

REPRESENTATION OF PAKISTAN, IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA IN UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSIONS: A COMPARATIVE FRAMING PERSPECTIVE

¹**Fizza Batool**

*PhD Scholar, Department of English, Fatima Jinnah Women University,
Rawalpindi, Pakistan.*

Email: malikaramzan@yahoo.com

²**Dr. Fakhira Riaz**

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, Fatima Jinnah Women University,
Rawalpindi, Pakistan.*

Email: drfakhirariaz@fjwu.edu.pk

Abstract

Framing refers to the construction of opinion by assigning meaning to reality. Framing studies, in general, are important to provide meaning to an event or phenomenon. Framing in political discourse plays a crucial role in influencing an individual's understanding of issues and events. The present study examines the types of frames employed in political discourse and especially how these particular frames are used by state representatives to serve their national interests. Purposive Sampling method is used and the speeches delivered by representatives of Muslim majority countries, e.g., Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia in United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session, from 2020 to 2024, are taken as a sample for this study. This study follows the deductive approach of framing for content analysis of UNGA speeches and builds on the media framing theory proposed by Boydston, et al., (2014) in their work "Tracking the Development of Media Frames within and across Policy Issues". Speeches are analyzed for recurrent themes and frames to explore the typology of frames are used in the speeches of Muslim majority countries. The findings reveal that Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia employ security & defense, fairness & equality, constitutionality & jurisprudence, economic, morality and policy prescription frames frequently. State representatives strategically link various themes in UNGA speeches to promote their national interests, often emphasizing regional stability, economic leadership, religious custodianship, and global cooperation. The comparative framing analysis emphasizes how UNGA speeches are used as a strategic tool to shape international perceptions, legitimize national policies, and expand alliances globally. The use of specific framing choices reflects broader ideological stances and aligns with their respective foreign policy goals.

Keywords: *Frames, framing, perception building, United Nations General Assembly, State Representative.*

Introduction

Politics is an effort to have power for the sake of exercising certain political, economic and social ideas. So as to communicate ideas of any kind, the speakers or writers have only one choice and that is language. In this process of politics, language gains a very important and striking status because language influences, prepares, accompanies and plays every political action. Hence, language is a major tool for persuasion and changing beliefs of the audience. Politicians' language is filled with ideology, power and rhetoric that serves the purpose of attaining certain goals.

Leaders employ discourse or communication to spread their philosophy, culture, fundamental values, or any other important messages to gain the trust and support of their people. The use of language in leadership has always been crucial. Leaders frequently use discourse-based language

manipulation to get the desired effects. There is no doubt that political leaders frequently use language to gain popularity for their opinions. Politicians succeed in achieving their goal of persuading their audience of the veracity of their viewpoints (Bayram, 2010).

Phenomena of Frame and Framing

The rhetorical power of a frame comes from its function to heighten the saliency of some aspects of reality over others. About this occurrence, William Gamson asserted that a frame is a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue (Gamson, 1989). He stressed that facts take on their meaning by being embedded in a frame or story line that organizes them and gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to emphasize while ignoring others (Gamson, 1989). Framing provides a system of communication in which some facts are attributed with more significance than the others, consciously or unconsciously, in order to facilitate a particular interpretation.

Framing theory is based on a concept that centers on the interplay between message communication and its reception. It holds particular significance when examining the role of language in influencing public discourse. Within this framework, framing refers to the process which shapes public perceptions about an event. It involves communicators consciously or unconsciously constructing a specific perspective that guides how the facts of a situation are perceived. This can involve emphasizing certain facts over others to shape the audience's viewpoint (Kuypers, 2006).

Framing, a term borrowed from the discipline of communication studies and political science (Entman, 1993), pertains to the intentional construction of narratives with the aim of shaping perception, policy and public opinion. In UNGA discourse, framing is used as a strategic tool by diplomats to frame national interests in terms of universal principles like peace, human rights and development, and contend with challenges like Islamophobia, colonialism, and conflict resolution (Hafez, 2014). Framing constitutes a dynamic and innovative system of shaping opinions. Frames embody the wider context within which all kinds of interactions occur, encompassing human notion, comprehension and interaction (Scheufele, 2006). According to Wendland (2010), mental schemas underlie frames which include interconnected symbols, assisting the target audience in the process of interpretation. Entman (2008, p.181) defines the frame as a narrative, emerging as a consequence of a selection that advances a particular interpretation. Typically, this interpretation unfolds through a related definition of the policy matter, an evaluation of its root causes, an ethical evaluation of the parties concerned, and a proposed recommendation for the solution of problem (Entman, 2008, p.190). Framing is the act of intentionally choosing and highlighting primary factors behind a scenario to promote a point of view.

The concept of 'framing' comes from the discipline of political communication which is at work in propagating the desired viewpoint, leading to the elimination of other competing interpretations. The impact of framing on public attitudes for the coverage of problems has gained sizeable popularity (Chong & Druckman, 2007), as it additionally influences how guidelines are applied (Baumgartner et al., 2008). To enhance deeper knowledge of politics, it is very crucial to recognize the frames employed by politicians, media, and the balloting public to gain popular approval. This phenomenon affords substantial challenges because of the dynamic nature of language and the ever-developing volume of data in which frames emerge and evolve. With the growing engagement of citizens in political discourse through platforms, including blogging, commenting, and social media, there may be a developing need for real-time analysis of how issues are framed to enhance our rational understanding of the political landscape. Yet, the method of figuring out

the array of frames in political discourse related to a specific issue is complex. Furthermore, the definition of framing itself has remained incredibly elusive (Christensen et al., 2021).

In political communication, framing is a strategic tool to sway public opinion. Chong and Druckman (2007) highlight how elites deploy frames to align policies with voters' values (e.g., linking welfare reform to racial equality). Metaphors like "war on terror" reframe policies according to the desired ideological implications of government officials.

Role of United Nations General Assembly

Since its establishment in 1945, the United Nations (UN) has dedicated its efforts to the upkeep of global peace and security, serving as a cornerstone of multilateral diplomacy in a world often fractured by competing ideologies and interests. In pursuit of this mission, the organization has sought to foster collaboration among its 193 member states, creating platforms for dialogue, negotiation, and collective problem-solving. Among its principal organs, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) stands out as a significant space for international discourse, where representatives of member states articulate national priorities, advocate for shared goals, and engage in the complex interplay of global politics. While UNGA resolutions lack legally binding pressure on character states, the statements made inside its chambers are significant of a state's stance on key problems.

According to Article 11 of the UN Charter, the General Assembly possesses the authority to review the overall standards of cooperation in the preservation of worldwide peace and is empowered to cope with any problems regarding worldwide peace and security raised via a UN member or by using the Security Council. Articles 10, 11, and 14 of the UN Charter similarly verify the UNGA's capacity to put forward recommendations to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in subjects related to worldwide peace and protection. These provisions define the UNGA's position as an advisory body, with concrete actions taken by means of the United Nations Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. (United Nations, 1945, pp. 4-5).

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) is the main policy-making organ of the Organization. Comprising all Member States, it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter of the United Nations. Each of the 193 Member States of the United Nations has an equal vote. The UNGA also makes key decisions for the UN, including: appointing the Secretary-General on the recommendation of the Security Council, electing the non-permanent members of the Security Council, approving the UN budget, etc. The Assembly meets in regular sessions from September to December each year, and thereafter as required. It discusses specific issues through dedicated agenda items or sub-items, which lead to the adoption of resolutions. Sitting arrangements in the General Assembly Hall change for each session.

Research Questions

The realm of political communication has been a subject of scholarly exploration for an extended duration. The language employed by government officers holds huge sway because it contributes in shaping public ideals and offers insights into the dynamics of politics (Cap, 2015; Collet, 2009; Halmari, 2005). Muslim-majority diplomats frequently employ framing that connects national interests to general themes such as justice, anti-colonialism or Islamic solidarity (Hafez, 2014). For example, the Palestine issue is usually framed in terms of human rights violations and historical displacement, while Western actions in Muslim-dominated regions can be framed as neo-imperialism (Said, 1978). Through such frames, diplomats not only preserve certain narratives but

also counter dominant geopolitical narratives. Persuasion and strategic communication rhetoric, or the art of persuasive speech, is extremely applicable in the case of diplomatic oratory.

1. What type of frames are used in the speeches of Muslim majority countries' representatives in United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) sessions?
2. How do Muslim majority countries' representatives in UNGA employ framing that connects national interests to general themes?

The speeches held in UNGA by the state representatives of different countries provide an opportunity to study and analyze how these countries highlight an issue and then project it not only in front of the international community, but also for the awareness of its own masses, by making use of the process of framing.

Research Methodology

To investigate the research questions, a qualitative content analysis methodology is used. Content analysis is an important technique that helps to make sense of the data and make it more analyzable. (Harwood & Garry, 2003). Semetko and Valkenberg (2000) divided framing analysis into two broad approaches: inductive and deductive. A deductive approach is used for this content analysis, which helps to organize the available data in few categories (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013).

This study follows the deductive approach, as it builds on the media framing theory proposed by Boydston, et al., (2014) in his work "Tracking the Development of Media Frames within and across Policy Issues". They have presented a unified coding scheme for content analysis across issues, called Policy Frames Codebook. This codebook is used as a toolkit for qualitative content analysis of our research sample. It contains fourteen categories of frame "dimensions" (plus an "other" category) that can be applied to any genre of communication. The ultimate goal of this study is to create a set of examples that demonstrate how choices made by the speakers in these speeches relate to framing. To achieve this goal, the speeches of selected Muslim majority countries in UN General Assembly sessions are investigated along the fifteen cross-cutting frame dimensions developed by Boydston et al., (2014).

The analysis begins with the classification of themes that are prominent in the speeches. Afterwards, different frame types are identified in the discussion of emerging themes. For Kuypers "a theme is the subject of discussion, or that which is the subject of the thought expressed. The frame, of course, is suggesting a particular interpretation of the theme" (Kuypers 2009, p.302). Kuypers' themes would be equivalent to Entman (2008)'s objects of framing: issues, events, actors (whether they are individual leaders, groups or nations), about which there are also frames (particular interpretations). Each theme has its own frames. Later, the role of framing in linking national interests to general themes is investigated with reference to UNGA speeches of Muslim majority countries.

Purposive sampling method is used by selecting three Muslim majority countries; Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. According to regional groups of member states declared by United Nations, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia fall in the category of Asia- Pacific states. Only those Muslim countries are selected which have declared Islam as their official religion. The speeches delivered in UNGA sessions from 2020- 2024 are analyzed to answer the study questions. Being the member states, these Muslim countries take part in the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly every year. Only those Muslim countries are selected which have declared Islam as their state religion.

The researcher takes primary data, e.g., original transcripts of speeches of Muslim countries' representatives in UNGA sessions from the official website of United Nation General Assembly General Debate <https://gadebate.un.org/en/sessions-archive>. Full statements till 79th session of the General Assembly are available in PDF format. United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library official website <https://ask.un.org/> also provides access to comprehensive historic information and statements made by member states during the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly.

Analysis of Dominant Themes and Frames in Speeches of Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia

Theme # 1: Israel Gaza War

First recurrent theme in speeches is Israel Gaza War. Security and defense frame dominates across all years and countries. Its consistent use reflects the regional consensus that the Israel-Gaza conflict is a security threat—both to Palestinians and to regional stability. This frame helps states justify positions regarding resistance, militarization, or sovereignty under international law. Frequent use of Policy Prescription and evaluation frame calls for international intervention, UN resolutions, and a two-state solution. This suggests that beyond moral or ideological claims, states want to present themselves as policy-oriented actors. It is used both defensively (against Israeli policy) and constructively (to propose Arab-led or international frameworks). Countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia apply political frame to situate the conflict within broader ideological, regional, or geopolitical contests (e.g., Israeli expansionism, normalization debates, or resistance blocs). Iran employs it specifically to critique Western double standards and assert anti-colonial narratives while Saudi Arabia uses it to navigate the Arab consensus while asserting leadership roles.

Morality frame is selectively but powerfully used by Pakistan highlighting humanitarian violations, ethical responsibility, and moral outrage at civilian suffering. Law, Order, Crime and Justice frame was also used by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to portray Israeli actions as war crimes or violations of international humanitarian law. External supervision and reputation frame is especially relevant in Iran where leaders emphasize the international community's responsibilities, credibility of the UN, or the reputational risks of inaction. The representatives pressure Western states and international bodies to act in favor of Palestinian rights. Collectively, these three Muslim-majority states demonstrated a convergence on key themes—Palestinian rights, opposition to Israeli aggression, and calls for international justice—while differing in the depth and scope of their framing, with Pakistan focusing on justice and morality, Iran on ideological resistance, and Saudi Arabia on diplomacy and stability.

Theme # 2: Ukraine- Russia Conflict

Second important theme is the conflict between Ukraine and Russia. Security and defense frame is particularly used by Pakistan reflecting concern over territorial sovereignty, with an uptick in frequency post-2022 (after the full-scale invasion). Policy prescription and evaluation frame is present in Pakistan, indicating a shift from condemnation to proposing solutions, e.g. ceasefires, diplomacy, or global mediation. Political frame has been used selectively in the statements of Iran and Saudi Arabia implying broader implications for global power structures. Iran criticized Western interventions and linked the crisis to broader systemic failures in international governance.

The Ukraine–Russia conflict is predominantly framed as a security threat and geopolitical crisis, with increasing movement toward policy evaluation and diplomatic resolution. During the years 2020–2021, minimal references to this issue are found out—most countries did not highlight the issue, likely due to the conflict not being in full escalation or overshadowed by COVID-19. In the

year 2022, many countries began to adopt security and defense and Political framings as the war escalated.

If we look at country- specific trends, Pakistan maintains a narrowly focused framing, consistently using the security & defense and Policy Prescription frames in 2023 and 2024. Iran avoids overt references in earlier years; adopts a political frame in 2023, signaling strategic positioning in global diplomacy. Saudi Arabia first mentions the issue in 2022 using a political frame, consistent with its neutral, diplomacy-centered stance. While all three countries supported a peaceful resolution, Pakistan remained cautious and humanitarian-focused, Iran emphasized political inconsistencies and Western hypocrisy, and Saudi Arabia sought to position itself as a regional mediator and responsible global actor.

Theme # 3: Nuclear Sanctions and Disarmament

Third theme in UNGA speeches is of nuclear sanctions and disarmament. Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan have expressed notably distinct framing patterns from 2020 to 2024, reflecting their differing stakes and strategic orientations. Iran has consistently employed a wide spectrum of frames, especially from 2020 to 2022, to portray nuclear sanctions as unjust, politically motivated, and harmful to national development and human well-being. Dominant frames include constitutionality and jurisprudence, economic, security & defense, external supervision & reputation, political, *and* policy prescription & evaluation. Iran links sanctions to violations of its sovereign rights and criticizes the double standards of global powers, especially the U.S., presenting its nuclear program as peaceful and essential for domestic development. The framing also connects sanctions to broader humanitarian impacts (e.g., on health and economy), emphasizing national resilience and legal justification.

Saudi Arabia, while not a target of sanctions, consistently frames nuclear disarmament as a global security imperative. It uses the political, security & defense, external supervision & reputation, *and* policy prescription & evaluation frames. Over time, Saudi speeches show growing concern over regional proliferation risks and a call for Middle East denuclearization. By 2023–2024, it underscores the need for international treaties and verification mechanisms, seeking to enhance its image as a stabilizing actor committed to global non-proliferation norms.

Pakistan, in contrast, has remained largely silent on this theme during the 2020–2024 period, reflecting its cautious diplomatic posture and desire to avoid direct scrutiny over its own nuclear capabilities. The lack of engagement also suggests Pakistan's intent to decouple its nuclear position from broader disarmament debates at the UN platform. In sum, Iran's framing is defensive and multifaceted, linking nuclear issues to national rights and external injustice; Saudi Arabia positions itself as a responsible regional actor promoting disarmament; while Pakistan remains strategically quiet, avoiding entanglement in global nuclear discourse.

Theme # 4: Call for Reforms and Commitment to the United Nations

Fourth theme is labelled as Call for Reforms and Commitment to the United Nations. From the year 2020 to 2024, many Muslim-majority states used UNGA platform to critically discuss the United Nations' role, highlighting concerns over the organization's effectiveness, equity, and accountability. Pakistan consistently questioned the UN's performance, often invoking the morality frame to highlight global injustices and double standards in the enforcement of international law and norms. Simultaneously, the external supervision and reputation frame was widely employed, particularly by states such as Pakistan to draw attention to biased international scrutiny, perceived hegemonic influence (especially from Western powers), and the selective application of accountability mechanisms. Saudi Arabia framed arguments using political and

constitutionality frames, stressing the need for institutional reform, fairer representation (especially for the Global South), and adherence to international principles. Meanwhile, Iran led the discourse in systemic and structural criticism, underscoring calls for democratizing global governance. Overall, the framing trend across this theme suggests a growing disillusionment with the status quo and a collective call for a more just, representative, and effective international system, with Muslim-majority nations seeking both greater voice and procedural fairness within the global order.

In the year 2020, Pakistan focused on institutional inadequacies, employing morality, capacity & resources, and policy prescription & evaluation frames. Pakistan criticized global inequities and called for UN reform. Later in 2023, it intensified its position by using a broad spectrum of frames including economic, policy, capacity, political, constitutionality, and fairness, signaling dissatisfaction with global governance and structural biases in the UN system. In 2024, the focus shifted to external supervision and reputation, indicating concerns over how international institutions assess and treat developing countries.

In 2020, Iran focused on external supervision and political framing, reflecting concerns about Western hegemony and bias in UN mechanisms. During 2022–2023, it consistently used the morality frame, emphasizing global injustice and selective application of norms. Iran maintains a principled and critical stance, using morality and political frames to question UN legitimacy and Western influence. Saudi Arabia remained engaged with morality, political, constitutionality, and external supervision frames, stressing UN accountability and fairness. Saudi Arabia maintained moderate yet reformist voices, while Iran and Pakistan led the principled and structural critique movement. Overall, while Pakistan stresses justice and equity, Iran critiques structural biases rooted in moral arguments, and Saudi Arabia advocates for rule-based reforms through institutional frames—revealing how each country ties the UN discourse to their broader national and diplomatic narratives.

Theme # 5: Rising Terrorism

Fifth major theme is Rising Terrorism. Across 2020–2024, Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia have addressed the theme of terrorism consistently in their UNGA speeches, using different combinations of frames to align with national interests and global narratives. Pakistan predominantly frames terrorism as a security and defense threat. Over the years, it has gradually added the economic and external supervision and reputation frames, portraying terrorism as both a threat to national stability and a consequence of international power politics. The policy prescription and evaluation frame is used to highlight Pakistan's counterterrorism strategies. Iran strongly associates terrorism with foreign interference and Western double standards, relying heavily on the security & defense, political and policy prescription & evaluation frames across multiple years. Iran criticizes external military presence and Western support for what it deems "instrumentalized terrorism." It also ties terrorism to constitutional and legal injustices, especially in 2023, asserting its sacrifices of high-rank officials to combat terrorism. This framing highlights Iran's rejection of Western narratives and presents it as both a victim and an effective regional actor against terrorism.

Saudi Arabia uses the security and defense and law and order, crime and justice frames almost every year, presenting itself as a key player in regional counterterrorism efforts. It emphasizes the morality frame in several speeches (e.g., 2021, 2023), linking terrorism to religious extremism and the desecration of sacred values, while advocating for international respect for religious tolerance. It also stresses political and economic dimensions in 2020 and 2024, illustrating how terrorism

threatens both governance and development. This multifaceted framing supports Saudi Arabia's role as a regional stabilizer and a promoter of moderation.

Theme # 6: Climate Change

Sixth major theme is climate change which is frequently addressed in the speeches of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Across five years of UNGA speeches, Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia have responded to the growing urgency of climate change keeping in view their vulnerabilities, and development agendas. Pakistan consistently frames climate change as a major hindrance in the path of national security and economic development. Pakistan takes security and defense frame as central, highlighting climate threats like floods and lack of resources for rehabilitation. The economic frame is repeatedly used to emphasize catastrophic consequences caused by climate disasters and the need for financing from the international community. Frames like capacity & resources, health & safety, quality of life, and policy prescription & evaluation are used to highlight the scarcity of resources in developing countries. In 2022, Pakistan employed highest frequency of multiple frames to highlight the devastation of livelihoods and infrastructure due to the impact of global warming.

Iran's engagement with the climate change theme is marginal and largely political in nature. It refers to climate change only in 2023 using the political frame, reflecting its broader stance that global environmental crises are tied to unjust international systems and sanctions. Unlike Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, Iran avoids linking climate change to national development policies. Saudi Arabia significantly broadens its framing of climate change, especially post-2021. It consistently uses the economic frame to advocate for a just energy transition that recognizes the continued relevance of fossil fuel producers. Health and safety, quality of life, and capacity and resources frames emphasize Saudi environmental initiatives like the *Saudi Green Initiative* and *Middle East Green Initiative*. The policy prescription and evaluation frame is central in showcasing Riyadh's global leadership in climate diplomacy.

Theme # 7: Afghanistan Issue

Seventh emerging theme is the Afghanistan Issue in the UNGA speeches of Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan consistently treats the Afghanistan issue as a matter of moral responsibility, and policy concern by positioning itself as a peace advocate. Policy prescription and evaluation is used to recommend inclusive governance and peace-building. The security and defense frame is used from 2021 onward, emphasizing cross-border terrorism risks. Frames such as morality, fairness and equality, and law and order highlight concern for Afghan civilians, especially rights of women and children. The external supervision and reputation frame appears in 2021, reflecting Pakistan's desire to play positive role in regional stability.

Throughout the years, except 2023, Iran uses the security and defense and policy prescription and evaluation frames to call for regional-led solutions and criticize foreign occupation. In 2021, Iran adds the political and capacity and resources frames, indicating the importance of inclusive governance and support for Afghan society.

Saudi Arabia consistently uses the security and defense and policy prescription and evaluation frames. The political frame is regularly invoked, emphasizing the need for stable governance. In 2023, fairness and equality and health and safety frames highlight need for protection of women's rights and humanitarian aid. In 2021, external supervision and reputation is used, showing Saudi interest in global engagement.

UNGA Speeches Linking National Interests with General Themes

Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia strategically link various themes in UNGA speeches to promote and protect their national interests, often emphasizing regional stability, economic leadership, religious custodianship, and global cooperation. Saudi Arabia projects its diplomatic role as a peace maker (e.g. Yemen peace initiative, Sudan mediation, Lebanon support) as essential to regional security. It continually sheds light on its active participation in preventing regional destabilization, (e.g. Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, and Afghanistan). These efforts help protect Saudi borders and enhance its image as a responsible regional power.

Saudi Arabia maintains legitimacy in the Arab and Islamic world by supporting Palestinian cause and raising voice against illegal occupation. It is also helpful in countering Iranian influence, asserting Saudi Arabia's positioning in defending Muslim causes. It highlights its global aid contributions in case of Sudan, Ukraine, Covid- 19, climate change and leadership during its G20 presidency. Vision 2030 and green initiatives like the Saudi Green Initiative and Green Middle East Initiative assert its role as a global humanitarian actor, enhancing soft power through aid delivery and climate initiatives. It hosting donor conferences and launching relief campaigns (e.g. for Sudan) boosts international reputation and diplomatic leverage.

Saudi Arabia emphasizes its role in stabilizing global oil markets (e.g. via OPEC+), asserting leadership in the global energy economy. Climate leadership supports economic diversification, enhances global standing, and prepares Saudi Arabia for post-oil economic realities. By highlighting women's empowerment, youth inclusion, and legal reforms, Saudi Arabia counters criticism and improves its international image. Saudi Arabia defends Islamic values and condemns Qur'an desecration to assert its role as a protector of Islam. Saudi Arabia links diverse themes—security, economy, religion, diplomacy, and environment—to a coherent national interest agenda. Through this multifaceted approach, the Kingdom positions itself as both a modernizing global actor and a guardian of Islamic and Arab interests.

Iran also skillfully links different themes in its UNGA speeches to advance and protect its national interests, using a blend of religious values, resistance rhetoric, and sovereign rights. It keeps on condemning U.S. and Western sanctions criticizing Western claims as protector of human rights. It delegitimizes the sanctions regime, affecting the availability of essential medicines and goods. Its resistance discourse justifies Iran's pursuit of economic self-reliance (e.g., producing its own COVID-19 vaccine) and portrays Iran as a morally superior victim of Western aggression. Iran frames its nuclear and scientific advancement as peaceful and essential for national development. It defends Iran's right to sovereign technological development by countering global narratives about nuclear threat. Iran links its support for "oppressed nations" to its Islamic and humanitarian responsibilities while criticizing U.S. and Israeli actions. It justifies its regional influence and alliances (e.g., with Syria, Yemen and Hezbollah), claiming its involvement as defensive rather than aggressive.

Iran strongly defends Islamic values, condemning Islamophobia, Qur'an desecration, and Western cultural aggression. Iran critiques Western dominance in international institutions and promotes a multipolar order where Iran can have more influence. It emphasizes moral values of justice and rationality to assert Iran's legitimacy in global discourse. During COVID-19, Iran highlighted its medical capabilities and condemned restrictions on humanitarian imports. It demonstrates resilience and self-reliance in crisis. It portrays itself as a resilient, just, and sovereign actor, defending its people and region against Western domination, while promoting Islamic and humanitarian values to strengthen both domestic legitimacy and international positioning.

Pakistan consistently links different global and regional themes in its UNGA speeches to its national interests by using carefully selected frames that reflect its strategic priorities. Pakistan's solidarity with Palestine aligns with its domestic public opinion, Islamic identity, and leadership role in the Muslim world. Pakistan highlights its commitment to Muslim causes by appealing to morality frame and deflects attention from its internal issues. Kashmir dispute is a territorial issue tied to Pakistan's identity, sovereignty, and regional power dynamics. Pakistan emphasizes the legitimacy of the Kashmiri cause as central to peace in South Asia, invoking legal and moral arguments. Stability in Afghanistan directly impacts Pakistan's security and refugee situation. Advocating for Afghan peace enhances Pakistan's regional role and helps counter extremist threats on its borders.

Pakistan emphasizes counterterrorism efforts to improve its global image and secure aid/partnerships. Pakistan is highly climate-vulnerable; facing floods and catastrophic results of climate change. Framing climate as an existential threat strengthens Pakistan's appeal for global climate financing. Promoting multilateralism protects Pakistan's interests against powerful states like India. Calling for UN reform reflects Pakistan's effort to maintain influence in global governance.

Islamophobia and appeals to domestic religious sentiments strengthens internal political legitimacy and connects Pakistan with wider Muslim solidarity. Pakistan uses the UNGA platform to strategically frame international themes in a way that reinforces its regional security goals, highlights its moral authority on Muslim issues, and supports its geopolitical rivalry with India. Through calculated framing—especially in *security*, *morality*, *law & order*, and *policy prescription*—Pakistan weaves its national interests into broader global narratives.

Conclusion

The framing analysis of Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia UNGA speeches reveals distinct yet overlapping strategic narratives shaped by their geopolitical positioning, domestic priorities, and ideological foundations. Iran consistently employs strong morality, political, and security and defense frames to present itself as a sovereign actor resisting Western hegemony, with emphases on US sanctions, regional stability, and Islamic justice. Its speeches portray sanctions as "crimes against humanity" and promote resistance framed within religious and ethical values, especially regarding Palestine, Yemen, and nuclear diplomacy. Pakistan, on the other hand, emphasizes political, fairness and equality, and morality frames, particularly around the Kashmir dispute, Islamophobia, and global justice. It positions itself as a victim of injustice, advocating multilateral reforms and equality among nations, with recurring themes of regional peace and international law. Saudi Arabia, in contrast, projects a vision of regional leadership and modernization, frequently using security and defense, policy prescription, and economic frames. It highlights its role in peace-building in Yemen, Syria, and Sudan, and promotes Vision 2030 and clean energy transitions. While Iran and Pakistan highlight grievances and justice-based appeals, Saudi Arabia balances its image as a stable power, mediator, and global economic actor. Together, these speeches reflect the broader ideological and strategic diversity within the Muslim world at the UNGA.

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