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Framing and Discourse Analysis of Indonesian Democracy: A Study of International Media News on the Figure of President Prabowo Subianto

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Abstract - This research aims to identify the framing pattern of international media on President Prabowo Subianto in the context of Indonesian democracy and to analyze the construction of democratic discourse in international news coverage. This study uses a qualitative approach by combining Entman's Framing Analysis and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Data were collected from five reputable international media outlets—The Guardian, The New York Times, BBC News, Al Jazeera, and The Washington Post—through online documentation using specific keywords. The analysis was conducted using NVivo software to organize the data into three main categories: framing, democratic discourse, and personal narratives. The findings show that negative framing is the dominant pattern, accompanied by political and responsibility frames that highlight Prabowo's role as a political actor with substantial influence on the direction of Indonesian democracy. In the democratic discourse dimension, the two main axes are authoritarianism and democratic values, supported by issues of election integrity and human rights. The personal narrative emphasizes Prabowo's controversial past, military background, and populist rhetoric, while temporal analysis shows shifts in issue emphasis across the pre-election, transition of power, and early governance phases. The word-cloud visualization confirms the interconnection between personal narratives, democratic frameworks, and human rights issues. The study concludes that international media construct Prabowo's image as a complex political figure, combining strong-leadership appeal with skepticism toward democratic commitment. Theoretically, this study demonstrates how the integration of Entman's framing functions and Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA advances the understanding of leaderisation in emerging democracies, where personal leadership images are constructed through media selection, ideological discourse, and global democratic norms.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis; Indonesian democracy, international media; media framing; Prabowo Subianto.

Introduction

The study of political communication in the global context highlights the strategic role of media in shaping political narratives and influencing the international image of democracy. In today's interconnected information system, media outlets not only deliver news but also participate in the construction of meaning, identity, and legitimacy in political processes. One of the widely adopted analytical lenses in understanding these processes is framing theory, first introduced by Robert Entman (1993). Entman explains framing as a process of selecting and emphasizing certain aspects of perceived reality to make them more salient in communication.

This process actively structures and presents information, shaping how audiences interpret and evaluate political phenomena (Fernando et al., 2021; Launa, 2020). Entman's model identifies four key elements—problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation—which provide a systematic framework for dissecting political messages in the media (Bungsu & Muzakir, 2023; Kerrigan et al., 2024).

Previous research demonstrates the global relevance of framing: for instance, Li (2022) and Shin (2020) reveal that Indian media framing of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) shaped perceptions of territorial sovereignty, while Aisyah et al. (2024) found that framing of the Southeast Asian haze crisis influenced cross-border diplomatic relations.

In addition to framing, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as formulated by Norman Fairclough, offers a complementary perspective for understanding the relationship between language, power, and ideology in political communication. Fairclough (1995, 2010) argues that discourse is not a neutral vehicle of communication but a site where social inequalities are constructed and contested. His three-dimensional model—textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice—allows researchers to link linguistic microstructures to macro-level ideological contexts (Fairclough & Scholz, 2020; Zhang, 2023). Textual analysis focuses on lexical and syntactic choices that reflect ideological stances, such as the WE/THEY dichotomy found in political rhetoric (Zheni, 2020).

Discursive practice concerns the production and consumption of texts, including journalistic routines and editorial framing (Alyeksyeyeva et al., 2021). The social practice dimension situates discourse within broader sociopolitical dynamics, such as the use of crisis narratives to justify policy decisions (Knudsen et al., 2022; Al-Azzawi & Majeed, 2024). Thus, CDA extends framing theory by uncovering the deeper ideological and institutional forces that shape political communication.

In developing nations, the representation of political leaders in international media plays a crucial role in defining national image and legitimacy. Studies such as Švecová (2024) show how progressive value framing built a positive image of Slovak President Zuzana Čaputová, while Grover et al. (2021) highlight how global leaders use digital platforms to voice sustainable development goals. Political communication strategies that adapt to both local sensitivities and global trends, as discussed by Peres et al. (2020), demonstrate how leaders construct transnational legitimacy.

Media representation may even influence international assistance, where leaders aligned with donor narratives tend to receive greater support (Rommel & Schaudt, 2020). In Indonesia's case, such representations intersect with the nation's democratic trajectory, Pancasila ideology, and post-authoritarian political culture. Following the 1998 Reformation, many observers portray Indonesia as a model of democratic transition in Southeast Asia, yet ongoing dynastic politics, patronage, and elite domination still undermine its democratic consolidation (Yusdinur et al., 2024). Media, both domestic and international, play an essential role in shaping how these challenges are perceived and understood globally (Ahmad, 2022).

Media framing of Indonesia's political leadership, particularly during periods of power transition, often serves as a barometer of democratic stability. The leadership of former President Joko Widodo, for example, has been framed variably in international outlets, emphasizing either his anti-corruption stance or populist tendencies (Elias, 2020). Moreover, Indonesia's engagement with global issues such as climate change and energy transition—through initiatives like the Paris Agreement ratification—enhances its environmental diplomacy and democratic image (Soemanto & Koestoer, 2023). These overlapping narratives show how media discourses actively negotiate national identity, construct political legitimacy, and shape international perception.

The relationship between media framing and the construction of democratic discourse has direct implications for political legitimacy. Peter (2020) and Wiesner & Harfst (2022) explain that legitimacy arises from will-based, belief-based, or fact-based foundations, each of which media narratives can

easily manipulate. Studies by Murray & Nyberg (2020) and Ireri & Ochieng (2020) further demonstrate that media visibility shapes public evaluations of political leaders across regimes.

During crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, media framing of government strategies—as shown in Fialon et al. (2022)—affects international perceptions of competence and accountability. Similarly, Kartika and Maksum (2023) show that global framing of the food crisis shaped the attribution of responsibility, demonstrating how media construct political reality. The recent phenomenon of leaderisation, where personal political branding replaces institutional legitimacy (Aggestam & Hedling, 2020; Marschlich & Ingenhoff, 2022), underscores the centrality of media in constructing leadership images.

Within Indonesia's post-authoritarian political culture, legitimacy theory and representation theory are analytically interconnected. Legitimacy is not produced only through electoral victory or formal institutional recognition; it is also mediated through representational practices that select, emphasize, and circulate particular meanings about a leader's biography, political commitments, and democratic credibility (Setianto, 2023). In Prabowo Subianto's case, international media representation links his military background, association with the New Order, campaign rhetoric, and electoral performance to broader questions of democratic trust after the 1998 Reformasi (Muhtadi, 2025).

Thus, representation functions as a discursive mechanism through which international media evaluate whether a political figure is compatible with the normative expectations of post-authoritarian democracy (Tanto & Tanusy, 2024). This connection clarifies why the study of media framing is also a study of political legitimacy: the way Prabowo is represented globally may shape how Indonesia's democratic consolidation is interpreted by external audiences.

Despite extensive research on media framing and political discourse, a clear research gap remains in mapping how Indonesian political figures, particularly *Prabowo Subianto*, are represented in international media within the framework of contemporary democracy. Previous studies have largely focused on issue-specific framing or leadership cases in other nations, leaving little understanding of how global news organizations construct Indonesia's democratic narrative through both linguistic and ideological lenses. Therefore, this study offers a novel contribution by integrating Entman's *Framing Theory* and Fairclough's *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)* to capture both the structural and ideological dimensions of representation.

While many scholars have examined media framing of democracy and leadership globally, few have applied an integrated framework combining Entman's and Fairclough's models to Indonesian contexts. Indeed, this research intends to fill that gap by examining how international media construct Indonesia's democratic image through framing and discourse strategies. The purpose of this research related to communication is: (1) to identify the framing patterns of international media toward Prabowo Subianto in the context of Indonesian democracy, and (2) to analyze the discursive construction of democracy as represented in international news coverage.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical background of this research is grounded primarily in communication theory, particularly Framing Theory (Entman, 1993) and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995), supported by political communication, media representation, and legitimacy theories as complementary frameworks. Framing Theory provides the foundation for understanding how media highlight or suppress aspects of political reality to shape meaning and public perception.

Through Entman's four framing functions—defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies—this study examines how international media organize narratives around Indonesia's political leadership and democracy (Bungsu & Muzakir, 2023; Fernando et al., 2021). This model enables systematic analysis of textual construction and ideological emphasis in media representations of Prabowo Subianto.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) deepens this examination by linking textual patterns to social power relations. Fairclough's three-dimensional model (text, discursive practice, social practice) serves as a methodological bridge connecting linguistic microanalysis with macro sociopolitical contexts (Fairclough & Scholz, 2020). CDA allows identification of the ideological underpinnings embedded in language, showing how discourses about Indonesian democracy are produced and legitimized in the international arena (Al-Azzawi & Majeed, 2024; Knudsen et al., 2022).

By integrating these frameworks, this study argues that media framing—as a communicative process—constructs discursive representations of legitimacy and reproduces them through ideological discourse within global power structures. This synthesis enables the researcher to examine both the visible textual framing and the invisible ideological mechanisms shaping international narratives of Indonesian democracy. Therefore, this theoretical model provides the state of the art of the manuscript by positioning the research within contemporary political communication studies, bridging *micro-level framing analysis* with *macro-level discourse analysis* to illuminate how global media construct national political images.

Material and Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using a media discourse analysis design. The study uses this approach to examine how international media frame and discuss Prabowo Subianto and Indonesian democracy. The qualitative approach is seen as relevant because it can describe the complexity of the process of media representation, which is not only textual in nature but also closely related to the social and cultural context (Bungsu & Muzakir, 2023; Fairclough & Scholz, 2020).

This study integrates two main analytical models: Entman's (1993) Framing Analysis and Fairclough's (2013) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The framing analysis identifies how international media frame Prabowo Subianto through four key elements—problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. Meanwhile, CDA is used to analyze the language structure, narrative, labeling, and representation patterns used by the media in shaping political reality. The CDA framework allows researchers to examine the relationship between media texts, discursive practices, and the socio-political context behind them (Al-Azzawi & Majeed, 2024; Zhang, 2023)

The study gathers data from online reports by five leading international media outlets—The Guardian, The New York Times, Al Jazeera, BBC News, and The Washington Post—selected for their global influence, editorial credibility, and consistent reporting on Indonesian politics. These outlets were selected through purposive media sampling based on four criteria.

First, they have global reach and agenda-setting capacity in international political communication, making their coverage influential in shaping transnational perceptions of Indonesia;

Second, they have established editorial credibility and publicly accessible archives that allow systematic retrieval and verification of news texts;

Third, they consistently reported on Indonesian politics, the 2024 election, and Prabowo Subianto across the relevant political phases;

Fourth, they represent diverse editorial and geopolitical perspectives: The Guardian, The New York Times, and The Washington Post reflect influential Western liberal-democratic news traditions; BBC News provides a public-service international broadcasting perspective; and Al Jazeera offers a Global South and regional geopolitical lens.

This variation allows the study to compare how different international media systems construct similar democratic issues through distinct framing and discourse strategies (Fahim & Islam, 2024; Jarvis & Whiting, 2024).

The study structures the data collection into three main phases aligned with Indonesia's political timeline: pre-election (October 2023 – February 2024), power transition (February – October 2024), and early governance (October 2024 – March 2025). Data collection was carried out through documentation techniques and online search (*web scraping*) using keywords: *Prabowo Subianto*, *Indonesian democracy*, *Indonesian election*, and *Indonesian military* figure.

All news that meets the criteria is entered into the database for further analysis. This study uses NVivo software to systematically organize, code, and analyze the data. The researcher begins the coding process by developing a Node structure that represents the main themes, which are then divided into Sub-Nodes as more specific codes. In this study, three main Nodes are identified

Table 1. Research Coding Structure on NVIVO 12 Plus

NODE (Main Theme)	Definition	Sub-Node (CODE / Category Specific)
Framing	grouping how the international media frames Prabowo Subianto and the issue of Indonesian democracy	*Positive Frame*, *Negative Frame*, *Conflict Frame*, *Human Interest Frame*, *Responsibility Frame*, dan *Political Frame*.

Discourse of Democracy	capturing narratives and debates related to Indonesian democracy	*Democratic Values*, *Authoritarianism*, *Election Integrity*, *Populism*, dan *Human Rights Issues*.
Prabowo's Personal Narrative	reading Prabowo Subianto's self-image representation in the news	*Strong Leader*, *Controversial Past*, *Military Background*, *Populist Rhetoric*, *Democratic Commitment*, dan *International Relations*

Source: processed by the author

Result and Discussion

This research produced key findings related to the framing pattern of international media, the construction of Indonesian democratic discourse, and Prabowo Subianto's personal narrative as represented in the news of five international media (The Guardian, BBC News, Washington Post, The New York Times, and Al Jazeera) in the period October 2023-March 2025. The analysis was carried out through an NVivo-based coding process with three main Nodes: Framing, Democratic Discourse, and Prabowo's Personal Narrative.

International Media Framing Patterns

This study examines how the figure of Prabowo Subianto is framed by the international media through various types of framing. The analysis was conducted on five major global media, namely *Al Jazeera, BBC News, The New York Times, The Guardian, and the Washington Post,* using six framing categories, namely *Conflict Frame*, *Human Interest Frame*, *Negative Framing*, *Political Frame*, *Positive Frame*, and *Responsibility Frame*.

Table 2. Presentation of Coding References to Prabowo Subianto's Framing Pattern in International Media

Media	Conflict Frame	Human Interest Frame	Negative Framing	Political Frame	Positive Frame	Responsibility Frame
Al Jazeera	6.52%	0%	52.17%	19.57%	19.57%	2.17%
BBC News	0%	0%	70.59%	0%	23.53%	5.88%
The New York Times	7.14%	0%	78.57%	7.14%	7.14%	0%
The Guardian	10.91%	9.09%	47.27%	14.55%	9.09%	9.09%
Washington Post	8.45%	2.82%	40.85%	30.99%	9.86%	7.04%

Source: processed by the author

For example, *The Guardian* often uses *negative frames* by emphasizing the issue of Prabowo's military past:

> "Prabowo Subianto, a former general with a controversial past, faces renewed scrutiny over human rights allegations" (*The Guardian*, 15 Feb 2024).

BBC News highlights *the positive frame* on the economic policy aspect:

> "Prabowo promises to continue Indonesia's economic transformation and expand welfare programs" (*BBC News*, 2 Mar 2024).

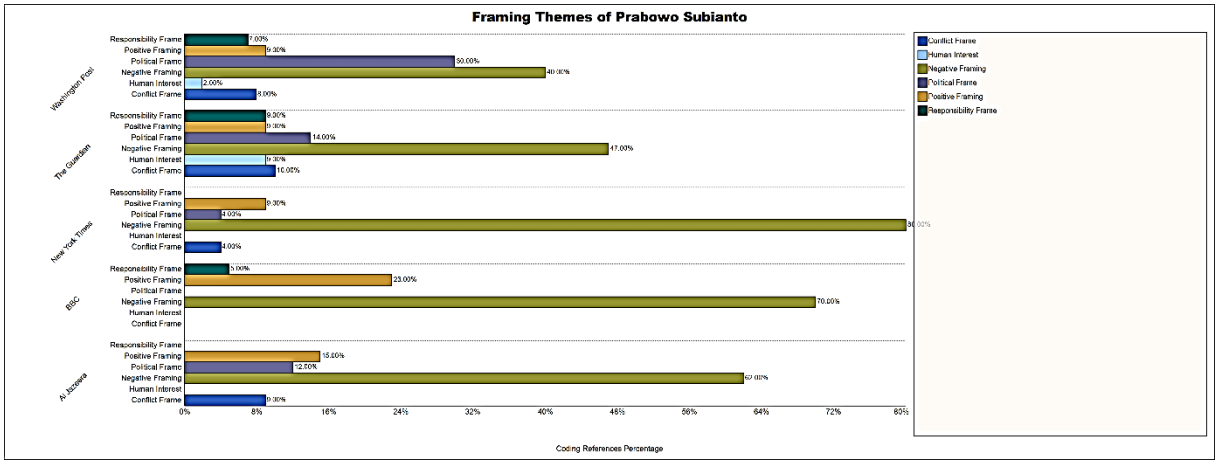


Figure 1. Results of Crosstab Visualization of Prabowo Subianto's Framing Pattern in International Media
Source: processed by the author using NVIVO 12 Plus

Indonesian Democracy Discourse

Furthermore, the results of this study also explore how the international media frames democratic issues in Indonesia in relation to the figure of Prabowo Subianto. The results of the coding presentation on five main global media by focusing on the main themes of democratic discourse: Authoritarianism, Democratic Values, Election Integrity, Human Rights Issues, and Populism, are as follows:

Table 3. Presentation of Coding References to Indonesian Democratic Discourse in International Media

Media	Authoritarianism	Democratic Values	Election Integrity	Human Rights Issues	Populism
Al Jazeera	18.75%	25%	21.88%	18.75%	15.63%
BBC News	20%	20%	10%	35%	15%
The New York Times	12%	40%	16%	32%	0%
The Guardian	28.95%	21.05%	10.53%	23.68%	15.79%
Washington Post	25.81%	22.58%	19.35%	11.29%	20.97%

Source: processed by the author

Quotes representing *human rights issues* appeared extensively in the *Washington Post*:

> "Rights groups fear that Prabowo's election signals a backslide in Indonesia's democratic gains" (*Washington Post*, 20 Feb 2024).

While *Al Jazeera* tends to associate the issue of democracy with the values of populism:

> "Prabowo's speeches blend nationalist rhetoric with promises aimed at the rural poor" (*Al Jazeera*, 5 Mar 2024).

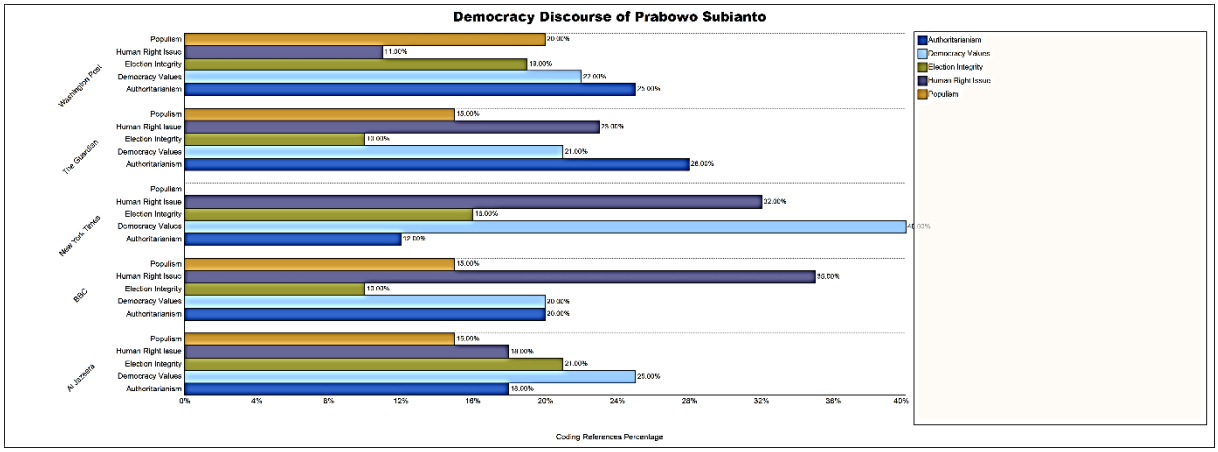


Figure 2. Results of Crosstab Visualization of Indonesian Democratic Discourse in International Media
Source: processed by the author using NVIVO 12 Plus

Prabowo Subianto's Personal Narrative

At this stage, the author wants to analyze how the international media frames the personal aspects and characteristics of Prabowo Subianto's figure in his news narrative. The analysis was conducted using six main categories of personal narratives: Controversial Past, Democratic Commitment, International Relations, Military Background, Populist Rhetoric, and Strong Leader, across five international media outlets.

Table 4. Presentation of Coding References to Prabowo Subianto's Personal Narrative in Indonesia in International Media

Media	Controversial Past	Democratic Commitment	International Relations	Military Background	Populist Rhetoric	Strong Leader
Al Jazeera	31.82%	4.55%	0%	22.73%	36.36%	4.55%
BBC News	35.29%	23.53%	5.88%	23.53%	0%	11.76%
The New York Times	61.11%	16.67%	0%	16.67%	5.56%	0%
The Guardian	22.45%	32.65%	8.16%	18.37%	14.29%	4.08%
Washington Post	17.14%	18.57%	22.86%	18.57%	12.86%	10%

Source: processed by the author

Example of a *strong leader narrative* from *The New York Times*:

> "Supporters hail Prabowo as a decisive leader capable of steering Indonesia through turbulent times" (*The New York Times*, 28 Feb 2024).

An example of a *controversial past narrative* from *The Guardian*:

> "His military career remains shadowed by allegations of rights abuses during Indonesia's authoritarian era" (*The Guardian*, 10 Jan 2024).

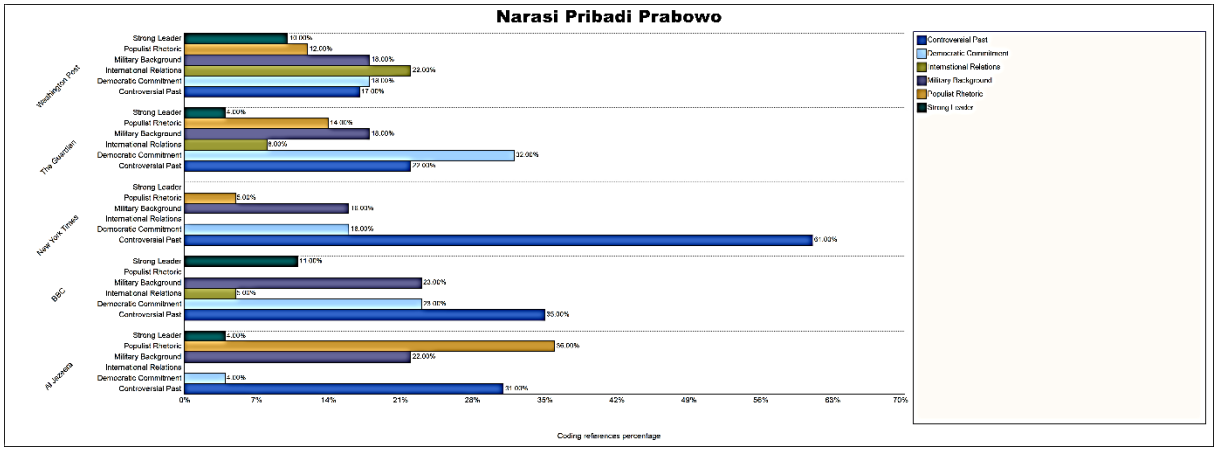


Figure 3. Crosstab Visualization Results of Prabowo Subianto's Personal Narrative on International Media
Source: processed by the author using NVIVO 12 Plus

The coding results show that the theme of Controversial Past generally occupies a dominant position in Prabowo's personal narrative. The highest scores were recorded in *The New York Times* (61.11%) and *BBC News* (35.29%), which showed that Prabowo's past background was the main highlight in their reporting. Meanwhile, the theme of Democratic Commitment is present in various ways. *The Guardian* recorded the highest percentage (32.65%), followed by *BBC News* and *Al Jazeera*, each with a percentage below 25%. This theme reflects the extent to which the international media associates Prabowo with democratic values in his political career.

The Military Background aspect is also quite prominent, especially in *Al Jazeera* (22.73%), *BBC News* (23.53%), and *Washington Post* (18.57%). This confirms that Prabowo's identity as a former military general is an integral part of the narrative formed by foreign media. Populist rhetoric emerged most strongly in *Al Jazeera* (36.36%), followed by *The Guardian* and *the Washington Post*. The results indicate that Prabowo's populist political communication style is also in the spotlight in international media representation. Meanwhile, the Strong Leader category emerged with lower frequency across all media, with *BBC News* (11.76%) and *Washington Post* (10%) recording the highest numbers. This indicates that the characterization of Prabowo as a strong leader is not the main focus of their narrative, although it remains an additional element.

Overall, the narrative shaped by the international media against Prabowo Subianto highlights many aspects of his controversial past, his commitment to democracy, and his military background and political rhetorical style.

Representation of Prabowo Subianto's Figure in the International Media Based on the Political Phases

This study maps the representation of Prabowo Subianto's figure in international media reporting using a temporal approach, divided into three main phases: the *Early Phase of Government, Pre-Election,* and *Transition of Power.* Each phase showed variations in the intensity and thematic focus of the news, as reflected in the percentage of coding references to various key issues.

Table 5. Representation of Prabowo Subianto's Figure in the International Media Based on the Political Phases

	Early Phase of Government	Pre-Election	Transition of Power	Total
Authoritarianism	18.42%	5.68%	0%	7.4%
Democracy Values	10.53%	8.3%	3.33%	7.95%
Election Integrity	0%	7.42%	5%	5.48%
Human Right Issue	3.95%	7.86%	10%	7.4%
Populism	3.95%	5.24%	6.67%	5.21%
Conflict Frame	3.95%	3.06%	1.67%	3.01%
Human Interest	2.63%	0.44%	1.67%	1.1%

Negative Framing	22.37%	17.03%	25%	19.45%
Political Frame	2.63%	8.73%	0%	6.03%
Positive Framing	2.63%	4.8%	8.33%	4.93%
Responsibility Frame	1.32%	1.75%	3.33%	1.92%
Controversial Past	2.63%	9.17%	11.67%	8.22%
Democratic Commitment	7.89%	4.8%	5%	5.48%
International Relations	7.89%	0.87%	1.67%	2.47%
Military Background	6.58%	6.55%	8.33%	6.85%
Populist Rhetoric	1.32%	5.24%	8.33%	4.93%
Strong Leader	1.32%	3.06%	0%	2.19%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: processed by the author

In the early phase of the government, the theme of Negative Framing recorded the highest proportion at 22.37%. Followed by the issue of Authoritarianism (18.42%) and Democracy Values (10.53%). The themes of Democratic Commitment and Controversial Past each received 7.89% attention, equivalent to the theme of International Relations. Several other themes, such as Military Background, Human Rights Issue, and Populism, appeared with lower intensity, ranging from 3.95% to 6.58%. Themes such as Strong Leader, Populist Rhetoric, and Responsibility Frame are also starting to be mentioned, albeit to a minimal extent.

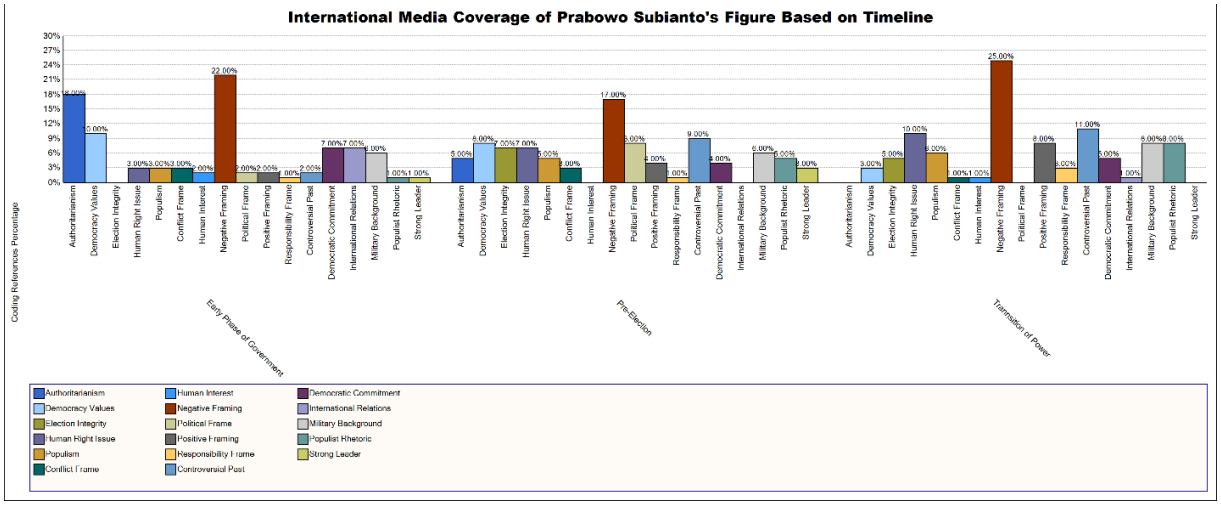


Figure 4. Results of Crosstab Visualization of the Representation of Prabowo Subianto's Figure in International Media Based on the Timeline
Source: processed by the author using NVIVO 12 Plus

In the run-up to the elections, the international media narrative shows a shift in focus. Although Negative Framing still dominated (17.03%), there was an increase in the themes of Election Integrity (7.42%) and Human Rights Issues (7.86%). The Political Frame theme became more prominent with 8.73%, while the Controversial Past remained present at 9.17%. Issues such as Populist Rhetoric and Military Background continue to emerge, highlighting the ongoing media attention to the personal and ideological dimensions of Prabowo's figure.

During the transition of power phase, international media increased their focus on negative framing, which accounted for 25% of the total coding in this phase. The themes of Authoritarianism (8%) and Human Rights Issues (10%) also received measurable attention. Meanwhile, issues such as Controversial Past (11.67%), Populist Rhetoric (8%), and Strong Leader (6%) show that the personal and symbolic dimensions of Prabowo's figure remain the focus of the news. The themes of Democratic Commitment and Responsibility Frame have also increased proportionally compared to the previous phase.

Visualization of the Theme Hierarchy: Representation of Prabowo Subianto's Figure

The hierarchy visualization presented in the hierarchy chart provides a comprehensive picture of the distribution of news themes related to Prabowo Subianto, based on the number of coding references in the overall data. In this visualization, three main categories group various themes of representation, namely Framing, Democracy Discourse, and Prabowo's Personal Narrative.

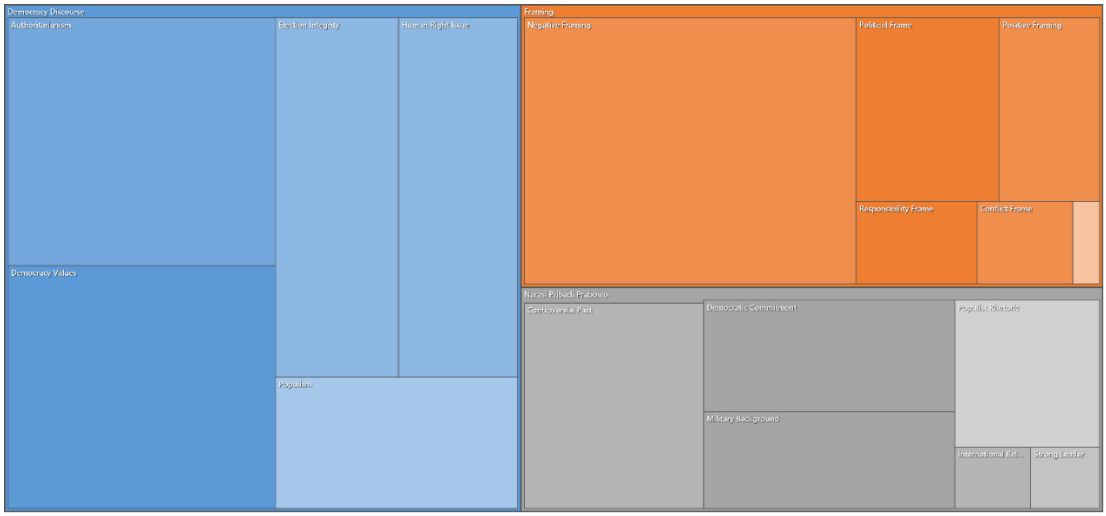


Figure 5. Results of Visualization of Theme Hierarchy: Representation of Prabowo Subianto's Figure
Source: processed by the author using NVIVO 12 Plus

Framing categories emerge as the dominant group in the theme hierarchy. In it, the Negative Framing theme occupies the most visual space, signifying the highest intensity of coding references. Followed by Political Frame and Positive Framing, which also appeared quite significantly. Other themes, such as the Responsibility Frame and Conflict Frame, are displayed in smaller sizes, indicating a lower proportion in the news.

Next, the Democracy Discourse theme group also occupies a large portion in this visualization. Authoritarianism and Democracy Values are the two most prominent subthemes, indicating that the discourse of democracy, political freedom, and authoritarian power is a major concern for the international media when framing Prabowo's figure. Other subthemes, such as Election Integrity, Human Rights Issues, and Populism, appear in slightly smaller sizes, but still make significant contributions to the overall narrative of democracy.

Finally, in the Personal Narrative category, Prabowo reflects the personal side and character of Prabowo's figure as depicted in the news. Controversial past is the most prominent subtheme in this category. Meanwhile, the themes of Democratic Commitment, Military Background, and Populist Rhetoric also hold considerable importance, indicating the media's attention to Prabowo's history, ideological position, and political communication style. The other two themes, International Relations and Strong Leader, appear in smaller sizes.

WordCloud: Visualization of the Dominant Keywords in International News

The wordcloud visualization provides a graphical representation of the frequency of the occurrence of keywords in international media reports about Prabowo Subianto. Words that appear more frequently in text data appear in larger font sizes, illustrating their level of intensity in global public discourse.

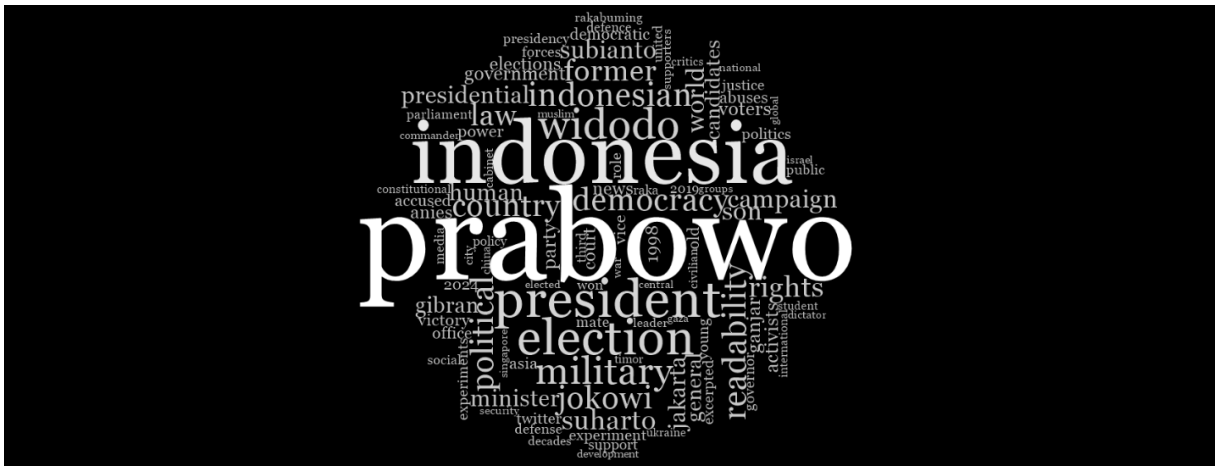


Figure 6. Results of Visualization *of Dominant Keywords in International News*
Source: processed by the author using NVIVO 12 Plus

The word "Prabowo" emerged as the most frequent visual element, emphasizing that this figure was the main focus of the overall news. It is followed by the words "Indonesia" and "president", which indicate the geographical context and political position that are the main background of the discussion. Some of the keywords that appear in large sizes, such as "election," "democracy," "military," and "rights," indicate that the news highlights many political and democratic aspects. This includes topics such as elections, democratic values, and the military's role in Prabowo's political career.

Furthermore, words such as "former," "general," "subianto," "minister," and "suharto" appear in medium to large sizes. Those keywords indicate that the international media also highlighted Prabowo's background, both in terms of his previous position and his relationship with Indonesia's political past, including the New Order era. In addition, the presence of words such as "widodo" (referring to President Joko Widodo), "gibran" (Jokowi's son and vice presidential candidate), "jakarta," "human," "rights," and "international" shows the relationship between Prabowo and global figures and issues. This shows that the news is not only focused on domestic aspects but also linked to Indonesia's international position and human rights issues.

Discussion

The results of this study show that the representation of President Prabowo Subianto's figure in the international media forms a complex, layered, and interrelated narrative pattern. The image that emerges does not only come from one dimension of news, but is a combination of framing, democratic discourse, personal narratives, and the dynamics of coverage time. These findings reinforce Fairclough's (2013) view that media discourse is multidimensional, where political meanings are shaped through the interaction between texts, contexts, and socio-political practices.

Entman's (1993) Framing Analysis model, combined with Fairclough's (2013) Critical Discourse Analysis model, allows for more in-depth reading. The analysis looks not only at what the media writes, but also how issues are framed, contextualized, and connected to the larger narrative of Indonesian democracy. Thus, these findings reflect how the process of meaning-making is shaped by media ideology, professional norms, and the global geopolitical context (Entman, 1993; Fairclough, 2013).

One of the most prominent patterns is negative framing, which appears dominant in almost all the media analyzed. The Guardian, Washington Post, and The New York Times have consistently highlighted critical aspects of Prabowo—from his political stances and past track record to his controversial statements. In the framework of Entman (1993), the *media's problem definition* tends to position Prabowo as a figure who has the potential to threaten the consolidation of democracy in Indonesia. The media conduct moral evaluation by presenting negative assessments that link the figure to human rights violations, potential authoritarianism, and past military involvement.

In addition, the political frame and responsibility frame also received substantial coding proportions. Both described Prabowo as a political actor who has a great responsibility for the direction of national policy and democratic stability. These findings are in line with previous research showing

that international media framing of emerging world leaders often combines personal criticism with narratives of structural responsibility (Murray & Nyberg, 2020). Thus, news not only reports events, but also builds moral evaluations regarding political accountability and democratic direction..

The dimension of democratic discourse in this news shows a strong duality between the narrative of *authoritarianism* and *democratic values*. The narrative *of authoritarianism* often appears in The Guardian and the Washington Post, positioning Prabowo as a symbol of the revival of leadership patterns that are considered contrary to liberal democracy. From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, this construction reveals an ideological square (van Dijk, 2000), where the media emphasizes the negative aspects of those perceived as threats to democratic values, while highlighting the positive aspects of democracy itself.

However, the narrative of *democratic values* is also present as a balancer. BBC News and Al Jazeera, for example, have repeatedly stressed that despite Prabowo's controversial past, he is still competing within the framework of democratic politics. This view aligns with that of Norris (2011), who states that democracy in developing countries is often in a "contested" position, where democratic values and authoritarian practices coexist (Norris, 2011). The spotlight on the issue of election integrity and human rights further strengthens the impression that Indonesia's democracy is at a critical point. *Election integrity* is often raised in the run-up to elections, while human rights issues continue to link Prabowo's military past with contemporary human rights challenges. In the framework of Fairclough (2013), this discourse forms *an intertextual chain* that connects the past and the present in assessing a political figure.

At the level of personal narrative, the international media builds Prabowo's image through the theme *of Controversial Past*. The New York Times and Al Jazeera have consistently raised allegations of human rights abuses, involvement in repressive events, and proximity to the New Order. From the perspective of the CDA, this is a discursive strategy that maintains a political image that is difficult to detach from its historical context (Fairclough, 2013). Another prominent element is the military background, which is reported in two different frameworks: as a symbol of strong *leadership* and as a potential threat of authoritarianism (Connell, 2005).

In addition, populist rhetoric is an important part of the personal narrative raised in international coverage. This rhetoric emphasizes national sovereignty, protection of the people's economy, and criticism of the political elite, which serves as a communication strategy to build proximity to mass constituencies. However, in international discourse, this rhetoric is also evaluated in relation to democratic pluralism, institutional restraint, and regional stability. The combination of a controversial past, military identity, and populist appeal makes Prabowo's image simultaneously legible as a strong national leader and as a figure whose democratic commitment is continuously scrutinized.

A comparison between Al Jazeera and BBC News clarifies this pattern. Al Jazeera tends to interpret Prabowo's populist rhetoric through socioeconomic and regional lenses, emphasizing promises to rural constituencies, nationalist economic protection, and the possible implications of Indonesian leadership for Southeast Asian stability. BBC News, by contrast, frames the same rhetoric more institutionally, placing it within questions of policy continuity, democratic procedure, and the ability of Indonesia's political institutions to absorb strong-leader discourse without weakening pluralism. This contrast shows that populist rhetoric is not represented uniformly: in Al Jazeera it is more closely connected to social redistribution and regional political positioning, whereas in BBC News it is read through the stability of democratic institutions and governance norms.

Temporal analysis shows that the focus of the issue shifts according to the political phase. In the pre-election, the media highlighted *election integrity*, *democratic values*, and political rhetoric, emphasizing that the electoral process is at the center of attention ahead of the election (Stromback & Kaid, 2008). Entering the transition of power, more intense coverage of *negative framing*, populism, and democratic commitment (Ørsten & Eberholst, 2024). At the beginning of the administration, the spotlight returned to the issue *of authoritarianism* and the controversial past, suggesting that the definition of the original problem was maintained and strengthened by linking the original policy to the past's track record (Entman, 1993).

The wordcloud visualization reveals the concentration on keywords such as *Prabowo*, *president*, *election*, *democracy*, *military*, and *rights*. From the perspective of the CDA, this consistency reflects *lexical cohesion* by Fairclough (2013), which maintains thematic and ideological meaning. Keyword linkage indicates the existence of *interdiscursive links* antara narasi personal, kerangka demokrasi, dan

isu HAM (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). This confirms that global media tend to use *master frames* that are easily recognizable to international audiences, placing Prabowo at the intersection between nationalism and universal democratic values.

Overall, this study shows that framing and democratic discourse are closely intertwined. *The dominating negative framing* is combined with the themes of human rights and authoritarianism to create a consistent construction of political meaning. In the framework of Entman (1993), the four functions of framing—*problem definition*, *causal interpretation*, *moral evaluation*, and *treatment recommendation*—are clearly visible. The CDA's approach reinforces this reading by placing framing as a social practice influenced by ideology and power relations (Fairclough, 2013)

Despite the variation in emphasis between media outlets—for example, BBC News highlights *strong leaders* while the Washington Post focuses on *authoritarianism*—the narrative common thread remains. This phenomenon illustrates *frame alignment*, where the media adjusts the emphasis according to editorial policy while still maintaining the core of the narrative (Snow & Benford, 1988). This proves that the combination of *Framing Analysis* and *Critical Discourse Analysis* is effective in understanding the relationship between news content and the ideology it brings, especially in the context of political communication in developing countries.

Overall, the news patterns found in this study show that the international media shaped the image of Prabowo Subianto through a combination of framing and integrated democratic discourse. This combination does not occur by chance; it emerges from news production mechanisms shaped by global values, editorial interests, and normative standards. By linking certain political figures to universal issues such as democracy, human rights, and leadership, international media not only reported events but also shaped the international public's perception of a figure's political legitimacy.

These findings also show how framing elements—such as the emphasis on a controversial past, military background, and populist rhetoric—are consistently intertwined with normative discourses on authoritarianism and democracy (Reese et al., 2001). This consistent combination produces a strong and enduring narrative that shapes how global readers perceive Indonesian politics.

In addition, the relationship between the temporal dimension of news and the direction of the narrative shows that the framing of the media is dynamic but consistent. The change in the focus of the issue in each political phase—pre-election, transition of power, and the beginning of government—shows the media's responsiveness to political momentum, while also showing that the definition of the initial problem is maintained and strengthened over time. Thus, the narrative formed is not just a momentary reaction but part of a long-term representation strategy that positions Prabowo's figure in the global political landscape.

This research makes an important contribution to the study of political communication, especially in understanding how international media produce images of political figures from developing countries. By combining *Framing Analysis* and *Critical Discourse Analysis*, this study shows that media representation is multidimensional, involving the interaction between texts, contexts, and socio-political practices. These findings also confirm that in the era of information globalization, national political image is not only shaped by domestic dynamics, but also by global discourse that influences perception, legitimacy, and even future policy direction.

Conclusions

This research shows that Prabowo Subianto's representation in international media is not singular, but complex, multidimensional, and consistently built through a combination of *framing* and *democratic discourse*. The results of the analysis show that the international media tends to use *negative framing* by highlighting controversial past, military background, and populist rhetoric as indicators of potential threats to democracy. Within the framework of *Entman's (1993) Framing Analysis, the four framing functions*—problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation—*are clearly visible, with an emphasis on the narrative that Prabowo risks disrupting the consolidation of Indonesian democracy.*

At the same time, *Critical Discourse Analysis* by Fairclough (2013) shows that news functions not only as information but also as part of social practices that reflect global media ideology. Coverage of democracy, human rights, and leadership reflects how individual portrayals are intertwined with universal normative discourses, particularly those contrasting authoritarianism and democratic principles. Theoretically, this study contributes to international political communication by explaining

leaderisation in an emerging democracy: Prabowo's global image is constructed not only through institutional politics but also through media representations that connect personal biography, ideological discourse, and democratic legitimacy. This integrated use of Entman's and Fairclough's models therefore offers a more comprehensive framework for analyzing how international media construct political leadership in post-authoritarian contexts..

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