

FRAMING THE GAZA CRISIS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONING AND HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY IN PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH

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Abstract

The escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza post-October 2023 has prompted significant diplomatic repositioning within the Global South. This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the official press releases issued by the Foreign Offices of Pakistan and Bangladesh, focusing on the period between October and December 2023. Utilising Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model, the research investigates how these states operationalise language to contest hegemonic geopolitical narratives. Prioritising the identification of argumentative topoi over quantitative frequency and the deconstruction of "Us/Them" binaries, the methodology adopts a qualitative epistemological stance. The analysis reveals that Bangladesh pursues an UN-centred diplomacy rooted in universal human rights and its own anti-colonial history, while Pakistan leverages its leadership within the OIC to promote political and religious solidarity. What emerges is not uniformity but divergence in how postcolonial states navigate global crises. As per the findings, while claiming ethical leadership, each nation, alongside legal reasoning, uses humanitarian diplomacy to counter unequal global power structures. In time, this study amid modern disputes offers decision-makers a lens through which state narratives influence ideas of fairness and confront bias.

Keywords: Palestine, Israel, Gaza, South Asia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Critical Discourse Analysis

Introduction

While responding diplomatically to the Gaza crisis, Pakistan and Bangladesh represent a critical site of disputation, where these sovereign states navigate the intersection of complex regional dynamics and international legal norms. The official discourse of these South Asian states is constructed upon the anti-colonial resistance and foundation of historical solidarity; this is contrary to the Western media framing, which often prioritises "Orientalist" tropes and security-centric narratives.¹ The presence of "pro-Palestinian" sentiment is not the only research gap addressed here, but rather as a diplomatic tool, the exertion of specific linguistic instruments through which this sentiment is operationalised. This study moves beyond the surface-level summary to

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provide a deep-level account of discursive power dynamics, and also how these states utilise international law to "Other" and construct "Us vs. Them" binaries.²

Following the events of October 2023, the escalating Gaza crisis has initiated a transformative shift in global diplomatic communication, requiring a rigorous analysis of how the increasingly fractured geopolitical landscape articulately positions the sovereign states. While contemporary scholarship has extensively scrutinised the discursive strategies of major global powers and the Western media representations, the South Asian states' specific ideological contributions and linguistics remain significantly under-examined.³ Through the official Foreign Office press releases, the diplomatic responses of these two states represent a critical site of contestation where humanitarian concerns clash with ideological positioning.⁴

With the requirements of international law and multifaceted diplomacy, these states inhabit a distinctive discursive environment, balancing internal socio-political pressures. Instead of merely reflecting the regional sentiment, challenging the dominant frameworks⁵ ⁶ Islamabad's and Dhaka's official narratives function as sophisticated tools. While managing the multifaceted power imbalances,⁷ this study fills a considerable gap in the literature by employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to deconstruct how these countries advocate for Palestinian sovereignty by operationalising the specific language. By shifting the analytical focus away from reductive thematic labels and towards the nuanced construction of humanitarian and legal frames, this research illuminates the role of South Asian states in shaping an alternative discursive architecture within the Global South.⁸

Consequently, a discourse analysis of the official press releases available via each government's foreign office is imperative to understand how they respond to prevailing crises and articulate severe concerns against inhumane force. This research explores how South Asian states respond to the perilous Palestine-Israel conflict, specifically investigating the official responses Pakistan and Bangladesh employ to criticise the termination of human life in Gaza.⁹

A Peek into the Israel-Palestine Conflict

The Israel-Palestine conflict, rooted in the Ottoman Empire's collapse, involves complex social and political tensions that trace back to early 20th-century territorial disputes. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 sparked increased tensions as Jewish immigration to Palestine grew, resulting in clashes with the Arab population.¹⁰ After World War II, the 1947 UN Partition Plan aimed to divide Palestine into Jewish and Arab

states, leading to Israel's establishment and the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. This conflict displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, an event now known as "*Nakba*."

Several conflicts, including the Six-Day War (1967), the First *Intifada* (1987), and the Second *Intifada* (2000), have shaped geopolitical realities, deepening divisions.¹¹ Recent years have seen erratic violence and failed peace efforts led by international diplomacy. Nevertheless, since the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993 until today, there has not been any progress made due to the trust deficit among the parties involved, especially for Israel, whose settlements continue expanding.¹²

On October 7, 2023, Hamas's fighters launched a significant attack from Gaza into southern Israel, causing numerous deaths. Responding to that, the response of the Israeli military was intense. While challenging to achieve lasting peace, the complexity and hostility of this occurrence highlight the depth of the conflict.¹³

Pakistan and Bangladesh's Historical Stance

Pakistan and Bangladesh's discursive framing of the Gaza crisis, knowingly, the conflict must be situated within a profound historical refusal to recognise the State of Israel. The diplomatic stance of these states is deeply rooted in the post-colonial trajectories and foundational identities, not simply their contemporary policy choice.

Viewing it as a moral imperative for the emerging Muslim polity, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of the nation, clearly expressed a "solid support" for the Palestinian cause.¹⁴ Therefore, the non-recognition policy of the state of Israel is rooted in Pakistan's inception. As the state consistently drew parallels between the Kashmiri struggle and the Palestinian quest for self-determination, Pakistan's own territorial anxieties further solidified this ideological commitment.¹⁵ Pakistan, being a founding member of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), has historically leveraged its role as a "middle power"¹⁶ and leads multilateral condemnations of Israeli occupation. Within the *Ummah*, framing itself as a guardian of Islamic sanctity and regional stability in the face of professed Western-backed hostility.

On the contrary, Bangladesh's definitive stance is a constitutional commitment to global justice, which is the subsequent product of its 1971 Liberation War. Although Israel was among the first states to offer recognition to the nascent republic in April 1971, the leadership in Dhaka, aligning with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), firmly rejected the overture.¹⁷ This rejection was codified in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, where Article 25 mandates the state to "support oppressed

peoples throughout the world waging a just struggle against imperialism, colonialism or racialism.”⁸

Unlike Pakistan’s predominantly religious mediation, Bangladesh’s diplomatic lexicon is heavily inflected with “de-colonial” and legalistic rhetoric, viewing the Palestinian cause as the world’s final unfinished chapter of decolonisation.¹⁹ Drawing on its own historical memory of systemic oppression to advocate for a principled international order²⁰, Pakistan relies on OIC-mediated solidarity, and Bangladesh frequently anchors its discourse in UN-centred frameworks and universal human rights.

Discursive Power, Ideology, and the Geopolitics of Solidarity

The diplomatic communication requires a scholarly examination of moving beyond descriptive summary towards a critical deconstruction of how sovereign states navigate the nexus of linguistic representation, ideology, and power. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), an interdisciplinary paradigm, is central to this research that conceptualises language as a profound form of social practice and does not consider it as a neutral medium of communication.²¹ The official press releases issued by the Foreign Offices of Pakistan and Bangladesh function as strategic sites of “thematization,” within this framework, to align with a state’s broader ideological commitments and domestic legitimacy, where specific facets of a geopolitical crisis are foregrounded.²²

The Ideological Square and the Construction of the ‘Other’

Teun van Dijk’s Ideological Square Model (ISM) is the theoretical architecture of this study. The ISM functions through a binary of “positive self-presentation” and “negative other-presentation.”²³ Consistent with van Dijk, dominant discourses are structured to stress “Our” good actions and “Their” bad actions, whereas concurrently de-stressing “Our” faults and “Their” merits.²⁴ This discursive strategy is operationalised to challenge hegemonic Western narratives in the context of the Gaza crisis. For South Asian states, the “Self” is portrayed as a morally upright advocate for international justice, while the “Other” is frequently constructed as an anarchic antagonist.

This discursive binary is not only a linguistic assortment but a choice of “identity-mediated representation”.²⁵ The leadership within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) often mediates Pakistan’s identity, whereas Bangladesh’s narrative is rooted in a post-colonial resistance against illegitimate rule.²⁶ CDA deconstructs these binaries, reveals the “hidden assumptions” of the text specifically that the moral intervention from the Global South is needed, and indicates that the established international order has failed.

Topoi and the Rhetoric of Humanitarian Diplomacy

The use of *topoi* is a critical component of this discursive construction, argumentative "commonplace" or "building blocks" justifications used to make specific claims appear as "common sense".²⁷ In diplomatic texts, the *topos* of "International Law" and the *topos* of "Humanitarian Catastrophe" serve as the primary vehicles for asserting moral authority and stirring international emotion.

Scholarship on "Humanitarian Diplomacy" indicates that to gain "normative power", Middle Power states employ the language of universal human rights.²⁸ Pakistan and Bangladesh, by framing the Gaza crisis through the lens of "indiscriminate force" and "collective punishment," move the discourse from a bilateral conflict to a global moral calamity. To which Fairclough terms "intertextuality", the way one text incorporates or references elements of another to gain power.²⁹ These states, by citing United Nations (UN) resolutions (specifically Nos. 242 and 338), garb their ideological positioning in the attire of global legal consensus; those who fail to uphold these resolutions effectively are positioned as "Othering".

Contextual Setting: Post-Colonialism vs. Islamophobia

While focusing on the "contextual setting" of post-colonial solidarity literature, as noted by Said, the "Orient" is often subject to Western-centric framing whilst representing the conflicts.³⁰ Seeking to "decolonise" the narrative of the Israel-Palestine conflict, Pakistan and Bangladesh exercise their diplomatic discourse as a counter-narrative.

While the term "Islamophobia" may not be explicitly mentioned, it operates as a "latent contextual factor".³¹ The sense of a "double standard" in international response to Muslim suffering creates an implicit framework where the defence of Palestine becomes a defence of the "Self" against a perceived global bias. Therefore, the discourse is not merely about a territorial dispute; it is about the "power relations" between the Global North and the Global South, where language is used to negotiate a position of dignity and sovereignty.

Press Releases

Before presenting the empirical analysis, we briefly introduce press release research. Many press release researchers have studied how they were used as a news pre-formulating device. As Jacobs states, the sole purpose of a press release is to be retold as accurately as possible, ideally verbatim, in news reporting. Jacobs also argues that before

the emergence of the Internet, there was no such thing as a press release per se; instead, its fate depended on journalists' kindness, only if they agreed with the style and content chosen by the company's press release writer, the latter could get his work published.³² This process imposes strict constraints on authors, explaining the stable structure of many press releases and limiting creative freedom.³³ Modern press releases use strategic language and formats to maximise media uptake.³⁴

This research examined press releases related to the Israel-Palestine conflict in Pakistan and Bangladesh, issued between October and November 2023, to explore how these two states are trying to present the conflict as a legal accountability and humanitarian issue in an attempt to shape international perceptions.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Van Dijk defines Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as research that examines how social power, inequality, and dominance are enacted, reproduced, and resisted employing talk and text in social contexts. CDA highlights latent power in discourse, which shapes minds and controls dominant-class actions and promotes their interest. In addition, CDA applies specifically to political and social discourses to examine the language employed to justify certain occurrences, beliefs, and persons.³⁵

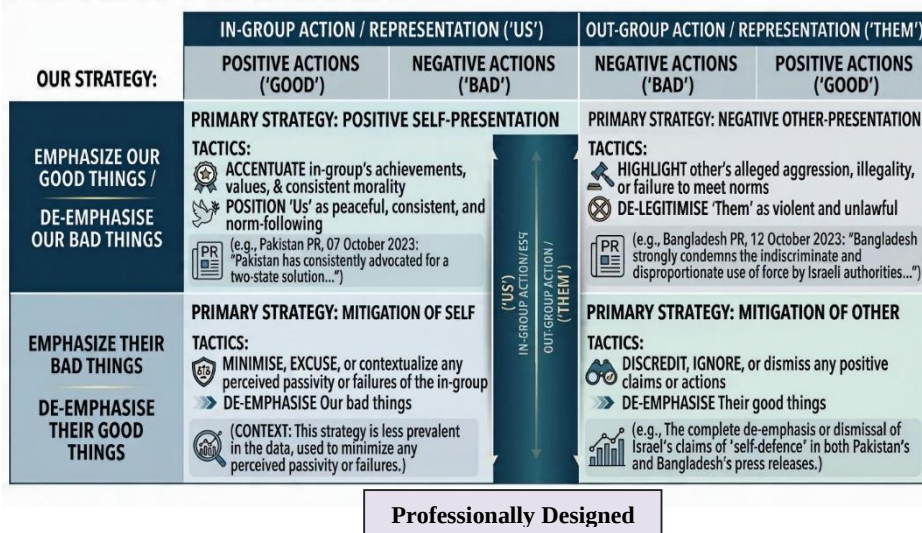
CDA also examines the existing ideological divides and confrontations. CDA emphasises how specific occurrences validate the beliefs of certain ideologies that may broaden societal gaps. CDA covers numerous approaches, but their emphasis is commonly on the "self-other schema" or "us versus them" dichotomy, which explores how some indigenous communities construct an affirmative view of "self" against a negative image of the "other." This narrative is a powerful means for legitimating particular ideological conduct, convictions, and emotions, van Dijk's Ideological Square Model focuses on this "self-other schema" approach.³⁶

CDA often emphasises the "self-other schema" or "us versus them" dichotomy and also explores how groups construct a positive "self" against a negative "other."³⁷ Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model guides our analysis of Pakistan and Bangladesh's press releases, revealing how they position themselves as humanitarian advocates while portraying Israel as an aggressor. By emphasising Palestinian suffering and international law, this framework reveals how these countries' diplomatic discourse challenges Western biases, such as Islamophobia.

Research Question

Far from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, how do Muslim-majority countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh in South Asia offer a unique perspective and shape global narratives? We explore their strategic use of language to influence international perception in their post-October 2023 press releases through the following research questions:

FIGURE 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: TEUN VAN DIJK'S IDEOLOGICAL SQUARE (1998) FOR DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE ANALYSIS.



RQ1: Regarding the Gaza crisis, how do the foreign Offices of Pakistan and Bangladesh employ specific rhetorical and lexical strategies to construct "Us vs. Them" binaries within their official communications?

RQ2: In what ways is the discourse of "International Law" and "Humanitarianism" operationalised to challenge dominant geopolitical narratives and assert moral authority?

RQ3: How does the diplomatic discourse of these two South Asian states, aimed at securing both domestic legitimacy and international solidarity, reflect a strategic ideological positioning?

Methodology

The Foreign Offices of Pakistan and Bangladesh issued 27 press releases during October and November 2023: 18 and 9, respectively. In our research, we have taken into account this corpus. This discourse analysis tries to understand how these two states frame the Israel-Palestine conflict, surfacing the legal frameworks and the humanitarian concerns that inform their actions, to provoke a specific international reaction.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the traditional lens of this research's methodology, which views language as an ideological reproduction and power struggle.³⁸ CDA studies are guided by a "How" question rather than a hypothesis. Therefore, this research is structured around the following main question: *How do the Foreign Offices of Pakistan and Bangladesh use particular argumentative topoi and discursive structures to create a narrative of legal legitimacy and humanitarianism in the Gaza crisis?*

Rationale for Selection: The Case of Bangladesh and Pakistan

Bangladesh and Pakistan, as the selected main case studies, are purposive and theoretically based. Both states, being the Muslim-majority "Middle Powers," represent distinctive diplomatic trajectories.

- **Bangladesh:** As a post-colonial state that achieved independence through a struggle, its diplomatic language is uniquely focused on UN-centred frameworks and "International Legality". Its unique historical memory of systemic struggle provides a vital perspective on how universal human rights are leveraged by states.
- **Pakistan:** A state whose national identity is deeply intertwined with Islamic solidarity, and as a founding member of OIC, the country provides a model for "OIC-mediated" diplomacy. The religious identity and political sovereignty are frequently bridged by its discourses.

By comparing these two states, the study moves beyond a monolithic "Muslim response" to reveal a balanced "Humanitarian Diplomacy" that stabilises the religious solidarity with the global legal norms.

Data Corpus and Sampling

Following the escalation in Gaza, this research analyses a purposive sample of Pakistan and Bangladesh's official 27 press releases issued between October 7 and November 30, 2023. The "peak of diplomatic narrativization" can be observed during this timeframe.

- **Pakistan (n=18):** It includes weekly media briefings, OIC summits, and specific statements on hospital bombings.
- **Bangladesh (n=9):** It includes Foreign Ministry denunciations of "Israeli brutalities" and Prime Ministerial statements.

The Analytical Framework: Operationalising the Ideological Square

This study, based on Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model, employs a three-tiered qualitative deconstruction. This framework is more appropriate than the quantitative content analysis because, rather than simply presenting the frequency of words, it emphasises the interpretative depth.

Following is the rigorous step-by-step process of deconstruction that presents the depth of this analysis:

- **Step 1: Lexical Micro-Analysis:** To see how they function to "Other" the antagonist, we examine specific 'word-choices,' e.g., "*barbaric, heinous, collective punishment*". In this analysis, we look for "loaded" adjectives that delegitimise the opponent's security claims and stir international emotions.
- **Step 2: Argumentative Topoi's Identification:** We determine that the very *topoi* (rhetorical building blocks) on which the state justified its position. The *topos of international law* (focusing on UN resolutions) and the *topos of humanitarian catastrophe* (focusing on civilian suffering) were the key *topoi* we analysed.
- **Step 3: "Hidden Assumptions" and Deconstructing Power:** Explicitly, this is the step in which the "Critical" component of the CDA is implemented. We ask: *What is being left unsaid?* e.g., the de-emphasis of the antagonist's perspective. Regarding justice, we analyse how the discourse constructs a sense of "common sense" in rendering the state's ideological position as a universal moral truth.
- **Step 4: Inter-textual Synthesis:** We follow the citations of OIC declarations or the past UN resolutions (e.g., 242 and 338) in these press releases. By anchoring new statements in established global legal systems, this "intertextuality" is analysed as a mechanism for gaining power.

Ethical Considerations and Validity

To ensure a consistent discursive pattern, the validity of these claims is ensured by comparing the official Press Releases with media briefings and through the "triangulation of data." In this study, to provide a transparent audit trail and allow the reader to see exactly how the interpretative claims are derived from the primary text, we have "borrowed longer paragraphs."

Analysis and Discussion: Deconstructing the Discursive Square

In October-November 2023, Pakistan and Bangladesh issued several press statements addressing the decades-long Israel-Palestine conflict through their foreign offices. This research paper has utilised Teun A. van Dijk's Ideological Square Model to gain insight into how these two states strategically employed the discourse to shape the worldwide perception. The Ideological Square Model shows how language can effectively create positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation, thereby sensitising the audience and diplomats to different perceptions and views.

This Ideological Square was employed sophisticatedly in this analysis. This discourse is organised on the dichotomy of the morally superior, law-abiding "Us" versus the lawless, "barbaric" "other."

Pakistan: The Discourse of "Collective Punishment"

The Foreign Office of Pakistan's (October 12, 2023) PR employs a high density of condemnatory linguistic expressions:

"Pakistan strongly condemns the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force by Israeli authorities against the civilian population in Gaza and calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities. We are deeply concerned about the fast-deteriorating and dire humanitarian situation in Gaza due to the inhumane blockade and collective punishment by Israeli forces. The decision to cut off electricity, fuel, and water supplies is unjust and should be reversed, as it would severely impact the lives of the Palestinians residing in the enclave."

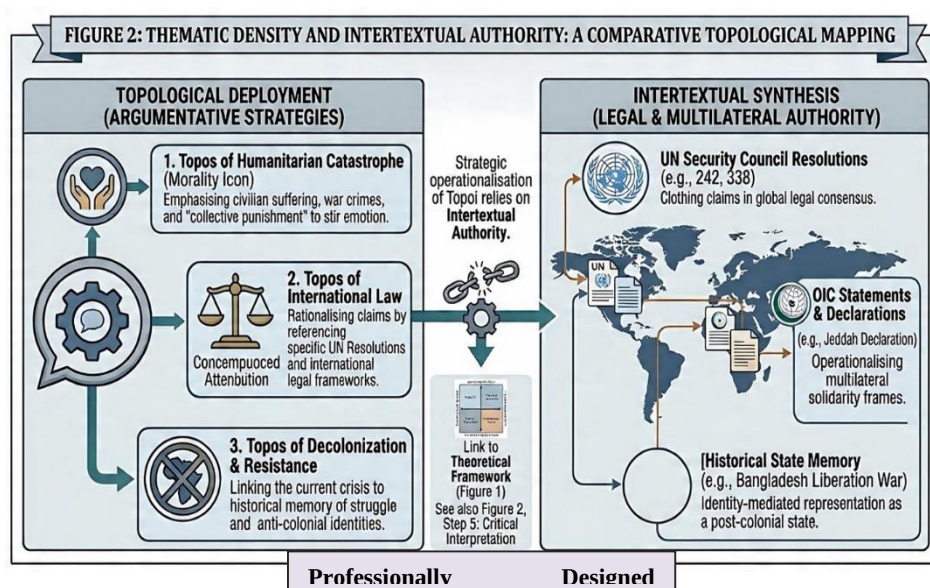
The lexical choice of "collective punishment" in this extract serves to delegitimise Israel as "Other" by framing their actions as war crimes under international law. The "Us" (Pakistan) is positioned as the advocate for human decency. This is further reinforced in the OIC context (October 18, 2023), where Pakistan calls for an *"immediate end to the Israeli aggression and blockade,"* operationalising the discourse of "Muslim solidarity" as a geopolitical power position.

Bangladesh: The Discourse of "Illegal Occupation"

Bangladesh's discourse is heavily mediated through its own historical identity as a post-colonial state. On October 8, 2023, the Foreign Office stated:

"Bangladesh holds that living under the Israeli occupation and forced settlements in Palestinian territory will not bring peace in the region. Therefore, Bangladesh supports a two-state solution... free of occupation following UN Resolutions No. 242 and 338." ³⁹⁴⁰

The "hidden assumption" here is that the root cause of violence is "occupation," not the immediate trigger of the conflict. By referencing specific UN resolutions, Bangladesh uses intertextuality to clothe its ideological stance in the authority of global consensus, effectively "Othering" the international community that fails to enforce these resolutions.



The Humanitarian Topos: Mobilising Emotive Pathos

The analysed corpus reveals that to shift the narrative from a "conflict between two sides" to a "unilateral slaughter of the innocent," both states frequently employ the *topos* of humanitarian catastrophe.

This analysis observes a high density of "condemnatory language" in Bangladesh's official communications. For instance, a press release issued on 18th October 2023 states:

"Bangladesh strongly condemns the recent barbaric air strike on the Ahli Arabi Hospital in Gaza City resulting in indiscriminate killing of hundreds of innocent civilians mainly women and children by the Israeli Occupying Forces (IOF). This ruthless attack is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian laws and accords which constitutes a grave crime against humanity. Bangladesh believes that the current war waged by Israel in Gaza targeting the civilians is not only asymmetric and disproportionate, but it is tantamount to

collective punishment of Palestinian people in Gaza and in contravention of all fundamental principles of human rights and international civil accords and conventions."

In this extract, the lexical choices of "barbaric air strike," "indiscriminate killing", and "tantamount to collective punishment of Palestinian" serve to delegitimise the "Other" (Israel) while positioning the "Self" (Bangladesh) as a witness to historical injustice. The discourse constructs a reality where Palestinian suffering is the inevitable consequence of systemic oppression and transcends mere reporting. Similarly, Pakistan's discourse focuses on the "indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force." Islamabad's Foreign Office forefronts the "war crimes" and "inhumane blockade," thereby "stirring emotions" to garner international solidarity. It employs "positive self-presentation" to frame itself as a compassionate advocate for the downtrodden.

Inter-textual Authority and Legal Rationalisation

The way one text references another to gain authority, a significant finding is the reliance on "intertextuality." To clothe their ideological positions in the garb of global consensus, both countries steadily cite international law and United Nations (UN) resolutions.

The only viable path to "enduring peace" is to invoke "UNSC resolutions" and the "two-state solution," which Pakistan frequently suggested through its press releases. This strategy allows the state to project an image of "norm-conforming" diplomacy. Pakistan and Bangladesh repeatedly position Israel as "Other" by mentioning the "International Humanitarian Law." Both states positioned Israel as a "political rival" and a "noncompliant" actor that exists outside the bounds of universal human decency. While Western powers may remain apathetic, this analysis concludes with the "hidden assumption" that the South Asian "Us" remains the true guardian of the international legal order.

Identity-Mediated Representation and the "Us/Them" Binary

The analysis reveals that Pakistan and Bangladesh frame the crisis as a matter of "Muslim solidarity," particularly referencing the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). These states counter the "Western silence" on the dehumanisation of Palestinians by positioning the Palestinian cause as a "Muslim world issue." Therefore, the binary is expanded. "Us" represents its South Asian advocates and the global Muslim community, while "Them" represents the failure of the "apathetic international community" to intervene and also characterises the "aggressor." Unifying the domestic audiences through

the lens of external crisis, this deconstruction shows that language is being used to build "national identity" and "power positions" effectively.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

Pakistan and Bangladesh focus on Palestinian rights and humanitarian issues while condemning the Israeli actions without directly addressing Islamophobia. Their strong calls for international intervention support for Palestinians and criticism of Israel's policies may implicitly protest biases like Islamophobia, though not explicitly named. Rather than religious discrimination, this study emphasises the conflict's political, legal, and humanitarian aspects.

Using different means to justify their position, and imitating the ideology of solidarity and human rights, Pakistan and Bangladesh exert strategic language to build power positions. By portraying Israel as an aggressor and Palestine as the victim, these states are looking to influence international opinion in favour of the Palestinian cause.

Using the Ideological Square Model, the post-October 7, 2023, press releases of Pakistan and Bangladesh are avenues through which international perceptions of the Israel-Palestine conflict are shaped. To create an image of a country endowed with compassion and proactive support for Palestinians, the diplomatic initiatives, adherence to international laws, and humanitarian work have been presented. To mobilise international support and pressure against Israel, both states successfully presented a powerful negative portrayal of Israel's actions.

While aligning with widely accepted international frameworks, they constantly call for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. This research shows how to have an impact on public opinions and diplomatic outcomes, and how discourse can be used to create political discourse. This study underlines the importance of state-level discourse in geopolitics and international relations. While showing their distinct approaches to the Israel-Palestine conflict, as the Muslim-majority states in South Asia, Pakistan uses its OIC leadership to promote Muslim solidarity, whereas Bangladesh, focusing on universal human rights, follows the UN-centred diplomacy.

This research, employing van Dijk's Ideological Square Model, reveals both states' strategic approach to potential Islamophobic prejudices, shaping the domestic and global narratives. Since this analysis focuses on these two Muslim-majority states, it is important to have a better understanding of the various regional diplomatic stances, other views in the region, such as those of non-Muslim South Asian states like India and Sri Lanka be

examined. The policymakers will eventually grasp the insights of a framework to utilise discourse in challenging prejudice in global conflicts and advocating justice.

While revealing a sophisticated operationalisation of Van Dijk's Ideological Square to navigate the Gaza crisis, this study has deconstructed the diplomatic narratives of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The analysis rigorously reveals that official press releases are strategic discursive tools designed to challenge hegemonic geopolitical frameworks and are not simply reactive statements of the states. These South Asian Muslim-majority states have successfully constructed an alternative discursive architecture by prioritising "positive self-presentation" as moral guardians of international law and "negative other-presentation" of the aggressor as a violator of universal norms and legal values.

This analysis has significantly found that the strategic shift from a purely identity-based or religious discourse to one rooted in "International Legality" and "Humanitarianism." Although shaping the underlying sense of marginalisation within the global order, Islamophobia remains a latent contextual factor, but the explicit language of the Foreign Offices focuses on UN resolutions and universal human rights. Moving beyond the "Muslim world" to engage with a global audience, this transition allows Pakistan and Bangladesh to broaden their strategic appeal. The binary of "Us vs. Them" is consequently redefined. The "Us" is no longer just the Islamic Ummah; it represents the principled, law-abiding international community. "Them" embodies the complicit or apathetic actors who facilitate the "cycle of aggression." Eventually, the discourse asserts moral authority within the Global South and serves as a form of "soft power," allowing Middle Power states to contest power asymmetries.

Recommendations for Strategic Diplomacy

The following recommendations are proposed for diplomatic practitioners and policymakers, based on the findings of this Critical Discourse Analysis:

1. **Legal Frameworks' Harmonisation:** Continuing to synchronise South Asian states' diplomatic language with international humanitarian law is needed. These states can mitigate "orientalist" dismissals of their positions as purely ideologically driven by framing the regional concerns within the lexicon of global justice.
2. **Strategic Multi-Platform Narrativization:** Foreign Offices should more aggressively link their official statements to historical precedents of anti-colonialism, given the power of "intertextuality" identified in this study. Grounding the contemporary solidarity in a shared history of resistance against systematic control, this strengthens the "Us" identity.

3. **Countering Hegemonic Framing:** Policymakers should invest in digital diplomacy that mirrors the rhetorical strategies identified in this research to address the "trust deficit" in global media. Effectively using "emotive pathos" and "topoi of victimhood" can stir international emotion and pressure multilateral institutions toward more decisive action.
4. **Inclusive Advocacy Framework:** The diplomatic discourse in the future should aim to bridge the gap between the "Muslim solidarity" and the "Global South advocacy." These two integrating frameworks, while challenging the perceived double standards of Western-led international orders, can create a more robust coalition.

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