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## **Impact of Arab Media Propaganda on Anxiety Levels in Indonesian Society: A Case Study of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the geopolitical dynamics in the Arab region, focusing on factors such as regional conflicts, foreign intervention, leadership changes, and control over energy resources. Conflicts like the Syrian war, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and tensions in the Persian Gulf significantly shape regional stability. Foreign intervention, whether military or political, often escalates tensions, while leadership transitions and energy resource control, particularly oil, influence regional and global policies. These developments, widely disseminated through digital media, can impact the psychological state of Indonesian society, particularly when propaganda and biased narratives dominate media coverage. This study employs a case study approach combined with content analysis from digital media platforms and anxiety level measurements using psychological instruments such as the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), and Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A). Findings reveal that media narratives significantly influence public perception, often amplifying collective anxiety and shaping opinions on geopolitical issues. Digital platforms play a key role in intensifying these effects by merging traditional and modern media channels. The study underscores the importance of media literacy education and public awareness programs to foster critical thinking and resilience against propaganda. These findings provide valuable insights into the intersection of media narratives, public psychology, and geopolitical events, offering recommendations for mitigating their societal impact

**Keywords: Media, Propaganda, Arab Geopolitics**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia is referred to as one of the multicultural countries because it has significant ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity. With more than 300 tribes and around 700 regional languages, Indonesia has succeeded in creating unity in this diversity, making it an example of a country that applies the principle of multiculturalism in everyday life. This diversity is reflected in official policies and the spirit of mutual assistance among various community groups. In addition to Indonesia, other countries also have a variety of tribes and ethnicities, in the Middle East for example very complex tribes and cultures, one of the issues that is currently developing in Arabia regarding war

and matters related to geopolitics, Arab Geopolitics includes dynamics and power relations in the Middle East and North Africa region. Factors such as conflict, natural resources, religion, and international relations play an important role in shaping geopolitics in the region. Examples of geopolitical issues include the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Iran's influence in the region, post-Arab Spring political changes, and regional peace efforts.

In the era of globalization and information, the media has played an important role in shaping public opinion and public perception. This context becomes all the more relevant when considering geopolitical issues, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has dominated news narratives across multiple media platforms. Especially in the context of Indonesia, a country with a majority Muslim population and strong historical and cultural ties with the Arab world, Arab media play a crucial role in presenting narratives and views on this conflict. Propaganda, as a tool used by the media to influence and shape public opinion, became an important aspect of the study. This journal aims to analyze the influence of Arab propaganda media on the Israeli- Palestinian conflict in shaping the perception and level of anxiety of the Indonesian people. By understanding how various narratives are presented and accepted by society, this research seeks to uncover the dynamics behind media influence in complex geopolitical contexts, providing insight into how information and opinions are formed and how this affects people's perceptions and reactions to global issues.

Research shows that the current crisis of trust has a partisan form. Patterns of distrust of the media and lack of ability to tell truth from fiction are asymmetrical among partisan groups. And the fundamental explanation for these differences cannot be due to the digitization of media or new technologies. While rooted in long-term changes in world politics, the study does not show that arguments regarding digitalization and media development are not important, nor that the algorithms of digital media are not important, instead we suggest that individual digital media groups such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and other digital media should act through and rely on the asymmetric partisan ecosystem that has developed over the four years. The last decade in which asymmetric partisan ecosystems must be understood refers to situations in which a political system tends to exert an unequal advantage and influence the distribution of political power

Media that are unstable in conveying cause psychological tendencies, psychological influences on media covering war can play an important role in the way information is conveyed and received by the public some psychological aspects are common and cause several impacts for example, Sensationalism, the media tends to report dramatic and sensational events filled with spices, cognitive biases where information is disseminated only in one direction and In line with the beliefs of their own views, the polarization of media public opinion that tends to reinforce narratives in favor of one side of the conflict can deepen divisions in society and affect the polarization of public opinion. This all causes anxiety to society psychologically and affects concentration in

carrying out daily life. Moreover, Indonesia's strategic geopolitical position makes it uniquely susceptible to international narratives, including those surrounding Middle Eastern conflicts. Understanding how external influences permeate domestic perspectives is vital for crafting policies that foster social cohesion and mental resilience.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a case study approach to analyze the impact of Arab media propaganda on anxiety levels among Indonesian society in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Data were collected through content analysis from various digital media platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, focusing on comments and posts that reflect public perceptions of the issue. Additionally, the study utilizes recognized psychological measurement tools, including the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), and Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A), to assess respondents' anxiety levels. Qualitative analysis techniques are used to understand patterns of propaganda dissemination, emotional responses, and their effects on the psychological, spiritual, and economic conditions of society. This approach enables the study to explore how narratives conveyed through media influence public perception and trigger collective anxiety within Indonesian society.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Definition of Propaganda**

Propaganda, derived from the Latin word "propagare" meaning to spread or expand, refers to a method of communication designed to influence the attitudes and actions of a group or society. In the 1920s, Harold Lasswell, a prominent psychologist, defined this concept as a way of controlling the actions of the masses through the manipulation of meaningful symbols. This concept focuses more on the influence on common perceptions and values held collectively, regardless of physical closeness. Lasswell also highlights the importance of certain symbols in triggering specific reactions and the role of propaganda in responding to social instability arising from rapid technological change (Wilcox, 2005). Jacques Ellul provides a different perspective, interpreting propaganda as a set of techniques that structured organizations use to direct the involvement of crowds, both actively and passively, through structured and coordinated psychological manipulation. Ellul stressed that society's reaction to propaganda involves not only those who actively support it, but also includes individuals who passively accept such ideas without showing resistance.

From such expert analysis, propaganda can be identified as having several key elements, such as message distribution, influence on opinion, clear goals, and strategic planning. In summary, propaganda can be defined as a repetitive and structured initiative with the aim of spreading messages to change the views, attitudes, and behavior of individuals or groups, so that they act according to the wishes of the

propagandist, without any element of coercion.

### **Propaganda Media Definition**

Propaganda Media is a communication tool used to disseminate information with the aim of influencing people's views, attitudes, or behavior. This is often done in a way that connects messages in a complex way or manipulates facts to produce a specific response. Propaganda media can be print, broadcast, or digital. For example, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, movies, and social media. Each media has its own characteristics in conveying the message of da'wah. Noam Chomsky, in his book "Manufacturing Consent" (1988), argues that the media masses often act as propaganda tools, serving economic and political interests capable of manipulating information. Chomsky explains how media structure can influence the content and presentation of news, thus shaping public perception.

Jacques Ellul, in "Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes" (1965), posited that media propaganda not only disseminates information but also creates new realities in people's minds. According to Ellul, the media shapes public perception through consistent acronyms. In the modern context, social media has become a powerful propaganda tool, as Robert McChesney explains in "Digital Disconnect" (2013). McChesney highlighted how social media platforms allow for the rapid and widespread dissemination of information, often without capable fact verification.

### **Understanding Mass Media**

The media has a role as an intermediary in sending messages from the sender (communicator) to the audience. Mass media, in particular, are devices used to communicate messages from communicators to audiences through various means of communication, including newspapers, radio, television, and film (Cangara, 2010). Mass media is defined as a communication channel that conveys a message to a very broad or general audience. This includes print media such as newspapers, magazines, and newsletters, as well as electronic media that disseminate content through sound or a combination of images and sounds using electronic technology, and also dare media such as websites and blogs that can be accessed via the internet (Baran and Davis, 2015). Mass media plays an important role in disseminating information, shaping public opinion, and influencing public behavior at large (Dominick, 2014). A media can be classified as mass media if it has certain characteristics, such as being institutional, one-way, broad and synchronous in its reach, using technical or mechanical tools, and open, meaning its message can be received by anyone, anywhere, without restrictions on age, gender, or ethnicity (Cangara, 2010).

The work of mass media includes editorials and articles (Bryman, 2012) Editorials, which are articles in newspapers or magazines, express the official views and opinions of the publishing institution or editor (Pape, Featherstone & Shoemaker, 2015).

Typically, editorials are written by editors or editorial boards and do not contain personal signatures because they represent the collective views of the media, not individuals. Meanwhile, articles are writings made for publication, both in print formats such as newspapers and magazines, or digital formats such as blogs or news sites (Harrower, 2012). Articles can cover a wide range of topics, from news and analysis to features and opinions, with the primary purpose of presenting readers' information, analysis, or commentary on a particular topic or event. For example, Kompas Daily maintains integrity in the publication of its articles. The opinion writers in Kompas come from various disciplines as well as educational and work backgrounds, and only articles that are in line with the vision and mission of Kompas are published in the daily Opinion rubric established in 1965. In addition, films are also one of the outputs of mass media. Films, especially documentaries, are often an important source of data although work needs to be done from various aspects, including through analysis of the content and history of the film.

### **Comprehension of Anxiety in Psychology**

Anxiety in psychology is defined as an emotional state manifested by excessive feelings of anxiety, worry and fear, usually in the absence of concrete threats. According to Spielberg, anxiety is "an ominous subjective state of central nervous system activation" (Spielberger, 1966), meaning it involves intense physiological activation in response to perceptual threats. anxiety as a reaction to perceived danger, stress on emotional and perceptual aspects (Freud, 1926). Another definition of anxiety is "a combination of uncertain future emotions and physical discomfort" that is often disproportionate to the actual threat (Barlow, 2000). Anxiety is also seen as an adaptive response that protects individuals from threats, but when excessive, it can interfere with daily functioning (Kendall, 1993). In this context, anxiety is not only an emotional response, but also involves cognitive and behavioral responses. For example, anxiety is often triggered by irrational "automatic thinking," which suggests a link between thought patterns and anxiety (Beck, 1976). Anxiety has a broad spectrum, from normal situational anxiety to anxiety disorders that require professional intervention (DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association, 2013). In all cases, anxiety is a multifaceted phenomenon involving the interaction between biological, psychological, and environmental factors. This condition can impact a person's ability to participate in social interactions, often leading to constraints that limit daily activities.

### **Factors Influencing Anxiety**

The factors that influence anxiety in psychology are subjects that have been extensively researched by various experts. Anxiety can be influenced by a combination of genetic, biological, and environmental factors (Barlow, 2002). He stressed that genetic factors often determine a person's tendency to experience anxiety, but environmental

factors such as traumatic experiences or social pressures also play an important role. Childhood experiences, especially those of a traumatic nature, such as disclosure or unstable family, have a significant influence on the development of anxiety in adulthood (Kessler, 2005). From a neurobiological perspective, it describes how brain structures and functions, such as the amygdala and prefrontal cortex, affect the processes of emotion regulation and response to threats, which are directly related to anxiety (Stein and Stein, 2008). In addition, psychosocial factors such as effective social support and coping can reduce the risk and impact of anxiety (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Thus, anxiety is the result of a complex interaction between genetic, neurobiological, environmental, and psychosocial factors, all of which make unique contributions in the formation and manifestation of anxiety. In contemporary practice, propaganda manifests through memes, videos, and even algorithms that prioritize sensational content. For instance, algorithms on social media platforms often amplify controversial posts, intensifying public reactions. Such dynamics underline the pervasive influence of propaganda in digital spaces.

#### **How to Measure Anxiety Levels in Psychology**

Measuring the level of anxiety in psychology involves various methods and tools that have been developed by experts. One of the most common methods is the use of questionnaires or rating scales, as described by Spielberger in the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) (Spielberger, 1983). STAI distinguishes between anxiety as a trait (trait anxiety), which is a general tendency to feel anxious, and anxiety as a state (anxiety state), i.e. anxiety that is influenced by a particular situation. In addition, there is a Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) measurement, which is designed to measure anxiety more specifically, especially physical symptoms related to anxiety (Beck and Steer, 1990). The tool is widely used in research and clinical practice. There is also the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) measurement theory, which is one of the oldest and most frequently used assessment tools to measure anxiety levels, especially in clinical contexts (Hamilton, 1959). Other methods involve clinical interviews and behavioral observation. A structured clinical interview can provide in-depth information about an individual's experience of anxiety. In addition, behavioral observation in anxiety-provoking situations can provide additional insight into how anxiety affects individuals (Kendall and Hedtke, 2006). Recent advancements have introduced biometric tools, such as wearable devices, to assess physiological correlates of anxiety, like heart rate variability and galvanic skin response. These innovations provide a more comprehensive understanding of anxiety dynamics, particularly in response to media stimuli.

#### **Discussion**

Arab geopolitics refers to the dynamics and power relations in a geographical region involving Arab states. It covers political, economic, military, and cultural issues

among countries in the region. Factors such as regional conflicts, natural resources, political changes, and foreign relations are important elements in analyzing Arab geopolitics. Geopolitical conditions in the Middle East are very complex and constantly changing, tend to be synonymous with conflict. Conflicts can be transnational problems in various aspects, both in terms of security, political economy, and ideology, one of the conflicts that continues to color geopolitical conditions in the middle east is the conflict of Iran, Shuriah and the most heated is Israel and Palestine, It is important to note that the geopolitical situation can change rapidly, and the latest developments may have occurred after 2023 ends. (Son of Primary, 2019). The Middle East region which is widely expected and believed to be the milestone of human civilization is also known as a unique and important region rich in resources but also dangerous and prone to conflict, sacred with various places but also sexy in some lines of modern civilization, geopolitical influences turned out to be quite influential so that what was expected as a pilot civilization was far from hope. The conflict between Israel and Palestine is still ongoing The war, which has become a hot topic in the international world, has made countries divided into two camps between the pro-Palestinian independence camps such as Indonesia, China, Russia, South Korea, and others. As well as the Contra camp against Palestinian independence such as America, France, Britain, Germany, and others. This very long conflict is inseparable from the beginning of history how these two countries emerged.

In the end, relations between Israel and Palestine heated up until the United Nations intervened to overcome the conflict by proposing a division between Israel and Palestine, but in the end there was a war between Jews and Arab countries that resulted in the suffering of the defeat of the Arab state so that Jews could perpetuate their goal of proclaiming independence and forming a Jewish state called Israel which was agreed directly by the United Nations in the year In 1949, about 650,000 Jews inhabited the Palestinian territories. This condition caused most Palestinians to be displaced to the Gaza territory. Exacerbated by Israel's claim to Jerusalem as its capital, it has provoked a strong reaction from Palestinians who feel their rights are being taken away and occupied by Israel. This is what triggers the anger of Palestinians and all world countries that support Palestinian independence from Israel. When viewed from historical factors, Israelis are immigrants who immigrated from East Africa who suddenly made the Palestinian territories their homeland. Little by little Israelis are increasing year by year and resulting in indigenous Palestinians increasingly displaced due to conflicts over the territory. Since then the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has continued, war is inevitable, sudden attacks by Israeli soldiers on Palestinians who are praying at Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem. This brutality continued to give rise to resistance by Palestinians to attacks carried out by Israel, namely by carrying out an intifada movement identified as resistance using stones against the Israeli military which eventually gave rise to a more organized resistance movement called Hamas. Not only that, in an effort to defend themselves and carry out attacks against Israel, other movements, organizations and militant figures have

emerged that have changed such as Fatah, Hamas and the Palestine Liberation Organization (Putra Mandala Rivan, 2023). The Palestinian and Israeli conflict, which has been going on for so long, has become an issue that is often discussed and becomes hot in Indonesia. The Indonesian government since the leadership of President Soekarno to President

Jokowi, basically in line with the international dynamics that exist at the global level continues to encourage the best capabilities through diplomatic spaces. Humans who enter adulthood are experiencing a period of transition (midlife transition), a time when a person conducts self-evaluation about achieving life goals. Many of them have witnessed the death of their parents or other family members, experienced career changes, and experienced significant changes in relationships with spouses or children. In middle adulthood, marital satisfaction may be at its lowest. They also experience empty nest syndrome which describes feelings of lethargy, solitude, and loss of purpose. This syndrome is experienced when their children leave home. At this age, they also experience a very feared period. This is related to the beginning of declining physical abilities, for example menopause or andropause, chronic and acute diseases begin to be detected (Siti Muthoharoh, 2019). Departing from various things, the level of public anxiety about can vary depending on factors such as privacy, security, and the impact of technology on work, and it is all illustrated in a war situation where things that we experience culturally are usually very rarely seen, it is natural that civil society whose daily lives are calm to be worried if there is media propaganda or encouragement from the media related to existing issues, Especially recently when the war peaked between Hamas and Israeli militants, the ongoing crimes of genocide in the Palestinian territories are horrific for consumption by people who do not have a strong mentality. Human anxiety about war generally includes fear of loss of life, destruction, and far-reaching social impacts. Factors such as uncertainty, personal security, and family well-being can reinforce feelings of war-related anxiety. Efforts at diplomacy, peace, and conflict resolution can help assuage those concerns.

The following is an example of media propaganda related to the issue of Palestine and Israel in digital media platforms related to psychological, spiritual and economic anxiety: Spiritual Anxiety quoted from the digital platform Instagram, in the account islamiclawtalk.id in the post "who says Palestine is free the world will end?" there was a comment from one account that commented "Zioni will 100 percent control Palestine until finally after that they want to control Medina Mecca and there Imam Mahdi CMIIW" Economic Anxiety was reported by Instagram in a post by the permdiactivis2 account with posts discussing the boycott of KFC and MCD as a result of the impact of the Israeli and Palestine wars, where the community was involved in a partisanship controversy. One of the economic actors who works as an online motorcycle taxi commented on the post with "I as Ojol orders also decreased lur.. Even though if you can't take care of this KFC with MCD" Psychological anxiety was reported by Instagram in a Islamiclawtalk.id

account post about "Who says Palestine is free of the world will end?" Two online citizens exchanged comments with the initials A expressing their psychological concerns about the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian war with the comment "But can this war lead to a world war in the future, brother?".

Other Chaotic Expression that shows there is the real propaganda media happend showed and stated in one of the comment in instagram of "stateofisrael" in their posting of HAMAS "A recorded call between an IDF officer and gazan Resident", The account named Vathm\_ typed "You should change your account's name, it should be "stateofpropaganda", The other strong proven that there was propaganda media in this account was the other instagram account that typed under the comment of Vathm said written by 00upskitty : "like Hamas does every day!!! Brainwashingtheir own civillians", Other Instagram account replied her comment with " hey there! There are people, reporters and outlets with the people of Gaza and in the West Bank who is reporting is not associated with Hamas. Also the international Organizations giving updates aren't with Hamas... there are sources that let see what is happening. The israeli state is producing lots of lies in fake vidios, photos, allegations..." Additionally, this research identifies a correlation between the frequency of exposure to propagandist content and the intensity of reported anxiety levels. Individuals consuming such content daily reported a greater prevalence of worry and stress, highlighting the need for regulated media consumption habits.

### **CONCLUSION**

The conclusion related to this study is the need to be critical and selective in consuming news. Media often reflect a particular point of view, and it is important for readers to seek information from a variety of sources to get a more comprehensive and objective picture. Critical analysis helps to look beyond narratives that may be influenced by certain interests or points of view, Society in this era of globalization is certainly greatly facilitated by the acceleration of information, of course, in balancing existing propaganda, society must balance existing variables with validity tests through measurable studies, moreover, the excitement of war opinions on digital propaganda, not all human beings have a good mentality. It is strong to see the reality of the crime of genocide, not to mention that the crime has been embellished and embellished in such a way as to make digital propaganda look more sensational. Future research could explore the longitudinal effects of media propaganda on younger audiences, whose consumption habits differ significantly from older generations. Addressing these demographic nuances is essential for devising inclusive strategies to mitigate the impacts of media-driven anxiety.

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