



**LI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT: A COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE  
ANALYSIS OF *AL JAZEERA* AND *THE NEW YORK TIMES***



**AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

*Submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University*

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English Department*

**BY**

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**ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM**

**FACULTY OF CULTURAL SCIENCES**

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**LEGITIMATION**

**THESIS**

**ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT: A COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE  
ANALYSIS IN AL JAZEERA AND NEW YORK TIMES**

**BY**

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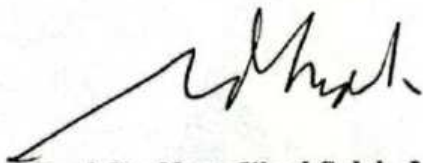
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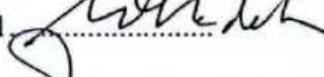

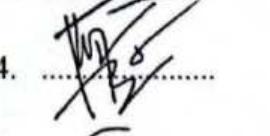
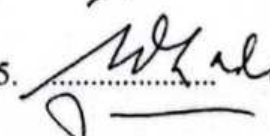


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**AGREEMENT**

On July 26th, 2024, the Board of Thesis Examination has kindly approved a thesis by Erfani Widya Ghassani (F041201003) entitled *ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT: A COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN AL JAZEERA AND NEW YORK TIMES* submitted in fulfillment of one of the requirements to obtain Sarjana Degree in English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

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The thesis by Erfani Widya Ghassani (F041201003) entitled *ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT: A COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN AL JAZEERA AND NEW YORK TIMES* has been revised as advised during the examination on July 26th, 2024 and is approved by the Board of Undergraduate Thesis Examiners:

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**APPROVAL FORM**

With reference to the letter of the dean of Faculty of Cultural Sciences Hasanuddin University No. 1805/UN4.9.1/KEP/2022 regarding supervision, we hereby confirm to approve the undergraduate thesis draft by Erfani Widya Ghassani (F041201003) to be examined at the English Literature Study Program of Faculty of Cultural Sciences.


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## STATEMENT LETTER

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Hereby, the writer declares that this thesis is written by herself. This thesis does not contain any materials which have been published by other people, and it does not cite other people's ideas except quotations and references.

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Erfani Widya Ghassani





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## Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Cover.....  | i         |
| Legitimacy.....   | ii        |
| Agreement.....  | iii       |
| Declaration.....  | iv        |
| Approval.....   | v         |
| Statement Letter.....                                   | vi        |
| Acknowledgement.....                                    | vii       |
| Table of Contents.....                                  | viii      |
| Abstract.....   | x         |
| Abstrak.....  | xi        |
| <b>CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.....</b>                     | <b>1</b>  |
| A. Background.....                                      | 1         |
| B. Identification of the Problem.....                   | 4         |
| C. Scope of the Problem.....                            | 4         |
| D. Research Questions.....                              | 4         |
| E. Objectives.....                                      | 4         |
| F. Significance of the Study.....                       | 5         |
| <b>CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>               | <b>6</b>  |
| A. Previous Studies.....                                | 6         |
| B. Theoretical Framework.....                           | 9         |
| 1. Critical Discourse Analysis.....                     | 9         |
| 2. Teun A. van Dijk Discourse Analysis Concept.....     | 11        |
| a. Text Analysis.....                                   | 11        |
| 1) Macrostructure.....                                  | 14        |
| 2) Superstructure.....                                  | 14        |
| 3) Microstructure.....                                  | 15        |
| b. Social Cognition.....                                | 15        |
| c. Social Context.....                                  | 16        |
| 3. The New York Times and Al Jazeera News Websites..... | 18        |
| <b>CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY.....</b>                    | <b>20</b> |
| A. Research Design.....                                 | 20        |
| B. Data Sources.....                                    | 20        |
| C. Method of Collecting Data.....                       | 21        |
| D. Method of Analyzing Data.....                        | 21        |
| <b>CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....</b>         | <b>22</b> |





|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Findings.....   | 22        |
| Al Jazeera's journalist got killed in the attack..... | 22        |
| 2. United Nations statement on the death toll.....    | 29        |
| 3. A baby girl died in the incubator.....             | 35        |
| B. Discussion.....                                    | 38        |
| <b>CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION.....</b>                     | <b>40</b> |
| A. Conclusion.....                                    | 40        |
| B. Suggestion.....                                    | 41        |
| <b>References.....</b>                                | <b>42</b> |
| <b>Appendices</b>                                     |           |



## Abstract

WIDYA GHASSANI. 2024. *Israeli–Palestinian Conflict: A Comparative Discourse Analysis of Al Jazeera and The New York Times* (supervised by NOER JIHAD SALEH and AYUB KHAN).

This study aims to identify the tendency of news portals to show their favoritism to one side in a conflict that eventually influences the viewpoints of their readers. This study employs the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis by Teun A. van Dijk, which consists of macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure. In this study, however, only two of them were applied: macrostructure and superstructure. (a) Macrostructure (thematic) refers to the meaning of the text as a whole; and (b) Superstructure (schematic/plot) is the narrative path that starts with the introduction, moves through the body of the text, and ends with the conclusions. The theory is used to compare the news about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict reported by The New York Times and Al Jazeera. Three news articles from each news website that were uploaded during the time ranging from October 7th, 2023 until April, 2024 with the same topics were picked randomly as representatives. The findings of this study show that The New York Times tends to be in the neutral position, while Al Jazeera favors Palestine more.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis (CDA), media bias, Israeli–Palestinian conflict



## Abstrak

WIDYA GHASSANI. 2024. *Konflik Israel-Palestina: Analisis Wacana Perbandingan Al Jazeera dan The New York Times* (dibimbing oleh NOER JIHAD SALEH dan AYUB KHAN).

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi kecenderungan portal berita untuk menunjukkan keberpihakan mereka kepada satu pihak dalam suatu konflik yang pada akhirnya memengaruhi sudut pandang pembacanya. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Analisis Wacana Kritis oleh Teun A. van Dijk, yang terdiri dari makrostruktur, suprastruktur, dan mikrostruktur. Namun, dalam penelitian ini, hanya dua di antaranya yang diterapkan: makrostruktur dan superstruktur. (a) Makrostruktur (tematik) mengacu pada makna teks secara keseluruhan; dan (b) Superstruktur (skema/alur) adalah alur naratif yang dimulai dengan pendahuluan, bergerak melalui tubuh teks, dan diakhiri dengan kesimpulan. Teori ini digunakan untuk membandingkan berita tentang konflik Israel-Palestina yang dilaporkan oleh The New York Times dan Al Jazeera. Tiga artikel berita dari setiap situs web berita yang diunggah selama rentang waktu 7 Oktober 2023 hingga April 2024 dengan topik yang sama dipilih secara acak sebagai perwakilan. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa The New York Times cenderung berada pada posisi netral, sementara Al Jazeera lebih memihak Palestina.

**Kata kunci:** analisis wacana kritis, bias media, konflik Israel-Palestina



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background

We often see people getting provoked when reading something on the internet. It is possible to happen because language possesses the power to form or change people's views of events around them. This fact is used by news media to indirectly put their agenda and affect the opinion of wider society. The media have their viewpoints and their coverage of any news story is affected by their agenda, ideologies, and perspectives (Thetela, 1999). The media, that is responsible for distributing the information, often being sponsored by influential, political organizations, has to side with them. Their agenda might or might not intend to change how people behave about certain events, but it certainly affects how people think of those events as when they read the news, it influences the way readers perceive the phenomenon reported.

There have been tons of studies regarding media, like D'Alessio & Allen (2000), Gollust et al. (2019), Lecheler & de Vreese (2018), and many more. However, this study covered one of the current conflicts that gets attention the most from people all over the world: the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The conflict between the two parties has been running for several decades now, but the massive spread of awareness for this conflict broke out as the situation escalated quickly in October 2023





ter Israel was accused of using a white phosphorus substance to attack the civilization in Palestine—claiming it to be self-defense after getting attacked several days back. People criticize their defensive act of attacking innocent civilians as it violates international law and especially the use of white phosphorus as it “*is harmful to humans by all routes of exposure. The smoke from burning phosphorus is also harmful to the eyes and respiratory. It also can cause deep and severe burns, penetrating even through bone.*” (World Health Organization, 2024). Up to now, it is still an ongoing conflict between the two that concerns people around the world.

It is very interesting to discuss this topic in a study because each discourse written has meaning and can be analyzed using the theory of CDA (critical discourse analysis) from Teun Van Dijk. Teun A. Van Dijk (2001) stated “*CDA is the study of the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality were enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political contexts of type of discourse analytical research.*” Having similarities as Fairclough’s model, van Dijk’s model was chosen as it presents through text linguistic and cognitive linguistic, while Fairclough presents a systemic functional linguistic perspective.

As CDA is an academic field that concerned with how “*discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society*”, it lays its focus on discourse and society. This involves approaching discourse—both text and talk—critically in order to identify the ways in which discourse affects



society. Such continuous impact caused by discourse can also occur through news reading. In other words, news outlets have the power to shape readers' perceptions of certain phenomena that later will also affect the way people around them build ideologies through their daily conversation and communication, according to what is emphasized and deemphasized in their news texts. Discourse cannot be seen and understood only as the study of free language but also released in context. Which is discussed here is a language that is used for certain purposes. Discourse is seen as having a background in the production process and the goals to be achieved. The discourse reflects problems that arise throughout social change. However, many people are unaware of the purpose of discourse and the consequences that reading the news may cause to their outlook on life. Moreover, some of them find it difficult to maintain objectivity and try to find out more about the news they read. Instead, they jump into conclusion too quickly and join the bandwagon effect.

Two news outlets that have been particularly attentive in covering this dispute are The New York Times and Al Jazeera, which will be further shortened to NYT and AJ. NYT, which is a western news outlet, often said to be opposing, while AJ is said to be standing for Palestine. Thus, the researcher wants to conduct the study referring this to compare news of both portals by applying the Discourse Analysis Concept of Teun A. van Dijk.



## **Identification of the Problem**

People tend to believe what they see online without questioning anything, when there are so many untold things behind affecting the post. For instance, we were taught that in the colonization era, Daendels tortured Indonesians by employing them unpaid, while it has been found in the Plakaatboek that he did pay them. Turns out, the authority at that time corrupted it. That is one of the examples that people tend to believe something without questioning it, especially when it is repeatedly implanted.

## **C. Scope of the Problem**

Limitations in a study function as the guidance to avoid irrelevant aspects in doing a research. Hence, this study was conducted by applying the macrostructure and superstructure described by Teun A. van Dijk.

## **D. Research Questions**

1. What are the macrostructure and superstructure of the news?
2. Which side do the news media support?

## **E. Objectives**

1. To identify the macrostructure and superstructure of the news
2. To identify the tendency that is done by both news portal



### **Significance of the Study**

1. This study is expected to contribute to comparative critical discourse analysis.
2. This study is expected to allow society understand that everything in the media should be carefully considered before coming to a conclusion.





## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### A. Previous Studies

There are some studies about comparative discourse analysis that have been conducted on different subjects in the past, as stated:

Dezhkameh et al. (2021), in their study titled “A Critical Discourse Analysis of Covid-19 in Iranian and American Newspapers”, used Van Dijk's ideological square framework to examine the ideological differences in how the Tehran Times and The New York Times reported Covid-19-related news. 2,977 clauses were selected from a representative sample of 56 news published between January 2020 and the end of January 2021. The clauses were then subjected to both qualitative and quantitative analysis to ascertain the cause of each microstrategy's existence as well as its frequency of recurrence. Evidentiality, Hyperbole, Metaphor, National Self-Glorification, Negative Lexicalisation, and Number Game were the most frequent micro-strategies.

Ramos (2019) did a study titled “Comparative Critical Discourse Analysis of CNN and Fox News Headlines: A Case of The Immigration Detentions in US”. This study attempts to determine how people in detention are portrayed in the headlines of Fox News and CNN, as well as what potential left- and right-wing political philosophies toward immigration are expressed in the news portals. Reference strategies and



ansitivity encompassed the micro-level analysis focusing on language instruction. For the macro-level analysis, discourse practices like processes of production and consumption were considered, while American foreign policy viewed from the left-wing and right-wing perspectives were discussed to see the differences in style, tone, and perspective in CNN and Fox News' headlines about immigrant detention events. The findings indicate that CNN, which tied to left-wing audiences, presents the events surrounding immigration detention from the viewpoint of immigrants who are put in danger because they are being held with their families. Meanwhile, Fox News, tied to rightwing audiences, presents the events mostly from the perspective of the government and the governmental bodies in charge of immigration laws, who must restrict, detain, and deport immigrants in order to protect national security.

Evayani & Rido (2019) in "Representation of Social Actors in Sexual Violence Issue in The New York Times and The Jakarta Post Newspapers: A Critical Discourse Analysis" aimed to reveal how social actors are represented in news reporting of sexual violence. The data were collected from the official websites of news portal *The Jakarta Post* and *The New York Times*. The findings show that to detach the actor (exclusion), both newspapers mostly presented the actor, especially the victim as a passive agent and the perpetrator as an active agent. The salient differences were found in the use of the inclusion strategy. This confirms that *The Jakarta Post* presented the actor as a specific individual, such as



/ their gender, age, and occupation, while *The New York Times* presented them by their surname and title such as “Professor”.

Isti’annah (2018) in her paper titled “Rohingya in Media: Critical Discourse Analysis of Myanmar and Bangladesh Newspaper Headlines” analyzed newspaper headlines on Rohingya cases published in Myanmar and Bangladesh in terms of their textual structures, employing Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar. The data were taken in a purposive sample method by observing twenty newspaper headlines from two newspaper companies: *Mmtimes* from Myanmar and *The Nation* from Bangladesh, taken in 2017. Both newspapers used topical Themes in their headlines, yet the participants chosen as the Themes were different. Myanmar headlines involved Actor, Goal, Sayer, and Verbiage as their Themes. Bangladesh headlines, on the other hand, employed Actor, Goal, Carrier, Token, and Sayer as the Themes. The ideologies concluded from different Theme features in the headlines are different. Myanmar newspaper headlines cover the Rohingya issue by blowing up the good deeds of the Myanmar government, while Bangladesh newspaper headlines show the actions done by Rohingyans to save themselves.

The studies above each have similarities with this study. All of them paid attention to the language features of the discourse and did the comparative discourse analysis between two newspapers or news websites. Dezhkameh et al. focused on microstrategies used in the news and the reason behind the occurrence. Ramos considered differences in style, tone,



and perspective in CNN and Fox News headlines about immigrant attention events. Evayani & Rido reveal how social actors are represented in news reporting of sexual violence. Isti'anah, just like Ramos, limited the focus to only the headlines of both news portals, but she analyzed them by employing Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar.

## **B. Theoretical Framework**

### **1. Critical Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis, also known as critical discourse analysis, is a research methodology that examines spoken or written language in connection to its social environment. Discourse analysis is a well-known research technique used in some humanities and social science disciplines—other than linguistics—such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. There are several areas that can be focused on while doing a discourse analysis research, like the functions and outcomes of various linguistic forms, cultural norms and communication protocols, how assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs are expressed. the relationship between language use and its historical, social, and political context (Luo, 2023).

Luo (2023) stated that the difference between discourse analysis and other qualitative research technique used in linguistics is that other techniques in linguistics only concentrate on the rules





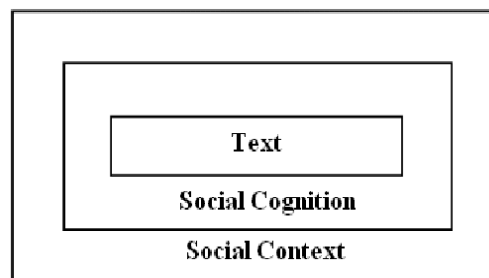
of language usage, while discourse analysis focuses on contextual meaning of language used, especially on the social aspects of communication and how people use language to reach their objectives in daily life, like managing conflict, evoking emotions, fostering doubt, or establishing trust. Unlike other linguistics theories that focus on smaller language units, like sounds, words, or phrases, discourse analysis is used to analyze bigger parts of language, like full conversations, texts, or collections of texts. Such discourse structures may influence the contents and the structures of the news in ways preferred by some powerful groups (van Dijk, 1988).

CDA is used to show up connections that may be hidden from people such as the connections between language, power, strategies, and ideology (Fairclough, 2001). Some powerful groups may want to control the general knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies shared by whole groups through repetitive media discourse about similar events, that later will be the general structures of knowledge and ideology. Thus, people tend to accept the beliefs, knowledge, and opinions of people or institutions they think as authoritative, trustworthy, or credible sources, such as scholars, experts, professionals, or reliable media (Nesler et al., 1993, as cited in van Dijk, 1988).



Eriyanto (2001, as cited in Yana, 2015) concluded that Van Dijk's theory is three dimensional and described as text, social cognition, and social context. In the dimensions of text, how the structure of the text and the discourse strategy used to emphasize a certain theme was examined. In social cognition, the process of producing news texts is studied, which involves individual cognition from journalists or community leaders that influences people's views. Social context studies the construction of discourse that develops in society about a problem (Surya et al., 2023).

## 2. Teun A. van Dijk Discourse Analysis Concept



### a. Text Analysis

The text analysis was based on Van Dijk's design in the three parts unit elements of the analysis are divided into macro-structure, superstructure, and microstructure. The unit elements of the text analysis are divided into three parts, namely macrostructure in which the text is analyzed thematically/topically. The second part is superstructure in which parts and order of the text are schemed as a whole.



Then the third part is called microstructure consists of semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and rhetorical analysis. Then discourse structure in the table below:

| <b>DISCOURSE<br/>STRUCTURE</b> | <b>THINGS TO<br/>OBSERVE</b>  | <b>ELEMENT</b>                     |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Macrostructure</b>          | Thematic<br><br>Theme/Topic put<br>forward in a news  | Topic                              |
| <b>Superstructure</b>          | Schematic<br><br>How the parts and<br>sequence of news are<br>presented in full text  | Scheme                             |
| <b>Microstructure</b>          | Semantic<br><br>The meaning to be<br>emphasised in the<br>news text, for example<br>by giving details on<br>one side or making<br>explicit one side and<br>reducing the other | Background, detail,<br><br>purpose |



|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | side's details.   |  |
|  | <p>Syntax</p> <p>How the sentence<br/>(shape, arrangement)<br/>is chosen</p>      | <p>Sentences, Coherence,<br/>pronouns.</p> |
|  | <p>Stylistic</p> <p>How the choice of<br/>words is used in the<br/>news text.</p> | <p>Lexicon</p>                             |
|  | <p>Rhetorical</p> <p>How and by the way<br/>emphasis is made.</p>                 | <p>Graphics, Metaphor,<br/>Expression.</p> |





### 1) Macrostructure

The macrostructure analysis which deals with global meaning tries to seek the theme of the text. The global meaning of the text can be found in the formulation in the text frame, for example, title, headlines, topic sentence, summary, abstract, or conclusion. Thus, macrostructures are only expressed, indirectly, by longer stretches of talk or text. (Van Dijk, 1988).

### 2) Superstructure

Schemata of the discourse is called superstructures. The schema determines how the topics of a text could or should be ordered and, hence, how sequences and sentences should appear in the text (Van Dijk, 1988). Thus, we want to know how schemata may develop from its macrostructures.



### 3) Microstructure

After observing the two previous structures, overall structures need to be expressed at a more concrete local level of words and sentences (Van Dijk, 1988).

The subject matter examined in the microstructure is the local meaning of a text which is observed through semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and rhetorical elements.

#### b. Social Cognition

Social cognition refers to the analysis of knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies portrayed in various discourses, such as novels, news texts, and speeches. Social cognition involves elements like knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies, which influence the discourse's content and tone. Van Dijk consider social cognition as the mediating part between text and society. He claims that CDA needs to account for the various forms of social cognitions that are shared by social collectivities (groups, organizations, and institutions) (Van Dijk, 2001 in Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018). Social cognitions, he states, are "socially shared representations of societal arrangements, groups, and relations, as well as mental



operations such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inferencing and learning" (Van Dijk, 1993 in Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018).

According to Amoussou & Allagbe (2018), despite being basic forms of social cognitions, ideologies also have cognitive functions. It was already pointed out that they organize, monitor and control specific group attitudes. It's possible that ideologies also influence how sociocultural knowledge is developed, organized, and used. But generally speaking, it is supposed that ideologies more specifically control evaluative beliefs, that is, social ideas shared by the members of a group.

### **c. Social Context (Social Analysis)**

Social context, as defined by Teun A. Van Dijk, encompasses the sociocultural dimension of text structures, emphasizing the importance of understanding the social environment and cognitive frameworks shared by language speakers. The social context dimension influences discourse by considering the impact of knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies on communication. Social context highlights the external factors shaping the discourse, such as media influence and societal norms,



emphasizing the role of social practice in shaping discourse and facilitating an adequate understanding of text meanings. The social context discuss how the text can be produced by readers. The text, power, and access forms discourse in social analysis, such as background, situation, event, and social condition that is happening. Through this analysis, Van Dijk's approach provides insights into how language is used to convey and shape social cognition in various forms of communication.

Based on Van Dijk's concept (1995), there are two points of social context, they are power and access. *"Social power is based on privileged access to socially valued resources, such as wealth, income, position, status, force, group membership, education or knowledge"*. Power involves control that is done by some people over other people. Such control may apply to both action and cognition, meaning that a powerful group may restrict the freedom of action of others, but also influence their minds. Access means that language users or communicators have more or less freedom in the use of particular discourse genres or styles, or in the participation in specific communicative events and contexts. Discourse is also considered one of the valued social resources that form the



foundation of power and in fact, the distribution of these privilege for access is is unequal. For example, not everyone has equal access to the media or to medical, legal, political, bureaucratic or scholarly text and talk.

We may assume that, similar to other social resources, greater access based on various participant roles equates to greater social power. In other words, measures of discourse accessibility may be rather highly accurate indicators of the power of social groups and their members.

### 3. The New York Times and Al Jazeera News Websites

The New York Times is a daily newspaper based in New York City with a worldwide readership reported in 2022 to comprise 740,000 paid print subscribers, and 8.6 million paid digital subscribers. It also is a producer of popular podcasts such as The Daily. Founded in 1851, it is published by The New York Times Company. *The goal of The New York Times is to cover the news as impartially as possible — “without fear or favor,” in the words of Adolph Ochs, our patriarch — and to treat readers, news sources, advertisers and others fairly and openly, and to be seen to be doing so.*

Al Jazeera English is a 24-hour English-language news channel. It operates under the ownership of the Al Jazeera Media



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