



Coverage of the Belt and Road Initiative in China Media Group's *Leaders Talk*: A News Framing Perspective

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Abstract. This academic paper makes a deep research into how *Leaders Talk*, a prominent interview program by China Media Group, constructs the Belt and Road Initiative(BRI) coverage in its media practice. The research selects 38 related programs from October 2022 to August 2025 and explores the media practice and discourse by the method of content analysis and news framing theory. In the research, the study identifies three major news frames concerned in *Leaders Talk*: Flagship Leadership, Win-Win Cooperation and Global Public Goods. Through the three frames featuring high-level talks, on-site reporting and multi-perspective storytelling, *Leaders Talk* highlights the progress, outcomes, impacts of BRI, as well as its theoretical value, while responding to external misrepresentations. The research shows that the BRI coverage of *Leaders Talk* translates China's development philosophy into narratives receiving the global resonance, which reflects China's improving capabilities in international communication and the pursuit of strengthening mutual understandings in the new era's media practice.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), *Leaders Talk*, News Framing, Discourse Analysis, International Communication

1 Introduction

In 2013, China initiated the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) inviting participation from countries across the world for a shared development. As of 31 August 2025, more than 150 countries and international organizations have signed BRI agreements. The BRI has channeled nearly one trillion U.S. dollars of global investment, generated more than 3,000 cooperation projects, and created 420,000 jobs in partner countries. World Bank estimates also indicate that in the medium to long term, the project will contribute toward lifting close to 40 million people out of poverty. With the BRI further developing and consolidating, more attention needs to be paid to its effective story-telling. Chinese official media have embraced this challenge, and aspired to widen the appeal of the program throughout the world.

However, there are still many problems in the international communication of the BRI. For one, the broader appeal of the initiative is not always obvious to an

international audience; its richness and actual outcomes are somewhat abstract or unattainable. Second, the project still faces skepticism in countries not directly affected by BRI projects at all, cast (or perhaps interpreted) by some actors as a competition or geopolitical threat. Such circumstances limit the global reception of the initiative and highlight the urgency of new compelling narratives about BRI. So constructing effective news frameworks through Chinese official media systems become more urgent and necessary.

In a context where such is the case, *Leaders Talk*, an interview program by China Media Group, occupies a prominent position. Through in-depth interviews with heads of state and government, political leaders, global commercial executives and an array of other influential personalities, the program provides a platform for leading voices on current affairs and reaches a wider audience through domestic and international broadcasts. Through the innovative design of the episodes' elements and alignment with China's strategic communication agenda, the program plays a remarkable role in telling the story of China towards the world to enhance Chinese discourse power and influence. For this reason, the coverage of BRI is also a big part of *Leaders Talk*. It strives to show how BRI contributes to enhancing international exchanges and cooperation, national development capacity building, people-to-people communication and cultural exchange and reshaping the global development landscape. As these related contents aired, the program has made a significant addition to authoritative construction of BRI-related discourse. In sum, *Leaders Talk* offers an informative case which helps to enlighten us on how China's authoritative media seek to influence discourse system associated with the BRI. Studying its coverage offers an important perspective for advancing BRI news construction and enhancing the initiative's global communication effectiveness.

2 Literature Review

This article studies how the programme *Leaders Talk* reports BRI news. In particular, it examines the ways in which the news frames of BRI as a central interviewee topic, presents symbol projects and uses multiple communicative strategies to illustrate achievements. In doing so, the show not only portrays BRI as a concrete enabler of developmental capacity amongst participating countries but also responds to the foreign charges of "neo-colonialism" and "debt-trap diplomacy" for China. The study identifies the framing models used in building BRI coverage and discusses why such have been adopted, as well as provides suggestions for enhancing the project's global communication.

News frames consist of information, structure, symbols, and value judgments. Framing BRI news with the help of framing theory is important for understanding how they create meaning and shape attitudes. The current Chinese media reporting tends to construct the BRI into an open, inclusive and win-win mode of globalization in which China plays a reliable role in partnership and participating in global governance at the global level, without taking negative or critical frames [1,2].

Analysis of the official social media accounts, such as those of Xinhua, People's Daily and CGTN reveal a number of dominant frames: win-win cooperation, foreign

aid, legitimacy and celebrity endorsement[3]. Nevertheless, this framing has been noted for its self-referential characteristic (centralized and homogenized discourses, and low interactivity) [1]. Chinese media also adjust their agendas for different audiences: in co-building countries, they focus on cultural and social stories that highlight the BRI international participation and economic development [4]. Globally, media framings vary from one context to another. A report by Global Voices, *Framing China's Belt and Road Initiative: The Unexpected Power of Local Narratives*, which analyzed coverage in 148 countries, found that the project receive support in Central Asia, Africa and South America but encounter resistance in North America, South Asia and certain parts of Europe and East Asia [5]. Non-participating countries, both developed and developing, tend to emphasize potential risks and strategic implications. In this stance, there are also subtle differences among the different actors. Japan, the UK and Australia adopt the conditionally supportive stance, whereas India and the US are hold more strong attitudes in criticizing it [6]. Besides, Germany and France tend to maintain balanced tone in the coverage, though concerns over the risk and geopolitics motivations occasionally arise [7, 8, 9].

Related to the study of frames is the research on the BRI discourse of government and media. Under the methods of series of discourse analysis approaches, those research papers explore how BRI discourse constructed and expressed.

BRI is the international cooperation platform proposed by China's authorities with prominent characteristics of openness and inclusiveness, aiming to promote connectivity and shared development. China is a peace-loving, confident nation that advance development and cooperation with others, striving for mutual benefit through the joint construction of BRI. Media discourse analysis builds on this foundation, analyzing those cases in order to infer types of discursive practice.

For example, Anna Kuteleva looked at BRI-related videos published on YouTube between 2013 and 2019 by CGTN, China Daily, People's Daily and Xinhua. She finds a turn away from lighter, depoliticized content to taking it seriously and professionally, with "joint contribution and shared benefits" one of the high-frequency terms. In the discourse, China is framing as a leading actor raising cooperative and comprehensive solutions to global challenges such as uncertainty, poverty, and war [10]. Likewise, the study by Zhang Xiaoling and Gareth Shaw on CGTN's YouTube activities (2018–2019) contends that Chinese communications strategies increasingly focused on personal stories as well as varied foreign voices to add attractiveness to the BRI [11]. Chan Seng In and Song Weiqing argue that the Chinese government produces BRI narratives with 'development discourse' and 'desecuritization' discursive strategies to boost its international discursive power [12]. Nevertheless, western states still reads the BRI as a geopolitical weapon, and China needs to improve its global narratives. Sun Fayou and Chen Xuguang draw attention to the use of discursive patterns including 'home–nation isomorphism' and the 'Great Harmony under Heaven', where with reference to the BRI, China's image becomes symbolic of its peaceful and cooperative emergence on the world stage [13].

On a larger scale, Zhang Wei and Wang Shaohua use framing theory to examine discursive strategy of the four major state media organization (People's Daily Online, Xinhuanet, Guangming Online and China Daily). They identify the strengths and

weaknesses of China's construction of BRI news, advocating for more emotional connecting and cultural bonding to help improve China's power on global public opinion [14]. In contrast, some of the research studies explore the disclosure about stigma packaging in Western media by analyzing their discourses and narrative models and suggesting recommendations for how China can respond to counter such kind of presentation. Academics like Yu Xin and Miao Peizhuang argue that Western-led modernization theories and neoliberal policies have shaped an international communication order in which developing countries are disadvantaged. In order to mitigate the adverse consequences of false claims for the BRI, they suggest conceptual innovation, discursive reconstruction and accurate information as well as global media cooperation space to encourage wider understanding of the actual value delivered by the BRI [15].

Beyond framing and discourse, further research studies BRI communication more generally, pointing to challenges and suggestions for improvement. Ma Yan emphasizes that an diversified agenda setting, multiple communicative actors, rationale and multi-platform strategies are required to enhance international influence as well as the understanding of BRI [16]. Sun Jisheng focuses on BRI communication in the digital age, seeing pros and cons. He argues that strengthening digital structures, introducing alternative communicative actors and tensioning narrative frames are key to change efficacy [17]. Ji Fangfang and Sun Ping point out that to enhance the international influence, it is necessary to focus on collaborative, technology-enhanced initiatives and a wide range of participants as well as the big-data-based assessment system [18].

There are also other studies with a focus on what China should do to address cultural and discourse challenges, promotion of narrative strategy based on storytelling and construction of technology pathways for public dissemination. These measures, they contend, are vital to establish a favorable international opinion environment for the continued growth of the initiative [19].

Generally speaking, the academic study on news construction of BRI is rich and involves the framing, discourse and communication strategies at both media and national levels. These provide an important orientation point when analyzing *Leaders Talk* by highlighting the latter's framing strategies and discursive practices. Together with a systematic coding and textual analysis of program interviews, they enable us to generalize framing strategies by the program, to distill lessons from media practice, and to formulate recommendations for an enhanced future global communication of the BRI.

The existing academic research on *Leaders Talk* has mainly discussed the emotional logic and discourse mechanism of *Leaders Talk*'s influence in public diplomacy and China's global image construction. However, most of them have taken the program as a whole, concentrating on its general communicative strategies. The practice dimension has lacked systematic investigation of how the programme unfolds over various 'content levels', how it frames and collectively organizes discourse relating to certain major national issues, such as the BRI. This research aims to address that gap by analyzing how *Leaders Talk* constructs BRI stories within the broader context of international communication.

3 Methodology

This article employs a qualitative approach to analyze the news frames of BRI in *Leaders Talk*. The corpus contains all 94 pertinent episodes broadcast between October 15 2022 and August 31 2025.

For in-depth analysis, the study drew a purposive, stratified sample of 38 interview transcripts using three explicit criteria.

(1) Temporal distribution: Episodes were distributed by quarter (12 intervals), with around 3 episodes per interval (mean/mode/median ≈ 3). This approach attenuates event-driven variations and seasonality, reduces skewness, and facilitates diachronic comparison.

(2) Geographic coverage: Cases were distributed with respect to the global reach of BRI—Asia (8), Africa (6), Europe (5), South America (4), Oceania (3), North America (2)—to avoid region-heavy bias and capture cross-regional variation in discourse.

(3) Guest-type diversity: Interviewees are heads of State/Government, leaders of international organizations (e.g., ASEAN/UN), and multinational business executives, articulating the policy intentionality, multilateral cooperation and corporate operation to expand the stakeholders perspectives. Repeated interviews with selected countries were retained to trace narrative continuity and policy development.

Together, this intersecting set of standards validates the temporal distribution, regional breadth, and stakeholder diversity of every field site; it also incorporates themes directly related to BRI policy, thus helping ensure data credibility as well as analytic generalizability of findings within a qualitative design.

The analysis focuses on four dimensions: thematic distribution, narrative patterns, attitudes and positions, and symbolic systems. Keywords and concepts emerged one by one from each of the 38 interview texts in an iterative process of coding and counting, with frequent repetition of similar content observed across samples. It suggests that the analysis had reached a state of relative saturation, where additional data were unlikely to yield new categories or insights. Based on this, the selected sample was considered adequate for both representativeness and analytic depth. Through systemic coding and inductive reasoning, the study identifies the news frames applied by *Leaders Talk* in its BRI coverage.

4 Results

Across the 38 program texts, the research identified a total of 51 open codes, 10 axial codes, and 4 selective codes in terms of thematic distribution. Based on it, it raises 4 thematic dimensions in the program's coverage:

- (1) The BRI and the High-Level Development of Nations and Regions;
- (2) The BRI Promoting Connectivity and Inclusive Development;
- (3) Cooperation and Mutual Learning among Civilizations under the BRI;
- (4) The Development Philosophy of the BRI and the Chinese Approach.

These themes are concluded and summarized through the processes of coding, which jointly present a clear picture of *Leaders Talk*'s report and construction of BRI.

In terms of narrative strategy, *Leaders Talk* mainly adopts two ways: interpreting the BRI's value at the level of practice and theory, and refuting the unreal external criticisms of the initiative. Those stories are not only presented with high-level interviews, but also combined with the projects participants, local beneficiaries and the anchor's onsite visiting and observations. In this way, it shows both the tangible results of the initiative and its theoretical importance as a challenge to western course on development.

At the attitude level, every episode definitely embodies the purpose of spreading affirmation and support shown by many countries to BRI.

In terms of symbolic system, the program constructs a comprehensive system of journalistic symbols centered on representative BRI projects. The system is based on featured cooperation projects as entries, and to arrange them in terms of historical context, current situations, effects, significance and future development prospect. Through carefully matched questions, cutaway shots, synchronous interviews as well as on-camera presentations, *Leaders Talk* forms its distinctive news discourse on the BRI.

5 Discussion

5.1 Thematic Contents

Table 1. Coding of Thematic Discussions

Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
Construction of energy projects including wind, hydro, thermal, and solar power	Development Capacity and Industrial Upgrading	The BRI and the High-Level Development of Nations and Regions
Cooperation in industrial park projects		
Cooperation in agricultural projects		
Cooperation in promoting green development		
Cooperation in developing mineral resources		
Cooperation in improving the unequal distribution of water resources		
Cooperation yielding significant agricultural benefits		
Cooperation in expanding fishery exploitation and export		
Cooperation in promoting tourism development		
Cooperation in alleviating energy supply shortages		
Cooperation in enhancing resource export capacity		
Cooperation in promoting cultural and sports development		
Cooperation in helping African countries overcome poverty		
Cooperation creating new opportunities for economic development		
Cooperation in promoting economic diversification	Economic Diversification and Regional Integration	The BRI Promoting Connectivity and Inclusive Development
Cooperation opening new development opportunities for Latin American countries		
Accelerating China–ASEAN economic and cultural exchanges		
Construction of transportation infrastructure such as railways, highways, airports, and ports		
Construction of regional comprehensive transport hubs	Connectivity and Infrastructure	
Cooperation in promoting interconnection among African countries		

Strengthening close ties among Eurasian countries		
Enhancing global connectivity		
Construction of public facilities such as hospitals and sports venues		
Cooperation in unleashing the potential of young people	People's Livelihood and Public Services	
Cooperation in improving public transportation and mobility		
Cooperation outcomes enhancing national pride		
Cooperation driving employment creation	Employment and Social Cohesion	
Cooperation strengthening national cohesion		
Joint recognition of cooperation plans		
Cooperation led by the heads of state of both countries		
Cooperation extending into more areas		
Cooperation overcoming various practical challenges		
Sharing China's advanced development experience	National Exchange and Policy Coordination	
Pooling advantageous resources from different countries through cooperation		Cooperation and Mutual Learning among Civilizations under the BRI
An embodiment of high-level friendly cooperation		
Cooperation setting an example of innovation		
Cooperation enhancing strategic mutual trust		
Cooperation characterized by historical continuity	Historical and Contemporary Foundations	
Cooperation built on existing cooperative relations		
Chinese enterprises becoming pioneers in cooperation		
Cooperation in cultural heritage preservation	Cultural Exchange and Cognitive Renewal	
Cooperation promoting academic and research capacity building		
Renewing foreign publics' understanding of China		
Cooperation promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind		
Aligning with the UN's development priorities	Global Governance and Common Development	
Cooperation supporting the development of developing countries		The Development Philosophy of the BRI and the Chinese Approach
Significant theoretical innovations in global development		
Cooperation resonating globally		
Responding to the 'debt trap' narrative		
Responding to the claim of excessive dependence on China	Responding to External Doubts	
Responding to the allegation of neo-colonialism		

Through the coding shown in Table 1, it identified that the thematic contents of BRI coverage in *Leaders Talk* centering on high-level development, connectivity and inclusiveness, civilizational dialogues and the Chinese development philosophy. These themes show the Chinese endeavor to develop the BRI and reshape the discourse of global development. Through extensive interviews with prominent figures from Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Oceania, the image of the BRI as a widely recognized platform for cross-regional and global cooperation is presented in detail.

Different from those international media outlets focusing on geopolitics and security risks, the prominent feature of *Leaders Talk* is telling the BRI story from the perspective of development, which depicts it as a path to shared prosperity. This exploration is a vivid example of utilizing actual achievements to enhance credibility in the evolving international communication context of the BRI. The development story is unfolded by emphasizing the BRI's contribution to connectivity, industrial upgrading, regional integration and social welfare. As a result, the abstract strategy is conveyed to sensible experience. Furthermore, the development narrative shows China's win-win concept,

which contrasts with the western paradigms, showcasing China’s contribution to global governance in the new global trend.

Besides, by “letting others speak for China”, the program builds a common ground for the cross-culture communication, which increase the authenticity and empathy.

In sum, these clear thematic contents show the shift in how Chinese media communicate the BRI today: from the factual reporting to comprehensive agenda setting, and adds more vividness to the serious political narrative with development narrative. These new features form the basis for the news frames mentioned below.

5.2 Narrative Strategy

Table 2. Coding of Narrative Strategies

Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
● Discussion of the progress, outcomes, and value of cooperation ● Examination of flagship cooperation projects ● Exploration of future expectations ● On-site project visits ● Theoretical-level discussions and reflections ● Discussion on how to strengthen strategic alignment for development ● Debate over doubts and criticisms concerning cooperation	● Exploring the value and significance of cooperation from multiple perspectives ● Strategic alignment with the development priorities of partner nations ● Positively responding to misunderstandings and doubts	● The Practical and Theoretical Value of the Belt and Road Projects ● Positive Response to doubts about the Belt and Road Initiative

In terms of narrative strategy, the research examines the methods used in the episodes and codes them. As it shown in Table 2, *Leaders Talk* takes the multi-strategy in the storytelling, combined with questions-driven interview, field visits and other various means of first-person accounts. The anchor tailored the questions for the guest, guiding them to discuss the BRI’s contribution from empirical and conceptual perspectives.

Then to respond to the external skepticism, the program establishes a comprehensive communication strategy. First, it directly raises the contested issues and invites guests to reply with facts and first-hand experience; second, it brings the BRI’s outcomes to the audience with various methods, encompassing the visual, aural and other expressions. The responsive strategy is also a continuity of development logic mentioned in the part of thematic contents discussion, utilizing actual progress and facts to refute political criticism and improve the audience’s perceptions.

In conclusion, the narrative strategy reveals the changes of the discourse from policy to projects, and the method from one-way advocacy to consensus-building, integrating rational persuasion with emotional resonance.

5.3 Stance & Symbolic System

At the stance level, *Leaders Talk* talks about the BRI positively with no doubt, but it achieve this by the remarks from the invited guests, avoid self-promotion. By releasing the voice of features dignitaries, projects participants and local beneficiaries, program transform those recognition into consistent understanding and credibility. This consensus-oriented strategy reshaped China's image by collective support from the external rather than the self-assertion.

Table 3. Coding of News Symbol

Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
Jakarta–Bandung High-Speed Railway (Indonesia)		
Hungary–Serbia Railway		
China–Laos Railway		
Mombasa–Nairobi Railway (Kenya)		
Zamyn-Uud–Erenhot Railway (China–Mongolia)	Railway Projects	
Gashuun Sukhait Railway (Mongolia)		
Shivee Khuren Railway Project (Mongolia)		
Bichigt Railway Project (Mongolia)		
Zongbayan–Hangji Railway (Mongolia)		
Montenegro North–South Expressway		
Peshawar–Karachi Motorway (CPEC, Pakistan)		
Nairobi–Mau Summit Expressway (Kenya)		Infrastructure Co-operation
Jingang Expressway (Cambodia)	Highway Projects	
Malekula Island Road Project (Vanuatu)		
Egg Road Project (Madagascar)		Economic Cooperation
5A National Highway Rehabilitation Project (Madagascar)		
Balebaba Water Diversion Tunnel (Nepal)	Tunnel Projects	
Brazzaville Cable-Stayed Bridge (Republic of the Congo)	Bridge Projects	
New Yarmag Bridge (Mongolia)		
Gwadar Port (Pakistan)		
Port of Callao (Peru)		
Chancay Port (Peru)		
Port of St. John's Expansion Project (Antigua and Barbuda)	Port Projects	
Hambantota Port (Sri Lanka)		
Baku International Sea Trade Port (Azerbaijan)		
Sahiwal Coal-fired Power Plant (Pakistan)	Energy Projects	

Port Qasim Power Plant (Pakistan)	
Hub Coal-fired Power Plant (Pakistan)	
Karot Hydropower Station (Pakistan)	
Dawood Wind Power Project (Pakistan)	
Bahawalpur Photovoltaic Power Station (Pakistan)	
Chashma Nuclear Power Plant (Pakistan)	
Nestor Kirchner-Jorge Cepemic (NK/JC) Complex(Argentina)	
Puttalam Power Plant (Sri Lanka)	
Caculo Cabaça Hydropower Station(An-gola)	
Ivovik Wind Farm Project (Bosnia and Her-zegovina)	
Stanari Thermal Power Plant (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	
Kenya Digital Superhighway Project	ICT and Digital Infrastructure Pro- jects
Doboj Hospital Project (Bosnia and Herze-govina)	
Colombo Port City (Sri Lanka)	
Sri Lanka Road Improvement Project	
Sarajevo Tram Renewal Project (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Public Infrastructure Cooperation Projects
Grenada National Stadium	
Grenada La Sagesse Demonstration Zone	
Grenada Maurice Bishop International Air-port Upgrade Project	
Malaysia–China Kuantan Industrial Park	
China–Malaysia Qinzhou Industrial Park	
Alat Free Economic Zone (Azerbaijan)	Industrial Park Cooperation
China–Belarus Great Stone Industrial Park	
Silk Road Economic Belt	
China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)	
Trans-Caspian International Transport Cor-ridor	Comprehensive Cooperation / Transport Corridors
China–Europe Railway Express	
New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor	
Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP)	
Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City	

In terms of symbolic system, the project builds it upon the BRI flagship projects. In Table 3, it lists the projects mentioned in the selected text thoroughly and categorized them. Then to reveal the value of BRI, *Leaders Talk* takes quite a few ways to tell the stories surrounding those projects. In the episodes, it integrated the projects’ back-ground, development and outcomes by related questions, visual expressions and

remarks, turning the BRI from abstract into vivid image. In the process, the infrastructure projects such as railway, ports and energy become metaphors for connectivity and cooperation. As an active advocate and constructor engaging in the BRI, China's role is thoroughly presented via those symbols.

5.4 News Frames of BRI Coverage in *Leaders Talk*

Integrating those four dimensions, *Leaders Talk* translate the BRI's discourse into concrete media practice, in which BRI is constructed as a open global cooperative platform bringing mutual benefits and China is a reliable partner following the peace development path.

Three interrelated news frames emerge:

1) Flagship Leadership Frame – highlights landmark projects and their tangible & concrete value through various interviews;

2) Win-Win Cooperation Frame – emphasizes mutual benefit and shared outcomes while addressing skepticism;

3) Global Public Goods Frame – positions the BRI as an innovative contribution to global development paradigms.

These frames intersect across thematic content, narrative strategy, stance and symbolic representation. In the practice, they frequently blend with each other to achieve a more complete BRI coverage.

Table 4 below identifies the news frames in the episodes and shows their corresponding application.

Table 4. BRI News Frames in *Leaders Talk*

No.	Date	Interviewee	Name	Category	News Frame
1	2022/10/15	President of Indonesia	Joko Widodo	Then Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation / Global Public Goods Frame
2	2022/10/29	President of Montenegro	Milo Đukanović	Then Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
3	2022/11/12	Prime Minister of Pakistan	Shehbaz Sharif	Head of Government	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
4	2023/1/21	President of Argentina	Alberto Fernández	Then Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
5	2023/2/25	President of Mongolia	Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh	Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
6	2023/3/25	Prime Minister of Singapore	Lee Hsien Loong	Then Head of Government	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
7	2023/4/8	Prime Minister of Malaysia	Anwar Ibrahim	Head of Government	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame

8	2023/5/13	President of Kazakhstan	Kassym-Jomart Tokayev	Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
9	2023/6/10	Rotating Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Željka Cvijanović	Then Head of State	Flagship Leadership Frame
10	2023/7/8	Prime Minister of Mongolia	Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene	Then Head of Government	Win-Win Cooperation Frame
11	2023/7/21	President of Algeria	Abdelmadjid Tebboune	Head of State	Win-Win Cooperation Frame
12	2023/8/12	President of Azerbaijan	Ilham Aliyev	Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
13	2023/10/7	Prime Minister of Nepal	Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda)	Then Head of Government	Win-Win Cooperation Frame
14	2023/10/14	President of Sri Lanka	Ranil Wickremesinghe	Then Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
15	2023/11/4	President of Kenya	William Ruto	Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation / Global Public Goods Frame
16	2023/11/25	President of Uruguay	Luis Lacalle Pou	Then Head of State	Win-Win Cooperation Frame
17	2024/3/16	President of the Republic of the Congo	Denis Sassou-Nguesso	Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
18	2024/3/23	President of Angola	João Lourenço	Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
19	2024/3/29	President of Nauru	David Adeang	Head of State	Win-Win Cooperation Frame
20	2024/4/13	Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda	Gaston Browne	Head of Government	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation / Global Public Goods Frame
21	2024/4/20	Prime Minister of Sri Lanka	Dinesh Gunawardena	Then Head of Government	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
22	2024/5/11	Prime Minister of Hungary	Viktor Orbán	Head of Government	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation / Global Public Goods Frame
23	2024/7/6	President of Peru	Dina Boluarte	Head of State	Flagship Leadership Frame
24	2024/7/27	Prime Minister of Vanuatu	Charlot Salwai	Then Head of Government	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
25	2024/10/12	President of Madagascar	Andry Rajoelina	Head of State	Flagship Leadership Frame

26	2024/11/21	President of Peru	Dina Boluarte	Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
27	2024/12/5	Prime Minister of Nepal	K. P. Sharma Oli	Then Head of Government	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
28	2025/1/9	Former Prime Minister of Egypt	Essam Sharaf	Former Head of Government	Win-Win Cooperation / Global Public Goods Frame
29	2025/1/16	Prime Minister of Grenada	Dickon Mitchell	Head of Government	Flagship Leadership Frame
30	2025/1/23	President of Sri Lanka	Sagala Disanayake	Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame
31	2025/3/21	Secretary-General of ASEAN	Kao Kim Hourn	Head of International Organization	Win-Win Cooperation Frame
32	2025/4/25	President of Azerbaijan	Ilham Aliyev	Head of State	Win-Win Cooperation Frame
33	2025/5/15	President of Colombia	Gustavo Petro	Head of State	Win-Win Cooperation / Global Public Goods Frame
34	2025/5/22	President of Kenya	William Ruto	Head of State	Flagship Leadership Frame
35	2025/5/29	Former Prime Minister of New Zealand	Jenny Shipley	Former Head of Government	Win-Win Cooperation / Global Public Goods Frame
36	2025/6/5	Chairman of the Board, Siemens AG	Roland Busch	Head of Multinational Corporation	Global Public Goods Frame
37	2025/7/31	Executive Director, UNOPS	Jorge Moreira da Silva	Head of International Organization	Win-Win Cooperation / Global Public Goods Frame
38	2025/8/29	President of Belarus	Alexander Lukashenko	Head of State	Flagship Leadership / Win-Win Cooperation Frame

Compared with frames that previously appeared in Chinese media's BRI coverage, like win-win cooperation, legitimacy, and celebrity effect frames, Leaders Talk integrates and extends those frames, developing them into more complex structures and richer contents in the earlier basis. The Flagship Leadership Frame focuses on tell the good story by valid cooperation outcomes; the Win-Win Cooperation Frame places emphasis on pushing the national story with more global resonance by releasing more voices; and the Global Public Goods Frame leads the policy discussion to civilizational level with more theoretical conversations. With the three frames, the BRI communication of Leaders Talk develops to a more matrixed and structured direction.

Through the analysis, the BRI coverage in *Leaders Talk* shows the inheritance and innovation to the previous Chinese media's practice in BRI's coverage. Build upon the authoritative discourse, it tells the story by high-level interviews, multi voices and communication networks facing the world. Visualizing and contextualizing the BRI, the program not only addresses the external concern, but also constructs a trustworthy, appealing, and respectable image of China. The practice reflects China's rising influence in the global communication environment, through clear yet nuanced media framing, to advance the internationalization of Chinese discourse and reshape global perceptions regarding the BRI.

6 Conclusion

The research examines how *Leaders Talk*, constructs the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) coverage from a news framing perspective by the selected 38 episodes aired from October 15 2022 to August 31 2025.

Based on the thematic contents, narrative strategy, stance and symbolic system, the study finds that the program report the BRI through three interrelated frames: Flagship Leadership, Win-Win Cooperation, and Global Public Goods.

The three frames highlights the landmark projects, emphasize the shared development and mutual benefit and place the BRI as prominent global public goods to the public, which makes the BRI coverage of Chinese media from fragmented reporting to a coherent and multidimensional storytelling framework.

Translating the developing proposal into a trustworthy, appealing, and respectable story, *Leaders Talk* inherits the past Chinese media practice and news frames and makes new innovation. The program offers a new case for observing the Chinese media report BRI around the development story with abundant angles and methods and systematic narrative strategy and promote the global perceptions regarding BRI.

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