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The Blind Spot of The Western Media: The Invisibility of Genocide in Reporting on the Israel–Palestine Conflict

Batı Medyasının Kör Noktası: Filistin-İsrail Çatışması Haberlerinde Soykırımın Görünmezleştirilmesi

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to reveal how the genocidal massacres committed by Israel during the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that began on October 7, 2023, were rendered invisible by the Western media. The sample for this case study consists of 75 news articles selected from The New York Times, The Guardian, Le Monde, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, and El País, representing the Western media. The data compiled from these articles were coded into three categories—perpetrator positioning, victim representation, and international legal terminology—and subjected to content analysis. The analysis revealed that in most of the news articles, Israeli military actions were legitimized through passive language, security discourse, and state-sourced references; the Palestinian civilians were mostly represented in narratives of human loss that were disconnected from the perpetrator, out of context, and numerical; and concepts belonging to international law, such as genocide, occupation, collective punishment, and ethnic cleansing, were not used at all in a significant portion of the news articles examined. These findings reveal that the news discourse on Gaza in Western mainstream media is structured around a security-centered framework that excludes discussions of legal responsibility.

Keywords: The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, News Discourse, Media Framing, The Western Media, Genocide.

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, 7 Ekim 2023'te başlayan Filistin-İsrail çatışması sırasında İsrail tarafından işlenen soykırım niteliğindeki katliamların Batı medyası tarafından nasıl görünmez kılındığını ortaya koymaktır. Durum çalışması (örnek olay incelemesi) yöntemi ile yapılan çalışmanın örneklemini, Batı medyasını temsilen ele alınan The New York Times, The Guardian, Le Monde, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung ve El País gazetelerinden seçilen 75 haber metni oluşturmaktadır. Bu haberlerden derlenen çalışmanın verileri, failin konumlandırılması, mağdur temsili ve uluslararası hukuk terminolojisinin kullanımı olmak üzere üç kategoride kodlanmış ve içerik analizine tabi tutulmuştur. Analizler sonucu, haberlerin büyük bölümünde İsrail askerî eylemlerinin pasif dil, güvenlik söylemi ve devlet kaynaklı atıflar yoluyla meşrulaştırıldığı; Filistinli sivillerin çoğunlukla failden koparılmış, bağlamsız ve sayısal insani kayıp anlatıları içinde temsil edildiği ve soykırım, işgal, toplu cezalandırma ve etnik temizlik gibi uluslararası hukuka ait kavramların, incelenen haberlerin önemli bir kısmında hiç kullanılmadığı görülmüştür. Bu bulgular, Batı ana akım medyasında Gazze'ye ilişkin haber söyleminin, hukuki sorumluluk tartışmalarını dışarıda bırakan güvenlik merkezli bir çerçeve etrafında yapılandığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Filistin-İsrail Çatışması, Haber Söylemi, Medya Çerçevelemesi, Batı Medyası, Soykırım.

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Introduction

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict that began in Gaza on October 7, 2023, and the subsequent systematic destruction of the city's civilian infrastructure have drawn not only regional security equations but also international legal norms and the reporting practices of the Western-centric media system into a profound debate. United Nations experts, the International Court of Justice, and various human rights organizations have published reports and legal assessments containing concrete data indicating that the military operations on the ground carry the potential for "risk of genocide," "crimes against humanity," and "collective punishment" (Amnesty International, 2023; International Court of Justice, 2023; OHCHR, 2023). Regarding how this humanitarian tragedy is perceived on a global scale and within which conceptual framework it is framed, the news discourse of five major the Western media outlets—*The New York Times, The Guardian*, *Le Monde, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and *El País*—has played a decisive role.

The central premise of this study is that the news language, source selection, and editorial framing practices of the aforementioned media outlets present the destruction in Gaza in a way that abstracts it from legal categories such as "genocide" or "occupation." This situation, referred to in the literature as the "problem of representation," is based on the Western media's discursive construction process, which obscures the perpetrator's responsibility and masks structural power relations. This process is theoretically consistent with the "selective perception" mechanism emphasized by Entman's (1993) and the "ideological meaning management" defined in van Dijk's(1998) critical discourse analysis. The fundamental issue here is that the media is not merely a transmitter of information but is positioned as an epistemic authority that decides which information is considered "legitimate" and which is considered "marginal". In the case of Gaza, this deep gap between the objective reality defined by international law and the reality constructed by the Western media has created a crisis of legitimacy in terms of journalistic ethics.

The study problematizes the linguistic strategies employed by the Western media when reporting on the destruction in Gaza and how these strategies render the legal reality "invisible". For example, the reporting patterns frequently used by *The New York Times*, such as "Israel says...," remove information from its factual basis and transform it into a one-sided claim. Similarly, The Guardian's presentation of civilian deaths using symmetrical war terminology such as "the bloodiest day of the conflict," and Le Monde's description of bombings using technical terms (raid, frappe) that strip them of political agency, point to a deliberate editorial choice that systematically obscures the source of the violence.

While examining these linguistic practices, the research seeks to answer the question of how the Western mainstream media presents the events in Gaza within which editorial frameworks and how these frameworks obscure the characterization of "genocide". The analysis process is conducted through three fundamental parameters: the colonial knowledge regime, the securitization discourse, and the limits of the Western-centric normative order. This context is critical for understanding the ideological filters used by the media in constructing social reality. Indeed, Said's (1978) theory of "Orientalist representation" provides a powerful foundation for explaining how the Palestinian subjects are passivized in today's Gaza news and how actors with allied status are legitimized as rational security subjects (Yılmaz, 2024c, p. 71).

In the digital media ecosystem, the period conceptualized by Miladi ve Miladi (2025) as "livestreamed genocide" has juxtaposed the institutional narrative of mainstream media with raw footage flowing from social media. In this context, the study aims to empirically demonstrate how the Western media constructed a "blind spot" in the face of this "new reality" by systematically analyzing the print media content of *The New York Times, The Guardian, Le Monde, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and *El País*.

1. Genocide, Framing, and Blind Spot

Analyzing the Western-centric news discourse in international media studies requires understanding the ontological distance between legal norms and media presentation. The first fundamental concept that defines this distance is *genocide.* The 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention defines genocide as a set of intentional acts aimed at the complete or partial destruction of a specific group (United Nations, 1948). Legal scholars such as Schabas (2009) and Straus (2007) note that the intent to destroy can be understood not only through physical acts, but also through systematic target selection, military practices, and the exclusionary discursive construction developed towards the targeted population. Therefore, genocide is not only a legal process of adjudication but also an epistemic field of struggle shaped by the media's practices of naming or obscuring this intent.

The role of news in this process can be explained through media framing theory. Entman (1993) conceptualizes framing as "selecting and emphasizing certain aspects of reality and thus presenting a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, and moral evaluation." Scheufele(1999) argues that this process is shaped not only by editorial choices but also by institutional routines and hegemonic value judgments. This theoretical grounding provides an analytical tool for understanding the discursive mechanisms through which the media normalizes power hierarchies and obscures the perpetrators of violence Reese, 2001).

The most extreme manifestation of these mechanisms is reflected in the concept of the "blind spot" in critical media studies. The "five filters" mechanism presented in Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model points to a structural filtering process whereby media organizations render the violations of allied states "invisible" or frame them as "legitimate defense." Van Dijk (1998) views this blind spot as a result of ideological polarization (us vs. them distinction) in news discourse. In this context, the blind spot is institutionalized through selective visibility, the transfer of epistemic authority to state sources, and the exclusion of international legal concepts.

2. Media Representation of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

The Western media's approach to the Palestinian-Israeli issue is based on a comprehensive body of critical literature spanning many years. Philo and Berry's work (2004), reveals that the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts have historically been represented with systematic bias in Western mainstream media; despite the structural asymmetry between the occupier and the occupied, the conflicts are often framed as a "war between two equal sides," thereby obscuring the reality. This classic literature demonstrates that the media has adopted the Israeli state discourse as its primary descriptor and reduced the Palestinian subjects to victim figures stripped of political agency and detached from their context, as emphasized by Said in(1981).

It is noteworthy that these historical trends in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have been reproduced in a more visible and intense manner since October 7. Recent studies

focusing on the 2023–2025 period confirm that the Western media largely continues to adhere to the "two-sided war" framework. In this context, critical articles published in the Columbia Journalism Review offer important discussions on the editorial and discursive choices of the Western media in their coverage of the conflict. Similarly, a media analysis published in The Intercept Johnson and Ali (2024) revealed that The New York Times, The Washington Post, and Los Angeles Times reported Israeli deaths with intense emotional framing, while the Palestinian casualties were presented with more technical and passive language (e.g., "killed in an explosion"). Similarly, reports prepared by the Centre for Media Monitoring show that British media outlets systematically passive-voice the Palestinian casualties and render the perpetrator invisible at the linguistic level (Hanif, 2024). These findings show a strong structural parallel with, Hall's (1997) observations that news discourse is structured by hegemonic power relations. In this context, it can be said that these findings are supported by the literature.

Looking at the literature, comparative studies published in 2024 and 2025 address the global impact of this discursive asymmetry. Dingin and Aslan's (2025) study states that the BBC uses a "conflict language" consistent with British foreign policy regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In Umunç (2025), a clear "ideological blindness" is identified in the Western press's presentation of the genocide trial in The Hague. In Ergen's(2024), it is observed that the Western public broadcasters resort to ambiguous linguistic strategies that conceal the perpetrator during crises, such as in the case of Al-Ahli Hospital. Naveed and Zafeer's(2025) and, and and Qasim's(2025) studies reveal that the deep ideological divide between the "blind spot" of the Western media and the frameworks of Eastern media is empirically validated. In Yılmaz's, (2024a) study, it was determined that newspapers such as The New York Times and The Guardian established a representation regime centered on Israeli security in a manner veiled by professional journalism principles. The same study revealed that the exclusion of historical-legal concepts such as "occupation" and "settler" severed the destruction in Gaza from its structural context. In another study by Yılmaz (2024b), which analyzes the Turkish media, it is stated that the language of news in Türkiye establishes a victim-centered humanitarian framework and, in this respect, forms a sharp contrast with the institutional blind spot of the Western media.

The institutional blind spot regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is not limited to media narratives; it is also reinforced by symbolic constructs in political discourse. In his study, Ceylan (2025) analyzes US President Joe Biden's statements on civilian casualties in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the lens of the concept of "virtue signaling". The analysis reveals that all of President Biden's statements regarding civilian casualties are merely displays of virtue signaling that do not alter the military-political strategies on the ground. This finding reveals the collaboration between the technical language of the Western media and the moral rhetoric of political actors, proving that displays of humanitarian sensitivity serve as a functional element that masks the structural responsibility for violence. In his study, Günay (2025) argues that international framing studies frequently place operations against Gaza within the parentheses of "counterterrorism," which renders the postcolonial context invisible. Miladi and Miladi (2025) define the tension between the reality of "livestreamed genocide" on social media and the technical language of mainstream media as a breaking point where the Western media lost its ethical legitimacy. In conclusion, the existing literature shows that the blind spot in the Western media is not an accidental journalistic flaw, but a structural

hegemonic practice that filters international legal norms and human reality through both media routines and ostentatious practices in political discourse. In this context, this study attempts to reveal how the genocidal massacres committed by Israel in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that began on October 7, 2023, were made invisible by the Western media, using five major newspaper examples.

3. Method

This research used the case study method, a qualitative research design. A case study is a method in which a single case or event is analyzed comprehensively, and data is collected systematically for comprehensive analysis (Subaşı & Okumuş, 2017). Content analysis is frequently preferred in case studies (Polat, 2020; Polat, 2023)ikisi de araştırmaya uygun formatta olmadığı için çalışma grubundan çıkarılmıştır. Bu bağlamda nitel veri toplama tekniklerinden doküman incelemesine göre 11 adet tez değerlendirilmiştir. Elde edilen verilerin incelenmesinde içerik analizi tekniği kullanılmıştır. İçerik analizinde MAXQDA 2020 paket programından yararlanılmıştır. Tezler kapsamında 13 farklı başlıkta kodlama gerçekleştirilmiştir. Kodlamalar biçimsel ve içeriksel olmak üzere iki kategori altında toplanmıştır. Araştırma neticesinde yeni medya ve halkla ilişkiler ilişkisini ele alan tez miktarının yetersiz kaldığı, tezlerin genellikle İstanbul merkezli üniversiteler bünyesinde çalışıldığı görülmüştür. Tezlerde kurumların ve halkla ilişkiler uygulayıcılarının yeni medyanın önemine dikkat çekmelerine rağmen yeni medyayı etkin kullanmadıkları ortak sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.","container-title":"Uluslararası Anadolu Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi","DOI":"10.47525/ulasbid.823915","ISSN":"2619-9475","issue":"4","page":"289-306","source":"DOI.org (Crossref. This research was designed within the framework of a case study pattern to analyze the representation of the genocide committed by Israel in the Western media during the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts that began on October 7. In the study, content analysis was adopted. It enabled a systematic and objective inventory of the frames in the news discourse (Neuendorf, 2017); while the case study approach made it possible to place the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the resulting international legal processes within a deep analytical universe (Yin, 2018). Thus, through this combination of methods, an attempt was made to reveal the relationship between micro-level linguistic preferences and the macro-level institutional-political orientations of media organizations.

3.1 Sample and Selection Criteria

In the research sample selection, the purposive sampling method, a nonprobability sampling method, was used. Purposive sampling is a method used in qualitative research to select the richest and best information relevant to the purpose of the study from limited resources. This sampling method involves selecting the most knowledgeable and experienced individuals, groups, or organizations, events, or phenomena regarding the subject addressed in the research (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2015; Yağar & Dökme, 2018). In this context, 5 mainstream newspapers representing different media traditions and ideological orientations, which have the power to shape the political perception of the Western public, were included in the sample: *The New York Times* (USA), *The Guardian* (United Kingdom), *Le Monde* (France), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Germany), and *El País* (Spain). These newspapers were selected for their hegemonic discursive power and high editorial influence. *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* were considered "record newspapers" with the ability to set the global agenda. *Le Monde, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and *El País*, selected from continental Europe, represent liberal-intellectual, conservative-liberal, and center-left journalism traditions, respectively, reflecting the

diversity of the European public sphere Papathanassopoulos et al., 2023). The inclusion of these publications in the analysis is important for testing the thesis that the "blind spot" in the Western media is based on an institutional and structural common discourse regime rather than a specific ideological position (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; van Dijk, 1998).

3.2. Data Collection Process and Limitations

The data for this study were collected using the document review method. This technique is a research method defined as the collection, examination, review, and analysis of various documents that constitute the primary source of scientific research (Sak et al., 2021)araştırma verilerinin birincil kaynağı olarak çeşitli dokümanların toplanması, gözden geçirilmesi, sorgulanması ve analizi olarak tanımlanabilen bilimsel bir araştırma yöntemidir. Bu yöntem, alanyazında çoğunlukla diğer araştırma yöntemlerinin tamamlayıcısı olarak hizmet ederken, tek başına bir yöntem olarak da kullanılmaktadır. Sosyal bilimlerde çalışma yöntemi olarak doküman analizinin kullanıldığı araştırmaların sayısında bir artış göze çarpmaktadır. Bu artışa rağmen diğer yöntemlerle karşılaştırıldığında doküman analizinin kullanımının oldukça sınırlı olduğu söylenebilir. Doküman analizinin bir araştırma yöntemi olarak birçok avantajı olmasına rağmen az kullanılmasının sebeplerinden birinin bu yöntem hakkındaki bilgi yetersizliği olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bir araştırma yöntemi olarak doküman analizi hakkında daha detaylı bilgilere ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu nedenle bu çalışmada doküman analizinin tanımı, mantığı, aşamaları, avantajları ve dezavantajlarının ortaya konulması amaçlanmıştır. Bununla birlikte, doküman analizine ilişkin bazı yanlış çıkarımlar söz konusudur. Buradan yola çıkarak bu çalışma kapsamında, (1. In this context, the data for the study was obtained through a digital archive search covering the period between October 15 and 31, 2023, when civilian casualties in Gaza intensified and international legal institutions issued their first concrete warnings. From each newspaper, texts containing the keywords "Palestine," "Gaza," or "Israel," focusing directly on the attacks in Gaza, and prominently featured on the newspaper's digital front page, were selected. The sampled content consists of news headlines, spots, analysis articles, and corporate editorial opinions. A total of the first 15 news articles from each newspaper that met the specified criteria (Total N=75) were subjected to in-depth analysis.

3.3. Analysis Units and Coding Protocol

The analytical units of the study are the discursive strategies in the headlines, spot texts, and the news body. The coding process is structured under three main categories based on the framing and discourse analysis models developed by Entman (1993) and van Dijk(2015) :

1. *Legitimization of the Perpetrator:* Passive language use that obscures the source of violence and the epistemic priority granted to state sources.

2. *Victim Depoliticization:* Presenting the Palestinian casualties as merely "statistical or technical data," severed from their historical and political context.

3. *Suppression of Legal Language:* The exclusion or marginalization in editorial terms of concepts from international legal terminology (genocide, occupation, war crimes).

3.4. Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the coding process, 15% of the sample was independently analyzed by a second expert coder outside the research team. The agreement between

the two coders was calculated using Cohen's Kappa coefficient, yielding a value of κ=0.85. This result confirms the consistency and reliability of the analysis categories (Landis & Koch, 1977).

***Table 1**. Content Analysis Coding and Framing Scheme*

Main Category	Definition	Subcodes/Indicators	Elements to Be Coded	Example Statement
1. Legitimization of the Perpetrator	Framing strategies that render perpetrators of violence invisible or diffuse responsibility	- Use of passive language ("X died") - State sources as the primary source of information - Prioritization of security discourse - Not explicitly naming the perpetrator	- News headlines and opening sentences - Distribution of sources - Frequency of security terminology - The way violence is defined	- "Civilians were killed" - "According to the Israeli army..." - "Due to a security threat" - "Buildings were damaged"
2. The Victimization of the Victim	The representation of the Palestinians as passive victims, detached from their political context.	- The human drama framework - Numerical abstraction - Exclusion of the Palestinian voices - Absence of historical context	- Emphasis on the "humanitarian crisis" - The way deaths are presented - Balance of source distribution - The narrative of structural violence	- "The humanitarian tragedy is deepening" - "100 people lost their lives" - Lack of the Palestinian sources - No mention of the occupation
3. Suppression of Legal Language	Avoiding or marginalizing legal concepts such as genocide.	- Avoiding direct use - Quotation marks - Making legal authorities invisible - Hiding the systematic structure	- Frequency of legal terms - Attribution of concepts - The place of UN/ human rights reports - Emphasis on the systematic nature of violence	- "Some call it 'genocide'" - "The UN issued warnings" - Absence of references to legal reports - Framing it as "retaliation"

Table 1 systematically illustrates how violent incidents are framed in the media through three key manipulative strategies. The content is classified into three categories: legitimizing the perpetrator, constructing the victim, and suppressing legal language. For each category, the table includes a definition, sub-indicators, elements to be coded, and example statements. This structure clearly demonstrates how the subject is addressed in the media, what discursive tools are used to present it, and which aspects are made visible or invisible.

4. Findings

In this section, the content of the five selected newspapers has been analyzed within the three basic coding categories defined in the methodology section. The results of the analysis reveal a structural similarity in the way the newspapers define the violence in Gaza, position the perpetrator's responsibility, and use international legal terminology. Despite their different geographical and editorial traditions, this discursive parallelism

observed in the vast majority of the media outlets examined points to the institutional nature of the "blind spot" in the Western media representations of Gaza.

4.1. Frequency and Framing Intensity

Table 2. *Framing Intensity According to Coding Categories*

Newspaper	Sample (n=15)	Category 1: Legitimization of the Perpetrator (n) / (%)	Category 2: Language of Victim Passivization (n) / (%)	Category 3: Suppression of Legal Language (n) / (%)
NYT (US)	15	n=13 / 87%	n=14 / 93%	n=15 / 100%
Guardian (UK)	15	n=11 / 73%	n=12 / 80%	n=10 / 67%
Le Monde (France)	15	n=12 / 80%	n=13 / 87%	n=14 / 93%
FAZ (Germany)	15	n=14 / 93%	n=13 / 87%	n=15 / 100%
El País (Spain)	15	n=6 / 40%	n=7 / 47%	n=5 / 33%

The data in Table 2 strongly supports the central argument. The high rates observed across all three categories examined (averaging 75%–79%) suggest that these discursive patterns stem not from individual editorial preferences but from a structural and recurring framing practice. In particular, the fact that certain categories have reached near-saturation in some newspapers (for example, rates of up to 100% for the suppression of legal language) demonstrates that these discursive strategies are not exceptional but rather part of an institutionalized language production mechanism. In contrast, variations in ratios across newspapers indicate that the intensity of framing is not entirely homogeneous; however, these differences do not alter the direction of the trend but merely represent a degree of variation.

When these findings are evaluated together, it becomes clear that strategies such as the invisibilization of the perpetrator, the passivization of the victim, and the suppression of the legal framework operate simultaneously and mutually reinforce one another within the examined media texts. Thus, the table does not merely present a quantitative distribution; it also analytically reveals that this discursive structure is produced within a systematic, continuous, and ideologically directed framing regime.

4.1.1 Institutional Suppression of Legal Language: Lexical Silence (Category 3)

The most striking finding of the analysis is concentrated in the category of "Suppression of Legal Language." In all articles included in the sample from *The New York Times* (NYT) and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) (100%), a systematic avoidance of international legal terminology such as "genocide," "occupied territories," and "collective punishment" was observed. Le Monde's 93% rate also confirms the impact of this trend in Continental Europe. This suggests that the media not only frames events but also pursues an active strategy of "lexical silence" that obscures the legal nature of violence.

4.1.2. Legitimization of the Perpetrator and Security Discourse (Category 1)

The "Legitimization of the Perpetrator" framework was predominantly used by the German media FAZ (93%) and the US media NYT (87%). It can be argued that this finding parallels the established diplomatic engagement and strategic alliances of these countries in the region. In the analyzed texts, Israel's military operations were largely rationalized through "legitimate defense" or "security requirements." *The* Guardian's 73% rate, despite the "balance" observed in the UK media, shows that the editorial line sharing or legitimizing the perpetrator's responsibility remains dominant.

4.1.3. Passivization and Depoliticization of the Victim (Category 2)

In the "Victim Passivization Language" category, it was found that publications such as the NYT (93%), *Le Monde* (87%), and *The Guardian* (80%) reported the Palestinian casualties in a passive language, independent of the perpetrator. This linguistic choice positions the Palestinian subjects not as actors with political or legal rights, but as "statistical data" or "objects of tragedy" detached from their context and in need of humanitarian aid. This approach abstracts violence from its political origins and presents a narrative of "destruction without perpetrators" to Western audiences.

4.1.4. An Exception Within the Western Block: The El País Example

The Spanish newspaper *El País* stands out significantly from the other four newspapers in all categories examined, displaying the lowest rates (Category 3: 33%; Category 1: 40%). This finding demonstrates that the discourse structure in the Western media is not uniform; national foreign policy traditions can create fractures in media representations. Spain's foreign policy line, which has historically been closer to the Palestinian cause and the vision of a two-state solution, can be considered a decisive factor in *El* País's use of a more balanced language open to legal references. *El* País's relatively flexible stance in using legal concepts strengthens the inference that the near-total silence in other newspapers points to a conscious editorial choice.

4.2. Qualitative Analysis

This section examines the conceptual frameworks, actor hierarchies, and linguistic preferences through which the conflict is represented in the international press. Five selected newspapers—*The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and *El País*—lend themselves to comparative analysis, both as discursive centers that shape global public opinion and because their editorial policies are shaped by different normative economic contexts. Each newspaper's representation strategy was examined in terms of (1) how the event was framed, (2) the linguistic-conceptual repertoire used, (3) which sources were prioritized, and (4) the visibility of legal-political content.

Table 3. *Framing Characteristics of Gaza Representation in the Western Media*

Newspaper	Country	Critical Article/ Headline Example	A. Focus & Frame	B. Language & Concepts Used	C. Highlighted Source / Perspective
The New York Times (NYT)	USA	"As Israeli Invasion Looms, Diplomats Seek to Meet Gaza's Dire Human Needs" (October 19, 2023) + NYT staff editorial line criticism (October 2023 letter)	It dramatically highlights the humanitarian crisis in Gaza; it frames the conflict mostly around the axis of "the impending Israeli operation + US diplomatic intervention."	In editorial practice, terms such as "massacre," "ethnic cleansing," and "occupied territories" are not used (staff letter); news reports use neutral/technical expressions such as "evacuation order," "dire needs," and "humanitarian crisis."	Statements from the US administration, Israeli officials, and international humanitarian organizations; Gaza sources are mostly at the level of testimony about the humanitarian situation.

Newspaper	Country	Critical Article/ Headline Example	A. Focus & Frame	B. Language & Concepts Used	C. Highlighted Source / Perspective
The Guardian	United Kingdom	"Hamas and Israel at war: what we know on day 5" (October 11, 2023) + humanitarian-focused field reports (Al-Ahli Hospital, etc.)	Presents the events entirely as a "war"; provides news flow in a chronological and operational framework. The Palestinian deaths are generally reported in a numerical/ passive manner.	The word "genocide" is used not in an editorial voice, but through references to the Palestinian representatives or activists; Israeli actions are often described using technical terms such as "airstrikes" and "bombardments."	Human testimonies from the field, UN agencies, and Gaza health authorities are included; however, the primary emphasis is often placed on attacks and casualties in Israel.
Le Monde	France	Sari Hanafi's rejected article (October 2023) + Gaza analyses	The editorial line produces a cautious framework that excludes certain terms in interviews or analyses on the grounds of "discursive sensitivity."	Terms such as "genocide," "ethnic cleansing," and "occupation" are filtered or restricted through an editorial lens; the language of the news maintains an institutional distance ( ).	French diplomatic positions, academic experts, and government sources are featured, but the Palestinian actors are also included; however, the editorial power remains under the control of.
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)	Germany	"Does the Gaza Strip need a ceasefire?" (October 23, 2023) and other political analyses	Reproduces the historical framework of German foreign policy's "special responsibility towards Israel"; positions the Hamas attack as the starting point and decisive reference point.	Powerful terms such as "Hamas-Terror," "Massacre," and "Israel's Security" frame Israel's military actions as "legitimate security measures."	German politicians, Israeli officials, and European institutions; representation of the Palestinian actors is more limited and mostly secondary.
El País	Spain	Analysis by former ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo (October 23, 2023) + Field reports from Gaza	Addresses the conflict in both its humanitarian and legal dimensions; references to international law are more visible than in Türkiye, the UAE, and France.	Concepts such as "extermination camp" (Ocampo), "war crimes," and "collective punishment" are used with references to legal experts; the normative language is more pronounced than in other newspapers.	International Criminal Court experts, Israeli critical academics, NGOs, field reporters; a multi-faceted network of sources.

4.2.1. The New York Times (USA)

Although *The New York* Times' news discourse on Gaza during the period under review appeared to maintain professional neutrality, an analysis of linguistic preferences and editorial choices revealed a clear structural framing pattern. A letter published internally in October 2023 and signed by over 300 employees provides concrete data for understanding the newspaper's institutional approach to news language. The letter

contains statements that concepts established in international legal literature, such as *"massacre," "occupied territories," "ethnic cleansing," and "apartheid,"* are restricted in editorial processes. This situation reflects a trend consistent with the study's category of "legitimization of the perpetrator." The systematic exclusion of these concepts obscures the structural dimension of violence, potentially leading readers to perceive events solely as a context-free humanitarian crisis.

An examination of news texts reveals that the Palestinian casualties are mostly conveyed using passive sentence structures. For example, headlines such as *"Civilians killed in Gaza"* are a typical example of victimization language that abstracts violence from its perpetrator. This linguistic structure presents the violence suffered by the Palestinians as a subjectless tragedy, while actions directed at Israel during the same period are reported using structures that directly include the perpetrator and the action, such as "Hamas militants killed" or *"Israel says..."*, revealing a discursive asymmetry.

Criticisms of the newspaper's editorial policy are deepened by allegations that state-sourced information is prioritized and that some content has been altered by external interventions. This picture reinforces the possibility that the NYT may have operated a filtering mechanism that epistemically privileged certain actors. The findings can be interpreted as indicating that editorial decisions produced not only a linguistic prioritization but also an institutional selectivity regarding which information would be considered legitimate.

Overall, *The New York* Times' news discourse during the period examined was shaped along three main axes: (1) avoiding legal terminology that directly identifies Israel as the perpetrator, (2) depoliticizing the Palestinian victimhood through passive structures, and (3) making official state narratives dominant in the news hierarchy. These patterns provide evidence that the NYT pursued a layered representation strategy that made the destruction in Gaza appear as a humanitarian crisis while obscuring the political and legal origins of this crisis at the level of discourse.

4.2.2. The Guardian (United Kingdom)

Although the news produced by *The Guardian* during the period examined has a broad perspective that addresses the conflict both as a humanitarian crisis and in terms of diplomatic developments, the framing choices reveal discursive patterns consistent with the study's three main categories. In the newspaper's news flow, statements by Israeli state actors were presented in detail and as a decisive authority, while the destruction experienced by the Palestinian civilians was mostly represented by humanitarian drama images independent of context. It can be said that this situation paved the way for the formation of a framing strategy that systematically separated the perpetrator-victim relationship.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant's statements regarding the operations, *"You will soon see Gaza from inside. The command will come"* regarding the operations, and Prime Minister Netanyahu's dramatic description of the process as *"This is our darkest* hour*"* have received extensive coverage in the news. Similarly, Israel's restrictions on humanitarian aid have been conveyed in a definitive and rational tone as a state decision with the statement, *"Israel says aid will halt if seized by Hamas."* Such direct quotations serve to make Israel's military actions appear as an inevitable, regular state practice grounded in security reasons. This presentation style confirms the study's category of

"legitimizing the perpetrator" by demonstrating that the state discourse on the Israeli side has established a clearly visible and rationalized position in the news hierarchy.

In contrast, civilian casualties in Gaza have been systematically presented through a passive narrative form. Expressions frequently used in news reports, such as *"People cook on firewood amid shortages of fuel and gas"* or "*A Palestinian child watches smoke billow on the horizon after an Israeli air strike,"* do not contain an explicit attribution of responsibility for the violence; they reduce the Palestinian civilians to humanitarian figures detached from the political context. Furthermore, the frequent presentation of data on casualties as *"according to Gaza officials"* renders the information indirect, relegating the statements of the Palestinian sources— —to a secondary position in the information hierarchy. This form of representation reflects the typical characteristics of victimization language as defined in the literature.

The cautious approach to using international legal categories is another prominent feature of *The Guardian*'s discourse. While the destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza is reported in detail, normative concepts such as *"occupation," "war crime," "collective punishment,"* or *"genocide"* are largely presented only indirectly as claims made by third parties. For example, the World Health Organization's (WHO) warnings have been reduced to technical warnings such as *"Insufficient aid will cause health disasters"*; the United Nations' legal responses have been reported without providing broad contextual analysis. This tendency aligns with the study's category of "avoiding genocide language" and contributes to the depoliticization of the structural nature of violence.

This asymmetrical framing can also be observed in the newspaper's opinion pieces. As in the narrative titled *"I lost my parents in the Hamas attack. My family wants peace, not revenge*," losses on the Israeli side are presented with intense emotional depth through personal stories, while losses in Gaza are generally limited to technical data and passive descriptions. This situation shows that violence is represented with different narrative intensities for each side; the Israeli side is framed in a "narrativized" manner, while the Palestinian side is framed in a "statistical" manner.

Overall, *The Guardian* has produced a hybrid discourse that, while making visible the destruction suffered by the Palestinian civilians during the period examined, confines the political and legal basis of this violence to a limited conceptual space. This discourse materializes through patterns such as empathy-focused but contextually shallow human representation, indirect transmission of legal concepts, and the discursive superiority of state actors.

4.2.3. Le Monde (France)

Le Monde, one of the most established representatives of the French press tradition, has been found to follow a specific and repetitive framing strategy in its news coverage of developments in Gaza. In line with the newspaper's institutional publishing identity, an analytical and detached geopolitical language is mostly preferred in the news texts. This approach is particularly evident in *"décryptage"* and *"tribune"* type content. For example, in analyses addressing tensions in the region, Gaza has been described using metaphors such as *"une poudrière" (a powder keg)* or *"un volcan" (a volcano)*. Presenting violence as a historical "explosion" process, using concepts that refer to natural events, produces a discourse that dissolves the perpetrator's actions into a structural inevitability, thereby misleading the subject.

The newspaper's approach to the humanitarian crisis also reveals that technical language takes precedence over legal concepts. The description of Israel's evacuation order for northern Gaza as *"un déplacement massif" (mass displacement)* in the news is an example of this. This expression renders invisible the legal and criminal liability carried by the concept of *"forced displacement"* in international law, presenting the process as if it were a technical population movement. This points to a framework in which the perpetrator's actions are named, but the legal nature of these actions is systematically left out.

The news report on the October 18 attack on Ahli Arab Hospital is one of the clearest examples of *Le* Monde's "mutual blame" strategy. The report describes the attack in a passive voice, without identifying the perpetrator, as *"a strike... which health officials said killed at least 200 people"*. The rest of the text gives equal weight to the Israeli army's claim that it was "misfired by Islamic Jiha". The nature of the attack in terms of international humanitarian law (war crime, etc.) is addressed indirectly, through references to statements by third parties such as the UN Secretary-General, rather than through direct analysis. This presentation style is consistent with the study's categories of "avoiding genocide language" and "narrowing the legal framework in favor of state discourse."

The epistemic privilege granted to Israeli state sources in the newspaper's news routine is also evident in the presentation of official narratives. Claims by the Israeli *army* are conveyed with the support of as yet unconfirmed intelligence elements, such as *"the army would also provide conversations in Arabic"*; data from Gaza sources, on the other hand, are generally limited to expressions with low institutional weight, such as *"health officials said."* This distinction corresponds to the discourse structure defined in the literature as "epistemic asymmetry," which distributes the legitimacy of the news source unequally between the parties.

Finally, it has been observed that the language used to convey the reactions of regional actors (Iran, Lebanon, Türkiye, etc.) stands in sharp contrast to the diplomatic language of the Western actors. Regional protests and statements are confined to an emotional and irrational framework, such as "day of rage," *"anger," or "clash,"* while the discourse of the Western leaders such as Biden or Macron is presented in the context of rational statecraft and institutional diplomacy. This situation reproduces the Orientalist dichotomy of "rational West" versus "reactive/emotional East" in *Le Monde's* discourse.

In light of the findings, it can be said that *Le* Monde's Gaza strategy is based on the following four fundamental patterns:

1. Indirectly justifying the perpetrator through metaphors that naturalize violence.

2. Giving epistemic priority to official Israeli narratives and intelligence data.

3. Concealing the legal nature of civilian casualties with technical terminology (human tragedy, etc.).

4. Reducing the political stances of regional actors to an emotional and reactive framework.

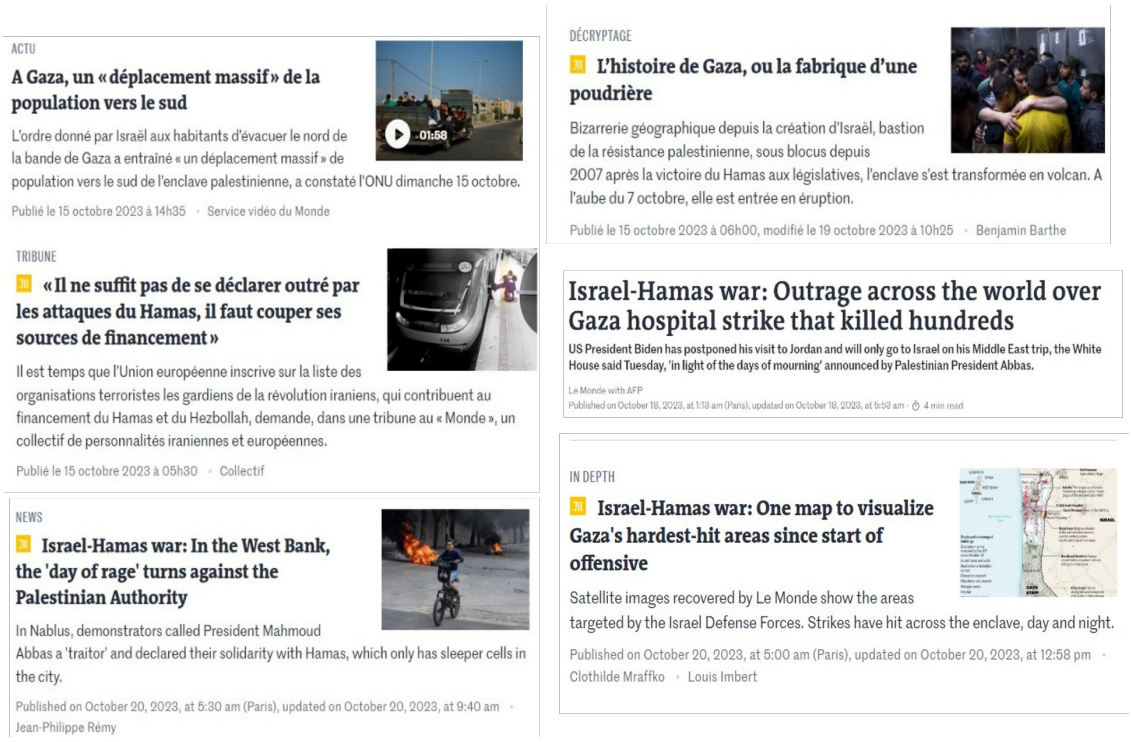


Figure 1. *Examples of News Articles from Le Monde Used in the Study*

4.2.4. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung – FAZ (Germany)

The news articles *of Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) during the period under review exhibit a structure that parallels Germany's established political stance toward Israel in terms of operational language use, the presentation of civilian casualties, and historical references.

In FAZ's news coverage from October 17–31, Israel's military actions are framed in a technical, security-focused context. For example, in the news item titled "Israel greift vereinzelt mit Bodentruppen an" (Israel attacks sporadically with ground troops), the operations are conveyed using technical terms such as "vereinzelt" *(sporadically*), *"Razzien" (raids)*, and *"Tötung von Terroristentrupps" (killing of terrorist groups)*. This linguistic choice removes the military attacks from the context of international legal debate and presents them as an operational necessity. Similarly, in news stories covering US intervention, the focus has been on diplomatic advice regarding the timing of the operation to rescue hostages, rather than civilian casualties in Gaza. This framing strategy codes Israel's military actions as a non-negotiable security necessity and reveals a tendency consistent with the study's category of "legitimizing the perpetrator."

In terms of the representation of the Palestinian civilians, a clear strategy of "absence" has been observed in FAZ discourse. The news texts examined made almost no mention of the daily civilian death toll in Gaza, living conditions under bombardment, or assessments by international legal institutions. For example, in news reports about the Red Cross releasing hostages, the focus was solely on the situation of Israeli hostages, while the humanitarian devastation in Gaza during the same period was rendered completely invisible. This corresponds to the practice of "discursive erasure," one of the most radical forms of victimization language; in this narrative, the Palestinians can only appear as an indirect, nameless, and contextless community.

Another noteworthy pattern in the newspaper's discourse is the reproduction of Germany's relationship with Israel on an ideological plane. In the commentary piece titled *"Was es heißt, Deutscher zu werden" (What it means to become German)*, support for Israel is framed as a historical obligation of German national identity and as *"Lehren aus der Geschichte" (Lessons from history)*. In such texts, the narrative of political responsibility defined by Germany as *"Staatsräson"* pushes the legal nature of the violence in Gaza into the background and reinforces the category of "suppression of legal language." Within this discourse, international law is reduced to a conjunctural foreign policy issue rather than a normative pursuit of rights.

Furthermore, in the hierarchy of sources used in the news reports, diplomatic actors such as the US, Germany, and the EU, as well as Israeli official authorities, are prioritized, while the Palestinian institutional sources are almost entirely absent. This situation can be assessed as a practice of "epistemic constraint" that anchors the flow of information to a specific state narrative and filters alternative perspectives in the editorial process.

Overall, FAZ's news discourse during the period examined

1. a framing that rationalizes Israel's military operations in technical-security terms,

2. A systematic strategy of absence that excludes the Palestinian civilian presence from news texts,

3. An ideological narrative that depoliticizes violence through Germany's historical responsibility.

These patterns indicate that the newspaper pursued an editorial policy that avoided making the destruction in Gaza a direct object of analysis but reinforced Israel's military and political position at the linguistic level.

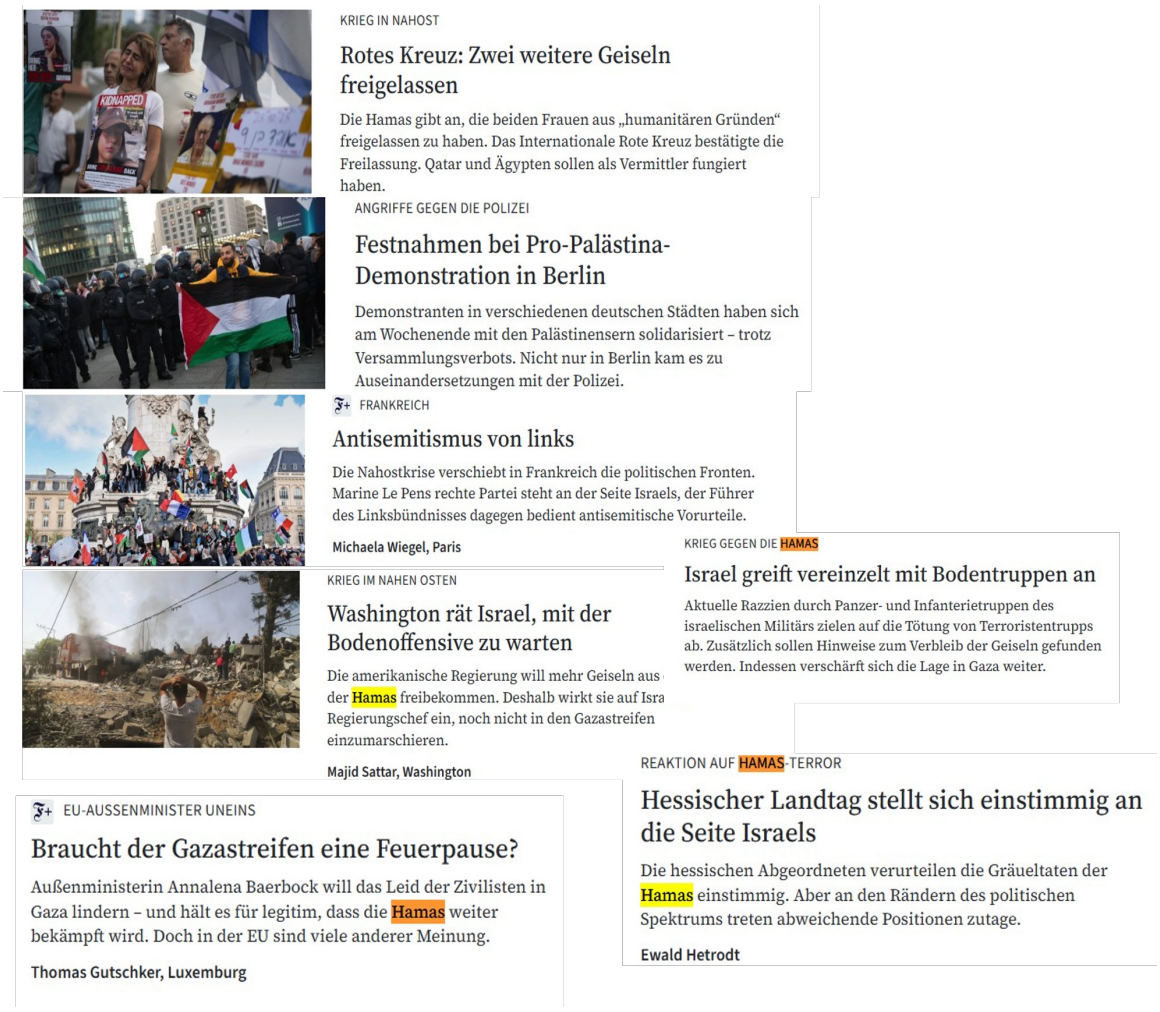


Figure 2. *News Examples from the Phase Used in the Study*

4.2.5. El País (Spain)

El País's news discourse on Gaza during the period under review clearly reflects the characteristic elements of the Spanish journalistic tradition: broadening the diplomatic context, emphasizing leadership analysis, and centering the humanitarian crisis framework. However, while the newspaper's news language positions Israel's actions as a natural consequence of international political developments, it often limits the explicit naming of the party responsible for the violence in Gaza; the representation of the Palestinian civilians is constructed through humanitarian losses, panic, and mass movements. These patterns are directly consistent with the study's three main categories.

In the article titled "*Netanyahu fights his last political battle in Gaza*," the main axis of the conflict is established through Israel's internal political dynamics and Prime Minister Netanyahu's political future. The bombardment of Gaza and civilian deaths serve as an indirect backdrop; at the center of the news story is the strategic determination and security policy of Israel's leadership. Thus, Israel's military actions are framed not in the context of direct violence production, but as a leadership test and a matter of national security; this constitutes a typical example of the perpetrator legitimization category.

El País's analysis articles have adopted an increasingly harsh tone toward Hamas. In the article titled "*Pure, unadulterated evil*," Hamas' attacks are described as "absolute evil," and the attack on Israel is represented within an emotional and moral framework. This

framework attributes all responsibility for the conflict to Hamas' actions, while implicitly reinforcing the necessity of Israel's military operations. Thus, while Hamas is demonized in the news discourse, Israel's actions are normalized as a legitimate security response.

The representation of the Palestinian civilians, on the other hand, is more focused on the humanitarian catastrophe. In the news story containing the phrase "*Tens of thousands of the Palestinians have joined a mass ex*odus...", civilians are described as being in a state of mass "exodus", and a narrative is constructed with high emotional intensity but stripped of political context, using terms such as *"chaos"* and *"desperation"*. These structures, which do not explicitly name the perpetrators, reduce the Palestinian victims to contextless and passive figures, directly aligning with the language of victimization.

El País's detailed report titled *"Gaza hospital massacre raises stakes for Biden's trip to Israel"* features a multi-layered narrative structure. The report refers to the attack on the Gaza hospital as *a "massacre"* and states that at least 500 civilians were killed; however, descriptions of the perpetrator are constructed through mutual accusations such as *"Israel blames..." and "Hamas blamed..."*, without naming a definitive perpetrator. This opposition reflects a discourse strategy that prevents the explicit use of international legal terms. Furthermore, the main focus of the report shifts to broader geopolitical factors such as Biden's diplomatic visit, US regional calculations, and the refugee policies of Egypt and Jordan. Thus representing the hospital attack as a turning point shaping international diplomacy, while the legal nature of the attack (e.g., concepts such as war crimes or violations of international humanitarian law) is not explicitly named. This situation is a clear reflection of the category of avoiding genocide language.

The newspaper's approach to regional actors reinforces the discursive hierarchy. While statements from Israel and the US are conveyed within the framework of diplomatic rationality, statements from the Palestinian institutions are often presented as quotes reflecting the emotional dimension of the conflict, thus creating an epistemic asymmetry between sources of information. In the hospital attack report, the statement by the Palestinian official saying, "This confirms that this Israeli government does not respect any international standards..." is presented more as an emotional reaction to the crisis moment than within a broader context.

Overall, El País's examined news discourse is shaped by three main patterns:

1. *A legitimizing discourse* that positions Israel's military actions as natural state behavior within the context of leadership, security, and diplomacy.

2. *A victimizing language* that represents the Palestinian civilians through images of mass migration, chaos, and helplessness, stripped of their political context.

3. *A strategy of avoiding genocide discourse*, *which* does not refer to clear concepts of international law even when discussing serious violations such as hospital attacks, and instead indirectly refers to the perpetrator through mutual accusations.

These patterns show El País's tendency to produce a discourse that, while making the violence in Gaza visible, also limits the perpetrator, context, and legal nature of this violence, in line with international diplomatic frameworks.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that the Western media's representations of the civilian destruction in Gaza intersect on a common discursive axis, despite structural

differences between the political traditions and media systems of different countries. This commonality demonstrates that news discourse is not merely a matter of linguistic preference but is shaped by a broad epistemic regime consisting of international power relations, historical positioning, and institutional editorial policies. The data from examining five major newspapers show that the "blind spot" in the Western media is not an isolated error but a systematic representation strategy.

The most prominent discursive finding of the research is the systematic narrowing of the perpetrator's categorical visibility. *The New York* Times' restriction of concepts such as "massacre," "ethnic cleansing," and "occupied territories" in its editorial process; *The* Guardian's narrative confining the violence to a symmetrical "war" framework; *Le Monde's* melting legal terminology into technical metaphors; and FAZ's positioning of Israel as an indisputable "security subject" reinforce this pattern. Although *El País* shows flexibility by featuring legal experts, it has preferred an operational language in its general news flow. This picture shows that the situation where all statements made by US President Biden regarding civilian casualties in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are merely ostentatious sensitivity (Ceylan, 2025)a qualitative research design. Data were collected using the archive scanning method. The results of the scans show that President Biden made a total of 41 statements regarding civilian victimisation in the year following the start of the war. In these statements, Biden mostly emphasised themes such as the humanitarian crisis, the protection of civilians, humanitarian aid, the call for a ceasefire and the limitation of military operations. The words he used most frequently were 'Israel', 'Hamas' and 'terrorists'. It is concluded that all of his statements carried the themes/characteristics of virtue signalling behaviour; that is to say, they are all examples of ostentatious sensitivity behaviour. Furthermore, it is evident that President Biden's statements concerning civilian victimisation in this war are consistent with US foreign policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is thought that this study of virtue signalling behaviour in political communication will contribute to future literature and research in this area."","container-title":"Selçuk İletişim","DOI":"10.18094/josc.1586276","ISSN":"2148-2942","issue":"2","page":"847-872","source":"DOI.org (Crossref also applies to media outlets. According to the literature, this result concretizes how the "selection and emphasis" mechanism Entman (1993) operates in similar ways in the Western media and demonstrates how van Dijk's (1998) concept of "ideological discourse production" is structurally reproduced in different media systems.

The second common pattern is the depoliticization of the Palestinian civilians through their representation using a systematic language of victimization. In the vast majority of the analyzed media outlets, the reporting of the Palestinian casualties using passive sentence structures and numerical data detached from the perpetrator obscures the historical and political roots of the violence. This discourse, which constructs the Palestinians as "recipients of humanitarian aid" rather than "legal subjects," is fully consistent with Scheufeles's (1999) model of "context-depriving framing". As emphasized in recent studies in Turkish literature (Günay, 2025; Yılmaz, 2024a), the inverse relationship between the legitimization of the perpetrator and the passivization of the victim forms the basis of the Western media's institutional bias against Gaza.

The most critical dimension of the debate is avoiding international legal terminology. Although the acts taking place on the ground (mass bombardment, forced displacement, systematic destruction of infrastructure) have clear definitions in international law, a conscious reluctance to label these acts as "genocide" or "war crimes" has been observed.

This situation confirms Straus's (2007) concept of the "naming gap"; it demonstrates how the political context restricts the circulation of legal concepts (Schabas, 2009). This discursive gap in the Western media becomes more apparent when compared to alternative discourses in Turkish and Global South press. The terminological frameworks used in Türkiye's media ecosystem (Yılmaz, 2024c) reveal that legal categories excluded by the Western media can be made visible in other contexts, demonstrating that the Western representations are not a universal standard of journalism but a political-ideological selectivity.

An examination of the data obtained in the research suggests that the Western media deepens the subject through transmedia storytelling rather than a journalistic approach. However, the rituals, symbols, and heroes created in this storytelling process reveal an effort to guide world society and legitimize events rather than to reveal their true faces. It has been revealed that the underlying concern of this transmedia narrative is to create new meanings for the target audience (Seyfi & Uzunçarşılı Soydaş, 2014).

In conclusion, the Western media's disregard for the genocidal massacres committed by Israel against Palestine is understood to be the most visible and clearest example of historical, ideological, and institutional blind spots. This representational regime is a structural discourse system that disperses the perpetration of violence, depoliticizes the victim, and renders the definitional framework of international law invisible. In future studies, considering these discursive patterns alongside structural variables such as media economics, algorithmic content hierarchies, and the role of news agencies will contribute to a deeper understanding of power asymmetries in international news flows.

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The Blind Spot of The Western Media: The Invisibility of Genocide in Reporting on the Israel–Palestine Conflict

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Extended Abstract

The purpose of this study is to reveal how the genocidal massacres committed by Israel during the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that began on October 7, 2023, were rendered invisible by the Western media. In this context, the study examines how leading mainstream media outlets in the Western media framed the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that began on October 7, 2023, and how this framing obscured possible responsibilities for violations of international law, particularly allegations of genocide. The escalating violence after October 7, 2023, has led to unprecedented levels of civilian casualties and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza. While international law experts, UN special rapporteurs, and global human rights organizations increasingly describe these developments using legal concepts such as "genocide," "crimes against humanity," and "collective punishment," the dominant narrative in the Western media has largely excluded this terminology. Instead, events have mostly been presented through a security-centered framework, which has decisively shaped the global public's perception and political interpretation of the crisis.

This research proceeds from the assumption that news discourse is not a direct reflection of objective reality, but rather a form of representation constructed within social and institutional contexts. Within this framework, the study aims to reveal how mainstream the Western media systematically places certain actors, sources, and concepts in privileged positions, thereby delineating the boundaries of legitimate interpretation. The research argues that a significant discursive "blind spot" has been produced in the international public sphere, particularly through the marginalization of legal responsibility and historical context. Accordingly, the study's main research question is formulated as follows: Through which discursive frameworks do Western mainstream newspapers present the 2023 Gaza attacks, and how do these frameworks suppress the language of international law?

The theoretical framework of the study combines Entman's framing approach with Critical Discourse Analysis. Framing is not considered a process limited to which topics are reported; rather, it is understood as the continuous highlighting of certain aspects of perceived reality in a way that supports specific problem definitions, causal explanations, and moral evaluations. This approach is complemented by the concept of "primary definers" developed by Hall and colleagues. This concept explains the positioning of state actors and official institutions as authoritative and defining sources in news discourse. Furthermore, Herman and Chomsky's "propaganda model" is used to conceptualize how the media is structurally aligned with state interests, particularly in matters of foreign policy and security.

One of the key concepts this study focuses on within this theoretical framework is "discursive silence." Discursive silence refers to the systematic avoidance of certain concepts that could reveal legal responsibility, intent, and perpetrator relationships.

In the context of Gaza, this manifests itself in the almost complete absence of terms of central importance in international law, such as "occupation," "collective punishment," and "genocide," from the news discourse. In connection with this, the study also discusses the concept of a "mourning hierarchy," which refers to the distinction made in news texts between victims who are "worthy of mourning" and those who are "unworthy." This hierarchy determines which losses generate public empathy and a sense of political urgency, thereby directing the response of global public opinion.

Methodologically, the research is based on comparative qualitative content analysis. The study's sample consists of five "record newspapers" with high agenda-setting power and representing different Western journalistic traditions: *The New York Times* (USA), *The Guardian* (UK), *Le Monde* (France), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Germany), and *El País* (Spain). These newspapers, selected through purposive sampling, were included in the analysis due to their editorial influence and decisive role in shaping global public opinion. The sample consists of 75 news articles published during the intense bombardment period in October 2023. The texts were coded within three main analytical categories: (1) legitimization of the perpetrator through security discourse and passive language use; (2) depoliticization of the Palestinian victims through decontextualized humanitarian narratives; and (3) suppression or marginalization of international legal terminology. The coding process was validated with a high level of inter-coder agreement.

The findings show a striking discursive convergence in most of the newspapers examined. References to international law in *The New York Times* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine* Zeitung were extremely limited; concepts such as "genocide" and "occupation" were almost entirely excluded. Israel's military actions were mostly presented within the discourse of legitimate defense and counterterrorism; these narratives were supported by official state sources as the primary defining position. In contrast, the Palestinian civilian casualties were frequently conveyed using passive language; expressions such as "lost his life" or "died in the explosion" were preferred over "was killed." These linguistic choices reduce the visibility of the perpetrator, disconnecting the deaths from their political and legal context.

Although *The Guardian* and *Le Monde* gave limited space to humanitarian law or contextual elements, they generally reproduced the dominant framework that presented the conflict as a "two-sided" and symmetrical struggle. This approach renders the structural asymmetry of the occupation invisible. Among the newspapers examined, *El País* is a relative exception. It was found that this newspaper's reports more frequently included legal context and historical background; the proportionality and legitimacy of military actions were questioned more explicitly. This situation shows that, although a dominant meta-narrative exists in the Western media, national journalism cultures and foreign policy traditions can create limited discursive fractures.

In conclusion, the study reveals that the Western mainstream media largely serves to "render the genocide invisible." The presentation of the attacks on Gaza within a narrow security paradigm and the systematic marginalization of the language of international law make it difficult for the public to recognize and question possible serious violations by the state. This discursive blind spot functions not as a simple journalistic shortcoming but as a structural media practice consistent with hegemonic power relations. The study contributes to the literature on media and communication studies by empirically

demonstrating how framing, discursive silence, and source usage practices intersect to sterilize state violence and produce an unequal regime of visibility in global news discourse.

Keywords: The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, News Discourse, Media Framing, The Western Media, Genocide.

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Bu makale **intihal tespit yazılımlarıyla** taranmıştır. İntihal tespit edilmemiştir.

In this study, the rules stated in the **"Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive"** were followed.
Bu çalışmada **"Yükseköğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Yönergesi"** kapsamında uyulması belirtilen kurallara uyulmuştur.

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Bu çalışma, üretken yapay zekâ araçları **kullanılarak** hazırlanmıştır.

There is no **conflict of interest** with any institution or person within the scope of the study.
Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile **çıkar çatışması** bulunmamaktadır.