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### Research Article

## Academic Blind Spots in the Middle East: A Bibliometric Deconstruction of Iran-Israel Diplomacy Literature

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### Academic Blind Spots in the Middle East: A Bibliometric Deconstruction of Iran-Israel Diplomacy Literature

**Abstract.** This study aims to map the academic landscape of Iran-Israel diplomacy through a bibliometric analysis of 113 Scopus-indexed documents (1972–2026). Using VOSviewer and Microsoft Excel, publication trends, institutional distribution, national contributions, journal sources, and keyword co-occurrence networks were analyzed. Findings reveal an event-driven, non-linear growth pattern: sporadic publications (1972–2005) transitioned to gradual growth (2006–2013), followed by paradoxical stagnation during JCPOA negotiations (2014–2016), and an exponential peak in 2024–2025 triggered by Iran's unprecedented direct military attack on Israel. The United States dominates knowledge production (35.4%), while voices from the Middle East itself remain structurally absent a

critical epistemic gap. These findings systematically contribute to understanding the development of Iran-Israel diplomacy literature and provide a roadmap for future research.

**Keywords:** Bibliometrics, Iran-Israel Diplomacy, Publication Trends, VOSviewer, Scopus, Epistemic Asymmetry

## INTRODUCTION

Iran-Israel relations constitute one of the most complex and enduring geopolitical dynamics shaping contemporary Middle East security architecture. Tensions between the two states span more than five decades, intensifying dramatically after Iran's Islamic Revolution of 1979, which formally severed diplomatic ties and inaugurated a period of sustained ideological and strategic antagonism. Since then, the bilateral relationship has evolved across ideological, military, and proxy dimensions: Iran's nuclear program, its support for armed groups in Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, and Yemen, and Israel's retaliatory intelligence and military operations have collectively constituted what scholars describe as a protracted "shadow war".

The conflict reached a qualitative turning point in April 2024, when Iran launched an unprecedented direct ballistic missile and drone attack on Israeli territory a watershed event that transformed the shadow war into open confrontation. This unprecedented escalation, and Israel's subsequent counterattacks, generated an immediate and dramatic surge in academic interest. Prior to this moment, the academic field had long been characterized by periodic attention to the nuclear dimension, with studies clustering around key geopolitical events such as the Stuxnet cyberattack (2010), the signing and withdrawal from the JCPOA (2015–2018), and the Abraham Accords (2020).

Despite the geopolitical significance of the Iran-Israel conflict, no prior bibliometric study has systematically mapped the full scholarly landscape from a long historical perspective. Existing studies either focus on specific sub-themes such as nuclear policy or proxy conflicts or analyze adjacent topics such as Middle East security architecture without an Iran-Israel-specific bibliometric frame. Bibliometric analysis, as a quantitative method in information science, provides an objective and replicable means to identify temporal trends, collaboration patterns, institutional dominance, and thematic structures within a scholarly field. Applied to Iran-Israel diplomacy studies, it enables a macroscopic examination of how academic knowledge about this critical conflict has been produced, by whom, and under what geopolitical conditions.

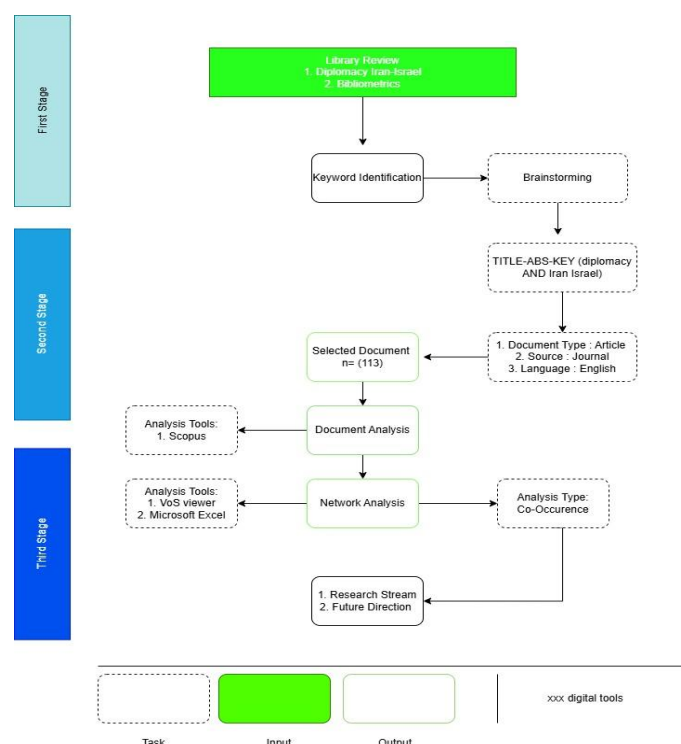
This study is distinguished from prior bibliometric work in Middle East studies in three significant ways. First, it covers an exceptionally long time span 1972 to 2026 capturing the full arc of the academic field from its pre-revolutionary origins to its post-confrontation acceleration. Second, it employs keyword co-occurrence network analysis via VOSviewer to map thematic clusters and detect emerging research frontiers, a method rarely applied to this specific bilateral relationship. Third, it

explicitly problematizes the epistemic dimension of the literature identifying structural absences, specifically the near-total marginalization of academic voices from the Middle East region itself, as a systemic research gap rather than merely a demographic observation.

The urgency of this research is reinforced by three interrelated realities. First, the dramatic acceleration of literature production since 2022 driven by cascading geopolitical events requires systematic mapping to help researchers navigate an increasingly dense scholarly field. Second, the glaring epistemic inequality whereby U.S. and Western perspectives dominate knowledge production while Middle Eastern academic voices are structurally absent demands recognition and remedy. Third, long-range bibliometric data (1972–2026) offer a unique vantage point for examining how concrete geopolitical events shape academic research agendas a question with methodological implications for bibliometrics as a discipline

The specific objectives of this study are: (1) to map temporal publication trends on Iran-Israel diplomacy historically from 1972 to 2026; (2) to identify growth and stagnation patterns and their correlation with geopolitical events; (3) to analyze institutional distribution and national contribution in knowledge production; (4) to identify the main source journals that dominate publications; (5) to map thematic clusters through keyword co-occurrence network analysis; and (6) to provide recommendations for future research agendas based on identified gaps.

## METHODS



**Figure 1** Research stages and detailed procedures for dataset preparation

This study employs a three-stage bibliometric approach. The methodology follows established bibliometric protocols as outlined by Donthu et al. (2021) and Aria & Cuccurullo (2017), ensuring transparency and replicability.

### Stage 1: Topic Formulation and Keyword Identification

A preliminary scoping review was conducted on two main topics: Iran-Israel diplomacy and bibliometric analysis. Following the scoping process, search terms were identified and refined through iterative brainstorming. The final search string applied to the Scopus TITLE-ABS-KEY field was: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("diplomacy" AND "Iran" AND "Israel"). This combination ensures that retrieved documents explicitly address both topics simultaneously, minimizing thematic noise (Maria & Fusco, 2025).

### Stage 2: Document Selection and Management

The search string was applied to the Scopus database with strict inclusion criteria: (1) document type: article; (2) source type: journal; (3) language: English. This process yielded a final corpus of 113 documents (n=113) covering 1972–2026. The use of strict inclusion criteria ensures corpus homogeneity and analytical quality (Tranfield et al., 2003). Raw bibliographic data (authors, affiliations, keywords, citations, abstracts) were exported in CSV format for subsequent analysis.

### Stage 3: Analysis and Synthesis

The third stage employed two parallel analytical streams. First, descriptive bibliometric analysis was conducted using Scopus's built-in analytics and Microsoft Excel to generate distributions by publication year, country, institution, and journal source. Second, keyword co-occurrence network analysis was performed using VOSviewer (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010), with a minimum co-occurrence threshold of 2 to generate thematic cluster maps, overlay visualizations, and density maps (Wang et al., 2025; Maria & Fusco, 2025). Results from both streams were then synthesized to identify established research streams, structural gaps, and future research directions.

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

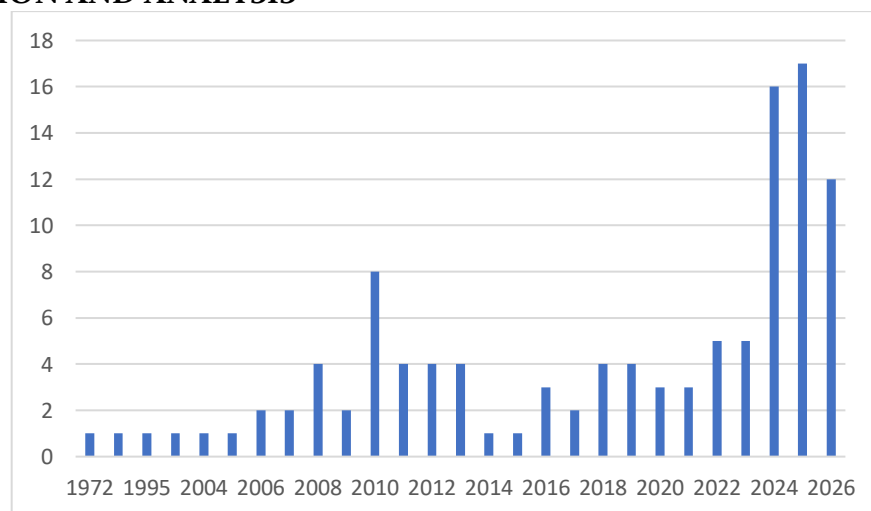


Figure 2 Publication by Year

This section presents an in-depth analysis of the distribution of academic publications on Iran-Israel diplomacy by year of publication, covering a very long historical time span: from 1972 to 2026. The data is sourced from 113 documents identified in the Scopus database. This analysis reveals a unique pattern of growth non-linear, sporadic in the long term, but exponential in the past decade with strong correlations with major geopolitical events in the Middle East region.

**Tabel 1.** Distribusi Lengkap Publikasi per Tahun (1972–2026)

| Year | Number of Publications | Phase                  | Key Geopolitical Context                                |
|------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 1972 | 1                      | Era Sporadis           | Post-Yom Kippur War (pre-Iranian revolution)            |
| 1976 | 1                      | Era Sporadis           | Initial tensions in the Middle East region              |
| 1995 | 1                      | Era Sporadis           | The Oslo peace process & regional dynamics              |
| 2003 | 1                      | Era Sporadis           | Iraq invasion, regional nuclear proliferation issue     |
| 2004 | 1                      | Era Sporadis           | International pressure on Iran's nuclear program        |
| 2005 | 1                      | Era Sporadis           | Ahmadinejad elected, anti-Israel rhetoric strengthens   |
| 2006 | 2                      | Gradual Awakening      | Lebanon War II, Iran continues uranium enrichment       |
| 2007 | 2                      | Gradual Awakening      | U.S. NIE report on Iran nuclear                         |
| 2008 | 4                      | Gradual Awakening      | UN sanctions, Cast Lead operation in Gaza               |
| 2009 | 2                      | Gradual Awakening      | Obama & the new nuclear diplomacy                       |
| 2010 | 8                      | Gradual Awakening      | Stuxnet, harsh sanctions, nuclear tensions peak         |
| 2011 | 4                      | Gradual Awakening      | Arab Spring, Iran's nuclear issue heats up again        |
| 2012 | 4                      | Gradual Awakening      | Israeli threat of attack, P5+1 negotiations             |
| 2013 | 4                      | Gradual Awakening      | Rouhani elected, signals nuclear diplomacy              |
| 2014 | 1                      | Paradoxical Stagnation | Intensive JCPOA negotiations (academics to think tanks) |
| 2015 | 1                      | Paradoxical Stagnation | Signing of the JCPOA attention turns to policy forums   |

| Year | Number of Publications | Phase                    | Key Geopolitical Context                              |
|------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 2016 | 3                      | Paradoxical Stagnation   | Implementation of the JCPOA, tensions relatively ease |
| 2017 | 2                      | Recovery                 | Trump elected, uncertainty of the JCPOA               |
| 2018 | 4                      | Recovery                 | U.S. pulls out of JCPOA, re-escalates                 |
| 2019 | 4                      | Recovery                 | Iranian proxy attack, Strait of Hormuz tensions       |
| 2020 | 3                      | Recovery                 | Abraham Accords the effect of academic time lag       |
| 2021 | 3                      | Recovery                 | Post-normalization, new JCPOA negotiations            |
| 2022 | 5                      | Acceleration             | Failure of JCPOA negotiations, China-Iran deal        |
| 2023 | 5                      | Acceleration             | Gaza War October 7, China mediates Iran-Saudi         |
| 2024 | 16                     | Exponential Peak         | DIRECT CONFRONTATION IRAN-ISRAEL (April 2024)         |
| 2025 | 17                     | Exponential Peak Highest | Escalation continues, regional normalization shakes   |
| 2026 | 12                     | Continued (partial data) | Current year projected beyond 2024                    |

### Sporadic Era Phase (1972–2005): Academic Absence

For more than three decades (1972–2005), academic publications on Iran-Israel diplomacy have emerged as isolated spots: one article in 1972, 1976, 1995, 2003, 2004, and 2005 respectively with large academic gaps in between. This phenomenon reflects that the Iran-Israel topic has not yet been considered an independent field of study that deserves systematic attention from the international academic community.

The presence of the 1972 article is likely related to the pre-Iranian Revolutionary regional dynamics, when Iran-Israel relations under Shah Pahlavi were relatively cooperative making this study more of a comparative analysis of the geopolitics of the Middle East in general than a study of specific bilateral conflicts. The absence of publication between 1979–1994 is an academic irony: it was precisely during this period that the foundations of modern Iran-Israel antagonism were laid after the Islamic Revolution.

This long academic "dead zone" also reflects the limitations of the bibliometric indexing infrastructure of the era. Many relevant studies are likely to be published in the format of policy reports, monographs, or journals that have not yet been indexed by Scopus, so they are not captured in this corpus of analysis.

### **Phased Revival (2006–2013): The Nuclear Issue as a Catalyst**

The period 2006–2013 marked a systematic revival of academic studies on Iran-Israel diplomacy, marked by the emergence of publications that began to be consistent even though the volume was still low. A key point in this phase was the 8th surge in publications in 2010 a prominent anomaly compared to the 2–4 per year pattern around it.

The year 2010 was the first contextually explainable inflection: the revelation of the Stuxnet cyberattack on Iran's Natanz nuclear facility, the imposition of harsh sanctions from the UN Security Council (Resolution 1929), as well as the increasing public discourse about the possibility of an Israeli military attack on Iran created academic pressure that encouraged the production of literature. This is the first documented example in this corpus of how concrete operational events (not just policy changes) can directly drive a surge in academic publications.

The period 2011–2013 was stable at 4 publications per year, reflecting the establishment of the Iranian nuclear issue as an ongoing research topic in mainstream international security studies. The presence of journals such as *Survival*, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, and the *Nonproliferation Review* in this corpus confirms that Iran-Israeli studies in this phase are strongly integrated into the traditions of security studies and nuclear policy studies.

### **The Paradoxical Stagnation Phase (2014–2016): When Diplomacy Suppressed Academia**

The most interesting paradox in the entire dataset lies in the period 2014–2016: precisely when the negotiations of the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) were at their most intensive and its signing in July 2015 became major international news, the production of Scopus-indexed academic literature plummeted to its lowest point only 1 article in 2014 and 1 article in 2015.

This phenomenon can be explained through two complementary mechanisms. First, the "displacement effect": as issues move from conflict to active diplomacy, analysis and opinion tend to migrate to faster mediums think tank reports (Brookings, RAND, IISS), op-eds in policy journals, and policy briefs. These mediums are not indexed by Scopus, thus creating the illusion of academic stagnation even though knowledge production remains high. Second, the structural lag of the peer-review process: researchers who respond scientifically to the JCPOA will only see their work published 12–24 months later.

The methodological implications of these findings are important: Scopus-based bibliometric analysis alone has the potential to downplay the academic influence of events that generate rapid intellectual responses but not through indexed journal channels. Future research needs to integrate sources such as SSRN, Google Scholar, and think tank databases to get a more complete picture.

### **Recovery and Acceleration Phases (2017–2023): Chain Effects**

President Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA by President Trump in May 2018 marked the starting point of the recovery a confirmation that it was the failure of diplomacy, not its success, that more effectively fueled the production of academic

literature. The publication returned to 4 articles in 2018 and 2019, as tensions in the Strait of Hormuz escalated and Iranian proxy attacks intensified in the region.

Interestingly, 2020 which marked the signing of the Abraham Accords, one of the most significant geopolitical changes in the Middle East in a generation actually recorded a decline to 3 publications. This is a classic manifestation of academic time lag: the full impact of the Abraham Accords on the production of literature was only felt two to three years later.

The 2022–2023 period (5 articles each) marks a real acceleration phase. The failure of the negotiations of the new version of the JCPOA, the escalation of Iranian proxy attacks on various fronts, and the Gaza War that began on October 7, 2023 cumulatively created academic pressures that resulted in a surge in research. China's mediation role in the normalization of Iran-Saudi Arabia relations (2023) also adds a new dimension that expands the thematic scope of the literature from mere bilateral issues to a more complex study of regional security architecture.

### Exponential Peak Phase (2024–2026): Open Confrontation and Literature Explosion

The years 2024 and 2025 represent the culminating points in the entire history of the production of Iranian-Israeli diplomacy literature: 16 articles (2024) and 17 articles (2025) figures that are almost three times compared to the previous year and dramatically surpass the entire volume of literature production in previous decades.

The main trigger for the 2024 surge is an unprecedented event in the five-decade history of the Iran-Israel conflict: Iran's direct attack on Israeli territory in April 2024 using more than 300 drones, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles, followed by Israeli counterattacks on Iranian military facilities in Isfahan. This escalation from a shadow war to an open confrontation creates an urgent academic imperative: explaining, analyzing, and contextualizing what happens before the implications are fully revealed.

The 2026 data shows 12 publications, but this figure is partial data because the year was not yet completed at the time of the analysis. Based on existing trends, it is very possible that the final total of 2026 will surpass the 2024 figure (16), making 2026 the third largest productive year. These projections indicate that the international academic community is still in active response mode to the ever-evolving Iran-Israel dynamic.

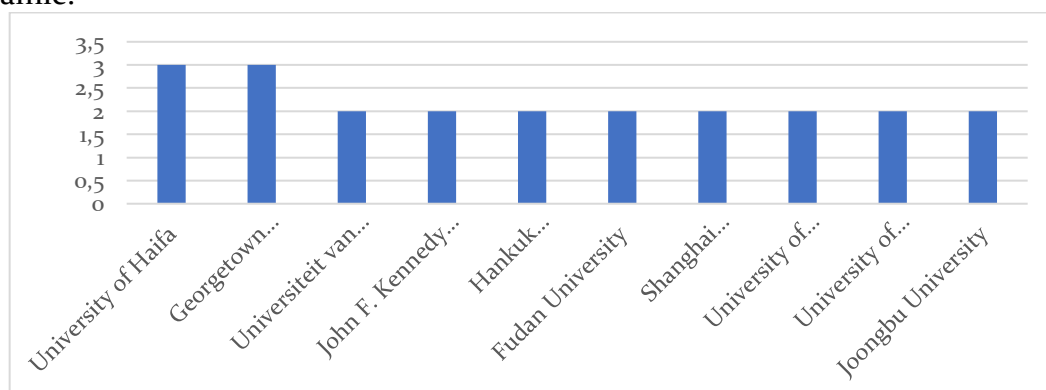


Figure 3 Graphical representation of publications from 2016 to August 2025

This bar graph maps institutional contributions based on the number of publications. Here is a complete distribution table of the most productive institutions:

| Institutions                              | Country         | Number of Publications |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| University of Haifa                       | Israel          | 3                      |
| Georgetown University                     | United States   | 3                      |
| University of Amsterdam                   | The Netherlands | 2                      |
| John F. Kennedy School of Government      | United States   | 2                      |
| Hankuk University of Foreign Studies      | South Korea     | 2                      |
| Fudan University                          | China           | 2                      |
| Shanghai International Studies University | China           | 2                      |
| University of Notre Dame                  | United States   | 2                      |
| University of Georgia                     | United States   | 2                      |
| Joongbu University                        | South Korea     | 2                      |

The University of Haifa (Israel) and Georgetown University (United States) became the most prolific institutions with three publications each. This reflects the dominance of the Israeli and U.S. perspectives in knowledge production a phenomenon known in the study of knowledge politics as epistemic asymmetry. The presence of East Asian institutions (Fudan, Shanghai International Studies, Hankuk, Joongbu) marked the internationalization of Middle Eastern research that went beyond the traditional Western centers (Hale, 2024).

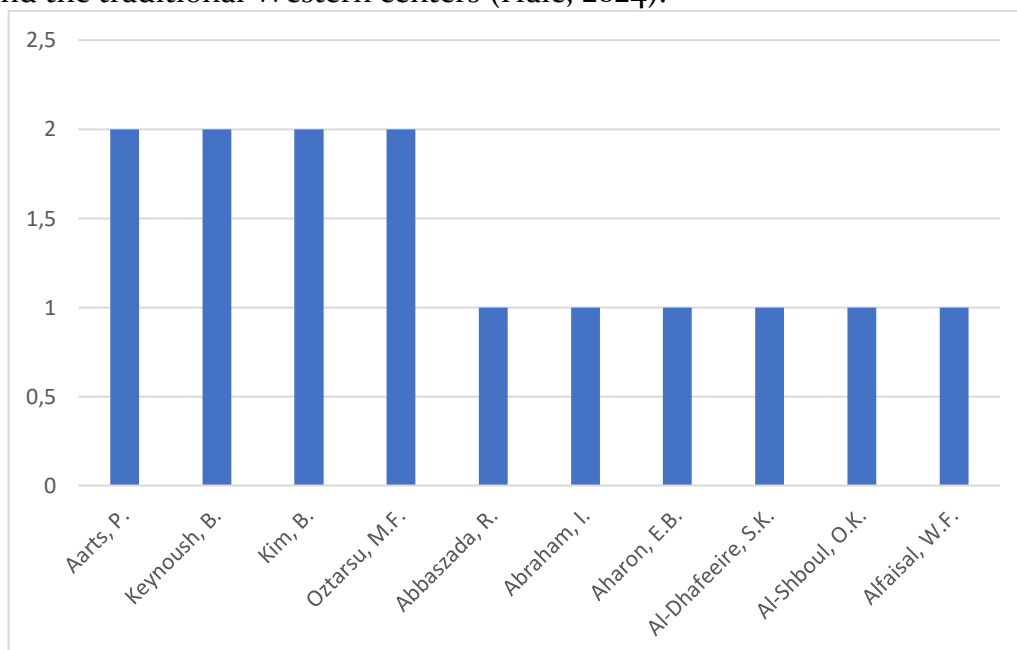
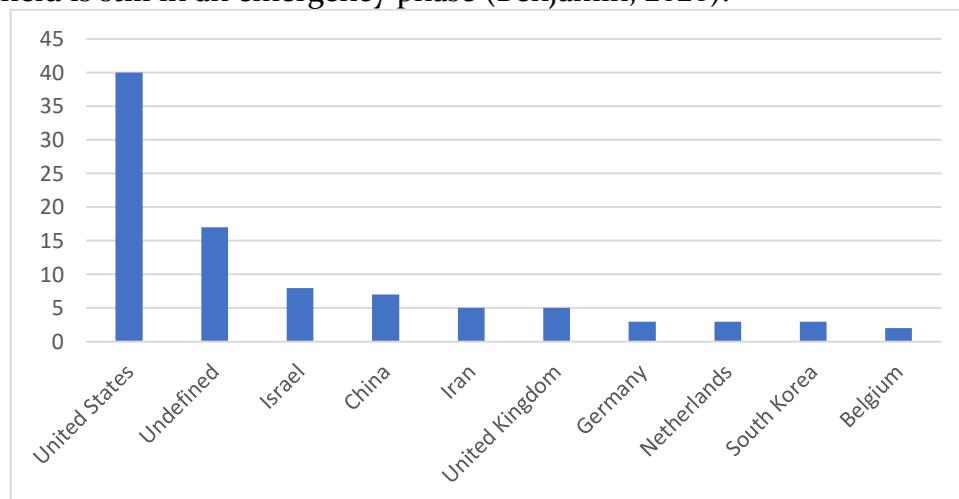


FIGURE 4 THE AUTHORS OF THE UNIVERSITIES INVOLVED IN DIPLOMACY IRAN ISRAEL

This graph shows individual productivity based on the number of publications. Here is the full distribution table:

| Author            | Number of Publications |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Aarts, P.         | 2                      |
| Keynoush, B.      | 2                      |
| Kim, B.           | 2                      |
| Oztarsu, M.F.     | 2                      |
| Abbashad, R.      | 1                      |
| Abraham, I.       | 1                      |
| Aharon, E.B.      | 1                      |
| Al-Dhafeire, S.K. | 1                      |
| Al-Shboul, O.K.   | 1                      |
| Alfaisal, W.F.    | 1                      |

Aarts, P., Keynoush, B., Kim, B., and Oztarsu, M.F. are the most prolific authors with two publications each. This distribution mirrors Lotka's Law of Scientific Productivity, in which most authors contribute only one work. The absence of highly prolific authors (five or more publications) indicates that the academic community in this field is still in an emergency phase (Benjamin, 2020).



**FIGURE 5** PUBLICATIONS CONTRIBUTED BY SEVERAL COUNTRIES

This graph maps the geographical distribution of authors by the countries of their institutional affiliations, reflecting the geopolitical representation in the production of academic knowledge about the Middle East region. Here is the full distribution table:

| Country        | Number of Publications |
|----------------|------------------------|
| United States  | 40                     |
| Undefined      | 17                     |
| Israel         | 8                      |
| China          | 7                      |
| Iran           | 5                      |
| United Kingdom | 5                      |
| Germany        | 3                      |
| Netherlands    | 3                      |
| South Korea    | 3                      |
| Belgium        | 2                      |

The United States dominates very significantly, with 40 publications out of a total of 113 documents (about 35.4%). This figure far surpasses the contributions of other countries and reflects U.S. academic hegemony in Middle East security and diplomacy studies particularly on issues directly related to Washington's strategic interests, such as Iran's nuclear program and U.S.-Israel relations. (Kamil et al., 2023)

The second position is occupied by the undefined or unidentified category (17 publications), which is most likely to include authors from institutions that do not have a clear state affiliation in the Scopus database, or come from think tanks and policy institutions that are not affiliated with a particular university.

Israel occupies the third position (8 publications), which reinforces the findings of previous institutional distribution analyses. China in fourth place (7 publications) proves a trend that has been identified in the keyword co-emergence map: Beijing's increasing strategic importance to the Middle East region is reflected in increasingly intense academic activity. Iran and the United Kingdom each contributed 5 publications, while Germany, the Netherlands, and South Korea each contributed 3 publications. (Steinhilber, 2006)

Overall, this distribution suggests a pronounced epistemic asymmetry: the countries of the Global South that are directly part of the Middle East region such as Jordan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, or Egypt are almost underrepresented in the production of academic knowledge about their own region. This is a structural research gap that deserves attention in the future bibliometric research agenda (Zohny, 2023).

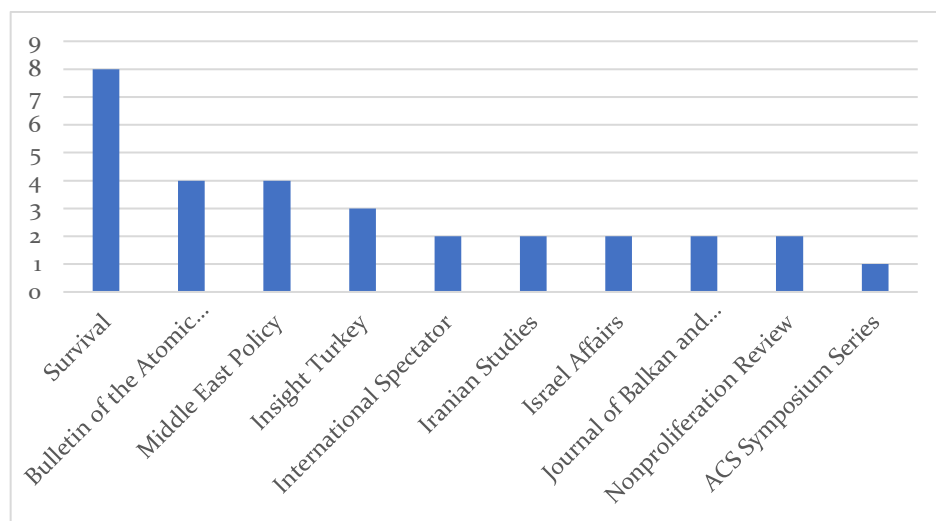


FIGURE 6 ANALYSIS BY SOURCE

This visualization maps the academic journals and serial publications that publish the most articles in the corpus analyzed. Here is the distribution table:

| Journal Name                               | Number of Articles |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Survival                                   | 8                  |
| Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists          | 4                  |
| Middle East Policy                         | 4                  |
| Insight Turkey                             | 3                  |
| International Spectator                    | 2                  |
| Iranian Studies                            | 2                  |
| Israel Affairs                             | 2                  |
| Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies | 2                  |
| Nonproliferation Review                    | 2                  |
| ACS Symposium Series                       | 1                  |

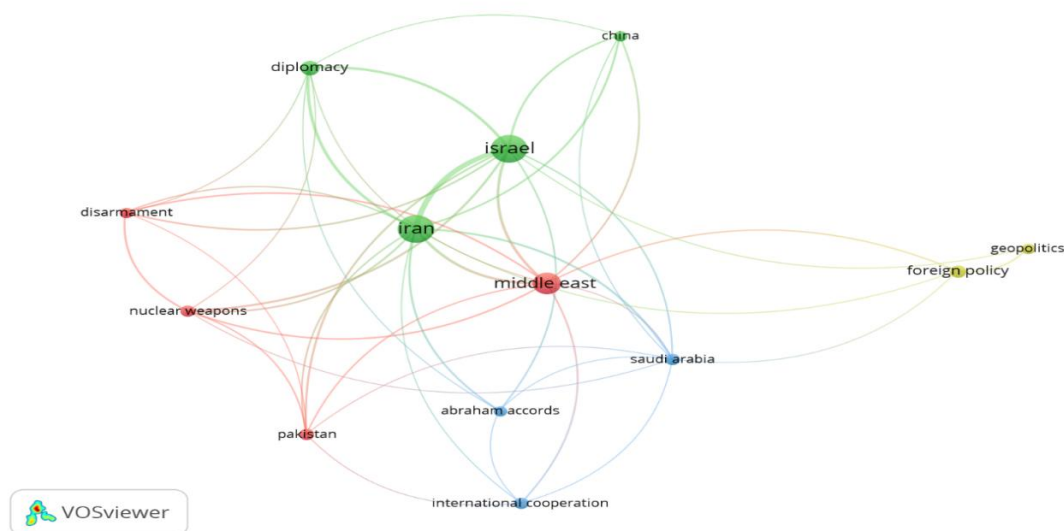
The journal *Survival* dominates with 8 articles, making it the most significant publication outlet in this corpus. *Survival* is a journal published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) London, which focuses on international security, strategy, and defense policy issues. Its dominance confirms that the study of Iran-Israel diplomacy is more firmly rooted in the tradition of security studies and strategic studies than in the broader area of studies or political science (Dallas & Burkle, 2011).

The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* and *Middle East Policy* contributed 4 articles each. The presence of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* is particularly relevant in the context of this corpus: the journal has historically focused on nuclear issues and global existential threats, and its contributions in significant numbers reinforce the finding that the Iranian nuclear issue is one of the literature's main thematic clusters. *Middle East Policy*, as a journal dedicated to the region, reflects the

desire of academics to place their research in forums that are directly relevant to policymakers (Ramberg, 2010).

Insight Turkey (3 articles) attracted attention because of its distinctive perspective as an Ankara-based journal indicating the presence of a Turkish perspective in the study of Middle East geopolitics. The presence of journals such as Iranian Studies (2 articles) and Israel Affairs (2 articles) reflects a more specific approach to area studies, while the Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies and the Nonproliferation Review broadens thematic coverage towards proliferation and broader regional issues (Steinberg, 2006).

The ACS Symposium Series (1 article) is a rather anomalous finding, considering that this journal is better known as an outlet for chemical and materials research. Its presence may reflect a study from the perspective of chemical weapons or the technical aspects of the weapons program, which are less common but relevant dimensions in the study of Iran-Israel security.



**FIGURE 2** VISUALIZATION OF NETWORKS BY OCCURENCE

This visualization is a keyword co-occurrence network generated by VOSviewer. There are four thematic clusters that can be identified by color code.

a) Cluster 1: Nuclear Security (Red)

The red cluster includes nodes: Iran, nuclear weapons, disarmament, and Pakistan. This cluster represents research focused on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and strategic security. Iran is the dominant hub with the highest level of centrality, indicating that this topic is at the core of the literature review. The concentration of these issues in a single cluster reflects the strong thematic coherence between Iran's nuclear policy, the global disarmament discourse, and its implications for the security stability of the Southeast Asia-Middle East region.

b) Cluster 2: Diplomatic-Geopolitics (Green)

The green cluster consists of nodes: Israel, Iran, diplomacy, and china. This cluster depicts a diplomatic-geopolitical nexus involving regional and external actors. China's presence as a node in this cluster shows increasing academic attention to

Beijing's penetration of influence in the Middle East region, particularly in the context of its relations with Iran and Israel.

c) Cluster 3: Normalization of Relationships (Blue)

The blue cluster includes the nodes: Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Abraham Accords, and International Cooperation. This cluster represents research focused on the post-normalization dynamics of Arab-Israeli relations within the framework of the Abraham Accords (2020). The presence of the international cooperation node indicates that there is a study that highlights the dimension of multilateral cooperation in the context of regional geopolitical transformation.

d) Cluster 4: Foreign Policy (Yellow)

The yellow cluster consists of nodes: foreign policy and geopolitics. This cluster is a minor cluster that stands on the periphery of the network, marking theoretical-conceptual studies in the realm of international relations. The peripheral position of this cluster suggests that conceptual studies of foreign policy are still not integrated with substantive studies on region-specific issues.

Overall, the Iran, Israel, and Middle East nodes occupy the highest positions of centrality, marking all three as bridging nodes that connect various thematic clusters.

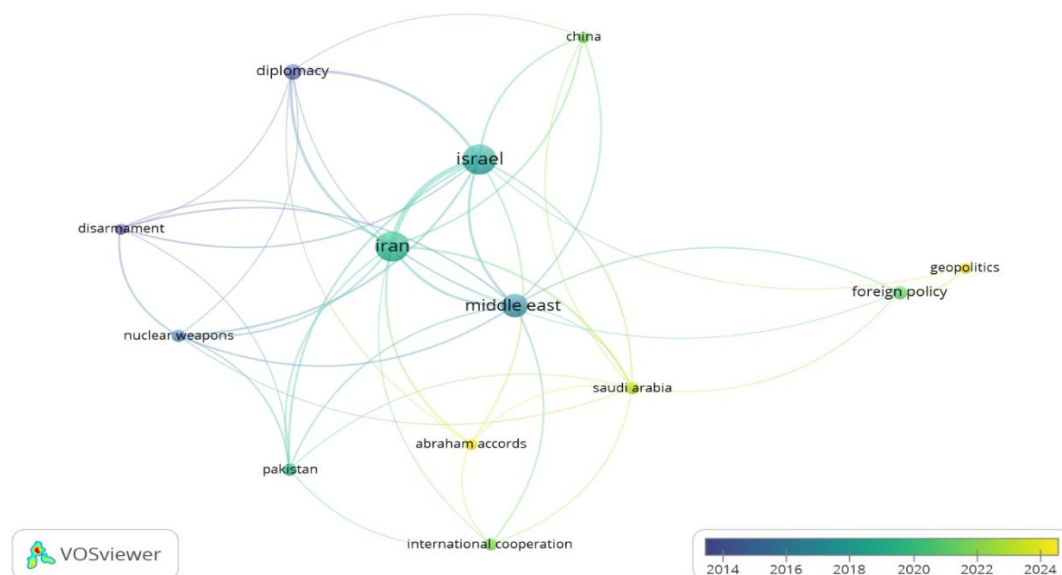


FIGURE 3 OVERLAY VISUALIZATION

This map uses a temporal coloring scheme with gradations from dark blue (2014) to yellow (2024). The teal-blue nodes of Iran and Israel (circa 2016-2018) indicate that the study of these two entities is academically established and an established research stream. In contrast, the nodes of the Abraham Accords and Saudi Arabia are bright yellow-green (around 2022-2024), confirming that the topic of normalizing relations is a relatively new emerging trend in the literature.

The nodes of foreign policy and geopolitics also tend to be yellow, indicating the increasing academic interest in the framework of foreign policy analysis in recent times. This temporal pattern macroly illustrates the shift in research focus from conflictual nuclear-security issues to the issue of normalization and reconfiguration of regional security architectures most likely influenced by a series of empirical

events: the JCPOA (2015), the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA (2018), and the signing of the Abraham Accords (2020).

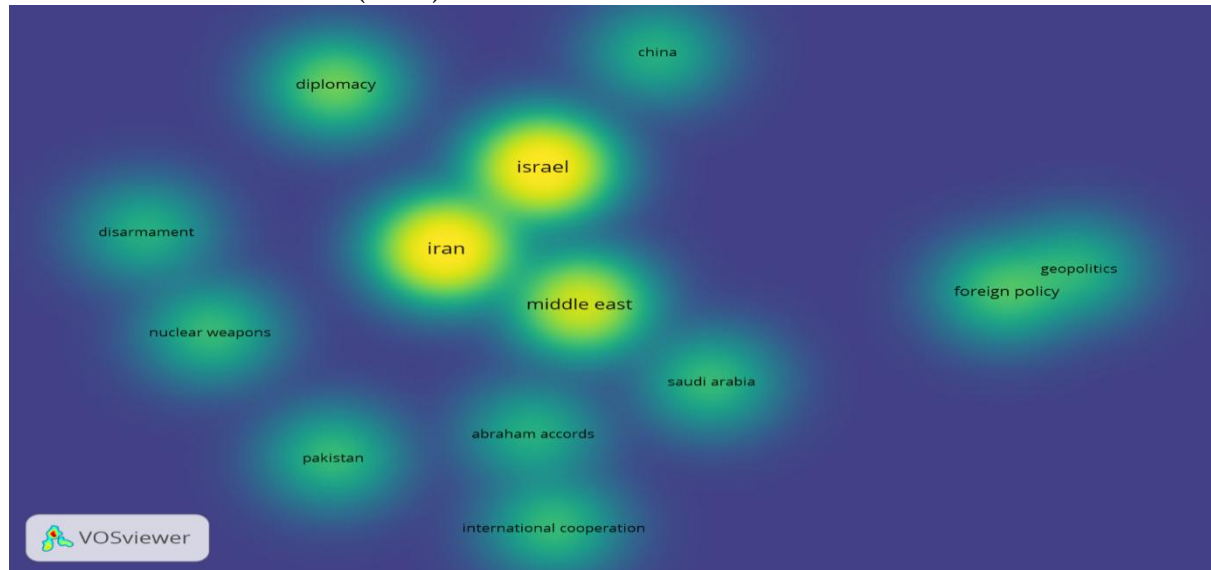


FIGURE 4 DENSITY VISUALIZATION

a) Figure 9 Density Visualization

Density visualization confirms and reinforces the results of the co-emergence network. The nodes of Iran and Israel have the highest density scores, which are characterized by bright yellow, followed by the Middle East as a medium-high concentration zone. Nodes such as diplomacy, foreign policy, geopolitics, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan are in low-to-medium density zones, methodologically suggesting that these topics still have significant research gaps and potential for further exploration (Talhami, 2013).

b) Figure 9 Distribution of Institutional Affiliations

This bar graph maps institutional contributions based on the number of publications. Here is a complete distribution table of the most productive institutions:

| Institutions                              | Country         | Number of Publications |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| University of Haifa                       | Israel          | 3                      |
| Georgetown University                     | Amerika Serikat | 3                      |
| Universiteit van Amsterdam                | Belanda         | 2                      |
| John F. Kennedy School of Government      | Amerika Serikat | 2                      |
| Hankuk University of Foreign Studies      | Korea Selatan   | 2                      |
| Fudan University                          | Tiongkok        | 2                      |
| Shanghai International Studies University | Tiongkok        | 2                      |
| University of Notre Dame                  | Amerika Serikat | 2                      |
| University of Georgia                     | Amerika Serikat | 2                      |

| Institutions       | Country       | Number of Publications |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Joongbu University | Korea Selatan | 2                      |

The University of Haifa (Israel) and Georgetown University (United States) became the most prolific institutions with three publications each. This reflects the dominance of the Israeli and U.S. perspectives in knowledge production a phenomenon known in the study of knowledge politics as epistemic asymmetry. The presence of East Asian institutions (Fudan, Shanghai International Studies, Hankuk, Joongbu) marked the internationalization of Middle Eastern research that went beyond the traditional Western centers (Qian & Xu, 2024).

## CONCLUSION

A historical bibliometric analysis of 113 documents on Iran-Israel diplomacy (1972–2026) reveals a much more complex and nuanced academic landscape than simply a narrative of linear growth. There are four main findings that have significant implications for the development of this field of study.

First, the production of academic knowledge about Iran-Israel diplomacy is event-driven, not organically cumulative. Each of the identified publication spikes 2010 (Stuxnet), 2018 (U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA), 2022–2023 (JCPOA failure & Gaza War), 2024–2025 (direct military confrontation) can be traced directly to concrete geopolitical events. This suggests that the academic community, even with a certain time lag due to the peer-review cycle, is responsive to the empirical realities in the field.

Second, the paradox of stagnation of 2014–2016 reveals the methodological limitations of Scopus-based bibliometric analysis: the signing of the JCPOA one of the greatest diplomatic achievements of the 21st century correlates precisely with the lowest point of indexed publications. This indicates a displacement of intellectual production to a non-Scopus medium (think tank reports, policy briefs), and serves as an important reminder that bibliometric indexes never fully capture the totality of knowledge production.

Third, the structural epistemic inequalities identified the dominance of the United States (35.4%) and the lack of representation of the countries of the Middle East region themselves are not just a statistical problem, but an epistemological problem. Iranian, Palestinian, Jordanian, Turkish, or Egyptian academic perspectives on conflicts taking place in their own backyards are almost absent from the mainstream of Scopus-indexed English-language literature. This is the most urgent research gap to overcome.

Fourth, the exponential acceleration since 2022 confirms that the study of Iran-Israel diplomacy has reached a mature stage as a field of independent study. The volume and quality of literature production today allow for meta-analysis, systematic review, and the development of more coherent theoretical frameworks an agenda that could not be done in previous decades due to the limitations of the corpus.

Going forward, further research is suggested to: (1) expand the database beyond Scopus by integrating Google Scholar, Web of Science, and think tank repositories; (2) conduct co-citation analysis to identify the foundational works that most

influence the development of this field; (3) compare English-language literature with Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew-language academic publications to get a comprehensive picture of how various academic communities understand and conceptualize this conflict from their respective perspectives.

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