



Mic Check for the Middle East: Podcasts Framing and Geopolitical Narratives of the June 2025 Israeli Strike on Iran

Sara Shaker•

Abstract

This article explores how English-language audio podcasts frame the geopolitical narratives of the June 2025 Israeli strike on Iran, focusing on how legitimacy, threat, and resistance are discursively articulated. Moving beyond approaches that treat podcasts as neutral or reflective media, the study argues they function as active spaces of discourse production, constructing opposing regimes of legitimacy through language, narrative sequencing, and epistemic authority. The research asks how podcasts frame the strike, what strategies structure these framings, and what ideological assumptions underpin them. Methodologically, the study combines framing analysis with critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine a sample from three English-language podcasts—*Unholy: Two Jews on the News*, *The Israel Policy Forum Podcast*, and *The Iran Podcast*—focusing on lexical choices, narrative structure, and practices of inclusion and exclusion. Findings show Israeli- and Western-oriented podcasts frame the strike as security-driven, emphasizing deterrence through authoritative, high-certainty language, while *The Iran Podcast* offers a counter-reading grounded in resistance and anti-imperialism. Legitimacy emerges through narrative sequencing and expert voices, illustrating how podcasts reproduce geopolitical divisions and shape listeners' interpretations of conflict.

Introduction

Across the globe, podcasts have expanded in popularity over the past few decades (Aufderheide et al. 2020; Berry 2006; Sullivan 2019), with their distinct features of narrative intimacy (Lindgren 2016), parasocial host-listener bonds (Lindgren 2016; Zuraikat 2020), and immersive storytelling (Dowling and Miller 2016). Extending beyond its feature of audio delivery,

• Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Prince Edward Island, Cairo Campus, The New Administrative Capital, Cairo, Egypt.



podcasting serves as a main alternative platform to traditional media through smartphone applications (Sang et al. 2020a).

Originating in the early 2000s via iPod-RSS integration (Really Simple Syndication), the term “podcast” appeared in 2004 from hobbyists, independent producers, and passionate creators (Bottomley 2015; Minooka 2024). Platforms such as Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Google Podcasts generated billions of downloads across different genres (Minooka 2024). As podcasts have expanded into influential platforms for political commentary on global events, their role has become essential during moments of rising geopolitical tension. In June 2025, when Israel performed a military strike against Iran, this action generated intense coverage across media platforms, but podcasts especially played an evident role by offering expert commentary that contributed to listeners’ interpretation of the strike.

Yet, despite the growing literature on podcasting as a form of participatory media, limited research has explored how English-language audio podcasts framed the Israeli strike against Iran in June 2025 and how these framings contribute to the public understanding of threat and resistance. Thus, through critical discourse analysis and framing analysis, the article investigates the three podcasts of *Unholy: Two Jews on the News*, *The Israel Policy Pod*, and *The Iran Podcast*, examining the lexical choices, narrative structures, and tone these podcasts employ to construct a specific political narrative about the military strike. The article is guided by the following research questions:

- How do the selected podcasts frame the Israel June 2025 strike against Iran?
- What linguistic, tonal, and narrative strategies are used in audio podcasts?
- What ideological assumptions structure those representations?

The article argues that audio podcasts do not frame geopolitical events but actively construct contrasting regimes of legitimacy through discursive logic. While existing scholarship on framing underlines selection, salience, and representation, this article shows that podcasts function at a deeper level, underlining how actions become justified. Through critical discourse analysis of the above-mentioned podcasts, the study demonstrates that legitimacy is not attached to actors, whether Israel or Iran per se, but is framed through the discourse-in-use, particularly through narrative sequencing, lexical choices, modality, and authority. It (i.e., the article) claims that audio podcasts function as spaces of geopolitical framing in which



legitimacy arises not from factual accuracy but from how narrative is organized and linguistically coded.

Research Gap and Contribution

Despite the growing body of literature on digital media and political communication, podcasting remains under-theorized, particularly in non-Western and Middle Eastern contexts. A significant research gap persists regarding how podcasts construct political meaning at the micro-discursive level. Existing scholarly literature focuses on accessibility, audience engagement, or the democratizing power of digital audio, but it rarely studies how specific discursive strategies like framing, sequencing, lexical choices, and narrative construction frame interpretations of political events. This gap is evident in conflict discourse. While scholarly literature on Arab digital media and political communication offers insights into broader media structures and transnational flows of information, it does not examine how audio-based political commentary advances geopolitical narratives in practice. There is a clear absence of systematic research on how audio podcasts frame Middle Eastern conflicts, with almost no scholarly work examining the June 2025 Israeli strike on Iran. This gap is particularly important considering the growing importance of podcasts as platforms for political analysis and the interpretation of international events.

To address this gap, this article adopts critical discourse analysis (CDA) in conjunction with framing theory to examine how audio podcasts construct conflict narratives through language, narrative sequencing, and interpretation. It shows how the audio podcast platform emphasizes readings of political events through discursive choices. By positioning podcast discourse within wider debates on non-Western media systems, transnational communication, and conflict narration, the article adds to the growing scholarly work on audio podcasts not as neutral channels of information but as active spaces where geopolitical meaning is produced, negotiated, and contested.

The article consists of six sections. The first section reviews podcasting scholarship as a form of mass media, highlighting how podcasting has emerged as an important space of political communication, particularly in non-Western contexts. The second section outlines framing theory and analyzes lexical choices, uncovering how they play an evident role in constructing the Israeli June 2025 strike against Iran. The third section provides background on the three selected audio podcasts *Unholy: Two Jews on the News*, *Iran Podcast*, and *The Israel Policy Pod*, featuring their institutional affiliations. The fourth section outlines the methodological approach,



explaining how critical discourse analysis is used to analyze linguistic and narrative patterns in the audio podcast episodes. It interprets the podcast's narrative structures, linguistic choices, and strategic omissions, underlining how it legitimizes Israeli state action and problematizes Iranian behavior. Through critical discourse analysis, this section assesses three dominant frames—the Security Rationality Frame, the Threat Escalation Frame, and the Responsible Actor Frame representing how these frames influence listeners' understanding of threat. The fifth section examines *The Iran Podcast* and its alternative discursive and ideological framing of the “Axis of Resistance” in contrast to Israeli and Western-oriented audio narratives. It explores how the podcast situates the Axis not simply as a geopolitical coalition but as an anti-imperialist account that this research identified through an Ideological-Resistance Frame. By foregrounding concepts such as “resistance,” “solidarity,” and “anti-imperialism,” this section highlights how the audio podcast lends moral and political legitimacy to Iran's regional role. The sixth and final section concludes with contributions, limitations, and future research recommendations on podcasting in conflict discourse.

Literature Review

Podcasting as Political Communication and Journalistic Storytelling

Podcasting emerged as a unique digital audio medium during the 2000s and became widely accessible after platform integration in the mid-2000s (Bottomley 2015; Berry 2016). Political communication scholarship emphasizes podcasts' long-form, on-demand audio format, which allows ideas and stories to be discussed in greater depth. It also highlights the conversational, host-centered nature of podcasts that combine journalism, analysis, and opinion (Berry 2020; Lindgren 2021). For example, narrative journalism case studies such as *Serial* demonstrate how serialized audio can blend investigative reporting and personal narration, featuring podcasting as a form of narrative journalism and providing hosts with space to act as narrators, interlocutors, and interpreters (Sherrill 2020; Nee and Santana 2021). These features influence how political issues are presented and interpreted; however, any conclusions about their impact on audiences are contingent on specific contexts and measures rather than generalized.

Podcasting in Non-Western and Middle Eastern Contexts

Outside Western contexts, academic research on podcasts is limited but expanding. Scholars show that podcasts function as alternative communicative spaces where traditional media is often censored. However, the form and effect of those audio spaces depend on local political, technological, and market conditions (Kraidy 2016; Sakr 2013; Tufekci



2017). In the Arab world, empirical case studies highlight how some podcasts operate as forums for critique, civic discussion, and knowledge production, while others align with institutional state frames (Snoussi 2024; Shaher 2025; Andrew 2025). Key factors that influence these dynamics include censorship and legal restrictions, platform governance, smartphone penetration, audience segmentation, and public trust in the media. Accordingly, claims that podcasts increase political awareness or substantially change public opinion should be supported with longitudinal evidence rather than presented as universal effects (Kraidy 2016; Tufekci 2017; Shearer et al. 2023). Given the need to move beyond broad assumptions about audience effects, it is equally important to examine how podcasts construct and communicate political meanings through discourse itself.

Framing and Discourse in Audio Media

Framing theory remains one of the most significant theoretical frameworks to assess how podcasts construct political meaning. Building on Goffman (1974) and Entman (1993), this article shows how framing analysis is employed to examine how language choices, narrative organization, and tone in spoken communication underline specific perspectives while excluding alternative interpretations. Three analytical mechanisms are particularly pertinent for podcast research:

- **Lexical and metaphorical framing:** the use of specific terms and metaphors like deterrence, retaliation, or preemptive strike carries implicit value judgments and assigns political or moral roles to different actors.
- **Narrative sequencing and causality:** the way events are sequenced and connected with a discussion creates particular storylines and causal relationships, featuring certain interpretations that appear logical or unavoidable. Podcasts often frame conflicts as chronological storylines, for example, provocation leading to retaliation and then escalation, which can make certain causal interpretations seem unavoidable. This type of framing may reinforce state-focused or security-oriented perspectives while excluding civilian suffering or alternative interpretations of narrating events.
- **Tone and modality:** expressions of certainty, doubt, possibility, or emotion shape how audiences receive the speaker's authority, expertise, and credibility as the discussion unfolds. Spoken language that features urgency or irony influences how certain claims and actors are evaluated. Words that imply certainty or uncertainty, for



example, likely, alleged, clearly shape perceptions of credibility, authority, blurring the line between fact and interpretation.

- **Voice and positioning:** the conversational, personality-driven format of podcasts allows hosts to present themselves as experts, observers, or witnesses, determining which voices are emphasized and which ones are silenced.

Omission is also analytically important in framing analysis. By excluding actors like Iranian civilians, local humanitarian groups, and ignoring evidence like reports and testimony; podcasts limit interpretations and feature a false discussion (Entman 1993). Also, the podcasts' host-led, conversational format strengthens framing effects, as hosts and guests combine facts, analysis, and opinion within episodes, thereby reinforcing a single perspective and narrowing interpretive space.

Conflict Narration in Audio

Audio formats, specifically long-form podcasts, are analytically important because of their sequenced storytelling, assertive tone, and their ability to negotiate meaning, all of which contribute to how listeners interpret political violence. Scholarship on media and conflict shows that narration does more than recount events; it orders causes and consequences, assigns agency and responsibility, and foregrounds particular moral evaluations (Sakr 2013; Kraidy 2016). In podcasts, hosts and guests co-construct storylines through dialogue, repetition, and disagreement, making framing an interactive process rather than a fixed editorial product.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that audio podcasts amplify marginalized or counter-narratives, as personal testimonies allow voices often ignored in mainstream media to be heard. However, platform distribution and algorithmic infrastructure still shape the visibility of these narratives and determine how widely they circulate and under what conditions (Couldry and Hepp 2017; Madianou 2019). In Middle Eastern contexts, conflict narration in podcasts often navigates censorship and political sensitivities, producing hybrid forms that combine official narratives with critical or locally grounded viewpoints (Shaher 2025; Snoussi 2024).

Limitations and Challenges

It is important to note that academic scholarship highlights several risks associated with podcasts' weak gatekeeping, rapid dissemination of unverified claims, audience self-selection, and weak regulatory oversight, which can amplify misinformation and polarization (Wirtschafter 2021; Törnberg 2018; Wirtschafter and Meserole 2022). Thus, it is important to



highlight that this study positions podcasts at the intersection of political communication and digital media scholarship by analyzing micro-discursive framing in audio podcasts about the June 2025 Israeli strike on Iran. Rather than developing broad claims about podcast effects on publics, it traces how meaning is produced through lexical choice, narrative sequencing, and tone in spoken discourse; how omissions function to limit interpretation; and how these processes interact with Middle Eastern media contexts and platform dynamics.

Methodology

The article adopts critical discourse analysis (CDA) as its main methodological approach, drawing on the work of Norman Fairclough (1992) and Teun A. van Dijk (1988). It analyzes discourse that constructs and reproduces power, ideology, and political legitimacy. This approach is well-suited for analyzing audio podcasts, where meaning and language are conveyed not only through lexical choices but also through conversational structure, expert authority, and narrative sequence. Within this context, CDA is deployed to explore how audio podcasts produce specific geopolitical interpretations. The method provides a clear analysis of how speakers construct actors (for example, Israel, Iran, and the United States), allocate responsibility, justify actions, and delineate what is considered legitimate or illegitimate violence.

Case Selection and Sampling Strategy

The study concentrates on three English-language audio podcasts: *Unholy: Two Jews on the News*, *The Israel Policy Forum Podcast*, and *The Iran Podcast*. These podcasts were chosen through purposive sampling, based on their relevance to Middle Eastern political discourse and their engagement with the June 2025 escalation between Israel and Iran. The chosen audio podcast selection is intended to highlight the contrasting discursive positions within elite and semi-elite transnational commentary spaces. They offer different orientations. *Unholy: Two Jews on the News* represents commentary that is based on Jewish diasporic and journalistic perspectives. *The Israel Policy Forum Podcast* demonstrates policy-oriented and pro-Israel analytical frameworks. *The Iran Podcast* provides an alternative perspective to Iran's geopolitical positioning.

Corpus of Selected Episodes

The audio podcasts were informed by their popularity on major platforms like Spotify and Apple Podcasts. However, due to the lack of standardized public audience metrics, it is difficult in this study to determine their exact reach. Thus, the audio podcasts studied in this article are not



intended to be statistically representative but rather analytically illustrative. The analysis concentrates on episodes that primarily discuss the June 2025 Israeli strike on Iran. The selected episodes are:

- Levi, Yonit, and Jonathan Freedland. “Special Update—Israel at War with Iran with Dr. Suzanne Maloney.” *Unholy: Two Jews on the News*. Audio podcast (Apple Podcasts), June 13, 2025. Chosen out of 328 episodes on Apple.
- Levi, Yonit, and Jonathan Freedland. “Israel–Iran War: Sunday Update with Amos Harel.” *Unholy: Two Jews on the News*. Audio podcast (Apple Podcasts), June 15, 2025.
- Israel Policy Forum. “Israel and Iran at War (Webinar Recording).” *Israel Policy Pod*. Audio podcast episode, June 18, 2025. Chosen out of 400 episodes on Podcast App.
- Israel Policy Forum. “The 12-Day War.” *Israel Policy Pod*. Audio podcast episode, June 25, 2025.
- Mortazavi, Negar. “Iran’s Grand Strategy.” *The Iran Podcast*. Audio podcast episode, August 13, 2025. [Spotify Podcasts]. [Iran’s Grand Strategy - The Iran Podcast | Podcast on Spotify](#). Chosen out of 175 episodes on Podcast App.
- Mortazavi, Negar. September 16, 2025 [Spotify Podcasts]. [Iran and the Axis of Resistance by The Iran Podcast](#)

These episodes were selected based on two main criteria: topic relevance and discursive content. Each episode of these audio podcasts considers the Israeli June 2025 strike against Iran and its implications and provides a detailed discussion, interpretation, and narrative framing of it.

Selection Criteria

- **Corpus scope:** The initial corpus consisted of all episodes (six episodes were surveyed) of the three selected English-language podcasts produced between June 1, 2025, and September 30, 2025: *Unholy: Two Jews on the News*, *Israel Policy Forum Podcast*, and *The Iran Podcast*. These episodes were selectively chosen because they represent unique transnational, elite and semi-elite commentary spaces associated with Middle Eastern geopolitics.
- **Episode shortlisting:** From the initial corpus, episodes were screened for topical relevance using episode titles, descriptions, and a first-pass listen. An episode was marked as relevant when at least half



of its total duration focused on the June 2025 Israeli strike on Iran or on the immediate consequences and developments arising from the event. This screening process yielded two episodes from *Unholy: Two Jews on the News*, two from the *Israel Policy Forum*, and two from *The Iran Podcast*.

- **Final selection rationale:** From the episode's corpus, six episodes were chosen and retained from across the three podcasts for critical discourse analysis to provide a comparison between real-time, immediate-response commentary and retrospective ideological framing, rather than assuming that the cases are symmetrical. Selection prioritized, first, episodes that focused and addressed the June 2025 strike (depth of discussion). Second, the article seeks to include a range of discursive approaches, including policy-oriented, journalistic commentary, and Iran-focused narratives. Third, episodes were selected to offer a comparison between immediate reactions and retrospective interpretations of the strike. The episodes under examination are not statistically representative of all commentary but are analytically illustrative. They were chosen to compare between elite and semi-elite framing rather than to estimate frequencies in the wider media ecosystem.

Podcast Name	Episodes Screened (June 1-30 Sept 2025)	Episodes meeting relevance for the strike	Episodes selected for close analysis	Date of selected episodes	Rationale for Selection
<i>Unholy: Two Jews on the News</i>	18	3	2	13 June 2025 15 th June 2025	Selected for their journalistic format and immediate commentary. The two episodes offered a host-led discussion of the strike, demonstrating a comparison of real-time reactions and short-term follow-up.
Israel Policy Forum Podcast (<i>Israel Policy Pod</i>)	14	4	2	18 th June 2025 25 th June 2025	Chosen for offering policy-elite framing and institutional expertise. The podcast episodes include webinar and guest expert formats that discuss policy rationales.



Podcast Name	Episodes Screened (June 1-30 Sept 2025)	Episodes meeting relevance for the strike	Episodes selected for close analysis	Date of selected episodes	Rationale for Selection
<i>The Iran Podcast</i>	12	2	2	13 th August 2025 16 th September 2025	Chosen to offer an Iran-centered perspective and retrospective framing. The selected episodes offer an alternative historical context and counter-narrative interpretation, highlighting an alternative perspective from the Israeli policy accounts.

It is important to note that the audio episodes were not released at the same time. In this article, this is intentional and analytically justified. While some audio podcasts offer immediate reactions, others provide retrospective framing, allowing the study to understand how narratives evolve over time. Therefore, temporal variation is seen as a strength rather than a limitation, as it provides a comparison between real-time framing and reflective interpretation.

In the case of *The Israel Policy Forum Podcast*, the two selected episodes, “Israel and Iran at War (June 18, 2025)” and “The 12-Day War” (June 25, 2025) offer a rich space for exploring how elite policy discourse constructs the conflict through a lens of security rationality and institutional authority. Within these episodes, critical discourse analysis (CDA) concentrates on interrelated discursive features, including:

A. Lexical Framing and Strategic Language

The podcast constantly deploys terms such as “deterrence,” “escalation,” “containment,” and “preemption.” These lexical choices are not neutral; they position the conflict within a strategic-policy framework, where military action is normalized as part of rational state behavior. Through CDA, such terms are analyzed as ideological markers that characterize Israeli state actions as calculated and necessary, while situating Iranian actions within a discourse of threat and instability.

B. Authority and Expert Voice

In contrast to audio journalistic podcasts, *The Israel Policy Forum Podcast*



relies heavily on expert speakers, policy analysts, and institutional voices. Through CDA, it analyzes how authority is constructed linguistically, for example, through confident modality such as: “This will likely lead to...” and “The strategic objective is.” This authoritative tone contributes to the podcast interpretation as a policy analysis rather than a contested opinion.

C. Narrative Structuring of Events

In particular, “The 12-Day War” episode of *The Israel Policy Forum* follows a coherent, chronological narrative of the strike, with events organized into a structured sequence. In this context, CDA analyzes how this event sequence constructs causal coherence, presenting Israeli actions as responses to prior threats and thereby reinforcing a defensive frame. In this context, the construction of causal coherence extends beyond individual narrative sequences and reflects a broader discursive pattern in how the podcast frames events.

D. Framing in Practice

Applying framing theory within CDA, the analysis shows how the audio podcast structures its discourse. The conflict is constructed as a matter of regional security escalation. Responsibility is often credited to Iranian regional activities. Israeli actions are explicitly framed and justified within a security logic, and emphasis is placed on deterrence and strategic containment.

By utilizing critical discourse analysis, it also uncovers what is not foregrounded in the discourse. In the two episodes of *The Israel Policy Forum Podcast*, there is very limited focus on civilian suffering. This exclusion is analytically important as it characterizes a policy-centric framing that foregrounds state strategy over human suffering.

The Israel Policy Forum Podcast presents a policy-elite discourse distinct from the two other audio podcasts in this article, which present contrasting discursive styles. For instance, “Special Update—Israel at War with Iran with Dr. Suzanne Maloney” and “Israel–Iran War: Sunday Update with Amos Harel,” the two episodes of *Unholy: Two Jews on the News* audio podcast combine journalistic commentary by bringing in external expertise while maintaining a dialogic format. On the other hand, the two episodes titled “Iran’s Grand Strategy” (August 13, 2025) and “Iran and the Axis of Resistance” (September 16, 2025) of *The Iran Podcast* offer a historical and identity-centered narrative, which adds an ideologically layered interpretation. By applying CDA framework across these three audio podcasts, the article compares how different discursive spaces-policy-



journalistic, and analytical-offer different framings and understandings of the same strike.

Data Collection

Audio data was transcribed manually. All episodes were listened to multiple times, and transcripts were double-checked to get an overview of recurring themes, arguments, and narrative sequencing. The transcripts were manually coded using both inductive and deductive approaches. Deductive codes were derived from framing theory (e.g., threat, self-defense, escalation, deterrence). On the other hand, inductive codes were developed from the data itself, for example, recurring metaphors and rhetorical labels. Coding included:

- lexical choices (i.e. preemptive, retaliation, resistance)
- modality (obligation, speculation)
- tone (critical, justificatory)
- narrative sequencing

Codes were then categorized into wider discursive patterns and frames, identifying recurring themes in which the Israeli strike was constructed like:

- Israel as a rational security actor vs. Israel as an aggressor
- Iran as a destabilizing force versus Iran as a target of containment
- Strike as inevitable versus preventable

Coding Procedure

- **Initial Deductive Coding:** a preliminary codebook was prepared from framing theory and prior literature, including codes like threat, self-defense, deterrence, escalation, civilian omission. These predefined codes were employed during the initial review of the transcripts to identify relevant sections and select passages for more detailed examination.
- **Open Inductive Coding:** across several readings of the transcripts, open coding was deployed to identify emerging patterns in word choice, metaphors, narrative developments, rhetorical devices, and paralinguistic elements like hedging, certainty markers, and vocal emphasis. This inductive process produced codes derived directly from the data, consisting of recurring metaphors, rhetorical descriptors (like, “proxy”) and interactional strategies such as establishing credibility through references to expertise.



- **Iterative Integration:** the deductive and inductive stages worked iteratively. For example, the broad category of “deterrence” was divided into more specific subcategories like “deterrence as policy” and “deterrence as justification.” At the same time, the deductive framework is crucial for identifying patterns that have been overlooked, such as subtle language choices that shifted responsibility from one actor to another. Any modifications to the coding system were recorded in an updated codebook and applied consistently across all episodes.

From Codes to Frame Labels

- **Aggregation:** once the coding process was finalized, clustered codes were organized into wider discursive patterns by locating recurring lexical, modal, and narrative features onto the deductive frame categories. For example, clustered codes like “preemptive,” “containment,” and “deterrence rhetoric” were grouped under a “security/strategic” frame.
- **Naming frames:** Frame labels were produced to reflect theoretical constructs and observed data. In case inductive clusters did not align with existing frame categories, new frame labels were developed. For example, a “historical-victimhood” frame was introduced to capture narratives based on long-standing grievances. Each frame is supported in the analysis with a description that connects the label to specific coded elements, like lexical choices, modal expressions, and narrative positioning.
- **Validation:** frame assignments were checked by cross-checking exemplar passages to ensure that each label reflected consistent discourse patterns, rather than unusual wording.

Then, the identified themes were analyzed through critical discourse analysis to highlight ideological assumptions, processes of inclusion and exclusion (e.g., the omission of civilian suffering), and the construction of binary oppositions such as “us” versus “them.” At this point, the analysis extended beyond description, connecting linguistic features to wider geopolitical narratives and structures of meaning.

Key Voices in Middle East Podcasting

The podcast of *Unholy: Two Jews on the News* is hosted by Yonit Levi, an Israeli journalist and Channel 12 news anchor, and Jonathan Freedland, a British journalist at *The Guardian*. Launched around 2021, the podcast features a weekly commentary format in which the hosts debate



contemporary events, with a particular focus on the Israeli state and Jewish communities. Recognized for its smart, nuanced, and conversational tone, the podcast often hosts famous guests and well-known media figures like Rachel Maddow¹, David Remnick², and Malcolm Gladwell³. The aim of the podcast moves beyond simple news reporting, providing an interpretation of world events via the points of view of two Jewish journalists, uncovering the intersections between politics, culture, and identity. The podcast has a large following of listeners seeking in-depth analysis of Jewish and Israeli issues, effectively bridging media commentary and policy insight.

Similarly, the podcast of *Israel Policy Pod* is produced by the Israel Policy Forum (IPF), a think tank and advocacy organization, and has been active since 2016. Released on a weekly basis, the podcast extends beyond headlines to offer in-depth analysis from IPF experts and distinguished guests, consisting of policymakers, academics, and journalists; the podcast discusses topics like Israeli politics, U.S.-Israeli relations, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and broader Middle East policy. Its audience primarily comprises listeners interested in policy, diplomacy, and Israel's strategies and military objectives. The podcast serves as a bridge between think tank research and public discourse, with its 2021 annual report providing solid download numbers, reflecting its impact and wide reach.

On the other hand, *The Iran Podcast* is hosted by Negar Mortazavi, an award-winning journalist and commentator, and a Senior Fellow at the Center for International Policy (CIP) based in Washington, DC. The podcast focuses on Iranian politics, society, culture, and foreign policy as well as Middle Eastern Affairs and U.S. Foreign Policy. Presented in a conversational interview format, the podcast episodes feature experts, diplomats, and policy analysts, allowing Mortazavi to offer on-the-ground insight and strategic analysis. Its audience consists of listeners interested in geopolitics, particularly Iranian domestic politics and U.S.-Iranian relations. Given the complexity of Iran's political landscape, the podcast offers a critical lens for understanding a nation that plays a central role in global geopolitical debates.

¹ Rachel Maddow is an American liberal political commentator and radio and television personality, host of The Rachel Maddow Show (2008-Present) on the channel MSNBC.

² David Remnick is one of the well-known figures in American media, known as the editor of The New Yorker magazine (1998-present). He also worked as a reporter for The Washington Post. He received the Pulitzer Prize for Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire (1993).

³ Malcolm Gladwell is a Canadian journalist and writer, well known for his views on popular culture.



Soundscapes of Military Power: Framing in The Israel Policy Pod

The two podcast episodes under examination, titled “Israel-Iran War: Sunday Update with Amos Harel” (Spotify) and “Special Update: Israel at War with Iran” (Apple Podcasts), provide critical interpretations of the Israeli strike against Iran in June 2025. While they are released from two distinct platforms and feature various expert voices, both episodes mirror a form of news analysis broadcasting that reflects geopolitical developments translated into narratives for politically engaged listeners.

The Spotify podcast episode featuring military analyst Amos Harel focuses on the Iranian retaliation strike that resulted in the deaths of Israeli civilians. These opening remarks concentrate on human suffering, foregrounding the civilian cost of the conflict, setting the episode in an affective and moral frame, even if it transitions into strategic analysis. At this point, Harel translates the attack in terms of deterrence and escalation dynamics, evaluating Iran’s military objectives and the likely forms of Israeli retaliation, from military responses to political and strategic signaling. The podcast illuminates existential security threats facing Israel, including missile defense operations and wider escalation management. The podcast examines Israel’s risk calculations, the role of the United States, and how military decisions intersect with political measures. This combination of themes situates the episode within a realist security perspective, in which warfare is treated as a series of cause-and-effect calculations. The tone is steadily serious, critical, and urgent; Harel’s authoritative presence underscores the importance of evidence-based assessment, avoiding conspiratorial framing and crafting the podcast as grounded and credible. Harel’s extended, uninterrupted speaking projects an image of confidence and expertise, allowing important concepts like “deterrence” and “escalation” to build naturally without interruption. This style fosters an authoritative discourse in which the military strike is perceived as a strategic issue requiring analysis rather than an emotionally charged subject for discussion. Although the tone remains serious and conveys a sense of urgency, it is deliberately controlled, with this composure emphasizing the guest’s credibility. In this context, vocal restraint serves as a source of epistemic authority, reinforcing the policy perspective as balanced, rational, and trustworthy.

Similarly, the Apple Podcast named “Special Update: Israel at War with Iran” examines the escalation within a wider strategic context, concentrating on Iran’s nuclear program, Israel’s security doctrine, and the influence of the United States and European powers. This audio podcast episode explores the stability of the Israeli regime, regional order, and the



risks of miscalculation, framing the strike as part of a wider regional power struggle rather than a purely tactical conflict.

The content of both podcasts exhibits a collective discursive interpretation that privileges expert analysis over civilian-centered narratives. This reliance on military analysts, as seen in the Spotify episode with Harel and Dr. Suzanne Maloney and the Apple episode with an academic, situates podcasts within a high-trust information sphere where military knowledge is prioritized. The policy-oriented expert tone is defined not only by what it highlights but also by the absence of hesitation. Speakers rarely display audible signs of uncertainty, rarely interrupt one another, and seldom pause to articulate their ideas, featuring an impression of confidence and authority. Such vocal assurance encourages listeners to perceive the framing as settled and credible, even when the interpretation of the strike remains highly contested. Consequently, war is mainly framed as a rational and strategic arena characterized by deterrence, retaliation, escalation control, and political calculations. While civilian suffering is recognized in the podcast, it serves as a narrative entry point rather than the main emphasis, with securitization as the dominant interpretive lens.

Drawing on critical discourse analysis, the article investigates the ideological underpinnings and framing of the attack. Both podcasts frame Israeli actions as calculated retaliatory actions to security threats and depict Iran as a destabilizing actor, thereby reproducing a Western-aligned security logic that legitimizes Israeli policies and reinforces “Us” versus “Them” binaries. What makes this logic specifically audio-driven is the way it is carried by voice; a calm tone lends authority to the security narrative, with the absence of conversational tension reducing opportunities for alternative interpretations to emerge. Counter-narratives, like anti-war perspectives, humanitarian concerns, or marginalized civilian experiences, receive minimal focus and are largely surpassed by dominant strategic narratives. The format of the above-mentioned episodes underpins temporal urgency, positioning listeners within a high-stakes geopolitical moment. This immediacy shapes public discourse but also consolidates how listeners discern the necessity of certain military actions.

Both podcasts forge specific ideological frames that center on military reasoning, legitimize state-centered perspectives, and marginalize alternative narratives. The podcasts function not only as information channels but also as sites of discursive production that contribute to how listeners interpret the attack and political power within the Middle East region. In this sense, they function not only as information channels but also as active producers of discourse, advancing how audiences interpret the Israeli attack against



Iran, regional power dynamics, and the larger security configurations within the Middle Eastern region.

This dynamic is also evident in how *the Israel Policy Forum Podcast*, which is produced by a U.S.-based think tank, situates itself as a channel for wider debates in relation to Israeli state security, regional diplomacy, and U.S.-Israeli relations. The podcast consistently features policy practitioners, analysts, and diplomats who provide technocratic explanations of geopolitical developments, thereby reasserting its position as a policy-focused forum. Because the format is spoken rather than written, authority is constructed through interview pacing, turn allocation, and the speaker's ability to maintain control across extended answers. The result is a sonic environment that naturalizes expert authority and frames the conflict as a subject best understood through policy judgment and strategic assessment. Using this framework, the podcasts' coverage of the June 2025 Israeli strike demonstrates how framing strategies and language convey a specific interpretation that emphasizes threat, responsibility, and legitimacy.

Strategic Discourses in Audio: Framing the June 2025 Israeli Strike on Iran

The *Israel Policy Forum Podcast*, a production of the U.S.-based think tank places itself as a space for wider debates about Israeli state security. In its coverage of the Israeli strike against Iran in June 2025, the podcast employs unique framing strategies and discourse patterns that construct a narrative of the attack. Critical discourse analysis reveals that podcast discourse (in particular linguistic choices and narrative structures) foregrounds Israeli strategic rationality while backgrounding regional asymmetries and escalation losses. One can argue that through the lens of framing theory, the podcast divides its discussion around three dominant frames: the "Security Rationality Frame," the "Threat Escalation Frame," and the "Responsible Actor Frame." Together, these frames underline strategic calculations, deterrence imperatives, and regional diplomatic repercussions, while excluding individual casualties, framing listeners' understandings of the attack.

The analysis differentiates between two temporal modes of framing across episodes. The first temporal mode is the immediate policy and security framing evident in podcast episodes produced during or immediately after the strike, which feature technical policy rationale. The second temporal mode is the retrospective ideological framing, which appears in episodes published weeks later after the strike, which combines historical narratives and ideological positioning into the interpretations of the strike.



The Security Rationality Frame analyzes the Israeli strike as a calculated and necessary retaliation to Iranian expansionism and nuclear ambitions. The hosts repetitively used phrases like “preemptive,” “strategically essential,” and “defensive maneuvering” to frame Israeli actions as necessary for national survival and threat mitigation. Such a lexicon is not neutral; its implications legitimize the attack by placing it within a discourse of defense rather than aggression. By adopting a critical discourse analysis lens, the article demonstrates how this language selection portrays Israel as the actor reacting to conditions imposed upon it, rather than initiating new forms of violence. References to vocabulary such as “red lines,” “operational constraints,” and “regional security architecture” frame the attack in technocratic terms, moving beyond immediate humanitarian crisis and positioning it instead within a strategic policy lexicon. For instance, the *Israel Policy Forum Podcast* frames the conflict through a policy-elite lens of security rationality. Speakers constantly employ strategic terms like “deterrence,” “escalation,” “containment,” and “preemption.” These lexical choices place military action as rational state behavior rather than a contested opinion. It is important to note that these lexical clusters are prevalent in immediate-response episodes, specifically in policy podcasts and commentaries released the same week, where hosts and guests reinforce operational terminology. Speakers do not hesitate over the strategic vocabulary by following a vocal certainty that makes the policy frame sound rational and valid. This framing is clearly shown in the following excerpt from “Israel and Iran at War” (Webinar Recording), June 18, 2025:

“This is not a discretionary choice. This is a preemptive strike necessary to preserve deterrence in the region. If we don’t act now, we lose the ability to contain Iranian escalation” [00:32:10-00:32:23].

In contrast, *Unholy: Two Jews on the News* blends journalistic commentary with external expertise while sustaining a dialogic format. This framing is evident in the episode of “Special Update-Israel at War with Iran with Dr. Suzanne Maloney,” with the below excerpt:

“So the question is: is this preemptive or is this escalation? Because if you call it preemptive, you’re saying it’s necessary. If you call this escalation, you’re saying it’s risky” [1:58.7-2:00.6].

In contrast to the policy forum’s expert briefings, this podcast episode is more overtly dialogic: the host’s phrasing brings to the forefront uncertainty and leaves interpretative space open, while the guest’s answer is characterized by a negotiated exchange rather than a clearly defined policy



statement. The audio effect is one of live deliberation, where competing labels are situated in tension rather than resolved immediately.

Although the *Unholy: Two Jews on the News* podcasts were recorded soon after the strike, they offer alternative perspectives rather than a single explanation. In contrast to policy podcasts that rely on expert consensus and present a more fixed interpretation. In this context, the hosts contest the framing of the issue. The difference between terms like preemptive and necessary on one hand, and escalation and risky on the other, underlines the ideological implications embedded in different labels. The dialogic format indicates contestation, not institutional certainty. A second excerpt from “Israel-Iran War: Sunday Update with Amos Harel,” June 15, 2025, further demonstrates this contestation:

“We ‘re hearing deterrence as the word, but I’m wondering: is deterrence really the goal or is this political signaling? [0.53.1-1:10:00].

This excerpt shows the host’s skepticism about whether the aim is truly deterrence or simply a form of political signaling. In contrast to the authoritative and policy-oriented tone of *Israel Policy Forum*, *Unholy* treats the framing of the attack as a matter of discussion and interpretation, uncovering how political and ideological assumptions shape how the attack is understood. Here, the conversational intimacy of the format is important because the host sounds less like a policy arbiter and more like an engaged interlocutor, which makes skepticism audible rather than merely implied.

At the same time, the Threat Escalation Frame mimics Iran as an unpredictable and destabilizing regional actor whose impulsive actions foster a perpetual environment of insecurity. The podcast repetitively invokes descriptors like “provocative,” “destabilizing,” “escalatory,” and “non-transparent.” These lexical patterns reveal a distinct identity between Iran and Israel: Iran is perceived as opaque and aggressive, while Israel is seen as rational and reactive. This framing relies on an evidentiary structure by bringing in intelligence assessments, previous Iranian military actions, and Iran’s nuclear program, which risks placing Iran as the initiator of tensions. Through such discursive analysis, the podcast expands a sense of inevitability surrounding the Israeli state’s actions, describing them as compelled rather than chosen.

It is important to highlight that the six chosen episodes are not directly comparable. Immediate-response episodes assert urgent policy concerns, whereas retrospective episodes concentrate more on ideological interpretations and historical continuity. As a result, the analysis demonstrates a comparative approach between two distinct forms of the



strike event response rather than a direct one-to-one assessment. This is particularly important in audio analysis because the spoken form changes across time: early episodes sound like live crisis management, while later episodes sound like interpretive commentary, employing more reflective pacing and a more expansive conversational mode.

The Responsible Actor Frame shows the Israeli state as a rational, accountable, and internationally aligned responsible actor. References to “coordination with Washington,” “diplomatic channels,” and “civilian risk mitigation procedures” illuminate Israel’s commitments to global norms and international institutions. On the other hand, Iran is discursively disconnected from the international community, represented as acting outside “established norms” or “recognized security protocols.” These discursive binaries between responsible versus irresponsible, aligned versus rogue, operate as strong framing tools that guide listeners toward normative evaluations of the attack.

Tone and modality also bolster these frames. The hosts adopt an authoritative and analytical tone, grounding their arguments in expert interviews, policy documents, and comparative historical references. Such epistemic authority positions the podcast as an objective, knowledgeable guide to events, given its strong political framing. Modal verbs such as “must,” “needs to,” and “cannot ignore” convey urgency and certainty, leading listeners to perceive that escalation was unavoidable. This contributes to a discursive setting where Israeli state actions are normalized, while alternative solutions like diplomacy, de-escalation, or political and economic sanctions are unrealistic. In audio terms, modality is not just grammatical: it is also amplified by a firm voice and little audible hesitation which make necessity sound self-evident.

Throughout the audio podcasts, what is left out or excluded also serves as a subtle yet powerful tool for framing. Iranian domestic politics and regional humanitarian crises receive minimal consideration. The exclusion of these voices is not ideologically neutral; it reinforces a discourse where military strategy silences all those excluded or suffering. Such silences in critical discourse are essential for explaining how media, and in particular podcasts, construct reality; looking at what is often left unsaid is as revealing as what is being reinforced.

In connecting these elements together, it is evident that the *Israel Policy Forum Podcast* not only delivers information on the Israeli attack against Iran, but it also actively shapes a certain reality around it. Through selective linguistic vocabulary, authoritative tone, and a distinct Israeli narrative, the



podcast legitimizes Israeli state actions while problematizing Iranian behavior. This discursive construction aligns with contemporary political communication. In this sense, the podcast highlights the significant role of framing in shaping political meaning regarding military attacks in the podcasting era.

Podcast Discourse: Constructing Legitimacy in The Israel Policy Forum Podcast

The podcasts differ in how they construct legitimacy, discursively justifying action, assigning responsibility, and providing interpretations of the June 2025 Israeli attack on Iran. *The Israel Policy Forum Podcast* builds legitimacy through lexical framing, narrative sequencing, expert positioning, modality, and omission. Its narrative sequencing presents events as cause-and-effect, with the episodic introductory part beginning with prior Iranian activity and framing Israeli strikes as consequential: for example, “given the pattern of Iranian escalation,” in response to mounting regional pressure. This frames Israeli action as the anticipated outcome of prior developments rather than a choice among alternatives, thereby downplaying its element of contingency.

Recurring word choices place military action within a technocratic discourse: terms like “deterrence,” “preemptive action,” “escalation management,” and “strategic signaling” appear in clusters and are rarely challenged. Speakers shift from concrete action to abstract formulation – “this is about resorting to deterrence,” “a necessary signal with the regional balance” – which turns violence into a matter of strategy and downplays humanitarian consequences. This effect is emphasized by the cadence of explanation: long, uninterrupted answers fostering a feeling of coherence with absence of interruption that prevents the listener from hearing an alternative rhythm of disagreement.

In the episode, authority is established through a lecture-style expert discourse. Guests appear with institutional affiliations, speak uninterrupted, and employ explanatory sequences, such as “what we’re seeing here is a classic deterrence framework” and “historically, these kinds of responses follow,” while hosts assert them rather than encounter them (“right,” “exactly”). Additionally, the deployment of high-certainty modal language, such as “Israel must respond,” “this cannot go unanswered,” “there is no viable alternative,” further limits interpretive space by presenting escalation as both necessary and unavoidable.

These mechanisms blend to build legitimacy in practice: narrative sequencing frames action as reactive and necessary; lexical choices normalize violence by using strategic vocabulary; expert positioning features a settled



reading, and modality reinforces necessity. This dynamic is evident in the “Israel and Iran at War” episode, where the speaker mentions, “The strategic objective is to restore deterrence. This will likely lead to a longer-term stabilization of the region.” Most importantly, civilian suffering is omitted across the Israel Policy Forum episodes, signaling a policy-centric frame that prioritizes state strategy over human suffering.

Across the three podcasts, a similar discursive logic surfaces despite the platform differences, whether it is Spotify or Apple. Amos Harel’s Spotify episode brings to the forefront Iranian retaliation and Israeli civilian deaths but quickly changes to deterrence and tactical calculation; the Apple episode positions events within wider geopolitics, i.e. Iran’s nuclear program, Israel’s security doctrine, and U.S. and European involvement. All three podcasts foreground expert knowledge, whether military or academic, reinforcing technical security considerations over humanitarian suffering, framing the attack as rational, expected, and driven by strategic considerations.

Critical discourse analysis highlights that these podcasts maintain an ideological stance, depicting Israeli action as a calculated response to the Iranian threat, by using vocabulary like “retaliation,” “preemptive,” “destabilizing,” and “escalatory” which normalize the attack and delegitimize Iranian agency. The *Israel Policy Forum*’s three dominant frames emphasize this: the Security Rationality Frame, i.e. strikes as essential and defensive, the Threat Escalation Frame, i.e. Iran as aggressive and irrational, and the Responsible Actor Frame, i.e. Israel following international norms while Iran behaves outside the global order. Equally important are the silences of civilian suffering, Iranian domestic politics, and humanitarian crises which remain excluded; bolstering a state-centered, technocratic narrative that justified escalation, constructing a clear divide between “US” versus “Them” with force as the only viable option.

Counter-Narratives: The Axis of Resistance in The Iran Podcast

Building on these dynamics, the *Iran Podcast*’s episode “Iran and the Axis of Resistance” provides a counter-discursive framing to Western and Israeli podcasts. It features the Axis as an ideologically driven, ethically justified anti-imperialist alliance linking Iran with Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other non-state actors. Through an Ideological-Resistance Frame—employing terms like “resistance,” “solidarity,” and “anti-imperialism”—the podcast features Iran’s role as a defensive necessity and moral leadership rather than as aggressive expansionism. It presents the Axis as a joint liberation project, legitimizing Iranian agency while recasting allies as



partners who share the same ideology rather than proxies. This is evident in excerpts like:

This is a continuation of a long campaign to contain Iran and undermine its regional role. The Axis of Resistance is Iran's response to decades of pressure, and The Axis of Resistance is not a threat. It is a network of self-defense against U.S.-Israeli hegemony. Iran's strategy is defensive, not expansionist [12: 43-13:28].

A second key frame in the podcast is the Network Resilience Frame, which depicts the Axis as a strong and enduring alliance capable of handling major crises. It demonstrates its flexibility in reallocating military resources and modifying tactics, representing it as unified and adaptable. This challenges Western representations and asserts Iran's image as capable and effective. It also indicates that Iran and its allies can uphold the existing regional order despite direct military pressure.

The Legitimacy and Strategic Autonomy Frame further situates Iran as a strategic architect that pursues common objectives rather than enforcing hierarchical command, contests Western "proxy warfare" narratives, and reframes the Axis as unified and legitimate. Within the context of the June 2025 Israeli strike on Iran, these frames shift interpretation from a single preemptive military act to a prevailing of a long axis-versus-hegemony confrontation. The strike is perceived as an attempt to curb and destabilize Iran, whereas the Axis is seen as a justified, resilient response.

These framing strategies reveal that *The Iran Podcast* contributes to how listeners perceive notions of power, threat, and legitimacy. It asserts themes of resistance and unity. In this sense, the Axis of Resistance discussed in the podcasts shapes how the listeners interpret military strikes, retaliation, and regional alliances in today's polarized media landscape. The conversational delivery softens claims of authority, making the episode sound more explanatory and interpretive than declarative, unlike the policy-expert certainty of the *Israel Policy Forum Podcast*.

Strategic Reversal of Legitimacy in The Iran Podcast

In contrast to *The Israel Policy Forum Podcast* mentioned above, the *Iran Podcast*, hosted by Negar Mortazavi, reframes legitimacy through a discursive reversal of causality, expertise, and moral positioning. Instead of offering an alternative perspective, the podcast reconstructs how the attack is perceived through historical reframing, moderated modality, and dialogic expertise. The episode positions the June 2025 strike within a wider trajectory of geopolitical pressure and long-term strategy, interpreting events as part of "Iran's long-term foreign policy calculations" rather than



an isolated escalation. This temporal reframing presents Iranian actions as historically calculated rather than impulsive, transforming causality from a linear action-response model to a cumulative logic: “Iran’s strategy is about long-term calculations.” Lexical choices such as “strategy,” “calculations,” and “long-term policy” normalize Iranian behavior and reassign rationality to Iran rather than exclusively to Israel.

In the episode, authority is constructed dialogically rather than hierarchically: the framing “Negar Mortazavi speaks with Vali Nasr” indicates co-construction of knowledge. The conversational format emphasizes legitimacy through contextualized analysis instead of declarative expertise. The deployment of exploratory language, such as “suggests,” “indicates,” “reflects,” and “broader strategy” instead of words like “must” or “cannot,” underlines interpretation over certainty, developing an epistemic space where Israeli-focused discourse often reinforces inevitability.

By looking at these elements, *The Iran Podcast* reconstructs legitimacy not by opposing Israeli narratives but by reshaping the terms of interpretation. It reframes legitimacy by widening the temporal horizon, normalizing Iranian strategy as rational and calculated, and replacing authority with expert positioning and dialogue. Instead of analyzing Iranian actions through a defensive framework, the podcast situates them within a broader strategic context. In this sense, legitimacy is not constructed through necessity, i.e., there is no alternative, but instead through contextualization, i.e., this is how it makes sense.

Conclusion

The article explores how the selected audio podcasts frame the June 2025 Israeli strike on Iran by analyzing the discursive strategies they deploy, uncovering the ideological assumptions that structure their representations. It explores the following research questions: How do audio podcasts frame the June 2025 Israeli strike on Iran? What linguistic, tonal, and narrative strategies structure these framings? What ideological assumptions underpin these representations?

The analysis shows that the three audio podcasts under investigation construct different interpretations of the strike through alternative formulations of language, narrative, and authority. First, in response to the first research question, the results highlight that the audio podcasts frame the June 2025 strike in divergent ways. For instance, *The Israel Policy Forum Podcast* and *Unholy: Two Jews on the News* primarily position the strike within a security-oriented framework, reinforcing deterrence, escalation management, and strategic necessity. On the other hand, *The Iran Podcast* situates the events



within a broader geopolitical trajectory, recasting it as a part of a wider pattern of regional contestation and resistance. These differences show how framing functions not only through what is communicated, but also through how events are temporally arranged and connected.

Second, regarding the discursive strategies in research question two, the study highlights that these podcasts construct contrasting narratives of legitimacy, threat, and resistance. Legitimacy is not ascribed to actors in a static way but is instead developed through discursive practices like narrative sequencing, lexical choices, modality, and forms of expertise. In the *Israel Policy Forum Podcast*, legitimacy is framed through a logic of necessity and strategic rationality, asserted through authoritative tone and high-certainty modality. On the other hand, *The Iran Podcast* constructs legitimacy through contextualization and historical continuity, deploying a dialogic discourse. These alternative narratives clarify how divergent discursive logics can render contrasting interpretations of the same military strike as coherent and credible.

Third, in relation to the third research question, the study demonstrates three key ideological assumptions underpinning these representations. These consist of a security rationality that prioritizes deterrence and strategic calculation as the prevailing interpretive lens; a state-centric technocratic epistemology that asserts institutional expertise over humanitarian perspectives; and a recurring “Us” versus “Them” binary that features Israel as a rational actor and Iran as a destabilizing force, though this binary is contested in alternative framings. On the other hand, *The Iran Podcast* shows a counter-ideology of resistance, positioning Iran within an anti-imperialist stance. The analysis illustrates that audio podcasts do not merely document the June 2025 strike but actively frame competing regimes of legitimacy. Through framing, narrative sequencing, modality, and expert discourse, they contribute to how listeners interpret violence and regional order. While the Western-Israeli-oriented podcasts normalize escalation as rational and necessary, the Iran Podcast historicizes it. In this context, the English-language podcast episodes explored in this article operate as discursive spaces where geopolitical meaning is produced, challenged, and stabilized.

Nevertheless, despite its contributions, this article has several limitations that can be addressed in future research. First, the analysis is confined to three circulated audio podcasts, which cannot be employed to generalize the power of audio podcasts in interpreting the discourse of military strikes in the Middle East region. Second, the paper primarily focuses on English-language international podcasts, overlooking the under-



researched regional and non-English audio productions. Third, it builds only on critical discourse analysis and framing analysis, without integrating audience reception and engagement, and thus cannot examine how listeners respond to the narratives presented about the military strike. Lastly, the paper studies the June 2025 Israeli strike as a discrete event, without exploring how framing may shift in interaction with other media spaces. By addressing these research gaps, future research can offer a better understanding of how podcasts provide discursive resources for political interpretation of military strikes.

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