

## Original Article

# Legitimizing Dispossession: A CDA of Settler Colonialism in Zionist Texts

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## Abstract

This paper employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate how Zionist discourse contributed to the formation and legitimization of the State of Israel. It aims to investigate and detail how Zionist ideology as a discursive practice underpinned the foundations of the State of Israel. To this end, the research adopts a dialectical approach analyzing key foundational texts exploring the link between language, ideology, and power. The analysis follows Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model, examining the linguistic and rhetorical strategies, the conditions of discourse production and consumption, and the broader sociopolitical context within which Zionist ideology was constructed. The findings reveal that Zionist discourse functioned as both a legitimizing narrative for Jewish statehood and a mechanism of exclusion and erasure of the Palestinian presence. By aligning itself with European colonial and liberal-nationalist ideologies, Zionism was discursively positioned as a modern, civilizing force while constructing Palestinians as either absent or other. This discursive formation facilitated international recognition, policy justification, and the normalization of displacement, contributing to the geopolitical entrenchment of settler-colonial dynamics in Palestine. The study contributes to the growing body of literature that critically interrogates the role of language in conflict and identity formation.

**Keywords:** Zionism, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Identity, discourse, discursive legitimization

## INTRODUCTION

The region of Palestine has been in dispute for decades. The conflict involves tensions dating back to the Roman Empire, but became a violent war from 1948 onwards, when David Ben-Gurion declared the birth of the State of Israel. This began a three-day war that led to the largest expulsion of Palestinians from their land ever seen and was marked in the Arab world as *Al-Nakba* (the catastrophe). The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 was a watershed moment in Middle Eastern history, often explained through the lenses of geopolitics, colonial intervention, and military conflict. To this day, the region is disputed between the Jewish and Palestinian peoples, both of whom regard Jerusalem as the holy land and claim the right to settle there (Home et al., 2025). However, such narratives

frequently underemphasize the role of language and ideology in shaping the sociopolitical realities that enabled state formation.

Since before the creation of the State of Israel, the discourse was already used as mechanism to attract and unite people around the consensus on the need for a State majority Jewish, that is, for more than a century, the Zionist ideology has been adapting to contexts in which it is inserted and constructing narratives about the Arabs, about the population Palestinian and about the domination itself in the region.

Understanding the genesis of this discourse and how it laid the foundations of the Israeli state, allows us to understand how the legitimization of policies of domination, expulsion, blockade, resettlement and apartheid that are imposed on Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip and the West



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This study explores how Zionist discourse operated as a form of ideological labor that helped facilitate the creation of Israel, drawing on Norman Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to critically interrogate the linguistic and socio-discursive practices underpinning this process. Thus, the research question that guides this study is: How did Zionist discourse, as analyzed through Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis, contribute to the discursive formation and legitimization of the State of Israel in the Palestine region?

Fairclough's CDA framework provides a rigorous method for analyzing how language contributes to the (re)production of power relations in society. His three-dimensional model—comprising textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice—enables the researcher to move beyond surface-level meanings to uncover the ideological underpinnings embedded within discourse (Fairclough, 2013). Within this framework, discourse is seen as both constitutive of and constituted by social structures, making it a suitable tool for examining how Zionist narratives aligned with broader colonial, orientalist, and nationalist discourses to legitimize territorial claims over Palestine. Scholars such as Said (1986) and Ayyash (2023) have argued that such discourses were instrumental in constructing the Palestinian as the “other”—absent from history, politics, and geography—while positioning the Zionist settler as a rightful returnee. These narratives were reinforced through political speeches, media portrayals, and diplomatic rhetoric, all of which contributed to a dominant discourse that erased Palestinian presence and framed statehood as a return to a biblical homeland. Building upon the critical traditions of discourse analysis, this research investigates textual and public documents that legitimized the establishment of Israel. It examines how Zionist discourse was strategically constructed to mobilize Jewish diasporas, appeal to Western powers, and render the colonial project intelligible and acceptable. Sabagh-Khoury (2022) and Abdo (2018) have emphasized that Zionist nation-building was deeply intertwined with the discursive construction of Jewish indigeneity and Palestinian invisibility, making discourse analysis essential to understanding the mechanics of state formation.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to discourse studies unlike traditional historical or political analyses that focus on military, economic, or diplomatic factors, this study foregrounds the discursive construction of legitimacy, identity, and belonging. It responds to calls in critical discourse literature to treat language not as a reflection of social reality but as a constitutive force in its own right (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). By uncovering the ideological mechanisms embedded in Zionist discourse, the study also offers insights into contemporary debates about settler colonialism, historical memory, and national myth-making. From this perspective, the production of consensus and truths through discourse allowed the transformation of the status quo and founded, legitimized and recognized the State of Israel, despite its contradictions. As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to shape global politics, understanding its discursive origins remains crucial for envisioning more equitable narratives and futures.

## METHODOLOGY

This work is a revisionist research, which seeks to clarify the roots of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, mapping, in particular, the role of Zionist ideology in establishment of the State of Israel in the region. Furthermore, the research employs a qualitative design and uses the theoretical method of Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze speeches and texts that were part of the structuring and dissemination of the Zionist ideology. CDA as an analytical framework aims to understand how texts influence asymmetrical power relations and social changes. Mekt et al. (2024) argue that any ideological sign can help create, maintain or transform these relationships. Having discourse as a mode of action historically situated and capable of organizing the structures of societies, the Social Theory of Fairclough's Discourse (1992) has the necessary foundations for identifying the role of Zionist ideology in the production of the State of Israel.

The research mainly focuses on the discursive strategies used by key Zionist figures and texts to construct national identity, justify territorial claims, and marginalize Palestinian presence, where Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1989) served as the primary analytical framework.

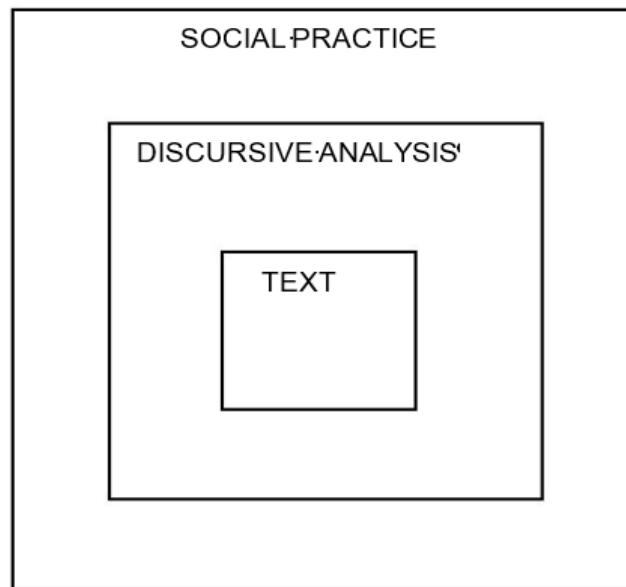


Fig. 1. Fairclough's 3D Model (1989)

### Data Selection

The study utilized a purposive sample of historically significant Zionist texts, spanning from the late 19th century to the declaration of Israeli statehood in 1948. The selection was based on the texts' relevance in shaping the ideological, political, and rhetorical foundations of the Zionist project. The primary data corpus includes: *A Jewish State* by Theodor Herzl (1896), Address by Max Nordau at the First Zionist Congress (1897), *The Iron Wall: We and the Arabs* by Ze'ev Jabotinsky (1923), Excerpts from *The Expulsion of the Palestinians* by Nur Masalha (1992, pp. 68–71, 111–115), Speech by Chaim Weizmann to the 20th Zionist Congress (1938), *Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel* by David Ben-Gurion (1948)

### Data Analysis

The selected texts were imported into WordStat and QDA Miner to complement a qualitative Critical Discourse Analysis framework. WordStat was used to identify salient lexical items based on word frequency, not for statistical generalization, but to guide deeper interpretive inquiry into how frequently used terms function within specific textual and discursive contexts. Building on this, QDA Miner facilitated the exploration of associated words and co-occurrence patterns, enabling the identification of collocation and thematic relationships that inform meaning-making processes. Extracts containing high-frequency or ideologically significant terms were then subjected to close, qualitative reading in line with Fairclough's emphasis on uncovering the

implicit ideologies, intertextual links, and power relations embedded in discourse

### Analysis and Discussion

#### Textual Practice

The textual features of Zionist discourse reveal a deliberate use of language to frame political aims in terms that appear historically inevitable, morally justified, and even divinely ordained. Across the selected texts—from Herzl's *A Jewish State* (1896) and Nordau's First Zionist Congress address (1897), to Jabotinsky's *Iron Wall* (1923), and culminating in Ben-Gurion's Declaration of the State of Israel (1948)—we observe a patterned deployment of key lexical items and syntactic structures that function to produce and legitimize a particular vision of Jewish nationhood and statehood, while rendering Palestinian presence marginal or oppositional.

For Fairclough, discourse provides the construction of social subjects and builds social relationships between people contributing to the construction of knowledge and belief systems (Fairclough, 1992). In *Discourse and Social Change* (2001), Fairclough discusses that codification and selection of samples can be one of the alternatives for analyzing a corpus. In view of this, to understand the relationships between the actors of the discourses selected and the important excerpts for the discussion of the Zionist ideological practice in construction of the State of Israel, eight codes were created according to the frequency of words in the chosen speeches (Table 1 and 2), associated with an understanding of what would be useful and relevant.

**Table 1**

Word Frequency

Category	Frequency	Number of Cases	% of Cases
Jews	182	6	100.00%
Jewish	170	6	100.00%
State	103	6	100.00%
Transfer	91	3	50.00%
Land	86	6	100.00%
People	85	6	100.00%
Arab	78	4	66.67%
Company	68	2	33.33%
Arabs	63	3	50.00%

**Table 2**

Frequency of Associated Words

Associated Word	Frequency	Number of Cases	Percentage of Cases
Jewish State	27	4	66.67%
Anti Semitism	22	3	50.00%
Jewish Company	22	1	16.67%
Royal Commission	19	2	33.33%
Jewish People	17	3	50.00%
Land of Israel	13	3	50.00%
National Home	13	3	50.00%
Eretz Israel	12	1	16.67%
Society of Jews	12	1	16.67%
British Government	11	2	33.33%
Compulsory Transfer	11	1	16.67%
Jewish Question	11	1	16.67%
Arab State	10	2	33.33%

From this, codes were established (see Table 3) and coding was carried out of the speeches through the QDA Miner software. Thus, the *Jewish State* codes (which include Jewish State, Land of Israel, *National Home* and Eretz Israel) and *Jewish People* (which includes Jewish People Jew, Anti-Semitism, Society of Jews, Jewish Question) were the most frequent, with 55 and 49 occurrences respectively. In this sense, when dealing with speeches that aim to establish Zionism, these terms are expressive and fundamental in the construction of ideology. The codes Transfer, Use of Force and Settlement/Colonization were thought of within the context of the Zionist occupation. The word 'Transfer' is repeated 91 times throughout the speeches and, when coded, is associated with the use of force in five cases of 18. Furthermore, although colonization is a term little used, its idea is

disseminated in 5 of the 6 speeches analyzed. Thus, after coding, this theme manifested 26 times (71.4%) in speeches, and 13 times associated with the idea of the Jewish State, which demonstrates that the constitution of the *National Home* has a strong correlation with the process of colonization of Palestine. Furthermore, the Arab and Threat codes were established with the aim to map both how the image of Palestinians was constructed over the establishment of the Zionist discourse, as well as the frequency with which the figure of the Arab is attributed to the notion of threat to the existence of the Jewish State. Finally, the Conflict code sought to analyze the mentions of the possibility of agreements, the possible resistance of the natives and, even to the possibility of war.



**Table 3**

Category	Frequency	Number of Cases	Percentage
Jewish People	49	Jew; Jews; Judaism; Society; Semites; Semitism; Anti-Semitism; Emancipation	85.7%
Jewish State	55	State; Israel; Land; State borders; Hebrew State; Eretz-Israel; Immigration; Establishment; "National Home"; Tel Aviv; Land Promised	85.7%
Transfer	18	Compulsory transfer; Mandate [British]; Transfer plan; Palestine; Arabs; Native Population; Non-Jewish; Forcible Transfer; Arab States	42.9%
Use of force	9	Coercion; Forced; Expulsion; Mandatory	42.9%
Settlement/Colonization	26	Emigration; Settlement; Colonization; Occupation; Settlers; Colonialists; Yishuv; Society of Jews; Jewish Company	71.4%
Arabs	23	Arab; Palestinians; Palestine; Enemy; Uncivilized; Native; Indigenous	71.4%
Threat	8	Danger; Fear; Disorder; Revolt; Provocation	57.1%
Conflict	15	War; Resistance; Retaliation; Agreement	42.9%

In *A Jewish State*, Herzl refers to the Jewish people as returning to their ancient homeland, and positions this movement as part of a divine and historical continuum. The metaphor of return displaces the political nature of migration and land acquisition, replacing it with an emotive, moralized language of homecoming. This aligns with Edward Said's analysis in *The Question of Palestine* (1980), in which he observes that Zionist discourse operates by eliding the political and demographic realities of Palestine, constructing the land as simultaneously empty and waiting.

The lexical field surrounding Jewish identity in these texts is equally important. In Nordau's speech, the Jewish people are repeatedly described in civilizational terms as: cultured, moral, and deserving. In contrast, Palestinians are rarely mentioned directly. When they do appear, they are characterized indirectly, often as obstacles to progress or as irrational resisters. Along the similar lines, Jabotinsky's *Iron Wall* exemplifies this, referring to the Arab population as inherently opposed to Zionism and requiring containment. The solution, he asserts, is "an iron wall of Jewish military force." The metaphor implies both separation and strength, constructing a discursive reality in which Arab resistance is not only expected but illegitimate.

This dichotomous representation resonates with Said's foundational theory of Orientalism (2014), in which the Orient is constructed as the irrational, inferior "Other" against which the West defines itself. Zionist discourse reproduces this structure: the rational, modern Jewish subject is pitted against the backward, emotional Arab.

Furthermore, syntactic analysis reveals a consistent use of passive voice when referring to Palestinian displacement or conflict. In Masalha's *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, which documents

internal Zionist correspondence, one frequently encounters phrases like "the village was vacated" or "the population fled," obscuring the agents of expulsion. This linguistic evasion reinforces Teun van Dijk's argument (2015) that elite discourse frequently uses syntactic strategies to mitigate responsibility and maintain ideological hegemony.

The inter-textual layering in Zionist discourse is another striking textual feature. The texts continuously draw from Biblical references and European political philosophy. Herzl's narrative fuses Enlightenment ideals of nationhood with Messianic longing, positioning Zionism as both modern and eternal. Ben-Gurion's declaration opens with a direct reference to Biblical history—the Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people—establishing a sacred genealogy that bridges millennia. As Michel Foucault contends, discourse is productive: it creates not only knowledge, but also subjects and truths (Foucault, as cited in, Miller, 1990). By narrating Jewish statehood as the culmination of a 2000-year exile, the discourse produces a "truth" that legitimizes the establishment of Israel and erases alternative narratives.

Across these texts, there exists a sharp discourse that shapes perception and authorizes action. The formal properties of language such as choice of words, sentence structure and metaphor are not neutral. They are carefully utilized as ideological tools constructing a coherent and persuasive narrative of Israeli nationhood, while marginalizing or delegitimizing Palestinian claims.

### Discursive Practice

In this section the relational function of discourse is developed, that is, how social relations are established in the discursive construction. Therefore, it's observed how these speeches were produced, distributed and

consumed.

Theodor Herzl is the author of the book *A Jewish State* which inspired the idea of the need for a territory for the Jewish nation; he was elected president of the World Zionist organization after the 1st Zionist Congress, a position he held until 1904. Regarding the speaker of the opening speech of the 1st Zionist Congress, Max Nordau is considered the founder of modern Zionism alongside Herzl; presided over the 7th to 10th Zionist Congress, but did not serve as an official member of the leadership council of the Zionist Organization World. Furthermore, author of the essay *Iron Wall*, Ze'ev Jabotinsky joined the Zionist movement in 1903, created the Jewish Self-Defense Organization, was delegate to the 6th Zionist Congress and became the leader of the right-wing Zionists after the death of Herzl, founding Revisionist Zionism. Chaim Weizmann was a delegate to all Zionist Congresses since 1898, playing a fundamental role in Congress of 1901, when he advocated the establishment of Israel in the land of Zion (Palestine); Weizmann became a diplomat of Zionism after the Balfour Declaration and became the first president of Israel after the declaration of the State.

Finally, David Ben-Gurion, the most important figure in the declaration of the State of Israel, was the son of a Zionist leader in Poland, immigrated to Palestine in 1906, was expelled by the Ottomans in World War I and enlisted in the Jewish Legion of the British Army after the defeat Ottoman Empire. In addition, Ben-Gurion had a strong political and military presence within the Zionist movement, becoming, in 1949, the Prime Minister of the Israeli government.

In this perspective, it is understood that all the speeches analyzed come from a ideological space, this is because all the represented issuers have some connection with the Zionist movement and its institutions. According to Fairclough (1992), the discourse has a dialectical relationship with the social structure, in which the latter shapes and constrains the first and the first constitutes all the dimensions of the last. Thus, the discursive constitution of society is not just a game of ideas, but part of a social practice that derives from material social structures (Fairclough, 1992). Understanding where the discourses analyzed are uttered contributes to understanding what ideological load they carry and what senses and meanings they want to reproduce.

In this sense, one of the fundamental

characteristics of Zionist discursive practice observed is collectivization. The text is produced and consumed collectively, even in books or essays by a single author. All speeches are inspired by a collective idea (Zionism) and start from the bases of this movement to reproduce its thought. Among the observed speeches, the word “I” was said 74 times, while the word “Jew/Jews/Jewish” was said 137 times and the word “we” was said 52 times. Furthermore, the pronoun “my” was not said not once, but the pronoun “our” was used 79 times. It can be understood, from this data, that there is a need to collectivize this discourse and this has to do with the Zionist goal of creating a Jewish majority homeland.

Zionist discourse, particularly in its foundational texts by Herzl, Nordau, and Jabotinsky, was deeply aware of its audience. It was simultaneously inward-looking – aimed at mobilizing and unifying a fragmented Jewish diaspora – and outward-facing, tailored for acceptance by European imperial powers. Fairclough's concept of interdiscursivity is especially useful here: Zionist texts draw upon religious, legal, and colonial discourses to construct legitimacy. Herzl's *A Jewish State*, for instance, borrows the form of a political pamphlet while echoing the Enlightenment rhetoric of rational state-building. Nordau, in his 1897 speech, adopts the posture of a statesman, speaking in the idiom of civilizational uplift and moral right.

Jabotinsky's *Iron Wall* is particularly illustrative of how discursive production was shaped by the need to address both internal doubts and external opposition. His writing is polemical, targeting liberal Zionists who still entertained the hope of Arab cooperation. His argument begins with a dismissal of Arab resistance as irrational, and culminating in a call for impenetrable military strength reflecting a discursive strategy of closure. As van Dijk (2015) emphasizes, dominant discourses often work by foreclosing alternative narratives, and here, the very possibility of a binational solution is eliminated through rhetorical force.

Dissemination of these discourses occurred through carefully chosen channels: Zionist congresses, European newspapers, diplomatic communications, and later, official declarations. The language of Ben-Gurion's 1948 declaration was constructed with an international audience in mind, particularly the United Nations and Western powers. Its intertextual structure, referring both Biblical history and modern legal

documents such as the Balfour Declaration – exemplifies what Fairclough(2005) calls “recontextualization,” where elements from different discourses are strategically recombined to produce new authority. Ben Gurion in his declaration refers to Palestine as Eretz-Israel, where he revives the link with the ‘biblical law’ (which he calls natural law), as it erases Palestine as a national unit. In addition, the reference to Nazi Holocaust is constantly used as catastrophe, the massacre, as a way of keeping the theme of suffering alive during the speech, which creates the legitimacy and urgency of declaring a Jewish national state. Furthermore, by saying that the General Assembly demanded that the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel take the necessary measures on their part to implement this resolution”, Ben-Gurion told the international community that the unfolding of the establishment of Israel would not just be a systematic plan, but a necessary consequence to put into practice as a UN decision, exempting Israel from any blame in relation to the conflict with the Arabs. The declaration does not merely proclaim statehood; it performs it linguistically, constructing the state of Israel as both an historical inevitability and a modern legal entity.

The discursive practices surrounding Zionist texts are thus not merely about the construction of linguistic structures but control: control over narrative, history, and legitimacy. All of these texts were consciously designed to be both persuasive and performative. As Foucault argued,(2001) discourse is a means of producing power and truth, and in this case, Zionist discourse succeeded in establishing a dominant truth that would go largely uncontested in Western discourse. The power of these texts lies not only in their content but in the institutional mechanisms that sustained and circulated them.

## Social Practice

In this section the social practice of discourse is developed, which, according to Fairclough (1992, p. 289) aims to “specify social relations and structures and hegemony that constitute the matrix of this particular instance of social and discursive practice, seeking to understand how discourse influences structures, how it is influenced by them and what effects it produces in terms of its reproduction or transformation”. As the objective of this work is to understand the behavior of ideology, the analysis of social practice will be around the ideological and political effects of the discourse, such as: creation of a belief system, the construction of social

identities and the hegemonic transformation , through the strategies of operating ideology. In this sense Osman (2025) claims that ideology is naturally hegemonic, and is an instrument to establish and sustain relations of domination. Thus, ideology contributes to the reproduction or transformation of the social order that benefits dominant individuals and groups (Sites, 2025).

The Zionist discourse that underpinned the formation and legitimization of the State of Israel must be understood as a historically situated practice shaped by broader colonial ideologies, nationalist movements, and the geopolitical crises of the early 20th century. It emerged not merely as a response to antisemitism or Jewish persecution but as a strategic engagement with the dominant political ideologies of the time – namely European colonialism, Enlightenment liberalism, and nationalist self-determination. As Fairclough (2013) concludes that discourse is not only linguistic but social, a practice that both reflects and reproduces social structures.

Unification is a fundamental mode of operation of Zionist ideology, as construction of the social identity of the future Jewish home depended on finding and uniting Jews from diaspora around the same ideals. In this sense, Theodor Herzl’s work, *A Jewish State*, and Max Nordau’s speech at the 1st Zionist Congress make extensive use of the strategies of standardization and symbolization of unity.

*No one can deny the gravity of the situation of the Jews. Wherever they live in noticeable numbers, they are more or less persecuted. Their equality before the law, guaranteed by statute, has become practically a dead letter. They are prevented from filling even moderately high positions, whether in the army or in any public or private capacity. And attempts are made to drive them out of the market too.*

Along the similar lines, Nordau uses the experience of the ghettos as a shared foundation (unification by standardization)

*Their external situation was insecure, often seriously threatened. But internally they achieved a complete development of their specific qualities. They were harmonious human beings, who did not need the elements of normal social life. They also instinctively felt the full importance of the ghetto for their inner life and therefore had only one care: to make their existence secure by means of invisible walls that were much thicker and higher than the stone walls that visibly enclosed them. All Jewish buildings and customs unconsciously pursued only*



*one purpose: to maintain Judaism by separation from other people and to make the individual Jew constantly aware of the fact that he was lost and would perish if he gave up his specific character*

Nordau not only attracts the Jews of the ghettos, but all those who identify with these needs, transforming the secure existence and the maintenance of Judaism in symbols of unity. This unification is essential for the objective to also be unified, that is, if all Jews identify with these sufferings, they go through the same experiences and share the same needs, therefore, the solution is unique and it must be the mission of all Jews to achieve it.

Overtime, unification ceased to predominate in Zionist discourses, especially after Zionism consolidated itself as a movement and the objective of conquering Palestine as the land for the establishment of Israel was plotted. From that moment, unification had already played its role of persuasion, giving space to the strategies of legitimization, dissimulation and fragmentation. It is inferred that, among all the modes, concealment by displacement is the most used, being present in all of the cases analyzed. Dissimulation is when ideology operates in order to establish and sustain relations of domination through the denial or obfuscation of relations of domination and the displacement strategy is evident when there is a recontextualization of terms displacing positive or negative connotations (Resende; Ramalho, 2006). This strategy is mainly used to talk about threat, transfer and use of force, as for example, Berl Katznelson's words:

*They will not lose from the transfer and we certainly will not lose from it. Ultimately, this is a political and settlement reform for the benefit of both parties. I have long been of the opinion that this is the best of all solutions, and in the days of the disorders I have been strengthened in my convictions that this must happen one day (Masalha, 1992, p. 71).*

Katznelson refers to the settlement as something beneficial for both parties and says it is of a political reform, that is, it seeks to bring positive aspects to the issue of transfer. Thus, to characterize the Arab Revolt as a disorder is to obscure the true reasons why it broke out and recontextualize it with the intention of implying the possibility of it will happen again if the transfer does not occur. Furthermore:

*We know definitely that Arab politicians are having high hopes for the dissensions in the Jewish*

*camp. They believe that if the present phase of negotiations can be dragged out and the partition fails as a result of Arab intransigence and the internal independent Arab Jewish State with a permanent Jewish minority, the latter will provide the financial means for the maintenance of Arab political glory as in the good old days*

Weizmann's strategy has the same objective as the previous one, but is used in a different form. The choice of words constructs a sense that Arab intransigence that seeks self-glory will be obtained at the expense of Jewish mourning, sadness and pain. Creating this scenario discursively obscures the real reason why Arabs resist the idea of partition. Furthermore, the entire speech declaring the State of Israel, made by Ben-Gurion, in 1948, is based on a constant narrativization, which tries through a history of past, legitimize the present:

*ERETZ-ISRAEL was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first achieved statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave the world the eternal Book of Books. Forced into exile from their land, the people remained faithful to it during their Dispersion, never ceasing to pray and long for its return and the restoration of their political freedom. Motivated by this historical and traditional bond, the Jews struggled in each succeeding generation to reestablish themselves in their ancestral homeland. [...] In the year 5657 (1897), at the call of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in their own land. [...] The catastrophe that recently befell the Jewish people - the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe - was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of their homelessness by re-establishing the Jewish State in Eretz-Israel*

The discourse first refers to the Hebrew people of the Bible, then to Herzl stating a right of rebirth and, finally, mentions the Holocaust caused by the Nazis as a demonstration of the urgency of the problem of anti-Semitism. The use of the words rebirth and reestablishment has already been discussed, but here it is worth mentioning its role in legitimation by narrativization. The past legitimizes the present presupposing a previous right, making the statement legitimate and calls for legitimacy. Said (2012) calls this as a total inversion of reality as it helped secure diplomatic support from Western powers. It also



enabled the formation of Israeli identity around the notions of pioneering, sacrifice, and national redemption.

The social practice of Zionist discourse also reveals the deep asymmetries of global power. As van Dijk (cite) has argued, discourse plays a central role in the reproduction of social inequality by controlling access to public knowledge and shaping collective memory. Until the rise of Palestinian scholarship and postcolonial critique in the latter half of the 20th century, the Zionist narrative dominated both academic and media discourses in the West. Even today, the residual effects of early Zionist discourse continue to structure political debates, international policy, and public perceptions. The foundational myths of “a land without a people for a people without a land,” the civilizing mission of Jewish pioneers, and the inevitability of conflict — all constructed through early Zionist texts — remain potent discursive tools in contemporary statecraft and international diplomacy. As CDA reveals, these are not just myths but socially embedded practices that continue to shape the possibilities for justice, reconciliation, and peace.

## CONCLUSION

This research has critically examined how Zionist discourse functioned not only as a reflection of political intent, but as a constitutive force in legitimizing the dispossession of Palestinians. Its popularization as well as its establishment occurred through assimilation with Western principles of colonization and subjugation of the other. Through discursive strategies, the Zionists managed to substantiate and legitimize the actions that constituted the establishment of the State of Israel and its policies since then.

The Social Theory of Discourse has shown that it is possible to produce subjects and disseminate ideas through discursive practice, so that these ideas are instrumentalized politically. In this way, discourse proved to be a social practice, which means that semiotic elements of language must be seen as products of society. In view of this, the study of the construction of Zionist ideology towards hegemony through discourse proved to be the ideal way to understand how the process of the establishment of Israel took place. In this regard, it was noted that, when articulating the narrative of return to the ancestral land, of collective unity through a Jewish identity and the need for a national state, Zionism managed to mobilize international support to legitimize

the colonization of Palestine.

Using Fairclough’s three-dimensional model, the study elucidate the linguistic strategies, discursive processes, and ideological underpinnings that enabled the transformation of a narrative into a hegemonic truth. The analysis demonstrated how language was meticulously crafted to justify exclusion, displacement, and occupation under the guise of historical necessity and moral justification. Across the foundational texts analyzed, language was deployed not merely to persuade but to construct legitimacy where none previously existed. The linguistic structure positioned Jewish settlement as a redemptive act, while Palestinians were rendered as threat rather than being recognized as the marginalized voice. These rhetorical strategies allowed Zionist leaders to invert settler-colonial violence into a narrative of civilizational progress and ancestral justice. The authority of these discourses was not simply rooted in their content, but in the broader political, institutional, and ideological systems that produced and circulated them. Zionist discourse aligned itself with prevalent ideologies of modernity, nationalism, and sovereign entitlement drawing strength from a Eurocentric worldview that normalized conquest and framed resistance as irrational.

The significance of this research lies in its ability to illuminate the ways in which statehood, legitimacy, and territorial sovereignty are not merely fought over through military or diplomatic means, but also constructed and contested through language and discourse. By analyzing the linguistic structure of Zionist ideology, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how power is exercised through language and narratives being weaponized to naturalize injustice. It is worth highlighting that the problem that sought to be clarified in this work is not the desire for a state for the Jewish people, it is in the systemic oppression from a colonial and imperialist mentality which implies Zionism. This ideology represents the search of a historically oppressed people for recognition as a nation, culture and collective entity. However, this pursuit comes at the expense of the people Palestinian, reflecting colonialist views of the oppressors.

Ultimately, the creation of the State of Israel was not only a political or military event, it was a discursive conquest, built through texts that masked dispossession as destiny and exclusion as emancipation elucidating that when history is written by the occupier, truth itself becomes a

casualty.

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