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Media Coverage of Israel-Induced Palestinian Starvation Crisis: A Visual Semiotic Analysis

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Abstract:

The Palestine–Israel conflict is one of the longest and most difficult conflicts in modern history and the world has paid a considerable attention to it. Likewise, media has remained a constantly powerful tool in portraying the lengthy and complicated Palestine-Israel conflict. This study explores the way Pakistani and US leading newspapers namely: The Dawn and The Express Tribune and The Guardian visually portray the starvation crises of Palestinian people during July 2025. By employing the lens of visual semiotics (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) supported with Martin and White's Appraisal Theory (2005), this study particularly focuses on compositional markers (information value, salience, and framing) and the emotional strategies of affect, judgment, appreciation. The results reveal that Pakistani newspapers highlights shared struggle with weak framing and disordered imagery of crowds with joint victimization and focuses on the aid distribution and symbolic struggle of people whereas The Guardian often uses personal misery through strong framed images and close-ups of individual undernourished children. The findings demonstrate how multi-

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modal and appraisal resources are deliberately used to conjure concern, trigger belief, and strengthen ideological positions. The study highlights the way print media is playing its role in shaping the ideology and triggering the emotions of the readers on Israel-Palestine conflict through visual portrayal of victim hood, endurance, and humanitarian disasters.

Key words: Palestine–Israel conflict, Multimodal discourse analysis, Compositional markers, Appraisal theory, Starvation crisis

1. Introduction:

This study explores the way two leading newspapers namely: The Dawn news and The Express Tribune from Pakistan, and one leading newspaper, The Guardian from the USA visually portray the hunger crises of Gaza during July 2025. Media, as one of the most powerful tools to impact people views about conflicts (Azher et al., 2021), has long covered the issue by shaping and affecting the public opinion and politics. It has remained a constantly powerful tool to impact ideology and perspectives at international level by continuous portrayal of the lengthy and complicated Palestine-Israel conflict. Though different media outlets have framed the issue according to their political, cultural, or national preference. These preferences create or reinforce bias, or one-sided narratives that shape how readers view the events and parties engaged in the events. So, although purpose-driven studies examine media bias or the phenomenon of language in conflict reporting, studies of the media that focus specifically on how print media provides pictures and text that reinforce narratives narratively using both modes are few and far between.

Recently multiple researchers (e.g., Sarwar et al, (2023) on Representation of Israel and Palestine Issue on BBC and Al-Jazeera; Ali et al, (2022) on textual analysis of Israel and Palestine Issue on news websites—BBC, France2, Voice of America, and Al Jazeera; Markkula, (2025) on American media portrayal of the issue, McTigue, (2011) on Media bias on Israel and Palestine Issue; Haleema, 2025; Abuasaker, 2025; Degaf, 2025 etc.) have shifted their attention to this issue and highlighted the way media has portrayed the Palestine-Israel conflict. By comparing

stories across different media outlets, researchers have recognized disputing narratives and the power relations that shape global attitudes towards the conflict. For example, Haleema (2025) highlighted how global media particularly *Guardian (UK), USA Today (USA), Dawn (Pakistan), The Indian Express (India), Al Jazeera English (Qatar), and Hürriyet Daily News (Turkey)* often follow power imbalance and geopolitical interest there by relegating Palestinian voices to the background.

Throughout the Palestine-Israel conflict, international media has been divided on its perspective towards the issue. For example, Degaf, (2025) highlighted how *"the Guardian has emphasized the humanitarian impacts and used euphemistic terms, while The Jakarta Post highlighted reactive actions and employed a more direct tone"* (p.119). Bakan & Abu-Laban (2010) analyzed the racial politics embedded in news coverage of western media which usually justifies Israeli actions and marginalizes Palestinians. Western media has been accused of showing Israel as a victim defending against Palestinian action, commonly referring to such action as "terror attacks" or "Hamas aggression" (Philo & Berry, 2011). One of the most common figures in treatments of subjects connected to Palestine is the idea that Palestinian identity, and with-it Palestinian patriotism, are short-lived and of recent sources (Khalidi, R. 1997). Meanwhile, Arab media often focus on Palestinian anguish, with an emphasis on occupation and resistance. Children, refugees, and bombed homes images are employed to evoke sympathy and draw attention to the human cost of the conflict (Falk & Howard, 2016). Another common theme is the historical and religious significance of the region. Media narratives at times invoke history,

religious ties, and cultural bonds to defend or condemn moves by one or the other side. For example, certain reports pay attention on Jewish historical privileges to the land, whereas others focus on Palestinian accounts of loss and occupation dating back to 1948 (Richardson, 2007). Likewise, media from different regions have focused different issues related to the Israel-Palestine conflict and from different angles. By employing the approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) frameworks, such as those by Fairclough and Van Dijk, multiple studies have thrown light on the media coverage of various issues and influence of narratives on public perception and policy. For example, Bakan & Abu-Laban (2010) analyzed the way media legitimizes Israeli actions and marginalizes Palestinians through racial politics. Elmasry et al. (2013) investigated the use of dysphemistic terms in shaping public perception against Palestinian people. Friedman & Mischler (2020) examined the co-construction of international and local Israeli narratives, while Qawariq (2020) focused on fringe ideologies in Palestinian news websites. Wahyudi and Irham (2012) analyzed political discourse strategies in Indonesian media, offering insights into localized narratives, and Rababah & Hamdan (2019) contrasted rhetorical strategies in UN speeches by Netanyahu and Abbas to reveal legitimization tactics. Additionally, Ozohu-Suleiman & Ishak (2012) explored Southeast Asian media's alignment with regional political solidarities.

While Palestine has suffered from continuous Israel siege, immense destruction of infrastructure, the acute obstruction of the basic humanitarian aid, the continuous bombardment and military operation during the last few

years, they were also imposed to bear intense starvation and hunger crises which led "genocidal environment" in the Strip and thousands to death. The starvation crises began soon after the outbreak of Israel; war on the Gaza Strip in October 202. Since then, millions of Palestinians have endured an unprecedented human misery and conditions. United Nations and international organizations termed this phenomenon as a "mass amine."

Media has highlighted the issue of Famine crisis and starvation in Gaza, trough from different perspectives. Western media as, reported in Aljazeera, generally portrayed an ambiguous and neutralized expressions for Starvation that shows their bias and intersection with complex political and economic agendas. "In Gaza, major Western media outlets have largely avoided using legal and ethical terms like "famine" or "starvation," instead deploying more ambiguous phrases like "food depletion" or "nutrition crisis" Fida Al Qudra, Aljazeera, 23 June 2025. This study attempts to investigate how three most influential newspapers have visually portrayed the issue of hunger and starvation of the people of Gaza. It employs Kress and Leeuwen's framework of visual semiotics and Appraisal theory (2005). This research seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do three leading newspapers employ compositional markers especially textual framing strategies (information value, salience, framing, appraisal markers) to highlight hunger crises of Gaza during July 2025?
2. How are the emotional strategies of affect, judgment and appreciation are being used to highlight hunger crises of Gaza during July 2025?

3. How do these framing and emotional strategies are used to impact the ideology and emotional perspectives of the global readers?

2. Theoretical Framework:

This paper relies on Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) framework of visual semiotic analysis and Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) to analyze how Pakistani and US print media have portrayed the hunger and starvation of Palestinian people during Israel-Palestine war.

2.1 Visual design:

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) developed the ideas of visual semiotics and proposed that visuals can be analyzed at three different levels: representational, interactional, and compositional. The representational metafunction addresses how semiotic modes represent objects and how these modes are experienced by humans. Two major processes are recognized within this metafunction: narrative and conceptual processes. Narrative processes represent patterns of phenomena and experiences in terms of participants, circumstances, actions, and events, as well as processes of change, whereas conceptual processes represent classificatory, analytical, and symbolic structures. The interactive metafunction represents social relations between the producer, the viewer, and the represented object. Interaction includes contact, social distance, and attitude., whereas modality refers to the degree to which a mode represents something to be taken as "true" or "real". Finally, the representational and interactive elements relate to each other in a meaningful whole in the compositional metafunction, which includes information value, salience, and framing. Information value is given by the placement of the elements

in relation to one another. Salience is the specific way in which elements are arranged to attract attention (e.g., foregrounding an element increases saliency). Framing then implies marking or delimiting a specific space to establish interest in that space. These three metafunctions operate simultaneously in texts to make meaning, but in line with the textual metafunction in the SFL model (see Halliday, 1994), we take the compositional metafunction to be secondary to the other two. The last meta function mentions the meaning of composition, being connected to "how representations and communicative acts adhere into a meaningful whole we call 'text' (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996: 181). Sense is built by three unified systems: information value, salience, and framing. In addition, these systems are not limited to solo images, but they relate to merged visuals, i.e., visuals, which combine text, image and other vivid fundamentals, and their designs as elaborated in the table 1.

Table 1:

List of compositional markers

Marker	Description	Function
Information Value	Placement of elements (left/right, top/bottom)	● **Left / Right**: Left side signifies "Given" (familiar/known), right side signifies "New" (unfamiliar, important). ● **Top / Bottom:** Top is "Ideal" (idealized, aspirational), bottom is "Real" (practical, factual). ● **Center / Margin:** Center is nucleus (most important), margins are subordinate.
Salience	Visual prominence via size, color, contrast, or repetition	● How some elements attract more attention than others? ● Achieved through size, color contrast, sharpness, focus, foreground/background placement, etc. ● Creates hierarchy of importance in the image.
Framing	Use of borders, white space, and separation of elements	● The degree of connection or separation between elements. ● Strong framing = elements are visually separated (boxes, lines, spacing). ● Weak framing = elements overlap or merge, showing connection.

2.2 Emotions:

The Appraisal Theory of Emotions recommends that emotions are not natural reactions to actions but are an alternative of individuals' cognitive assessments of those events. According to this theory, people value their environment and understand events based on their goals, beliefs, and desires, and these explanations lead to emotional experiences (Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, 2001). Key to the theory is the idea that different models of appraisal lead to different emotions. Integrating the emotional language framework of Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) into Multimodal Discourse Analysis of visuals can deepen the investigation by unloading how emotions (Affect), judgments of conduct (Judgment), and assessments of things and states (Appreciation) are arranged in the texts and images.

Table 2:

List of Appraisal emotions:

Subsystems	Functions
Affect	Expressions of emotion (e.g., sadness, fear, hope)
Judgment	Evaluations of people's behavior (e.g., heroic, cruel)
Appreciation	Evaluations of things, situations, or phenomena (e.g., tragic, chaotic)

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis:

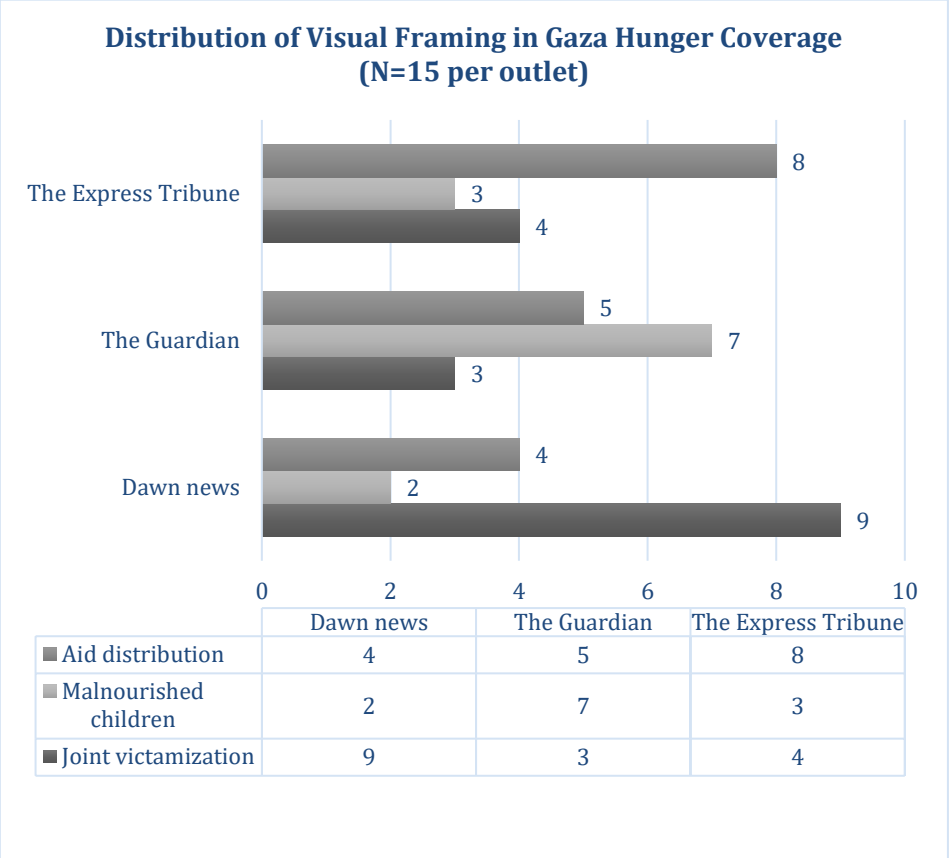
The data comprise of 45 different images selected from the Dawn, The Express Tribune, and The Guardian (15 from each newspaper) portraying hunger and starvation crises of Palestinian people. An initial close study of the visuals led to the three main thematic areas mainly covered in the newspapers: Aid Distribution, Malnourished Children and

Joint Victimization. Five images from each newspaper were selected to highlight the framing and emotional strategies used by the selected newspapers. These images carry editorial weight, as they are purposely selected to balance or support the headline story. Accompanying graphic headlines were also saved for analysis.

3. Results:

The below given graph reveals the grouped distribution of visual framing categories across Dawn, The Guardian, and The Express Tribune.

Figure 1:



	Dawn news	The Guardian	The Express Tribune
Aid distribution	4	5	8
Malnourished children	2	7	3
Joint victamization	9	3	4

Out of fifteen sampled images from each newspaper, Dawn mainly depicted images of joint victimization (n=9), with other numbers highlighting malnourished children (n=2) or aid distribution (n=4). In contrast, The Guardian focused mainly on malnourished children (n=7), while depictions of joint victimization (n=3) and aid-related scenes (n=5) were slight. The Express Tribune showed images mainly of aid distribution (n=8), followed by joint victimization (n=4) and starved children (n=3). These results are based on the data collected from the month of July 2025.

Dawn captures shared misery by joint victimization. The Guardian concentrates on individual disasters with close-ups of underweight and starving children, and The Express Tribune mergers pictures of aid distribution with moments of resistance.

4. Discussion and Analysis:

This section gives a detailed analysis of selected images from each newspaper in terms of composition and emotions.

4.1 Portrayal of Starvation Crisis in The Dawn:



Figure 1*: (2025, July). Palestinians wait to receive food from a charity kitchen, amid a hunger crisis, in Gaza City.* ***Reuters***

Composition and emotions:

In this image there is a group of women and children, holding empty cooking pots and pans, tilting forward to get food from a charity kitchen. Their faces show resolve, tension, and tiredness, showing the harshness of the hunger crisis. The crowding, overlapping pots, and extended arms show worry and uncertainty.

In terms of information value, women on the left are holding their pots, representing the given, already known state of hunger and need. On the right side, hands reaching out to receive food can be seen as the new, as hope or the expected result which is delivery of food. The top part shows

pots raised high, representing the ideal the goal for getting food and surviving. The bottom portion, with empty utensils and tired faces, shows the real, the reality of scarcity. The main focus is on the girl in the middle with a headscarf, leaning forward with her pot she seems to be the nucleus of the image. The utensils and hands surrounding it support the struggle they share together but stay subordinate. In terms of salience the big, metal pots dominate the visuals due to their size, shine, and arrangement. They quickly attract attention and indicate the crisis of hunger. The children and women also give salience because of their faces that show desperation, focus, and exhaustion which emotionally involve the viewer. The contrast between the shiny silver pots and the darker clothing/background enhances the visual prominence of the utensils, reinforcing the theme of food scarcity. As far as framing is involved, this composition has weak framing, arms, faces, and utensils overlap without clear boundaries, merging into one messy scene. This visual connectedness highlights the shared suffering and collective struggle of the people. The lack of strong partings advises that hunger is not individual but shared, linking everyone in the same awful situation. In terms of emotions, the Affect can be seen in the expressions of emotion. The sadness, fear and somewhat hope on the faces of the individuals seems to provide a sense of dejected emotions. The people desperately trying to get food represent the dire situation which in turn upsurges emotions of distress and despondency in the people in the image and the viewers inspecting the image. As judgment we can evaluations of people's behavior. The people in the image are frantic and miserable. Trying to reach the food first as they are conscious of the deficiency. Their

behavior seems to be disordered and distressing. As appreciation we can evaluate the situation or phenomena. Here it is chaotic. People are overlapping and blending into each other. The situation is very calamitous.



Figure 2*: (2025, July). People walk with sacks of flour delivered after trucks carrying humanitarian aid entered northern Gaza coming from the Zikim border crossing.* ***Bashar Taleb/AFP***

Composition and emotions:

The image shows a crowd of Palestinians in northern Gaza carrying sacks of flour on their shoulders. The scene is disordered, with hundreds of people moving in lines through a destroyed area. In the background ruined buildings, and dust, show destruction and hardship.

In terms of information value, the left side of the image shows people coming for aid already carrying their flour, representing the given that they are hungry and struggling. The right side shows more people waiting, representing the new, the hope of aid. The top portrays ruined buildings,

and smoke working as the ideal, the reminder of war's devastating impact. The bottom shows the people carrying flour, the real practical act of survival in the middle of ruins. The center is a dense line of men carrying white sacks, creating the nucleus. Margins such as collapsed buildings and waiting groups show context in a secondary way. The white sacks of flour are the most salient elements because of their color, size, and repetition across the image. They stand out against the dirty background, turning the viewer's focus instantly to aid distribution. The human faces and tired bodies create a second salience, as their faces show expressions of determination, and struggle. The ruins in the background are less prominent, increase the emotional impact, comparing humanitarian aid with damage. The composition has weak framing, with no clear borders, stressing on collective struggle and unity. The never-ending line of aid receivers visually joins, telling the continuing suffering. The lack of separations between individuals symbolizes shared hardship and a shared story of survival. As affect in this image, we can see the expressions sadness and desperation on the faces of the people carrying aid. They appear exhausted and distressed. Their faces show clear signs of despair. As judgment we can evaluate their behavior as heroic because they are risking their lives to get supplies for their family as these aid points are knows places where the aggressor attacks in order to create chaos. Their behavior can also be seen as desperate as despite knowing the fact that they may die, they still risk their lives to get the flour. As appreciation the situations is both tragic and chaotic. The uncertainty of whether their families will get

to eat tonight or not creates an atmosphere of despondency. The movement of individuals through the desolate land, trying to survive is catastrophic.



Figure 3: *(2025, July). Displaced Palestinians who have not received humanitarian aid gather as they survive on leftover food, amid a hunger crisis in Gaza.* ***Reuters***

Composition and emotions:

The image shows displaced Palestinians in Gaza around tents. Several children and women are visible sitting on the ground. Pots and a fire setup represent an effort to make food with limited resources.

On the left side, a young man is busy collecting or handling objects, showing the given as the ongoing struggle for survival. On the right side, a woman in black clothing means the new, the uncertain future and continued dislocation. The top of the image shows tents as the ideal, an aim of safety and shelter. The bottom shows cooking pots, stones, and ground as the harsh truth of trying to survive on little resources. In the center, a woman

is sitting, wearing a brown scarf, she is the main point, drawing attention to the human face of sorrow. Small figures of children in the background and the standing woman on the right add context but stay secondary. The cooking pots and temporary fire are salient because of to their location, showing survival is possible with whatever is accessible. The woman in the center stands out, showing the emotional weight of losing one's home. This image has weak framing: people, tents, and objects blend into one another without obvious parting, visually stressing on the connection of hardship. The absence of clear margins shows the collective displacement, where individuals struggle combines into shared crisis. The people and objects create claustrophobia, stressing on less of space and resources. As affect, the expressions on the faces of the individuals cannot be perceived clearly but one can consider that they are of sadness and frustration, considering their situation. In terms of judgment one can evaluate their behavior as distraught and strained. Their homes being lost and with no place to go, they are stuck in a distressing situation. As appreciation one can evaluate things as disastrous and painful. The people lost and displaced, with no sight of a secure future.



Figure 4*: (2025, July). A woman cooks as displaced Palestinians who have not received humanitarian aid survive on leftover food, amid a hunger crisis in Gaza.* ***Reuter***

Composition and emotions:

The image shows a woman wearing a scarf and cooking food in a large pot. Steam is rising from the pot as she stirs, holding the lid in her other hand. Behind her, a man is sitting on the ground, holding paper, possibly using it to light the fire. A young girl, barefoot and in minimal clothing is walking toward them. The background tents represent displacement and terrible living conditions.

In terms of information value, on the left, the child and man represent the given, the state of dependency on insufficient supplies. On the right, the woman cooking represents the new as survival and hope, in spite of shortage. The background tents show the ideal as a temporary shelter. The real is represented by the bottom, with the pot, fire, and ground because it

shows the struggle to prepare little food with whatever is available. The woman is the nucleus of the image, representing strength and care for one's family amid crises. The child and man are marginal but offer important context, showing a family facing hardship but still united. The black cooking pot with steam rising from it is the most salient element, due to being in the middle and its contrast against the beige background. It pulls attention to food being prepared as an act of survival. The woman's expressions of concentration are highly salient, having emotional weight and concern. The contrast of light and shadow makes the woman and the pot stand out more than the background, stressing on humans in serious situations. The framing is weak, as people and objects overlap without visible outline. The lack of limits between figures and their tents and the bare ground tells of limited choices. The overlapping supports the sense of shared hardship within a family. In terms of affect, we can see the expressions of emotion on the faces of individuals in the image are solemn and strained. Their situation is very uncertain and ambiguous. As judgment we can evaluate their behavior as nervous yet eager to make an effort and survive. As appreciation the situation is indeed calamitous. People displaced with no place to go, obligatory to take care of their children and families in the middle of obliteration and collapse.



Figure 5: *(2025, July). Displaced Palestinians who have not received humanitarian aid gather as they survive on leftover food, amid a hunger crisis in Gaza.* ***Reuters***

Composition and emotion:

The image shows a Palestinian man with four children in the frame. Only three of the face are visible in frame. The individuals look for food among scraps, as food is deemed very scarce. The Displaced Palestinians in the image have most likely not received any humanitarian aid, so they resort to gather and survive on leftover food, amid a hunger crisis in Gaza. In terms of information value placement of elements is crucial. The left side of the image represents given. Something that is familiar or known. In the image under observation, a little boy looks for food in the scraps. This is given as it has already been determined that Gaza is going through a hunger crisis. The right side of the image has a little girl also looking for food through scraps, this can represent the new as the situation may be unfamiliar for her. It is also important as it establishes the fact that even children are not spared the agony of living in constant hunger. The top of the image shows a tent peeking through the people in the image. That can be the ideal of the image as it may show that despite the circumstances the people still aspire to live and hold on to hope. Furthermore, the bottom of the image is the scrapes of food. This is the real or factual element of the image as it tells the already established remark that Gaza is going through a food crisis. Center is nucleus and most important, in this case it is the man in the image as he stands for many things like resilience, struggle, fight, and survival. The margins are the children in the back, subordinate yet still necessary to paint the entire picture. Salience in this case are the children and the man as they are the most visually prominent. Their size, color, and contrast are what stand out the most in the entire image, attracting more

attention than others. The color and contrast focus more on them rather than the background placement. This further creates the hierarchy of importance in the image, as it highlights their struggles and gets empathy from the viewers. Framing here is weak as elements overlap or merge, showing connection. There is a degree of connection between the individuals, showing no deliberate separation. In terms of emotions, affect can be seen as the expressions on their faces show sadness, uncertainty of the future. The judgment concludes the evaluations of their behavior as equivocal and despairing. With the end of this tragedy not in near sight. The appreciation evaluates the situations as catastrophic and tragic as they are not sure of the food or aid, they may receive.

4.2 Portrayal of Starvation Crisis in The Express Tribune:



Figure 6: *(2025, July). Palestinians gather as they carry aid supplies that entered Gaza through Israel, amid a hunger crisis, in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip****. Reuters***

Composition and emotion:

The image shows a mass of Palestinians gathered as they carry aid supplies that entered Gaza through Israel, amid a hunger crisis, in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip. The scene is chaotic, with hundreds of people moving in lines through a destroyed area after getting aid. In the far background ruined buildings can be seen along with dust, and destruction. In terms of information value, the left side of the image shows people going after getting aid, already carrying their flour, demonstrating the given that they are famished and stressed. The left side also shows some tents as many of these people are displaced. The right side shows more people going back after getting aid, representing the new, the hope of not going hungry. The

right side also has some tents, showing the displacement of these individuals. The top represents ruined buildings, and smoke working as the ideal, the reminder that war can have a devastating impact. The bottom shows blurry images of people carrying flour, the real practical act of surviving among ruins. The center is a dense line people carrying sacks of flour, creating the nucleus. Margins such as collapsed buildings and tents show context in a secondary way. The white sacks of flour and the tents are the most salient features because of their color, and recurrence across the image. They stand out and turn the viewer's focus immediately to the aid. The human faces are not visible but tired bodies create a second salience, as it shows the expressions of willpower, and struggle. The ruins in the background are less prominent but come into view if paid attention to, increase the emotional impact, comparing humanitarian aid with damage. The composition has weak framing, with no clear borders, stressing on collective struggle and unity. The lack of separations between individuals symbolizes shared hardship and a shared story of survival. As affect in this image, we can read the body language of the people and see the expressions sadness and desperation among people carrying aid. They appear fatigued and distraught. Their faces even though not visible, but their bent bodies from the weight of the flour, show clear signs of despair. As judgment we can evaluate their behavior as valiant because they are exposing themselves to get supplies for their family as these aid points are knows places where the assailant attacks to create disorder. Their behavior can also be seen as despairing, despite knowing the fact that they may not come back alive,

they still jeopardize their lives to get aid. As appreciation the situation is both disastrous and confused.



Figure 7: *(2025, July). A Palestinian boy flashes the victory sign as he shoves the crowd to receive a hot meal at a charity kitchen in the Mawasi area of Khan Yunis in Gaza Strip****. AFP***

Composition and emotion:

The image shows a large group of Palestinian men, women and children huddled together to get food from the aid distribution. They are in a tight space and overlap with each other. Many are holding pots and pans over their heads in order to protect themselves from the heat and sunlight. A few are looking at the camera clicking their pictures. A Palestinian boy flashes the victory sign as he stands in the crowd to receive a hot meal at a charity kitchen in the Mawasi area of Khan Yunis in Gaza Strip.

In terms of information value left side represents given, which in the case of this image is the apparent starvation crisis. The left side of the image holds some women and children waiting in line to acquire aid. It is the known about this image that Gaza is going through a desperate hunger crisis. The right side represents new. In this image the right side of the image shows children trying to get aid, some sheltering themselves with the utensils they brought along. This can be seen as the important of the image as, these destitute children are exposed to both the cruelty of the human as it is a man-made hunger and the environmental brutality. The top or ideal of the image shows the children holding pots and pans again trying to shield themselves from the environment. This is aspirational as even at a young age their resolve is absolute. The bottom is of the image is not clear, but it is factual that the individuals in the picture are going through a hunger crisis and require aid. Center is the nucleus of the image; in this case it is the boy showing the victory sign. His determination should be venerated as even though he is trapped in the middle of a catastrophe still he is positive about the situation and wants peace. His bravery is commendable and his

steadfastness concrete. The margins are subordinates in the image, which in this case are the children surrounding the boy. Salience in this image are the pots and pans raised above the heads. They are the most visually prominent because of their color and repetition throughout the image. They attract more attention than others. Framing is weak as the separation of elements is not clearly visible. The degree of connection between individuals in the Image gives it a weal framing as they overlap each other. In terms of emotions, Affect can be determined by looking at the expressions of emotions on the faces of individuals. Their faces clearly show discomfort and uneasiness. Which is obvious due to their dire condition. As judgment evaluation of the people's behavior can be seen as irritated and distressed because they are wedged in a constricted space trying to get aid. Evaluations of the situation is indeed tragic because these humans are experiencing what no human should ever have to face, the uncertainty of going to sleep or back to their families with or without food.



Figure 8: *(2025, July). Palestinians carry aid supplies in Beit Lahia, Gaza Strip****. Reuters***

Composition and emotion:

The image shows a horde of Palestinians assembled as they transport aid supplies that arrived in Gaza through Israel, amidst a hunger catastrophe, in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip. The scene is disordered, with hundreds of people stirring through a demolished zone after getting aid, carrying the bags of flour on their shoulders. In the far background we can be seen along with dust, and destruction, more people arriving in order to get aid.

In terms of information value, the left side of the image shows people gathered around after getting aid, some already carrying their flour bags, signifying the given that they are ravenous and strained. The left side also shows many of these people carrying bags of flour over their shoulders. The right side shows additional people going back to their tents after

receiving aid, demonstrating the new, the hope of not going to sleep famished. The top represents a sea of people coming to get aid along with debris and smoke working as the ideal, the aide-memoire that war and famine can have a distressing effect. The bottom shows clear images of people carrying flour on their shoulders while others wait to get aid, demonstrating the real practical act of enduring among ruins. The center is a dense crowd of people carrying sacks of flour, creating the nucleus. Margins such as collapsed structures in the back and ruins with people standing on them in the distance show context in a secondary way. The white sacks of flour and the people carrying it are the most salient features because of their color, and reappearance across the image. They stand out and turn the viewer's focus proximately to the aid. The human faces are not very noticeable but exhausted bodies generate a second salience, as it shows the expressions of determination, and struggle. The carcasses in the background are less protuberant but come into view if focused on, this intensifies the emotional impact, associating humanitarian aid with mutilation and survival with struggle. The composition has weak framing, with no clear borders, emphasizing on joint struggle and accord. The absence of partings amongst individuals suggests communal adversity and a public story of endurance. As affect in this image, we can examine the body language of the people and see the languages of despondency and exhaustion among people carrying aid. They look weary and troubled. Their faces not noticeable, but their bent bodies from the weight of the flour, show clear signs of hopelessness. As judgment we can evaluate their behavior as courageous and heroic for the reason that they are revealing

themselves to acquire supplies for their household as these aid points are recognized places where the assailant attacks to create disorder. Their behavior can also be seen as miserable, contempt to knowing the circumstance that they may not come back successful, they still endanger their lives to acquire aid. As appreciation the circumstances are both devastating and disordered.



Figure 9*: (2025, July). The United Nations is warning that the world is facing its worst humanitarian crisis since the end of World War II, with more than 20 million people facing starvation and famine in four countries.* ***AFP***

Composition and emotion:

The image shows a mother and child. The mother covers her face with her hand in sorrow while the child embraces her, watching the cameras in distress. They stand in front of a wall with not visible help or support. The child clutches the mother firmly while the mother embraces him back as to deliver him with a comfort despite being in agony herself.

The information value in this image is the placement of elements (left/right, top/bottom). No visible left right of this image are shown. But the given is the undeniable situation the people of Gaza are going through. There is no visible top or bottom of the image as well only the center or nucleus of the image which is the mother and child. Salience of the image is clearly the mother and child as they are visually very prominent because of their color contrast with the background. The grey background pulls attention of the viewers to the mother and child. They stand out in the image due to the gloomy context. Framing is strong as there is a clear degree of separation between the elements. All the elements are visually separated. The emotional subsystems here are affect, also the expressions of emotion. The mother is clearly distress as she covers her face with her hand, possibly to hide her tears. The child clutching her is also in agony as his face is twisted in a crying position. Judgment can be evaluated through their behavior. The covering of the face shows a surge of emotions that humans face. It is natural to cover one's face if the emotions are overwhelming. The child's behavior is defensive, clutching him mother. Either he feels threatened or self-protective. Evaluations situations, or phenomena is undeniably catastrophic and chaotic. The United Nations cautioned that Gaza is facing its worst humanitarian crisis since the end of World War II, with many people facing starvation and famine.



Figure 10: *(2025, July). A child and two women were trampled to death in a stampede at a bakery in the central Gazan city of Deir el-Balah on Friday.* ***Reuters***

Composition and emotion:

The image shows people waiting patiently in line to get food from the bakery in the city of Deir el-Balah. A boy with a girl next to him is seen getting aid from an aid worker. A woman stands behind them waiting her turn. A few men wearing caps and a hair net can be seen distributing the aid.

In terms of information value, left side represents given. In the image the left side holds an aid worker distributing aid. This is the familiar as in a catastrophe like famine aid distribution is compulsory. The right side represents new or unfamiliar. The right side of the image displays a boy getting aid. He looks distressed and confused. This situation may very well be unfamiliar to him. The top of the image shows some people waiting for

aid. This is the ideal. The bottom is real or factual in the image to bottom shows the pots and pans being filled by the aid workers. This shows the fact that Gaza is starving. The nucleus of the image is the girl standing in the middle of the image, ready to receive aid. The margins are subordinate. In this image they are the people surrounding the girl waiting to receive food. They are secondary but no less important. Salience in this image are the girl and the aid workers. They are visually prominent due to their contrast and repetition. Thy attract more attention than other individuals. The framing is weak as the elements in the image overlap or merge, showing connection. Affect can be interpreted as the expressions of emotions on their faces are mixed. The boy on the right seems to be in distress but the girl seems to be smiling. The faces of aid workers are neutral. Judgment is evident is their behaviors. The people in the picture are patient, waiting their turn and letting others get aid peacefully. They are not huddled together but giving a form of apace to each other. Appreciation is the assessment of situations. In this image in seem to be tragic as these people have lost their usual lives and now resort to aid. As the caption also states that a child and two women were trampled to death in a stampede at a bakery in the central Gazan city of Deir el-Balah on Friday. Rendering the situation even more tragic.

4.3 Portrayal of Starvation Crisis in The Guardian:



Figure 11: *(2025, July). Five-year-old Lana Salih Juha, who suffers from severe malnutrition.* ***Mohammed Y. M. Al-yaqoubi.***

Composition and emotion:

The image shows a Palestinian child sitting in a tent, likely starving due to the hunger crises. His face solemn and miserable. Due to the hunger crisis, it is deemed highly impossible to get food or feed your children. The image shows the child starved with his backbone prominent. His body is very weak, making the scene look chaotic and highlighting need of food. The child is placed at the very center of the image, making him its nucleus and drawing all attention to his fragile body and piercing stare. The composition emphasizes two layers of meaning: the upper half highlights the child's face, eyes, and body, creating an emotional plea and reveals the stark physical reality of starvation, while the lower half emphasize the reality of no shelter for children. Unlike a given/new structure, the layout is stable and entirely centered on the child's condition. His pale, frail body and wide, sorrowful eyes stand out sharply against the dark-grey

background. The use of light heightens his visibility, ensuring that he remains the unquestionable focal point. The strong framing isolates him from any surrounding elements, eliminating distraction and producing an effect that forces the observer to confront his suffering directly. On the emotional level (affect), the child's weak frame, prominent bones, and helpless posture evoke deep sadness and fear of impending loss. From a judgmental perspective, the image implicitly reflects the cruelty, negligence, or devastation of war that allows a child to reach such a dire state. In terms of appreciation, the image carries a tragic quality: the child's malnourishment becomes a powerful symbol of the broader humanitarian disaster in Gaza's hunger crisis.



Figure 12*: (2025, July). Fourteen-month-old Hazar Arfa, receiving treatment at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis in southern Gaza, was in critical condition due to severe malnutrition.* ***Anadolu/Getty Images***

Composition and emotion:

The image shows a brutally underweight fourteen-month-old child, Hazar Arfa, held upright by adult hands. The child's ribs are noticeable, with a weak body and big, expressive eyes. The background is fully black, separating the child from any background scenery.

Information Value can be seen as the child is in the center, making him the nucleus of the image. All attention is focused to his delicate body and stare. The upper half focuses the child's face and eyes being the ideal, inducing emotional plea, while the lower half highlights the bodily reality of starvation, which can be seen as the real. It is a stable composition, not designed as given/new, but in its place as a particular focus to the child and his state. The child's pale, fragile body and large eyes stand out blatantly in contradiction to the black background. Light increases the child's prominence, making a sharp difference. The adult hands are subdued in manner and partially hidden, ensuring the child remains the main focus of the image. The framing is strong, the background separates the child entirely, in order to remove distraction. The separation makes a Painting like effect, pushing the observer to question the child's state openly. In terms of affect, the child's weak body, large eyes, and unresponsive face induces deep sadness. His noticeable ribs and fragile position create fear of loss of life. The requirement for adult hands to hold the child straight underlines weakness, inducing feelings of brittleness and resolve. In terms

of judgment, a negative element may occur as indirectly the brutality, negligence, or disasters of war for letting a child to reach this serious state. Appreciation can be seen as tragic; the child's malnourishment symbolizes the human disaster of Gaza's hunger crisis.



Figure 13: *(2025, July). Five-month-old Ammar Muhammad Ammara has suffered from a persistent high fever and severe malnutrition since birth.* ***Anadolu/Getty Images***

Composition and emotion:

The image shows a mother holding her malnourished and underweight child. The child's ribs are obviously visible, with a weak little body and small delicate crying face. The background is fully brown, separating the child and the mother from the passive backdrop.

Information Value can be seen as the child and the mother are the center, making them the nucleus of the image. All attention is focused on the child

and his delicate body, with the mother holding him upright. The upper half focuses the mother's face being the ideal, inducing emotional plea from a mother to the world as she watches her beloved child starve, while the lower half highlights the bodily reality of starvation with the child's malnourished body clearly displayed, which can be seen as the real. It is a steady composition, not intended as given/new, but in its place as a particular focus to the mother and child and the child's malnourished state. The mother's black headscarf and the child's pale, fragile body stand out deliberately in contradiction to the brown background. The background further increases the mother and child's importance, making a strong difference. The background is passive in manner, guaranteeing the mother and child remain the focus of the image. The framing is strong, the background separates the mother and child entirely, to remove interference. The parting makes a portrait like effect, forcing the observer to enquire about the child's state. In terms of affect, the mother's solemn expressions and child's feeble body, and crying face brings deep despondency. His obvious ribs and fragile position generate anxiety of cost of existence. The obligation for the mother to clutch the child underlines feebleness, persuading feelings of fragility and determination. In terms of judgment, an undesirable element may occur as the viciousness, carelessness, or catastrophes of war for letting a child to reach this serious state and the mothers utter helplessness watching her child go into a state of malnourishment. Appreciation can be seen as heartbreaking and tragic; the child's malnourishment indicates the human disaster of Gaza's hunger crisis and the mother's helplessness indicates a parent's utter vulnerability.



Figure 14: *(2025, July). Muhammad Zakariya Ayyoub al-Matouq, an 18-month-old child, in Gaza City.* ***Ahmed Jihad Ibrahim Al-arini/Anadolu/Getty Images***

Composition and emotion:

A Palestinian mother, with a headscarf, holds a severely underweight child in her arms inside a temporary cover or tent in Gaza city. The child's ribs and spine jut out harshly, underlining life-threatening starvation and weakness. The woman's face shows a combination of strength and deep mourning, as she cares for her child touching her chest. The mother and child are positioned centrally, making them the concentration of the viewer's observation. The grey tent background setting gives them a situation of displacement and poverty. This is the information value. The child's shrunken body is the most salient component emphasized by illumination, posture, and the distinction with the mother's

clothes. The mother's face also draws consideration because of its demonstrative character. The near bodily connection between mother and child makes a close-fitting, intimate setting. The background tent walls encircle the scene, accentuating the aspect of seclusion, imprisonment, and absence of escape.

Affect can be seen as the child's fragile state conjures sorrow and desolation in the onlooker. The mother's shielding motion stimulates compassion in the viewers. In spite of misery, the woman holds the child resolutely, conveying a silent strength. In terms of Judgment the mother is judged in a positive light, considerate, defending, enduring destitution while still showing self-esteem. Appreciation can be seen as assessment of situation; the image represents the overwhelming human cost of hunger and war. Which is catastrophic. Dissimilar to comprehensive crowd images, this concentrates on one connection that of a mother and child, whirling the humanitarian crisis into an intensely personal, mother-child calamity. The mother's embrace of her emaciated child converts into a representation of both suffering and maternal suppleness among breakdown and war disasters.



Figure 15: *(2025, July) Mohammed, seven, and Zeina, 10. Their mother says the family has been 'silencing our hunger with water'.* ***Seham Tantesh***

Composition and emotion:

Two children, possibly siblings can be seen in this picture. The boy on the left and the girl on the right. Their names respectively given as Mohammed and Zeina. Both look discernably emaciated and malnourished. The girl holding up her sleeve to demonstrate her scrawny arm and the boy without a shirt to exhibit the absolute nightmare both are going through because of a food shortage.

Information Value can be depicted as the placement of elements in the image. On the left we see a boy utterly emaciated and starved. His ribs visible. This side represents given also the known that Gaza is going through a manmade famine. The people are left with very scarce food. On the right side we see a girl. She signifies new or the important, that even

children are not spared by this situation, but they are the worst effected ones. The top or ideal can be their faces. Their expressions of hope yet filled with grief. The bottom or real is factual that both these children are going through hunger and starvation. Center or nucleus are surely the children as all the attention is drawn towards them. They are the subject of the image. No visible margins can be seen in the image. Salience is definitely the children as they are visually prominent because of their size in the image, their contrast with the grey background, and the color of their clothing. They are the main focus, and their placement is dominant. This further creates hierarchy of importance in the image. Framing is strong as all the elements of the image are visually separated

In terms of emotions, affect can be seen as the expressions of emotion on the children's faces. Their faces showing clear signs of anguish and despondency. Their big eyes gazing at the cameras with hope. The girl's face evidently presenting signs of pain. The boy appears emaciated and distraught. Judgment can be seen in their behavior. Evaluating it can make the observer realize that they are disheartened, unaware of their future. In terms of appreciation the situation in indeed catastrophic. The children left with little to no food along with numerous other people shows us the devastating effects of war and man-made famine.

5. Conclusion:

To conclude, it can be said that Pakistani print media both the Dawn and Express Tribune use weak framing, chaotic and distant images of crowded places and aid distribution to depict the joint victimization and starvation crises of Palestinian people. The emotions are invoked through

facial distress and salient elements like pots, underweight bodies, flour sacks and homelessness. They also use captions and headlines to highlight suffering, willpower, and pliability. Most of the images from Pakistani print media highlight shared struggle, massive destruction and starvation. The Express tribune uses portrayals of aid supplies and resilience, displaying Palestinians as both exposed and resistant and reframe Palestinians as not only sufferers but also as mediators of struggle, while Dawn uses disordered crowd scenes, distressed people to invoke empathy for the Palestinian misery. The Guardian uses tight framing of individual calamity by portraying the close images of starved children as symbols of innocence, to invoke strong emotional engagement and induce worldwide humanitarian worry.

These choices, shaped by compositional markers (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and appraisal strategies, reveal that media portrayals of humanitarian crises are never neutral but carefully made to evoke emotions and reflect ideological positions. To portray Palestinians as either individual victims, collective victims, or fighters, Dawn, Express Tribune, and The Guardian employ compositional markers and appraisal subsystems as ideological tools in addition to visual strategies. Each newspaper tactically uses compositional markers. Information value with left-right elements, often compare “given sorrow” with “new optimism” like flour sacks as a mean of survival. Salience highlights polished pots, white flour bags, delicate and malnourished bodies of children to govern kindness, arranging pyramid of meaning. Dawn’s weak framing shows public suffering, while The Guardian’s strong framing separates people from the rest of the image to

deepen compassion. Express Tribune uses diverse framing, alternating between shared and separate focus. All these images are picked because they were ideologically and emotionally relevant. By underlining shared struggles of Palestinians, Dawn uses crowded misfortune, the Guardian uses individual misfortune and Express Tribune a mixture of both, the newspapers support stories with many viewpoints and audience prospects. The comparative analysis of the Dawn, The Express Tribune, and The Guardian as representative of Pakistani and American media shows that these images invoke emotional power by making tactful use of compositional markers like information value, salience, and framing along with strong affective cues.

Further studies can be carried on in the context of international media portrayal of starvation crises and in view of representational and interactional markers used to invoke emotional effect at broader level.

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