

What is Truth? A Comparative Study on Indian and Pakistani News Reports of Chinese Related Topics

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From 2013, China's President Xi Jinping proposed successively the co-construction of "The Silk Road Economic Belt" and "The 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road", which has been called in short as "One belt and one road". India and Pakistan both has strategic importance on the "One belt one road" policy. But, we can see very few news reports from Chinese media. Even though, the few reports normally focus on the wars and religion conflicts such kind of very negative topics. As while, our mass knows too less about other undeveloped countries.

This paper used Frame Theory. This research is based on the theory branch of ZangGuoren, a famous researcher in the field of Mass Communication. He classified the news report frames into high, middle and low three categories. This research used these three categories and separated them into many smaller parameters. By analyzing the second degree parameters, the whole frames of Indian media and Pakistani media were reflected. Two big politic events, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan and Indian Prime Minister Modi visited China, were compared as two news report examples. Obvious difference of report frames were found in this research. The findings after data analysis from this research were different from the opinion which general public holds. Politics, economy, culture, religion and relationships between countries all were the reasons were analyzed in this research. Hopefully this study will provide a new angel for general mass to know international media and Chinese image, as while provide wise supports for domestic media on publicity work.

Keywords: Frame Theory, The Times of India, Dawn

Background

During his visit to Central Asia and Southeast Asia in September and October, 2013, China President Xi Jinping proposed the co-construction of the "Silk Road Economic Belt" as well as the "21st-Century Maritime Silk Road". This proposal has attracted high-level attention internationally. These strategic concepts were named "One belt, one road." It offers a very large development opportunity world-wide.

India and Pakistan both exert strategic importance on the "One belt, one road" policy. However, Chinese

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readers can only see a few pieces of news reports domestically about these two countries. Additionally, among these few available reports, Chinese media usually focus on wars, religious conflicts and such kinds of negative topics. Readers receive knowledge from mass media and it is difficult for them to avoid the agenda set by the media. Furthermore, the majority in China don't know what China's image is in foreign news media, especially countries that are beyond our scope of attention. As a result, we know neither real image of other countries, nor China's image in other countries. Indeed, these countries are very important to China's international relations and further development. With the booming of "On belt, one road", Chinese media should pay more attention and seek new ways to report these countries of interest. At the same time, due to the complicated trilateral relationships between India, Pakistan and China, it is difficult to obtain facts from the huge amount of news agenda setting.

The purpose of this research is to study some of the different news agenda setting behaviors between Indian and Pakistani news agencies, and, thus, to help Chinese readers understand the outside world as well as China's image overseas.

Theory

Frame theory or "Framing" was first established in the mid-20th century (Bateson, 1972; Goffman, 1974).

This research is based on the branch of Zang Guoren's framing theory, a famous Taiwanese researcher in the field of Mass Communication. He classified that news reports can be framed into high, medium and low categories. High frame refers to journalistic ideology with main themes of reporting, including reporting topics and journalistic quality. Medium frame refers to choices of material organization and news sources. Low frame refers to language choices, relating to or concerned with the art of rhetoric (Zang, 2006).

Three categories were used in this research and divided into second degree parameters for better analysis.

Methodologies and Data

Content Analysis

The content of this study was taken from targeted news papers' official websites. Day-to-day web archives in targeting time duration were collected.

In this study, two different kinds of software SPSS and RostCM were used for data collection and analysis. SPSS is a well-known professional software for data analysis. RostCM is a well-known full-function software in content mining, which was introduced and developed by Wuhan University.

Case Selection

In terms of case selection, we compared cases of 2 dimensions, which includes 4 relationships.

(1) attitudes of Indian and Pakistani news reports on each state visiting were compared (Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Modi).

(2) before-and-after attitudes of each Indian and Pakistani news reports on similar events.

Table 1

Relationships between 4 Main Subjects

	The Times of India(A)	Dawn(B)
Chinese President Xi Jinping(C)	A-C	B-C
Indian Prime Minister Modi(D)	A-D	B-D

Research Design

Targeted Newspapers

Indian newspaper “The Times of India” and Pakistani newspaper “Dawn” were selected for analysis. These two historical English newspapers are the most influential in their countries, and they both play very important roles in their entire society as “Opinion Leaders”. “The Times of India”, reflecting the opinions of the Indian government, is one of the most widely circulated English newspapers globally. “Dawn” is one of the three most important newspapers in Pakistan; it reflects the political atmosphere in Pakistan.

Since the elite class in both countries receive their education in English, these people like to read English-language newspapers and reflects their social identity. Therefore, news reports on The Times of India and Dawn reflect the ideologies of the ‘elite opinion leaders’ and therefore exert influence over the majority in these two countries.

Targeted Timing Duration

News reports were selected from April 1st to June 30th, 2015. The main reason for choosing such a period is that during this period, major events related to China occurred; China President Xi Jinping visited to Pakistan, and soon after, Indian Prime Minister Modi visited China. Due to political and economic competition between these big countries, these two events became hot topics in the global media landscape. Besides political and economic topics, at the beginning of June, a large ship sank in the Yangzi River drowning more than 400 people. This accident also attracted attention from other countries. On negative topics, it can be easier to find the real reporting angles.

Essential Keywords

“China” and “Chinese” were selected as essential key words. News reports archives were collected from these two newspapers’ official websites on a daily basis in the targeted duration. News reports with titles containing “China” or “Chinese” were collected.

Analysis and Results

We collected 518 news reports in total during the targeted period, which have more than 200,000 English words. Blogs and advertisements were excluded. Data were analyzed using SPSS using the appropriate coding.

High Frame

In the high frame category, three variables were set for assessment — reports quantity, report topics and report length.

(1) Report Quantity

Reports quantity shows the focus of one medium on a certain field or topic. The entire news reports quantity of The Times of India was seen much more than Dawn. This is probably due to The Times of India Publishing Group being much bigger than the Dawn Group. But the percentage of “Chinese Topic reports / Total reports”, India and Pakistan gave almost same attention on a percentage basis. Each month was split into three parts each of 10 days. Report quantity distribution of each part is shown in Figure 1.

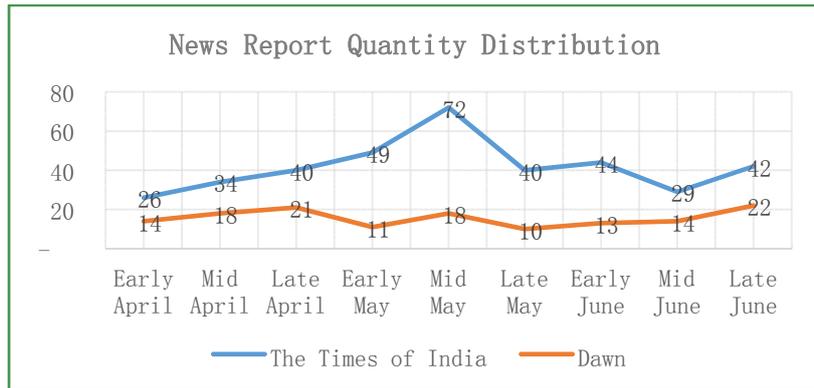


Figure 1. News Report Quantity Distribution in Each 10 Day Period.

(2) Report Topics

Report Topicstell us the news agency’s reporting angle and ideology. The more topics one medium reports, thewider horizon it has. Distribution of different topics shows the interests of each medium and their readers. The distributions of each news report of The Times of India and Dawn are shown as in Figure 2.

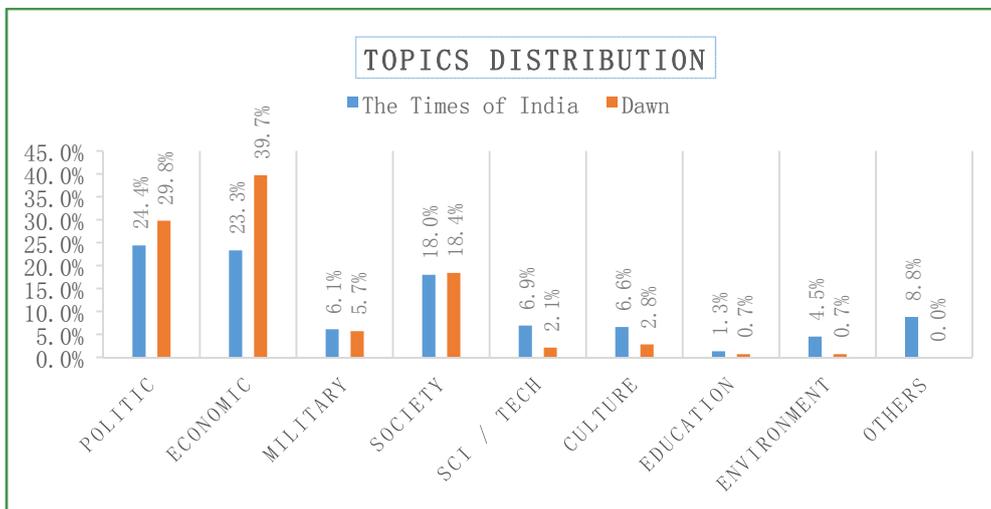


Figure 2. News Report Topic Distribution.

(3) Report Length

According to Dr. Zhou Honggang’s doctoral thesis “Research on China’s Image in India Mainstream English-language Newspaper”, report length can be classified into “1-300 words”, “301-500 words”, “501-800 words”, “801-1200 words” “1200 words and above” (Zhou, 2013). This classification is considered reasonable for data analysis.

Table 1

Distribution of Report Length

		1-300	301-500	501-800	800-1200	1200&Above	Total
The Times of India	Report Quantity	103	141	96	24	13	377
	Percent	27.3	37.4	25.5	6.4	3.4	100.0
Dawn	Report Quantity	42	45	37	15	2	144
	Percent	29.8	31.9	26.2	10.6	1.4	100.0

Middle Frame

(1) News Source

News source indicates where the journalists received news information. News source plays a very important role in convincing readers to believe the content. At the same time, how news sources disseminate information also directly reflects the reporter's understanding of that case. The distribution of news sources is listed as in Table 2. As we can see from the distribution table, sources from national officials and leaders are twice as many in The Times of India than in Dawn. The Times of India also has a higher percentage of western sources than Dawn. Additionally, The Times of India accepts information from Taiwanese or outlaw Tibetans whereas Dawn has none of those. This is because The Times of India tends to attack the Chinese government by reporting on more sensitive issues related to it. The Pakistan government, on the other hand, supports the Chinese government, and, therefore, no such sources were cited in Dawn.

Table 2

News Source Distribution

News Resource	The Times of India			Dawn		
	Count	Percent	Valid Percent	Count	Percent	Valid Percent
National Leader	27	7.2	7.2	8	5.7	5.7
National Public Official	119	31.6	31.6	22	15.6	15.6
National celebrities	24	6.4	6.4	7	5.0	5.0
National Businessmen	20	5.3	5.3	4	2.8	2.8
National Common People	4	1.1	1.1	1	0.7	0.7
Chinese Official Media	35	9.3	9.3	18	12.8	12.8
Chinese Leader	7	1.9	1.9	4	2.8	2.8
Chinese Public Official	56	14.8	14.8	25	17.7	17.7
Chinese Celebrities	5	1.3	1.3	6	4.2	4.2
Chinese Businessmen	8	2.1	2.1	3	2.1	2.1
Chinese Common People	1	0.3	0.3	1	0.7	0.7
Taiwanese	1	0.3	0.3	0	0	0
Outlaw of Tibet/Sinkiang	1	0.3	0.3	0	0	0
Western Media/Celebrities	42	11.1	11.1	13	9.2	9.2
Pakistan Official	2	0.5	0.5	8	5.7	5.7
Pakistani Common People	0	0	0	1	0.7	0.7
Organizations	8	2.1	2.1	9	6.4	6.4
Others	17	4.5	4.5	11	7.8	7.8
Total	377	100.0	100.0	141	100.0	100.0

Apart from news sources, editorial source indicates that from which news agency the editors get the news. To some extent, it also indicates the inclination of the original news agencies, corresponding to their own background. The distribution of editorial source is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 shows that about 70% of the sources concentrated on American media and American news agencies. There are more articles from American news agencies than its national news agencies. This shows that the Times of India relies heavily on American news agencies for their editorial source and therefore was influenced heavily by America in terms of agenda setting.

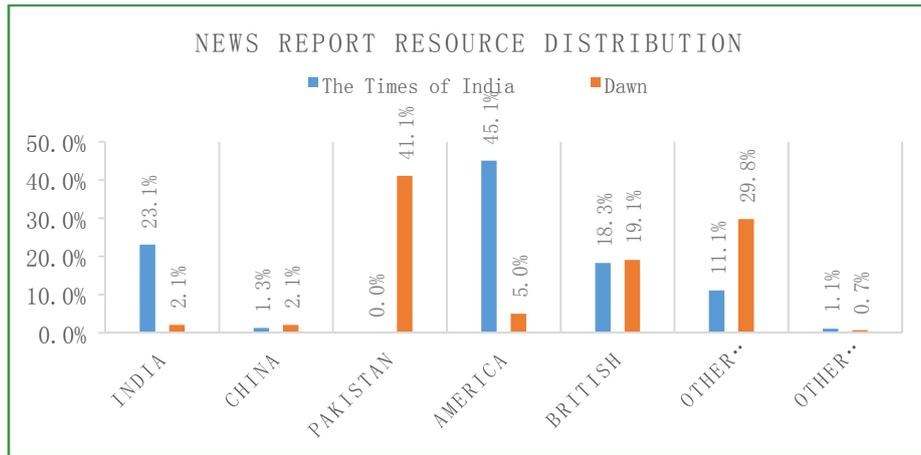


Figure 3. News Report Resource Distribution.

(2) Place of reporting

Place of reporting refers to the city the reporting took place. It shows the background of the news report and also affects its reliability. In terms of coding, “national capital”, and national other cities” for India means New Deli and other Indian cities. Pakistan means Islamabad and other Pakistani cities. The phrase “Indian/Pak cities” means the opposite country from previous option as shown in Figure 4. It shows that the Chinese news related articles in Times of India are mainly reported in the capital or other major cities in India; whereas the Dawn reporting on China are mainly reported in Beijing, China.

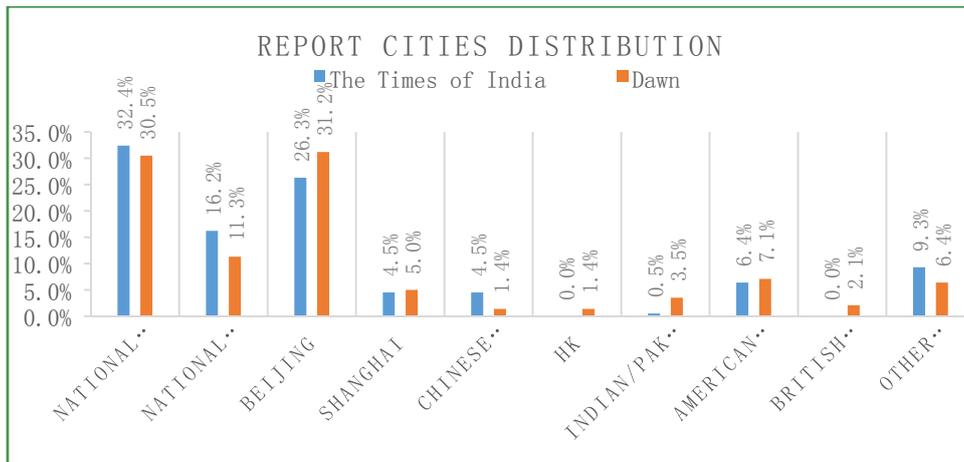


Figure 4. Report Cities Distribution.

(3) Order of news reporting

Taiwanese Professor ZangGuoren defined news report timing as following 6 elements: “main issue”, “pre-issue”, “history”, “result”, “influence” and “oral reflection”. In this study, considering practical reports details, we added “commentary/evaluation” and “reason”. The distribution of all eight elements is listed in Table 3. The two newspapers are very similar in all categories except for commentary/evaluation, in which, The Times of India is 3% higher than Dawn. Further investigation shows that news articles that are heavily manipulated are all in the evaluation / commentary category and therefore the Times of India has a higher percentage of untruthful reporting.

Table 3

News Report Timing Order Distribution

		History	Main Issue	Pre Issue	Reason	Result	Influence	Evaluation/C ommentary	Oral Reflection	Total
The Times of India	Count	4	246	9	11	15	19	67	6	377
	Percent	1.1	65.3	2.4	2.9	4.0	5.0	17.8	1.6	100.0
	Valid Percent	1.1	65.3	2.4	2.9	4.0	5.0	17.8	1.6	100.0
Dawn	Count	1	78	16	9	4	11	21	1	141
	Percent	0.7	55.3	11.3	6.4	2.8	7.8	14.9	0.7	100.0
	Valid Percent	0.7	55.3	11.3	6.4	2.8	7.8	14.9	0.7	100.0

Low Frame

According to previous research[4], low frame means the elements of text. In this section, the following three elements were studied: “key words”, “high frequency words” and “report tone”.

(1) Key Words

The word selection reflects the thoughts and preferences of journalists. Similar verbs or adjectives can show totally different meaning even between two words that have similar meaning. Examples of key words will be expanded in the following section, under the title “Case Study”.

(2) High Frequency Words

With the help of modern software such as RostCM, we can count which words are used and how often. Especially, researchers can recover nouns that show the true tendency of the journalists.

From RostCM, total word count of Indian news reports was 140,433, which was a little more than twice the word count of Dawn (0.285%) at 69,363. However, the proportion of reporting focused on China president of Dawn is twice as much as The times of India (0.138%). This shows that Dawn pays much more attention to China president’s activities than The Times of India.

Table 4

High Frequency Words Distribution of The Times of India

Topic Items	Word	Frequency	Percent
Politic related	China+ Chinese	2103+884=2987	2.127%
	India + Indian	825+280=1105	0.787%
	Modi	377	0.268%
	Beijing	340	0.242%
	government	340	0.242%
	people	270	0.192%
	state	256	0.182%
	minister	218	0.155%
	Pakistan	169	0.120%
	Asia + Asian	162+103=265	0.189%
	Xi + Jinping	135+59=194	0.138%
	Delhi	135	0.096%
	Shanghai	124	0.088%
	Washington	82	0.058%

(table 4 continued)

Topic Items	Word	Frequency	Percent
Economic Related	Economic + economy	184+108=292	0.208%
	Investment + investors	139+37=176	0.125%
	trade	126	0.090%
	Market + markets	125+44=169	0.120%
	cooperation	111	0.079%
	Industry + industrial	79+59=134	0.095%
Military Related	security	149	0.106%
	military	138	0.098%
	energy	82	0.058%
	maritime	64	0.046%
	Defense + defense	61+47=108	0.077%
	nuclear	48	0.034%
	aircraft	44	0.031%
	Territory + terrorism	34+25=59	0.042%
Other Aspects	media	83	0.059%
	infrastructure	80	0.057%
	technology	76	0.054%
	Taiwan	40	0.028%
	force	36	0.026%
	Tibetan	27	0.019%
	Sovereignty	27	0.019%

Table 5

High Frequency Words Distribution of Dawn

Topic Items	Word	Frequency	Percent
Politic related	China+ Chinese	945+440=1385	1.996%
	Pakistan + Pakistani	512+43=555	0.800%
	president	184	0.265%
	Beijing	183	0.264%
	government	179	0.258%
	India + Indian	167+70=237	0.342%
	minister	153	0.221%
	people	134	0.193%
	Xi + Jinping	117+81=198	0.285%
	development	98	0.142%
	Asia + Asian	86	0.124%
	Modi	84	0.121%
	Gwadar	76	0.109%

(table 5 continued)

Topic Items	Word	Frequency	Percent
Economic Related	Economic + economy	208+47=255	0.368%
	project+projects	127+143=270	0.389%
	corridor	127	0.183%
	Investment + investors	115	0.166%
	Investment +investors + investments	115+27+20=162	0.233%
	trade	103	0.148%
	bank	91	0.131%
	Business + businesses	56+17=73	0.105%
	corporation	54	0.078%
	construction	36	0.052%
	Finance + financing	28+24=52	0.075%
	manufacturing	20	0.029%
	Industry + industrial	15+19=34	0.049%
Military Related	security	87	0.125%
	energy	78	0.112%
	military	51	0.074%
	border	50	0.072%
	solar	33	0.048%
Other Aspects	infrastructure	78	0.112%
	terrorism	17	0.025%

(3) Reporting Tones

Reporting Tones typically include “Objective”, “Balance” and “Prejudice”. “Objective” reflects the real image of a case or event that the news report reflects. “Balance” shows that the news report gives the same chance to each party or aspect when the case or event involved multiple events. “Prejudice” indicates that the news report is false or uses clearly subjective or negative words. Compared to Dawn, the “prejudice” tone of the Times of India is relatively high at around 25%. This is considered high for a newspaper (Zang, 2006). This prejudice reporting was focused on China in the military section. Objective tones were at a low of 11.9%, which is the lowest among all three tones. Dawn, on the other hand, focused on objective and balanced tones, which covered 95.7% of the articles. It is worth pointing out that the prejudice report in Pakistan was mainly focused on India, not China.

The news report tone distribution is shown asin Figure 5:

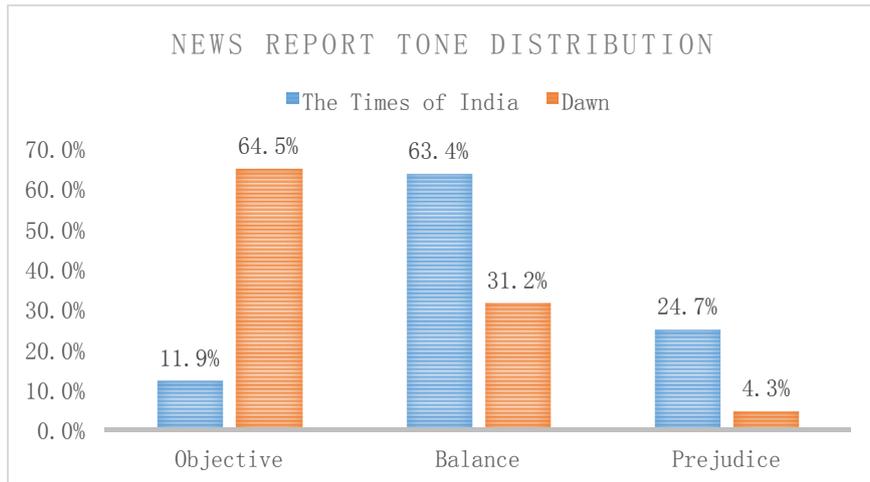


Figure 5. News Report Tone Distribution.

Case Study

(1) The news reports of Chinese President Xi Jinping State Visit to Pakistan (A-C, B-C)

(I) A-C

Chinese President Xi Jinping State Visit on 21st April, 2015. This is a historical event for both China and Pakistan. This signified the beginning of “One Belt One Road”. Other countries’ media also focused on this event. But, The Times of India had a surprisingly negative attitude.

One report on 20th April named “Chinese President in Pakistan to unveil \$46bn in investments”. It gives the following aggressive analysis:

“China is a leading arms supplier to Pakistan and has sought its help in combating anti-Chinese Islamic separatists reportedly hiding in the country's lawless tribal areas. China is also eager for Pakistan's help in stabilizing Afghanistan as US and international troops wind down their presence there.”

On the day of state visit, it published one report named “Xi Jinping in Pakistan, China to beat US spending there with \$46 billion investment”. This report’s content was not related to US at all, but it gave such a title to instigate the relationship between China and US. And according to English grammar, “spend” means to pay money for something wanted or needed. In fact, China is just investing instead of paying Pakistan.

On the same day, The Times of India reported “Twitter reacts to Pak, China’s think tank ‘RANDI’”. It reads as follows:

“China and Pakistan on Monday launched a think tank to focus on the development of their economic corridor. According to a press statement issued by the Islamabad office of Pakistan-China Institute, the newly-formed think tank has been named ‘Research and Development International’. While the name of this think tank is seemingly harmless, it is the acronym — ‘RANDI’— that takes the cake. In case you didn’t know, ‘Randi’ is also a very crude Hindi word for ‘prostitute’.”

What follows are comments of Twitter users, comments like “That awkward moment when a think tank does not even think its name through RANDI.” And “Not surprised that China and Pakistan’s economic think tank is called RANDI. China has always been a Red Light Area.”

In fact, this full report is designed to meet the needs of Indian government and media. As we know, the grammar discipline to make a short phrase is to select the first letter of each word except preposition. So, the

correct abbreviation of “Research and Development International” is “RDI” rather than “RANDI”.

(II) B-C

Among the reports of Dawn, one report titled “Chinese president due today on historical visit” offered the Chinese official rationale of the investment:

“He (Planning and Development Minister Ahsan Iqbal) said Pakistan wanted to transform political and strategic relations between the two countries into economic and strategic partnership as the Chinese leadership embarked upon its vision of developing the Silk Route through land, maritime and air links for the combined benefit of the over three billion people who lived in the region..... Moreover, the PCEC (Pakistan-China Economic Corridor) route would be utilized for the creation of economic and industrial free zones, for which a fresh economic zone working group would be created soon after the upcoming visit to link all the four provinces, AJK (Azad Jammu And Kashmir), FATA and Gilgit-Baltistan to extend benefits of the initiative across the country. ”

Later on, Dawn reported many following analyses of Chinese investment, which showed an objective attitude — neither flattering nor self-abasement. For example, one report on 24th April, “Should we bask in the glory of China’s commitment?” showed their self-independence attitude.

(2) The news reports of Indian Prime Minister Modi’s State Visit to China (A-D, B-D)

Just two weeks later after President Xi visited Pakistan, Indian Prime Minister Modi visited China. It was a big event between two countries. During Modi’s visit India received more than 20 contracts and more than \$20 billion in investment from China. Chinese media reported this big event with great passion and an optimistic attitude. However, India looked not so happy with China on Modi’s visiting.

(I) A-D

On the 14th of May, the first day of Modi’s visit, The Times of India released a report titled “PM Narendra Modi will push China to cut trade deficit”:

“Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to pitch for concrete steps from China to check the growing trade deficit as India’s neighbor has failed to act on a series of measures it promised over the past few years.”

It portrayed China as a dishonest country and claimed that China sought help from India due to its own financial crisis.

On the 16th of May, The Times of India published an article titled “China must rethink stand on some issues: PM Modi”. This article expressed a threatening tone:

“PM Narendra Modi did some straight talking about India’s unease over aspects of China’s foreign policy, telling Beijing on Friday that it should ‘reconsider its approach on some of the issues that hold us back from realizing the full potential of our partnership’”

On the 18th of May, “Modi’s openness seen well — but China not in mood to compromise on border: Simon Denyer” had the following paragraph:

“But there’s no doubt China’s friendship with Pakistan and India’s relationship with the United States do set some limits on how friendly governments in Beijing and Delhi can become..... in fact, China has taken a maximalist position on territorial issues in the past decade and is not in the mood to compromise with anyone.”

In this report, India was trying to sabotage China’s efforts on border issues and economic cooperation. In the meantime, we can sense India’s possible jealousy on Chinese investment to Pakistan.

(II) B-D

From Pakistan aspect, Dawn showed a more relaxed editorial position on Modi’s visit, which was very

different from Indian reactions on Xi's visit stated in the sections above. Dawn totally reported 5 news pieces about Modi's visit. Such as "Chinese president fetes Modi in his ancestral town", "Xi to Indian PM: China, India must build mutual trust", "China, India sign more than \$22 billion in deals: Indian embassy". All these 5 reports gave objective statements based on the events. No news report belittled the Indian image.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, certain results are not so different between Indian and Pakistani reports, although some differences exist. On one case or event, different countries have different news frames, which result in a different China image in their readers' mind. This stereotype throws inverse effects on the report method.

Indians and Chinese are "Frenemies", which means half friend and half enemy. Pakistan, on the other hand, is the Iron Brother of China. Apparently, such a difference is one of the most important reasons for their differences in news reports. However, Indian news agencies show inferior attitude that appears to be against reporting principles. To some extent, it delivers stories that appear to be unprofessional. On the other hand, the Pakistani news agency shows objective analyses and observations about China. As a neutral third party, it simply reports the truth, not showing positions as a close friend or a loathsome enemy.

Therefore, Chinese readers could learn from this paper what the Chinese image is in other countries' eyes. It offers different viewing angles to reflect on our own country. For false news, China should deliver statements to clear the confusion in front of the world. In terms of the criticisms on our true defects, China also needs to accept the criticisms and make corrections to ensure better development.

The following aspects can be improved in this research:

- (1) Time duration is not long enough to cover all topics.
- (2) Different inspections were enumerated under each frame category according to the research design. In actuality, one news report could be decomposed into many small variables by different standards. In this research, the aforementioned inspections are limited in order to tease out all the useful information.
- (3) In the data coding process, evaluation criteria of some items are relatively subjective. They could possibly lead to some deviance of the results.

For future we could consider collecting more news reports in longer time duration. Additionally, more inspections can be collected to examine the smaller aspects.

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