

Frenemies in the Media: Maritime Sovereignty and Propaganda Regarding the South China Sea

Lupita Wijaya ¹

Abstract

When Indonesia struggles to fight illegal fishing in 2016, Indonesian Navy has caught several Chinese fishing boats in its 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off the Natuna Island. Although, many have trespassed Indonesia's EEZ, conducted illegal fishing and been scuttled, China is the only country that backs up their fishermen with military forces. After Indonesia officially sent diplomatic protest note over the incident, China replied that the seizing had no official grounded as the area was actually claimed as traditional fishing ground by China. This position may leave Indonesia in frenemy position with China. Regional conflict such as South China Sea has been diligently highlighted in international coverage. If it's about involvement of home country conflict, the concept of objectivity journalism has been under questioned. This embodied-concept has raised because of broad range of contextualization in international coverage. Interdependency between media systems and political systems interprets how propaganda influences on the media within the national interest frames of ideology, particularly when the global issue involving their home countries. There are nine propaganda techniques including name calling, glittering generalities, transfer, testimonial, plain folks, card stacking, bandwagon, frustration of scapegoat and fear. Applying comparative content analysis of Indonesian and Chinese state-run wire services of ANTARA and Xinhua, and three most popular news websites: China Daily, People's Daily and Kompas. This study identifies types of national interest frames including common, conflict, and threat interest frames. It is found out that media perform propaganda techniques which later depict the frenemy position according to their national interest frames.

Keywords: South China Sea, Media Studies, Frenemy, Propaganda, National Interests

¹ Lecturer at the Faculty of Communication, Universitas Multimedia Nusantara. She graduated from the Chinese Culture University, Taipei, Taiwan. Her research focuses on comparative media studies, propaganda, and global conflict. Courses she has taught include Global Journalism, Media & Politics, and History of Journalism. Her current research focuses on the South China Sea dispute, providing a comparative analysis of media since 2014. Her papers have been published in both national and international journals. *Corresponding e-mail:* lupita@umn.ac.id

Introduction

During the administration of Indonesian President Joko Widodo (Jokowi), Indonesia shifted its approach to the South China Sea maritime conflict pertaining Natuna, from a regional diplomatic and peaceful approach to one of national interest protection, while at the same time attempting to maintain bilateral relations with China. The changes in Indonesia's position were triggered by increasing Chinese attacks on Natuna waters, Jokowi's lack of enthusiasm in diplomacy, and his efforts to spur Chinese investment in Indonesia's Maritime Axis infrastructure projects (Connelly, 2015). Indonesia's maritime axis policy has enforced: (1) maritime resources through conquering the transnational crime of illegal fishing; (2) interconnectivity in infrastructure projects; and (3) national navy and maritime defence forces.

Since China has a set nine-dashed line and claimed the waters of Natuna (northwest of Borneo) as its traditional fishing area, Indonesia has been inexorably dragged into conflict over its sovereignty ("No compromise on sovereignty over Natuna islands despite China claims: Indonesia's Jokowi," 2016). The conflict was exacerbated by the arrest of Chinese illegal fishing vessels, which had Chinese military support, in Natuna waters. This incident can be considered a stunt invoking Jokowi's Maritime Axis policy, particularly the country's navy and maritime defence forces. The Maritime Axis policy is Indonesia's promise to maximise maritime resources, emphasising the pillars of maritime culture, maritime economy, maritime resources, maritime connectivity and infrastructure, as well as maritime security and diplomacy (Ekawati, 2016; Carruthers, 2016).

Indonesia's Maritime Axis requires Chinese investments to implement interconnectivity through several infrastructure projects, as explicit through Indonesia's request for the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to fund a 2,000-megawatt power plant (Chin, 2016, p. 19). However, China's nine-dash line in the South China Sea has put Indonesia in the position of protecting its own maritime sovereignty around Natuna. In 2016, when Indonesia was fighting against illegal fishing, the Indonesian Navy caught several Chinese fishing boats in its 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off Natuna. Although many illegal fishermen trespassing in Indonesia's EEZ are scuttled, China is the only country that backs up its fishermen with military force. After Indonesia officially sent a diplomatic protest note

over the incident, China replied that the seizure had no official grounds and claimed the area as a traditional fishing ground. This position may leave Indonesia in a frenemy position with China.

Jokowi's policy has explicitly increased Indonesia's enthusiasm for Chinese investment to finance a large number of infrastructure projects and implement maritime interconnectivity. The Maritime Axis has also required increased enforcement of Indonesia's territorial sovereignty. Assertive implementation of this policy has been expedited by efforts against illegal fishing, which is considered a transnational crime. Since December 2014, many illegal fishing boats have been seized, burnt, and scuttled. The last of these dominated headlines about Jokowi's administration, creating dismay in several neighbouring countries regarding Indonesian diplomacy. The government responded to foreign criticism by stressing that its actions are permissible under domestic law and the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), while Jokowi demystified illegal fishing as "a purely criminal issue [that] has nothing to do with neighbourly relations" (Murphy, 2017, p. 55).

However, that policy has severely affected Jakarta–Beijing diplomatic relations. Although Indonesia has scuttled 234 foreign vessels, Chinese vessels have enjoyed a "special approach" compared to other offenders. In December 2014, a large ship filled with Chinese crews was arrested by custom officers in Merauke and Papua, far from the South China Sea. When the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Susi Pudjiastuti, decided that the vessel should be scuttled as an effort to enforce sanctions, her ministerial colleagues argued not to sink the vessel to avoid problems with China. Although the vessel was finally scuttled in May 2015, without any media coverage, this action was postponed until six months after the fishermen were captured. Indonesia has, meanwhile, had to manage its own tensions with Beijing regarding its behaviour in the South China Sea in the waters off Natuna (Connelly, 2015).

The media, particularly in covering international conflict, is prone to use propaganda techniques, be it what is often called democratic propaganda/moderate or public diplomacy. This can be understood as relating to the interdependence between media systems and the national interests of dominant ideological framework. Jang (2013) said that most global issue coverage tend to focus on Western media and ignore non-Western media. Propaganda has several characteristics: (1) international

news coverage in-line with government interests and perspectives; and (2) there is no middle ground; it is either an ally or an opponent in conflict.

Changes in communication and politics this year have tended to involve improving the application of propaganda models. The increasing power of corporate media, global media mergers and centralisation, and decline of public broadcasting institutions, has made the media facilitate not only rulers' propaganda messages, but also those of the media elites.

When involving conflicts within journalists' home countries, the concept of objectivity in journalism has been questioned. This embodied concept has been raised and applied in various contexts. Contextualisation can be defined as collectivism among participants within similar contexts and series of interests (Iskandar & El-Nawawy, 2004).

Interdependence between Media and Political Systems

Engesser and Freanzetti (2011) wrote that interdependence between political and media systems has always occurred. As such, media is actually part of the state system and believed to be a democratic entity that can influence political decisions. According to research conducted by Snow and Taylor (2006), multiple propaganda techniques have been used by media, particularly in reporting global issues or regional conflicts.

In a political communications perspective, media can be defined strategically as the mouthpiece of governments and a political tool to conduct propaganda. However, in a media studies perspective, media is seen not as a mere passive political tool, but active player in elite conflicts, with some struggles involving criticism of media performance, particularly its objectivity. The media studies perspective also considers media, as the active institutional and political actors, have some degrees of ideology that will affect their framing of reports (Priyonggo & Wijaya, 2013; Mullen & Klaehn, 2010; Cook, 1998).

Ideologies comprise three different frameworks: dominant ideology, elite ideology, and journalism/occupation ideology (Akhavan & Ramaprasad, 2000, p. 48). Dominant ideology has a broader scope; for instance, in American society, capitalism and anti-communism can be considered examples of dominant ideologies. Elite ideology can be defined as the policy ideology within administrative/institutional

policies in government or business. Meanwhile, journalism/occupation ideology can be defined as journalists' beliefs regarding how to cover issues or write stories, including the principles of objectivity and news value. This ideology enables journalistic practice to yield key values and characteristics, including journalists' preference to select official actors/institutions as sources.

National Interest Frames in Media

In reporting on global issues relating to other countries, media are oriented towards telling stories, particularly concerning national interests and international citizenship. National interests are related to the political, economic, military, socio-cultural, and security objectives of the state, and contain the values set by policymakers to minimise costs and maximise profits for the good of the country. Journalists apply national interest frames by explicitly highlighting or making implicit assumptions through framing events or issues and emphasising/suppressing the importance of certain issues to domestic or international audiences (Novais, 2007). Media coverage of communication crises involving other countries lead to the attribution of different national interest frames. Coverage will contain different contexts, and contextualisation implies different media systems, diplomatic relations, and socio-cultural situations (Bier, Park & Palenchar, 2017).

Brewer (2006) analyzed the impact of national interest frames and identified three categories: common interest frames, conflicting frames, and threatening frames. Common interest frames identify trust and cooperation. For instance, Australia supported the United States' statement pertaining to freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. Cooperative interest frames focus on the potential for achieving different benefits through exchange with other countries. Trust and cooperation can be actualised if both parties can achieve better results through joint concessions. Conflicting interest frames, meanwhile, emphasise disagreement among parties. Threatening interest frames are a continuation of disagreement accompanied by threats of (for example) economic sanctions, termination of diplomatic relations, or military force.

This explanation is pivotal to see how the media in Indonesia and China tell stories pertaining to illegal fishing in maritime sovereignty and historical rights. A previous study has indicated that trust and cooperation, which appear in common

interest frames, can be better to actualise solutions that benefit both parties through mutual concession.

Jang (2013) analyses how media reflect national interest frames and become propaganda tools as a result of the conflicting interests concerning global conflict involving their home countries. Furthermore, propaganda is the inevitable influence of the news-making process.

Media as the Instrument of Propaganda

Propaganda is derived from the Latin word *propagare*, which means “to spread, to amplify”. Propaganda has been used since medieval times to describe the missionary activities of the Roman Catholic Church. During the enlightenment era, intellectuals considered propaganda a concealed and dangerous action by deceiving people and making them do things against their will and interests (Kaid & Bacha, 2008, p. 659).

Propaganda can be considered a persuasive communication technique to manipulate target audiences' attitudes and opinions. Propaganda activities aim to change existing belief systems, value structures, and political positions to produce certain attitudes on particular issues that concur with those of propagandists. Propaganda is targeted at the broader community, meaning that it requires mass media (speeches, advertisements, editorials, articles, music, or posters) to spread its ideas and messages (Kaid & Bacha, 2008, p. 658). Generally, propaganda is not a new term referring to its application in its coverage. It can also be called rhetoric, spin doctoring, indoctrination, agitprop (propaganda through literature, drama, music or arts), or brainwashing (Cunningham, 2002).

Kamalipour and Snow (2004) mention several elements of dominant information when compared with the traditional concept of propaganda. First is the integration of propaganda and psychological operations into a broader concept of information warfare. The traditional concept of propaganda involves the creation and distribution of messages through state-owned media or independent news media.

The mass media runs as a system for communicating symbols and messages to the public. It functions to entertain, inform, and instil individuals with values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour in accordance with larger institutional structures (Herman & Chomsky, 2002).

In 1937, research conducted by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis identified six propaganda techniques: name-calling, glittering generalities, transfer, plain folks, card stacking (selection), and bandwagon. Further propaganda techniques—testimonial, fear, and scapegoat—were later added by Holsti (Essays, 2013). Thus, there are nine propaganda techniques, which are mapped in the table below.

Tabel 1. *Propaganda Techniques in Media*

No.	Technique	Definition	Example
1.	Name-calling	A tactic to ensure the target receives a conclusion without deep consideration of the facts. It uses words to relate a person or idea to a negative concept. Our purpose, projections and evaluations determine what we call a person, yet such person does not change when we change the label.	One person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter
2.	Glittering Generalities	A tactic in which something is associated with a virtue word, which can then be used to make audiences accept the thing in question without examining evidence. It is linked to highly valued concepts.	Democracy: honour, equality, love of country, freedom
3.	Transfer	A tactic in which authority, sanction, and even prestige of something respected are transferred over to something else to make the latter more acceptable. This technique can also be seen to take place using symbolic objects/subjects.	The cartoon of Uncle Sam, who represents the consensus of public opinion in the United States.
4.	Testimonial	A tactic in which public figures (actors/actresses/politicians) are used to advertise candidates/products. Testimonial has great appeal to emotions instead of logic because it gives a weak justification for a product/action.	The testimony from Hollywood actress (who is also a feminist activist) in support of Hillary Clinton as a president
5.	Plain Folks	A tactic that puts propagandists as ordinary people like the target audience to demonstrate their ability to empathise and understand the concerns/feelings of the public.	Maspion, an Indonesian manufacture, advertised with the slogan "love your home-country products"
6.	Card Stacking/ Selection	Often called slanting, it involves ignoring arguments that do not support the propagandist. This technique will only select arguments/evidence that support the position taken. It works most effectively when the evidence is true.	There are actually positive and negative effects of globalisation, but a propagandist may display only positive effects.
7.	Bandwagon	A tactic in which the propagandist attempts to convince and persuade the target that, since all members of a group to which they	<i>"Since everyone is doing it, you should too."</i>

		belong accept a programme, he/she must therefore follow this particular crowd. This technique appeals the subject to join simply because others are doing so.	
8.	Scapegoat	A tactic in which someone is blamed for the mistakes of others. When a problem occurs, people tend to blame others and seek a scapegoat. Scapegoating is also an easy way to create resentment and frustration.	Inflation is getting worse because the current president cannot handle the situation.
9.	Fear	A tactic in which deep-seated fears are exploited; a propagandist warns the audience that disaster will result if they do not follow a particular course of action.	If communists win, the economy will collapse.

(Source: Bensa & Wijaya, 2017)

In most people's minds, the term propaganda has negative connotations. Thus, in the 1920s the term 'public relations' began to replace it, though the practice remained common in the United States, from radio advertisements to pro-government or anti-fascist messages through films, newspaper columns, political figures, clerics, and celebrities (Hobbs & McGee, 2014).

A study conducted by Bensa and Wijaya (2017) asserted that the dominant propaganda technique in the South China Sea dispute is "glittering generalities", a technique that involves emphasising Indonesia's size as an important mediation tool. Other statements, such as "Indonesia is a tough nation" and "It's about sovereignty, Man!," can be seen explicitly in news headlines.

Method

This research employs a descriptive and quantitative content analysis. Kerlinger (1973) defined this method as a systematic and objective process in quantitative with the purpose of measuring variables. This study includes all news articles published between March and June 2016 that are relevant to South China Sea and illegal fishing activities in Natuna, with the primary criteria being that they mention Indonesia-China bilateral relations as related to illegal fishing incidents.

Several considerations include: (1) this being the first time Indonesia took firm action, sending a note of protest and summoning the Chinese ambassador in Jakarta; and (2) a series of incidents involving Chinese trawlers in 2016. After the first incident on March 19, 2016, China finally stopped when Jokowi deployed military enhancements and training in Natuna in June 2016. The statement below suggests that

there were no more “sovereignty” violations after the increased military force in the region:

...tidak ada serbuan kapal nelayan Cina lebih jauh ke ZEE Indonesia sejak kejadian 17 Juli lalu, yang menunjukkan bahwa tindakan yang dilakukan Indonesia sebenarnya memiliki efek pencegahan.

Translation:

...there's been no further invasion of Chinese fishing vessels into Indonesia's EEZ since 17 July, which shows that the actions taken by Indonesia actually have a preventive effect.

(Indonesia's Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Susi Pudjiastuti, cited by Conelly, 2015, p. 6)

This researcher will design national interest frames and propaganda techniques in a coding book and sheet. Media from China and Indonesia are selected based on the involvement of both parties as well as the highest percentage of international traffic in Asia, as measured by 4 International Media & Newspaper (4imn.com). Of 7,000 media in 200 countries, 4 International Media & Newspaper identifies *China Daily* as the foremost newspaper/news website in China (and in Asia), followed by People's Daily. Meanwhile, *Kompas* is the most popular newspaper/news website from Indonesia, ranked thirteenth in Asia. Indonesia's ANTARA and China's Xinhua have been purposively selected, as both news agencies are representatives of state-owned media. In line with the concept of interdependence between media and political systems, state-owned news agencies have a proclivity to represent national interests as well as government opinions and policies (Iskandar & El-Nawawy, 2004; Engesser & Franzetti, 2011).

Throughout the research period (March to June 2016), 86 analytical units were collected through online searching using the keywords of 'illegal fishing', 'Natuna', 'China', and 'Indonesia'.

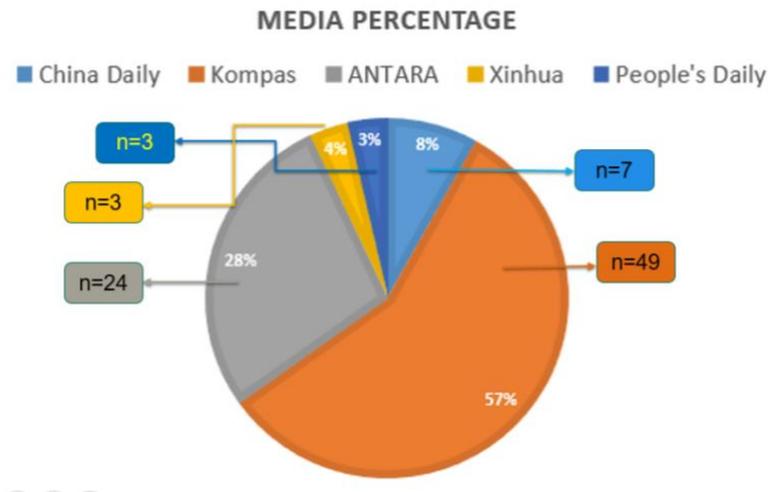


Figure 1. Units of Analysis

Research Findings

National Interest Frames

All media, including *China Daily*, *Kompas*, ANTARA, Xinhua, and *People's Daily*, have predominantly construed the sovereignty dispute in a conflict interest frame (65.1%). The conflict interest frame mostly highlights the incident of KM *Kway Fey 10078*. China considered the Indonesian Navy to have harassed Chinese fishermen in their “normal” fishing activities in the claimed traditional fishing area, while Indonesia considered China to have violated Indonesia’s EEZ and used its military to back up its fishermen.

Conversely, cooperative national interest (26.7%) appears to be the second most dominant. Indonesia and China are depicted as good neighbours in an Indonesian article titled “Luhut: Indonesia Tak Ingin Ribut dengan Tiongkok” (Luhut: Indonesia is Reluctant to Make a Fuss with China). The main source of this article is Luhut Binsar Panjaitan, the Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, who stated directly, “We don’t want to wrangle with China.” This article, part of the national rubric, highlighted that the Indonesian government was searching for solutions to resolve the South China Sea dispute.

Cooperative national interest is also evident in an article titled “Menlu Retno LP Marsudi: Kemlu Kedepankan Komunikasi Intensif” (Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi: Foreign Ministry to Advance Intensive Communications) in the daily *Kompas*. Cooperative national interest is supported by reiterating Indonesia being a

non-claimant to the dispute and maintaining good bilateral relations with China. Similar statements were found in other articles, where Indonesia and China agreed to let an incident pass and focus on bilateral relations.

Media have described how KM *Kway Fey 10078*, a Chinese trawler involved in an illegal fishing incident, threatened Indonesia's sovereignty in many ways. In its editorial page, the highly circulated Indonesian newspaper *Kompas* also framed this as a threat to Indonesia's national interests. The editorial "Demi Kedaulatan, Kita Harus Tegas" (For Sovereignty, We Must be Firm) discussed Indonesia's Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Susi Pudjiastuti threat to report China to the International Tribunal for Law of The Sea due to this incident. In this editorial, *Kompas* rhetorically asked why Indonesians must appreciate the firm action of sending a verbal note protest. The *Kompas* editorial states that Chinese patrol boats had violated Indonesia's maritime sovereignty. It argues that, because China violated the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of Indonesia's EEZ, protesting and summoning the Chinese *charge d'affaires* of Embassy are not enough. The media lauded the Philippines for taking its case to Permanent Court of Arbitration.

However, to bolster foreign support for its Maritime Axis, Indonesia still needs Chinese investment. The Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) recorded US\$1.6 billion in direct foreign investment from China until the third quarter of 2016, making China the third-biggest investor in Indonesia, after Singapore and Japan (*The Jakarta Post*, 20 January 2017).

In spite of rising tensions, Indonesia and China still consider each other potential partners. Indonesia is still figuring out how to compromise with China while simultaneously defending its sovereignty. With the increased tensions in the South China Sea involving regional powers, Indonesia recognises a new category of "frenemies", states that pretend to act as friends but instead intimidate each other and create insecurities (*The Jakarta Post*, 18 April 2015).

However, the concept of frenemy in this study covers someone who is both friend and enemy, a relationship that is both mutually beneficial and dependent. This concept is closer to a new way of diplomacy. As a good partner to China, Indonesia must show continuous support for any form of management that deals with conflict (Hanggarini, 2015). The frenemy concept works through the dominant appearance of conflict national interest frames (65.1%) and cooperative national interest frames

(26.7%). Incohesive and incoherent views are found among ministries pertaining the *KM Kway Fey 10078* incident. For instance, the Indonesian Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries presented the firmest opposition to China’s illegal fishing activities and violations of Indonesia’s sovereignty. Meanwhile, the Indonesian Cabinet Secretary and Coordinating *Minister of Security and Political Affairs* tended to ignore the incident, focusing primarily on bilateral relations and maintaining good relations with China.

Table 2. *National Interest Frame*

			National interest frame			Total
			Cooperative	Conflict	Threatening	
Media	China Daily	Count	4	3	0	7
		% within Media	57.10%	42.90%	0.00%	100.00%
	Kompas	Count	8	37	4	49
		% within Media	16.30%	75.50%	8.20%	100.00%
	ANTARA	Count	8	13	3	24
		% within Media	33.30%	54.20%	12.50%	100.00%
	Xinhua	Count	2	1	0	3
		% within Media	66.70%	33.30%	0.00%	100.00%
	People's Daily	Count	1	2	0	3
		% within Media	33.30%	66.70%	0.00%	100.00%
Total		Count	23	56	7	86
		% within Media	26.70%	65.10%	8.10%	100.00%

(Source: SPSS Research Results by Author)

China Daily predominantly contained cooperative frames (57.1%), focusing on (1) China seeing Indonesia as an important cooperative partner, (2) China enlarging its circle of friends, (3) the existence of cooperative military ties between China and Indonesia, (4) and good China–ASEAN relations not being affected by the South China Sea dispute. The fourth point suggests high optimism that the South China Sea dispute would not affect China’s bilateral relations.

The Indonesian daily *Kompas* contained dominant conflict frames (75.5%), focusing on (1) illegal fishing activities conducted by Chinese trawlers (*KM Kway Fey 10078* boat in this case), (2) criticism of China backing up its fishermen with military force, (3) China causing incohesion among ASEAN countries, and (4) China’s disrespectful attitude in violating Indonesia’s EEZ. However, *Kompas* also used some threatening frames (8.2%), covering Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Susi Pudjiastuti's threat to report China to the international maritime tribunal; it also

expressed concern that the KM Kway Fey 10078 incident could affect bilateral relations between Indonesia and China.

Coverage by the Indonesian news agency ANTARA predominantly contained conflict frames (54.2%). Four major themes depicted: (1) China attacking Indonesia's naval vessels when defending their trawlers; (2) Indonesia taking appropriate action by sending a protest note; (3) China's land reclamation and military activities in the South China Sea; and (4) disagreement among ASEAN countries. However, threatening frames (12.5%) were also apparent, stressing military and economic aspects, involving (1) China building a maritime nuclear power plant and (2) Indonesia warning China to re-evaluate economic partnerships. ANTARA mostly produced cooperative frames (33.3%) in economic perspectives.

The Chinese news agency Xinhua contained dominant cooperative frames (66.7%) by citing statements from major shipping and maritime companies that they had no problems with freedom of navigation in South China Sea. This statement presented trust and mutual understanding, countering the claim that China disrupted so-called freedom of navigation. For instance, the article "Spotlight: South China Sea Offers One of the World's Safest Navigation Routes" argued that China's infrastructure construction, such as lighthouses, would promote navigation safety in a sea where many ships and airplanes operate. However, subtle conflict frames (33.3%) criticised Indonesian navy warships for harassing Chinese fishermen on the South China Sea.

The Chinese *People's Daily* predominantly contained conflict frames (66.7%), mainly discussing (1) China being attacked in its traditional fishing area, and (2) China disagreeing with American and Japanese accusations of self-isolation and use of force. However, subtle cooperative frames (33.3%) appeared in regards to Vietnam and China, hoping to boost cooperation and interaction.

Propaganda Techniques of the Media

Card stacking, also called selection (47.1%), is the propaganda technique most commonly used by media. This technique is the most common in Indonesian media. Card stacking is the act of pointing to individual cases or data that seem to confirm a particular position, while ignoring related cases or data that may contradict that position. This technique applies selected information about events, issues, or people.

Table 3. Propaganda Techniques

			Propaganda techniques							
			Name calling	Glittering generalities	Testimonial	Plain folks	Card stacking	Frustration of scapegoat	Fear	Total
Media	China Daily	Count	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	6
		% within Media	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Kompas	Count	6	6	1	1	26	9	0	49
		% within Media	12.2%	12.2%	2.0%	2.0%	53.1%	18.4%	0.0%	100.0%
	ANTARA	Count	0	6	0	3	10	2	3	24
		% within Media	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	12.5%	41.7%	8.3%	12.5%	100.0%
	Xinhua	Count	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
		% within Media	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	100.0%
	People's Daily	Count	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
		% within Media	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	6	12	2	4	40	18	3	85
		% within Media	7.1%	14.1%	2.4%	4.7%	47.1%	21.2%	3.5%	100.0%

$$x^2 = 48.782 (df = 24); \rho < 0.005$$

(Source: SPSS Research Results by Author)

In this issue, illegal fishing and the *Kway Fey* seizure dominated news content focusing on bilateral Indonesia–China relations, rather than just reportage of the incident. News articles highlighted more economic implications, trade targets, investments, peaceful diplomacy, improving relations through the G-20 and Jakarta–Bandung high speed railway, and defence cooperation between two countries. The media have reiterated that Indonesia is not a claimant of South China Sea, although China has intruded on Indonesia’s sovereignty.

In the media, card stacking pointed out that this incident should not affect bilateral relations, and that disagreement could be solved through dialogue. For instance, in the article "Pencurian Ikan: Pemerintah Gunakan Pendekatan Kasus" (Illegal Fishing: Government to Use Case Approach), Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Luhut Pandjaitan, as well as its Defence Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu, asserted that the incident was an ordinary violation and as such the focus should be on law settlement.² This approach was taken to maintain good relations between Indonesia and China. This explanation may be in line with the frenemy concept; news reports mostly used conflict frames, identifying China as violating Indonesia’s EEZ, but at the same time used the card stacking technique to depict good Indonesia–China relations.

² i.e. the seizure of KM *Kway Fey* 10078 and KM *Gui Bei Yu* 27088.



Figure 2. Distribution of Topics in Card Stacking

(Source: SPSS Descriptive Results by Author)

A previous study by Wijaya and Bensa (2017) also found that Indonesian media dominantly use a “neutral” tone in articles about China, although Indonesia admitted having a maritime territory conflict. Indonesian media addressed the territory as Natuna waters, part of Indonesia’s EEZ according to UNCLOS, while claimed the area as a traditional fishing area.

The scapegoat, or blaming, technique was second most dominant news content. This was particularly dominant in Chinese media (*Xinhua*, *China Daily*, and *People's Daily*). Analysis found overt blaming of Indonesia, though topics highlighted by Chinese media varied. In the *People's Daily* news article "Chinese Coast Guard Ship Did Not Enter Indonesia Territorial Water, China Urges Indonesia to Release the Chinese Fishermen", Indonesia was depicted as attacking a Chinese fishing vessel while it was carrying out normal operations in traditional fishing grounds. An article in *Xinhua*, "China Condemns Indonesia's Use of Force in South China" reiterated a similar statement, emphasising protest over perceived harassment by the Indonesian navy³ in the South China Sea. Moreover, the media admitted that Indonesia and China had overlapping maritime rights claims. Similar points were relentlessly addressed

³ Xinhua also alluded to “harassment” with its phrase “excessive use of force”.

throughout articles that identified Indonesia as provoking China by using heavy-handed measures against illegal fishing activities and adopting a hard-line policy toward China. Chinese media consistently utilised blaming. Whom did it blame?

1. Indonesia, for harassing fishermen and adopting a hard-line policy.
2. The Philippines, for reporting the nine-dashed line to the Permanent Court of Arbitration and thereby triggering recent tension.
3. The United States and Japan, for being outsiders that regularly meddle in Chinese affairs.

Glittering generalities were only used by Indonesian media, which depicted Indonesia as a regional leader in Southeast Asia. A headline article published in *Kompas*, “RI Siap Jadi Pelopor di Asia” (Indonesia is Ready to be Pioneer in Asia) in 28 May 2016, for instance, emphasised Indonesia's ability to actualise stability and peace in Asia. Most glittering generalities emphasised sovereignty, peace, and stability. As a concept, sovereignty was frequently presented parallel with conflict frames, where China was considered as violating Indonesia's EEZ. Indonesian articles implied that, as the most populous country in Southeast Asia, Indonesia must not remain silent when China undermines its EEZ but must play an active role to defend its sovereignty in the South China Sea.

The name-calling propaganda technique was often used within conflict frames. For instance, in Indonesian media China was depicted as arrogantly abusing international principles and treating the disputed area as its “backyard”. Several labels were used to depict Chinese militarisation and savage behaviour; The South China Sea was described as a “sterile area”, and the conflict was suggested to promote “ASEAN balkanisation” and render ASEAN a “zombie”. Labels such as “hegemony” and “maritime colonialism” were used by the Indonesian daily *Kompas*.

Conclusion

From a media studies perspective, the interdependence of political and media systems is pivotal for understanding regional/global conflict. Media from different countries have different approaches to covering particular conflicts. Considering many aspects are engendered in media, contextualisation plays an important role in framing. As explicitly discovered in this study, said frames are allocated through propaganda content.

According to per-country categorisation, Chinese media mostly utilised cooperative national interests (53.8%, n=7) which considered good relations between China and ASEAN (including Indonesia) as being unaffected by the South China Sea dispute or illegal fishing incidents. Meanwhile, Indonesian media highlighted illegal fishing incidents predominantly through conflict frames (68.5%, n=50), pointing out (1) China's illegal fishing activities; (2) China's induction of incohesion among ASEAN; (3) China's attacks on the Indonesian navy in its defence of trawlers; and (4) China's land reclamation and military activities in the South China Sea.

The card stacking propaganda technique was most commonly used in Indonesian media. The "frenemy" concept was construed when the Indonesian media referred to China as violating its sovereignty while simultaneously using card stacking propaganda to focus on being good neighbours and affirming that the incident would not affect bilateral relations. Meanwhile, although Chinese media predominantly used cooperative frames, the scapegoat propaganda technique was the most common, with blame mainly arguing that Indonesia was harassing its fishermen in its traditional fishing area and escalating tension by excessive use of force. Other articles blamed the Philippines and underlined its reporting of China's nine-dashed line in the South China Sea to the Permanent Court of Arbitration as the trigger of recent rising tension. The United States and Japan, meanwhile, were branded outsiders that continuously meddled in and exacerbated the conflict.

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