A Discourse Analysis on *Fox News'* Coverage of China's Technological Rise in the Post-Pandemic Setting: A Techno-Orientalist Approach

Elyza Cordova & Mikaela Gabrielle de Castro

University of Santo Tomas

The post-pandemic landscape situates China at a critical juncture as an international actor, drawing international scrutiny and interest. Western media coverage, notably prominent right-wing outlet Fox News, frames China's technological rise as a mystifying threat to globalization.[1] Edward Said's Orientalism has become a timeless theory in scrutinizing China's tropes in the U.S. discourse—characterized as a communist Red Peril and deceitful "other." Its sub-theme, Techno-Orientalism, reemerges in the 21st century by reimagining narratives of a futuristic Asia that is met with a blend of apprehension and interest.[2] However, the concept of Techno-Orientalism remains relatively understudied in international relations and tech journalism.

This study employs Edward Said's concept of Orientalism and Techno-Orientalism to analyze fifty news articles from Fox News, published from April 1 to November 8, 2023, focusing on word collocations and Techno-Orientalist themes. The analysis reveals prevalent narratives portraying China as an economic and tech aggressor, with recurring themes of 'Rising' and 'Economic Domination.' These findings of the news discourse analysis aligned with Fox News' narrative framing of China's increasing capabilities and ambitions in the realm of economy and technology, often depicting China as a threat to American sovereignty. The study underscored the consistent depiction of China through Techno-Orientalist lenses, reflecting a nuanced yet one-dimensional portrayal in right-wing U.S. news discourse.

Keywords: *Post-pandemic, China, Western news media, discourse analysis, international relations, communication*

Introduction

Orientalism, a concept initially coined by Edward Said in 1978, garnered recognition for its profound critique of the binarizing perceptions of the East and West. His book was a response to the West's quest for knowledge production and historical constructions in Asia's culture, literature, and expression. As such, Said emphasizes the West's "Oriental" awareness of Asia, the tendency that has led to a pattern of exoticization of Eastern cultures that reinforces the West's assertive influence over the region.[3] Hence, this created an ambiguous racial construct deepened by harmful stereotypes of culture, riddled with ethnocentrism and dehumanization.[4] The sovereign Western consciousness othered its relationship with the Japanese, Korean, Indochinese, and Middle East. Said discussed the perpetuation of stereotypical depictions of the Orient mirrored in various media forms ranging from television and films, accentuating the Middle East as a threatening entity and a hub of political imperialism.[5] Orientalism is defined as a Western-style, European-Atlantic power that has authority and domination in restructuring the Orient and is a valuable sign of a constructed body of theory.[6] Techno-Orientalism, adopts the theory of traditional Orientalism but operationalizes Asia in the context of technology and the future. The Western gaze reimagines Asia in a futuristic narrative with scrutiny, often depicting its technological and cultural innovations with interest and fear. Its manifestations lie in popular literature and media, incorporating themes of Western anxieties against a suspicious rising Asia.[7] Roh discussed East Asia's flourishing development, studying instances such as the Japan Panic phenomenon and the portrayal of China's labor force as dystopian and consumerist, which has harbored apprehensions from the Western perspective.[8]

China's rise in technology and international prominence has become intertwined with Techno-Orientalism, as reflected in its portrayal in news coverage, thus becoming a component of media Orientalism. Bui wrote that monetary orientalism is evident in the way economists frame the People's Republic of China's (PRC) currency aggression and manipulation that "causes the U.S.'s suffering."[9] Western online news outlets, particularly American and British ones, often use provocative headlines in their opinion pieces (op-eds). For instance, *CNN Money* published an article with the headline, *"Is China Sparking a Global Currency War?"* Another article was titled, *"China 'Fully*

Prepared' for Currency War." This choice of language, while addressing technical economic issues, aligns with Edward Said's argument that the use of specialized language can obscure economic concepts, perpetuate ideological biases, and reinforce Orientalist narratives. This image of a "global China" indicates the perceived antagonism of a "cheating China," since the 1880s in U.S. political rhetoric, and other related meanings that signify instances of Sinophobia.[10] China's depiction as the exotic other, Red Peril, suspicious Asiatic economic partner, and little brother serves to provide reasoning in justifying the actions of the U.S.'s harsh immigration laws that barred Chinese settlement, response to the influx of Chinese labor, but most of all, to keep China under control.[11]

Given the crucial role of Western news sites as sources for many viewers worldwide, their framing of China's representations before, during, and after the pandemic is a critical juncture that extends beyond invitational rhetoric and speculative fiction. It necessitates the interpretation of the transformation of Techno-Orientalism in non-traditional forms; within the swift digital news age, an area that shapes ideas and biases concerning China. The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic has forged a unique environment that links the trajectories of contemporary media perceptions and cross-cultural understanding among China and the U.S. Hence, the study aims to explore a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of instances of China's reinvoked Orientalist and Techno-Orientalist depiction in the post-pandemic phase constructed by the Western news site *Fox News.* Additionally, the researchers seek to dissect remarkable narratives surrounding China's technological phenomena and whether they are embedded with Orientalist notions through Orientalism, concretized by employing news discourse analysis methodologies.

Using discourse analysis to dissect frequent themes in the content of the stories, this paper implores the following:
- How prominent are the negative word collocations and expression pairings in *Fox News* articles, specifically focusing on the terms and descriptors used for the reportage and coverage of China?
- What are the most common Techno-Orientalist themes in the content of *Fox News* coverage regarding China's technological rise?
- How do *Fox News* journalists use framing to alter perceptions of China and potentially foster Techno-Orientalist tendencies in their coverage?

Literature Review

Prompted by the recurring themes of underlying racial and colonial messages observed in media, Orientalism is mutually inclusive with the subordination of the other race, where exoticism and fetishization intersect.[12] Techno-Orientalism, a motif of Orientalism, was first coined in the book *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Culture* by David Morley and Kevin Robins in 1995. The content deals with specific themes and representations of the Far East in U.S. media, specifically the intensifying Western fear over the economic rise of East Asian states (i.e. Yellow Peril).[13] Examining the usage of the cyberpunk subgenre, one that incorporates Asian culture and elements in speculative and science fiction in Asia, paints implicit portraits of East Asian countries with dystopian streaks, exhibiting this anxiety. The prominence of the cyberpunk phenomena includes examples used by scholars in film and literary analysis, area studies, and sociology to explain the rise of an Asianized future are the films: *Neuromancer (1984)*, *The Matrix Trilogy*, *Black Rain (1990)*, *Ninja Turtles (1983)*, among other franchises. Scholars note that Eastern mysticism has been strongly preceded by Dr. Fu Manchu, a character created by British author Sax Rohmer in 1912. The character epitomized Techno-Orientalist discourse and expression that titillated consumers, viewers, and academics.[14] A major premise in the story is Fu Manchu's scheme to prop up China by kidnapping European engineers, reinforcing the idea that the Orient lacks technological valor and skills and desires to have West's technology. He is characterized as a "cunning, cruel, yet intellectual being of the Eastern race," evoking Chinese villainy.[15] These Western settings are painted through onscreen characterization in endeavors to construct their relationship with East Asia, through dehumanization and exoticization at their expense. Roh claimed, *"China is a screen that the West extrapolates its anxieties of being colonized and mechanized for technological dominance."* In a resonating vein, Ueno remarked that the West was able to position itself on a "morally superior" pedestal that looms over the East.[16] Thus, threatened by Asia's technological aggression, the West seemingly fills this vacuum by virtue-signalling dubiousness about the Techno-Orient. [17]

Amidst the news about currency wars that dramatize China's pathway to a threatening yellow future, Bui conceptualizes monetary Orientalism that resembles Fan Yang's fiscal Orientalism. Both relate to sensationalizing

the effects of China's ownership of the U.S. national debt that perpetuates "indebted citizenship to a foreign non-Western" nation and its ability to protect its national interests and reputations amid economic instability against the communist threat from Asia. Moreover, the PRC's evolution as an Asian superpower or a testimony of another "Asian miracle," along with its East Asian neighbors, evokes a different sense of astonishment, compared to Japan and South Korea which are met with admiration and inspiration. Rather, China's rise is a cautionary tale of a non-Western antagonist who is not a passive beneficiary but one willing to "play the game."[18]

News media utilizes varied forms of journalism styles to deliver information and conceptualize such conflict in its representation in their news coverage. One of which is peace journalism, which is committed to fair and proactive coverage of conflict, aiming to alleviate rather than intensify conflicts or staying a spectator in order to provide society with the opportunity to examine and promote non-violent solutions to conflict.[19] On the other hand, war journalism escalates the conflict by demonstrating a value bias in favor of violence and violent parties, aligning with the elites and authorities, and acting as official propaganda to guarantee a "victory" for the host nation. In *How U.S. and Chinese Media Cover the US–China Trade Conflict*, scholars discovered that Chinese news media were significantly more inclined to employ peace journalism, incorporating objective language, avoiding victimizing and demonizing rhetoric, and used the phrase "trade war" less often to characterize the conflict.[20] The U.S. media, in contrast, more frequently deployed the term "trade war" and displayed strong reliance on the views of the government. The usage of combat rhetoric with emotive and demonizing language on China was also more discernible in the news coverage of the U.S. media, which incorporated tones of justification in describing actions taken by the U.S. government. The researchers contended that despite China's growing influence and burgeoning economy, the Western media portrayed the predisposition to depict it as an "enemy" challenging the current status of the U.S.[21]

Similar findings were found in Ooi and D'Arcangelis' study, *Discourses of Othering in U.S. News and Political Rhetoric*, which sought to identify U.S. Orientalist manifestations in political rhetoric and news media texts on economic and security issues based on the framework of Orientalism. Discourses on issues of Chinese national currency value, cyber operations, and maritime conflicts in the East China Sea and South China Sea were

all found to have raised Orientalist themes that painted China as a cheater, thief, and lawless bully. Evident was the construction of China as a potential adversary, relying on past discourses that described the nation as the Red Peril, Yellow Peril, and as a "sleeping giant," which is evocative of the Cold War phrase "little brother" who threatened to surpass an elder.[22] A *Los Angeles Times* article in 2008 stated that *"China in the last year has developed ways to infiltrate and manipulate computer networks around the world in what U.S. defense officials conclude is a new and potentially dangerous military capability, according to a Pentagon report."* [23] As such, these depictions of China as being unable to uphold civilized values endorse the notion that it is constantly unprepared to be a contributing member of the international community, which is tailored for strategic political purposes as an instrument of propaganda, and validation of the superiority of Western culture.[24]

Since the onset of the domination of COVID-19 into the global sphere in March 2020, its origins have sparked conspiracy theories fueled by existing tensions between groups. Scientifically identified as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the COVID-19 pandemic emerged as one of the deadliest infectious diseases in recent history, shattering economies, upended patterns of life, infecting nearly 1 billion people, and causing almost 7 million deaths. The virus caught its first case in Wuhan in Hubei Province, China, in late 2019, with scientific data that establishes the virus to have evolved from a SARS-like virus that naturally infects bats and pangolins in Asia.[25] Since the rapid transmission of the virus, conspiracy theories about the virus's ambiguous origins have been increasingly prevalent, unleashing a new form of a pandemic. Notwithstanding the parallels between bioweapons and spontaneous viral illness outbreaks, Knight argued in his study on the *COVID-19 Pandemic Origins* that scientists can readily disprove bioweapon conspiracy claims.[26] Apart from the fact that using biowarfare in real life would have had distinct ramifications, bioweapons are restricted by international law, and producing a weaponized virus with gene-editing technology would necessitate prolonged secrecy. Moreover, claims that it was the consequence of a research facility breach were also refuted as, COVID-19 showed no evidence of human manipulation, which would have been evident if it were true.[27] Groups of people still prevalently held value to the theories that COVID-19 was likely to be a biological weapon intentionally produced by China. As such, information on the COVID-19 pandemic has been widely disseminated in the mainstream media on both national and international scale;

social media platforms have become not only saturated with information but also a significant source of misinformation.[28] Amidst uncertainties and the lack of information, numerous posts on social media platforms such as Facebook with clickbait thumbnails or images detail dangerous conspiracies, blurring the distinction between fabricated unverified assumptions and empirically-based scientific facts.[29] Statements made by world leaders feed public sentiments that support conspiracy theories. Former U.S. President Donald Trump, who repeatedly referred to the coronavirus as the "Chinese virus," asserted to have witnessed proof that the virus originated at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, furthering popular perceptions of COVID-19 as a bioweapon designed by China.

Fox News reporters who were allies of Trump with the exception of Carlson, share the same stance on the theory promoted by the former president. The "Chinese virus" was used by conservatives, triggering reactions from Chinese politicians and Asian Americans who thought it was racist and misleading. Although the Chinese government did not inform the public enough during the earlier stages of the outbreak, Trump has also been blamed for downplaying the threat of the virus.[30] *Fox News* hosts and commentators Sean Hannity and Laura Ingraham pointed fingers at China further on-air: *"Their months-long coverup is now causing death and destruction and carnage all over the world," Hannity said. "China has blood on its hands," Ingraham claimed. "You can see how the Chinese Communist Party has continued to lie about this from the very beginning, as if they have something to cover up," the Republican Senator Lindsey Graham asserted."* [31]

In a descriptive analysis, a related study that evaluated the political dispositions of *Fox News* and *CNN's* reportage on Trump's COVID-19 management from March 11, 2020 to March 31, 2020 presented the contrast between the two leading partisan news outlets. It was a comparative study examining issues that arose during the beginning of the pandemic, presented from two different news angles and frames by *Fox News* and *CNN*. Darboe concluded that *Fox News* mainly "praised, justified, and supported" statements made by Trump, and to a certain degree, maintained a relationship with him. On the other hand, *CNN* was inclined to criticize and question the former president's leadership, with whom they had a negative relationship.[32] In the face of an unprecedented worldwide health crisis, the connection between Asians and the virus becomes indicative of "Othering" practices, in which

the perpetrators exclude themselves from the peril and attribute the blame on others (nations, marginalized groups, minorities), or they villainize the other as someone who actively intends the crisis and nefariously seeks to spread diseases. As such, politicians and the media are complicit in the racialization of the disease, as evidenced by multiple derogatory headlines, such as *"China is the real sick man of Asia,"* an opinion piece from the *Wall Street Journal*, and the aforementioned example of Trump frequently referring to COVID-19 as "Chinese virus" or "kung flu." Essentially, the scholars contend that social media and mass media are crucial and actively involved in the propagation of damaging content that feeds conspiracy theories and anti-Asian prejudice.[33]

Theoretical Framework

Two co-existing theories are mainly employed in the study, Orientalism and Techno-Orientalism. Traditional Orientalism and Techno-Orientalism are part of its two branches.[34] Although Said was not the first researcher to produce work about Orientalism, he popularized the term in the discursive and historical realm of post-colonial studies and the expansive cusp of social sciences.[35] Orientalism has served as a foundational theoretical framework that has developed in a plethora of studies involving Othering, and the West's imposed superiority and representations of East Asia and Middle East representations in discursive approaches.[36] Said argues the European construction of the Orient through the invention of mystifying Asian cultural identities and experiences as romantic and exotic. Furthermore, three features of Orientalism are emphasized by Said: (1) Orientalism is not a mere abstract idea but rather a conscious and metaphysical invention amplified by consistency, (2) the hegemonic interplay of power is deeply entrenched and are inseparable culturally, socially, and historically, and (3) despite the West's effective invention, Orientalism's depictions are constructed under a false premise, devoid of accurate basis.[37]

The development of Orientalism as a theoretical framework is flourishing in a compelling path as it has evolved from surveying the stereotypical and romanticized depiction of non-Western otherness in the literary dimension, but has also followed in film and television.[38] These Western settings are painted through onscreen characterization in endeavors to construct their relationship with East Asia, through dehumanization and

exoticization at their expense. [39] It allows the assessment of the power-knowledge dynamic of positioned powerful institutions. In this context, *Fox News* is a focal point that influences the potential inclination of media bias that underpins framing of China.

Conceptual Framework

Orientalism is adapted into its sub-theme, Techno-Orientalism, as the conceptual framework. Both theories operate as constitutive frameworks, uncovering subtexts and cohesively tie them with dominating narratives of Western news media. Popularized by Morley and Robins in *Techno-orientalism, a motif of Orientalism, was first coined in the book Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Culture,* it expresses Western anxiety over the hyper-technological rise of Asia in futuristic settings.[40] Roh fleshes out this theory with fictional examples in the contemporary media in *Imagining Asia in Speculative Fiction, History, and Media.* Their cultural identities surrounding technology are cast in a deceitful and villainous light.[41] China's technological innovations have grown immensely prominent in the post-pandemic phase, often being signaled and depicted as a potential threat. This theoretical framework offers a constructive base for evaluating how *Fox News* deepens examinations of China's technological innovations and foreign relations. Hence, the dual frameworks equip the researchers' analysis for untangling the multidimensional layers of China's technological rise in which Western media participates and invokes broader discussions.

Orientalism and Techno-Orientalism encompass interrelated indicators that discern manifestations in certain implications in the writing construction of the selected news articles. Such include (1) Sensationalism, the tendency of media to exaggerate content to evoke strong reactions and emotions from the public, a common practice in headlines which can stem from Western response to Asia's rise, (2) Fear and awe, rendering media's framing of China's technological innovations as a mystery or a threat, aligning to Orientalist and Techno-Orientalist narratives of exoticization, (3) Romanticization, an approach that idealizes aspects of society, complemented with manifestations of media in glorifying China's achievements and perpetuating exceptionalism, (4) Mystification of the media in the depiction of China as an inexplicable and

mysterious entity as the "Other," (5) Exaggeration that polarizes China into a dichotomy, portrayed as a menacing, futuristic, Asiatic threat or a bewildering and miraculous success.

Methodology

The research is qualitative due to its interpretation of nuanced and subjective aspects of *Fox News*. Its primary focus is not on establishing causation or prediction but rather on the interaction of *Fox News* articles and Techno-Orientalist manifestations. The selection of the timeline was made in accordance with data topics under China's post-pandemic phase, the research questions, and in consideration of the time constraints. The manual search began with approximately 400 news articles on the *Fox News* search engine using theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation refers to the continuation of the sociologist to judge and gather data until considerable saturation of categories into groups manifests, which can limit the data. [42] The researchers narrowed the selection to 50 articles of relevant data topics on China's technological rise published between April 1, 2023, and November 8, 2023. The pertinent articles emerged as representative texts with techno-Orientalist expressions and were selected for news discourse analysis.

The following selection of data topics related to the technological rise of China were identified for analysis. The data topics, which also serves as the keywords, were manually entered in the *Fox News* new media search engine: China in the realm of A.I, espionage, weaponry, technological innovations, COVID-19 innovations. The selection of data topics was based on the most prominent developments commonly presented in the coverage of China in the post-pandemic stage and in conjunction with the subject matters encapsulated in the concept of techno-Orientalism. News articles containing such content were retrieved through manual search tools, such as the Google search engine and *Fox News* website which feature a dedicated category that caters to feature articles about China and date and subtopic filters.

INITIALIZE

GATHER DATA

Data Collection of Primary
Sources: News Articles

Fox News

COVID-19   Science
Espionage   Cybersecurity AI
Information Technology   Research & Development

PRE-PROCESSING AND
CONSOLIDATION

ANALYZE AND INTERPRET DATA

News Discourse Analysis

Occurence of Techno-Orientalist Themes
and Word Collocation in *Fox News*
Articles

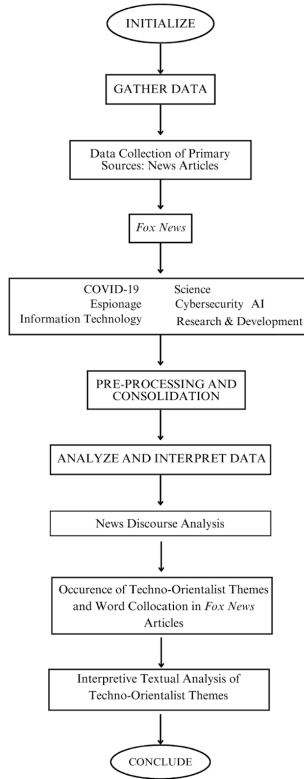Interpretive Textual Analysis of
Techno-Orientalist Themes

CONCLUDE

Figure 1. Data Process Gathering Flow

Discourse analysis is employed to examine how *Fox News* shapes
representations of China in media. The network has also developed to be
highly successful in taking place as one of the top-rated cable networks in the
U.S. and occupies a distinct position in the American media landscape, playing
a significant role in influencing political views, especially among individuals
who lean on the right side of the political spectrum.[43] The notion of the Fox
News Effect substantiates the premise that news outlets possess the power to
effect change in public opinion and behavior, inducing a sizable percentage of
non-Republican viewers to vote for the Republican party.[44] The study focuses
on textual analysis of news frames, exploring lexical choices and expressions
in headlines and sentences. News discourse analysis, a branch of discourse
analysis, emphasizes language's role in international relations and journalism
studies.[45]

Analysis and Discussion of Results

How prominent are the negative word collocation and expression pairing in Fox News articles, specifically focusing on the terms and descriptors used for the reportage and coverage of China?

Occurrence of Word Collocation and Expression Pairing in Fox News Articles

Techno-Orientalist Themes and Expressions	Count of *Fox News* Article/Headline Mentions (out of 50)	Percentage (%)
AI Competitor	15	30%
Bully	4	8%
Censor	12	24%
Communist	9	18%
Corrupt	13	26%
COVID-19	14	28%
Cybersecurity Threat	23	46%
Economic Domination	30	60%
Giant	4	8%
Human Rights	9	18%
Propaganda	14	28%
Red China	3	6%
Rising	33	66%
Spies	6	12%
Techno-Manipulator	17	34%
The Great Firewall	2	4%
The Middle Kingdom	1	2%

Totalitarian/Authoritarian	23	46%
Wuhan/China virus	4	8%

Figure 2. Total Number of Word Collocation and Expression Pairing in *Fox News* Articles in Chart Form

The researchers employed manual rapid-data examination to detect and quantify the common negative descriptors and collocations regarding China's technological rise among the fifty articles. These words were stated through direct mentions, verbatim statements, and paraphrased or non-verbatim content.

Aligned with the results of the most prominent Techno-Orientalist theme from the first figure, the word collocation 'Rising' is present in thirty-three articles (66%) in total. This is exemplified in the article that termed as "China's tech behemoths," Chinese technology companies are characterized as potentially overpowering and enormous. The metaphor accentuates China as a fierce technological force that catalyzes skepticism and apprehension. Moreover, it suggests the fear of American tech firms collaborating with Chinese counterparts, overwhelmed by their scale. The highlighted passage indicates that such alliances will put them "into hot water with U.S. policymakers," feeding into the notion that China continues to be a source of danger and uncertainty for American companies, accentuating Techno-Orientalist themes in the discourse of U.S.-China rivalry. This alludes to the frequency of *Fox News'* emphasis on China's meteoric growth and development in the fields of technology and economy. Reflective of China's ascending ambition, this perpetuates the Techno-Orientalist narrative of China as a global power set to continuous emergence. The second highest word collocation is 'Economic Domination,' composed of 30 articles (60%) in total. *Fox News* stories on China's technological rise have drawn a focal point on China's alarming economic influence and control. "Domination" is seen in *In House Democrat Sounds Alarm on Beijing's Plan to Dominate Tech Sector,* it adopts concerns about China's rising ambitions in the technology sector. The usage of "escalating economic aggression" and the call to "act swiftly" highlights the urgent need to counter China's technological rise, viewing the rapid progress of the CCP as obstructive. Moreover, it amplifies China's "attempts to dominate technology" as an alarming move, a framing aligned with Techno-Orientalism which addresses Western doubt over emerging Chinese and

Eastern innovations: *"For too long, policymakers haven't given the Chinese Communist Party's 'Made in China 2025' plan the attention or urgency it deserves — and that ends today," Rep. Sherrill told Fox News Digital. "We must act swiftly to counter the CCP's escalating economic aggression and attempts to dominate the technology of the future that is so critical to our economic and national security." [46]* China's economic domination is framed as a multifaceted and urgent challenge for the U.S. as an economic powerhouse and competitor that may impact the global economy. To demonstrate, this is seen in In *China's AI (*artificial intelligence) *dominance should be a wake-up call for us all*, an opinion piece written by U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss and Senator Kent Conrad for *Fox News* displays clear bias against China. The language deployed, "China is determined to supplant the U.S.," and "ambitious goal" exaggerates China's intentions and capabilities. While the events and initiatives are real, they are framed in such a way that showcases China as a direct challenge to the U.S. in the AI and technology race. Additionally, the propagandistic and anti-Chinese language highlights the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and portrays China's activities and initiatives with negative connotations, hinting that China is actively working to undermine the U.S.

The term 'Bully' was only evident in four articles or 8% in total. This is exemplified in the articles citing China's "bullying" tactics in matters of trade, commerce, and maritime disputes. Interestingly, this term was found in an article that associated China's actions with "sci-tech bullying." An illustration of China as a potentially threatening powerhouse also manifests in "*China fumes as Biden plots to starve it of AI investment: 'Sci-tech bullying',"* which delineates China's indignation towards U.S.'s plan to deviate investment in AI and other technology-related investments away from the country. Accentuating the technological rivalry between China and the U.S., the narrative frames the country as an indomitable entity striving for absolute domination in the technological industry and underscores China's advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) as a detriment in light of its political governance. In *China wants to be energy superpower. Here's how they can be stopped,* it implies the potential negative consequences its metaphoric rise in energy technology brings as an adversary: *"Left unchecked, China will benefit from the same economic and geopolitical advantages that the U.S. currently enjoys. Despite Kerry's strategy of appeasement, China remains the world's No. 1 polluter and its renewable energy industry is built on the backs of Uyghur slave laborers."*[47]

'Communist' is evident in several headlines emphasizing China's type of regime, which is often implied with negative connotations. With over nine articles, it often links China's characterization and actions with unfavorable reactions, highlighting the repressive and seclusive perception of the U.S. toward its rival. The mention of China catching up with the U.S. in different technological fields reciprocates the typical Techno-Orientalist narrative by portraying China as a mysterious and threatening force rapidly advancing: *"The People's Daily, the mouthpiece newspaper of the ruling CCP, on Monday published its second commentary in two weeks vowing to intensify efforts to unleash the potential of AI."*[48] The overall write-up is characterized by a proclivity for oversimplification, imaging Chinese technology as monolithic. Notions on the country's surveillance prowess, in conjunction with the depiction of China as a threat to national security are also salient in the sentences: "*If you still want to use TikTok, you can without handing over all your information to communist China. Plain and simple, TikTok is a national security threat."*[49]

Likewise, 'Corrupt' is stated and insinuated in 13 articles (26%). Similar to the communist narrative, this adjective is often used to describe the U.S.'s view towards China's different economic and technological approaches that include issues of "corrupting" AI, by adding its communist and undemocratic values. China as a spy is perpetuated by six articles (12%). They have also dubbed China's spying system as "scary" and as an "imminent threat." As such, an article uses the mention of "Maoist-like vision" is a significant historical imagery which draws correspondence to China's complex past under the rule of Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution: *"To force his Maoist-like vision on China, Xi Jinping is cutting links with the world and promoting xenophobia," he added. "The report-foreign-spies campaign is very much in line with the mood of 1950s China."*[50] Techno-Orientalism derives the authoritarian and collectivist aspects of Asian countries blended with narratives of the future, in this context, China. By alluding to the Maoist era to compare the current administration of Xi Jinping, the passage subtly hints both leaderships are oriented towards repressive and isolationist rules that may hamper global stability.

The usage of the term "behind largest cross-platform misinformation operation" in the headline *China, Russia behind largest cross-platform misinformation operation, Meta report finds,* puts emphasis on the scale and

sophistication of the operation and frames the aforementioned countries, as state entities, to be secretive and cunning that actively utilizes technological capabilities to manipulate global narratives and impose strategic influence to undermine the U.S. or Western institutions.[51] The article manifests Techno-Orientalism in that it perceives both countries to be a threat to the Western institutions, and suggests the involvement of the state in the conduct of dubious online operations. The following passage implies that China launched a misinformation campaign with the goal of shaping global narratives through digital and sophisticated methods: *"An explosive new report Meta released Tuesday exposes covert misinformation operations from China and Russia targeting the United States. Organizations which were targeted include The Washington Post, NATO and Fox News"*[52] It also expresses the perceived obligation of Western technology companies in battling prospective threats by non-Western actors that are perceived to contend its dominance. There are hyperlinks pertaining to the specific details of this article for supposed further information and verification; however, they merely lead to the news categories of the associated news topic.

Censorship is present in 12 articles (24%) in total under the code 'Censorship.' In *Who is harmed when the CCP steals American technology? It's not the CEOs, it's not the lobbyists. It's our service members who are put in danger when the CCP weaponizes stolen technology. It's our farmers. It's ordinary Americans,* the article illustrates the weaponization of the CCP, insinuating how China's actions manifest as an existential threat. It paints the stereotype of China as a technologically advanced power that desires to penetrate the capabilities of the American military: *"Walters also expressed concern that such programs may or already do lead to data collection by groups linked to foreign adversaries, adding he has seen many organizations trying to collect student data, which he characterized as a cybersecurity and national security threat to the homeland. Walters said he has seen evidence of censorship overall in such programs, alleging reticence to discuss Taiwan or the Tiananmen Square protests."*[53]

This refers to the patterns of China's censorship among media and its citizens in U.S. discourse, often associating this with their communist ideologies, perceived as alarmingly despotic. The metaphor 'Giant' is exhibited in four articles (8%), personifying China as an extensive land and a colossal political and international actor with its motives towards the junctures of economic

and technological ascendancy. The figurative phrase 'Red China' is written in three articles (6%), referencing China's communist past and legacy. Present in 14 articles (28%) 'Propaganda' was employed to focus on the U.S.'s usual concerns towards China's information manipulation, specifically their differences in ideological perspectives evoked by the Cold War. Cultural othering is present in *Communist China influence in US schools a rising concern, Dems offer 'absurd' deflections, Okla. official says*, in the statement made by the official, asserting the Confucius Institutes and Classrooms are a "propaganda campaign of a soft power attempt." In *Regulation could allow China to dominate in the artificial intelligence race, experts warn: 'We will lose',* it highlights the repercussions it brings such as utilizing AI models that adhere to the CCP's ideologies. Moreover, the reference to AI deepfake technology to exploit it for the expansion of propaganda connotes malice in the technological advancements and competence of China, reflective of the narrative explained by Techno-Orientalism.

By terming "killer AI robots," in *China, US race to unleash killer AI robot soldiers as military power hangs in balance: experts,* it conjures images of advanced and autonomous technological weaponry that can function without human intervention: "*The report warns of "killer robots" — AI weapons such as subs, warships, fighter jets, drones and combat vehicles that can operate autonomously. While such technology has the potential to be a force multiplayer on the battlefield, its ability to make decisions independent of human input also poses serious risks."*[54] Such terminology evokes sensationalism, conflict, and fear as they are formidable and uncontrollable. The personification of "robotic workforce" is emblematic to the portrayal of China as technologically ahead of deploying robotics in operating in difficult commands and tasks: *"As the coronavirus pandemic forced Beijing to maintain its zero-tolerance policy for COVID-19 — leading to repeated and prolonged lockdowns to battle the virus — engineers in China increasingly turned to robotic workers as the path forward to complete daunting construction jobs."*[55] However, the robot workers "taking a path forward" may also bring a sensationalist and sophisticated undertone to China's scale of technological solutions. It may also perpetuate dominance and fear which imply China's tenacity in maintaining its zero-policy for COVID-19.

What are the most common Techno-Orientalist themes in the content of Fox

News reportage and coverage regarding China's technological rise?

Occurrence of Techno-Orientalist Themes in Fox News Articles

Techno-Orientalist Themes and Expressions	Count of *Fox News* Article/Headline Mentions (out of 50)	Percentage (%)
Backwardness	4	8%
Dominance	20	40%
Fearmongering	15	30%
Futurism	11	22%
Mistrust	19	38%
Mystification	7	14%
Othering/Dehumanization	10	20%
Red Scare	7	14%
Romanticization	4	8%
Sensationalism	13	26%
Techno-Dystopia	5	10%
Uncertainty	5	10%
Yellow Peril	17	16%

Figure 3. Total Number of Techno-Orientalist Themes in *Fox News* Articles in Table Form

The researchers analyzed common Techno-Orientalist indicators, themes, and expressions as highlighted by scholars Roh, Morley, and Robbins through literary and film analysis. Through manual interpretive analysis and rapid data-gathering, discernible themes emerged within the articles.

The most notable Techno-Orientalist theme, 'Dominance,' appeared in 20 articles (40%). This theme addresses China's rapid military and technological rise, perceived as a critical challenge for the U.S. *Fox News* frequently presented China's superior capabilities across various topics such as AI, investment, economic race, and technological rivalry. Techno-Orientalist and metaphorical elements are embedded in, *"A world dominated by China is not a world that most people want to live in," [Gordon Chang] said. "It's a world where China rules the entire planet and they've made it clear that that's their goal." "It's a world where there's no freedom, where there's no representative governance," he added. "It is a world ruled by one person in Beijing. That's not a world that we want to be in."*[56] The phrase "putting Americans at their mercy" hints at the helplessness on the part of Americans amidst China's domination in AI, suggesting a sense of possible subjugation. As such, phrases such as "particular narrative" and "steal your industrial secrets in China or outside in a heartbeat" are hyperbolic to emphasize the threat of intellectual property theft in which China is complicit as an unprincipled actor. Chang's statement, "a world ruled by one person in Beijing," is a dystopian Sinocentric framing, underlining its authoritarian control and lack of freedom as a fatalistic threat.

Following closely is the theme of 'Mistrust,' present in 19 articles (38%) percent in total. *Fox News* echoed sentiments of mistrust and doubt expressed by US political figures towards China's technological intentions and economic actions, characterizing China through a filter of suspicion. In *TikTok content creators to present arguments against Montana's ban on Chinese-owned social media app,* the headline's emphasis on "Chinese-owned social media app," to cite TikTok, underscores its foreign ownership, particularly from China. It suggests a level of mistrust and suspicion towards foreign technologies, primarily China's different values and intentions. Despite being debunked by tech researchers, enthusiasts, and TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew, U.S. discourse and government still argue that TikTok allows China to access American user data for its advantage. The opposing claim exemplifies Techno-Orientalism, fueled by the perception of China's authoritarianism, which is perpetuated by U.S. media and embraced by politicians.

China is characterized by mystification in the undertones of several articles. This is exemplified in *'Red Alert': China posts bizarre video of marching*

female Chinese soldiers to sounds of classic video game. The headline condenses a quintessential illustration of sensationalism, including the word choice "bizarre" with a Techno-Orientalist undertone. By employing the word "bizarre," it draws the readers' attention with a blend of intrigue and curiosity which is common in the media coverage of China: *"The Chinese government has posted a bizarre video of female Chinese soldiers marching in various settings to its official account for its embassy in France — and featuring music that was made for a famous 1996 military strategy video game."[57]* The video's description also perpetuates the sense of mystification and otherness through the likening of the depiction of Chinese female soldiers in video games and futuristic settings, digressing from the ordinary. It references a "famous 1996 military strategy video game," which contours the Techno-Orientalist narrative of China's technological advancements as alluring and extraordinary.[58]

Another article makes a historical reference to the Apollo Project, the U.S.'s monumental undertaking to land a man on the moon during the space race, exemplifies Techno-Orientalist elements. The comparison indicates China's ambitions of achieving something of a historical scale like the aforementioned event. Such resemblance can be viewed as the sensational extent of China's AI innovations. Exaggerations of China's advancement and sensational language are present in the passage. The phrase "risk ceding global influence, technology leadership and democracy to strategic adversaries like China," is evocative of fear-inducing sentiments. Such a description amplifies the perceived threat from China. This includes "understanding the potential for AI to disrupt warfare" and its usage of AI for "domestic repression and surveillance," which construe China as an insidious and authoritarian regime.

The word "adversarial" is used in a confrontational approach, by framing Chinese biotech companies such as BGI and others as potential threats, which may be a bearing of Techno-Orientalism. This choice of word subscribes to Techno-Orientalism for its susceptibility to antagonizing China in the biotechnology field. This narrative also supports ideas suggesting China collects and uses genetic data for malicious purposes such as the bioweapon development. As such, "malign aggression" are laced with a sense of uncertainty and fear. This conspiracy and narrative have been widely prominent in the discussion of COVID-19, which typifies China as an advanced nation with perilous capabilities. Discouraging collaborations with the CCP accentuate the negative view of the U.S. towards the CCP's

appropriation of technology for nefarious purposes. The ensuing article approaches the subject of the annual World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) of China and the country's respective regulatory practices with tones of skepticism and depictions of difficulty in navigating through the country's practices of regulation. The following passage incorporates the usage of the terms, "regulatory acrobatics," which suggests in a negative parlance that acting in compliance with Beijing's regulations is of complex and challenging nature contrary to the regulatory environment of the U.S. Moreover, the phrase "fight for control" reflects the context of rivalry in the AI industry and a struggle for dominance between the two countries.

Less prominent themes include 'Techno-Dystopia' and 'Uncertainty,' tied at five (10%) in total. While *Fox News* often portrays China as a threat, themes of techno-dystopia and uncertainty are not as dominant as 'Superiority' and 'Mistrust.' The headline framing in *China's threat to our national security that might surprise you* is designed in a sensationalist approach to captivate readers. The deployment of the phrase "surprise you" advocates a narrative about China's threat that may be unexpected. Moreover, there is an emphasis on how China's activities hampers the national security, core values, and interests of the U.S. CCP-backed individuals is also indicative of the article's implication of Chinese entities' covert agenda. It also makes reference to historical events such as years of FBI intelligence and reference to past espionage to solidify their claims. Such historical manifestations shape the sense of doubt and uncertainty towards China. Third in prominence is the theme of 'Yellow Peril,' exhibited across seventeen articles, with 'Red Scare' expressed in only seven articles. Another manifestation is an article comparing China's warship to futurism and science fiction, alluding "breakthrough technologies." In *American companies keep distance from China AI conference amid acccessibility concerns*, the phrases "science fiction to real world," and "big step forward" emphasize the meteoric disposition of China. With the premise of disruptive technological innovations, China's ambition for military dominance reinforces threads of Techno-Orientalism. Although the article may not demonstrate explicit indicators of Techno-Orientalism, it endorses sci-fi elements that are susceptible to Techno-Orientalism.

In *Alarming evidence' links China's Communist Party to American K-12 schools, anti-indoctrination group claims,* the article has also used expressions such as "CCP propaganda" and "deceptive tactics" to delineate a clandestine

image of China in exerting its influence through education. Although factual, the text tends to lump China, making it prone to singular and monolithic representations of the CCP agenda—homogenizing non-Western cultures, which is premised on Orientalism. The article additionally states that the PDE has accused the CCP of employing such "deceptive tactics" and a "self-serving agenda" that can risk the next generation of Americans by anchoring technology. Infusing both elements of traditional orientalism and Techno-Orientalist notions, it collectively forms a narrative of the threat China obtrudes.

Conclusion

Upon delving into the correlation of the two sets, the results of the word occurrence complement the narrative analysis in reinforcing the incipient narrative of China's ascendancy as an economic prowess, solidifying the lens of Techno-Orientalism, steeped with substantial mistrust and suspicion in U.S. news discourse. As such, there is synergy between the linguistic approaches and narrative focus, thereby deepening China's detailed and critical construction in representations of a portion of U.S. news and media discourse. Another glaring trend that has surfaced among the articles gravitates towards the proliferation of AI-related data topics—one of the most debated and relevant topics of the year—over COVID-19. This manifestation is a juncture pointing at the interesting editorial focus of *Fox News* regarding China's technological rise, particularly the security concerns met with its AI innovations. The persistent depiction of China as a threat to American sovereignty and the world and an economic and tech aggressor may be aligned seamlessly with *Fox News* Republican and conservative-leaning. Certain Republican leaders and pundits have written stories for *Fox News* and established and maintained affiliations with the channel. Hence, this complex propensity of partisan politicians and journalists influences the propagation of stories and agendas.

As news articles unfolded through the latter part of the third quarter, it became evident that the practice of hedging articles, or expressing uncertainty, diminished progressively. Authors transitioned from cautiously regarding China as a suspicious partner to unequivocally labeling it as a significant threat to both security and the economy, particularly with the intensification

of AI competition. Furthermore, the research was able to echo the second subquestion's examination of its storytelling repertoire, in which "Dominance" and "Mistrust" surfaced as salient motifs. These themes contoured the portrayal of China as a dominant yet untrustworthy actor within the global technological landscape. The thematic elements of "Techno-Dystopia" and "Yellow Peril" underscored prevalent anxieties regarding China's technological progress. The aforementioned terms reinforced the storytelling techniques of the news network, highlighting its sharp critique of China as it employed these negative and extreme terminologies.

The expressions construct the ponderous narrative that China is the most formidable adversary to the U.S., a threatening "Other" that looms in the East. Their recurrent characterization of China as a peril to American sovereignty and a threat to global technology and economy foments images of China as a distrustful actor. The cultivation of their Techno-Orientalist narratives, through their choice of language and narrative concentration, engenders a larger discussion in the increasing tensions between the two nations embattled in multiple forms of geopolitics, affecting foreign policy decisions and public opinion. Thus, the possible reciprocity of media bias and political alliances opens room for discourse on the impact of shaping word collocations, which translates into Techno-Orientalist framing evidenced by *Fox News*. Likewise, the amalgamation of the results and discussion substantiates the impact of *Fox News* journalists' linguistic approaches and narrative strategies that amplify negative aspects of China as an actor, as well as its actions and intentions. The orientation of language and framing is pertinent in the context of China's technological ascent. The geopolitical and industrial interplay of trade, technology, and national security form a co-existent orchestra, each pulsing differently yet correspondingly. In this ensemble, the media, *Fox News,* is the maestro driving provoking narratives surrounding China.

Recommendations

In light of the perceptible Techno-Orientalist tendencies and approaches of *Fox News*— present in the word collocations, Techno-Orientalist expressions, and narrative thematic analysis—a more balanced approach is commended for nuanced reporting that upholds journalistic integrity and nuanced news regulations. Oversimplified and romanticized narratives, as exemplified by the

analyzed news articles, perpetuate one-dimensional perspectives. Although *Fox News* has reported accurate figures and events on China's events, influential stereotypes can still arise from the recurring mold determined by the framing and linguistic choices of big platforms. Hence, the researchers encourage outlets to advocate for a comprehensive understanding of China's innovations, contexts, and cultures through the awareness of potential bias that manifests in reporting practices.

Future research in this transpiring field can venture into the other cornerstones of the theories of Orientalism and Techno-Orientalism by applying these frameworks to other non-Western cases, actors, or states. Since the researchers were only limited to news discourse analysis with the news articles as the primary sources, further research can be extended to the slant of the public perception through surveys or social media sentiment analysis which can observe the interplay between the journalist's article and feedback from the readers. Likewise, the researchers studied a variety of technological data topics amidst China's post-pandemic rise. For instance, the rapid advancements in contemporary AI technologies position it at the forefront of current technological progress and societal transformation, exerting wide-reaching influences across multiple disciplines and significantly extending to the global geopolitical landscape. [59] Noticing the trend in AI-related studies—particularly in the areas of geopolitics, national security and defense, surveillance and privacy, AI ethics, information warfare, and economic competition—follow-up research, and extended examination on this specific data topic is encouraged as it is a timely subject that is cohesively aligned with the discussions of technology and Techno-Orientalism. Moreover, the researchers recommend increasing the sample or number of articles for a more robust identification of Techno-Orientalist themes. These can also be operationalized through a comparative study with other prominent news media outlets.

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