Mentor Name. : John Rachlin Subject/Category : Media Text Analysis Class : DS 3500

Class : DS Group # : 03

Northeastern University

Text Analysis of Media Platforms' Coverage of the Israel/Palestine Conflict

Janav Sama, Jacob Jawharjian

Background

We took an interest in analyzing how three different media platforms portrayed the ongoing conflict in Gaza. Seeing as how the recent military outbreak is the culmination of decades of tension and violence, we wanted to gain an understanding of how different media portrayed the complex issue. We chose three different platforms – Fox, Al Jazeera, Haaretz – (one Western media platform, one Arab media platform, and one based in Israel) with the hope of gauging what biases, if any, these platforms may have in their representation of the ongoing issue.



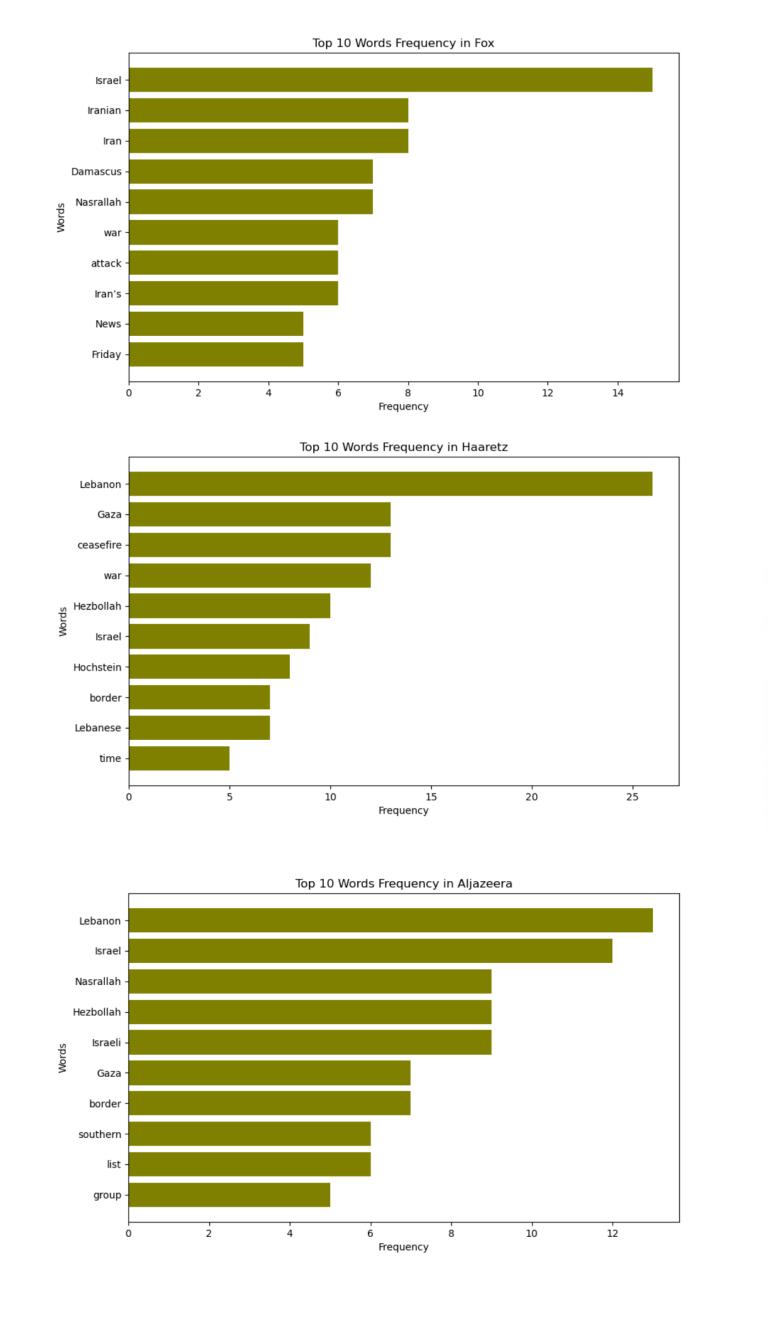


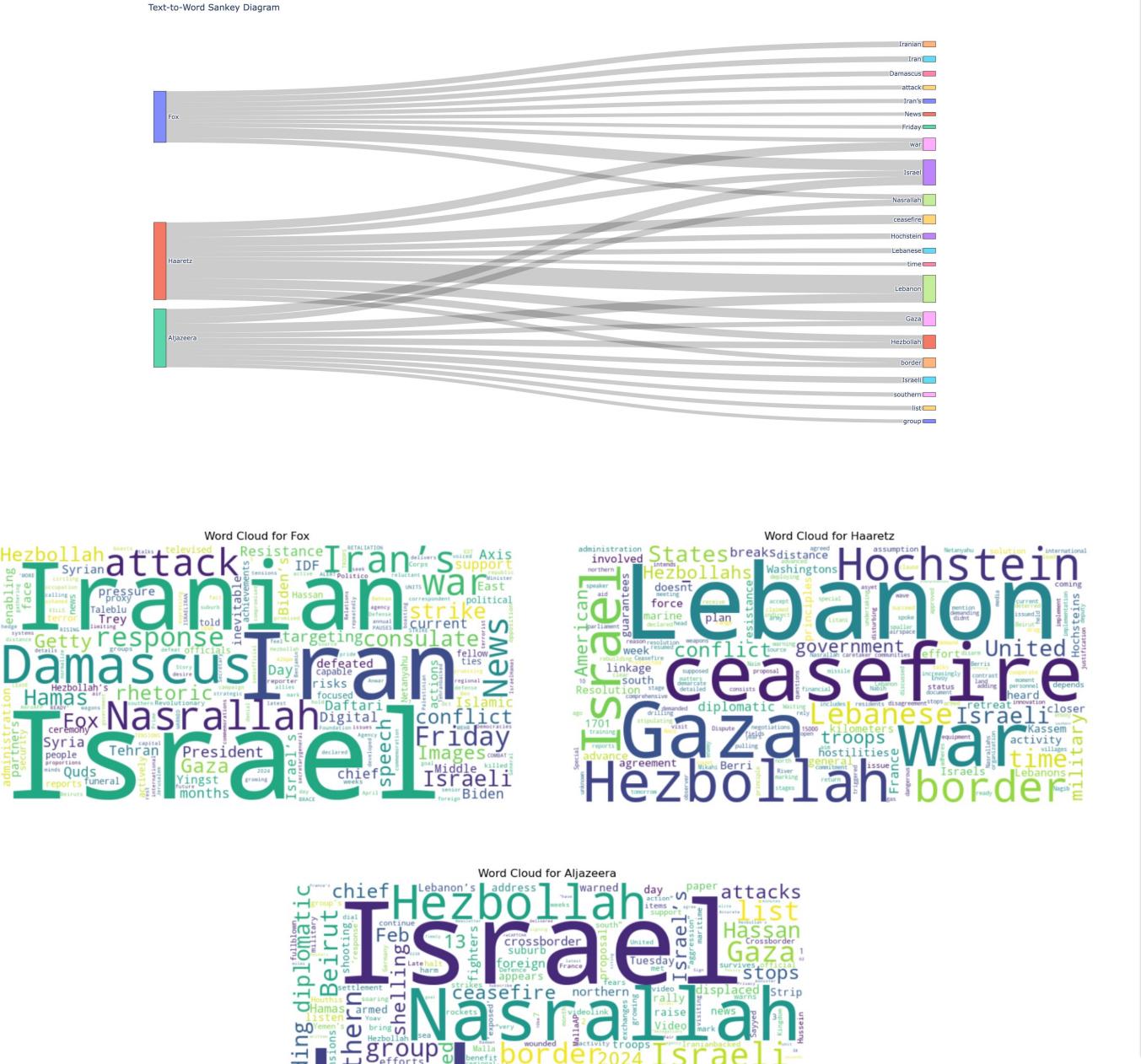
SHAARETZ

Process and Methods

We approached the task by first finding articles from each of the media platforms relating to the war in Gaza. We felt as though it was important to be intentional in the articles we chose. Thus, treating this a controlled variable, we selected an article from each of the three platforms, all of which covered the same event/topic (we did this for 3 separate topics, so 9 articles altogether). This way any differences in tone or word choice displayed by each media source would be their own choosing, and not dictated by differences in the event/topic they were covering. We converted these articles to text files, and then created a Sankey diagram depicting the overlap of common words among each platform. We also created word clouds for each platform and horizontal bar charts explicitly displaying the counts for the 10 most common words for each platform.

Figures





Conclusion and Next Steps

Based off what we gathered from the results of the analysis, a strong bias cannot be definitively attributed to any of the media platforms. This can likely be attributed to the limited data we worked with. With more articles, a biases could potentially be identified. However, we did identify certain tendencies among each of the platforms. To begin, Fox frequented violent terms such as "war", "attack", and "strike". This seems to be an indication of efforts to produce more sensational, riveting news pieces. Perhaps this type of media is the only way to attract Western attention to the longstanding political conflict between Palestine and Israel. Haaretz reported from the position of attempting to highlight how the ongoing conflict will weigh into Israel's political landscape. They also made a point of reporting on how the conflict stands to impact their relations with Lebanon and their conflict with Hezbollah. Al Jazeera's reporting made a point of tying the conflict in Gaza to the geopolitics throughout the Arab world and middle east. They also made considerable mention of Lebanon's relations with Israel in their reporting. Next steps for the continuation of this analysis would include primarily gathering of many more articles from each platform. What would also be beneficial would be to compile a stopword list more tailored to these articles, rather than just using a general stopword list from the internet.