

MEDIA RESPONSE ON IRAN'S ATTACK AGAINST ISRAEL: Western, Middle Eastern, and Indonesian Media Discourse

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Abstract

This article discusses media responses to Iran's attack on Israel, comparing the narrative constructed by Western, Middle Eastern, and Indonesian media. It investigates how different perspectives and media biases from different regions shape the discourse surrounding the event. Using discourse analysis, this study provides an in-depth analysis of media texts, focusing on structure, language use, and the contextualization of ideologies in news coverage. This analysis explores how media from the West, the Middle East, and Indonesia framed the conflict and identifies lessons from these differing narratives in shaping public perception. The findings aim to contribute to understanding the dynamics of media discourse in international news, and to enrich the fields of communication and international relations by highlighting the media's role in constructing global conflict narratives. The results reveal that Western media emphasize diplomatic and humanitarian perspectives, Middle Eastern media focus on themes of struggle and ideology, and Indonesian media highlight political and social impacts at the local level. These differences reflect how discourse is shaped by diverse regional interests and viewpoints, influencing how communities in each region perceive and understand such conflicts.

Artikel ini membahas respons media terhadap serangan Iran terhadap Israel, membandingkan wacana yang dibangun oleh media Barat, Timur Tengah, dan Indonesia. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana perspektif dan bias media

yang berbeda dari berbagai wilayah membentuk wacana seputar peristiwa tersebut. Dengan menggunakan analisis wacana, studi ini memberikan analisis mendalam terhadap teks media, dengan focus pada struktur, penggunaan bahasa, dan kontekstualisasi ideologi dalam pemberitaan. Analisis ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana media Barat, Timur Tengah, dan Indonesia mbingkai konflik tersebut serta mengidentifikasi pelajaran yang dapat diambil dari perbedaan narasi ini dalam membentuk persepsi public. Hasil studi bertujuan untuk berkontribusi pada pemahaman tentang dinamika wacana media dalam berita internasional, serta memperkaya studi komunikasi dan hubungan internasional dengan menyoroti peran media dalam membangun narasi konflik global. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa media Barat menekankan perspektif diplomatic dan kemanusiaan, media Timur Tengah menonjolkan tema perjuangan dan ideologi, sedangkan media Indonesia menyoroti dampak politik dan social di tingkat local. Perbedaan ini mencerminkan bagaimana wacana dibentuk oleh kepentingan dan sudut pandang regional yang beragam, yang pada akhirnya memengaruhi cara masyarakat di setiap wilayah memahami dan merespons konflik semacam itu.

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Introduction

The conflict between Iran and Israel is a long-standing regional issue rooted in ideological, political, and territorial disputes. Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iran has taken a hostile stance toward Israel, labeling it a "Zionist regime" and consistently opposing its existence (Koloay et al. 2024, 6081). Relations between the two countries are strained, mainly due to differences in ideology, political interests, and territorial conflicts. Iran's attack on Israel in Tel Aviv became one of the episodes in this ongoing series of conflicts, escalating tensions and attracting widespread attention from the international community.

The mass media, as one of the main players in the formation of public opinion, plays a critical role in either strengthening or mitigating tensions arising from the attack. Through its various platforms, the mass media controls the flow of information and narratives that shape the public's

perception of the event (Fashli 2024, 18 & 12). The practice of journalism has become increasingly intertwined with everyday life due to the presence of the internet and smartphones. These tools have supported journalism's evolution into a network system, facilitating access to diverse information (Juwita et al. 2024, 82). The press bears a social responsibility. As Sibert states, in relation to society's need for information, the press is responsible for upholding and advancing the interests of society (Mak 2015, 155). Therefore, it is crucial to understand how the mass media in different countries responded to these attacks, including how they chose to represent the event, taking into account the underlying political, cultural, and ideological contexts.

Iran's attack on Israel in Tel Aviv on April 13, 2024 generated a wave of media responses in various regions, including the West (*The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*), the Middle East (*Al Jazeera* and *The Jordan Times*), and Indonesia (*Kompas* and *Republika*). Mass media, such as magazines, newspapers, and social media platforms, play an important role in shaping public opinion and perception of international conflicts involving the two countries. This article discusses the media response from several regions to Iran's attack on Israel in Tel Aviv.

Media outlets with significant global influence, provided extensive coverage of the attack. Several prominent newspapers and television stations conducted in-depth analyses of the political and security implications, while prominent magazines explored broader aspects, such as the humanitarian impact and the role of international actors in the conflict. Many local media also present varying perspectives depending on the political and ideological interests of each country. Some support or criticize the attack, while others strive to maintain a balanced approach in their coverage.

The emergence of political problems related to Islamic radicalism has become a new challenge for Muslims to address. The issue of Islamic radicalism has actually been a topic of international discourse for quite some time. As a historical-sociological phenomenon, Islamic radicalism is often discussed in political discourse and global civilization, triggered by the power of the media, which plays a significant role in shaping the perception of the global community (Fitriani 2015, 118). In addition, social media platforms have become crucial spaces where individuals and groups can widely express their opinions and reactions. Information can quickly spread across various

platforms, particularly social media, which has become an easy channel for embedding certain ideas and influences (Juwantara et al. 2020, 314).

Meanwhile, in Indonesia—a country with the largest Muslim population in the world—the media response also reflects the country's political and cultural dynamics. Some media outlets take a pro-Israel or pro-Iran stance, while others, such as *Kompas*, seek to introduce a more complex and comprehensive framework in their coverage. By analyzing media responses from different regions, we can better understand how international conflicts like these are perceived and understood by the global community. Additionally, the research can help identify trends and patterns in international media coverage that can influence public opinion and policy shaping in the future.

Several similar studies have been conducted using critical discourse analysis or other approaches focusing on mass media and international conflicts. There is a study examining how mass media represents the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a discourse analysis approach (Nadila et al. 2024, 349). They explore how media language and narratives shape public perceptions of the conflict and influence opinion and policy. A study in 2021 investigated conflicts in the Middle East more broadly, including the conflict between Iran and Israel (Purnomo 2021, 182). He analyzed how mass media from various countries and regions respond to and represent these conflicts, shedding light on their influence on the political and social dynamics of the region.

Another study focused on the role of social media in international conflicts (Sholehkatina et al. 2024). The study highlights how social media platforms are used to disseminate information, shape public opinion, and mobilize political action within the context of these conflicts. Last but not least, media framing in the context of international conflicts, particularly in the Middle East, has been examined (Wafa 2020). His study analyzed how mass media organizes and presents information about conflicts and the extent to which such framing influences public perceptions and attitudes.

The focus of this study is the analysis of media discourse surrounding Iran's attack on Israel in Tel Aviv. It compares how media from three different regions (Western, Middle Eastern, and Indonesian) construct narratives related to the event. This article seeks to identify differences in how these media outlets convey information and how their respective perspectives and ideologies influence their coverage. The primary objective

of this study is to explore how media compose news texts, use certain language, and form discourses that shape public perception of conflicts. Using a discourse analysis approach, this study aims to uncover the social and ideological constructions hidden behind the coverage of the attacks, and to understand the role of the media in shaping public opinion and perceptions of complex international events.

The urgency lies in the importance of understanding how media from different regions present international events from diverse perspectives. These narratives can significantly influence global attitudes and opinions toward the conflict. Given the dominant role of the media in shaping public discourse, this study is highly relevant for enriching the study of communication, international relations, and media studies, particularly in exploring the impact of media in global geopolitics. This study also contributes to understanding how media discourse can strengthen or weaken the narratives underlying international conflicts. Furthermore, it examines how media representations have the potential to affect policies and relationships among different countries.

This article highlights the complexity of international conflicts in the Middle East and their far-reaching impacts, especially how mass media shape public understanding of these events. In today's global information landscape, analyzing media reactions provides valuable insights into political and social dynamics at local, regional, and international levels. Exploring how various media, including those from the West, the Middle East, and Indonesia, frame and report on such incidents offers a nuanced understanding of how media narratives shape public opinion, influence perceptions across regions, and potentially affect governmental policies. Additionally, examining these media responses shed light on their role in shaping the discourse around international conflicts and their future implications for public attitudes and diplomatic strategy.

Research Method

This study employs discourse analysis using van Leeuwen's theory of exclusion and inclusion to examine news coverage of Iran's attack on Israel in Tel Aviv. According to Van Dijk, discourse studies originated from critical linguistic analysis and have expanded into other social sciences, such as critical semiotic analysis, language, discourse, communication, and other disciplines (Sugiyanto 2023, 70). Discourse analysis is a relatively new and

developing field. Previously, various schools of linguistics focused on sentence structure, but over time, many linguists shifted their attention to the study of discourse (Lubis 1993, 12). Discourse analysis explores the structure of messages in the communication, specifically the pragmatic functions of language. Language is used in communication as a series of discourses; without considering the context and relationships between sentences, effective communication becomes challenging (Tarigan 1993, 24). Discourse analysis stems from the understanding that communication problems extend beyond sentence structure and speech functions, to encompass more complex and deeper message structures, known as discourse (Littlejohn 1996, 84).

This study compares media discourses from the West, the Middle East, and Indonesia to understand how these regions shape the narrative. Western media coverage is analyzed through *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*, both of which are influential in shaping global public opinion. For the Middle East, *Al Jazeera* and *The Jordan Times* are selected, while in Indonesia, *Kompas* and *Republika* are chosen for their credibility and diverse perspectives. The study focuses on how these media outlets cover the attack and its impact on international relations. The analysis focuses on how these media outlets report the attack and its impact on international relations, applying Van Leeuwen's theory of exclusion and inclusion (Van Leeuwen 1996, 32-69). This model identifies exclusion, where certain actors are omitted from the narrative, and inclusion, where groups are portrayed in specific ways. Both processes shape public understanding and can legitimize particular viewpoints (Badara 2012, 6).

The study further explores how the ideology and interests of each region's media influence public perception of Iran's attack on Israel. By examining how Western, Middle Eastern, and Indonesian media frame the event, it seeks to understand the role of media in constructing global narratives and shaping public opinion on international conflicts. This comparative approach aims to provide deeper insights into the power of media discourse in reflecting and reinforcing regional perspectives on global events.

Results and Discussion

Background of Iran's Attack on Israel

The history of relations between Iran and Israel has evolved through a complex journey. After its founding in 1948, Israel maintained close relations with Iran (al Hadab et al. 2022). Iran became the second Muslim country, after Turkey, to recognize the Jewish state (Shidiq 2021). During the reign of King Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Iran, and Israel formed an alliance (Fatoni 2019) At that time, Iran was also home to the largest Jewish community in the Middle East, and Israel imported 40 percent of its oil from Iran in exchange for weapons, technology and agricultural products.

Iran's relations with Israel were not always hostile. After Israel gained independence in 1948, the two countries developed strategic and economic ties. In the 1950s, as part of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion's "fringe doctrine," Israel sought relations with non-Arab countries and ethnic minorities. With 22 Arab states (dominated by Sunnis) opposing Israel, Iran, whose majority population is Persian and Shiite, emerged as a logical partner.

Both countries also maintained strong ties with the United States and opposed Soviet influence in the region. Iran was Israel's largest arms importer, and it exported oil to Israel. Israel even had a diplomatic mission in Tehran. For three decades, from 1948 to 1978, relations between the two countries remained stable. However, these ties abruptly after the monarchy was overthrown in 1979. The new theocratic regime labeled the United States the "Big Satan" and Israel the "Little Satan." The regime abandoned Israel and adopted the Palestinian cause as its own, announcing a new holiday, Qods Day (Jerusalem). In August 1979, revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini invited Muslims to celebrate the last Friday of Ramadan as a day of solidarity with the Palestinian people "to jointly break the hands of these power grabbers and their supporters." The Qods force, an elite unit of the IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps), is also named after Jerusalem.

In 1979, the Islamic Revolution in Iran overthrew the monarchy and ended Iran-Israel alliance (Jatmika 2013). The revolution dismantled the monarchy and established the Islamic Republic under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini (Kadir 2015). Tensions between Iran and Israel escalated after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, with Iran viewing Israel as an illegal occupier and Israel rejecting Iran's legitimacy. Iran began supporting

Palestinian resistance groups, further intensifying the conflict, while Israel saw this as a security threat. This rivalry has complicated Middle East politics, often resulting in military confrontations and power struggles (Muhammadin 2023), with Iran's support for Islamic Jihad seen as part of a wider regional conflict.

During the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), Israel sent 1,500 missiles to assist Iran against Saddam Hussein. After Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, Iran supported the formation of Hezbollah, which carried out attacks on Israeli forces. Israel also blames Hezbollah for the 1992 bombing of its embassy in Argentina (29 killed) and the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center (85 killed). The relationship between Iran and Israel shifted from temporary cooperation during the Iran-Iraq War to one of hostility, with both nations now engaged in shadow wars. Israel views Iran's nuclear program as an "existential threat," while Iran labels Israel as an occupier.

On April 1, 2024, Israel launched an attack on Iran's embassy in Damascus, Syria, prompting a retaliatory strike from Iran on April 13, 2024. The Iranian response included drones and missiles aimed at Israel, which led to a counterattack on April 19, 2024. The Iranian strikes, in retaliation for Israel's embassy attack, caused explosions in cities such as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Israel blamed Iran for attacks on both its and US assets, resulting in the deaths of seven Iranian military officials. This marked a significant escalation in tensions between Iran and Israel.

Iran's missile attack on Tel Aviv, in response to Israeli airstrikes in Syria, further intensified the conflict. Israel retaliated with additional counterattacks in Syria, highlighting national security concerns. The conflict drew global condemnation, with diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalating tensions to prevent further instability. This analysis examines how Western, Middle Eastern, and Indonesian media frame the Iranian attack on Israel, highlighting regional differences in coverage and offering insights into the international perception of Middle Eastern conflicts.

Western Media Response: Contrasting Perspectives of The New York Times and The Washington Times

The analysis compares how *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* covered Iran's attack on Israel. *The New York Times* offers a detailed exploration of the conflict's background and regional impact, while *The*

Washington Times provides a more conservative perspective. The analysis explores how both outlets frame the conflict and the roles of the involved parties. The study examines how language and discourse are used to construct the narrative, shaping the inclusion or exclusion of key actors. It further explores how these choices influence public opinion in the U.S. and globally, revealing how the media frames Iran's role and its impact on the conflict.

Discourse Analysis of Western News Headlines

The headline "Iran Attacks Israel" in *The New York Times* uses deliberate word choices and structure to create a brief yet impactful narrative (The New York Times 2024). By placing "Iran" at the beginning, the headline emphasizes its role as the primary actor and instigator of aggression, while the verb "attacks" conveys decisiveness and violence. The positioning of "Israel" at the end frames it as the victim, creating a clear binary narrative where Iran is the aggressor and Israel the vulnerable party (Badara 2012, 40). This structure provides clarity but simplifies the complex geopolitical dynamics, focusing on direct conflict while leaving out broader context. This framing shapes public perception, portraying Iran as a provocateur through evocative language like "attacks," while presenting Israel as vulnerable and deserving of sympathy. Such language reinforces a polarized view of the conflict, emphasizing aggression and victimhood. Although the headline is concise and direct, its implications reach beyond the event itself, potentially influencing readers to adopt a one-sided perspective on the Iranian-Israeli conflict. This highlights the subtle power of media language in shaping narratives and underscores the need for critical engagement with how conflicts are framed, particularly in longstanding international disputes.

Analyzing *The Washington Times'* headline, titled "War-wary Iran keeps tensions stirring; proxies carry out most of death, unrest, destruction" (Wolfgang 2024) using the identification nomination discourse strategy from the Inclusion approach (Badara 2012, 40), reveals how the media constructs identities and labels the key actors. Iran is depicted as the primary force behind regional tensions, labelled as "war-wary" to highlight its reluctance for direct conflict while still actively maintaining instability. This portrayal suggests Iran is cautious about large-scale war but remains an influential player, shaping events indirectly.

The term "proxies" is used to describe groups acting on Iran's behalf, framing them as tools executing Tehran's policies without much specificity. These proxies are identified as responsible for violence, unrest, and destruction, reinforcing a narrative that highlights Iran's role as a central instigator. However, this framing overlooks details about who these proxies are and how other actors, like independent groups or nations, contribute to the broader conflict. By focusing on Iran and its proxies, the media simplifies the narrative, sidelining other perspectives. Overall, this strategy centers the narrative on Iran's influence and its proxies' actions but limits the complexity of the conflict by excluding additional roles and dynamics.

Discourse Analysis of Western News Leads

Discourse analysis of news leads focuses on how the media composes and presents information in the opening paragraphs, commonly referred to as leads (Wulandari et al. 2023, 4). Leads play a crucial role in news articles as they summarize the content and grab the reader's attention. By examining language and structure in these leads, discourse analysis reveals how media outlets shape the message and influence readers' understanding of events. The lead from *The New York Times*:

"Iran's missile attack on Israel has ended, for now, and virtually none of the missiles reached their targets" (The New York Times 2024).

The discourse theory of differentiation-indifferentiation can be applied to uncover nuanced meanings. Differentiation is evident in the separation between Iran, positioned as the aggressor, and Israel, identified as the target. The lead underscores Iran as the initiating actor of the missile attack, while Israel is portrayed as the victim of the aggression. This differentiation frames a binary narrative of action and reaction, establishing clear roles for the involved parties.

Additionally, the lead emphasizes a discrepancy between the action and its outcome. The phrase "virtually none of the missiles reached their targets" suggests the attack was largely ineffective. This description highlights the failure of the attack, creating a distinction between Iran's intention to cause harm and the actual lack of significant impact. This framing diminishes the perceived gravity of the attack, subtly influencing readers' interpretations of its consequences.

Conversely, an element of indifferentiation is introduced with the phrase “for now,” which implies uncertainty about the event’s permanence. This language choice obscures whether the attack marks the end of the conflict or if further tensions are anticipated. By leaving the duration of the event ambiguous, the lead maintains a sense of unresolved tension. Furthermore, by equating the attack with its failure, the lead minimizes the impact, suggesting that the outcome was inconsequential despite the action.

Overall, this lead skillfully combines differentiation–distinguishing actors and actions–with indifferentiation, which blends outcomes and introduces uncertainty. This interplay not only shapes readers’ understanding of the event but also reflects the subtle power of language in framing narratives and influencing public perception (Badara 2012, 42).

Meanwhile the lead from *The Washington Times*:

“Does Iran, beneath all its tough talk and anti-Israel, anti-US bluster, actually want to go to war?” (Wolfgang 2024).

This lead offers a nuanced perspective on Iran's rhetoric and actions. Using the differentiation approach, this lead separates Iran’s public statements and attitudes from its actual intentions in international relations (Badara 2012, 43). The sentence juxtaposes Iran’s hostile rhetoric toward Israel and the United States with uncertainty about its military objectives, prompting readers to question whether the aggression is genuine or merely political posturing.

This lead highlights the difference between Iran's "tough talk" and its concrete actions, such as engaging in war. It frames Iran’s public stance–characterized by aggressive rhetoric and open hostility toward Israel and the US–in contrast with its ambiguous military intentions. This differentiation creates a tension between what Iran says and what it might actually do, emphasizing an inconsistency between verbal posturing and potential concrete actions. By labeling Iran as “anti-Israel” and “anti-US,” the sentence places the country in a hostile position relative to two major powers, reinforcing its image as an aggressor in international politics. At the same time, the phrasing introduces doubt about whether Iran’s verbal hostility genuinely reflects a desire for direct military engagement.

Through this differentiation, the lead underscores the divide between Iran’s rhetoric and its military intentions, positioning the country within a

context of hostility while inviting skepticism about its true objectives. It effectively portrays Iran as a nation projecting toughness toward its adversaries but raises questions about whether this posture will translate into aggressive actions or remain political rhetoric. This layered analysis encourages readers to reflect on Iran's duality as both an outspoken critic of its enemies and a potentially cautious actor in international conflict.

Discourse Analysis of Western News Content

The articles from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* highlight different aspects of Iran's role in the Israeli conflict. Using an inclusive discourse strategy (Badara 2012, 44), both outlets portray Iran as a central actor but frame its involvement differently. *The New York Times* focuses on Iran's direct military actions, emphasizing the missile attack on Israel as a retaliatory response to earlier strikes on its embassy. Israel is depicted as the victim, with keywords like "missile attack," "retaliation," and "intercepted" (see Figure 1) reinforcing the intensity of the conflict and Israel's military response. Despite Israel's defense systems intercepting most missiles, the attack caused damage and injuries, including to a young girl, underscoring the humanitarian cost. This narrative frames the conflict as a cycle of mutual attacks, emphasizing polarization and escalating violence in the region.

Figure 1
News Content from The New York Times

Iran's missile attack on Israel has ended, for now, and virtually none of the missiles reached their targets.

Iran last night launched more than 300 drones and missiles in retaliation for an apparent Israeli strike on an Iranian embassy two weeks ago. Iran's attacks caused minor damage at one military base, and shrapnel seriously injured a 7-year-old girl from an Arab Bedouin community in southern Israel. But Israel intercepted most of the drones and missiles. The U.S. and Jordan also shot some down.

In contrast, *The Washington Times* provides a broader perspective by including Iran's use of proxy groups to escalate tensions. While still portraying Iran as a driver of conflict, the article highlights its indirect role through proxies, which are depicted as tools to carry out violence and destabilize the region

without direct confrontation, as shown in Figure 2. This framing presents Iran as both an aggressor and a strategic actor managing events through intermediaries, offering a more complex view of its involvement. By incorporating these proxies, the article moves beyond the binary narrative of aggressor versus victim, showing the broader impact of Iran's policies. Together, these perspectives reveal how media framing shapes public understanding of the Iranian-Israeli conflict, with one outlet emphasizing direct action and the other exploring indirect influences and wider dynamics.

Figure 2
News Content from The Washington Times



Middle Eastern Media Response: Contrasting Perspectives of *Al Jazeera* and *The Jordan Times*

In the Middle East, *Al Jazeera* has emerged as one of the main media outlets providing intensive coverage of Iran's attack on Israel in Tel Aviv. *Al Jazeera* is renowned for its regional focus and alignment with Middle Eastern perspectives in reporting on international conflicts. Through its television and online platforms, it delivers in-depth news coverage and invites speakers from both sides to provide diverse perspectives. This analysis examines the media text from one of *Al Jazeera* news articles. Additionally, it analyzes coverage from *The Jordan Times*, a leading media outlet in Jordan with significant influence in the Middle East.

Discourse Analysis of Middle Eastern News Headlines

Analyzing the headline from *Al Jazeera* “What does Israel want to do after Iran’s drone and missile attacks?” (Cordall 2024), it becomes evident that the phrasing aims to present Israel and Iran in a seemingly objective manner, explaining facts and circumstances without overt subjective value

or emotional charge. Objectivity in discourse implies that the elements in the text are presented without apparent influence from specific viewpoints or judgments. Instead, they are depicted neutrally, focusing on the actions or events themselves. The phrasing, "What does Israel want to do," highlights Israel's potential strategic actions in response to the Iranian attack without framing these actions as aggressive or defensive. This neutrality avoids moral or political judgments, directing attention to Israel's reaction to real, tangible events. By mentioning "Iran's drone and missile attacks," the headline stays factual and refrains from cultural or emotional interpretations, encouraging critical engagement with the topic.

This open-ended language fosters an understanding of the complexities behind Israel's decision-making while reflecting *Al Jazeera's* commitment to balanced journalism. The headline invites readers to explore the situation critically without imposing a particular perspective, fostering informed discussion on sensitive international issues. This approach aligns with the outlet's broader ethos of presenting regional conflicts in a way that encourages diverse perspectives and thoughtful consideration.

The headline from *The Jordan Times* "Israel presses on in Gaza as world awaits reaction to Iran Attack" similarly describes events without overt bias or emotional framing (AFP 2024). The phrase "presses on" denotes that Israel continues its operations in Gaza without attributing a positive or negative connotation to these actions. This phrasing conveys the continuation of military policies or actions factually, avoiding judgments about their moral or ethical implications. Meanwhile, the addition of "as world awaits reaction to Iran" portrays the international community as an observer waiting for Iran's response. This statement refrains from evaluating what Iran's response should be or how global nations ought to react. Instead, it presents the international world as a neutral entity anticipating developments, without imposing expectations or criticism.

Thus, the headline objectively addresses two significant events: Israel's ongoing actions in Gaza and the international tension surrounding Iran's potential reaction. By avoiding subjective views or moral judgments, the headline allows readers to focus on the events without the influence of strong biases or opinions about the conflict's rights or wrongs.

Discourse Analysis of Middle Eastern News Leads

Using the inclusion theory and categorization nomination approach (Badara 2012, 44), the opening paragraph of *Al Jazeera* article (Figure 3) categorizes and labels the parties involved in the event. It also depicts the social and political implications of this categorization. The text explicitly identifies two main groups: Israel and Iran.

Figure 3
News Lead in *Al Jazeera* Article (Cordall 2024)

Israel is reportedly unable to agree on a response to an [overnight barrage](#) of more than 300 Iranian drones and missiles, launched in response to Israel's own strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus on April 1.

The Israeli category is positioned as the first subject in the sentence, emphasizing the country's difficulty in agreeing on countermeasures. This positioning creates the impression of Israel as a rational or organized actor, albeit one facing confusion in responding to the attack. Israel is depicted as a legitimate and structured entity with a power system and diplomatic influence capable of shaping international decisions. In contrast, Iran is labeled as the party that carried out the counterattack using "drones and missiles," presenting its response as both defensive and aggressive. The term "attack" used to describe Iran's actions conveys aggression and confrontation, which can foster a narrative that portrays Iran as more inclined to the use of force or violence. These categorizations create an "us versus them" dynamic, where Israel is framed as an organized and policy-oriented actor, while Iran is portrayed as reactive and reliant on military force. While the text does not explicitly use terms like "terrorists" or "militants," the framing still suggests that Iran acts as the more aggressive and less controlled party in the conflict.

In *The Jordan Times* article the categorization nomination process divides the parties involved in the conflict to construct a specific narrative. Israel is labeled as the party that bombed Gaza, implying aggression, even though the context suggests it was in retaliation for previous attacks. Hamas is cited as the party reporting these events, positioning it reactively. Iran, identified as launching an unprecedented attack on Israel, is labeled as a trigger for the conflict, with the phrase "*unprecedented attack*" underscoring

its aggressiveness. Meanwhile, world powers are portrayed as urging restraint and de-escalation, suggesting a neutral or diplomatic stance advocating for peaceful resolution. This categorization creates a clear distinction between those directly involved in the violence (Israel, Hamas, and Iran) and international actors seeking to mitigate the conflict (world powers). The lead is shown in Figure 4

Figure 4
News Lead in *The Jordan Times* Article (AFP 2024)

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES — Israel bombed war-battered Gaza, Hamas said on Monday, as world leaders awaited Israel's reaction but urged de-escalation after Iran's unprecedented attack that heightened fears of wider conflict.

World powers have called for restraint after Iran launched more than 300 drones and missiles at Israel late Saturday, though the Israeli military has said nearly all were intercepted.

Discourse Analysis of Middle Eastern News Content

The discourse strategy of *identification nomination* focuses on defining specific groups, events, or actions through categorization and explanation. This strategy is similar to categorization but adds a defining process, often using clauses introduced by conjunctions like *that* or *where* to provide further explanation. While these explanations may appear neutral, they often carry implicit evaluations or judgments about the person, group, or action being described, shaping public perception (Badara 2012). The application of this strategy is evident in the selected news coverage, where various actors in the conflict are labeled and characterized, forming distinct narratives about their roles and motives.

In his report, Cordall (2024) highlights Israel as the party responsible for attacking the Iranian consulate in Damascus, presenting two scenarios: either a reckless act made without considering the consequences or a calculated attempt to divert international focus from Gaza to Iran. This framing positions Israel as a central driver of regional tensions, with its motives scrutinized by commentators. The article emphasizes that Israel's attack on the consulate, "*where the IRGC is based,*" crossed a significant boundary, as it constitutes a strike on foreign soil under international law. The conjunction *where* explains the strategic and provocative context of the attack, adding depth to the narrative. Meanwhile, Iran is depicted as

retaliating forcefully, leveraging its significant military power, including the IRGC, while Western powers like the U.S. are portrayed as advocating restraint and de-escalation. These categorizations form a narrative where Israel's actions are seen as deliberate provocations, Iran's response highlights its regional strength, and Western allies attempt to temper the conflict diplomatically.

In *The Jordan Times* news, the reporter portrays Israel as a "surviving" state focused on its mission to rescue hostages taken by Hamas, even amidst simultaneous attacks from Iran. The Israeli military stated it would not be distracted from its war against Hamas in Gaza, which was "triggered by the Palestinian armed group's October 7 attack on Israel" (AFP 2024) with the phrase *triggered by* clarifying the causal link between Hamas's actions and Israel's response. Hamas is labeled as the militant group responsible for initiating the conflict through hostage-taking and violence, while its media office reported Israeli strikes on central Gaza, with the term providing descriptive detail of the aftermath. Iran is framed as a supporter of Hamas, acting as a "proxy" to escalate tensions, and Hezbollah is noted for extending the conflict across borders with cross-border actions. Meanwhile, world powers, such as the United States, are implied to play a moderating role in shaping international dynamics. These labels establish Israel as a resilient and defensive actor, while Hamas, Iran, and Hezbollah are portrayed as aggressive forces driving regional instability.

Through the use of identification nomination, these texts provide nuanced descriptions that subtly shape readers' perceptions of the actors involved. Israel is generally presented as an organized and defensive entity, while Iran and its allies are framed as provocative and aggressive. The inclusion of Western powers as moderating forces adds a layer of complexity, creating a dynamic narrative about the conflict's regional and international dimensions.

Indonesian Media Response: Contrasting Perspectives of *Kompas* and *Republika*

In Indonesia, *Kompas* is a leading newspaper reporting on Iran's attack on Israel in Tel Aviv. It is one of the most popular news portals in Indonesia, established on September 14, 1995 (Zulvia et al. 2022, 82). Renowned for its high-quality journalism and in-depth analysis of global issues, *Kompas* utilizes both print and digital platforms to provide readers with a

comprehensive understanding of the conflict while exploring its implications for Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country. The author also referenced *Republika*, a national newspaper founded by Indonesia's Muslim community. Established by young journalists led by Zaim Uchrowi, *Republika* was launched with the support of the Indonesian Muslim Scholars Association (ICMI) and successfully navigated government restrictions on publishing. Its first edition was published on January 4, 1993.

Discourse Analysis of Indonesian News Headlines

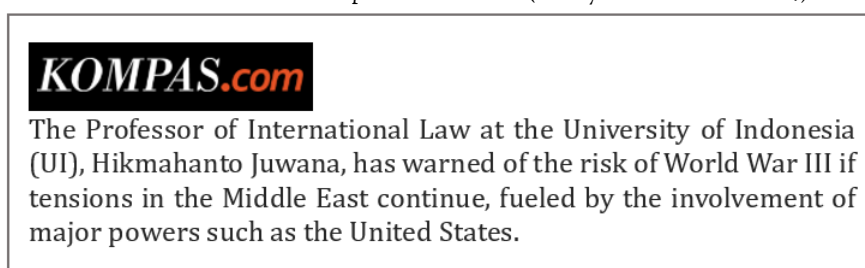
Kompas published a news story titled "Highlighting Iran-Israel Tensions, Analyst: War in the Middle East Could Lead to World War III" (Aditya & Rastika 2024). This headline can be analyzed using Van Leeuwen's theory of inclusion and identification to understand how the conflict's narrative is shaped (Badara 2012, 45). In this case, Iran and Israel are explicitly labeled as the central actors in the tensions, making them the primary focus of the discourse. The word "Highlighting" emphasizes the prominence of the tensions, framing them as a critical issue with the potential to escalate into a global crisis, specifically World War III. The inclusion of "Analyst" introduces a third-party perspective, adding a sense of neutrality and authority to the warning, while also underscoring the gravity of the situation. However, this framing sidelines other significant actors in the Middle East, such as Gulf states or other powers, who may play key roles but are excluded from the narrative. As a result, the headline positions the Iran-Israel tensions as not just a regional issue but a conflict with profound global implications, with the threat of World War III serving as a stark cautionary signal.

Republika published a news titled "Government Prepares Policy to Mitigate the Economic Impact of the Iran-Israel Conflict" (Nasrul 2024). This headline was also analyzed using Van Leeuwen's theory of inclusion and identification, with a focus on how governments and other actors are portrayed in the narrative. The term "Government" identifies a proactive and responsible actor addressing the potential economic repercussions of the Iran-Israel conflict, highlighting its pivotal role in mitigating domestic risks stemming from global tensions. The headline highlights the economic risks of the Iran-Israel conflict, emphasizing the government's proactive role in safeguarding Indonesia's economy. By focusing on the government's measures, the narrative shifts attention away from Iran and Israel, framing the state as a key player in managing domestic stability amid global tensions.

Discourse Analysis of Indonesian News Leads

The association-dissociation discourse strategy examines whether an actor or party is portrayed independently or connected to a larger group. This process often occurs unconsciously (Badara 2012, 49). Through the lens of association, this study observes how various elements and actors in these texts interconnect to construct a larger discourse on potential global conflicts. In *Kompas* news lead, Hikmahanto Juwana, a professor of international law, is identified as a "cautionary voice" warning of the risks of World War III if tensions in the Middle East persist (see Figure 5).

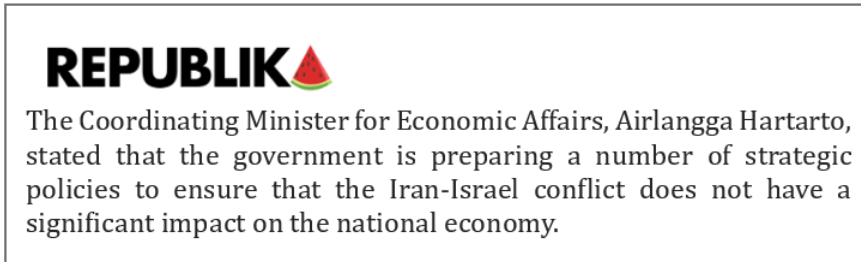
Figure 5

The Translation of *Kompas* News Lead (Aditya & Rastika 2024)

This association highlights his authority and credibility in addressing the potential global consequences of regional conflicts. The term "risk" underscores the gravity of the situation, suggesting severe consequences if the Middle East tensions remain unaddressed. The text highlights the link between Iran-Israel tensions and the risk of a global conflict, with the United States, as Israel's key ally, playing a crucial role in either escalating or easing these tensions. Furthermore, the connection between "Middle East tensions" and "World War III" frames local conflicts as potential catalysts for broader global crises. The narrative warns of the far-reaching consequences of these conflicts, urging readers to consider their global implications.

Analyzing the lead of *Republika* (Figure 6) using the association framework, we observe how various elements combine to build a broader narrative about government responses to the economic impacts of international conflicts. The news reads:

Figure 6
The Translation of *Republika* News Lead (Nasrul 2024)



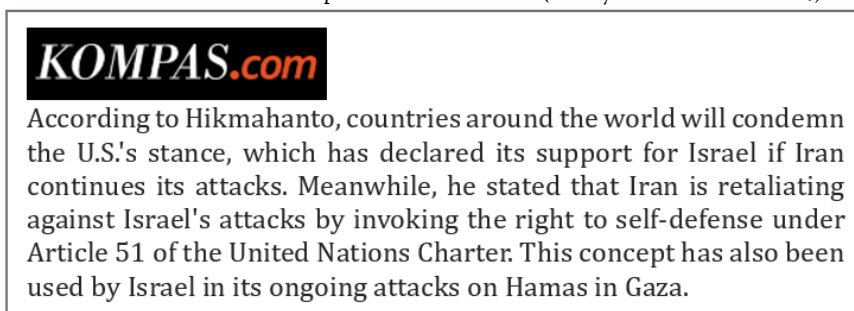
The minister is portrayed as a proactive figure, emphasizing that the government has prepared "strategic policies" to mitigate the economic effects of the Iran-Israel conflict. This association between government policies and national economic stability highlights the government's efforts to shield the economy from uncertainties caused by global tensions. The news emphasizes that the Indonesian government's "strategic policies" aim to protect "the national economy" from the potential impacts of the Iran-Israel conflict. The term "significant impact" points to potential substantial losses for the national economy if the conflict persists, such as rising energy prices, disrupted international trade, or increased market volatility. Although Indonesia is not directly involved, its economy remains vulnerable to global instability, positioning the government as a key actor in maintaining economic stability amidst international tensions.

Discourse Analysis of Indonesian News Content

This discourse analysis, using an identification approach, highlights key actors and their roles in shaping the narrative of international conflicts. Hikmahanto is portrayed as an authoritative figure in international law, lending credibility to his analysis of global reactions to US and Iranian policies (Figure 7).

Figure 7

The Translation of *Kompas* News Content (Aditya & Rastika 2024)



The US is identified as Israel's primary ally, emphasizing its readiness to support Israel if Iranian attacks continue. Conversely, Iran is depicted as retaliating against Israel based on its claimed right to self-defense, citing Article 51 of the UN Charter to justify its actions. Similarly, Israel invokes the same principle to legitimize its military actions against Hamas in Gaza. This framing underlines how both sides leverage the concept of self-defense within the framework of international law to justify their actions. The discourse connects these legal justifications to the broader context of escalating international tensions, emphasizing how each actor positions itself within the global legal and political landscape.

Meanwhile, Airlangga in *Republika* news (Figure 8) is highlighted as a key figure addressing the economic impact of geopolitical tensions, focusing on disrupted wheat supply chains and rising cargo costs. His role reflects the government's active measures to safeguard the economy, led by the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs. The ministry is shown implementing strategies to manage risks and maintain stability. A meeting with ambassadors emphasizes international cooperation alongside domestic efforts, covering banking, inflation control, and fiscal policy to protect Indonesia's economy from global uncertainties. This narrative portrays the government as proactive and committed to mitigating the effects of international conflicts.

Figure 8
The Translation of *Republika* News Content (Nasrul 2024)



Comparative Media Framing of the Iran-Israel Conflict Across Regions

After analyzing the six media outlets from three different regions (West, Middle East, and Indonesia), the authors did a comparative study illustrating how news framing reflects the unique political, ideological, and cultural contexts of each region. Table 1 presents the key elements of each outlet's coverage, providing a clear comparison of their framing, focus, and influencing factors.

Table 1
Comparative Analysis of The Six Media Outlets

Media	Key Focus	Factors Influencing Framing
The New York Times	Emphasizes military conflict, risks of escalation, and global impact. Focus on US-Israel alignment.	Pro-Israel ideology, US geopolitical interests, national security concerns.
The Washington Times	Criticizes Iran's policies, highlights Iranian proxies, emphasizes risks to global security.	Conservative ideology, pro-Israel stance, concerns about terrorism and nuclear proliferation.
Al Jazeera	Conservative ideology, pro-Israel stance, concerns about terrorism and nuclear proliferation.	Middle Eastern perspective, humanitarian focus, emphasis on social justice and Palestinian rights.
The Jordan Times	Highlights Israel's actions, international reactions, and tensions in Gaza.	Arab world ties, religious factors, focus on Palestinian impact and regional stability.
Kompas	Warns of potential global escalation, objective tone highlighting risks of global instability.	Neutral stance, global impact focus, influence of Indonesia's Muslim majority and support for Palestine.
Republika	Emphasizes Indonesian government's economic measures to mitigate the conflict's impact.	Emphasizes Indonesian government's economic measures to mitigate the conflict's impact.

The comparative analysis underscores how media framing is deeply shaped by regional and national contexts, reflecting varying priorities and ideologies. For instance, Western outlets prioritize geopolitical concerns and security risks, while Middle Eastern media emphasize humanitarian aspects and regional stability. Indonesian outlets take a neutral stance, focusing on global implications and aligning with domestic public sentiment. These

patterns reveal the complexity of media narratives in shaping public perception and highlight the role of cultural and ideological influences in the framing of international conflicts.

Conclusion

Media coverage of the Iran-Israel tensions varies significantly across the West, Middle East, and Indonesia, shaped by each region's unique ideological, geopolitical, and domestic priorities. Western outlets like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* highlight Iran as a central actor in the conflict, focusing on its direct attacks or proxy strategies, while emphasizing US support for Israel and the broader implications for international security. Middle Eastern media, such as *Al Jazeera* and *The Jordan Times*, shift the focus to the humanitarian impact and regional solidarity, particularly emphasizing the struggles of Palestinians and Israel's role in escalating tensions. Indonesian media, represented by *Kompas* and *Republika*, adopt a more pragmatic perspective, centering on the economic repercussions of the conflict for Indonesia and the government's measures to maintain domestic stability.

This comparative analysis highlights how media framing reflects regional priorities: Western media emphasize geopolitical alliances and security threats, Middle Eastern outlets focus on regional stability and humanitarian concerns, and Indonesian media prioritize the economic impact on domestic interests. To promote balanced reporting, media outlets should aim to provide comprehensive narratives that integrate humanitarian, political, and economic dimensions, avoiding narrow or biased perspectives. Future researchers could explore the evolving role of digital and social media in shaping public perceptions of international conflicts, as well as analyze audience reception of media narratives in different regions. Similarly, governments, particularly in Indonesia, should continue strengthening diplomatic and economic strategies to mitigate the effects of global tensions, ensuring national stability in an increasingly interconnected world.

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