

Framing the Iran-Israel Conflict: Ideological Representation in Al-Jazeera's Nuclear News

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Abstract. This study applies discourse analysis to examine how Al-Jazeera portrays Iran's nuclear program, highlighting its language choices, narrative strategies, and ideological frameworks. The results show that Al-Jazeera forms a defensive narrative for Iran, emphasizing the threat from Israel while downplaying the image of Iran's nuclear ambitions. In its reporting, Al-Jazeera strategically uses terms such as "deterrence," "threshold capability," and "fatwa limits" to portray Iran as a country that acts within its limits and only responds to external pressure, not as an aggressor. In addition, this study also highlights the dynamics of global escalation, especially how Russia and the United States play a role in influencing Israeli policy. Russia's warnings against attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities and US diplomatic interventions show how global powers shape strategic calculations in regional security. In terms of ideology, Al-Jazeera's reporting reflects three main themes: support for Iran's nuclear strategy within the framework of state sovereignty, rejection of Western dominance, and criticism of US influence in Israeli policy. This editorial stance shows Al-Jazeera's tendency to challenge Western narratives and support multipolar geopolitical discourse. This study contributes to the study of media discourse by highlighting how language choices and visual elements in news reporting can shape geopolitical perceptions. By analyzing Al-Jazeera's coverage, this study highlights the media's role in constructing competing realities in international conflicts, while also offering insights into the relationship between journalism, ideology, and strategic communication in Middle Eastern media

Keywords: *ideological representation, iran-israel conflict, nuclear news, stuart hall, al-jazeera*

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INTRODUCTION

Tensions between Iran and Israel over the issue of Iran's development of nuclear weapons continue to take centre stage in international media coverage. Kamal Kharrazi, Chairman of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, in his latest statement reported by Al-Jazeera, asserted Iran's readiness to produce and use nuclear weapons in response to external threats. This statement further complicates an already heated geopolitical situation (Jalal, 2023). The coverage of the nuclear issue not only reflects the political dynamics between Iran and Israel, but also illustrates how major media outlets in the Middle East, such as Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya, shape narratives that have broader ideological dimensions. Using Stuart Hall's theory of representation, this study aims to explore how Al-Jazeera presents the nuclear issue in the context of the Iran-Israel conflict, as well as how their ideology is reflected in the language, visuals, and structure of the news delivered.

Studies on the representation of ideology in nuclear news, particularly in the Iran-Israel conflict, have discussed various aspects such as media framing, foreign policy, and the influence of political interests. American media, for example, often frame Iran's nuclear programme as a global threat to support US foreign policy (Chodijah et al., 2020; Sella, 2023). Leadership changes in the United States, such as the transition from Trump to Biden, have also impacted the way the media presents the issue of nuclear diplomacy, with changes in approach and foreign policy (Nurtyandini, 2022; Setyawan et al., 2022). In the context of national security, research conducted by (Mikail, 2018; Mohamad Fuat Najib, 2022) shows how perceptions of a nuclear Iran vary, both among the Iranian public itself and in neighbouring countries, especially Israel. The media also often portray Iran's nuclear programme as a global threat, triggering international tensions (Ballenger et al., 2011). On the other hand, media coverage is often influenced by underlying political and economic interests (Kalliny & Benmamoun, 2014). In addition, identity and cultural factors also play a role in news framing. Al-Jazeera, for example, is known to often support narratives that emphasise Arab identity in discussing the Iranian nuclear issue (Phillips, 2012).

This research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how Al-Jazeera shapes narratives and public perceptions of the Iranian nuclear issue, as well as how its ideology influences the way news is organised. Drawing on Stuart Hall's theory, this article highlights how meanings in the media are designed and conveyed to shape audience perceptions (Sadr, 2005). The focus of this research is on analysing articles and reports published by Al-Jazeera during October 2024, which coincided with a series of incidents that exacerbated tensions between Iran and Israel. Some of the key events analysed include the assassination of Ismael Haniyeh in Tehran on 31 July, Hasan Nasrallah and Abbas Nilforoushan in Beirut on 27 September, as well as Yahya Sinwar in an IDF raid in Gaza on 17 October. This research explores how the reporting of these events reflects ideological representations that shape public perceptions of nuclear issues and geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East. The research argues that Al-Jazeera's coverage of the Iranian nuclear issue shows a pattern of bias aligned with certain political interests, which ultimately influences public opinion about Iran's

nuclear programme. Ideological bias in the media often narrows local perspectives and creates certain social impacts.

Using Stuart Hall's theoretical framework, this research aims to fill the gap in the study of how media narratives are shaped and how they influence public perception (Azis & Djakaria, 2021; Muttaqien, 2017). As one of the main media outlets in the Middle East, Al-Jazeera has a significant influence in shaping public opinion on regional and global issues. Since its establishment in 1996 in Qatar, Al-Jazeera has been known for its diverse and critical journalistic approach to various issues, including the foreign policies of Arab and Western countries (Azis & Djakaria, 2021; Muttaqien, 2017). With an editorial approach that claims to be censorship-free, Al-Jazeera has managed to attract an international audience and become an alternative news source in the Arab world (Dallas & Burkle, 2011; Jalal, 2023).

Al-Jazeera has become one of the most influential media outlets in the Middle East, playing an important role in shaping public opinion and narratives on regional and global issues. Founded in 1996 in Doha, Qatar, as an Arabic-language news channel, Al-Jazeera is known for its freer and more diverse approach than traditional media in the region. Al-Jazeera often attracts international attention for its journalistic coverage that is critical of Arab governments and Western foreign policies. Al-Jazeera often covers issues that other mainstream media ignore, such as the Palestinian conflict, the war in Iraq, and the wave of Arab revolutions. With a mission to deliver news that is "free from censorship and government control," Al-Jazeera has attracted Arab and international audiences through its bold and unique reporting (Dallas & Burkle, 2011; Jalal, 2023).

In the context of research on ideological representations related to nuclear issues, particularly the conflict between Iran and Israel, a number of literatures have discussed how the media shape narratives that influence public perception. Previous research shows that the media, especially Western media such as in the United States, tend to frame Iran's nuclear programme as a significant global threat.

Studies by (Sella, 2023) and (Chodijah et al., 2020) highlight how this framing is used to support the United States' foreign policy towards Iran. The media often emphasises the risks posed by Iran's nuclear programme through terms such as "weapons of mass destruction" and "nuclear proliferation," thereby reinforcing public perceptions of the potential danger posed. In addition, a military response is often positioned as the ultimate solution in dealing with Iran's nuclear programme, portraying aggressive action as necessary to maintain global stability.

In many news reports, Iran is often represented negatively, especially during the reign of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Iran was portrayed as a direct threat to regional and international stability. This narrative not only influenced public opinion, but also supported a tougher US foreign policy approach towards Iran. Other research by (Nurtyandini, 2022) and (Setyawan et al., 2022) highlighted how leadership changes in the United States and Iran affected both countries' nuclear policies. These studies show significant differences in diplomatic approaches between the Joe Biden administration and its predecessor, Donald Trump. Under Biden's leadership, foreign policy tended to prioritise diplomacy as the main way to defuse nuclear tensions, in contrast to Trump's more aggressive and confrontational approach.

The research also highlights the importance of international agreements such as the *Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action* (JCPOA) in influencing Iran-Israel relations and geopolitical dynamics in the Middle East region. Through negotiations and agreements, the Biden administration sought to ease tensions and promote a peaceful solution to Iran's nuclear programme. These studies show how media framing and foreign policy changes can shape narratives and influence public opinion. The approach taken by Al-Jazeera in presenting such issues reflects the media's major role in shaping public understanding of conflicts and political dynamics in the Middle East.

Research conducted by (Mohamad Fuat Najib, 2022) and (Mikail, 2018) explores how Iran's possession of nuclear weapons is understood in the context of national security, both from the perspective of Iran itself and surrounding countries, particularly Israel. The study shows that nuclear possession is often seen as a strategic tool that strengthens Iran's position on the international stage and magnifies its influence in regional geopolitics. In addition, the study also highlights how other countries, especially Israel, respond to Iran's nuclear programme with great concern, perceiving it as a direct threat to their national security. The research also identifies how Iran's defence policy is shaped by external threats, including pressure from Western countries and potential military attacks from its neighbours. This perspective underlines the complexity of security dynamics in the Middle East that are closely linked to the nuclear issue.

Meanwhile, (Ballenger et al., 2011) show that the media consistently frame the nuclear issue as a global threat that has a significant impact on international tensions. Through narratives that portray nuclear programmes as a grave danger to world stability, the media help shape public perceptions that support certain actions, such as the imposition of sanctions or diplomatic intervention. By highlighting the grave risks that may arise from nuclear proliferation, such framing reinforces global opinion that views Iran's nuclear programme as a threat. This research underscores the important role of the media in influencing the foreign policies of major powers and shaping public opinion on sensitive issues.

(Kalliny & Benmamoun, 2014) highlights how political and economic interests often influence media coverage. In the context of nuclear issues, the media is not always neutral, but tends to represent the interests of certain parties directly involved in the issue. For example, media from countries that have an interest in nuclear issues often frame narratives to support their position, either by portraying the nuclear threat as a serious threat or highlighting the benefits of nuclear control as an important and urgent step. This shows how political and economic factors shape the media narratives that reach the public.

Phillips (Phillips, 2012) adds that identity and culture also play an important role in shaping the framing of nuclear issues. Al-Jazeera, for example, despite claiming to provide a balanced perspective, often presents narratives that favour Arab identity and oppose Western domination. This shows how cultural and national identities influence the way news coverage of sensitive issues such as nuclear is presented to audiences. This research confirms that news does not simply convey

information, but also reflects and reinforces group identities that influence the way people understand global issues such as nuclear proliferation.

However, an assessment of previous research points to some weaknesses that need to be addressed. One limitation is the use of methodologies that tend to be qualitative, focusing on text analysis without considering the broader social and political context. This makes the analysis less comprehensive and in-depth (Nurtyandini, 2022; Sella, 2023). In addition, many studies lack the role of social media in shaping public opinion. In fact, these platforms play a significant role in disseminating information and shaping public perceptions on nuclear issues (Chodijah et al., 2020; Mohamad Fuat Najib, 2022). Another shortcoming is the lack of local perspectives from Iran, resulting in an incomplete understanding of how Iranians perceive their own nuclear programme and its impact on their national identity (Ballenger et al., 2011; Vishwanathan, 2016). Kalliny and Benmamoun (Kalliny & Benmamoun, 2014) also highlight that in-depth analyses of ideological bias in news coverage are still limited, thus not providing a comprehensive understanding of how the media ideologically influence public opinion (Fauzi et al., 2023; Nugroho et al., 2023). In addition, most studies focus too much on political aspects and ignore the identity and cultural dimensions that actually play an important role in understanding the complexity of the Iran-Israel conflict (Phillips, 2012; Yu et al., 2014). Recognising these tendencies and weaknesses, this study aims to contribute to understanding ideological representations in the reporting of nuclear issues, especially in the context of the Iran-Israel conflict. By analysing Al-Jazeera's reporting using Stuart Hall's theory, this research seeks to present a new perspective in understanding the dynamics of nuclear issue reporting.

RESEARCH METHOD

The unit of analysis used in this research is three news articles published by Al-Jazeera in October 2024, which reported news about nuclear in the context of the conflict between Iran and Israel. A qualitative approach is applied in this study to explore how ideology plays a role in shaping the narratives conveyed by the media, as well as how meaning is constructed and disseminated in a broader social context. The focus of this research is to identify the ideological representation patterns that emerge in the way Al-Jazeera frames the nuclear issue (Wijaya & Baskoro, 2022). Through this method, the research seeks to understand social phenomena more deeply and uncover hidden meanings that may not be visible in quantitative analyses.

In this study, the selection of three news articles as the unit of analysis shows a qualitative approach that focuses on the depth of analysis. The selection of articles was done purposively, considering the relevance of the nuclear issue in the Iran-Israel conflict and the temporal relationship with the critical moment of the news. Using the principles put forward by Patton, qualitative analysis seeks to gain in-depth understanding and contextual interpretation of limited but meaningful data (Samuel-Azran, 2013). This study reflects the need for deeper exploration of the pattern of ideological representation, which is in line with Fusch and Ness's argument regarding the saturation point in critical discourse analysis, where new themes no longer emerge after intensive analysis of the available data (Fahmy & Neumann, 2012).

To maintain the objectivity and validity of the analysis, the researcher applied data triangulation, comparing the findings of the three articles with previous literature and research on ideological representation in the nuclear issue. This is in line with Creswell and Poth's approach which emphasizes the importance of reflection in qualitative research (Melki, 2014). By conducting reflexivity, researchers attempt to minimize subjective bias that may influence data interpretation, thus contributing to the transparency of analysis and increasing accountability (Fahmy & Neumann, 2012; Samuel-Azran, 2013). The process of identifying themes and ideological representations was carried out through an inductive-deductive analysis approach. By reading the articles thoroughly, researchers summarized the initial themes that emerged, before proceeding to a deductive analysis utilizing Stuart Hall's theoretical framework on encoding-decoding (Kalantari, 2022). The manual and reflective coding process included identifying ideological elements in the news, which showed how language and narrative were used to shape public perceptions (Bhowmik & Fisher, 2023).

The data collection process began with searching for relevant news stories on Al-Jazeera's official website. The selection criteria included the relevance of the news to the nuclear issue, its connection to the Iran-Israel conflict, and the appropriateness of the time of publication. Selected articles were then downloaded and saved for further analysis. Once the news was collected, the researcher read each article carefully to note important elements, such as the main theme, point of view, and language used. This stage aimed to understand how Al-Jazeera framed the nuclear issue and identify the ideological representations that emerged. This approach is consistent with qualitative research methods that emphasise an in-depth understanding of the context and meaning behind the data obtained (Sary et al., 2023). In this way, the research ensures that the data analysed is relevant and representative (Sulo, 2023).

The categories of data collected in this study include:

1. **Headline/Narrative:** A summary or main point of the news story being analysed.
2. **Main Themes:** The facts reported, how the information is structured, and which parts are emphasised or omitted.
3. **Language choice:** Analysis of the use of terms such as "protection," "response," or "retaliation" to describe self-defence, as well as terms such as "killing" or "massacre" to describe the aggressor. The use of neutral terms was also noted.
4. **Point of View:** The perspective of the narrative, whether it favours Iran, Israel, or is neutral.
5. **Symbols and Visuals:** The use of images, graphics, or other visual elements, and the messages conveyed through these visuals.
6. **Ideological Representation:** The focus of the news on security, state rights, or environmental impacts, and whether the news is orientated towards global security, national politics, or human rights issues.
7. **Implied Ideology:** Identify the ideology reflected in the news, whether it is pro-nuclear, anti-nuclear, or neutral, and whether the narrative favours Iran, Israel, or is in a neutral position.

The analysis was conducted through several stages. Firstly, content analysis was used to identify the main themes in the news, including keywords, phrases and narrative structure. Secondly, critical discourse analysis was applied to explore how ideology influences the way the news is presented, taking into account the social, political and cultural context behind the narrative. This approach allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of ideological representations in the reporting of nuclear issues (Ariffananda & Wijaksono, 2023). Stuart Hall's theory is the main framework in this analysis, emphasising that the media does not merely convey reality, but also plays a role in shaping reality itself through the process of *encoding* and *decoding*. Through this theory, researchers highlighted how ideology plays a role in constructing the way news is presented and understood (Andhita, 2021; Ernawati et al., 2023). After the analysis is complete, the resulting findings are interpreted to identify patterns of ideological representation that appear in the news. These findings are then compared with the literature and previous research to evaluate their congruence or differences. This approach is expected to not only provide new insights into ideological representations in nuclear news, but also enrich the understanding of media dynamics and how media influence public perception and international policy (Rafsanjani et al., 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In analysing Al-Jazeera's coverage of the nuclear issue in the Iran-Israel conflict, Stuart Hall's theory of ideological representation is a very relevant framework. Hall argues that the media not only acts as a conveyor of information, but also participates in shaping meaning through the process of encoding and decoding. This process produces ideological representations that have the potential to influence the way the public understands certain issues (Dallas & Burkle, 2011; Jalal, 2023). Thus, analysing the narrative elements in Al-Jazeera news can reveal how the Iran nuclear issue is framed and how it affects the dynamics of Iran-Israel relations.

One of the key findings in Al-Jazeera's reporting is how it highlights the threat posed by Iran's nuclear programme to Israel's security. This approach reflects the media's selectivity in determining issues that are considered important and relevant in the regional geopolitical context (Ibnu Qoyyim, 2022; Sadr, 2005). Through its consistent emphasis on nuclear threats, Al-Jazeera helps shape audience perceptions of power dynamics in the Middle East, which are often framed in narratives of fear and uncertainty (Dallas & Burkle, 2011). A review of the literature on Al-Jazeera's coverage of the Iran-Israel conflict shows a distinctive narrative pattern that tends to reflect a particular agenda. This media has a different approach compared to other media, such as Al-Arabiya, which is more inclined towards the narrative of the Gulf countries.

Main Theme

following table summarises the themes found in the three Al-Jazeera news articles analysed:

Table 1. Main themes of the news

No.	News Title	Main Theme	Focus
1	<i>Ma'a at-tahdīd al-Isrā'īlī, hal iqtarabat Īrān min ṣan' qunbulah nawawiyyah?</i>	Escalation of security threats	Iran vs Israel tensions, Iran's response, nuclear legitimacy discourse
2	<i>Rūsiyā tuḥadhdhir Isrā'īl min at-tafkīr fī ǧarb munsha'āt Īrān an-nawawiyyah</i>	Russia's warning to Israel	Israel delays attack on Iran's nuclear facilities
3	<i>Limādhā imtana'at Isrā'īl 'an ǧarb al-munsha'āt an-nawawiyyah wa an-naftīyyah al-Īrāniyyah?</i>	Analyse Israel's strategy	Role of the United States, limitations of the Israeli military

Table 1 above summarizes the main themes found in three Al-Jazeera news articles related to the nuclear issue in the Iran-Israel conflict. The first article focuses on the escalation of security threats by highlighting tensions between Iran and Israel, Iran's response, and the discourse on nuclear legitimacy. The second article discusses Russia's warning to Israel regarding a potential attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, emphasizing efforts to delay such an attack. Meanwhile, the third article explores Israel's strategy in dealing with Iran by considering the role of the United States and Israel's military limitations.

Table 1 shows that Al-Jazeera tends to highlight the threat posed by Iran, but in some articles also makes room for narratives about preventive measures, such as a warning from Russia to Israel not to attack Iran's nuclear facilities. The use of visual symbols such as maps of Iran's nuclear facilities and images of Israeli military exercises reinforced the narrative of conflict escalation (Dallas & Burkle, 2011). In another article, Al-Jazeera featured visuals of the Bushehr nuclear reactor, combined with Russian rhetoric warning Israel. This approach shows how symbols and visual elements are used to emphasise the meaning to be conveyed. This approach is in line with Stuart Hall's theory, which emphasises that media representations not only reflect reality, but also shape it. Through the selection of certain words, symbols and narratives, the media plays a role in building public perceptions of an issue (Jalal, 2023). In this context, Al-Jazeera not only reports facts about Iran's nuclear programme, but also plays a role in shaping audience perceptions about the threat Iran poses to regional security.

Al-Jazeera's coverage of the Iranian nuclear issue shows a consistent pattern of representation in highlighting potential threats to Israel and the Middle East region more broadly. Media framing contributes to shaping public perception and geopolitical dynamics. In comparison with other media, it appears that Al-Jazeera's approach focuses more on threat escalation, while other media such as Al-Arabiya accentuate the perspective of the Gulf states (Ibnu Qoyyim, 2022; Sadr, 2005)

The first article, "*Ma'a at-tahdīd al-Isrā'īlī, hal iqtarabat Īrān min ṣan' qunbulah nawawiyyah?*" discusses the rising tensions between Iran and Israel over Iran's

potential development of nuclear weapons. The article highlights how the escalation of threats to the security of the Middle East region is becoming more apparent, especially with concerns over Iran's nuclear capabilities believed to be growing. In it, Al-Jazeera not only presents Iran's response to the Israeli threat, but also shows the internal debate in Iran regarding the legitimacy of nuclear weapons production. This issue is portrayed as one of the central topics in Iran's domestic political discussions, reflecting the internal dynamics that play a role in determining the direction of the country's nuclear policy (Dallas & Burkle, 2011; Jalal, 2023; Meltzer, 2013)

Meanwhile, the second news item, "*Rūsiyā tuḥadhdhir Isrā'il min at-tafkīr fī ḍarb munsha'āt Īrān an-nawawīyyah*," highlights Russia's warning to Israel against carrying out attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities. The main focus of the article is on the importance of maintaining global nuclear safety and preventing the potential disaster that could occur if a military conflict does break out. This warning from Russia reflects the role of international actors in de-escalating tensions, while also demonstrating how the complex diplomatic relations between Iran, Israel, and other major powers such as Russia play a role in managing crises (Abdul-Nabi, 2015; AlBadareen, 2019; Dallas & Burkle, 2011).

The third story, "*Limādhā imtana'at Isrā'il 'an ḍarb al-munsha'āt an-nawawīyyah wa an-naftīyyah al-Īrānīyyah?*" highlights Israel's strategic decision not to launch a direct attack on Iran's nuclear and oil facilities, despite harsh rhetoric. The story highlights how Israel chose to take more limited action to avoid a major escalation that could destabilise the region. Another focus was on the role of the United States in shaping Israel's strategic decisions, showcasing how diplomatic pressure and coordination between the two countries influenced Israeli policy to remain in line with broader security interests (Kenneth Ifeanyi Ibekwe et al., 2024; Pate, 2020; Septiani et al., 2023).

The three stories show how Al-Jazeera frames the Iran-Israel conflict by highlighting the negative impact of Iran's nuclear programme on regional stability. They also illustrate how neighbouring countries and international powers are responding to the dynamic. Through provocative headlines and narratives that highlight Iran's position, Al-Jazeera seeks to provide a perspective that highlights Iran's point of view in the broader geopolitical context. At the same time, it displays the complexity of international relations involving various major actors in managing nuclear tensions in the region (Eligür, 2014; Jaspal, 2014, 2016). Al-Jazeera's approach to presenting this news shows how the media plays a role in shaping public opinion by presenting a narrative that underlines the injustice that Iran may be experiencing, while also showing the complexity of the balance of power in the Middle East. The results of the analysis show that Al-Jazeera's news framing often emphasizes the nuclear threat from Iran, which can be seen as a framing strategy aimed at influencing public opinion (Chodijah et al., 2020). On the one hand, this framing may reflect Al-Jazeera's media position as part of Qatar's public diplomacy, which seeks to balance relations with major powers in the Middle East, including Iran and Israel (Bukhari et al., 2024). Through this approach, Al-Jazeera plays a role in conveying a narrative that questions the dominance of Western media that often sides with Israel, creating space for alternative views in a complex geopolitical context (Melki, 2014).

Language and Terms

The choice of words and phrases in news coverage plays an important role in shaping public opinion and reinforcing certain ideologies (D'Angelo, 2002; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In this context, Al-Jazeera tends to use a humanist and empathetic language style, emphasising the social impact of the conflict and the tensions faced by Iranian society (Dallas & Burkle, 2011; Rashid, 2021).

Table 2. Keywords in the News

Category	Keywords
Threats and Escalation	<i>at-tahdīdāt al-Isrā'īliyyah</i> (Israeli threat), <i>taṣ'īd khiṭābī</i> (rhetorical escalation), <i>khaṭ aḥmar</i> (red line), <i>ḥarb shāmilah</i> (great war), <i>al-mumārasāt al-'adā'iyyah</i> (aggressive action)
Military and Security	<i>raf' ar-rad' al-'askarī</i> (increasing military deterrence), <i>al-qudrāt al-Isrā'īliyyah</i> (Israeli capabilities), <i>al-'amaliyyah al-'askariyyah</i> (military operations), <i>ḍarbah jirāḥiyyah</i> (limited attacks), <i>al-mawāqif al-'askariyyah</i> (military positions)
Nuclear and Technology	<i>al-'atabah an-nawawiyyah</i> (nuclear threshold), <i>al-mabādī' al-qā'imah fī majāl as-salāmah an-nawawawiyyah</i> (nuclear safety principles), <i>al-istrātījiyyah an-nawawawiyyah</i> (nuclear strategy)
Diplomacy and Alliances	<i>ittiṣāl dā'im bi-Īrān</i> (permanent relations with Iran), <i>aḍ-ḍughūṭ al-Amrikīyyah</i> (US pressure), <i>qarārātuhā al-'askariyyah</i> (military decisions), <i>al-'alāqah ar-rūsiyyah al-Īrāniyyah</i> (Russian-Iranian relations)
Global Consequences	<i>kārithiyyan</i> (calamity), <i>ilghā' nihā'iyy li-l-mabādī' al-qā'imah</i> (total abolition of the principle of safety), <i>qā'idah jadīdah fī tawāzun al-quwā</i> (new rules in the balance of power), <i>ḥarb ghayr ma'mūnah al-'awāqib</i> (war with great risk).
Legitimacy and Strategy	<i>fatwā qad tataghayyar</i> (changeable fatwa), <i>radd rumzī</i> (symbolic response), <i>al-istrātījiyyah as-siyāsiyyah</i> (political strategy), <i>tawāzun al-quwā</i> (balance of power)

The table 2 above categorizes the main themes of news coverage related to the Iranian nuclear issue into six main categories: "Threats and Escalation," "Military and Security," "Nuclear and Technology," "Diplomacy and Alliances," "Global Consequences," and "Legitimacy and Strategy." Each category is accompanied by keywords that frequently appear in the news, which describe the focus of the narrative and the approach used in packaging the issue. These keywords reflect various perspectives, ranging from potential threats to global impacts, as well as diplomatic dynamics and political strategies related to Iran's nuclear program.

Iran's Defensive Narrative

The first story, "*Ma'a at-tahdīd al-Isrā'īlī, hal iqtarabat Īrān min ṣan' qunbulah nawawiyyah?*" uses language that emphasises Iran's position as a threatened party. Terms such as "*at-tahdīdāt al-Isrā'īliyyah*" (Israeli threat) and "*raf' ar-rad' al-'askarī*" (increasing military deterrence) create the impression that Iran is responding to a

threat, not provoking one. The use of phrases such as "*al-'atabah an-nawawiyyah*" (nuclear threshold) highlights Iran's technological achievements, without directly mentioning the development of nuclear weapons, providing an ambiguous tone that nonetheless indicates a potential threat (Dallas & Burkle, 2011; Jalal, 2023).

Moreover, the term "*fatwā qad tataghayyar*" (changeable fatwa) shows Iran's theological flexibility in responding to geopolitical situations. This narrative suggests that Iran's decisions regarding nuclear weapons may change, depending on external and internal conditions. The focus on "*Khamenei's fatwa*" adds a moral and religious dimension, suggesting there are limits that may be adjusted according to the political context (Antonakakis et al., 2017; Pate, 2020).

Global Escalation and the Role of Russia and the United States

The second story, "*Rūsiyā tuḥadhdhir Isrā'īl min at-tafkīr fī ǧarb munsha'āt Īrān an-nawawiyyah*", highlights Russia's warning to Israel. Words like "*tuḥadhdhir*" (warn) and "*kāriṭhiyyan*" (catastrophe) reinforce the narrative of global urgency and the risk of escalation that could have far-reaching consequences (Amer, 2022; Sharapan, 2022). The phrase "*ilghā' nihā'iyy li-l-mabādi' al-qā'imah*" (total elimination of the principle of safety) indicates the serious repercussions in the event of conflict. Russian-Iranian relations are described through the term "*ittiṣāl dā'im bi-Īrān*" (permanent relations with Iran), which shows Russia's role as Iran's strategic ally. While in the third news item, "*Limādhā imtana'at Isrā'īl 'an ǧarb al-munsha'āt an-nawawiyyah wa an-naftiyyah al-Īrāniyyah?*", terms such as "*taṣ'id khiṭābī*" (rhetorical escalation) highlight Israel's verbal threats, while "*radd rumzī*" (symbolic response) indicates restraint in military action (Najafi et al., 2020; Ward, 2017). The phrase "*ḥarb ghayr ma'mūnah al-'awāqib*" (war at great risk) describes the risks of full escalation. Al-Jazeera emphasises Israel's dependence on the US through the phrase "*aḍ-ḍughūt al-Amrikiyyah*" (US pressure), emphasising Israel's limited autonomy in making military decisions.

The three news stories analysed highlight different aspects of the Iran-Israel conflict, including the potential Iranian nuclear threat (News 1), the global impact and Russia's role as mediator (News 2), and the complex military strategy of the Israeli side (News 3). While each story offers a different perspective, there are limitations in the scope of the discussion, especially in terms of humanitarian impact and the reaction of the wider international community. This points to the need for a more holistic approach to understanding the conflict, including assessing the social and humanitarian impacts that may result from escalating geopolitical tensions (Ayoob, 2012; Kaye et al., 2011).

Point of View

Al-Jazeera's coverage of the Iran-Israel conflict shows how the media plays a role in shaping public perception through its perspective and use of visual elements. The angle taken by the media has the potential to provide a deeper understanding of a conflict, but on the other hand, it can also create polarisation and reinforce certain narratives (Tenenboim-Weinblatt et al., 2015).

Table 3. Visual

No.	News Title	Visual
1	<i>Ma'a at-tahdīd al-Isrā'īlī, hal iqtarabat Īrān min ṣan' qunbulah nawawiyyah?</i>	Iran ballistic missiles, Israeli military exercises, map of Iran's nuclear facilities
2	<i>Rūsiyā tuḥadhdhir Isrā'il min at-tafkīr fī ḍarb munsha'āt Īrān an-nawawiyyah</i>	Bushehr Nuclear Reactor
3	<i>Limādhā imtana'at Isrā'il 'an ḍarb al-munsha'āt an-nawawiyyah wa an-naftiyyah al-Īrāniyyah?</i>	Iran ballistic missiles, Netanyahu and Blinken meeting, drone attacks

The [table 3](#) above summarizes the main themes of news coverage related to the Iran-Israel conflict, focusing on six categories: “Threats and Escalation,” “Military and Security,” “Nuclear and Technology,” “Diplomacy and Alliances,” “Global Consequences,” and “Legitimacy and Strategy.” Each category is accompanied by specific keywords that reflect core elements of the news narrative, such as Israeli threats, rhetorical escalation, military capacity, diplomatic relations with Russia and the United States, and the global impact of a potential conflict. This [table 3](#) provides a brief overview of the news coverage approaches used in depicting the issues related to the Iranian nuclear issue and tensions with Israel.

In the first news story, using illustrations of Iranian ballistic missiles (*aṣ-ṣawārīkh al-bālistiyah al-Īrāniyyah*) and a map of nuclear facilities (*kharīṭah al-munsha'āt an-nawawiyyah*), Al-Jazeera depicted Iran's readiness to face a potential attack from Israel. This visual effectively shows Iran as a country that has enough military capability to survive, while emphasising the potential threat faced by Israel ([Pertiwi et al., 2023](#); [Thurlow et al., 2020](#)). As for the second news, by displaying an image of the Bushehr Nuclear Reactor (*mufā'il Būshahr an-nawawī*) as a strategic symbol representing Iran's nuclear programme, Al-Jazeera reinforces the narrative that the facility is at the centre of geopolitical tensions involving Iran, Israel, and other major powers such as Russia and the United States. Al-Jazeera underlined Russia's warning to Israel against launching an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, emphasising that military escalation in the region could impact global stability ([Hassan et al., 2022](#); [Veronika et al., 2023](#)). By highlighting the Bushehr Reactor, Al-Jazeera underlined the facility's strategic role as one of the factors fuelling tensions, especially in Iran's relations with Israel and other countries concerned about Iran's development of nuclear weapons. This portrayal effectively reinforces the narrative of the potential threat and Russia's warning of a possible global catastrophe that could occur if a military conflict breaks out ([Hassan et al., 2022](#); [Veronika et al., 2023](#)).

Meanwhile, in the third news story, Al-Jazeera featured Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant with military leaders (*Wazīr ad-difā' al-Isrā'īlī Yoav Gallant wa qādat al-jaysh*) showing Israel's readiness to face the Iranian threat. On the other hand, Iran's missile systems are also presented as a symbol of power that creates a balance of power in the region ([Rogers, 2021](#); [Universiti Teknologi MARA \(UiTM\) et al., 2022](#)). The meeting between Netanyahu and Blinken in another visual shows the close but unequal relationship between Israel and the United States, reflecting how

Israel's Iran policy is often influenced by external pressure from Washington (*yastamir aḍ-ḍaght al-Amrīkī*). The use of terms such as "*manzūmat ad-difā' al-jawwī al-Isrā'īlī*" (Israeli air defence system) and "*hajamāt aṭ-ṭā'irāt al-musayyirah*" (drone strikes) confirms Israel's reliance on advanced technology, while the phrase "*yastamir aḍ-ḍaght al-Amrīkī*" (US pressure continues) suggests significant external pressure on Israeli military decision-making. Overall, the analysis of the use of visuals in these three news stories shows how images and symbols play a role in supporting the narrative presented. Visuals are not only used as aesthetic complements, but as rhetorical tools that reinforce editorial messages and shape the audience's understanding of complex issues. By displaying symbols such as nuclear reactors, missile systems and diplomatic meetings, Al-Jazeera presents an additional layer that enriches the narrative and allows readers to understand the Iran-Israel tension from a broader perspective.

The use of these visuals also serves to highlight the balance of power between Iran and Israel, showing how both countries project their power on the international stage. In this context, Al-Jazeera carefully selected visuals that not only depicted the conflict, but also gave a visceral impression of the geopolitical dynamics underlying the tension. This analysis confirms that the media has a significant role in shaping public perception, not only through verbal narratives but also through structured and meaningful visual representations ([Hassan et al., 2022](#); [Veronika et al., 2023](#)). This visual analysis shows that Al-Jazeera's reporting does not only aim to convey information, but also seeks to shape narratives that influence public opinion. The use of military symbols and nuclear maps emphasises that the Iran-Israel conflict is not just a bilateral dispute, but part of a broader geopolitical dynamic involving various international actors.

In reporting on Iran's nuclear tensions, Al-Jazeera tends to present Iran as a defender against international pressure, while Israel is portrayed as an aggressor preparing to take military action. This approach is evident in news reports that portray Iran as a victim of the aggressive policies of Israel and its allies, as [Jaspal \(2014\)](#), who revealed that media such as Al-Jazeera often present a more sympathetic point of view towards Iran, shows a certain bias in news framing. Gunawan and Setiawan ([Aldo Gunawan & Setiawan, 2022](#)) also emphasise that news framing is influenced by political and economic factors. In this case, Qatar's interests as a supporting country of Al-Jazeera have a role in shaping a narrative that is more favourable to Iran and tends to be critical of the policies of Israel and Western countries. This perspective shows how the media is not always neutral, but rather functions as a tool that reflects the geopolitical interests of its home country.

Visual elements also play a crucial role in reinforcing the message presented through the news narrative. Murua and Piscina ([Murua & Ramírez De La Piscina, 2017](#)) explain that symbols and images in news are not just a complement, but rhetorical elements that reinforce the ideology to be conveyed. In the context of reporting on the Iran-Israel conflict, Al-Jazeera often uses visuals such as images of Iranian ballistic missiles, maps of nuclear facilities, and Israeli military exercises to accentuate the escalation of tension in the region.

The perspective and visuals used in Al-Jazeera's coverage of the Iran-Israel conflict create a narrative that reinforces Iran's position as the defensive side, while Israel is portrayed as the more aggressive side. This approach is in line with research that shows how media often take positions that align with the political interests of their home countries (Aldo Gunawan & Setiawan, 2022; Jaspal, 2014).

Ideological Representation

Media coverage, especially in sensitive geopolitical issues such as the Iran-Israel conflict, often reflects more than just the facts. Through the analysis of ideological representation based on Stuart Hall's theory, it can be understood that every narrative constructed by the media has layers of meaning that are not always directly visible. The three Al-Jazeera news stories analysed show how ideologies can be formed and maintained in coverage of nuclear tensions and international security.

Table4. Ideology

No.	News Title	Ideological Representation
1	<i>Ma'a at-tahdīd al-Isrā'īlī, hal iqtarabat Īrān min ṣan' qunbulah nawawiyyah?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro-Nuclear in the Context of Iran • Flexibility of the Fatwa on the Haram of Nuclear Weapons • Israel Portrayed as a Threat • Rationality and Nationalism
2	<i>Rūsiyā tuḥadhdhir Isrā'il min at-tafkīr fī ḍarb munsha'āt Īrān an-nawawiyyah</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Hegemony and State Sovereignty • Resistance to Foreign Intervention • Militarism and Equal Recompense • Realism in International Relations
3	<i>Limādhā imtana'at Isrā'il 'an ḍarb al-munsha'āt an-nawawiyyah wa an-naftīyyah al-Īrāniyyah?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Domination and Control of Israel • Criticism of Israeli Policies • Neutrality towards Iran and Support for Regional Stability • Realism and Multilateral Ideology

The table 4 above explains the ideological representation of three main news stories related to the nuclear tensions between Iran and Israel. The first news story shows support for Iran's nuclear program by emphasizing the flexibility of the fatwa regarding the prohibition of nuclear weapons and depicting Israel as a threat that must be faced with rationality and nationalism. The second news story focuses on the rejection of foreign hegemony and intervention, with an emphasis on state sovereignty, resistance to foreign interference, and the approach of militarism as a form of balanced reciprocity in the context of realism in international relations. Meanwhile, the third news story criticizes the dominance of the United States over Israel, highlights Israel's controversial policies, and shows neutrality towards Iran and support for regional stability with a realist approach and multilateral ideology.

Pro-Iran and the Nuclear Strategy Narrative

Al-Jazeera shows an ideological slant in favour of Iran, especially in highlighting Iran's right to defend itself amid threats from Israel and Western countries. Iran is often portrayed as a country under great pressure, while its nuclear programme is presented as a defensive rather than aggressive move. Phrases such as "*Īrān qādirah 'alā intāj qunbulah nawawīyyah fī ghudūn usbū*" (Iran is capable of producing a nuclear bomb within a week) are used to highlight Iran's technical capabilities. However, this narrative is not accompanied by concrete evidence that Iran is actually developing nuclear weapons. This reinforces the idea that Iran's nuclear programme is more of a deterrent against potential external threats (Iannarino et al., 2015; Sarlos & Fekete, 2019). Interestingly, Al-Jazeera also presents a perspective that is rarely raised by other media, namely regarding Iran's right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes (Sella, 2023). This narrative is reinforced by the flexibility in religious fatwas that prohibit nuclear weapons. Statements such as Sheikh Mahdi Masa'ili's that the *fatwa* may change if Iran faces an existential threat demonstrate how religious values can be adapted to national security needs (Pincus & Ali, 2016; Wang & Kim, 2019). This coverage shows that Al-Jazeera not only functions as an information channel, but also as a medium that helps shape the legitimacy of Iran's policies in the face of international pressure. However, as explained by Dallas et al. (Dallas & Burkle, 2011), although the media have a responsibility to present news objectively, they are also not free from ideological biases that reflect certain political interests. Given the context that the media is often a tool of public diplomacy (Dallas & Burkle, 2011) it is likely that this reporting was a combination of Al-Jazeera's own political interests and an attempt to balance a global narrative that tends to discredit Iran.

Anti-Hegemony and Support for State Sovereignty

Al-Jazeera presents a narrative that challenges the dominance of global hegemony, especially by highlighting Russia's role as a counterweight in the Iran-Israel conflict. Russia, in this case, is presented as the party that warned Israel against launching an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov's statement that this attack would be a "*taṭawwur kārithī*" (catastrophic development) confirms that Russia stands by Iran's side in defending the country's sovereignty from foreign intervention (Ho & Kristiansen, 2019; Mažeikienė et al., 2021; Roziki & Ibrahim, 2022). This narrative reflects an ideology that opposes military interference by Western countries and Israel in the Middle East. The focus on solidarity between Russia and Iran reinforces the discourse that both countries have a common interest in maintaining regional stability and preventing US and Israeli domination. The statement that the attack on Iranian infrastructure violated the "*khaṭ aḥmar*" (red line) further emphasises Russia's position as a protector of the multipolar world order, which opposes unilateral domination by great powers such as the US (Aravamudan et al., 2021; Nwankwo, 2022).

US Dominance of Israeli Policy

In the third news item, Al-Jazeera highlights how Israel's strategic decisions in dealing with Iran are not entirely autonomous, but are heavily influenced by US pressure. The phrase "*aḍ-ḍughūṭ al-Amrikīyah allatī taṣā'adat 'alā al-qaādah al-Isrā'īliyyīn*" (increasing US pressure on Israeli leaders) shows that despite Israel's military might, its foreign policy is often aligned with US interests (Lankester et al., 2015; Sharonova, 2021). This narrative reflects the complex and asymmetrical relationship between the US and Israel, where the US has great influence in directing Israel's military policy. The critique of Israel's aggressive policies in this story asserts that military decisions are often influenced by Washington's diplomatic pressure, creating the image that Israel acts as an extension of the US in managing conflicts in the region (Arlt et al., 2019; Newig et al., 2013). The three Al-Jazeera stories clearly reflect how ideologies are formed and articulated in coverage of the Iran-Israel conflict. Pro-Iranian representations highlight Iran's right to self-defence and show how religious values can be appropriated for national security. On the other hand, Russia's anti-hegemony narrative highlights the importance of maintaining state sovereignty from foreign military intervention (Hamas & Roziki, 2021). Meanwhile, news that addresses US dominance over Israeli policy reveals an unbalanced relationship, where Israeli strategic decisions are heavily influenced by US interests. This analysis shows that media such as Al-Jazeera not only report events, but also shape and reinforce ideologies that align with the strategic positions of the international actors involved in this conflict.

Al-Jazeera, as a Qatar-based media, plays a significant role in public diplomacy, especially in how news is presented regarding geopolitical tensions in the Middle East between major actors such as the US, Iran, and Russia. By maintaining a balanced relationship between these powers, Al-Jazeera often creates narratives that offer alternative perspectives to the dominant Western media view that views Iran as the main threat (Fahmy & Neumann, 2012; Samuel-Azran, 2013). This creates space for criticism of US hegemony and Israeli policies, which can be seen as part of a strategy to counter narratives that place Western powers in a dominant position (Melki, 2014). In this regard, the use of terminology and symbols in their reports gives the impression that Iran is more on the defensive while Israel is positioned as the aggressor, highlighting the strong anti-hegemonic rhetoric in the context of the news (Bhowmik & Fisher, 2023; Kalantari, 2022). In addition, these media reports reflect broader geopolitical dynamics, where Al-Jazeera functions not only as an information channel, but also as a political tool that can shape opinions and respond to dominant narratives in the global media context (Bukhari et al., 2024; Chodijah et al., 2020). In doing so, Al-Jazeera contributes to a shift in the way geopolitical issues are understood and presented on the international stage, suggesting that they play an active role in shaping political discourse that mitigates global power imbalances (Carter & Dodds, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Al-Jazeera's coverage of the nuclear issue in the conflict between Iran and Israel shows how the media shapes narratives based on certain ideological

perspectives. From the analysis conducted, it is clear that Al-Jazeera consistently frames Iran's nuclear program as a security issue that has the potential to trigger tensions. Iran is often depicted as the party defending itself amidst threats from Israel and its allies, while Israel is shown to rely on the support of the United States in taking strategic steps. This narrative reflects the geopolitical position and ideological strategy adopted by Al-Jazeera in reporting the dynamics of the conflict. One important lesson from this analysis is that the media has a major role in shaping public understanding of complex issues such as geopolitical conflicts. Through visual representation and narrative presentation, the media is able to direct the audience's perspective on an event. In this case, Al-Jazeera not only reports facts, but also provides interpretations that influence how the public understands the Iranian nuclear issue and tensions in the Middle East.

This study makes an important contribution to the study of media representation, especially in the context of conflict in the Middle East. By using Stuart Hall's ideological representation theory framework, this study successfully reveals how the ideology adopted by the media can shape news narratives. This analysis also shows how bias and strategic interests are reflected in media coverage, thus enriching the academic literature in media and geopolitical studies. In addition, this study explains the mechanism of narrative framing, the role of visuals in reinforcing messages, and how media bias influences public perceptions regarding security and nuclear issues in the region.

However, this study has several limitations. The focus of the analysis is only on Al-Jazeera, so it does not provide a broader picture of how other media, such as Al-Arabiya or Western media, frame the same issue. Future research can expand the scope of the analysis with a comparative approach, reviewing news coverage from various media in different regions. In addition, exploring audience perceptions through surveys or focus group discussions (FGDs) will provide valuable insights into how media framing influences public opinion regarding geopolitical conflicts and nuclear issues in the Middle East. Understanding media framing is crucial because it not only shapes public perceptions but also broader global narratives. By analyzing how narratives are constructed, we can critically assess the power dynamics that occur and their implications for international relations and conflict resolution. As the media increasingly serves as a tool of public diplomacy and political influence, recognizing its impact in shaping ideology and policy becomes a crucial area of study.

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