Media Framing of Freight Transportation Policy during the Christmas 2025 and New Year 2026 Period

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Abstract

The policy of restricting and regulating freight transportation during the Christmas and New Year (Nataru) period is a routine agenda of the Indonesian government to ensure safety, smooth traffic flow, and comfortable public mobility. However, this policy often sparks public debate because it is considered to have a direct impact on logistics activities, distribution of basic necessities, and economic performance. The mass media plays an important role in framing this policy, both as an effort to protect the public interest and as a policy that has the potential to cause harm to certain sectors. This study aims to analyze how national media frames freight transportation policies during the Christmas and New Year 2025 and 2026 periods. The research method used is qualitative with the Robert N. Entman framing analysis model approach, which includes problem definition, interpretation of causes, moral evaluation, and recommendations for solutions. Data were obtained from national online media coverage during the period of December 2025–January 2026. Using Entman's framing approach, it was found that coverage of freight transportation restrictions during the Nataru period showed differences in media perspectives in constructing the reality of public policy. Despite the differences, all reports showed convergence on selective and temporary solutions. This emphasizes the role of the media not only in framing conflicts of interest, but also in shaping the discourse of policy compromise between traffic safety and smooth logistics distribution.

Keywords: Framing Analysis, Freight Transportation, Government Policy, Transportation, Christmas and New Year Period

1. Introduction

The Christmas and New Year (Nataru) period is a time of extremely high public mobility in Indonesia (Gunardi & Martono, 2018). The increase in travel by people and private

vehicles during this period requires the government to implement various traffic regulations to ensure safety, security, and smooth transportation (Muley et al., 2020). One policy routinely implemented is the regulation or restriction of freight transport operations on certain roads and at certain times (Mogaji et al., 2022). This policy aims to reduce traffic congestion, reduce the risk of accidents, and give priority to passenger vehicles (Cheberiachko et al., 2023).

Despite its stated goal of ensuring safety and order, freight transport policies during Nataru often spark controversy. Logistics and freight transportation businesses believe these policies can hamper the distribution of goods, increase logistics costs, and potentially lead to shortages of basic necessities in some areas (Wang et al., 2022). On the other hand, road users and the government view these policies as strategic measures to protect the broader public interest (Fourie et al., 2023). These differing interests then become the subject of mass media coverage.

The mass media plays a strategic role in conveying public policy information to the public (Cantor et al., 2021). However, the media functions not only as a neutral transmitter of information but also as an actor in framing social reality (Sianipar et al., 2025; Thankachan & Thomas, 2021). The media can function as a watchdog, a transmitter of information, and an arena for public discourse (Ots et al., 2024). In transportation policy, the media often serves as a platform for various actors, such as the government, businesses, and the public, to voice their interests and views (Sáenz-Leandro & Fernández-Ardèvol, 2024).

Through the process of framing, the media selects certain aspects of an event to highlight, while others are suppressed or ignored (Robertson & Mourão, 2020). The concept of framing in mass communication studies refers to how media package and present social reality to audiences (Guenther et al., 2021). Goffman views framing as an interpretive scheme used by individuals to understand reality (van Dijk, 2023). In the media context, framing is the process of selecting and highlighting certain aspects of an event to form a specific meaning in the minds of the audience. Thus, media framing has the potential to influence how the public understands, assesses, and responds to freight transportation policies during the Christmas and New Year period (Ninan et al., 2022).

Figure 1 Conditions on one of the toll roads
Sumber : Ni'am & Ika (2025)

Freight transportation policy during the Christmas 2025 and New Year 2026 period is interesting to study because it takes place amidst the dynamics of economic recovery, increased trade activity, and demands for efficiency in the national logistics system

(Kadarisman et al., 2016; Laode et al., 2025; Syaiful et al., 2025). In this context, how the media frames this policy is a crucial question, given that media framing can shape public opinion and even influence the legitimacy of government policies (Pan et al., 2022; Satyadharma et al., 2023).

Media coverage of public policies can influence public perceptions of their effectiveness and legitimacy (Mensah, 2024). Framing that emphasizes the policy's benefits tends to increase public acceptance, while framing that highlights negative impacts can trigger resistance or criticism (Rupiarsieh, 2025).

This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the media construction of transportation policy and provide input for policymakers in managing public communication more effectively and inclusively.

2. Research methods

This study applies a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm. The qualitative approach was chosen to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of freight transportation policies during the Christmas 2025 and New Year 2026 period presented by various national media. The research method used is descriptive, namely a method that aims to uncover and present information broadly and systematically related to the object being studied within a certain time period (Bungin, 2009). The object of this research includes a number of news reports in national media discussing freight transportation policies during the Christmas 2025 and New Year 2026 period.

3. Results and Discussion

Results

Social reality does not form spontaneously without the involvement of individuals, both those directly involved and those outside the context of the event. A reality acquires meaning when other individuals participate in the construction process and provide subjective interpretations. Through this process, social reality becomes increasingly reinforced and perceived as objective. This demonstrates that individuals play a crucial role in constructing social reality, representing it in everyday life, and reinforcing it through the subjective recognition and interpretation of others within a particular social environment or institution (Dharma, 2018). The concept of framing, introduced by Robert M. Entman, as explained by Eriyanto (Simatupang, 2021), explains how the media selects, organizes, and emphasizes certain realities. Framing is understood as a media strategy for packaging information within a specific context so that one issue becomes more dominant and prominent than others. Entman (Simatupang, 2021) proposes four main elements in the framing model:

a. Define Problems, namely, how the media understands and represents an event. The same event can be interpreted differently depending on the perspective and framing used by the media.

b. Diagnose Causes, which focuses on determining the actors or factors considered to be the source of an event or problem. At this stage, the media directs attention to the parties deemed responsible.

c. Make Moral Judgment, which assess the value of certain events or actions to determine whether they are right, appropriate, or otherwise, based on prevailing norms and values.

d. Treatment Recommendation, which contain proposed solutions or steps deemed appropriate to resolve the reported problem.

Based on the research results, the following is a framing analysis of four news reports published by national media outlets regarding freight transportation policies during the Christmas 2025 and New Year 2026 periods. This analysis was conducted using Entman's framing model, which is systematically described according to the four elements.

Table 1 Analysis of News Framing 1

News title	Pengusaha Protes Waktu Pembatasan Angkutan Barang : Terlalu Panjang (Fadilah, 2025)
Media	Detik.com
Entman Device	
Define Problem	The news described the government's policy of imposing operational restrictions on freight transport during the 2026 Christmas and New Year holidays as the main issue protested by entrepreneurs because it was considered too long and disrupted the smooth flow of logistics.
Diagnosis Cause	The 11-day restriction policy was deemed to have caused disruptions to supply and business operations because it did not meet the needs of business owners who require flexibility in distributing goods during the long holiday period.
Make Moral Judgement	News sources voiced the opinion of the Indonesian Employers' Association (APINDO) which disagreed with the restrictions, assessing that the government's decision did not understand business needs and had an impact on the sustainability of logistics services.
Treatment Reccomendation	The news conveyed the businessman's suggestion that the government review its policies, for example limiting it to just H-1 or H+1 holidays so that supplies continue to flow, as well as considering non-food needs during the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Source: Data Processing Results (2026)

Table 2 Analysis of News Framing 2

News title	Jaga Keamanan Nataru, Menhub Pastikan Angkutan Barang Dibatasi (Ni'am & Ika, 2025)
Media	Kompas.com
Entman Device	
Define Problem	The news emphasized that the potential for traffic jams and the risk of accidents during the Christmas and New Year rush hours were seen as major issues, so that restrictions on freight transport were deemed necessary to maintain the safety, order, and smooth mobility of the general public.
Diagnosis Cause	The surge in public travel during Christmas and New Year, the dominance of private vehicles, and the potential for conflicts over road space with heavy-loaded trucks are interpreted as the main causes of the need for government intervention through restrictions on the operation of goods transportation on national strategic routes.

Make Moral Judgement	The restriction policy is considered positive and responsible because it prioritizes public safety over short-term economic interests, while also reflecting the state's role in controlling traffic risks during periods of extreme mobility.
Treatment Reccomendation	The government recommends temporary and selective restrictions, with exceptions for essential logistics transport, and ongoing evaluation to maintain a balance between transport security and sustainable distribution of goods.

Source: Data Processing Results (2026)

Table 3 Analysis of News Framing 3

News title	Ini Angkutan Barang yang Boleh Melintas Saat Libur Nataru 2025/26 (Kurniawan & Maulana, 2025)
Media	Kompas.com
Entman Device	
Define Problem	The news defines operational restrictions on freight transport during the Christmas and New Year period as a step to overcome traffic congestion, so that only certain types of freight transport are allowed to pass in order to maintain smooth and safe travel.
Diagnosis Cause	The restrictions and exceptions to types of goods transportation are interpreted as a response to the predicted surge in mobility during the long holiday, which could cause congestion and safety risks if all goods vehicles were free to pass.
Make Moral Judgement	The policy of exempting goods transport carrying vital needs (for example, essential logistics) is considered a responsible decision because it meets public needs while minimizing negative impacts on the movement of people and the economy.
Treatment Reccomendation	The solution highlighted is the implementation of selective regulations regarding the types of goods transportation that are allowed to pass during Christmas and New Year, along with the time limit for the prohibition, so that the distribution of essential goods continues but general traffic remains maintained.

Source: Data Processing Results (2026)

Table 4 Analysis of News Framing 4

News title	Kakorlantas: Pembatasan Truk Sumbu 3 Buntu Turunkan Kecelakaan Lalin Nataru (Syarifudin, 2025)
Media	Detik.com
Entman Device	
Define Problem	The news positioned the restriction on 3-axle trucks as a strategic intervention in Operation Candle Nataru to reduce the number of traffic accidents and fatalities which often increase during the high mobility period of Christmas and New Year.
Diagnosis Cause	The decrease in accidents is interpreted as a direct result of the operational restrictions on 3-axle trucks, which reduces conflicts between heavy vehicles and passenger vehicles on toll roads and main arteries during the Christmas and New Year holiday period.
Make Moral Judgement	The restriction policy was given a positive rating because it was considered responsible for public safety, reducing fatalities and improving traffic security and order during the surge in long holiday travel.

Treatment Reccomendation	The solution proposed is to continue limiting the operation of certain heavy vehicles during peak holiday periods as part of an integrated traffic management strategy to maintain safety while taking into account the dynamics of vehicle flow.

Source: Data Processing Results (2026)

Discussion

The analysis that can be taken from the framing of four news reports raised by national media in the Goods Transportation Policy during the 2025 Christmas and 2026 New Year Period is as follows:

Analysis 1: Polarization of Economic Interests and Public Safety

The series of news reports demonstrates a clear difference in framing between Detik.com and Kompas.com in their views on the policy of restricting freight transport during the Christmas and New Year (Nataru) period. Detik.com, particularly in News 1, emphasizes the perspective of business actors, emphasizing potential economic losses, disruptions to logistics distribution, and concerns about the continuity of business operations. Conversely, Kompas.com, in News 2 and 3, frames the policy as a preventative measure by the state to ensure public safety, reduce the risk of accidents, and maintain smooth traffic flow. This difference in framing demonstrates how the media selectively chooses certain aspects of reality according to their reporting orientation, thus shaping differing public perceptions of the same transportation policy (Bennett, 2020; Cho et al., 2024; Ritonga, 2024).

Analysis 2: Construction of Government Policy Legitimacy

In News 2, 3, and 4, the restriction on freight transport is consistently framed as a rational, measured, and responsible public policy. The government and officials, particularly the Minister of Transportation and the Head of the Traffic Corps, are positioned as central actors, making data-based decisions regarding the surge in mobility, potential congestion, and increased risk of traffic accidents during the Christmas and New Year (Nataru) period. This framing builds policy legitimacy through positive moral judgments, placing public safety above short-term economic interests. In contrast to News 1, which emphasizes criticism from business owners, other news reports tend to minimize the potential for conflict by emphasizing the temporary, selective nature of the policy, while still providing exceptions for essential logistics transportation. This framing strategy reinforces the state's image as an adaptive and responsible manager of transportation risks.

Analysis 3: Selective Solution Patterns as Framing Meeting Point

Despite differing perspectives, the four news reports demonstrate common ground in policy recommendations in the form of selective and flexible restrictions on freight transportation. Business owners, the government, and security forces agree that the distribution of vital goods and essential logistics must continue to maintain economic stability and public needs. The framing of solutions in the news shifted from a total ban to adaptive traffic management, such as regulating operating hours, exempting certain types of cargo, and

conducting periodic evaluations. This framing pattern emphasizes that the media not only represents conflicts of interest, but also plays an active role in shaping compromising policy discourse that balances economic interests with public safety priorities (Hassan et al., 2024) .

4. Conclusion

Based on Entman's framing analysis, coverage of freight transport restrictions during the Christmas and New Year (Nataru) period demonstrates differences in media perspectives in constructing the reality of public policy. Detik.com emphasized the economic impact and business objections, while Kompas.com prioritized public safety and the legitimacy of government policy. Despite these differences, all reports demonstrated a convergence on selective and temporary solutions. This emphasizes the media's role not only in framing conflicts of interest but also in shaping policy discourse on compromises between traffic safety and smooth logistics distribution.

It is recommended that the government strengthen data-driven policy communication to businesses to minimize public resistance. The media is expected to present a more balanced framing by proportionally accommodating various interests. Future research could expand the analysis to audience responses to examine the impact of media framing on the perception and acceptance of transportation policies.

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