



News Framing of the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade Controversy on Kompas.com and Tempo.co

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DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.47134/converse.v3i1.6178>

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Received: 09-05-2026

Accepted: 15-06-2026

Published: 24-07-2026



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Abstract: *The signing of the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) between Indonesia and the United States in early 2026 triggered an economic sovereignty polemic due to a significant asymmetry: 217 obligations for Indonesia versus 6 for the US. This policy was contrastingly constructed by national online news portals. This study aims to compare the news framing of the ART polemic on Tempo.co and Kompas.com. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach with a constructivism paradigm, data were collected through digital documentation of 12 news texts published between February 20 and March 2, 2026. The texts were analyzed using Robert N. Entman's Framing Analysis and Vincent Mosco's Political Economy of Communication Theory to trace underlying ideological motives. The results demonstrate an extreme divergence. Representing an independent watchdog ideology, Tempo.co framed ART as a threat of economic neocolonialism due to the loss of digital tax authority. Conversely, Kompas.com, operating under a massive media conglomeration, framed ART optimistically as a savior for investment and export stability to avoid market instability. In conclusion, the reality of international policy news on digital platforms is never neutral; it is absolutely dictated by the ownership structure dynamics and the political economy interests of the press institutions.*

Keywords: Agreement on Reciprocal Trade, Framing Analysis, Political Economy of Media, Kompas.com, Tempo.co.

Introduction

The signing of the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) between the Republic of Indonesia and the United States in early 2026 marked a turning point in bilateral economic relations and triggered a nationwide controversy. The agreement drew intense scrutiny because of an extreme asymmetry in the obligations it imposed on each party. Indonesia was bound to comply with 217 obligations, whereas the United States assumed only six. This asymmetry suggests that ART was not an ordinary trade instrument but a geopolitical manoeuvre that left Indonesia's diplomatic bargaining position markedly weak.

The reciprocal-tariff policy was widely assessed as carrying destructive consequences for the survival of the domestic real sector. The national agricultural sector was projected to come under pressure from an influx of cheap imports from the United States, including wheat, soybeans, and processed meat products. The mining sector was likewise expected to suffer as the relaxation of raw-mineral exports undercut the national downstreaming (hilirisasi) agenda. The erosion of competitiveness across these two strategic sectors accumulated into a tangible threat to state sovereignty. A sharp public discourse subsequently emerged, characterising the agreement as a new form of economic neocolonialism on the part of the United States ([Rizky, 2026b](#)).

This controversy over threatened sovereignty did not arise in a vacuum; it was actively and extensively constructed by online mass-media institutions. Digital news portals occupy a central position as gatekeepers that select, filter, and shape public interpretations of the treaty's intricate provisions. The objective reality of an international legal document was thus unpacked and reworked into competing versions of subjective reality presented to the wider public. The velocity of cyber journalism further intensified the situation by fostering an almost instantaneous polarisation of public opinion over whether ART represented an investment opportunity or a form of colonisation.

This production of subjective reality by journalists operates through news-framing mechanisms shaped by competing ideological interests of deliberately select particular issues for emphasis and foreground specific aspects of an event so that it becomes more salient and memorable to audiences ([Entman, 1993](#)). The news text ultimately becomes an arena of discursive contestation that reflects the ideological positions and political-economic interests of each media conglomerate. Editorial responses to foreign economic hegemony confirm that journalistic products are never wholly neutral or value-free.

Tempo.co has historically positioned itself as a watchdog outlet, consistently sceptical of the exercise of power and of foreign hegemony. Its newsroom sustains a robust tradition of investigative journalism, aided by the absence of direct pressure from pro-government oligarchic capital within its ownership structure. Kompas.com, by contrast, operates under a philosophy of transcendental-humanist journalism that tends toward moderate compromise in the interest of national stability ([Hill, 1994](#)). The Kompas–Gramedia Group has grown into a large-scale media conglomerate that routinely seeks to temper negative sentiment in order to avert instability and mass panic in the stock market.

This editorial divergence was already visible in an initial observation of the two outlets' headlines at the moment the ART document was concluded. Tempo.co published reporting that foregrounded the threat to economic sovereignty and cited critical, independent expert opinion, under the headline "Celios Deems the Indonesia–US Trade Agreement a Threat". Kompas.com, by contrast, sought to secure the central government's narrative by emphasising claims about protecting the livelihoods of local workers, in an article titled "The Indonesia–US Trade Agreement: What Are the Benefits for Indonesia's Economy?". This stark difference in early framing points to a mechanism of meaning reproduction heavily inflected by competing political interests within the newsroom.

Framing research on Indonesian online news has already established that Tempo.co and Kompas.com construct public issues in divergent ways, yet three limitations in that literature remain unresolved. ([Sinambela, 2025](#)) compared the two portals' coverage of the Pertamina corruption case through Entman's model and documented a clear divergence, with Tempo.co foregrounding elite actors, legal process, and losses to the state, while Kompas.com emphasised consumer harm and unethical business practice. The object of that study was nonetheless a domestic criminal case, in which the contested stake is legal accountability rather than national sovereignty, and its analysis stopped at describing the divergence without tracing it to the ownership structures that produced it. [Martha et al. \(2022\)](#) shifted the discussion toward foreign policy, examining how Kompas, Tempo, and

The Jakarta Post reported Indonesia's response to the rivalry between the United States and China, and found a striking uniformity: all three outlets endorsed the government's neutral, free-and-active posture. That study, however, addressed a declaratory diplomatic stance rather than a binding legal instrument carrying direct material consequences for domestic sectors, and its analytical apparatus, Michael Brejcek and accounted for the divergence through the Hierarchy of Influences. Their design, however, contrasts state ownership with editorial independence, a dichotomy that cannot capture the commercial logic of a privately held conglomerate such as Kompas–Gra

Taken together, these studies leave a determinate gap. None examines an issue that simultaneously engages macroeconomic policy, state sovereignty, and international relations; and none explains framing divergence by reference to the ownership structures and capital interests of the institutions producing the text. The ART case renders both omissions consequential. Its provisions, among them the prohibition on a digital services tax and the removal of local-content (TKDN) requirements, bear directly on the fiscal authority of the state, while the two outlets reporting on them occupy structurally distinct positions within Indonesia's media economy. This study therefore treats the divergence in framing not as a pattern merely to be described, but as one to be explained.

This study examines comparatively how the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade was framed by Tempo.co and Kompas.com, applying Robert N. Entman's model of framing analysis to uncover the ideological discourse embedded in the news texts of these two mainstream institutions. Its novelty lies in three respects. Empirically, it is the first comparative framing study to take as its object a binding bilateral trade instrument that directly curtails the fiscal authority of the Indonesian state, an issue that fuses macroeconomic policy, sovereignty, and international relations in a way the existing literature has treated only separately. Theoretically, it does not stop at mapping divergent frames but reads them through Vincent Mosco's political economy of communication, so that the difference between the two newsrooms is explained by ownership structure and capital interest rather than merely recorded as organised earlier work, setting an independent outlet against a privately held conglomerate whose commercial incentives operate through the market rather than through direct state pressure. The study accordingly contributes to Communication Studies by mapping the discursive contestation over national economic sovereignty, and equips readers to approach reporting on macroeconomic policy with a firmer critical media literacy. ([Mosco, 2009](#))

Theoretical Framework

The Social Construction of Reality, developed by the sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, serves as the principal theoretical foundation of this study. This macro-level theory posits that social reality is not a natural, static, or given entity. Reality is continually created, interpreted, and reshaped through everyday human activity and social interaction. Berger and Luckmann identify three dialectical moments that operate simultaneously within this process of social construction: externalisation, objectivation, and internalisation.

Applied to the study of cyber journalism, this conceptual framework casts journalists and editors as the principal agents of construction. News texts about the ART document are not simply reflective mirrors of the objective facts unfolding at the diplomatic negotiating table. Media workers produce a subjective reality through externalisation, a highly selective filtering of information aligned with their institution's editorial ideology. This partial reality is then objectivated into a finished news product that appears, on the reader's screen, to be an absolute representation of fact. At the final stage, audiences are directed to internalise the dominant discourse presented by the outlet as the single truth about the state of national sovereignty.

Uncovering the fundamental motives behind these divergent constructions of journalistic reality requires the analytical tools of Vincent Mosco's Political Economy of Communication. This critical approach examines the intersection of power relations among ownership structures, corporate-conglomerate affiliations, and the ideological orientation of the newsroom ([Mosco, 2009](#)). Mosco defines the political economy of communication as the study of the social relations, particularly relations of power, that shape the production, distribution, and consumption of communicative resources. His framework offers three analytical entry points, commodification, spatialisation, and structuration, for exposing hegemonic practices within the mass-media industry. Editorial decisions to suppress or foreground a given public discourse are never free from the largely invisible pull of corporate capital accumulation.

The concept of structuration is especially well suited to explaining the divergent framing of news texts on Tempo.co and Kompas.com. Large-scale media corporations tend by their nature to prioritise the continuity of their business operations and to avoid open confrontation with those in power. This pragmatic, pro-stability journalistic orientation frequently collides with the idealism of an independent press that historically has no capital ties to political-oligarchic conglomerates ([Steele, 2005](#)). It is precisely this difference in the ownership chain that produced the most extreme discursive polarisation over the asymmetrical ART agreement.

Robert N. Entman's model of framing analysis is adopted as the operational methodological framework for identifying the ideological frames embedded within online news texts. Entman defines framing as the selection of specific aspects of a perceived reality that are deliberately made more salient so that audiences grasp a particular meaning intended by the communicator ([Entman, 1993](#)). This cognitive salience is deployed strategically by cyber media to guide readers toward a coherent problem definition, identification of the responsible party, moral evaluation, and recommended resolution. The news text thereby exercises considerable control over the parameters of public perception during high-stakes policy conflicts.

Entman's model comprises four principal units of analysis that interlock to form a single narrative. The first, defining the problem (define problems), examines how the media formulate the essential nature of an issue from a sequence of reported events. The second, diagnosing causes (diagnose causes), identifies the entity or actor cast as the source of the crisis. The third, making moral judgements (make moral judgement), evaluates the ethical

labels or legitimating justifications applied to the dominant actor's conduct. The fourth, recommending treatment (treatment recommendation), reveals the prescribed solutions or corrective measures that journalists embed within the body of the news text.

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach grounded firmly in the constructivist paradigm. This paradigm is an epistemological necessity for analysing cyber news texts saturated with competing ideological interests. Within the constructivist view, reality is understood as plural, malleable, and deliberately shaped through purposive social action ([Triyono, 2021](#)). In the context of this study, the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) is not a mirror of a single economic reality. Rather, the trade agreement is a discursive reality deliberately reconstructed and interpreted in opposing ways by the Tempo.co and Kompas.com newsrooms. A descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because the study does not seek causal relationships between variables or test statistical hypotheses. Instead, it focuses on uncovering the manifest and latent meanings behind the linguistic elements of the news texts.

The primary data corpus consists of online news texts addressing the ART policy controversy between the United States and Indonesia. These texts were drawn from two mainstream national news portals, Tempo.co and Kompas.com. The two portals were selected on the basis of their historically contrasting editorial identities. The researcher selected twelve specific news articles, six representing Tempo.co and six representing Kompas.com. All articles in the corpus were published within the crucial window of 20 February to 2 March 2026. This period was chosen purposively because it represents the peak of public polarisation following the signing of the agreement in Washington, D.C.

Data collection was carried out through digital documentation and non-participant textual observation. The researcher archived the news articles in full from the two outlets' official websites, converting them to Portable Document Format (PDF). This precise digital archiving was essential to prevent the loss of data caused by the routine system updates common to online news portals. The twelve news texts were then analysed formally through close reading. Repeated readings were applied to capture the cognitive framing inserted by information gatekeepers into the headline, lead, body, and selection of expert-source quotations.

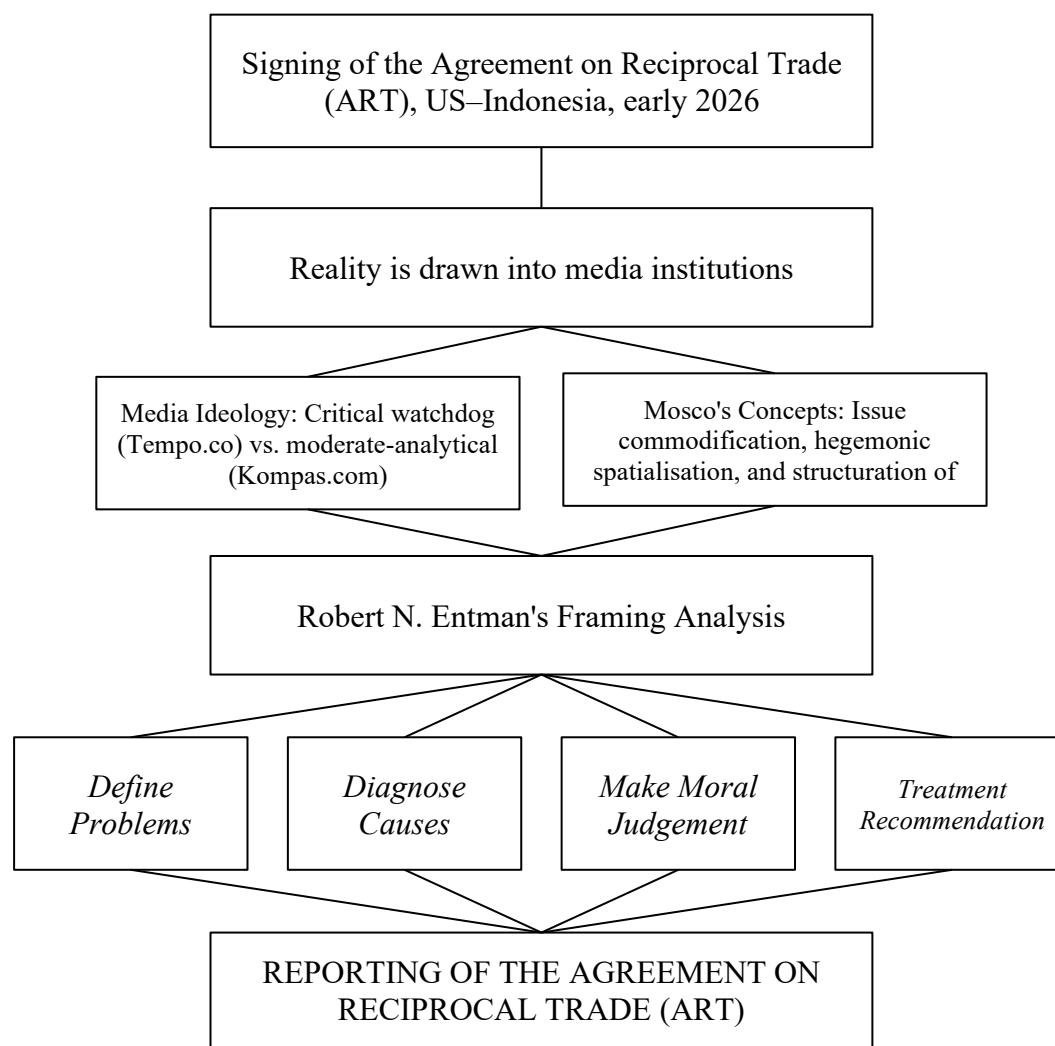


Figure 2.1. Research Framework

Data analysis was implemented using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, integrated directly with Entman's framing apparatus. In the data-condensation stage, peripheral sentences were reduced and extraction was focused on key passages indicating ideological contestation. In the data-display stage, these key passages were analysed across Entman's four categories: Define Problems, Diagnose Causes, Make Moral Judgement, and Treatment Recommendation. In the final stage, conclusion drawing, the framing findings of the two outlets were compared and the political-economic motives underlying their discursive divergence were examined ([Miles et al., 2014](#)).

Result and Discussion

Framing of the ART Issue in Tempo.co's Reporting

Analysis of the define problems element reveals Tempo.co's assertive construction of the ART policy as a threat to sovereignty and a new form of economic colonisation. The portal consistently foregrounded the imbalance between Indonesia's 217 obligations and the six borne by the United States. Tempo.co's journalists defined the agreement as a structural instrument that would gradually dismantle national industrialisation. Their reporting

sharply emphasised the loss of technology-transfer obligations and the outright removal of local-content (Tingkat Komponen Dalam Negeri, TKDN) requirements for foreign multinational firms. This highly critical framing reflects Tempo's willingness to challenge the claims of diplomatic parity advanced by state officials.

At the diagnose causes stage, Tempo.co positioned US hegemonic ambition as the principal cause of the loss of domestic regulatory independence. The newsroom specifically exposed the stripping of the Indonesian government's authority to levy digital-services taxes on foreign technology giants. This fiscal prohibition was framed as empirical evidence of the plundering of state revenue by global capital. Tempo.co's reporters further identified Indonesia's obligation to comply with US trade-boycott lists as a cause of the collapse of the country's "free and active" foreign-policy principle ([Pratiwi, 2026b](#))

The make moral judgement element in Tempo.co's texts sharply condemned the surrender of state authority merely to facilitate the flow of foreign capital. Mortgaging the nation's economic independence, and granting tax exemptions to large platforms, was judged a deeply problematic and unjust sacrifice of sovereignty. This moral evaluation criticised a business climate that discriminated against and stifled local technology firms. Tempo.co's narrative positioned millions of farmers and real-sector workers as the principal victims of an influx of cheap US imports ([Pratiwi, 2026a](#)). This moral justification, cast in defence of ordinary citizens, reaffirmed Tempo's historical identity as a watchdog outlet consistently sceptical of the narratives of those in power.

At the treatment recommendation stage, Tempo.co steered its audience toward heightened vigilance. Its texts implicitly urged the public to demand a review of the ART provisions shown to be markedly imbalanced and disadvantageous. Readers were invited to recognise the projected widening of the trade-balance deficit should the agreement be implemented in full without resistance. This recommendation carried an unwritten demand that state officials not readily submit to hegemonic pressure and instead promptly annul provisions that constrained national regulatory sovereignty.

Table 2.1. Tempo.co News Headlines

No.	News Headline	Date
1.	<i>Kewajiban Indonesia vs Amerika di Perjanjian Dagang</i> [Indonesia's Obligations versus America's in the Trade Agreement] (Pratiwi, 2026a)	20 February 2026 17:33 WIB
2.	<i>Apa Saja Kesepakatan Indonesia-AS senilai US\$ 33 Miliar</i> [The Details of the US\$33 Billion Indonesia-US Agreement] (Estherina, 2026)	20 February 2026 18:17 WIB
3.	<i>Perjanjian Dagang: RI Wajib Ikut jika AS Boikot Negara Lain</i> [Trade Agreement: Indonesia Must Comply if the US Boycotts Other Nations] (Pratiwi, 2026b)	20 February 2026 20:29 WIB
4.	<i>Celios Nilai Perjanjian Dagang Indonesia-AS sebagai Ancaman</i> [Celios Deems the Indonesia-US Trade Agreement a Threat] (Yuantisya, 2026a)	21 February 2026 08:02 WIB
5.	<i>Pemerintah Jelaskan Alasan Sepakati Perjanjian Dagang AS</i> [Government Explains Its Reasons for Agreeing to the US Trade Deal] (Yuantisya, 2026b)	22 February 2026 19:22 WIB
6.	<i>Setelah Amerika Melarang (Piri, 2026)Indonesia Memungut Pajak Digital</i> [After America Barred Indonesia from Levying Digital Taxes]	2 March 2026 07:30 WIB

Framing of the ART Issue in Kompas.com's Reporting

Analysis of the define problems element in Kompas.com's reporting reveals a stance highly accommodating of the government's position. The portal consistently defined the ART policy as an instrument for rescuing the national economy and as a strategic diplomatic achievement. Kompas.com's journalists centred their discourse on protecting the competitiveness of national export products amid the threat of a widening trade deficit. This editorial choice reflects a deliberate issue-selection strategy that foregrounded claims about the success of the state's diplomatic lobbying. Such a pragmatic definition positioned the trade agreement principally as a means of safeguarding employment and catalysing local industrial growth.

At the diagnose causes stage, Kompas.com located the root of the problem in the threatened unilateral imposition of a 32 percent reciprocal tariff by the United States. Its editors highlighted the state's difficult position, compelled to pursue negotiation in order to avoid a more destructive retaliatory response. The Indonesian government was consistently positioned as a rational actor seeking the best available outcome amid mounting global protectionism. This diagnosis validated the state's compromise as a reasonable act of self-defence.

The make moral judgement element in Kompas.com's texts implicitly praised the diplomatic effort as a pro-people action. This ethical evaluation was reinforced by a narrative underscoring efforts to protect the livelihoods of millions of workers in labour-intensive industries. Kompas.com afforded state officials ample space to allay public doubts and to promote the ease of doing business following the signing. This pro-stability moral justification reflects the outlet's commitment to maintaining a harmonious relationship with state authorities and to averting an escalation of panic in the capital markets.

At the treatment recommendation stage, Kompas.com directed public opinion toward a positive reception of the agreement. Its texts encouraged domestic businesses to adapt quickly and to recognise the various incentives embedded in the treaty's provisions. Industry actors were persuasively urged to take advantage of zero-percent tariff facilities across thousands of export commodity lines and of easier access to technological raw materials. This optimistic framing functioned to guide audiences toward viewing the ratification of ART as a logical solution deserving full support.

Table 2.2. Kompas.com News Headlines

No.	News Headline	Date
1.	<i>Indonesia-AS Resmi Teken Perjanjian Tarif Resiprokal</i> (Ulya & Prabowo, 2026) [Indonesia and the US Officially Sign the Reciprocal-Tariff Agreement]	20 February 2026 09:00 WIB
2.	<i>Ekonom Sebut Perjanjian Tarif Resiprokal AS Rugikan Indonesia, Ini Alasannya</i> [Economist Says the US Reciprocal-Tariff Agreement Harms Indonesia: Here's Why]	21 February 2026 16:16 WIB
3.	<i>Perjanjian Dagang Indonesia dan AS, Apa Manfaatnya untuk Ekonomi RI?</i> [The Indonesia-US Trade Agreement: What Are the Benefits for Indonesia's Economy?]	22 February 2026 19:40 WIB
4.	<i>Asimetris Substansi Perjanjian Dagang AS-Indonesia</i> [The Asymmetric Substance of the US-Indonesia Trade Agreement]	25 February 2026 12:02 WIB

5.	<i>Ekonom Ini Sebut Perjanjian Dagang dengan AS Bikin Posisi RI di Bawah Kendali Asing</i> [Economist Says the Trade Agreement with the US Puts Indonesia under Foreign Control] (Rizky & Djumena, 2026)	27 February 2026 16:06 WIB
6.	<i>Ekonom Ramai Kritik Perjanjian Dagang RI–AS, Pemerintah Pedes Tetap Jalan</i> [Economists Widely Criticise the Indonesia–US Trade Agreement; Government Confidently Presses Ahead]	28 February 2026 08:37 WIB

Framing Comparison and Confirmation of Political Economy of Media Theory

The comparison of the two textual analyses reveals a sharp divergence between Tempo.co and Kompas.com in their construction of the ART policy. This international trade agreement was demonstrably not presented to readers as a single, neutral fact. Tempo.co actively produced a reality of threat and economic neocolonialism by centring the imbalance in the two countries' obligations. Kompas.com reproduced a reality of optimism by focusing its discourse on safeguarding export competitiveness and protecting macroeconomic stability.

Table 2.3. Synthesis Matrix Comparing the Framing of Tempo.co and Kompas.com

Framing Elements	Tempo.co	Kompas
Define Problems	Economic neocolonialism and a threat to the sovereignty of national industry.	A strategic diplomatic achievement safeguarding exports and the survival of labour-intensive industry.
Diagnose Causes	US hegemonic ambition and the stripping of the government's fiscal authority (digital taxation).	The threat of a unilateral 32 percent tariff by the US, forcing a rational compromise.
Make Moral Judgement	Condemnation of a surrender of sovereignty that discriminates against local industry.	Praise for the state's action as the definitive protector of the stability of MSMEs and workers.
Treatment Recommendation	Urging the public to be vigilant against the threat and to demand a government review of the agreement.	Inviting businesses to exploit zero-percent tariff incentives for production efficiency.

This divergence cannot be treated as journalistic accident, nor can Entman's model account for it on its own: framing analysis describes what a frame does to an issue, not why a particular newsroom arrives at that frame. Mosco's concept of structuration supplies the missing explanatory layer by treating news production as an activity bounded by the ownership relations that surround it (Mosco, 2009). Tempo.co operates under PT Tempo Inti Media Tbk, whose governance separates commercial authority from editorial authority and distributes shareholding to include the journalists themselves. No capital bloc aligned with the incumbent government sits within that structure, and the newsroom's institutional memory is one of having been closed down in June 1994 for investigative reporting on the procurement of warships from East Germany. For an outlet so constituted, the structural cost of defining a treaty signed by the state as economic neocolonialism is close to zero, and the reputational return, confirmation of a watchdog identity its audience selects it for, is substantial.

Kompas.com is positioned differently. Its newsroom is embedded within Kompas–Gramedia Group, a conglomerate whose portfolio extends well beyond publishing into

printing, hospitality, and property ([Hill, 1994](#)). That portfolio is directly exposed to the macroeconomic and regulatory conditions on which the ART controversy bears, which converts editorial confrontation with the state into a business risk rather than merely an editorial choice. Hill characterises the resulting disposition as determined boringness: a deliberate caution in handling sensitive issues, with criticism delivered obliquely rather than frontally. Read through Mosco's category of commodification, the pattern is coherent. A news product serving advertisers and an investor readership derives value from stability, and a frame that anticipates panic in the capital markets damages the conditions of its own circulation. Kompas.com's construction of ART as rational compromise is therefore not evidence of a less competent newsroom but of a newsroom operating under a different structural constraint.

The corpus nonetheless resists any simple equation of conglomerate ownership with uncritical reporting. Four of the six Kompas.com texts examined here carry headlines that are plainly critical of the agreement, including reports that economists judged it harmful to Indonesia and that it placed the country under foreign control. What distinguishes these texts from Tempo.co's is not the presence of criticism but its location: on Kompas.com, critical propositions are attributed to external economists and presented as reported opinion, while the outlet's own definitional and recommendatory work, the problem definition and the treatment recommendation, remains aligned with the government's account. Tempo.co, by contrast, incorporates the critical proposition into its own framing, so that the imbalance of obligations functions as the definition of the problem rather than as a source's view of it. Structural constraint thus operates less as suppression than as displacement: criticism is admitted into the text, but positioned so that it never becomes the newsroom's own voice.

Situating these findings against the existing literature clarifies what the ART case adds. ([Sinambela, 2025](#)) examined the same two portals through the same model and likewise found them diverging, but the axis of divergence ran along the scale of harm rather than its existence. ([Sinambela, 2025](#)) examined the same two portals through the same model and likewise found them diverging, but the axis of divergence ran along the scale of harm rather than its existence. Tempo.co located the damage of the Pertamina corruption case in elite conduct, legal process, and losses to the state, while Kompas.com located it in consumer detriment and unethical business practice. Both newsrooms nonetheless condemned. In the ART corpus the moral evaluations are not differently scaled but opposed, with Tempo.co condemning a surrender of sovereignty while Kompas.com praises a diplomatic achievement. The comparison indicates that divergence between these two outlets widens sharply once the object of scrutiny shifts from corporate wrongdoing to state policy, since condemning corruption commits a newsroom to no position on the government's own decisions, whereas condemning a treaty the government has signed does exactly that.

The contrast with [Martha et al. \(2022\)](#) is sharper still, since that study found uniformity precisely where this one finds division, and across an issue that also involved the United States. The difference lies in the character of the policy rather than in t(2022) is sharper still, since that study found uniformity precisely where this one finds division, and

across an issue that also involved the United States. The difference lies in the character of the policy rather than in t(2022) is sharper still, since that study found uniformity precisely where this one finds division, and across an issue that also involved the United States. The difference lies in the character of the policy rather than in the outlets. Indonesia's free and active posture amid the rivalry between the United States and China is a declaratory stance that allocates no losses domestically and that no constituency has an interest in contesting. ART is a binding instrument that distributes concrete costs across agriculture, mining, and the domestic technology sector while removing a specific fiscal power from the state. The juxtaposition supports a proposition that merits testing on further cases: consensus among Indonesian outlets on foreign policy holds while the policy remains symbolic, and fractures once it becomes distributive.

[Syahira et al. \(2025\)](#) provide the closest methodological comparison, and their portrait of Tempo.co is confirmed here in a new domain, with the critical disposition they observed on domestic infrastructure extending to international economic policy. The more consequential comparison, however, falls on the other side of their design. Antaranews.com's accommodation of the government narrative is readily explained by state ownership, whereas Kompas.com is privately held and accommodates nonetheless. Structural accommodation therefore does not require state ownership; embedding within a commercial conglomerate produces a functionally comparable outcome through a different route. The mechanisms remain distinguishable in the texts themselves. Antaranews.com set potential risks aside altogether, while Kompas.com admits critical assessments and relocates them into attributed opinion. This distinction between exclusion and displacement is the principal empirical contribution this study offers to comparative framing research in Indonesia.

Conclusion

This study finds that Tempo.co and Kompas.com did not merely emphasise different aspects of the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade but produced opposed constructions of it, with Tempo.co defining the treaty as economic neocolonialism and a threat to sovereignty while Kompas.com defined it as a rational diplomatic achievement protecting export competitiveness, a divergence traceable to the ownership structures within which each newsroom operates rather than to the facts of the agreement itself. The finding carries an implication that extends beyond this case. Because Kompas.com is privately held yet accommodates the government's account, structural accommodation evidently does not require state ownership, and because that accommodation works by relocating criticism into attributed opinion rather than by excluding it, the presence of critical voices in a news text is a poor indicator of a critical frame. For readers, this means that a plural media market does not guarantee plural definitions of a public problem, and critical media literacy should therefore attend to which actor performs the definitional and recommendatory work in a text, not simply to whether dissenting views appear within it. For newsrooms, it underscores the value of making the distinction between reported criticism and editorial position legible to audiences. Subsequent research could test whether this displacement is

perceptible to readers at all, since reception analysis would establish whether audiences distinguish a frame the newsroom advances from one it merely transmits, and comparative work across a larger corpus of outlets would determine how far the pattern identified here extends within Indonesia's online press.

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