

Global Times' Framing for China's Noopolitics in the South China Sea

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ABSTRACT

The South China Sea (SCS) is a water area blessed with rich natural resources and a strategic location for geopolitical interests. As a result, China has placed SCS on its list of Major Rejuvenation Goals. China's modus operandi for achieving its SCS ambitions is various. Starting from making land reclamations and artificial islands, sending residents to artificial islands and then implementing jurisdiction and administration, carrying out military activities, as well as carrying out diplomatic efforts. Another path China has undertaken to establish its maritime empire in the SCS is media framing. This study highlights how China functions the Global Times, its state-owned media, to establish a framework for thinking that the SCS belongs to China. To achieve its objectives, this study uses Zhongdang Pan and M Kosicky's framing analysis to identify Global Times framing and qualitative methods to discover the intent of these frames. This study finds that the Global Times assisted the Chinese government in claiming the SCS with syntax, thematic, and rhetoric structure of framing; dominantly quoted pro-China experts/academicians/statesmen, emphasized the words 'sovereignty' and presented the narrative that the SCS belonged to China, used Chinese to name the islands in the SCS, and echoed the rhetoric of 'there is no conflict in the SCS'. This study proves that China is also pursuing its Nanhai Dream by practicing Noopolitics.

Keywords: China; Global Times; Framing; Noopolitics; South China Sea

INTRODUCTION

The importance of the SCS is unquestionable. The SCS is a sea that holds around 125 billion barrels of oil and 500 trillion cubic feet of gas in unexplored areas (Daiss, 2016). The SCS is also home to the world's most diverse reef systems and over 3,000 indigenous and migratory fish species, making the sea endure 12 percent of global fish catch (Greer, 2016). In terms of geographical position, the SCS hosts a crucial sea road for international shipping passage, with \$5.3 trillion worth of trade roaming across its waters every single year—one-third of all global maritime trade (Saiidi, 2017). With this data, it is logical for William Pesek (2017) to note that "*whoever controls these shipping lanes rules this Asian Century*".

The treasures the SCS possesses, therefore, stimulate China's eagerness to govern this sea. China has sounded the so-called nine-dash line claim in the SCS since the late 1940s. Unfortunately, garnering the blessings offered by this 1,423,000-square-mile area of water is similar to opening Pandora's Box. If one takes the opportunity to open and take the SCS'

resources, misfortune will immediately take place. It is evidenced by the protests posted by Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Vietnam, which in some cases have brought physical and non-physical disputes. Consequently, the SCS transforms into a sensitive, even dangerous, spot at sea. Some scholars even dub it *'the most problematic sea of this century'*.

For China, considering the sea has a number of fortunes, it is sensible to make significant efforts to own the sea. China exercises its sovereignty in the SCS in several practical ways. First, China develops artificial islands in the SCS area, which, in the first place, were originally rocks, reefs, shoals, or low-tide elevations (Davenport, 2018; Beech, 2016). Raul Pedrozo (2010) argues that China's incentive to do this is to "*elevate whatever territory it has to 'island' status in order to gain 200 nautical miles of EEZ*". In Andrew Ericksen et al.'s (2015) opinion, China, by having islands, might attempt to establish an Air Defense Zone in the SCS as it did in the East China Sea in 2013.

Second, China uses its military power to assert its sovereignty claim in the SCS. Beijing has built military facilities on seven features in the Spratlys; three of them have three-kilometer-long airfields with aircraft shelters, advanced radars, and point defenses (Brands & Cooper, 2018). China has also applied military exercises and patrol routines not only to display its modern naval capabilities but also to deter other claimants from challenging him at sea (Fravel, 2011).

Third, China embeds its jurisdiction and administration in the SCS by sending its citizens there, making it easier for them to carry out economic activities (Fravel, 2011). For example, in 2016, Woody Island had over 1,000 habitats and a Chinese garrison on the surrounding islands. China built government buildings, schools, post offices, rural cooperative banks, supermarkets, barbershops, beverage shops, and 4G signals on the island (Zhen, 2016). China also treats tourism activities as a practice within its jurisdiction. Yan Huang and Hamid Suliman (2020) found that many tourism activities in the SCS arrange for tourists to attend meaningful patriotic rituals, such as raising the Chinese national flag and swearing-in ceremonies. The activity was held to get tourists to declare China's national sovereignty over the SCS.

The next steps for China to preserve its sovereignty are through diplomacy. China held plenty of bilateral talks with SCS claimants, sent diplomatic notes and statements, and attended some regional forums organized by ASEAN. China's diplomatic efforts serve to both pacify angry neighbors and strengthen its claims to the SCS (Storey, 2012). In M. Taylor Fravel's lens, China pursues the diplomatic path to comfort its delayed strategy. The delaying strategy is a way for the state to "*buy time to strengthen its position and achieve a more favorable outcome in the future*" (Fravel, 2011).

Another of China's efforts to impose its sovereignty claims in the SCS is by means of mass media framing, or theoretically speaking, noopolitics. China uses the media to frame and spread information so that readers, whether consciously or unconsciously, fall into the perception that the SCS belongs to China. This type of modus operandi conducted by China to strengthen its claim in the SCS is often lacking or even out of discussion. To fill this gap, this paper seeks to explain, from the perspective of noopolitics theory, how Global Times, a prominent Chinese media outlet, constructs the narrative of China's *Nanhai* Dream. This article proceeds as follows: In the following sections, relevant literature related to China's mass media and the SCS claim is discussed to clarify the importance of this study and fill the

gap on the issue. Thereafter, the theory of noopolitics is examined to justify China's use of the media to bridge its national interests. Then, the article describes the methodological approach: framing analysis by the qualitative method. The following sections shed light on Global Times' history and efforts to frame the SCS issue in line with China's interests. Finally, the article concludes with the points of discussion.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research uses noopolitics theory to argue that China uses Global Times to promulgate its interest in the SCS. Arquillah and Ronfeldt (1999) proposed this theory. They assumed noopolitics play a role as a part of statecraft that treats 'information' as a strategy to share ideas, values, norms, laws, and ethics through soft power. By arguing that the Cold War is not over but has only changed in shape, Nikonov (2013) suggests that noopolitics is one of the strategies that "*was used, is being used, and will be used by states in the fight for control over information space*". However, instead of having a state-centric character, noopolitics provides space for cooperation between state and non-state actors (Arquillah and Ronfeldt, 1999). In this light, a state might work together with the media to attain an objective.

It is crucial to emphasize that noopolitics is not just a matter of having means of entry to data, but also a matter of the ability to strategically perform that data through information channels (Xifra & McKie, 2012). In noopolitics, the media provide information using preferential ways of data presentation or distorting it in extreme mode. The labeling technique, rumor manipulation, concealment of information, and interest formation through different linguistic manipulations are some methods of media to carry out noopolitics today (Nikonov, 2013).

METHOD

FRAMING ANALYSIS

This paper applies the framing analysis method of Zhongdang Pan and M. Kosicky, a well-known model of framing analysis. According to Pan and Kosicky, framing analysis can be an alternative to analyzing media texts. Eriyanto (2002) classifies framing as a way to accentuate a message by positioning information so that the audience gets more focused on the message. There are four framing structures to achieve the goal of framing: syntax, script, thematic, and rhetoric.

In this research, we focused on the syntax, thematic, and rhetorical structure of the news published by the Global Times. In examining the syntax, we pay attention to the headline, lead, background information, quotation, source, statement, and closing. In terms of thematic structure, we take a deep look at paragraphs, sentence propositions, and relationships between sentences in the news to find framing attempts. In rhetorical framing structure, we expressed our concern about how the news chose particular words, idioms, pictures, and graphics to build a certain frame. After that, the authors try to elaborate on the interests and meanings behind all of those articles, framing them with the Qualitative Method.

QUALITATIVE METHOD

The qualitative method stands for a strategy of research that relies upon the collection and analysis of non-numerical data. The methods are applied to better understand the meaning and processes that took place in our world (Lamont, 2015). The search for meaning is vital to this method. That is why Audie Klotz (2008) explains that qualitative methods are "*somehow linked to meaning*". The effort to make sense of the meaning of the world is made through the in-depth interpretation of specific events, phenomena, regions, countries, organizations, or individuals (Lamont, 2015). On this background, the qualitative method can be characterized as a form of interpretive research. The qualitative method depends on inductive reasoning to attain interpretations, thus making the researcher prefer to generate theoretical propositions (Bryman, 2008; 366).

This paper collects secondary data, such as online news and articles published by Global Times. The use of the qualitative method serves as a suitable tool to dig into the meaning of Global Times media framing. The interpretation of news and articles from Global Times aims to prove this paper's theoretical proposition that China is applying noopolitics through Global Times media to strengthen its claim in the SCS.

DISCUSSION

In wielding its elusive claim in the SCS, China is not only acting through land reclamation, military activities, jurisdiction and administration steps, and diplomacy tools but also through noopolitics. Noopolitics makes the state deploy mass media as a society manipulation device (Kim, 2013; Nikonov, 2013) and an informational strategy of manipulating international processes by creating a positive or negative image of ideas and promulgating moral values (Nartov & Nartov, 2007).

In achieving a state's territorialization effort, noopolitics might serve as a significant and lucrative instrument. It may cement global society's subconscious perception that a state's claim to territorial rights is justifiable and undeniable. Therefore, noopolitics can arguably help a state gain support from its citizens and consent from an outside community for its territorial ambition.

GLOBAL TIMES AS CHINA'S NOOPOLITICS TOOL

Global Times is a daily tabloid newspaper under the management of the Chinese Communist Party's flagship People's Daily newspaper. Its Chinese version launched in 1993, while its English version started to be produced in 2009. According to its official website, Global Times aims to provide its readers with facts and views that could help them better understand China's policies and development trends (Global Times, 2021). With this background, Global Times is often used as a platform for the Chinese government to promulgate nationalistic party lines (Mastro, 2012) and tackle topics shunned by rivals to downgrade China (Chaguan, 2018). Given this fact, the Global Times has been labeled 'the voice of Beijing' (Huang, 2016) and, therefore, is suitable to become the noopolitics tool of China.

One of China's noopolitics aims through Global Times is to frame the perception of the global audience that its claim in the SCS is legitimate and worth fighting for; thus, the sea reasonably belongs to them. Global society's perception is pivotal in determining China's path to attaining the SCS. Once global society recognizes China's sovereignty in the SCS,

China's next and only task to completely own the sea is to convince world governments and legalize their claims under international law. After analyzing 105 articles, this research found four ways Global Times framed China's claim in the SCS.

QUOTING CHINESE-LEANING EXPERTS/ACADEMICS/STATESIANS

ARTICLE 1: US SUBMARINE MAY HAVE MADE A 'STUPID MISTAKE' IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ON THE RECENT COLLISION: EXPERT.

This article, written by Zhao Juecheng, Fan Wei, Chen Qingqing, and Leng Shumei, was published on October 12, 2021. In this article, it discusses a US submarine that crashed into something that China claims to be in the SCS. In this article, it discusses a US submarine that crashed into something that China claims to be in the SCS.

It said in this article that US officials said their Seawolf-class nuclear attack submarine, USS Connecticut (SSN-22), sank in the SCS and crashed into something as yet unknown. But the Global Times claimed that a US submarine had hit an object belonging to China's SCS Aquaculture and Fisheries Company.

The claim by Global Times is contained in the second paragraph, namely in the sentence,

The latest possible explanation on Chinese social media platforms is that the object could belong to the China South China Sea Aquaculture and Fisheries Company.

In this article, the Global Times revealed that Chinese social media had posted content saying the object hit by the US submarine was part of a Chinese company. So, indirectly, the Global Times has confirmed that it is true that the SCS belongs to China.

In addition, the Global Times in this article also cites expert opinion to perpetuate its framing. The Global Times cited the opinion of an intentionally unnamed China Sea fisheries expert by Global Times, who argued that it was impossible for a 'US submarine to hit Chinese fishing gear' in the international waters of the SCS.

A Chinese marine fishery expert who requested to remain anonymous told the Global Times on Tuesday that it is very unlikely that the US submarine hit a Chinese fishing gear in international waters in the South China Sea as most of China's yellow croaker breeding cages are located in East China's Fujian.

In the expert opinion cited, the Global Times conveys a veiled message to readers that what was hit by a US submarine in the SCS belonged to China. This can be seen in the sentence 'US submarine hit China's fishing gear', where the sentence contains a subtle indoctrination meaning for the reader.

ARTICLE 2: CHINESE FM STRESSES EFFORTS IN SAFEGUARDING PEACE IN S. CHINA SEA AFTER REJECTING PORT VISIT OF THE GERMAN WARSHIP

The Global Times presents this article to inform readers that only China has the right to regulate activities happening in the SCS. Meanwhile, other countries that appear to exist in the SCS, even if only for a port visit, are subjected to being considered intruders on peace. In the title of this article, the Global Times wants to emphasize that China is the legal regulator and the actor maintaining peace in the SCS. The article also cites the words of its foreign minister as a tool to emphasize this frame,

China is unwavering in its determination to safeguard its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interest and will continue to negotiate and properly handle differences with concerned countries, Zhao Lijian said at the routine press conference.

From Zhao Lijian's statement, the Global Times used the words “*China is unwavering*” and juxtaposed it with “*to safeguard the country's territorial sovereignty*”. ‘Unwavering’ portrays an image of someone who is on the right side and consistent in pursuing their rights. Thus, by using these words, the Global Times wants to create the nuance that China's sovereignty is disturbed and that the country is not afraid to stand up for its rights.

ARTICLE 3: US DESTROYER WARNED OFF AFTER TRESPASSING INTO AREAS ADJACENT TO CHINA'S MEIJI REEF IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA: MILITARY SPOKESPERSON

This article was published by the Global Times on September 8, 2021, which also discussed US ships entering the SCS without permission from China. In this article, the Global Times cites the opinion of a Chinese military spokesman to legalise China's strategy in claiming the SCS.

On Wednesday, the US guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold trespassed into areas adjacent to the Meiji Reef in the South China Sea without China's permission, and the naval and aerial forces of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Southern Theater Command conducted whole-process tracking and monitoring of the US destroyer and warned it off, said a PLA Southern Theater Command spokesperson in a written statement.

The statement from the Chinese military spokesman aims to lead readers to blame the US for entering China's territory, namely the SCS.

In addition, the Global Times also quoted a statement from Tian Junli, who is a senior colonel in the Chinese air force. In his statement, Tian Juli fully blamed the US for violating China's sovereignty and security by trespassing into the SCS area.

Air Force Senior Colonel Tian Junli, the spokesperson, pointed out that the US move has seriously violated China's sovereignty and security. It is the latest iron proof of the US' voyage hegemony and militarisation of the South China Sea.

Through the statements of the spokesperson, the Global Times would like to assure readers that the actions taken by the US were a mistake for having snatched the SCS from China's grasp because their government official said so.

EMPHASISING 'SOVEREIGNTY' WORDS AND DISPLAYING A NARRATION THAT THE SCS BELONGS TO CHINA

The efforts to highlight a striking word aim to instill the word's value in the readers' minds. Emphasizing a word continuously will make the reader's subconscious follow the flow carried by the word. It is like a magician's suggestion to put people to sleep. Before the magician puts the victim to sleep, he tries to instill the word 'sleep' into the victim's subconscious so that the victim can fall asleep when he flicks his finger.

The power of subconscious doctrine is powerful, and China realized this. China, for example, has used the strategy of word choice' to maintain its One-China, Two-System policy toward Taiwan. By following the path provided by the Global Times, China is trying to emphasize that Taiwan is not an independent country but one of its territories by calling the region 'The Island' in each of the media's articles. The action is likely the same as Indonesia calling Sumatra the Island', not the Sumatra state, because Sumatra is Indonesia's territory. This scenario shows that China possesses a specific intention behind its word choice' in its noopolitics.

In the Global Times articles published in the period of 2020–2021, particularly the articles related to maritime issues, we might see the narration 'the SCS belongs to China' frequently, whether they come from Chinese government authorities, observers, or the Global Times editorial itself. Here the paper provides a table to identify the article's title, publication date, and the sound of its narration.

TABLE 1: The Articles of Global Times that gives the idea that the SCS is a part of China

Title	Narration
US the peace destroyer, South China Sea troublemaker (July 14, 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “China has ... exercised maximum restraint in safeguarding its sovereignty, rights and interests in the region (the SCS)” – Chinese Foreign Ministry
US politicians push new bill to sanction China on maritime issue, ‘will receive retaliation if it passes’(October 20, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Some US politicians have pushed another anti-China act to sanction entities and individuals who safeguard China's sovereignty in the South China Sea and East China” – Global Times’ reporter • (US Senate's attempts to punish China's individuals) will not shake China's determination to safeguard its national sovereignty – Observer
US destroyer warned off after trespassing into areas adjacent to China's Meiji Reef in South China Sea: military spokesperson (September 8, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The US guided missile destroyer ... trespassed into areas adjacent to the Meiji Reef in the South China Sea without China's permission” – PLA • “China has sovereignty over the islands and nearby waters ... The (PLA) troops will firmly perform their duties and missions to safeguard China's sovereignty ... in the SCS”. - Air Force Senior Colonel
Chinese FM stresses efforts in safeguarding peace in S. China Sea after rejecting port visit of German warship (September 16, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “China is unwavering in its determination to safeguard the country's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests” – Chinese Foreign Ministry
US media hype Chinese aircraft carrier progress and anti-carrier capability ‘to boost military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Aircraft carriers provide a very important platform for the Chinese Navy to safeguard national sovereignty in the South China Sea” – Observer

funding, rally allies' (November 10, 2021)	
PLA Air Force celebrates 72nd anniversary as Taiwan island patrol becomes more frequent (November 11, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "... <i>combat patrols in the South China Sea ... are some of the most representative missions the PLA Air Force has been carrying out ... in safeguarding national sovereignty, territorial integrity</i>" - Expert
Bayern shows Germany's limited military presence in Indo-Pacific (November 6, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>We hope that it (German's Vessel) will not enter these sensitive waters (Indo-Pacific; the SCS), let alone carry out so-called close reconnaissance of China's territorial waters.</i>" - Expert

Using the word sovereignty to refer to the SCS is crucial to shedding light on the idea that China has sovereign rights over the sea. Sovereignty means "*supreme authority within a territory*" (Stanford Encyclopedia, 2020). When a state claims to have sovereignty over an area, whether it is an area of land or water, it implies that the state has rights, basis, power, or authority to manage the area. When China solidifies the sentence "*its sovereignty on the SCS*" on a daily basis, it attempts to shape the narrative that the SCS is their indisputable right.

China also used the words 'doorstep' to display its possession of the sea. The table below shows how China employs the word to wield its narration.

TABLE 2: The articles that consisting the word 'China doorstep' referring to the SCS

Title	Narration
Biden's 'guardrails' need true test (November 17, 2021)	<i>Washington has deployed warships and fighter jets at China's doorstep (the SCS) – Expert</i>
US spy ship conducts extensive activities in S. China Sea, 'aims to collect data to support submarine warfare against China' (October 11, 2021)	<i>"The US' intensive submarine activities in the South China Sea, on China's doorstep, are a threat not only to the Chinese Navy if a conflict breaks out, but also to normal, civilian activities in peacetime"</i> - Expert
Back to where it was 20 years ago, will US go through Afghan nightmare all over again? (August 25, 2021)	<i>"A US EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft flew on to China's doorstep in the South China Sea"</i> – Global Times' Columnist
PLA conducts maritime attack drills, deploys warplanes in South China Sea amid US aggression (July 20, 2020)	<i>"These incidents (in the SCS), taking place thousands of miles away from the US and on China's doorstep", - Expert</i>

From the data provided above, we can identify four articles that signify the idea of 'China's doorstep'. This is another *modus operandi* of China to frame its possession of the area of water by means of word choice'. China intends to shape the opinion that the sea is its home's integral part. Therefore, no one should disturb its territory or the peace of its household. A doorstep is a step before an outer door. It is a part of someone's door. And one thing should be noted: someone's area or land cannot be regarded as others' doorstep. Just for the sake of argument, Indonesia cannot say the Andaman Sea is its doorstep just because the sea can reach Indonesia. Indonesia can say that its border with Timor-Leste is its doorstep, but it cannot say that Timor-Leste is its doorstep.

The designed narration can also be seen in the titles of the articles. Two examples exist in the articles entitled "*PLA expels US warship trespassing in the South China Sea*" and "*US destroyer warned off after trespassing into areas adjacent to China's Meiji Reef in the South China Sea: military spokesperson*". The word 'trespassing' means "*the crime of going*

onto someone's land or entering someone's building without permission" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). International Law suggests that the SCS are international waters. No country is restricted from passing the sea, thanks to the idea of Freedom of Navigation. Yet, When China argues that a country is trespassing on its territory, it intends to promulgate the idea that the SCS is theirs and nobody enters the sea without its consent. The countries that are accused of trespassing will be subjected to a negative perception because they seem to be the ones who are 'violating' other territories.

USING CHINESE TO NAME THE ISLANDS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

WHAT'S IN A NAME? THAT WHICH WE CALL A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD SMELL JUST AS SWEET.

This famous quote by William Shakespeare has been a principal idea that makes a name less important in the West. Otherwise, in Asia, the name is crucial. Asians name their children, where they live, and their belongings with certain names that have deep and impressive meanings for them, particularly for the Chinese. In Chinese traditional culture, the belief that the meaning lies behind a name has always borne huge value. Chinese communities across East Asia have a belief that a name can invite luck in every sector of their lives, from physical and mental wellness and romance to the economy and academic achievement (Lee, 2020).

Hansen (1992) signifies that 'names' are crucial to all Chinese philosophy rather than 'sentences.' This matter serves to distinguish the Chinese approach to reality, which is more important than the theory of truth. This issue is supported by China's long-held philosophical nature. The oft-cited discussion of the significance of appropriate meaning is observable in the Analects of Confucius (3rd century BCE) with its topic of *zheng ming*, which means 'rectification of names' (Waley, 1938; Lau, 1979; Huang, 1990 in Blum 1997). When the Warring States took place in the 5th through 3rd centuries BCE, political philosophers in China reflected on the appropriate path to conduct moral and effective government. Correct naming was the proper method for *ru-ists* (Confucians) and legalists (Blum, 1997).

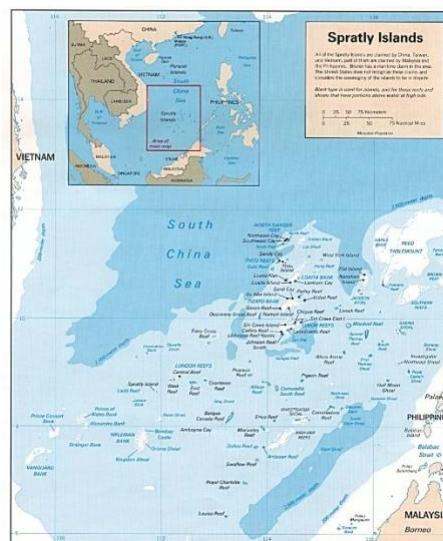


FIGURE 1: The map of Spratly Islands. Source: Central Intelligence Agency

In applying its principle of the importance of a name, today's China consistently refers to the parts of the SCS in its own language. This act bears two meanings: a wish of good luck in grabbing the sea and a noopolitical intention to frame the sea as part of Chinese sovereignty. There are three groups of features in the SCS, which China often calls by their own names, such as 'Xisha Islands' to refer to the Paracels Islands and 'Meiji Reefs' to refer to the Mischief Reefs. To attain a deep discussion, this paper will focus on the use of 'Nansha Island' to refer to 'Spratly Islands' by China.

The Islands consist of a large group of reefs, shoals, atolls, and small islets. Its geographical position is in the northern part of Malaysia and midway between the Philippines and Vietnam. This island, which spreads over an area of more than 425,000 km² (164,000 sq mi), is called by many names: (Pinyin) *Nansha Qundao* or (Wade-Giles transliteration) *Nansha Ch'un-tao* by Chinese, *Kepulauan Spratly* by Malaysians, *Pangkat Islang Kalayaan* by Pilipino, and *Quan Dao Truong Sa* by Vietnamese. But internationally, the island's area is often called Spratly, a name given after Richard Spratly, a British whaling captain who sighted Spratly Island in 1843.

For China, referring to the island by its Chinese name, Nansha, is an utmost important act for delivering its noopolitics at Global Times. It shows their consistency in their historical rights, a basis to nurture their claim in the SCS since the name is the word for Chinese to refer to the sea in the past. In the Qing Dynasty era (1644–1911), the Nansha Islands were put as Chinese territory on various maps drawn by their administration, such as a Map of Administrative Divisions of the Whole China of 1724, a Map of Provinces of the Qing Dynasty, and other five maps (Talmon & Jia, 2014).

China's framing attempt is visible in many articles published by the Global Times. From January 1, 2020, to November 23, 2021, 88 articles in the Global Times used the word Nansha to refer to Spratly Island in the SCS. In general, the articles cover different topics. However, in essence, they discussed issues related to the maritime situation at the SCS. Whenever the article refers to the Spratly Islands, it uses Nansha to mention the island.

The move to set aside the western-sourced name Spratly and promote the use of their own name Nansha is a way to frame the people's subconscious as believing that the SCS belongs to China. For China, the name 'Spratly' has contributed to the confirmation of the SCS as international water. To put this away, through its noopolitics in the Global Times, China wants to make the public get used to mentioning features in the SCS in its own language. When a place is named in the language of a particular country, that place will be considered by many people to be part of that country.

Several countries have taken action to change the name of a particularly contested area. For example, the Philippines and Indonesia in October 2011, the Philippine government under Benigno Aquino III started to refer to the SCS as the West Philippine Sea in all their official communications. It was their effort to show their "*inherent power and right to designate its maritime areas*" (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). In Indonesia's case, in July 2017, it changed the name of the sea around its Natuna Islands, which are in the southern area of the SCS, to the 'North Natuna Sea'. The action signifies Indonesia's integrity to safeguard its sovereignty, given China's nine-dash line overlaps with its EEZ around the resource-rich Natuna Islands (Parameswaran, 2017). In two cases, the 'name games', a term coined by Aaron L. Connelly (2017), have been an ordinary form of struggle in territorial

integrity battles. Thus, it is rational for China to coin its language to refer to features in the SCS and make a move as its noopolitics strategy in the Global Times.

ECHOING 'NO CONFLICT IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA' RHETORIC

Framing peace in the SCS is another noopolitics agenda of China in the Global Times. China aims to notify the readers that the SCS today is the sea of peace, not the sea of conflict. China tries to construct the perspective that it and other coastal states in the SCS have successfully maintained peace and stability. This argument is observable in several articles published in Global Times between January 1, 2020, and November 23, 2021.

TABLE 3: Global Times' articles between 2020-2021 that try to frame the existence of peace in the SCS

No.	Title	Narration
1.	US the peace destroyer, South China Sea troublemaker: Chinese FM (July 14, 2020)	"China has <i>never</i> sought to establish a ' <i>maritime empire</i> ' in the South China Sea, and has always treated its neighbors in the region equally" – Chinese Foreign Ministry
2.	US exhausted, alone in the South China Sea: Global Times editorial (August 27, 2020)	"Disputes over the sovereignty of the South China Sea have gone through several rounds of ups and downs, and regional countries have gradually <i>adapted</i> to the situation". – Global Times Editorial
3.	Chinese FM stresses efforts in safeguarding peace in S. China Sea after rejecting port visit of German warship (September 16, 2021)	"China urges non-regional countries to respect regional countries' efforts in <i>safeguarding peace and stability</i> in the South China Sea" – Chinese Foreign Ministry

As we can see, China regularly and consistently spreads the idea that there is no conflict in the SCS. China also emphasizes that it is a country that respects its neighbors. Thus, no country has a reason to have a conflict with them. Global Times has become the channel to spread this framework of thinking, be it from academics, public officials, or even their editorial team.

The truth behind those narrations might be questionable. For the first narration mentioned in the table above, perhaps the Chinese foreign ministry purposely neglects the fact that they have nine-dash line claims, which is unimaginable from an international law perspective, and actions to build artificial islands and military bases in the SCS. What better term to describe this as an attempt to build a 'maritime empire'? For the second narration, the Global Times editorial may have forgotten that, to give one example, the Philippines had protested China's declaration of Manila-claimed areas in the disputed SCS as its territory at the end of April 2020 (four months before the article was published). At the same time, China aimed its weapons-controlled radar at a Philippine navy ship, which sparked the Philippines strong protest (Associated Press, 2020). Probably the Global Times did not consider this fact when they said that "*regional countries have gradually adapted to the situation*".

The third narration sounded by the Global Times ostensibly notifies the readers that China and other coastal states have successfully acquired peace and stability in the region. Thus, they try to 'safeguard' it. When the Global Times provided a platform for echoing this Chinese Foreign Ministry statement, they may not have fact-checked the reality where a giant Chinese vessel blasted through the calm waters of the SCS toward a wooden fishing boat of

Vietnamese citizens (Bengali, 2020). Even two months after releasing those statements, three Chinese coastguard ships blocked and fired water cannons on two Philippine supply boats within the country's EEZ (Aljazeera, 2021). How can this act be classified as "*safeguarding peace and stability*"?

Despite these facts, why would China want to build a perspective that the SCS is a peaceful, stable area of water? In peace, society lives in harmony. There are no disputes between individuals or groups that lead to conflict, whether physical or verbal. If a conflict exists prior to it, peace means that the conflicting parties have reached a consensus through common sense in resolving their problems.

Orchestrating peace in the SCS is pivotal for China. This effort will point to the stereotype that the coastal states have managed to admit Chinese sovereignty on the SCS. When the Global Times' readers who are trapped in this stereotype think peace and stability have already been achieved in the SCS, they will lurch to believe the coastal states do not dispute the matter anymore and stop rebelling against Chinese sovereignty in the SCS. In other words, the coastal states have shelved their claims. The plot will be different if the world recognizes that the SCS remains a conflicting sea and peace and stability are null in the water. A non-stable and conflicting SCS may become a sign that the coastal states still fight and are unwilling to accept Chinese claims in the SCS.

CONCLUSION

Various ways have been intensified by China to claim the SCS, including through framing in the Global Times media. From the articles presented, there are four general ways of framing the article by the Global Times to support the Chinese government's noopolitics in claiming the SCS that this paper has obtained: 1.) quoting Chinese-leaning experts, academics, or statesmen; 2.) emphasizing 'sovereignty' words and displaying a narration that the SCS belongs to China; 3.) using Chinese to name the islands in the SCS; 4.) echoing 'no conflict in the SCS' rhetoric.

By applying the tools of analysis framing by Zhongdang Pan and M. Kosicky, this paper finds that the most prominent framing done by Global Times is the Syntactic and Rhetorical framing. In the syntactic, especially the citation and source elements, Global Times, in its article, dominantly chooses experts as sources to support China's strategy. The Global Times selects Pro-China experts so that readers get used to China's point of view in the SCS.

Then the framing of the Global Times on the rhetorical strategy, especially on the element of using a word, is intended to emphasize certain messages in the news. Overall, news published by Global Times referring to the SCS often uses the word sovereignty to imply its importance so that readers believe the SCS is part of China's property because the word sovereignty is often repeated every time in the news.

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