Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis of Gendered Lexical Choice in Israel-Palestine Conflict Narratives

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Abstract

Social media plays a crucial role in shaping public discourse. Studies have been conducted to examine the language of digital spaces, however data-driven analyses of how gender construct the conflict narrative are surprisingly scarce. This study aimed to explore how gendered lexical differences in Twitter/X construct the narratives of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Employing a corpus-assisted discourse analysis, the study examines 2,105 tweets posted between 7 to 13 October 2023, a critical period when the conflict escalated. After pre-processing stage, we performed sentiment analysis using RapidMiner software to divide the corpora into four subsets: pro-Israel male and female sub-corpus and pro-Palestine male and female sub-corpus. After that, we performed keyword analysis using AntConc software to generate the word list. By extracting the twenty most frequent words along with the concordance lists, we abductively clustered the words to reveal the user's thematic narrative. The findings reveal that male user mainly frame the conflicts around security, historical legitimacy, and territorial rights. On the contrary, female users are more likely construct their narrative on humanitarian issues. This suggests that culturally gendered norms play significant role in shaping the digital discourse, with male-driven narratives reinforcing securitization and female-driven narratives amplifying humanitarian consequences of the conflict.

Introduction

In today's immersive digital society, social media platforms such as Twitter/X have extended their initial role as merely communication tools. They have evolved into powerful tools for shaping public discourse. With its relatively fast nature to connect with, Twitter/X serves as an important medium not only for disseminating information but also for framing narratives and influencing public opinion on global issues (Chaudhari & Pawar, 2021; Hasan, 2023). The platform, which was initially designed for personal updates and networking, now has transformed into a free space where everyone,

including state actors, activists, or common people, can voice and contest their ideology, in response to globalizing issues (Al Sarraj et al., 2016).

Much research has examined how social media constructs the conflict narratives and highlighted its dual role in both fostering peace or even aggravating the tensions (Bahar, 2020; Geissler et al., 2023; Rehman & Riaz, 2021). Bahar's (2020) study on the Afghanistan war found that social media, especially Twitter, has been used by both the Taliban and the Afghanistan government to frame the war, with the Taliban referring to themselves as *mujahid* while the government labelled them as terrorists. This is in line with Geissler et al.'s (2023) study on the Russia-Ukraine war, which found that social media enable emotional framing to control the public narrative. Rehmean and Riaz (2021) observed that social media is used not only to mobilize public sentiment but also to spread propaganda, making it as a double-edged sword in modern-day conflict. Social media trivial features such as hashtags can have a huge impact on framing what should be trending and consumed by netizens (Garcia & Cunanan-Yabut, 2022). Sadly, the complexity of polarization in social media is often exacerbated by the differing ways in which genders frame conflicts, making the situation more intricate. Research has indicated that men communicate differently from women, with men using more assertive language, while women use more affiliative and inclusive language (Abdul Kadir et al., 2022; Hu & Kearney, 2021; Tannen, 1996). This suggests that different styles in conveying information can influence how ideological narratives are both received and constructed in the digital landscape (Herring & Stoerger, 2014; Karami et al., 2022).

Social media has transformed the visibility of global conflicts. Digital platforms play an important role in shaping the global narratives, mobilizing support, and even influencing policy debates (Howard & Hussain, 2013; Walk et al., 2022). In the context of conflicts such as the Israel-Palestine conflict, scholars have argued that social media does not merely document the events but further constructs social and political realities, by either reinforcing or challenging dominant narratives (Steinberg & Wanner, 2015; Wolfsfeld et al., 2013).

In order to analyze the discourse, corpus-assisted discourse analysis (CADS) has been leveraged as a valuable approach. CADS allows researchers not only to examine linguistic patterns but also to uncover implicit biases and track ideological changes within large datasets of online texts (Baker, 2023; Hardy & Friginal, 2016; Partington, 2004). The use of corpus software to analyze word frequencies, collocations, and concordances, combined with discourse analysis facilitates researchers to identify patterns in language use that may reflect certain social and ideological structures (Gillings et al., 2023).

Scholars have also documented how digital platforms have been strategically used by political actors to amplify certain voices on the one hand while marginalizing others (Conover et al., 2011; Wooley & Howard, 2016). This strategy often involves deploying buzzers "to attack political opponents or to drown out activists' conversations" (Woolley & Howard, 2016, p. 4886). This suggests that social media has been strategically used by both state and non-state actors to intensify the desirable narrative, suppress alternative voices, and bypass traditional media filters (Conover et al., 2011). In the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, social media has been used by both parties to express their views to construct global perceptions and policy debates around the issues (Aouragh & Alexander, 2011; Tuck & Silverman, 2016). These studies have consistently demonstrated how online platforms can be not only a strategic tool for fostering intercultural dialogue, but also a means for propaganda and misinformation.

Although much research has been conducted to investigate how social media shapes the conflict narratives, how gender might influence lexical choice in the digital landscape

remains underresearched. Addressing this gendered language issue is important because gender can shape how political and conflict discourse is framed. Existing research has indeed well-documented how men and women communicate in online political discussions (Pedersen & Smithson, 2013; Thelwall & Wilkinson, 2010), however data-driven analyses of how gender construct the conflict narrative, such as the Israel-Palestine conflict, are still surprisingly scarce (see also Carneiro et al., 2020; Hu & Kearney, 2021; Thelwall & Wilkinson, 2010). By investigating the communication style, we can understand how men and women frame issues differently and express authority, with the hope that it may open up possibilities to amplify underrepresented voices and promote more inclusive ways toward global peace.

This study aims to address this gap by applying CADS to explore how male and female Twitter/X users construct their narratives about the Israel-Palestinian conflict. It focuses on answering the following question: How do male and female Twitter/X users differ in their lexical framing of the Israel-Palestinian conflict?

Literature Review
Corpus Assisted Discourse Analysis

Corpus-assisted discourse analysis (CADS) is a research approach that combines corpus linguistics and discourse analysis to study language as a social action. Ancarno (2020) describes CADS as a potential for studying language in context that "combines methods of text analysis commonly perceived as qualitative and quantitative [and can] reconcile close linguistic analyses with the more broad-ranging analyses made possible" through corpus methods (pp. 165-166). While traditional critical discourse analysis has successfully managed to handle a small pile of materials to reveal the ideology within the text, one might not be sure the findings can show a wider pattern because researchers may choose dramatic examples that only support the argument they want to make. Corpus linguistics allows researchers to systematically analyze large body of texts, and with the help of computer software, they can analyze patterns more systematically and more objectively. As Gillings et al. (2023) say, "Size does not necessarily matter, but it inspires confidence" (p. 6).

Baker (2023) provides a step-by-step guide to using corpora in discourse analysis, from choosing the topic for corpus building to the way to interpret the linguistic pattern (i.e., frequency list, concordance list, collocation list, and keyness) found in the corpus. In her CADS on appraising feedback stance situated in higher education, Van Poucke (2025) demonstrates how CADS revealed distinct patterns on how feedback in university life should be communicated, where students used more emotion-charged language to process feedback, suggesting that they want feedback that is empathetic, clear, and doable. By contrast, academic research articles discussed the topic with a more cautious and evaluative tone, with the use of hedging and recommended practice. Similarly, Pei and Cheng's (2024) CADS on how 5G is portrayed in Chinese and British press found that Chinese press show more optimism toward the technology and support their govetnment promotion of 5G, while British media coverage shows more scepticism, claiming that the technology might compromise their geopolitical and security. These studies demonstrate that CADS has been widely used to analyze and interpret how linguistic patterns can construct social meanings and structure.
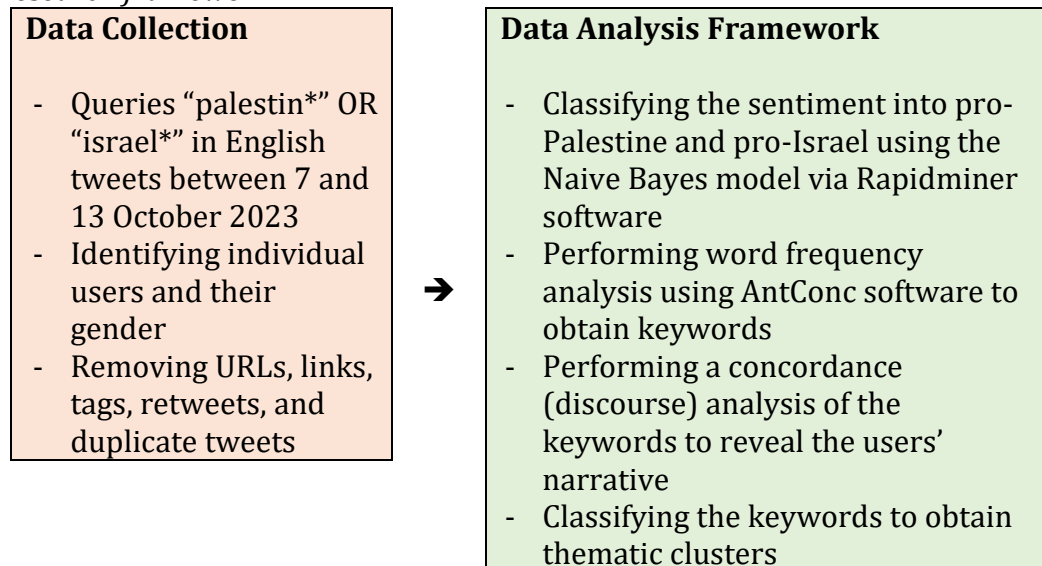
Gendered Lexical Choices

Research on gendered language investigates how lexical choices help construct, reproduce, and challenge the ideology within social practice (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2020). When we refer to someone in that role as a "policeman," the lexical choice frames the position as normatively male and can implicitly marginalize non-male officers (James & Rawlins, 2024). By contrast, when we use the term "police officer," we send a signal that anyone, regardless of their gender, can count as occupying that position. Likewise, the study of online political discourse by Karami et al. (2022) observed a prevalent gap, with women's tweets being more emotionally charged, whereas men's tweets mainly focused on policy and strategic considerations. Similarly, Hu and Kearney (2021) found that women's political tweets were more personal and community-oriented (i.e., using personal pronouns "I/me" and collective pronoun "we/us" and expressive with extensive use of hashtags, men's tweets were more direct by the use of mentions and less exclamation marks. This suggests that men's and women's language use frequently intertwine around contrastive communicative styles, with women tending to be more expressive and men tending to be more informational and assertive.

Methods

In this section, we formulated a framework that includes two parts: (1) data collection, including tweet crawling, gender identification, and data preprocessing, (2) data analysis, including sentiment analysis, thematic analysis and concordance analysis to reveal the narrative construction behind the users' discourse (Fig. 1).

Figure 1
Research framework

Data Collection	Data Analysis Framework
- Queries "palestin*" OR "israel*" in English tweets between 7 and 13 October 2023 - Identifying individual users and their gender - Removing URLs, links, tags, retweets, and duplicate tweets	- Classifying the sentiment into pro-Palestine and pro-Israel using the Naive Bayes model via Rapidminer software - Performing word frequency analysis using AntConc software to obtain keywords - Performing a concordance (discourse) analysis of the keywords to reveal the users' narrative - Classifying the keywords to obtain thematic clusters

The present study adopts corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) for two main reasons. First, Twitter/X produces big linguistic data in the form of posts in a relatively timely manner; therefore, the use of corpus tools allows us to manage the large data by identifying patterns, such as frequent words, phrases, and collocations more efficiently (Baker, 2023). Second, while numbers of words may show what is common in the text, they do not sufficiently explain how language expresses implied meanings; therefore, a discourse analysis is helpful to understand how tweets carry ideological narratives

(Fairclough, 2015). By combining both methods, we are able to move beyond identified-language patterns in male and female users' tweets to interpret how these gendered discourse frames the conflict.

The corpus of this study comprises public tweets from 7 to 13 October 2023, a period when the conflict escalated. Tweets were retrieved via Twitter API using a Boolean query ("Israel*") AND ("Palestin*") and limited to English-language content with the **lang:en** parameter. The wildcard asterisk (*) is used to allow all relevant morphological variants, for example, Israel**i**, Israel**is**, Palestin**e**, Palestin**ian** or Palestin**ians** were captured. After automated deduplication and language verification process, we obtained 2,105 tweets.

In the preprocessing stage, we used Python 3.1.1 with spaCy 3.6 to remove URLs, hashtags, mentions, emojis, and HTML entities. After that, we converted all tokens into lower-case, tokenized the text with the **en_core_web_sm** model, and filtered out standard English stop-words and other noise tokens (such as rt, amp).

To ensure that the tweets were made by real humans rather than automated output (e.g. bots), we manually checked all user profiles. An account was retained only if it met the following criteria: (i) at least ten lifetime tweets, (ii) no highly repetitive postings or template-style postings, and (iii) either having at least ten followers or following at least ten accounts. Profiles failing all these criteria were removed from the dataset (Martinc et al., 2021), leaving 1,957 tweets (39,761 tokens).

Then we determined the user's gender through three manual cues: (i) culturally gendered-first name, (ii) profile pictures, and (iii) thematic content signaling gendered roles or activities. Where all these cues met, for example, a woman's photograph, a culturally feminine first name, and a post centering around women's daily lives, the account was coded female. If the account had no photograph or was ambiguous, we checked for the other two cues. Accounts that did not meet the cues were excluded from analysis. An analogous procedure was applied for male coding. This procedure left the working corpus totaling 1,950 tweets or approximately 39,531 total tokens.

To determine the users' stance, we classified the sentiment using a multinomial Naive Bayes (MNB) model algorithm (McCallum & Nigam, 1998). First, we trained the model on a manually curated corpus: 200 labelled with 'pro-Israel' and 200 'pro-Palestine'. However, because tweets with a neutral stance were hardly found, we only provided 100 tweets labelled with 'neutral'. Two coders (researchers 1 and 2) annotated the data. Subsequent adjudication reduced the disagreement to five percent and yielded an inter-coder reliability of $\kappa = 0.87$.

To classify the users' stance, all modelling was performed with RapidMiner 9.10, an open-source tool for data analysis and machine learning. We used this software because it does not require high coding writing skills to perform certain computational analysis (Hofmann & Klinkenberg, 2014). After we performed the sentiment analysis, neutral tweets were removed because they did not reflect stance, resulting in 1,118 pro-Palestine and 776 pro-Israel tweets for further analysis.

After extracting the tweet attributes for pro-Israel and pro-Palestine users, we performed a word frequency analysis in AntConc to identify the lexical items that most frequently occur in both male and female users' tweets (Anthony, 2004). From each sub-corpus, we retained the twenty most frequent lemmas and applied log-ratio ≥ 1.0 so that only lemmas with at least four occurrences entered the next stage of analysis (Pojanapunya & Todd, 2018).

To ensure comparability between two gendered sub-corpora, we first normalized counts to occurrences per 10,000 tokens, then performed a log-likelihood test to each

candidate lemma (LL ≥ 6.63, p <.01) and only retained those that met the threshold to mitigate the unequal keyword list sizes and maintain the reliability of the analysis (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). The keyword lists for pro-Israel and pro-Palestine Twitter/X users by gender are presented in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

Table 1
Top Twenty Words for the Lexical Choice of Pro-Israel Twitter/X Users by Gender

Male				Female			
Word	**Freq**	**LL**	**Sig.**	**Word**	**Freq**	**LL**	**Sig.**
hamas	87	45.3	*	hamas	20	45.3	*
people	59	24.6	*	people	17	24.6	*
support	35	14.7	*	support	10	14.7	*
jews	29	40.2	*	peace	7	8.0	*
war	24	33.3	*	country	6	12.5	*
land	23	31.9	*	attack	5	7.7	*
gaza	21	29.1	*	bad	5	11.0	*
civilians	19	26.3	*	care	5	11.0	*
iran	19	26.3	*	children	5	11.0	*
terrorist	19	10.6	*	innocent	5	11.0	*
terrorists	19	26.3	*	israeli	5	11.0	*
state	17	23.6	*	palestinian	5	11.0	*
against	16	7.7	*	against	4	7.5	*
attack	16	7.7	*	conflict	4	7.5	*
stand	16	21.9	*	god	4	7.5	*
peace	15	8.0	*	money	4	8.9	*
conflict	14	7.5	*	name	4	8.9	*
evil	14	19.0	*	need	4	8.9	*
free	14	19.0	*	terrorist	4	10.6	*
god	14	7.5	*	ukraine	4	8.9	*

Table 2
Top Twenty Words for the Lexical Choice of Pro-Palestine Twitter/X Users by Gender

Male				Female			
Word	**Freq**	**LL**	**Sig.**	**Word**	**Freq**	**LL**	**Sig.**
people	182	75.3	*	people	146	68.2	*
support	100	55.1	*	support	98	55.1	*
hamas	98	54.6	*	free	75	45.1	*
palestinians	98	54.6	*	palestinians	50	30.5	*
free	73	45.2	*	supporting	43	28.3	*
war	66	40.1	*	genocide	42	28.0	*
land	61	38.2	*	stand	42	28.0	*
against	57	36.5	*	years	42	28.0	*
world	57	36.2	*	hamas	40	26.7	*
conflict	52	34.0	*	palestinian	39	26.0	*
gaza	52	34.0	*	land	36	23.5	*
years	48	32.1	*	media	33	20.4	*
palestinian	47	31.8	*	war	32	19.5	*
genocide	44	29.4	*	say	31	18.7	*

ukraine	43	29.0	*	everyone	30	17.8	*
media	40	26.0	*	gaza	30	17.8	*
state	40	26.0	*	against	29	16.9	*
innocent	39	25.2	*	innocent	29	16.9	*
stand	39	25.2	*	right	29	16.9	*
right	37	23.7	*	time	29	16.9	*

Note: * indicates a log-likelihood score of ≥6.63 (p<.01), signifying that each keyword's over-representation in its gendered sub-corpus is statistically significant, thus not confounded by corpus-size discrepancy (McEnery & Hardie, 2012).

After that, we clustered the keywords to identify the framing of the tweets using Benford and Snow's (2000) diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational model. We input keywords one by one in AntConc's KWIC feature and extracted concordance lines with a context size of 10 tokens both to the right and to the left, to provide sufficient qualitative context. We performed this step iteratively to classify the keywords into thematic clusters (see De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2020). The thematic cluster, keyword signals, and interpretation are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3
Keyword Signals and Thematic Clusters in Pro-Israel Twitter/X Users by Gender

Gender	Cluster	Keyword signals	Interpretation
Male	politics and security	against, attack, conflict, evil, hamas, iran, terrorist(s), war	frames the threat actors and narrative of "war against terrorism" to make the defensive action legitimate
	identity	god, jews, people, stand	emphasizes religious identity and moral stance
	territory	free, gaza, land, state	frames the conflict on territorial rights
Female	stability	against, attack, conflict, country, need, terrorist, ukraine	concerns on domestic security and global order
	peace	peace, people, support	promotes non-defensive solutions and humanitarian aid.
	empathy & victimhood	bad, care, children, innocent	highlights on civilian suffering to arouse sympathy

Table 4
Keyword Signals and Thematic Clusters in Pro-Palestine Twitter/X Users by Gender

Gender	Cluster	Keyword signals	Interpretation
Male	geopolitics	media, ukraine, world, state	frames Palestine within a global context and criticizes media bias
	liberation & agency	against, free, support, stand	calls for solidarity and resistance
	historical perspectives	genocide, land, years	highlights long-term dispossession and frames the conflict as systematic oppression
Female	humanitarian issues	people, innocent, everyone, stand	focuses on human suffering regardless of identity
	injustice	genocide, right, years, against	uses legal-moral lexicons to frame conflict as systematic oppression
	media representation	media, say, war	criticizes media bias and calls for a counter narrative

Results and Discussion

In this section, we present the detailed analysis of the gendered lexical choices used by pro-Israel and pro-Palestine Twitter/X users.

Lexical Choices of Pro-Israel Twitter/X Users

Our analysis reveals shared lexical choices between pro-Israel male and female Twitter/X users. Both users construct their narratives around a shared morality and security concern. The frequent occurrences of lemmas *attack*, *conflict*, *terrorist*, and *against* frame the ongoing conflict as a *war on terror*. These tweets frequently read like brief situation reports, such as *Another terrorist attack against civilians; we defense ourselves*. The use of words like attack and conflict emphasizes the constant threats.

While *terrorist* assigns clear blame, *against* highlights Israel's active resistance. In addition to describing the treats, both men and women also use words that frame a call for solidarity and action. The lemma like *people* and *god* reflects a sense of shared identity. References to *people* frame Israel as the victim group, while acknowledging wider human rights discourse. Meanwhile, references to *god* serve a covenantal dimension, suggesting that national defense is not only morally imperative, but also divinely encouraged.

Building on the shared narrative between pro-Israel male and female Twitter/X users, our closer look into the lemma *terrorist* found that it frequently collocates with *hamas* as the key actor in the conflict. Both genders commonly associate Hamas with negative connotations by using language that implies accusation and blame. There is a general agreement that views Hamas as a radical organization posing security threats. However, the way in which each gender expresses this view is different.

As seen in Figure 2, females often employ indirect language to criticize Hamas by using comparisons rather than direct labels. For instance, they compare Hamas to ISIS or refer

to it with metaphors *a sick depraved arm of Iran*. On the contrary, males tend to express intense criticism more straightforwardly by referring Hamas as terrorists, as presented in Figure 3. An example of such direct expression might be, "Hamas is a terrorist group, intent on destroying the Jewish population."

defend Israel always. Make NO Mistake.	**Hamas is**	NOT Palestine. Hamas is a sick deprived arm of Irans'
Make No mistake Hamas is not Palestine.	**Hamas is**	a sick deprived arm of Irans' irrational hatred of Jews.
the innocent civilians from Israel and Palestine.	**Hamas is**	trying to emulate ISIS However the BIG difference is

Figure 2. Pro-Israel Female Twitter/X Users' Description of Hamas

Just to clarify what is happening is Israel	**Hamas is**	a terrorist group Hamas only has one goal to wipe out
Hamas stop making it a Palestine/Israel situation	**Hamas is**	a terrorist organization trying to kill anyone who isn't
I hope Israel will do what is necessary against them.	**Hamas is**	a terrorist organisation. That's all there's needed to
Israel has the right to defend Hamas isnot Palestine	**Hamas is**	a radical ideal group. Please explain to me why so
for American dissidents that was the end of it. What	**Hamas is**	doing is NOT liberation. They are murderers, terrorists
they own something God gave the Land to Israel.	**Hamas is**	just as bad as ISIS Terrorism is not Jihad it's against

Figure 3. Pro-Israel Male Twitter/X Users' Description of Hamas

Lexical Choice of Pro-Israel Male Twitter/X Users

Based on the information presented in Table 1, we obtain the fact that in the Twitter/X discourse around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, male users frame the conflict in three main areas: politics, identity, and territory.

<u>*Politics and Security*</u>

Our analysis shows that males focus mainly on political themes. They frequently use terms like *terrorist* and *war*, often in connection with discussions about Hamas. The use of words like *state* and *Iran* in these discussions highlights political coalitions and geopolitical factors. The sample tweets (1) and (2) reveal the narrative.

[1] "<u>Palestine's **terrorist** attacks against Israel affirms this. Stop repeating Hamas propaganda.</u>"

[2] "<u>Gaza with their government **Hamas** and the West Bank with a different government. There is no Palestine. That is Israel's deadname.</u>"

[3] "<u>Who opened the floodgates and supplied **Iran** to the tune of $100+ billion Obama. Biden. Valerie Jarrett. The Iran Deal. This situation is far beyond just Israel and Palestine.</u>"

Tweet [1] shows that Israel proponents view Hamas actions as aggressive and illegitimate and, further, label them as terrorists. Their lexical choce suggests that they frame the conflict in terms of security and political aggression. Tweet [2] demonstrates a view on the political complexities within the Palestinian territories. It also denies the idea of Palestine as a sovereign state and rejects the status of Palestine and its governance structures. Additionally, tweet [3] suggests that the conflict is not merely regionally triggered but also affected by external factors, especially the involvement of Iran, framing that the issue is even more complicated and involves global politics and diplomacy.

<u>*Identity*</u>

Words such as *Jew*, *land*, and *Iran* are also frequently used to express identity. These words do more than just describe; they carry strong feelings of connection to a group, and sometimes opposition against others. This is evident in the tweets below.

[4] "<u>There are two groups of **Islamists** in **Jewish** land that are attacking Jews.</u>"

[5] "<u>Do you support Iran and Muslim terrorists who want to kill every **Jew** in Israel.</u>"

Tweet [4] describes that the attack is not only on the Jewish land, but also on Jewish identity. By using terms like *Jewish land*, the tweet implies an exclusive Jewish right to the land, which can overshadow the historical complexity and the claims of other groups in the region. Additionally, the reference to *Islamists* attacking suggests a religious aspect to the conflict that to some extent can intensify religious tensions. Also, when the word *Iran* is used in these discussions, it goes beyond referring to the country itself. It symbolizes a great, opposing power. In tweet [5], Iran is portrayed as an enemy, standing against the Jewish identity. This tweet sets up a clear identity between Iranians and Jews in opposition, describing Iran as a threat to Jewish existence in Israel.

Territory

The focus on land and territory is also prevalent, as evidenced by the frequent occurrence of words like *land*, *Gaza*, and *country*. The emphasis on territory is clearly reflected in several tweets:

[6] "Israel gave them **Gaza**. Gaza then attacked Israel on October 7th."

[7] "Since then boarders of **land** that people who identify as Palestinians can rule was growing. Propaganda vs reality see."

[8] "First of all there is no country called Palestine. Secondly the **land** you live in Israel was given to Abraham and his descendants."

Tweet [6] indicates a view of Gaza as a territory given by Israel to the Palestinians, but then Gaza acted antagonistically. This view suggests the concept of territorial control and the unexpected actions that follow such control. Also, in tweet [7], the users skepticize about the expansion of land under the Palestinian control. This tweet indicates a belief that the actual territorial control by Palestinians is being exaggerated and which results in intensifying the debate over the authenticity of territorial claims. Furthermore, tweet [8] strongly rejects the idea of a Palestinian state and emphasizes a historical claim to the land. This claim is framed by affirming a deep-rooted historical connection of the Jewish to the land that they believe in.

Lexical Choice of Pro-Israel Female Twitter/X Users

Our analysis found that pro-Israel female Twitter/X users frame their narratives of the Israel-Palestine conflict on themes of stability, empathy, and victims.

Stability and Safety

The pro-Israel female Twitter/X users put stability as their main concern. They are not only referring to the need for peace and the end of conflict. They are also considering the wider effects of the conflict, which include social, political, and economic aspects. For instance, they think about how the conflict influences society, how it affects relationships between different groups, and what the financial costs of the conflict.

[9] "It seems like it frees up a lot of money to **attack** Israel."

[10] "If any other country had experienced the same **terrorist attack**, no one would be blaming them, but since it is Israel they get blamed for the actions of Hamas and told they deserve it."

[11] "If you stay silent when Israel is under **attack**, stay fucking silent when Israel **defends** itself."

Tweet [9] describes the financial costs of the conflict. The user questions the allocation of resources spent on the conflict and suggests that the funds used might be better used elsewhere. Tweet [10] expresses their frustration about how Israel is perceived in the conflict. This tweet suggests there is an international bias against Israel, highlighting a

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sense of injustice in global narratives about the conflict. In addition, tweet [11] voices the need for fairness in opinions about the conflict. It challenges what is seen as a double standard in reactions to the conflict and advocates for equal judgment in evaluating both sides.

Peace and Support

The pro-Israel female Twitter/X users also put peace and support as their main concerns. The use of the word *peace* highlights a significant aspiration for resolving the conflict.

[12]"What Israel has done we pray for **peace** God's will be done."

The tweet shows a desire for peace and resolution in the Israel-Palestine conflict. It goes beyond arguing about who is right or wrong and instead hopes for the end of the conflict. This tweet talks about peace as something both sides should work towards together. It suggests that peace is not just about stopping the war, but also about both sides understanding and living in peace with each other.

Empathy and Victimhood

The theme of empathy and victimhood is also prevalent in female users' tweets. Words such as *care*, *children*, and *innocent* are used frequently to arouse empathy for those impacted by the conflict and focus their concern for victims.

[12]"Notice the only **babies** Democrats care about are in Palestine and Ukraine or illegals. They don't care if Ukrainians blast "innocent Russians"? They don't care about **kids** in Israel. They certainly don't give a crap about American children or they wouldn't be only handing out."

[13]"I don't support anyone who uses human **children** as shields Palestine need to wake up to the awful people running their country Let Israel destroy Hamas for you to live your life peacefully."

[14]"**Innocent** lives have been slaughtered on both sides. The ppl supporting what Palestine is doing is supporting death of **children** and families. Why is it so bad to want Palestine to stop what they are doing to Israel Are so many of you that desensitized to support the horrendous."

In tweet [12], the female users criticize the politicians' hypocrisy about the conflict. They claim that certain groups, like Palestinian and Ukrainian children, receive more attention compared to Russian and Israeli children. Tweet [13] expresses their concerns toward the violation of humanitarian norms in the conflict by accusing Hamas of using children as shields. They argue that Palestinians will only live peacefully if Hamas is eliminated. Further concern is shown in tweet [13] by referring to the innocent lives on both sides and suggesting that the support for both conflicting parties indirectly supports the harm to civilians and children.

Lexical Choice of Pro-Palestine Twitter/X Users

In our analysis, we found that both male and female pro-Palestinian Twitter/X users use common lexical items, such as *genocide*, *against*, *right*, *people*, *innocent*, *support*, *land*, and *years* to show the long-standing injustice experienced by Palestinians. The prevalent use of lemma *genocide* indicates their condemnation of Israel's immoral actions. This word choice frames that pro-Palestinian users view the conflict as a systematic action to erase the existence of a nation. Similarly, the lemmas *innocent*, *support*, and *people* are used to arouse sympathy by portraying Palestinians as the victims of a much larger

geopolitical struggle. Furthermore, the frequent occurrence of lemmas *right* and *against* portrays the injustice the Palestinians experienced in claiming their legal entitlement. These lexical choices indicate that both pro-Palestine male and female Twitter/X users frame Palestinians as the victims and people experiencing systematic injustice.

Our closer look into the word *support* found that it also frequently collocates with *hamas*. Male users often portray Hamas as the symbol of Palestinian resistance against Israel's aggression, as opposed to the pro-Israel groups that frame them as terrorists. They frame Hamas as a response to "the crimes committed by Israel in Palestine for 75 years" as presented in Figure 4. Conversely, female users tend to frame Hamas in humanitarian terms by emphasizing the importance of promoting a non-aggressive response for the sake of saving innocent lives and conflict resolution, as seen in the tweet "Just because you support the Free Palestine does not mean you support Hamas."

Figure 4
Pro-Palestine Male Twitter/X Users' Description of Hamas

they are thieves and we want to regain our land.	Hamas	is not a terrorist organization. it has only responded to all the
if you support Palestine you support	Hamas	if you support Israel you support genocide
first thing I thought when the	Hamas	retaliated against Israel was how Israel was gonna use it as an
Israel killed 'em and arrested and jailed 'em	Hamas	trying to get Palestine's rights
the Palestine ppl and their struggle and support	Hamas	and I say down with Israel long live fully independent Palestine
Israel funded backed and propped up	Hamas	to dismantle the government in Palestine in order to paint all of

Figure 5
Pro-Palestine Female Twitter/X Users' Description of Hamas

It is entirely possible to condemn	Hamas	brutal attack yet acknowledges the brutality that Palestine has
Innocent ppl are trapped. They are not	Hamas.	They are families trying to survive. I better not go to church on
Free Palestine does not mean you support	Hamas	Nor does it mean you want harm to Israel & the Jewish

In the following section, we present the differences in pro-Palestine male and female Twitter/X users' tweets. Based on Table 2, it is evident that in male tweets, words such as *Hamas*, *Palestinian*, *free*, *war*, *land*, *against*, *world*, and *conflict* are prevalent. This suggests that they focus their discussions about the Palestine-Israel conflict on the political and territorial aspects of the conflict and a global call for supporting Palestinians against Israel's occupation. As for female tweets, they frequently use words such as *free*, *Palestinian*, *supporting*, *genocide*, *stand*, and *Hamas*. The prevalence of words such as *genocide* and *years* suggests deep concern for the long suffering and injustices faced by Palestinians.

Lexical Choice of Pro-Palestine Male Twitter/X Users
Our analysis found that pro-Palestine male Twitter/X users' tweets frame the Israel-Palestine conflict on geopolitics, historical perspectives, and liberation.

<u>*Geopolitics*</u>
The frequent occurrence of words such as *war*, *free*, and *against* shows their concerns about the political situation. Also, the words such as *land*, *world*, and *conflict* show their geographical concerns. These words show pro-Palestine male Twitter/X users' concerns on the geopolitical aspect of the conflict as shown in the following tweets.
[14] "<u>The bigger picture clearly shows that Israel is guilty of war crimes against humanity. Yet the west and their governments continue to support a **nation** who are the real terrorists.</u>"

[15]"The world we are living in is ruled by hypocrites who care for only what they gain not for the poor man. Free Palestinians. Palestine is **country** that has been there before the US and the fake NATO and the Oppressors Israel."

[16]"Russia must leave Ukraine alone but apartheid **state** of Israel should be allowed to continue its never ending scrutinization and war crimes against Palestine."

[17]"Search Nakba 750000 Palestinians who lived on 77 of the **land** in Palestine which later became Israel were expelled from their **homes** result of the war."

[18]"There is decades of videos and photos of dead Palestinian children and babies we can show. Endless. We've shown the proof and the **world** stood silent."

[19]"The only way that this conflict is going to end is if Israel stops the **colonization** and robbing of resources of Palestine and its people."

In tweet [14], the pro-Palestine male Twitter/X users emphasize the severity of the conflict by mentioning "war crime against humanity." This tweet signifies their view that Israel's actions are not only abusive but also violate universal humanitarian norms. Their reference to "the west and their government" and the US and NATO asserts their belief in the failure of the global powers to mitigate the long-standing conflict and, in fact, intensifying the conflict by continuing to provide support to Israel for attacking Gaza, as shown in tweet [15]. The tweets also criticize big political powers' double standard regarding aggression by comparing Ukraine and Palestine, as shown by the frequent occurrences of the word "Ukraine" in the tweet [16]. They question the world's decision to condemn Russia's actions in Ukraine while remaining silent and overlooking similar actions by Israel in Palestine. Male users also mention the Nakba, as shown in tweet [17], which refers to an event where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were expelled from their homeland during the establishment of Israeli settlements. The mention of this geographical tragedy indicates that this conflict has been deeply rooted in the history of the two countries, which has harmed civilians, as shown in tweet [18]. However, despite the clear evidence, the world remains silent and unable to (or perhaps unwilling to) end the humanitarian crisis and Israel's colonization of Palestinian land (tweet 19).

Historical Perspectives

In our analysis, historical reference has also been prevalent in the pro-Palestine male Twitter/X users' tweets, evidenced by the frequent occurrence of words such as *years*, *genocide*, and *state* in the following tweets.

[20] "**20 years** and the people of Gaza have been besieged by the occupation soldiers."

[21] "Palestine defend themselves after **75 years** of violence and oppression violence terrorists?"

[22] "Israel has been acting as a terrorist state brutalizing Palestinians for **decades**. They've colonized land ruthlessly murdered countless civilians and act as if they're the victim when Palestine responds."

The frequent mentions of periods like "20 years" and "75 years" among pro-Palestine male Twitter/X users highlight the long-term suffering of Palestinians under Israel's colonization (tweets [20] and [21]). They challenge the global view of Israel as the main victim and describe Israel's actions and policies over the years in Palestine as severe, oppressive, and immoral (tweet [22]). They suggest that Israel's actions in Palestine are not just a recent reaction against Hamas but part of a long history of colonizing and oppressing the Palestinians since the Nakba.

Liberation and Agency

Liberation is also the key theme in the narrative of pro-Palestine male Twitter/X users. They primarily focus on the desire for Palestinian independence from Israeli control, as evidenced by the frequent use of words like *free* and *against*.

[23]"It's very disappointing to see the world suddenly care about humanity. **Where was everyone** when Israel invaded Palestine when they took away their land when they took the lives of the people when they committed inhumane acts of terrorism why are people against **the oppressed**."

[24]"**Free Palestine** from Israeli occupation stop the war. This is genocide."

Tweet [23] illustrates males' disappointment as shown by the question of *where was everyone* in tweet [23]. This tweet highlights their criticism of the world's indifference to Palestinian struggles and demands for immediate action against the humanitarian crisis and human rights violations. Tweet [24] calls for the freedom of Palestine from what it describes as *Israeli occupation* and labels the situation as genocide. The user expresses his urgent plea for world intervention and supports the narratives of human right violations under Israeli occupation. This narrative does express more than just political stances; it demands the world's re-evaluation of the moral and ethical responsibilities towards Palestine.

Lexical Choice of Pro-Palestine Female Twitter/X Users

Based on our analysis, the lexical choices of pro-Palestine female Twitter/X users center around empathy, mainly focusing on humanitarian issues, perceptions of injustice, and how media portray the conflict.

Humanitarian Issue

This theme focuses on the concern for the Palestinian suffering and the support for action to address the violence and injustice. Tweets relevant to this theme often use words like *people*, *support*, *genocide*, and *stand*.

[25]"You can say Free Palestine and also feel bad for the **innocent people** in Israel… You can stand for just peace in general. That's possible y'al Lmao."

[26]"Israel is committing a **genocide** in Palestine right now and the media + western leaders are literally letting this slip beyond appalled and shocked."

[27] "I better not go to church on Sunday & hear them talk about **praying** for Israel. Pray for **peace** how are you supporting those who hate Jesus Pray for Palestine."

In tweet [25], the user discusses the possibility of supporting Palestinian freedom while also wishing peace for the parties involved, including Israelis. This shows a balanced view that supports justice and peace for all. In tweet [26], the user condemns Israel for committing genocide against Palestinians and criticizes media and world leaders for being indifference about the atrocities. This tweet reflects the user's frustration with the global community's failure in moral obligations. In tweet [27], the user challenges moral and religious hypocrisy by questioning the alignment of the teachings of peace with support for Israel in the context of violence against Palestinians. This tweet exercises a religious setting to critique the inconsistency between religious teaching of peace and the actions supported by certain religious communities.

Perceptions of Injustice

The pro-Palestine female Twitter/X users also express a sense of moral outrage and frame the situation with words such as *free*, *against*, and *right*.

[28]"Israel colonized Palestine & has been committing atrocious war crimes against them & Palestinians **deserve to be free** by any means."

[29]"It's **truly shocking to me** how fierce the propaganda against Palestine is. Like where was this outrage when Israel has been killing innocent Palestinians for many years."

[30]"Let's not forget **the root cause of the problem** Israel is occupying Palestine They are daily violating Palestinian rights oppressing Palestinians constantly Israel is a monster."

Tweets above emphasize the urgency of addressing Palestinian suffering and rights. In tweet [28], the user challenges common misunderstandings about the conflict as merely a religious or ethnic conflict. They suggest that Palestinian actions are responses to long-standing oppression by Israel. The call for Palestinian freedom *by any means* highlights a strong demand for freedom and justice. Tweet [29] addresses the biased narrative presented in media coverage, observing an inconsistency in the reaction to the violence against Palestinians compared to other groups. The user is disgusted with the media that overlooks the Palestinians' long-standing suffering. In tweet [30], the user labels Israel as an *occupier* and *monster*, words that strongly describe the malevolence of Israeli policies towards Palestinians.

Media Representation

Pro-Palestine female Twitter/X users also discuss media representation in their framing of the conflict. The discourse focuses on their critique of the media roles and public figures in portraying the conflict as bias, as shown in the following tweets.

[31] "Israel is currently experiencing what Palestine was for a long time. However, celebrities were either neutral or chose not to speak out and the **media coverage** did not show enough. The amount of celebrities showing support now is insane."

[32] "Seeing **the news** about Israel and Palestine makes me remember the day I woke up and found out Russia was invading Ukraine and how people tried to say it was justified."

[33] "Naur cuz Israel been doing this to Palestine all this time but now that Palestine is fighting back these **celebrities** start reposting on IG like we stand with Israel."

The tweets above suggest a deep mistrust of media bias among pro-Palestine female Twitter/X users. In tweet [31], the user perceived the inconsistencies that celebrities and media show about the Israel-Palestine conflict. Celebrities and media are irritated with what the Israeli are experiencing and remain silent when Palestine experienced immoral violence. Users show their great concern about unequal support given by the media and celebrities when the conflict escalates. Tweet [32] compares the media's reaction to the Israel-Palestine conflict with international conflicts, like the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The user suggests that the media applied a double standard in its coverage by justifying certain conflicts while condemning others, depending on the parties involved. Tweet [33] criticizes the sudden shift in celebrity and media support for Israel when Palestine responds to Israel's aggression. The user observes the media's sympathy for Israel when it faces retaliation, while they overlook the long-standing grievances of Palestinians.

Discussion

Social media has significantly changed our digital landscape and influenced the way global discourse, including conflict, is discussed and contested. The Israel-Palestine

conflict which has received the most attention in the world today provides us an example of how digital landscape shift from merely entertainment and communication into battle ground to shape public opinions (Chaudhari & Pawar, 2021). Our analysis has revealed different lexical patterns and narratives in the Israel-Palestinian conflict discourse across gender. Both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine male users' discourse mainly frames the conflict on security and territorial narratives, claiming that both conflicting parties attempt to defend the security of the community, as shown by the use of lexical choices, such as *land*, *terrorist*, *attack*, and *war*. The pro-Israel male users legitimize Israel's defensive actions against violent acts by framing Hamas or Palestinians groups as threats. On the contrary, the pro-Palestinian male users frame the Palestinians' struggles to survive and claim justice from the threat to Palestinian identity and resistance against the Israeli colonization.

Both pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian male users use assertive language in condemning the other side and framing the conflict as a battle for survival and self-determination. In short, male discourse from both groups often frames the conflict as existential and justifiable, even divinely encouraged (Smith et al., 2024; Vodová & Svačinová, 2025). The confrontative and assertive nature of male discourse aligns with the expected cultural norms where masculinity is often associated with decisiveness, authority, and the willingness to engage in conflict (Agius et al., 2020; Fall, 2020). Male discourse that focuses mainly on territorial rights and labelling adversaries as "terrorists" strengthens the traditional notions of men as the defenders of national boundaries and cultural identities (Collins & Semino, 2024).

In contrast, female discourse frames the conflict in moral and ethical perspectives. While the pro-Israel female users frame the conflict as a justifiable act of defense to protect Israeli civilians, especially children, from the "terrorist" attack, the pro-Palestinian female users emphasize the humanitarian suffering of the Palestinian children and innocent people due to the long-standing violence and colonization. Lexical terms, such as *peace*, *children*, and *innocent*, frequently occur in their tweets to symbolize the cultural and social expectation that women should adopt more caring, nurturing, and relationship-focused styles in their communication (Palomo-Domínguez et al., 2023; Tannen, 1996). This is in line with Ogunyemi (2023), who found that female users are more likely to highlight humanitarian issues and ethical responsibilities in the digital landscape. In contrast to males who contrast their roles as defenders of territory and identity, females are more likely to construct themselves as advocates for the vulnerable within the conflict. This further echoes what Hu and Kearney (2021) found that "women were consistently more likely to use family and home-related words" (p. 15).

These lexical gendered differences to some extent align with perceived socio-cultural expectations of men as assertive figures who are willingly to defend national or group identities, and of women as caring and empathetic. However, as Hu and Kearney (2021) argue that this practice should not consider women as "subordinated in political discussion" (p. 14); rather, they should be viewed as more sensitive to discuss issues that potentially trigger conflict or tensions. Consequently, women utilize their linguistic skills to be more conversationally contributive while maintaining harmony and fostering more peaceful discourse in response to a humanitarian crisis. This study reveals that these social roles are not limited to day-to-day interactions but continue to shape digital interactions, with male users asserting their identities through combative rhetoric and female users portraying themselves as moral advocates (Martey et al., 2014; Meier et al., 2020; Vainapel et al., 2015).

We argue that these gendered lexical differences are not merely stylistic; instead, they shape how authority, identity, and legitimacy are presented and contested in the digital landscape. Men, with their assertiveness, tend to adopt language centered on ideology, power, and confrontation, which can fuel the tensions on digital spaces (Smith et al., 2024; Vodová & Svačinová, 2025). Women, on the other hand, adopt more inclusive and caring language, and highlights ethical responsibilities from both conflicting parties may encourage the conflict resolution everyone wishes for (Kouchaki & Kray, 2018; Martin, 2011; Meier et al., 2020).

Conclusion

The findings of this research indicate how gendered discourse is closely associated with ideological stances in digital conversations about the Israel-Palestine conflict. Male users, both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine, frequently frame conflicts in the perspective of security, territorial rights, and historical legitimacy, whereas female users emphasize humanitarian consequences and moral judgement. These differences highlight that online interactions are shaped not merely by political affiliation but by culturally and socially embedded norms of masculine and feminine communication. Despite this contribution, this study has several important limitations that need further inquiry. This study focuses on the seven-day window of the 7-13 October 2023 conflict, which only captures the initial surge of the conflict discourse. Further research can involve a longitudinal design with multiple escalation-de-escalation to thoroughly capture the narrative shifts over time. Also, this CADS study employed an abductive framework that, even though it may excel at extracting thematic clusters, may fail to address how these frames diffuse through social networks. Therefore, future research is also suggested to combine social-network analysis with corpus methods to achieve a more thorough understanding of the discourse. Furthermore, this study's sole reliance on text calls for a multimodal corpus method that includes analyzing images, memes, or emojis to obtain a clear description of how ideology is framed in different genders through verbal-visual analysis.

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