

Framing the Enemy Negative Other-Representation as a Discursive Strategy in Rishi Sunak's Speeches on the Israel-Hamas Conflict

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Abstract

The strong connection between language and politics can be seen in the role that language plays in conflicts. In many cases, politicians use language to criticize the policies of others by highlighting their actions while legitimizing their own actions and minimizing their own shortcomings. Therefore it is very common that in times of crisis politicians use certain linguistic strategies to make an explicit division between the "self" and the "other". Thereby separating themselves from their opponents. They also use language as a tool to transfer their ideologies and influence the public perception. That is why one of the most important strategies that political figures use is the negative other-representation. This strategy is based on portraying the other group as immoral and cruel. Such a representation not only affects the image of the other party but it also influence the image of the speaker's own group. The represented study examines the way in which Rishi Sunak uses this strategy to represent Hamas in his speeches considering the conflict in Palestine. This study contributes to the current knowledge by providing qualitative descriptive analysis to the way in which Hamas is linguistically represented as the enemy and how this representation supports the larger ideological aims. The significance of Sunak's speeches lies in the fact that he represents the United Kingdom, which plays a crucial role in the global affairs. The analysis of Sunak's speeches is based on the adoption of Teun A. van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework. This framework explains this strong connection between society, cognition and discourse and therefore it is considered very beneficial for examining how ideologies appear in language. The primary aim of the study is to investigate how the strategy of negative other-representation is employed in Sunak's speeches and how it is used to condemn Hamas's actions. In addition the study aims to figure out how this strategy supports the United Kingdom's moral authority and justify its actions. The represented study contributes to the critical discourse analysis field by illustrating how international conflicts are shaped through the use of language and how the war narratives are framed.

Keywords: (critical discourse analysis, conflict, negative other-representation, political speech).

تأطير العدو التمثيل السلبي للآخر كاستراتيجية خطابية في خطابات ريشي سوناك حول الصراع

بين إسرائيل وحماس

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الملخص:

تتجلى العلاقة الوثيقة بين اللغة والسياسة في الدور الذي تلعبه اللغة في الصراعات. ففي كثير من الأحيان، يستخدم السياسيون اللغة لانتقاد سياسات الآخرين عن طريق إبراز أفعالهم، بينما يبررون أفعالهم الخاصة ويقللون من شأن عيوبهم. ولذلك، من الشائع جداً أن يلجأ السياسيون في أوقات الأزمات إلى استراتيجيات لغوية مُعينة لإحداث فصل واضح بين "الذات" و"الآخر"، وبالتالي فصل أنفسهم عن خصومهم. كما يستخدمون اللغة كأداة لنشر أيديولوجياتهم والتأثير على الرأي العام. ولذا، تُعد استراتيجية "التمثيل السلبي للآخر" من أهم الاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمها السياسيون. تقوم هذه الاستراتيجية على تصوير الطرف الآخر على أنه غير أخلاقي وقاسٍ. ولا يؤثر هذا التصوير على صورة الطرف الآخر فحسب، بل يؤثر أيضاً على صورة جماعة المتحدث نفسها. تتناول هذه الدراسة الطريقة التي استخدم بها ريشي سوناك هذه الاستراتيجية لتمثيل حركة حماس في خطابه المتعلقة بالصراع الفلسطيني. تُسهم هذه الدراسة في المعرفة الحالية من خلال تقديم تحليل وصفي نوعي للطريقة التي تُصوّر بها حماس لغوياً كعدو، وكيف يدعم هذا التصوير الأهداف الأيديولوجية الأوسع. تكمن أهمية خطابات سوناك في كونه يُمثل المملكة المتحدة، التي تلعب دوراً محورياً في الشؤون العالمية. يستند تحليل خطابات سوناك إلى تبني الإطار الاجتماعي المعرفي لتيون أ. فان دايك. يُفسر هذا الإطار العلاقة الوثيقة بين المجتمع والإدراك والخطاب، ولذلك يُعتبر مفيداً جداً لدراسة كيفية ظهور الأيديولوجيات في اللغة. يهدف البحث بشكل أساسي إلى دراسة كيفية توظيف استراتيجية تصوير الآخر بصورة سلبية في خطابات سوناك، وكيف تُستخدم لإدانة تصرفات حماس. إضافةً إلى ذلك، يهدف البحث إلى تحديد كيف تدعم هذه الاستراتيجية السلطة الأخلاقية للمملكة المتحدة وتُبرر أفعالها. تُسهم هذه الدراسة في مجال تحليل الخطاب النقدي من خلال توضيح كيفية تشكّل الصراعات الدولية عبر استخدام اللغة، وكيفية صياغة سرديات الحرب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: (تحليل الخطاب النقدي، الصراع، تصوير الآخر السلبي، الخطاب السياسي).

1. Introduction

The conflict between Israel and Hamas is one of the most significant ongoing disputes in the current era. It is considered as an international issue that receives large attention, due to its social, political and humanitarian consequences. What makes this conflict enduring is the fact that it is not limited to the battlefields, but it extends to the ideology and identity realm. Also It underlines the constant fluctuation in the Middle East and shows the vulnerability of international laws in wartime. In times of crisis, politicians have a huge influence on the minds of the audience, whether the foreign or domestic one. Since they utilize their political speeches to divide groups into victims and aggressors. As well as justifying certain actions while condemning others. So in such sensitive times, language is no longer used as tool for communication, it becomes an instrument for expressing conflict and producing escalation. In conflict times, many politicians try to show neutrality by frequently calling for peace and tension resolution. They claim that their opinions and decisions are stable and that they follow the international laws. Although they try not to show any clear bias toward any side, the examination of their own linguistic practices shows the opposite. In fact, They show their preference for Israel by supporting its actions and considering it as a loyal and legitimate ally while decrying Hamas and considering it as a terrorist organization. This shows how the linguistic strategies used by the political elite can hide the ideological predilection under pretended neutrality and therefore influencing people's perception of the conflict. The presented research examines two political speeches delivered by Rishi Sunak, the previous British prime minister as a study case to investigate how politicians use language to represent Hamas in the Isreal-Hamas conflict. His speeches shows how the linguistic strategy of negative other-representation is used to criticize Hamas' actions and rationalize the

international responses. Thus, this study participates in comprehending the role of language in the Isreal- Hamas conflict and revealing the covered biases underneath the claimed neutrality.

2. Critical Discourse Analysis

Rogers (2004) states that discourses are always filled with political, social, racial, and economic indications. For that reason, as an approach within the larger field of discourse analysis, the main aim of critical discourse analysis is to reveal the hidden and commonly overlooked beliefs and standpoints. Furthermore critical discourse analysis examines the utility of discourse concerning social and cultural concerns, including racism, politics, gender, and identity, and explores the reasons behind specific discourse practices and their implications (Paltridge, 2012). It functions as an instrument for interpreting, describing, analysing and criticizing the social realities that are manifested in language. Moreover, critical discourse analysis aims at identifying the role of the secret relations in the advancement of dominance and power. It also highlights certain matters such as power imbalance, undemocratic attitudes, social injustice and oppression, in order to encourage people towards the reformative activities (Fairclough, 1992). In addition to the description and interpretation of discourse in context of crisis, discourse analysis offers an illustration of why and how discourse functions (Rogers, 2004).

The main focus of critical discourse analysis is the predominant figures and organizations because of their role in promoting social justice and inequality (Van Dijk, 1993). Consequently, Richardson (2007) confirms that CDA exposes how language conceals the power and complexities of politics, as well as how inequalities are normalized; thus, it is a valid theoretical paradigm for use in conflict studies.

Critical discourse studies seek to establish links between social and cultural activities alongside the ideals and assumptions that underpin discourse. It aims to clarify individuals' expressions and actions in

discourse concerning their perceptions of the world, self-identity, and interpersonal relationships. Moreover, one of the assumptions that critical discourse analysis is based on is that the connection between language and meaning is inherently non-arbitrary, as the selection of a specific genre or rhetorical approach entails distinct presuppositions, meanings, ideologies, and intents (Kress 1991).

3. Political Discourse

Language serves as the sole medium through which commands can be issued, threats can be expressed, questions can be posed, and offers and promises can be made, contingent upon convincing one's interlocutors of the necessary resources that make the speech act reliable. Only through language connected to social and political systems can one announce war, determine guilt or innocence, prorogue parliaments, or adjust taxes (Chilton, 2004). As suggested by Chilton and Schäffner (2002), the existence of political activity is inherently tied to the utilization of language. It is indeed the case that additional behaviors play a role: for example, physical violence. However, the practice of politics is primarily shaped by language.

Political discourse can be defined as a human language used in ways that are perceived as politically driven (Chilton, 2004). On the other hand, van Dijk (2001) defines political discourse as the discourse of politicians, i.e., their talks, texts, and their professional activities. A politician's informal interaction with an associate has not been categorized as political discourse. It must be delivered by a qualified speaker and occur within an institutional setting. The subjects addressed generally relate to public activities demanding collective decisions, policy, and laws. Consequently, Isabela and Norman Fairclough (2012) confirm that in non-political circumstances, the discourse of politicians or any other political actors is not considered 'political'. Additionally, van Dijk (1997) asserts that political discourse is determined not chiefly by topic or style,

but by the identities of the speakers, the audience, the context, and the objectives pursued. In another terms, political discourse is particularly 'political' due to its role within the political process.

From Cap's (2023) perspective, within the political discourse, political agents typically convey meanings beyond their explicit statements, and where indirect and ambiguous meanings appear to be normative rather than the anomaly. Equally, Chilton and Schäffner (2002) state that in both daily and political discourse, there is a tendency for the words communicated to be different from what was meant by them. Though they may use several different registers and styles and choose to discuss different issues politicians and journalists still use the same indirect speech acts, base their statements on assumptions, and use face-saving tactics to soften their rejections as they communicate with the public.

4. Language of Conflict

In times of conflict, the impact of violence on language becomes more evident and distinct. Where language undergoes censorship, encryption, and euphemism; commands take the place of conversation, and countries express their aims more forcefully through harm rather than symbols. Moreover, discussions are suspended, foreign diplomats are brought back, and threats and falsehoods rise to the level of communicative frameworks. War demonstrates how violence can damage communication; it silences communities and, through trauma and hurt, undermines an individual's ability to articulate thoughts clearly (Dawes, 2002). In a similar vein, Chilwa (2021) argues that language constructs and discursive systems determine the nature of conflict, demonstrating the close relationship between discourse and the escalation of conflict.

Conflict necessitates the presence of an explicit target or cause, together with a minimum of two parties adopting opposing positions. O'Driscoll (2019) suggests that a conflict can occur when two groups

disagree about the essential resource's distribution. Or it even can occur because of the actions of one individual at a certain point so subsequently conflict happens based on that impression. In such situations language is usually used to express the antagonism by necessarily indicating ethical evaluations considering the opposite party. And in turn these evaluations may undergo negative evaluations. Above all by the time this chain occurs, it means that the conflict is escalating, irrespective of its size.

Normally when the word "conflict" is mentioned what comes in the mind first is "international conflict" although conflict can happen at any level. Conflicts can occur for different reasons among different parties. For instance, the conflicts that happen between governments, states, tribes or large organizations are usually sophisticated and mainly different from conflicts that happen on smaller scales. Conflicts can happen because of disagreements over natural resources, political stances, or territories. It can even happen because of historical events that seem to be perpetual despite the hard diplomatic efforts to resolve them over many years. Notwithstanding, at the core of all conflicts, language functions as the primary tool for the communication between the conflicting parties and factions (Jeffries, 2019).

The two terms "conflict" and "war" are deeply interconnected and most of the time they are interchangeably used. In the perspective of Chilwa (2021) it is recognized by contrasting aims and opposite interests that develop from simple disagreement to violence among groups. Moreover, conflicts can happen at the group level, ethnic level, state level, national level or regional level. Furthermore, international conflicts can be seen in the "war on terror" such as Nigeria and its allies against Boko Haram as well as the US and its allies against ISIL.

Also, Jeong (2008) illustrates that the term "conflict" is linked to tensions related to decision-making on various matters and has been broadly interpreted to denote any form of discord in social contexts.

Hartwick and Barki (2002) emphasize that different specialist define the term “conflict” in distinct ways. Some specialists link conflict to dispute or contrasting views; others consider it as threatening actions. On the other hand some of them see it as mixture of unpleasant feelings, including dissatisfaction, tension, anger, and envy. While others consider it as a blend of all these things combined.

In the last few years language scholars became significantly more engaged in the expensive field of conflict studies. Recognizing that language reflects a community's collective understanding, which allows them to interpret their surroundings, examining language use will serve as a crucial gateway for exploring how individuals within a society or group perceive and manage conflict (Cohen 2001). Therefore, there is a significant cooperation among discourse analysis and conflict studies, asserting that discourse analysis serves as a valuable “instrument” within the realm of conflict studies. For instance, how conflict is constructed through the way in which "others" have been addressed and how the parties involved define the current issues (Suurmond, 2005).

5. An Overview of The Isreal- Hamas Conflict

Ever since the establishment of Israel through armed conflict in 1948, Palestinians have been subjected to unending misery and hardships. The Palestinians were deprived of more than 78 percent of their territory. As a result of the conflict that took place in 1948, a great number of Palestinians were compelled to leave their towns and homes, which led to an increase in the quantity of refugees, which reached over 6 million by the year 2006 (Hroub, 2009). Thus, the conflict between Palestinian and Israeli is arguably one of the greatest frustrating disputes in the current era (Nets-Zehngut & Bar-Tal, 2007). In accordance with Gibson (2018), The origins of the conflict extend over an entire century during which the relationship between Palestinians and Israelis have predominantly been characterized by combat, bloodshed, and misery.

As stated by Hroub (2009), Hamas was originally established on 14 December 1987, announcing its formation in a communiqué shortly after the onset of the first intifada, the Palestinian rebellion, on 8 December. The establishment of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) was decided by prominent leaders of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, including Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, Abdul 'Aziz al-Rantisi, Salah Shehadeh, Muhammad Sham'ah, 'Isa al-Nashar, 'Abdul Fattah Dukhan, and Ibrahim al-Yazuri, on the day following the intifada. Accordingly, Hamas identifies itself as an Islamist movement located in Palestine (Gibson, 2018).

Hamas has maintained a steady ascent since its establishment, despite the fact that there has been no significant progress in attaining even a basic degree of Palestinians' rights. Years of hard work have contributed off, and it is now an important actor in the region's political Islam arena as well as in the Arab and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts. Its popularity has persisted among Palestinians. It has gained popularity among Palestinians' populations both inside and outside of Palestine through a complex web of strategies including religious propagation, educational initiatives, social and charity activity, and military assaults. In several elections that have been held in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, including municipal, student union, and syndication elections, Hamas has emerged victorious (Hroub, 2009).

6. Van Dijk's Seminal Work (2005) for PDA

Politics is a social sphere where discourse is the primary mode of practice, as political cognition is inherently ideological, and discourse serves as a key mechanism for the reproduction of political discourse (van Dijk, 2006). Van Dijk (2005) argues that since the political sphere is inherently ideological, its practices and corresponding discourses are also shaped by ideology. He demonstrates the mutual connection between political language and political ideology, where ideologies not only are manifested

in language but also contributes considerably to the construction and development of language. Additionally he emphasizes that language functions as the central means via which political ideologies are obtained, introduced, conveyed, distributed and criticized (van Dijk, 2005)

Van Dijk (2004) introduced the theoretical socio-cognitive framework to investigate how ideologies appear in language. This framework employs multidisciplinary approach. Due to the complexity that lies in the assessment of ideology and discourse within a sole discipline. Rather, the examination of this relation necessitate the involvement of several academic fields. Thus, to refine this wide scope, the socio-cognitive framework is centered on three main aspects which are “discourse, society and cognition”. In this framework “discourse” involves the utilization of language, conventions, written texts, and oral communications. “Society” includes the larger political, social, cultural and historical aspects of the ideology. It also examines the group-based nature of ideologies and their part in promoting or questioning dominance structures. “Cognition” on the other side entails the intellectual aspects of ideology. Encompassing its nature as a belief system, as well as its relationship with knowledge and opinions (van Dijk, 2004). Van Dijk in this framework suggests that the linguistic structure and societal structure are connected via the sophisticated processes of the cognition. These processes act as a linkage between the social context and language use. Therefore cognition serves as a bridge that ties language with social situations. Therefore van Dijk states that critical discourse analysis not just investigates the structure of the text, but it also identifies its relation with the larger social structures (van Dijk, 2016).

This approach is based on two interrelated levels, the micro and macro level. The micro-level investigates language use and verbal communication. On the other hand the macro-level centre on the wider social dynamics including dominance, power and inequalities among

social groups. That is why critical discourse analysis focuses on connecting these levels since they cannot be examined separately. At the micro level every discourse unit should be stored in the cognition. While at the macro-level summaries of long discourse and the primary themes must be analyzed (van Dijk, 2016).

According to van Dijk in the discursive analysis, especially the analysis of media news, the focus should be on the macro structure level since it is related to the thematic structure of the news and its general representations. The macro-level analysis deals with the larger social structures and things like organizational and institutional structures, parliamentary democracy, capitalism, intergroup relations and group structures (van Dijk, 1995).

As van Dijk (2005) illustrates, ideology is usually formed in a polarized way, therefore highlighting the division between groups into in-groups and out-groups depending on opposing affiliations. These structures determine the political orientations and even effects the biased mentality of the group members. As long as the mental models determine the content of the discourse, the ideological polarization is widely observed in language use. In turn, the macro-level structures include also two connected strategies which are positive self-representation and negative other-representation. The strategy of negative other-representation is based on magnifying the negative characteristics related to the out-group while minimizing positive ones (van Dijk, 2006).

Van Dijk (1995) declares that languages are usually ideologically constructed to show preference for the in-group whereas representing the other group in a negative way. Therefore informations that reflect badly on the group members are usually implicitly presented and most of the time linked to external factors. Whereas the out-group's shortcomings are explicitly introduced in detailed ways. Moreover, topicalization is also subjected to ideology due to the fact that the speaker normally overlooks

the content that does not match the interests and the positive self-image of his group while highlighting the negative features of the out-group. Furthermore, rhetorical devices—such as repetition, metaphors, exaggeration, understatement, euphemism, and other classical figures—function to obscure ingroup shortcomings and amplify the outgroup's perceived flaws. This can be frequently seen in political language, for instance when Bush compared Saddam Hussein to Hitler, this is considered a scornful metaphor (van Dijk, 1995).

7. Methodology

The presented study introduce a critical discourse analysis of two selected speeches introduced by Rishi Sunak who is the former prime minister of the United Kingdom considering the Isreal-Hamas conflict. which is considered as one of the most influential debates in the current time. The primary data for this study includes two speeches. The first one is Sunak's statement to the House of Commons on October 16, 2023 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-to-the-house-of-commons-on-the-latest-situation-in-israel-and-gaza-16-october-2023>), henceforth (2023a), and his subsequent address on October 23, 2023 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-to-the-house-of-commons-on-the-latest-situation-in-israel-and-gaza-23-october-2023>), henceforth (2023b). These speeches were selected because of their importance and offering beneficial data to examine how Sunak plays a role in the conflict. Also how does he use language to position himself and his country in the conflict as well as framing the actions of the involved parties. The analysis of the speeches is based on Teun A. van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework (2005), which focuses on the connection between discourse, cognition, and society. The study presents an analysis of how Sunak employs the strategy of negative other-representation in his speeches, with the findings interpreted from a critical perspective.

Therefore, the findings are examined by providing a qualitative descriptive analysis.

Rishi Sunak was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom between 25 October 2022 and 5 July 2024 and the Leader of the Opposition. He was the first British Prime Minister of Indian origin and of Hindu faith. He has introduced many important statements regarding the situation in Palestine, particularly the conflict between Hamas and Israel. He has often sought to portray himself as a neutral party. He has even called for the protection of civilians in Gaza and urged the delivery of humanitarian aid. but he has expressed strong support for Israel since the beginning of the conflict in October 2023. In the language he uses, he has emphasized Israel's right to defend itself and has strongly criticized Hamas, describing its attacks as terrorist.

8. Data Analysis and Discussion

Following the adopted model, the analysis of the two selected speeches reveals important insights about the use of negative-other representation. The in-depth reading of the speeches reveals that Sunak only focuses on the bad traits of Hamas and ignores all their good ones. Thus, negative other-representation can be noticed in many instances in the two speeches. Consider the following

Extract 1: “Hamas as he using innocent Palestinian people as human shields - with the tragic loose of more than 2,600 Palestinian lives, including many children” (Sunak, 2023a)

Sunak employs the strategy of negative other-representation to characterize Hamas as ethically repulsive and accountable for civilian’s suffering. By stating that Hamas is “using innocent people as a humanitarian shield” Sunak implies that Hamas intentionally puts civilians and including vulnerable groups, in danger, for strategic reasons. This portrays Hamas not just as aggressive but also abusing people whom they supposed to protect, which increases the negative judgement against

them. In this text Sunak mentions the catastrophic loss of the lives of Palestinians for certain intentions. First of all, he emphasizes the seriousness of the situation by highlighting the human losses in order to elicit empathy and confirm the impact of the conflict on human lives. Secondly he shifts the responsibility for those deaths away from Israel and directly assigns it to Hamas. Such statement stresses Hamas' role in the conflict and view it as brutal organisation. This representation effects the public perception by viewing Hamas as ruthless and accountable for people torment. Which influence the humanitarian and diplomatic orientations considering the conflict.

Extract 2: “like our allies, we believe that Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people, or their legitimate aspirations to live with equal measures of security, freedom, justice, opportunity and dignity” (Sunak, 2023a).

Here, Sunak employs the negative other-representation strategy to distinguish between Hamas and the rest of Palestinian people. By stating “Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people” Sunak diminishes the legitimacy and authority of Hamas. Moreover he describes the organisation as inauthentic representative to the people it speaks for. He asserts that Palestinians strive to “equal measures of security, freedom, justice, opportunity, and dignity” in order to show that these positive principles contradict with the principles and actions of Hamas. This juxtaposition conveys that the actions and objectives of Hamas are contradictory to the notion of fairness, peace, and human decency, which underscores Hamas' negative image. Also, when he says “our allies” he intends to create a social cohesion among the western countries. In doing so he asserts the unified position of these countries against Hamas, in order to show that Hamas' actions are internationally criticised. In addition, he signifies Hamas as an obstacle that prevents the Palestinian people from achieving their legitimate goals. This portrayal aims at

undermining the legitimacy of Hamas' role and its disenfranchisement. In this way he emphasizes the positive image of his country as supporter of the Palestinian objectives and opponent of Hamas' measures.

Extract 3: “Hamas simply does not stand for the future that Palestinians want” (Sunak, 2023a).

In this extract Sunak tries to questions the role of Hamas as a delegate of Palestinian's aims. When he said that “Hamas simply does not stand for the future that Palestinians want” he demonstrated that Hamas is not only detached from the Palestinian community but it also opposes the real ambition of that community. Such framing strips Hamas of its moral and political authenticity. Thereby suggesting that its ideology and actions are basically contrasting with the principles of justice and human dignity. Considering the language of conflict, this statement amplifies the separation between Hamas and the people it supposed to protect. His focus on portraying Hamas as an organisation that obstructs the Palestinian's goals rather than supporting them intensifies its image as a barrier to peace.

Extract 4: “And they seek to put the Palestinian people in harm's way” (Sunak, 2023a).

Sunak utilizes the strategy of negative other-representation to view Hamas as purposely endangering the lives of the people it is intended to protect. “Seek to put the Palestinian people in harm's way” indicates that Hamas' actions are intentional and vicious instead of being incidental or defensive. This depiction of Hamas view it as unequivocal threat to the Palestinian safety, therefore reducing its authority as a defender. In times of crisis such depiction supports Hamas' moral denunciation, by presenting it not as an advocate against external violence but as traitor to the country. This supports the ideological division among Hamas and civilians. It also confirms global measures and strengthens the legitimacy of those countries that stand against Hamas. By viewing Hamas as risking

the Palestinian lives, Sunak framed them as a barrier to peace and freedom.

Extract 5: “but it was also driven by Hamas’s fear that a new equilibrium might be emerging in the Middle east” (Sunak, 2023b).

In this text, Sunak implies the strategy of negative other-representation to declare that Hamas’ actions are out of selfishness rather than acceptable political motives. “Driven by Hamas’s fear” here he describes the organisation as unconfident, reactive, and inconsistent with regional development, instead of being rational and principled. Additionally the phrase “a new equilibrium” indicates potential change and the direction of cooperation, stability and peace. Also connecting the actions of Hamas to the aim of destroying this developing balance presents Hamas as a constraint in the face of progress. Sunak depicts Hamas as a source of instability that attempts to sustain disorder for its own benefit. This depiction amplifies the negative image of Hamas by suggesting that it is not only responsible for the damage but also deliberately works against stability and peace in the area. Therefore, Sunak associates Hamas with disturbance rather than advancement.

Extract 6: “Mr Speaker, Hamas care more about their paymasters in Iran than the children they hide behind” (Sunak, 2023b).

The negative other-representation strategy can be clearly seen in this extract. Here Sunak attributes egoistic and deceptive objectives to Hamas. The declaration that “Hamas care more about their paymasters in Iran” weaken the legitimacy of the organisation by viewing it as obedient to foreign governments rather than being responsible for its own people. This restricts its political sovereignty and represents it as mercenary troops instead of authorized movement. “Than the children they hide behind” this section of the statement intensifies the negative impression about Hamas by blaming it as using the innocent civilians for its own protection. This now only shows Hamas as cruel organisation but also as

weakening the social cohesion that it should sustain. This declaration reinforces Hamas' moral decline and recklessness. Thus, enhancing the condemnation scenario by viewing Hamas as dangerous organisation that threatens people survival and safety.

Extract 7: “Hamas is not only a threat to Israel but to many others in the region” (Sunak, 2023b)

In this extract Sunak employed the strategy of negative other-representation to show that the threat of Hamas goes beyond Israel and cover the region as a whole. By saying “not only a threat to Israel but to many others in the region” Sunak represents Hamas as a threat to stability that leaves destructive consequences. In this way he suggests that Hamas' actions in general threaten the peace of the entire territory. This negative representation of Hamas contributes to the conflict narrative significantly since it view Hamas as a mass threat instead of being simple opponent. Sunak represents Hamas' actions as transnational issue in order to create intense condemnation and expanded coalitions against it. He draws attention to the importance of contesting the position of Hamas by expanding the threat perception. Moreover, he positions it as a collective enemy that affects the stability of the Middle East as well as its peace.

Extract 8: “but also to renew the better version of the future that Hamas is trying to destroy” (Sunak, 2023b).

The negative other-representation strategy is effectively employed in this text to depict Hamas as destructive force that hinders future prospects and progress. By stating “Hamas is trying to destroy” Sunak indicates that Hamas is deliberately seeks to prevent the “better version of the future” which is built on justice, stability and peace. He weakens Hamas' role and intensifies its reputation as anti-progressive via portraying it as the opponent who works against development and the aspirational outcome. In doing so he sheds the light on ideological gap between the harmful practices of Hamas and developmental aims of the

others. Sunak not only presents the dispute from a military perspective but from existential and moral one. He focused on showing the distinction between those who aim to build a better future and those who seek to ruin it. Through this depiction Sunak represents his side as the protector of progress and peace that stands in the face of Hamas' destructive goals.

In his two speeches (2023a) and (2023b) Sunak employed the strategy of negative other-representation in order to depict Hamas as dangerous and immoral organisation. In doing so he defines the humanitarian and moral aspects of the conflict. In his first speech (2023a) he focused on ethically criticizing Hamas. He accused it with the utility of the innocent civilians as a human shield. Sunak portrays Hamas as a hostile group that doesn't represent the Palestinian people and puts them in danger. He purposefully used this representation to linguistically separate Hamas from the rest of the Palestinian community. He portrayed the organisation as manipulative force that abuses civilians. Such linguistic separation gave him the opportunity to show sympathy for the Palestinian community while at the same time justifying his alignment with Israel. Thereby this speech constructed a moral division in which the United Kingdom represents humanity and justice whereas Hamas stands for deception and ruthlessness.

In his second speech (2023b) Sunak's tone became more oriented towards security and peace. Which intensifies the narrative of threat. He characterized Hamas as an entity that gives a lot of attention to its foreign advocates while very little attention to the Palestinian civilians. He argues that the organisation is "not only a threat to Israel but to many others in the region." he also claims that Hamas seeks to destroy a better version of the future. In this speech, the discourse extend beyond the ethical criticism to include expressing regional and establish and geopolitical threats. Sunak introduced Hamas as a tool that creates external threats and not just an unethical organisation. He confirms the importance of

international alignment and political cooperation between Israel and the western nations to stand in the face of the transnational threat of Hamas.

Overall, Sunak's employment of the strategy of negative other-representation in his two speeches (2023a) and (2023b) fulfils several ideological goals. This strategy helped to dehumanise Hamas and viewing it as unprincipled. It was also utilized to show the separation between Hamas and the Palestinian people. This strategy justifies the western interference via representing Hamas as a universal threat. These rhetorical strategies determine the language of conflict through promoting the Israel-Hamas dispute to the level of global concern. Additionally, the depiction of Hamas as the aggressive side adds legitimacy to the political practices and polishes the image of the United Kingdom as protector of peace and human rights.

9. Conclusions

The present study has investigated how Rishi Sunak used the strategy of negative other-representation to frame Hamas within the Israel-Hamas conflict. The analysis is based on using van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework and has revealed that Sunak repeatedly depicts Hamas as an unauthorised organisation while portraying the United Kingdom and its associates as ethical actors. Committed to humanitarian ideals. He represented Hamas not as mere threat to Israel but also as a destabilizing force for Palestinians and the wider Middle East. The analysis of the data shows that the strategy of negative other-representation is a strategic means to support ideological division. As well as it gives legitimacy for the political positions. This strategy also participates in garnering support for engaging in political interventions.

In both speeches, Sunak implicitly promotes the United Kingdom's claimed moral superiority via representing Hamas as an embodiment of inhumanity and distraction. He viewed the political interference of the united kingdom as crucial and valid. To conclude, this research

emphasizes the role of political discourse in influencing the public's perceptions regarding the conflict. Moreover, the strategy of negative other-representation appears as an effective and beneficial tool through which politicians can frame the international issues. Which exposes the importance of language in peace and war politics.

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