



The Framing Power in CNN and Al-Jazeera's U.S. - China Trade Coverage: Robert Entman's Framing Framework

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ABSTRACT

Digital media platforms are now the main source of global information, including world economic issues. This study aims to analyze the differences in the framing of the news of the trade war between the United States and China by the international media CNN and Al-Jazeera in April 2025. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this research explores how the two media framed their trade conflict of interest, using Robert Entman's framing theory. The main data is taken from CNN Arabic article titled "الصين تحتفظ بورقة استراتيجية في صراعها التجاري مع ترامب" and Al-Jazeera article "الصين توقف استثماراتها في وول ستريت ردا على حرب ترامب التجارية", and supported by secondary data from various scientific studies. Data collection techniques were conducted through reading and recording, while analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that CNN tends to present China as a strategic but aggressive party, while the US as a party that seeks to strengthen economic independence. In contrast, Al-Jazeera portrays China defensively, responding to economic pressure from the US to protect national interests. This difference reflects the media's geopolitical setting that influences the construction of discourse and global public perception.

Keywords: framing power, trade coverage, framing framework

Kekuatan Pembingkai dalam Liputan Perdagangan AS-Tiongkok CNN dan Al-Jazeera: Kerangka Pembingkai Robert Entman

ABSTRAK

Platform media digital kini menjadi sumber utama informasi global, termasuk isu-isu ekonomi dunia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis perbedaan pembingkai berita perang dagang antara Amerika Serikat dan Tiongkok oleh media internasional CNN dan Al-Jazeera pada April 2025. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana kedua media tersebut membingkai konflik kepentingan perdagangan mereka, menggunakan teori pembingkai Robert Entman. Data utama diambil dari artikel CNN berbahasa Arab yang berjudul "الصين تحتفظ بورقة استراتيجية في صراعها التجاري مع ترامب" dan artikel Al-Jazeera "الصين توقف استثماراتها في وول ستريت ردا على حرب ترامب التجارية", dan didukung oleh data sekunder dari berbagai studi ilmiah. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui pembacaan dan pencatatan, sementara analisis mengikuti model Miles dan Huberman: reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa CNN cenderung menampilkan Tiongkok sebagai pihak yang strategis namun agresif, sementara AS sebagai pihak yang berupaya memperkuat kemandirian ekonomi. Sebaliknya, Al-Jazeera menggambarkan Tiongkok secara defensif, merespons tekanan ekonomi dari AS untuk melindungi kepentingan nasional. Perbedaan ini mencerminkan konteks geopolitik media yang memengaruhi konstruksi wacana dan persepsi publik global.

Kata kunci: kekuatan pembingkai, liputan perdagangan, kerangka pembingkai

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INTRODUCTION

In April 2025, the media were busy reporting on the trade war between the USA and China. This trade war began when USA president Donald Trump announced through a fact sheet, which is a short document containing a summary of key points about a topic, company, product, or event, published by the White House on Tuesday, April 15, 2025, by increasing tariffs on imported goods from China (Rosdalina, 2025). The trade war between the USA and China has been ongoing since 2018, during the first period of Donald Trump's administration. The trade war began because Trump was annoyed by the US's trade deficit with China. For this reason, he chose protectionist measures to improve the US trade balance. Trump decided to increase import duties on solar panels and washing machines to 30 percent and 20 percent, respectively. Since then, on January 22, 2018, the trade war began (Klaisatporn, 2020).

In response to Trump's new tariff policy, the Chinese government did not remain silent. On Thursday, April 17, 2025, China's Ministry of Commerce announced countermeasures by imposing additional tariffs of up to 200% on American agricultural products and motor vehicles (Bellit & Nam, 2024). China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs also stated that the US policy violates the basic principles of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and could undermine the stability of global supply chains that have begun to recover after the pandemic. Economists predict that this escalation of tension will have a significant impact on the global economy, especially countries that are the main trading partners of the two superpowers, including Indonesia and other ASEAN countries.

The trade war between the USA and China has affected the global economy by changing exchange rates across various countries. Current conditions can signal global events that drive volatility in capital markets. One of the main global economic conditions is the rivalry between two developed countries, China and the United States,

which also affects international currency markets in other countries (Syahfitri et al., 2024).

Observing the facts as described above, the researcher intends to examine the news from one of the world's major platforms, namely CNN and Al-Jazeera in reporting news on the trade war between the USA and China, the selection of CNN and Al-Jazeera as research objects in this study is based on their position as international media that have a significant influence in shaping global public opinion. CNN is based in the United States, a country directly involved in the trade war. At the same time, Al Jazeera represents a media perspective from outside the United States and China, specifically from Qatar, a relatively neutral country in the conflict. As such, both offer different but equally credible perspectives in delivering international news.

In this context, mass media play a very significant role. Mass media is the result of human work and thought, and its development today is highly innovative and has a significant influence on the world's information supply. The presence of mass media is one of the means of disseminating information to the public, of course, by accelerating the flow of information through communication networks (Iskandar, Khristiana, and Sapariyah 2020). Through the media, information about global issues such as the trade war between the USA and China can spread quickly and widely, shaping how people perceive the issue. Virtual networks are an effective means for people to disseminate information, opinions, and various other content quickly and efficiently through instant digital communication (Amriza and Khairun Nisa Meiah Ngafidin 2021).

On the other hand, this expansion of information often leads to hegemony in the form of neo-colonialism. It can be seen, as Herbert Marcuse put it, as a one-dimensional condition in society, including in government, economics, communication, culture, language, dress, and so on (Susilawati & Surur, 2024). In addition, a discourse as a social



practice implies a dialectic between language and social context (Arrafi & Surur, 2024).

Expected results: a) data on the practicality of the e-module; b) user responses to the e-module's usability, appearance, and usefulness.

The public's understanding of the media is highly dependent on how the media frames reality. In this case, the public tends to be trapped by media framing (Suma, 2023). This process is known as framing. Framing is how mass media present social reconstruction to the public. Entman states that "framing plays a significant role in the exertion of political power, and frames in news texts actually have an imprint in recording the identities of actors or interests competing to dominate the text (Effendi et al., 2023). The framing by the mass media is highly influential in shaping the image of an existing problem. Issues presented in the mass media are the first spear that shapes the public's view of a problem (Zawawi et al., 2024).

To examine in depth the framing analyses of the trade war between the USA and China in April 2025 by CNN and Al Jazeera, researchers refer to Robert M. Entman's framing theory. Entman sees framing in two major dimensions: issue selection and the emphasis or prominence of certain aspects. Framing is an approach to finding understanding of how journalists' perspectives shape their selection of facts and writing of news (Entman, 1993).

In the context of news coverage of the trade war between the United States and China, framing analysis is particularly relevant for revealing how international media with different geopolitical backgrounds frame this economic conflict. As stated by Suma (2023), public understanding of an issue is highly dependent on how the media frames reality, and the public tends to be trapped by these frames. In other words, the framing by the mass media significantly influences the public's perception of a problem (Zawawi et al. 2024).

Therefore, this study aims to analyze differences in the framing of news coverage of the trade war between the United States and China in April

2025 by two leading international media, CNN and Al Jazeera. By using Robert M. Entman's framing analysis model, which includes four main elements: problem definition, cause identification, moral judgment, and resolution recommendations. This research seeks to reveal how the two media construct narratives and perspectives on the same global issue. The selection of CNN from the United States and Al-Jazeera, based in Qatar, provides an opportunity to compare how the media's geopolitical background affects the emphasis on specific aspects of the news, the issue selection process, and the formation of global public opinion regarding the economic conflict between the two superpowers. Through this comparative analysis, the research also seeks to highlight the role of mass media as agents in the construction of social reality, with significant power to frame public perceptions of complex international issues.

Several previous studies have discussed framing analysis in the context of their respective studies, including those conducted by Jamil et al. (2023), Siregar et al. (2023), and Alqodri & Basid (2024). This study applies framing theory in news framing analysis. And also in framing analysis on social media (Kurnia et al., 2024; Guran & Özarslan, 2022; Msughter et al., 2023; Almakaty, 2025).

Based on the preliminary studies above, this research has both similarities and differences with them. The similarities between these studies lie in the themes raised — namely, framing analysis — and in the type of object studied — namely, news. The difference lies in the framing analysis's focus: news about protests against the Omnibus Law in Indonesia in 2021 (Jamil et al., 2023) and news of Illegal Levy Eradication at the Port of PT Pelindo 1 Period June 1 - June 30, 2021 (Muda Siregar, Sazali, and Achiriah 2023), coverage of Donald Trump's shooting in Pennsylvania on BBC and CNN media (Alqodri & Basid, 2024), reporting of Gibran's vice presidency on CNN Indonesia Media (Kurnia et al., 2024), framing theory in

the age of social media (Guran & Özarslan, 2022), the coverage of identity perspectives and conflict narratives in the Nigerian media (Msughter, Garba, and Rabi 2023), a comprehensive and critical literature review on framing theory in the digital media era (Almakaty, 2025).

By examining the similarities and differences between this study and previous studies, this study complements existing findings, especially by examining how two major media frame issues and their influence on public perception. This study aims to reveal how CNN and Al Jazeera reported the "Trade War Between USA and China," using Robert M. Entman's approach. Specifically, the research seeks to: (1) analyze how the two media framed the event and conveyed the information to the public; (2) compare the differences in viewpoints and news presentation of each media; and (3) explain how the framing of the news can influence public views.

This research uses Robert Entman's framing theory to analyze media texts, including one that uses Robert N. Entman's model. This model is used to understand a reality in the field and how we interpret it into content (Iskandar et al., 2020). Framing is socially shared organizing principles and systems over time, which work symbolically to structure the social world in meaningful ways (Mendelsohn et al., 2024), Framing analysis can be described simply as an analysis to find out how the reality of events, actors, groups, or anything else is framed by the media (Mardiah et al., 2022). Framing is one of the important concepts in media studies that refers to the process of selecting and highlighting certain aspects of reality by the media. According to Entman, framing is a selection process of various aspects of reality that are accepted and make the event more prominent in a communication text. This process involves the selection of facts, emphasis, elaboration, and exclusion of certain aspects of reality, thus forming a coherent and meaningful narrative (Entman, 1993).

The theoretical concept created by Robert M. Entman focuses on how the media organizes a point of view on an issue or fact through four main elements: formulating the problem, identifying the cause, providing moral judgment, and suggesting solutions or actions to be taken (Gerome, 2021). In Entman's view, framing does not simply determine which information is included or excluded, but also gives important weight to certain aspects of the constructed reality. The media carries out selection and salience of facts so as to influence public interpretation. This process occurs through the placement of information in certain positions, repetition, use of familiar symbols, and association with widely accepted cultural values. As expressed by Entman (1993), "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation." Recent research by Mendelsohn (2024) shows that Entman's framing analysis framework has been widely applied in various contexts such as war reporting, economic crises, identity politics, and public health issues, proving the relevance and flexibility of this theory in analyzing the construction of reality by the media in an increasingly complex information age.

Method "This research uses a qualitative approach to portray framing patterns in the news coverage of the "USA and China Trade War" on CNN and Al-Jazeera portals. This research uses a frame approach or frame analysis. The concept of framing is an alternative paradigm for seeing other realities behind mass media discourse (Vu & Lynn, 2020). Framing analysis aims to examine how news about an event is framed to be consumed by the public. In this study, the researchers used Robert Entman's frame analysis theory. The data were taken from news articles on the USA-China Trade War on the CNN and Al Jazeera news por-



tals in the April 2025 edition. The data analysis technique used is Robert Entman's frame analysis technique to determine the reality framed by the media. This includes events, actors, and related elements.

The data collection techniques used in this research are reading and note-taking techniques. Researchers used the reading technique to read the entire news content and carefully identify the narrative using frame analysis theory (Tarigan et al., 2021). The researcher's note-taking technique documents important data obtained from reading activities. Furthermore, the data were compiled into a single file before analysis and classification according to Robert Entman's framing framework. The data analysis technique uses the Miles and Huberman model which is carried out through the following stages: (1) data collection and classification; (2) identification and categorization (selection and sorting) of data to be arranged into units of analysis; (3) interpretation and analysis of news texts (elements of define of problem, diagnose causes, make moral judgement, and treatment recommendation); and (4) conclusion drawing.

RESULT

1. Overview of the Study

Based on Robert Entman's framing analysis of CNN and Al Jazeera's coverage of the trade war between the United States and China, this study concludes that both media outlets construct the issue through distinct ideological and political lenses. Each news organization reflects the geopolitical orientation of the region it represents and the values it seeks to uphold. CNN, as a U.S.-based global media network, tends to emphasize American interests and the United States' global leadership role. Meanwhile, Al Jazeera, based in Qatar and influenced by Middle Eastern perspectives, often highlights the global South's view, particularly the struggle of developing nations against Western economic dominance. This ideological

divergence shapes how each outlet selects, emphasizes, and presents information to the public.

2. Problem Definition and Issue Framing

In defining the core problem, CNN frames the U.S.–China trade war not only as an economic dispute over tariffs and trade deficits but also as a broader strategic competition between two major global powers. The network constructs the issue as a struggle for dominance in international trade and technological innovation. This framing positions the United States as a nation seeking to protect its economic interests against an assertive, rapidly growing China.

Conversely, Al Jazeera frames the trade war as an economic and political confrontation initiated by the United States, forcing China to take defensive measures. It presents China as reacting to economic provocation and unfair pressure from Washington. By adopting this perspective, Al Jazeera implies that the root of the problem lies in the United States' aggressive, unilateral policies, particularly under the Trump administration. This difference in framing reveals how each medium defines the "main conflict" and who is responsible for escalating it.

3. Cause Diagnosis

In the cause diagnosis segment, CNN identifies the primary cause of the conflict as the U.S. government's policy of increasing tariffs on Chinese products, announced by President Donald Trump in April 2025. The network highlights that this decision was a response to China's alleged unfair trade practices, including intellectual property theft and state intervention in industry. Through this narrative, CNN attempts to justify the U.S. government's policy as a defensive measure to protect domestic industries and restore balance in trade relations.

Meanwhile, Al Jazeera offers a contrasting interpretation. It attributes the escalation of the trade

war to the U.S. administration's pursuit of economic hegemony and its desire to contain China's rise as a global economic superpower. The network presents China as a victim of American economic pressure rather than as an aggressor, emphasizing that Beijing's responses were necessary to safeguard its sovereignty and economic stability. This causal interpretation underlines how media institutions can interpret the same event differently to support particular ideological stances.

4. Moral Judgement

The moral judgment stage reveals how both CNN and Al Jazeera evaluate the actors involved. CNN portrays both nations with mixed moral attributes: China is seen as strategic and forward-looking, but also ethically questionable due to accusations of unfair trade practices and a lack of transparency. The United States, in contrast, is framed as struggling with internal weaknesses—such as overreliance on imported goods—but morally justified in its attempt to protect national economic integrity.

On the other hand, Al Jazeera reverses this moral narrative. It presents China as a more moral and defensive actor, one that responds rationally to provocation. The network uses moral reasoning to highlight China's right to resist economic coercion and defend its sovereignty. In Al Jazeera's framing, the United States is depicted as the aggressor—an actor that threatens global economic stability through unilateral and protectionist actions. This moral evaluation demonstrates how each medium's ethical judgment aligns with its political and ideological affiliations, thereby shaping audience perception in distinct ways.

5. Treatment Recommendation

In the treatment recommendation stage, CNN's framing emphasizes the need for the United States to strengthen domestic industrial capacity, diversify supply chains, and reduce its dependence on Chinese imports. This recommendation reflects a

nationalistic economic orientation, suggesting that self-reliance and innovation are the best strategies to confront China's growing economic influence. CNN implies that policy reforms, technology investment, and alliance-building with other Western economies are essential to ensuring long-term stability.

Conversely, Al Jazeera proposes a more diplomatic and international approach. The network suggests that China should raise the issue at multilateral forums such as the United Nations Security Council or the World Trade Organization to address the dispute through global consensus rather than unilateral measures. By promoting dialogue and international mediation, Al Jazeera's framing emphasizes cooperation over confrontation and positions China as a rational actor within the international order.



Table 1

Summary of the Framing Analysis Results of CNN and Al Jazeera Based on Robert Entman's Model

Elemen Framing (Robert Entman)	CNN	Al-Jazeera
Problem Definition	CNN defines the U.S.–China trade war not merely as an economic or tariff issue, but as a form of strategic competition between two global powers. The conflict is framed as the United States' attempt to maintain its global economic dominance against China's expansion.	Al Jazeera views the trade war as China's defensive reaction to economic pressure from the United States. The main problem lies not in global competition but in America's aggressive and unilateral economic policies, which are seen as unfair.
Causal Interpretion	CNN attributes the main cause of the conflict to the U.S. policy of raising tariffs on Chinese products, announced by President Donald Trump. The measure is presented as an effort to protect domestic industries and counter China's allegedly unfair trade practices.	Al Jazeera interprets the root cause as the U.S. ambition to contain China's rise as a global economic power. The United States is portrayed as attempting to preserve its hegemony by exerting political and economic pressure on Beijing.
Moral Evaluation Treatment	CNN presents both sides with mixed moral attributes. China is described as strategic but ethically questionable due to alleged economic manipulation, while the U.S. is portrayed as morally justified in protecting national interests yet weak because of its dependence on imports.	Al Jazeera portrays China as the more moral and defensive actor, acting to protect its national interests from U.S. economic pressure. Conversely, the U.S. is depicted as aggressive, arrogant, and a threat to global economic stability.
Recomendation	CNN recommends strengthening U.S. domestic industries, diversifying supply chains, and encouraging technological innovation to reduce dependency on Chinese imports. The network also stresses the importance of reinforcing Western economic alliances.	Al Jazeera calls for a diplomatic and multilateral resolution, suggesting that China should bring the issue to international forums such as the United Nations Security Council or the World Trade Organization (WTO) to seek a consensus based solution.
Ideological Orientation	Represents a Western, liberal-economic perspective, framing U.S. protectionist policies as a legitimate and strategic response.	Represents a Global South or Middle Eastern perspective, generally sympathetic to developing countries and critical of Western economic dominance.

DISCUSSION

This research analyzes online news from CNN and Al-Jazeera media using Robert Entman's frame analysis approach. the focus of the news taken is viral news about the trade war between the USA and China. The titles chosen are as follows:

Table 2
List of Trade War News between USA and China from Two Media Sources

No.	Title	Date	Media	Link
1	الصين تحتفظ بورقة استراتيجية في صراعها التجاري مع ترامب	April 17, 2025	CNN	https://arabic.cnn.com/world/article/2025/04/17/china-trade-rare-earths-infographic
2	توقف استثماراتها في وول ستريت ردا على حرب ترامب التجارية	April 24, 2025	Al Jazeera	https://www.aljazeera.net/ebusiness/2025/4/21/china-pressuring-us-investments-trade-war

Based on the results of the analysis conducted on the coverage of the trade war between the United States and China in April 2025, it was found that CNN and Al-Jazeera framed the same issue in different ways, reflecting the geopolitical setting and editorial interests of each media. CNN framed China as a strategic but aggressive party, emphasizing China's dominance of rare earth metals, a group of 17 chemical elements that have similar properties and are essential in various industries, including electronics, automotive, and defense, as a pressure tool in the trade war. In contrast, Al-Jazeera framed China more defensively, featuring economic measures taken in response to pressure from the United States. CNN underscored the need for America to reduce its reliance on imports as a solution, while Al-Jazeera emphasized the need for China's decisive action in international forums. These findings show that mass media not only convey information, but also shape social reality through targeted and ideological framing of issues.

الصين تحتفظ بورقة استراتيجية في "Media Framing News " صراعها التجاري مع ترامب in CNN

Define Problem

Define problem refers to the process of identifying the core of the issue and how it is perceived

and conveyed to the public. This stage includes analyzing how the media raises and reports on an issue, as well as how narratives are built to explain the context and background of the problem, CNN opens its report on the trade war between the USA and China, with a title that arouses the reader's attention from the start, "الصين تحتفظ بورقة استراتيجية". In the title raised by CNN, CNN emphasizes the diction that "China is risking the strategy card" In this case China is not passively responding to what Trump is doing, namely by increasing the export price of trade goods from China. Because the word "risking" certainly contains a tactical step taken by China, despite the high risk. The media emphasizes that China maintains a strong, controlled position amid pressure from the Trump administration. This shows that the problem is not only the conflicting trade policies, but also the dynamics of power and strategy between the two major countries. Thus, the media, through this sentence, has defined the main problem in the context of global trade conflicts: the power competition between the two world economic giants, with China appearing as a party ready to face pressure with a planned strategy.



Referring to the previous description, the main issue raised in the news is that the trade conflict between the US and China is not just an economic policy issue but a strategic power competition between two major countries. Furthermore, CNN emphasizes that China is not a passive party but an active, planned actor in the face of pressure from Trump, as reflected in the diction "risking strategy cards."

In this way, CNN constructs its news narrative. It illustrates that China has a strong strategy to counter the policies carried out by Donald Trump by writing the narrative "Nearly six years later, China's dominance of the rare earth supply chain has emerged as one of the most powerful tools in the new trade war with the US president" with such a narrative CNN has described how the power possessed by China to respond to this trade war.

Diagnose Causes

Diagnosing the cause is a step to determine the factors or parties that are considered to trigger an event. This process aims to uncover the root causes of an emerging event. In the news above, it can be seen that the cause of the trade war between the USA and China is Trump's trade policy, which increased tariffs on Chinese goods by 34%. This trade war occurred due to Donald Trump's policy of imposing a 34% tariff on Chinese goods. This was revealed by the media through its narrative.

In response to Trump's 34% 'reciprocal' tariff on Chinese goods". CNN also conveyed the view of Donald Trump that the USA's dependence on imports and weak supply was one of the steps Trump took to reduce imports of Chinese goods. CNN also presents a presentation on the development of rare-earth metal production in the USA, which involves three industrial companies. CNN conveyed this information through its report, "Since the first Trump administration, the United States has struggled to keep pace with rising demand and build a domestic supply chain for rare earth metals. Three US companies involved in the rare earth metals industry told CNN they are ex-

panding their production capacity and sourcing materials from US allies and partners. "In the news, the cause of the trade war between the USA and China is the imposition of tax increases on Chinese goods. This was analyzed using Robert Entman's framing theory (Entman, 1993), especially in diagnosing causes. The increase occurred on April 15, 2025, when US President Donald Trump announced it in an official fact sheet published by the White House. When the President of the United States, Donald Trump, makes important announcements regarding his administration's policies, he does so through an official fact sheet published by the White House, as part of the administration's efforts to be transparent with the public and the media. The document contains details of the policy to be adopted, along with the background and purpose of the decision.

Make Moral Judgment

Judging something morally means deciding whether an action is right or wrong, good or bad, based on the ethical values we believe in. This process is important because it helps us understand situations more deeply and determine the proper steps to take in dealing with a problem. The way we judge is also influenced by various factors, such as our experiences, beliefs, and the information we receive. The media often uses this moral judgment to shape the audience's perspective, enabling them to see an issue from a more ethical perspective. This makes the news or information delivered feel more meaningful and evocative. In the news above, CNN uses the term "Hitting American industry".

It is implicit that China's actions are strategically effective, but also aggressive and perhaps unethical because they "hit American industry" in a targeted manner. There is a sense that these actions carry negative consequences for the US and are considered a form of "economic weaponization." In addition, there is a term narrated by CNN that refers to moral judgment: "US dependence on imports and weak supply chains

increases the likelihood of risks to national security.

This sentence implies that US dependence is undesirable, so it should be revised. It also contains an element of moral judgment: the US should be independent in strategic resources for the national good.

In addition, the results of this study are in line with previous studies, including (Hafidli et al., 2023), which examines differences in the presentation of local and global news, and (Iskandar et al., 2020), which focuses on how Republika frames LGBT-related issues. Both previous studies employ a framing approach to examine how media shape public perception through the selection of specific narratives. This research is correlated with those studies, particularly in its application of Robert Entman's framing theory.

In the context of the U.S.–China trade war, the media also play a role in shaping audience understanding through framing elements such as making moral judgments, where the media do not merely present economic facts or policy information but also embed moral evaluations of each country's actions. For instance, China is often framed as an aggressive actor exploiting its dominance over rare earth metals, while the United States is positioned as a victim of dependency.

This moral assessment reflects how media shape public opinion regarding who is “right” and who is “wrong” in the conflict, aligning with previous findings that demonstrate how media frames strongly influence public perceptions of strategic and sensitive issues. Make moral judgment in this news is China's actions in controlling rare earth metals reflect an effective geopolitical strategy but its morality is questionable because it has adverse effects on the US and is seen as a form of economic pressure tool as well. Also, “US dependence on imports and weak supply chains increases the likelihood of risks to national security.” This sentence makes a judgment that US dependence is undesirable, so it needs to be changed. It also contains an element of moral judgment: that the US.

should be self-reliant in strategic resources for the national good.

Treatment Recommendation

A Treatment Recommendation is a solution or suggested step to overcome a problem. In the news presented by CNN, a treatment recommendation regarding the USA-China Trade War is that the USA needs to reduce its dependence on imports of rare earth metals from China. This is evident in Trump's concerns about national security stemming from this dependence. One of the suggested ways is to strengthen the domestic processing industry and expand cooperation with allied countries. This solution not only aims to respond to China's move, but also serves as a long-term effort to maintain national security, economic stability, and the independence of US strategic industries. Through this frame, CNN invites readers to see that behind this trade conflict, there is an urgent need for the US to clean up and build stronger economic resilience.

الصين توقف استثماراتها في وول ستريت ”
”ردا على حرب ترامب التجارية in Jazeera

Define Problem

Defining the problem is a stage of analysis that aims to explain how the media portrays an issue and how narratives are used to describe the problem's background. News about the trade war between the USA and China begins with an interesting title: "China halts investment in Wall Street in response to Trump's trade war". The diction Al-Jazeera uses emphasizes the serious steps China has taken in response to President Trump's decision. For example, the selection of "stopping investment in Wall Street" shows a serious, high-impact step that raises curiosity about its impact on financial markets. This shows that they want to identify the extent to which China's move affects the USA financial market. The main issue framed is the escalation of economic tensions between the US and China due to Trump's protectionist tariff policies, leading to investment withdrawals and trade wars. Al Jazeera, through source quotes and trade data, makes it clear who is considered the



trigger and who is affected.

In addition, Al-Jazeera's media narrative shows China as being forced to take decisive steps, making it reactive, not the aggressor. This reinforces the framing that the problem arises from US policy. Al-Jazeera uses the narrative "stop investment" to describe China's decisive steps in response to Trump's decision. In addition, Al-Jazeera used the narrative in its news that "China sharply cut imports of many US goods last month, in some cases to zero, as the trade war between the world's two largest economies escalated" and also "US cotton imports fell 90 percent from the same month last year" (Al-Jazeera 2025). By citing a drastic drop in imports of wheat, LNG, cotton, and other goods, as well as the withdrawal of investment funds, the news reinforces the view that the problem is not just political but also rooted in real and widespread economic losses (Sri et al., 2024).

Diagnose Causes

Diagnosing causes is the second stage of framing analysis, focusing on identifying the causal factors of an event, including the parties involved and the reasons behind it. This stage aims to identify the leading actors in the event and understand the motives behind their actions. In the news narrative presented by Al-Jazeera, "Trump imposes new tariffs of up to 145 percent on Chinese exports, and Beijing retaliates with 125 percent tariffs", this indicates that Trump and his tariff policy are positioned as the trigger for economic conflict. In other words, the US is the leading cause, while China is just reacting. In addition, the Trump administration is shown using pressure on other countries to stay away from China, which strengthens the framing that the US uses economic power aggressively to weaken China. This is in accordance with what Al-Jazeera reported in its news report: "a Bloomberg report citing sources familiar with the matter that the Trump administration is preparing to pressure countries seeking tariff cuts or exemptions from the United States to restrict trade with China, including financial sanctions.

Therefore, in the news presented by Al-Jazeera, the cause of the conflict is defined as the Trump administration's aggressive actions through tariffs and global economic pressure, which forced China to take countermeasures. The US is framed as the causal actor, while China is the affected and reacting party. This is in accordance with the "diagnose causes" function in Entman's framing theory, which is to explain "who and why" something happened.

Make Moral Judgment

The moral judgment stage is the process by which an event or issue is evaluated from an ethical point of view, to determine whether the action taken is judged to be right or wrong, good or bad. This element influences how the audience understands and assesses the situation, and helps shape their opinions on what actions should be taken or avoided. The media often utilizes this element to direct readers to view an issue through a particular moral lens. In the news of the trade war between the USA and China, reporting "China's Ministry of Commerce said Beijing will firmly oppose any party reaching a deal at China's expense and take firm countermeasures" This assertion gives the impression that China's actions are morally charged: namely to protect national interests and reject forms of "economic oppression". This frames China in a morally defensive and legitimate position. Furthermore, the sentence "Purchases of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and wheat were among the hardest hit, dropping to zero" this narrative morally assesses the impact of the trade war as unfavorable and damaging to economic stability, reinforcing the negative perception of Trump's policies. In addition, the sentence "Beijing will convene an informal meeting of the UN Security Council to accuse Washington of bullying and 'undermining global efforts for peace and development' by weaponizing tariffs." This is a form of moral labeling of the US, putting it as an actor creating global tensions and acting unethically.

Based on the previous description, the news contains elements of moral judgment. Moral judg-

ment refers to the evaluation of ethical values to justify or reject an action or idea. In the context of news, trade-war coverage between the United States and China involves moral judgment, as described in Entman's framing theory. The media frames China as ethically defending its national interests and resisting economic pressures that it deems unfair. At the same time, the United States is portrayed as aggressive and destructive to global stability. This framing helps shape audience perceptions that China is in the correct moral position and that US economic policies have negative ethical and socio-economic impacts.

Treatment Recommendation

This stage emphasizes problem-solving by presenting solutions or steps to address events or issues. The solution offered in Al-Jazeera online news media in the case of a trade war between the USA and China is in the form of a strong statement from China's trade ministry, as outlined in the narrative "China's Ministry of Commerce said Beijing would firmly oppose any party reaching an agreement at the expense of China and 'take firm countermeasures'. This is a form of treatment recommendation conveyed to the world: that, to deal with pressure, countermeasures and a firm stance are needed. Al-Jazeera also wrote in its narrative that "This week, Beijing will convene an informal meeting of the UN Security Council to accuse Washington of bullying and undermining global efforts for peace and development by weaponizing tariffs." This is also part of the proposed strategy of taking the issue to international forums to pressure the US diplomatically. This frames that the appropriate solution is resistance through international legal and political channels.

Robert Entman's Framing Device on Trade War Coverage Between the USA and China

Framing International Trade Policy in the Coverage of the Trade War between the USA and China on CNN Arabic Online Media

Table 3
Structure Analysis Using 5W+1H Elements of CNN Arabic Online Media

5W + 1H	Description
What	China restricted exports of rare earth metals in response to the 34% tariff imposed by the US in the trade war.
Who	Chinese government (particularly Xi Jinping), US government under President Donald Trump, global technology and defense industries that rely on rare earth metals, three US companies in the rare earth metals sector.
When	It started in 2019 when Xi declared the importance of rare earth metals, and peaked in April 2025 when export restrictions were imposed.
Where	China
Why	Because rare earth metals are crucial for advanced technologies (smartphones, electric vehicles, defense systems), and control over these resources gives China strategic power in an economic confrontation with the US.
How	China is using an export restriction strategy by requiring government licenses for seven types of rare earth metals and related products as a form of retaliation against the US tariff policy.

Robert Entman states that there are two sides to framing, namely the selection of issues and the highlighting of issues (Pohan, Sari, and Maisyarah 2023) The explanation is as follows.



Issue Selection

The determination of issues is closely related to the process of filtering and presenting facts by the media. In the context of the trade conflict between China and the United States, the media chose to highlight China's strategy in limiting rare earth metal exports as the main focus of the news. As seen in Table 2, the media framed China's dominance over rare earth metals as a form of economic power used to respond to tariff pressure from the United States. Even through the headline, it appears that China is portrayed as utilizing strategic resources to maintain its position in the trade competition, emphasizing that the move is not an aggressive action, but a response to Trump's economic policies that are considered oppressive. To dismiss the notion that China's move in the trade war is a form of unilateral aggression, a number of media outlets such as CNN present news that traces the roots of economic tensions between China and the US. They highlighted the high tariff policy of the Trump administration that triggered great pressure on the Chinese economy, so that China's response was positioned as a form of self-defense, not an attack (CNN Arabic 2025).

The media also highlighted how US trading partners that were once close to China are now trying to get closer to the US through normalization policies to reduce trade conflicts, even though this could harm their own global economic interests. In the narrative, the media questioned the commitment of Western countries to the principles of free trade that they have been promoting, as they are supporting the protectionist measures of the US (Gregori, 2021). With this framing, the media wants to show that China's restrictions on rare earth metal exports are not unilateral actions without reason, but part of a strategy of resistance to economic pressure and a way to show that China's economic strength cannot be ignored (CNN Arabic, 2025).

Issue Highlighting

Issue highlighting is a selective process used by the media to highlight certain aspects of an event

in order to shape public perception according to the narrative it wants to build. In its coverage of the trade war between China and the United States, media such as CNN emphasized the importance of China's rare earth metal export restriction policy. This policy is not positioned as a form of economic aggression, but rather as a rational defensive measure amidst the tariff pressure launched by the Trump administration.

The media highlighted three main reasons why this move was deemed necessary. First, US dominance of the global trading system, including the unilateral imposition of tariffs, has long been seen as suppressing the economic growth of competing countries, including China. Trump's move to raise import tariffs is considered a form of economic coercion that undermines the principle of free trade. Second, China's restriction of rare earth metal exports was done to draw global attention back to the imbalance in the international economic structure. The dependence of developed countries on supplies from China shows their own vulnerability, which was previously ignored. Third, this policy is also intended to change international perceptions of the role of the US, which has been considered the motor of global stability. Through this move, China wants to show that the US can also be a party that triggers instability when its interests are disturbed, especially by implementing policies that harm its strategic trading partners.

Thus, through issue highlighting, the media plays a role in reinforcing the narrative that China's actions are a legitimate response to aggressive economic policies, not a form of domination or market manipulation.

Framing International Trade Policy in the Coverage of Trade War between USA and China on Al-Jazeera Online Media

Framing international trade policy in Al-Jazeera's online coverage of the US-China trade war is presented in a table containing the 5Ws and H and their descriptions.

Table 4
Structure Analysis Using 5W+1H Elements of
Al-Jazeera Online Media

5W + 1H	Description
What	China halted state fund investments in US private equity firms and retaliated against US tariffs with other strategic economic measures, including import restrictions and export diversions. It's part of a heated trade war between the world's two largest economies.
Who	The Chinese government (including China Investment Corporation), US private equity firms, US President Donald Trump, and China's Ministry of Commerce.
When	Events have intensified since the trade war began, with the latest escalation occurring in the last few weeks before this report was released.
Where	China
Where	This is China's direct response to the aggressive US unilateral tariff policy (up to 145%) which is considered detrimental to China's national economy. It is also a form of rejection of US political-economic pressure on China's other trading partners.
How	China withdrew investment funds from US companies, imposed retaliatory tariffs, cut imports of strategic goods from the US (such as LNG, wheat, cotton, LPG), and stepped up international diplomacy to criticize US policies in global forums such as the UN.

Robert Entman states that there are two sides to framing, namely the selection of issues and the highlighting of issues (Pohan et al., 2023). The explanation is as follows.

Issue Selection

The news narrative presented by Al-Jazeera on the trade conflict between the United States and China mostly highlights China's reactive measures, such as halting investments in US private equity firms and restricting imports of certain American goods. The media explains that China's actions are in response to the Donald Trump administration's unilateral tariff policies, including tariffs of up to 145% on Chinese exports. However, the description of the broader socio-economic impact of US policies on Chinese society and businesses is brief and without in-depth emphasis (Al-Jazeera, 2025).

In its narrative frame, Al-Jazeera prefers to highlight Western investors' anxiety and global market uncertainty as the main issues, instead of discussing the structural pressures and geopolitical tensions China faces due to US protectionist policies. This shows that media issue selection favors Western economic interests and ignores the broader context of China's defensive moves. Terms used, such as "tariff retaliation" or "investment freeze," frame China as a reactive party that shocks global markets, while terms such as "Trump administration's strategy" are used with a neutral or even positive tone towards US policies (Al-Jazeera, 2025).

This framing bias has important implications. Although the media does not explicitly blame China, this framing emphasizes the dominance of Western narratives in global economic discourse. Supposedly, in the context of bilateral relations and economic multilateralism, both the US and China are positioned equally in the news narrative.

Issue Highlighting

Al-Jazeera's account of the trade war between the United States and China highlights two main



issues: the Trump administration's high tariffs and China's response of halting investments and a significant drop in import volumes from the US. In its report, it highlights these reasons in general terms without going into depth on broader negative impacts, such as violations of free trade principles, economic pressure on farmers and small businesses in both countries, or escalating geopolitical tensions.

Rather than going into detail about US economic dominance or aggressive forms of economic intervention, Al-Jazeera chose to emphasize the Chinese government's response, withdrawing investment funds from the US private market and cutting purchases of essential commodities such as LNG, cotton, and corn. This highlights how the media framed the crisis, focusing on China's countermeasures rather than delving into the initial causes of the escalation.

In addition, the media also features the attitudes of other countries that are worried about the effects of US trade policies, as seen from the efforts of nearly 50 countries requesting exemptions from tariffs. The focus on these international dynamics shifts attention away from the original issue—the main reason China is responding strongly to Trump's trade policy. However, the selection and highlighting of issues in the news remain part of the framing strategy, carried out by the media in accordance with the audience and the narrative objectives to be achieved.

CONCLUSION

Robert Entman's framing analysis of CNN's coverage of the trade war between the US and China begins by showing that CNN frames this conflict not only as an economic policy competition but also as a strategic competition between two global powers. In the cause diagnosis segment, CNN explains that the root cause of this trade war is the policy of increasing tariffs on Chinese products announced by President Donald Trump in an official White House document on April 15, 2025. In the moral judgment section, CNN provides an evaluation of the actions of China and the US.

China's dominance of rare-earth metals is considered both strategic and ethically problematic. At the same time, the US's reliance on imports is seen as a national security weakness that must be overcome. In the treatment recommendation section, CNN proposes that the US reduce its dependence on rare-earth metal imports from China by strengthening domestic industries and establishing cooperation with allies as a long-term measure to ensure national security and economic stability.

On the other hand, Robert Entman's framing analysis of Al-Jazeera online news shows that China's actions are framed as retaliation or a defensive response to Donald Trump's policies. At the cause diagnosis stage, it is explained that China's decision to take risky steps, such as stopping investment in Wall Street, is motivated by economic pressure from the US. In moral judgment, Al-Jazeera portrays China as the ethical party and the US as aggressive and destabilizing, thereby creating the perception that China's moral position is more justified. The analysis concludes with a recommended solution: decisive action and taking the issue to the international sphere, such as the UN Security Council, is seen as the best strategy to respond to economic pressure from the United States.

This research analyzes the framing in online news articles from Al Jazeera and CNN regarding the trade war between the USA and China. However, the findings may not fully cover the broader scope or framing strategies applied by these media outlets as a whole. This study only focuses on two major international media platforms, so the findings may not apply to other media organizations or different contexts, as framing strategies may vary across platforms and regions.

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