

**DELIVERING CHINESE VOICES TO AUSTRALIAN AUDIENCES:
CCTV'S SEARCH FOR CONGRUENCE BETWEEN ITS FRAMES AND THOSE OF AUDIENCES**

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ABSTRACT

This project explored firstly how China's image is framed by public diplomacy (PD) elites in China and Australia and their views on the role of media in soft power generation and projection; and secondly, with the case of One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR), China's most recent comprehensive strategy to generate wider cooperation and prosperity in a wide arc of countries; how China's discourse is framed comparatively by its own media channel CCTV NEWS (now CGTN) and intended target audiences to examine congruence. CCTV NEWS has adopted the multinational formula exemplified by CNN by incorporating Western anchors and Western news production values. The practice culture as an index of framing culture had also been discussed to make sense of the frame construction under China's current institution and possible frame reception among audiences

The research is situated under symbolic interactionism and the constructivist approach to analyse the information flow under the constructivist international relations. It is ideographic, interpretive and qualitative and does not seek to prove causality, though it does recognise that Chinese PD elites have an intention to influence and treat audiences as targets. In-depth interviews, observation and online focus group discussion have been used as data-collecting methods and framing analysis was used for the analysis of the collected data, plus the state documents and CCTV NEWS features on OBOR.

Frames from CCTV programs about OBOR were found to have limited congruence with those of Australian stakeholders in China-Australia relations despite the program format and quality being rendered similar to Western models through the use of Western anchors, journalists and production values. There is the obstacle of stereotypical frames of China that needs to be carefully studied and addressed. In networked society wherein public diplomacy prevails, media as a channel of projection shows its limitation in leading discourse; but the mobilisation among media practitioners grant media outlets a dual role, as both a tool and a network hub.

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STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled *Delivering Chinese voices to Australian audiences: CCTV's search for congruence between its frames and those of audiences* has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree to any university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research that has been written solely by me with the supervision of my principal supervisor. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work – and in the preparation of the thesis itself – have been appropriately acknowledged in the thesis.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, on 29 May 2015 (Ref: 5201500324).

Mei LI

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-----------|---|
| ABC | Australian Broadcasting Corporation |
| AIIB | Asian Infrastructural Investment Bank |
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| CCTV | China Central Television |
| CCTV NEWS | China Central Television English News Channel |
| CIPG | China International Publishing Group |
| CGTN | China Global Television Network |
| CNN | Cable News Network |
| CPC | Communist Party of China |
| GRC | Global Republican Confederacy |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| OBOR | One Belt One Road |
| PBS | Public Broadcast Service |
| PD | Public Diplomacy |
| PPP | Purchasing Power Parity |
| R&D | Research and development |
| RT | Russia Today |

| | |
|---------|--|
| SAPPRFT | State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television |
| SARFT | State Administration of Radio, Film and Television |
| SCIO | State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China |
| S&T | Science and Technology |
| SBS | Special Broadcasting Service |
| SCMP | South China Morning Post |
| SMH | Sydney Morning Herald |
| TPP | Trans-Pacific Partnership |
| NWICO | New World Information and Communication Order |
| WSIS | World Summit on the Information Society |
| USIA | United States Information Agency |
| USIS | United States Information Service |
| VOA | Voice of America |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

International media has increasingly been viewed by governments in recent years as being useful in public diplomacy. Many governments have competitively engaged in something akin to a ‘war’ of public diplomacy, through media, seeking to present their countries as attractive and friendly to foreigners. Emerging powers such as China have not previously had the capacity to reach Western audiences. In addition to developing attractive content they have in the 21st Century also enhanced the capacity of their content delivery systems, channels through which their views to the world could be spread. China began to attach more importance to the development of international media and invest heavily in developing international news channels to achieve its international relations objectives by publicising China’s views and expanding its soft power as a counter balance to the ‘China Threat’ theory. In this project, taking the reception of Chinese news in Australia as a focus, this project will compare, in as a case study, the intent of CCTV NEWS¹, the English language channel run by China Central Television (CCTV), in expanding the perspectives of Australian viewers to include knowledge of Chinese perspectives, with audience perspectives.

¹ This research was conducted before CCTV NEWS changed its name to CGTN in January 2017. CCTV News, CCTV-9 and CCTV International are all names that preceded CGTN. The term CCTV’s English-language channel is used in this article to refer to the channel under its various names. CCTV itself started off as Beijing Television.

This opening chapter of the whole thesis aims to provide a blue print for the whole project by presenting, in five substantive sections: (1) the research background; (2) objective and research questions; (3) the theoretical framework and methodology; (4) significance of the project; and (5) the general structure of the thesis. The aforementioned five substantive sections will follow this introduction. The chapter will end with a brief summary.

Background: China's Rise as the start of the debates

The rise of China is regarded as one of the most significant issues since the first decade of the 21st Century in world politics. Its high-speed economic growth has ignited the rise of China's status in world affairs (Ikenberry 2008). Since the adoption of its 'reform and opening up' policy starting in the late 1970s, China's economy has experienced a three decade-long period of high-speed growth. In 2010, it surpassed Japan to become the second largest economy in the world. IMF statistics recognised that in 2015 it became the largest economy in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) (World Bank 2016). Although China tracks far behind some developed countries for certain indicators, it ranks first in the world in many dimensions: it is the largest manufacturer; the largest source country of the world tourism market and the greatest contributor to world economic growth (Liu 2015).

Accompanying the rise of its economic status has been the growth of its significance in world affairs beyond the economic field. This trend has triggered numerous discussions on its impact on world order with diverse views being offered. One group of scholars acknowledges the integration and cooperation efforts China has made towards international institutions in the process of its economic development (Johnston 2003; Li and Worm 2011; Harpaz 2016). For the second group, China's rise is considered merely to be its restoration to the central stage it has occupied through much of history (White 2005). The third group is associated with 'China Threat' theory and members hold suspicious attitudes regarding the rise of China, claiming that China's rise will upset the balance of world order and threaten the security of both its neighbours and the world. The fear lies in the potential for China's high economic

growth precipitating parallel growth in military power; fierce economic competition; the propagation of social values and norms coloured by Chinese socialist ideology; and assertiveness regarding its territorial claims (Roy 1996; Jeffery 2009; Kristof 1993; Gertz 2013; Campion 2016).

Presenting a good image has been an important factor for the Chinese government when dealing with domestic and international affairs; efforts have been made to counter the negative framing of the country. Chinese political leaders have attached special importance to China's national image since the "reform and opening up" period. Each generation of China's leadership has made statements about China's image in published works and speeches. For example, Deng Xiaoping emphasised the 'reforming and opening' image to convince international society of the country's attitude of willingness to open its doors with the aim of building trust in and confidence in China (Deng 1994). During Jiang Zemin's administration, a decade after the opening up policy and the Tiananmen Square incident generated positive and negative influences respectively, national image was regarded as a task for China diplomatic strategy (Jin and Xu 2010). In this period, an image of self-dependence, modernisation, reforming and opening up, anti-hegemony, peacefulness and political stability – with the purpose of serving the reform and opening up and modernisation – was articulated (Jiang 1999). During Hu Jintao's administration, China experienced a long stable period of wealth accumulation and integration into the world community, especially in terms of its economy. China's self-perceived image was more systematically described variously: Politically as a peace-loving democratic country; economically as a responsible developing country; culturally as a civilised country respecting cultural pluralism and harmony in the pursuit of equity and justice (Jin and Xu 2010). Shi (2009), after historically reviewing the speeches of the CPC leaders from Mao to Hu, identifies six aspects of China's image discourse among the top leadership during the past 60 years: Independently following its own path; a big economy under reform and opening up; a united country with people as the master of their own life; cultural prosperity and civilisational rejuvenation; social harmony and people living a happy life; pursuing lasting peace and co-prosperity in the world. Xi Jinping elaborates China's image in a more detailed way: China should be portrayed as a civilised country featuring rich history, ethnic unity and cultural diversity; an Oriental power with good

government, developed economy, cultural prosperity, national unity and beautiful mountains and rivers; a responsible country that advocates peaceful and common development, safeguards international justice, and makes contributions to humanity; and a socialist country which is open, amicable, promising and vibrant (Xinhuanet 2014).

Facing external concerns about the potential threat of an ascendant China, the carefully elaborated frames of national image partially aim to dispel doubts. Rhetorically reassuring its peaceful intention to other countries, together with exercising self-restraint on thorny issues and creating win-win situations are the strategic responses of China to the suspicions entertained by other countries, especially the major Western powers. The Chinese government has articulated on numerous occasions that China is harmless and has no aggressive, expansionary or hegemonic intentions behind its accelerated economic rise. Phrases such as ‘Peaceful Rise’ (Zheng 2002; Hu 2004a), ‘Peaceful Development’ (Hu 2004b; Xi 2014) were developed and used by Chinese think tanks and top leaders at various occasions to express China’s developmental aims.

Interpreting China’s rise from soft power prism

With the emergence of the concept of soft power, some scholars adopt a soft power approach to analyse the rise of China (Ross 2006; Ding 2010; Hunter 2009; Li and Worm 2011). Defined as ‘the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments, soft power ‘arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies’. (Nye 2004, x) After examining China’s adoption of a soft power-based global strategy and a soft power approach during its rise, Ding concludes that soft power could be used to analyse a rising power. According to the realist world politics theory, a rising power is a revisionist power that will disrupt the existing system and pose a threat to the status quo power (Morgenthau 1973, Mearsheimer 2001). Ding believes that China’s efforts to develop soft power resources and rely on soft power will reduce the likelihood of China adopting a revisionist policy. Under this circumstance, the transition process from a rising power to a status quo power will be smoother (Ding 2010). Li and Worm also acknowledge that soft power is applied by China as a means and end with respect to its peaceful rise; they conclude that

a peaceful rise may not be impossible for China (Li and Worm 2011). In Mingjiang Li's (2008b) view, soft power in China is a means to multiple ends. Firstly, it is widely regarded by Chinese scholars and top leaders as an indicator of China's world status and would be an attribute that can match its hard power status. Secondly, it is regarded as a soft shield for self-defence from misunderstanding of others in the short run and as providing a favourable environment for its development.

Sino-Australian Relations

The bilateral relations between China and Australia have been changing as cooperation has deepened in areas such as economy, education, environment, science and research, and tourism. Since late 2007, China has been Australia's largest trading partner, and in 2009 it became Australia's largest export market. Australia is China's seventh largest trading partner. The scale of two-way trade has increased more than 1000-fold to over \$100 billion in 40 years. China is Australia's second largest source of visitor arrivals with 709,000 arrivals in 2013. Australia is one of the most popular destinations for Chinese students wishing to study overseas. China is Australia's largest source of overseas students with over 119,000 students in 2013 (Australian Embassy China 2014).

Strategically, relations between China, the burgeoning power in the world and Australia, the leading middle power in the Asia-Pacific region may be characterised as close interdependence (Yu and Xiong 2012). For China, to win the heart of the world means not only winning the fondness of big countries but also the fondness of the middle powers. For Australia, with a burgeoning economy and high status, China's policy has a substantial impact on its interests in the Asia-Pacific area. Australia's foreign policy is no longer dependent solely on the U.S. which has always been regarded as an ally but is now viewed through the lens of a Sino-Australian-American triangle (Li 2011). But for Australians, China, with totally different cultural, political cultural and political backgrounds, is not as compatible as Western allies. This can be found in many foreign policy decisions and media discourses. Like in the case of OBOR, Australia's decision in joining the institutional financial organisation Asian Infrastructural Investment Bank took much longer than many countries, even the allies

of Australia (Rimmer 2015). To understand China is therefore a more urgent and tougher task for Australian policy makers.

Media in China's image framing

Existing research on frames on China's image indicates that foreign media's coverage of Chinese issues is always infused with double standards; and the proportion of negative news is always dominant in Western mainstream media's coverage of China. Research findings show that Western media seldom portray a favourable image of China in relation to many crucial issues. And China's cultural image and technological topics which are likely to be more positive in the eyes of Westerners are seldom covered by international mainstream media (Xiang 2013; Willnat and Luo 2011). It is believed that these commissions and omissions will have a negative impact on Australian foreign policy making too, because of prejudicial views of the Australian electorate. Prejudicial views are clearly seen in the Lowy Institute Poll conducted by Australian international policy think tank Lowy Institute (Oliver 2014). In the case of Australia, although China has been the country's biggest trade partner for many years, the U.S. is its de facto ally in international affairs and always cooperates with the U.S. to defend against possible threats by China strategically; and its China policy is always swinging between US and China. In the Lowy Institute's 2014 poll, far fewer think of China as Australia's greatest Asian friend (31%) than as a threat (48%), or who think that the Chinese investment is too much in Australia (56%). Some view this kind of case as a result of skewed frames of China in the Western world, especially in the media (Zhao 2012). "Demonising China" is the term used by some Chinese scholars and diplomats to define what is seen as a strategy that is employed by the outside world, especially by Western democratic countries and their media, when they describe China (Li and Liu 1996). Terms such as 'distortion', 'biased' and 'selective' are always employed to characterise the Western media's stance and tendencies of practice when reporting on China.

Ramo's (2007) diagnosis of the problem of China's image is that there is a misalignment between China's self-perception and other's perceptions of China's

image. For example, on the ‘China’s Rise’ case, fear of China’s rise seems the predominant attitude (Zhao 2012, Harris 2001, Hailin 2012), despite the repeated expression of China’s expectation of a peaceful developmental environment by Chinese authorities. The empirical logic of reception studies suggests that receivers do more than receive passively, dominant or preferred readings. They may negotiate readings, constructing their own counter-hegemonic preferred readings (Fisher and Lucas 2011; Hall 1980). Wang (2011a) analysed the reason why the perceptions are sometimes different: Some images may be viewed as ‘fact-based’ leaving little space for interpretation while others are subjective. One factor is the degree of consistency of words and deeds. Also, Wang employed psychological theories of perception to explain the phenomenon that sometimes China is doing well, but Americans do not perceive it to be doing well because people tend to accept information that is consistent with their previous knowledge; also decision makers tend to fit new information into their existing theories and images (Jervis 1976). Chinese officials from governmental organs attribute the suspicious mentality to a residual Cold War mindset and prejudice in some Western countries that makes some Westerners adopt an oppositional stance about everything that happens in China, which is reflected in Western media as distortions, even attacks (Zhao 2016). This judgement is supported by many scholars through empirical analysis of foreign media discourse (Li and Liu 1996; Xiang 2013). Another explanation has been offered under the framework of unbalanced international information flow (MacBride 1980), flows that Western media dominate (Shi and Zhang 2016).

The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games provided not only an unprecedented opportunity for China to showcase its development achievements and culture and thus was an image-promoting mega event. But it turned out also to be an opportunity for negative coverage. This is interpreted as a demonstration of China’s weak discursive power. In the following year, the *2009-2020 Master Plan for the Construction of China’s Major Media as an International Dissemination Force* and *The Cultural Industry Promotion Plan* were released to promote the development of China’s international media and culture industries. And the national image orientation of government discourse gradually switched to a discursive power orientation. This led to a research transition in Chinese academic research: for example, the search results in

China's scholar search platform CNKI saw a doubling of searches on discourse (Huayu) related topics after 2009.

In practice, the top leadership prescribed a 'going out' policy in cultural industry and media as a remedy under the framework of a soft power strategy. Besides the rhetorical efforts, institutional and policy development are other complementary efforts for China to gain exposure of itself to a broader overseas public; it draws on public diplomacy resources such as the Confucius Institute, China Cultural Centre, and the international media.

Action was initiated long before the 2009 master plans of media and culture industry development had been launched. CCTV NEWS is one of the key institutions to be activated internationally. As part of the country's soft power machinery, CCTV has been making efforts to become a global media network, with the intent of increasing China's international influence, since the 1990s. The expansion of CCTV overseas began in the early 1990s and the broadcaster has graduated from a modest to a grand-scale operation. In 1990, an international channel was launched targeting overseas Chinese in the East Asian region. In 1992, CCTV-4, known as the Chinese International Channel, was established targeting the Chinese diaspora worldwide. Two years later, an English news team was set up. One year on, an experimental English Channel was launched. The English Channel, formerly widely known as CCTV-9, was formally launched on September 25, 2000 to broadcast English programs to major English speaking countries as a 24-hour international channel. Then under the instruction of the publicity department of CCP, in May 2004, the English Channel was relaunched as CCTV-International. Since then, further expansion and transformation has happened regularly. In 2004, Spanish and French channels were introduced. And then in 2009, Arabic and Russian channels were added. In April 2010, the name CCTV-International was changed to CCTV NEWS as a 24-hour news channel; and several other foreign language channels were set up in the following years. By December 2016, the CCTV International family had 5 channels broadcasting in English, Spanish, French, Russian and Arabic respectively. And two offshore branches of CCTV NEWS – CCTV Africa, based in Kenya and CCTV America based in Washington, DC – were launched in January and February 2012 respectively (Zhu 2012; Li 2012). In 31 December 2016, a

rebranding happened again when the foreign language channels of CCTV appeared under a new name, China Global Television Network (CGTN), with multiple social media platforms.

In addition to its expansion, CCTV NEWS made substantial improvements in news practice. For example, CCTV America hired many veteran producers, correspondents and anchors from *60 Minutes*, Bloomberg News, CNN, CNN International, BBC World News, ABC News, etc., in the hopes of producing global news with an Asian focus. The launch of CCTV Africa is the first initiative in the world to realise the idea of establishing a Pan-African television channel, prompting traditional international media outlets such as BBC World and Al-Jazeera to follow suit.

The decision on the international media approach may be looked at in the context of the historical role of international broadcasting in world affairs. Since the 1920s when it emerged, international broadcasting has been a means for public diplomacy in order to influence international relations through having an impact on broader publics in other countries; and thus international communication is viewed as an important tool of soft power (Nye 2004). On the relationship between media and foreign policy, previous research has arrived at two seemingly contrary conclusions: on the one hand, some scholars use the case of CNN effect to illustrate the media's capacity of influencing government decisions (Robinson 2001; Livingston 1997); on the other hand, some researchers emphasise governmental ability to affect media coverage while admitting the power of media in formulating consent (Herman and Chomsky 1988). One thing that is undeniable in this debate is that international media is viewed by public diplomacy elites as playing a role in information dissemination and interaction with governments. Additionally, in the age of network society (Castells 2004), people-to-people diplomacy has boomed. And international broadcasting has evolved into an organisation for those with global interests – among transnational corporations, international organisations, government agencies, professionals, and tourists from the elite classes of all societies (Melody 2011).

Objective and research questions

Based on the background information reviewed in the last section, this part will articulate the research objective and list research questions that will direct the project's progression.

China is viewed as a rising big power on the world stage across the world. The domination of international media flows by the West ensures that Western framing of China prevails in the West. As China is trying to make its own voice heard, what kind of frames does it wish to transmit? How is its frame framed by its own mouthpieces and how congruent is this frame with that of intended receivers? Many studies have focused on how the foreign news media frame China (Li 2011) or the media practice in single cases in the framework of soft power push (Wang 2011b), but few have addressed Chinese media's performance holistically within the dynamics of the country's discourse intentions in policy and media contexts and their congruence with intended receiver frames. One of the concerns may reside in the weak take-up of Chinese media in the West. But one fact must be realised: that under the circumstance of the shrinking media market, China is pouring large amounts of investment into its state media with the intent of spreading its perspective and voice in the world. In the case of CCTV NEWS, its practice is not confined to being a Chinese broadcaster in the traditional sense; other social media platforms are also used; with the employment of foreign staff, the performance of it has improved dramatically and it is on the way to becoming a global player. With this as background, this project tries to find out how the frame of China is formed in the international arena and how its media approach functions with a soft power purpose. The bilateral relationships between China and other countries vary a lot. Previous research in the area of media and international relations often focuses on the big powers such as the US and EU countries. However, in the context of globalisation, to earn the goodwill of middle power countries is of the same importance.

Based on the previous discussion, the study develops the following propositions:

1. The public diplomacy policy elites in China have a clear consensus of a preferred self-projected frame for China.

2. The Chinese government strategically regards CCTV NEWS as an important agency of soft power.

While this will be an interpretive qualitative study that eschews the notion of causality and effects, it is recognised that Chinese public diplomacy policy elites have intended frames and targets. This project will choose Australia, a middle power belonging to the West, as a destination for Chinese broadcast news; but without measuring effects it will uncover intended frames, of China, of Chinese public diplomacy policy elites and of CCTV NEWS, as well as the frames of Australian public diplomacy policy elites that have a stake in China relations to reveal any nature of congruence that exists. Specifically, answers to the following four questions based on the assumption that CCTV NEWS is viewed by the Chinese government as an agency of public diplomacy:

1. What kind of images does China intend to deliver to the world?
2. How are China's stories framed in CCTV NEWS?
3. How congruent are CCTV NEWS frames of China with those of Australian stakeholders of China-Australia relations in the CCTV NEWS audience in Australia?
4. What role does CCTV NEWS play in China's soft power projection?

Question 2, in addition to uncovering frames of China, provides the opportunity to investigate CCTV NEWS narratives in the context of a particular public diplomacy initiative, One Belt One Road (OBOR) and also the news production context generated by importation to CCTV NEWS of western anchors and production values.

Theoretical framework: an international relations perspective

Having identified the objectives of this research, this section will sketch the theoretical scaffold on which this project will be constructed.

Framing China with international relations theories

Many scholars interpret the rise of China within the spectrum of international relations theory. Based on the assumption of the selfishness of human nature and the anarchic international system that characterises realist theories, competition for power and security among the main actors, the sovereign states, is a zero-sum game; conflict is always inevitable (Morgenthau 1973; Waltz 2010). While realism attributes causality entirely to politics, neorealism is also politically determinist but sees a role for economics. From the neorealist perspective, the ultimate objective of states in the anarchical system is to survive. Maintaining the current balance of power is an instinctive reaction. Thus, cautious policy and action will be adopted when an established hegemon faces a rising power (Al-Rodhan 2007). While from the offensive realist perspective, not satisfied with power balance, states will seek to expand their power at the expense of other countries (Mearsheimer 2001 as cited in Al-Rodhan 2007). In these neorealist perspectives, the economic rise of China coupled with its growing military budget is always interpreted as a potential threat to the existing world order. In contrast, neoliberal theories, with the focus on interdependence, institutions, and globalisation and the assumption that human nature is benevolent, emphasise economic cooperation and interdependence among states while recognizing a role for politics. Neoliberal scholars predict that the incorporation of China into the international system, through complex interdependence with other major economies, will increase the cost of serious conflict and in turn lower the risk of war (Keohane and Nye Jr 1973; Goldstein 2012; Bulkeley 2009). The assumption underpinning constructivism is that international politics is a 'world of our making' (Onuf 1989). In the constructivist view, states can learn and adopt international rules to avoid confrontation because they believe in the importance of social construction by ideas (Wendt 1992; Bulkeley 2009). From this perspective, some think whether China's rise is a threat or not, is about imagination rather than economic growth and military might (Liu 2010).

Apparently, the framing of China as a threat or blessing may both be accommodated within the constructivist spectrum. In the human world, behaviour is always determined by constructed information (Boulding 1959). Media is a source of

information for people to know each other. In the interaction of people with those beyond their community, where the transmission of information of face-to-face communication becomes impossible, the media plays a crucial role in gathering information from the public, policymakers and the external environment, then packaging that information for consumption.

The emphasis of construction in international relations determines that ideas, values, norms, knowledge, information are becoming more and more important in world politics which has been associated with the notion of 'noopolitik' (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 1999) – which views politics to be based on ethics, ideas and information strategy.

The noopolitik approach to understanding international relations can find underpinnings in the theoretic perspective of symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1986), which views human interaction as a process of meaning communication through symbols constructed through inter-subjectivity; human acting on the basis of meaning. Usually, media frames of symbolic reality, which will be further discussed in Chapter Three, become a primary source of both public opinion and policy action (Manheim 1984).

To analyse the meanings embedded in any communication, framing theory provides analytic tools. Frames are the 'schemata of interpretation' (Goffman 1974, p.21), the way individuals classify, organise, and interpret life experience to make sense of them. This offers a perspective for researchers to understand the way people organise and interpret information. According to previous scholars, frames are powerful mechanisms that can help define and solve problems and shape public opinion (Entman 2010). At the same time, they are also potentially useful in identifying the strategic messages created by practitioners in areas such as public relations and public diplomacy. Also, frame theory (discussed in Chapter Three) offers the methodological potential to connect the study of perceived and portrayed national images in analysing news discourse (Pan & Kosicki 1993), the process of news construction and the framing effect (Scheufele 1999; D'Angelo 2002).

As indicated in the focus of previous discussion in this chapter, this project is situated within the tradition of the international communication, with an international relations lens, and is concerned with key factors of power and communication, and the broad culture that shapes them. Although soft power is used widely in various subjects, it is held here with its original meaning in politics, especially in international relations as influence that is sans coercion or inducement. As an innovation in this project, it is investigated from a communication perspective which views soft power acquisition and projection as a communication process.

The constructivist view holds that our construction of world affairs matters in international relations, it is rational to emphasise the importance of information and communication. The formation and exercise of soft power, to a certain extent, are matters of communication. Constructivist framing analysis is able to capture frames of messages delivered by states to the audiences through non-coercive public diplomacy. Details of the communication approach of soft power will be unfolded progressively in chapters that follow, especially in Chapter Three.

Methodology

To find answers for the questions mentioned above, this project will examine frames of China through CCTV NEWS in three steps associated with three contexts of framing: the intended frames of communicators; the projected frames in CCTV NEWS; and the frames in CCTV's intended audience in Australia. The frames of the three contexts will be compared and the relationship among them will be examined in order to evaluate the function of CCTV NEWS as a media tool of public diplomacy and soft power. As mentioned above, the issue that will be chosen for analysis is China's One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR)² which is regarded as China's most salient strategy in

² The name of the initiative has changed slightly over the years. In September, 2015, the official English translation of the project was confirmed as 'the Belt and Road' with the abbreviation of 'B&R' by the Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce of P.R.C. These are used in current documents and media reports. However, before that, OBOR was widely used in media reports including the ones analysed in this project. The initiative will be named as OBOR in this project for consistency.

this century, one with huge foreign policy implications. It has drawn great attention worldwide and thus is a good example wherein to investigate the nature of China's discourse dissemination.

To figure out the dynamics of framing and the framing context of a specific issue, it is necessary to understand how the audiences view China, as a whole, and China's media outlets as part of it. So, specific questions will also be set to investigate the participants' general frames on China, which can be seen as a parameter to understand media message.

The data collection method employed in this project will be in-depth interviews of public diplomacy policy elites from China and Australia, the producers in CCTV NEWS and observations on the media practice in CCTV NEWS. According to previous research, public diplomacy involves four sectors: state, business, civil society, and media sector (Chitty 2007a). Participants will be identified in these four sectors.

Framing analysis will be used to analyse the data and media content. Many researchers have contributed to the method with various models (Pan and Kosicki 1993; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; van Gorp 2007). In Pan and Kosicki's (1993) model, the focus is on the structural elements. Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) model offers a detailed matrix model with the identification of frame themes, reasoning devices and framing devices. Van Gorp (2007), from the constructionist perspective, emphasised the cultural elements. Based on these models and combining the characteristics of this project, this project will draft a framing matrix with frame themes, function, framing devices and frame culture. Details will be discussed in Chapter Four.

The significance of the study

The significance of the project can be summarised in two ways. Firstly, it will uncover the mechanisms through which China is framed by different stakeholders in public diplomacy practice. Ramo's (2007) diagnosis of the problem of China's image is

that it is not good or bad as such, but that there is incongruence between China's self-perception and others' perceived image of the country. In Ramo's eyes, it is not only harmful to China, but also dangerous to others because one consequence of misconception of a country would be misjudgement in making decisions in activities such as investment. To understand how a specific country, Australia in this case, understands China is important to Chinese policymakers in the judgement of China's situation around the world. China's rise has imposed significant influence on Australian foreign policy. To understand China holistically, including what China presents about itself is, essential for Australian policy elites in making judgements about Sino-Australian relations.

Secondly, it will offer a new evaluating mechanism for international media as a tool of soft power projection in a time of *noopolitik*. In the global arena, media's functions as a tool of informing, dialogue and mutual understanding are more useful than that of agenda setting. Thus, locating it as a tool of public diplomacy and an agency of soft power is more appropriate. Nye (2004) himself acknowledges the role of international media in soft power generation. But the mechanism behind that has never been examined. This project views soft power resources in the communication of soft power and tries to unravel its working mechanism.

Structure of the study

The thesis consists of seven chapters. This introductory chapter is followed by a literature review that will identify the literature gap in the interplay of media and soft power, especially in the Chinese context. To prepare for the research, literature from the following areas will be reviewed: public diplomacy and soft power in China; international broadcasting as a public diplomacy tool for soft power projection; China's public diplomacy through international broadcasting; and the achievements and limits of CCTV NEWS. Through the review, the research gap will be identified and the research questions and propositions will be revised accordingly.

Chapter Three will address the theoretical framework of this research. This chapter will consist of three substantive sections. The first will address the theoretical underpinnings, theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism and social construction framing theory; the second will focus on constructivist international relations, the assumption of a weak Global Republican Confederacy, noopolitik and information flow. Also, the theoretical underpinnings of media and soft power in world politics will be covered in this part. In the last section of this chapter, an analytical framework for this project will be drawn.

In Chapter Four, methodology will be discussed. This chapter will explore the main research concerns and questions of this project in detail and the method design applied to answer these questions. It will start with the philosophical foundations of qualitative research. After revisiting the research questions through a methodological lens, specific data collection methods of in-depth interview, observation, and case studies will be discussed. The focus of these methods will be on the conducting principles and their operationalisation of them at different stages. In the last section, the data analysis methods of framing analysis will be analysed and its operationalisation will be presented in details.

Chapters Five and Six will present the research findings. Specifically, Chapter Five will focus on the findings from the interviews with Chinese and Australian participants on the questions of the general frames of China. While Chapter Six will be mainly about the framing of OBOR in China's state document, CCTV NEWS program and the Australian participants' response to the TV framing. The practice values of CCTV NEWS as a hybrid organisation with staff from different media cultures will also be presented as the cultural context within which the program is produced

Chapter Seven will present the discussion on the research findings addressing the research questions and propositions in detail. It will conclude the thesis with a conclusion drawing from the discussions on the analysis of the social and academic significances and limitations of this research project.

Summary

This chapter has offered an overall picture of the research, outlining the background, objectives, significance, the theoretical framework, methodology, and structure of the thesis. The following chapter will review the literature dealing with relevant topics with the aim of identifying the research gap that this project seeks to address.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research background and questions were presented. In order to specifically identify the research gap, define the parameters of this project and develop a theoretical framework, this chapter will start with the reviewing of published research regarding the evolution of discourse on the Rise of China in world politics. As indicated in the previous chapter, this evolution has had a profound impact on China's strategic choices regarding its image building and soft power enhancement worldwide. Based on ever more heated debates conducted in academia, media and government, many discourses on China's status and significance in the world order have emerged, such as the China Threat, China Collapse and China's Neo-colonialism. From the Chinese perspective, the discourses have influenced China's image and been at odds with its desire to establish a climate of opinion that is favourable to its economic development. To survive through the possible impact of these discourses, China has employed many strategic policies and practical tactics. One move is the adoption of the soft power strategy within which discursive power enhancement is one of the foci. The expansion of media outreach, in this cause, has bestowed a portion of responsibility on Chinese international media. Embarking from this point of departure, this chapter will review the previous research on the relevant topics including China's soft power strategy; China's effort in expanding its international broadcasting; and the development of CCTV NEWS.

Soft power as a national strategy

Soft power in the China context

In his 17th CPC Congress speech in 2007, the then president Hu Jintao adopted the term ‘soft power’ by calling for China to ‘enhance culture as part of the soft power of China’ (Hu 2007). This marks, to a certain extent, the adoption of soft power into the developmental strategy in China. In academia, soft power has also become an element to talk about China’s power status (Chung 2015; Campbell and Darsie 2007), and the rise of China (Li and Worm 2011; Ding 2010). Ding, in recognition of the limits of traditional paradigms of power analysis in examining China’s rise, tests a soft power approach. Both Ding and Li and Worm conclude that pursuing a peaceful developmental model, with an emphasis on soft power, will earn for China a smoother transition to big power status.

The emergence of the concept of soft power in world politics offers a new conceptual spectrum with which to define and interpret the issue of China’s rising status in both the government and academic discourses. As Nye has argued, soft power is based on attraction: institutions that are legitimate in the eyes of others (and therefore attractive) will confront less resistance to their wishes than institutions that are seen as not being legitimate (Nye 1990, 167). This not only aligns with China’s traditional ideal of rulers – like ‘[a] just cause enjoys abundant support while an unjust cause finds little support’ (*De dao duo zhu, shi dao gua zhu*) (Wang and Lan 2007), but also with the country’s goal of earning a favourable environment for its peaceful development. In addition, it offers a theory-based lexicon to describe its national strength domestically and internationally in a noopolitik context. Since the 1980s, deviating from Mao’s emphasis on military and economic power, Deng proposed to assess national power more comprehensively (Pillsbury 2000). Between the 1980s and 1990s, quite a few measurement models were proposed by Chinese scholars to measure Comprehensive National Power (Bulkeley 2009). Intangible/qualitative variables such as international reputation and foreign affairs capability were also included (Hu and Men 2002). The

concept of soft power offers an approach to identify and include the intangible components of national strength in Comprehensive National Power

Many scholars attributed the popularity of the concept of soft power among the top leaders in China to Wang Huning, a political theorist and current member of the Politburo of China's Communist Party. Although his 1993 article 'Culture as national power: Soft power' (Wang 1993), introduced Nye's term soft power, his focus is on the role of culture as the pillar of soft power; his view has shaped the discourse of Chinese authorities on cultural soft power. Inspired by Toffler's emphasis on knowledge in the 'power triad' of violence, wealth and knowledge (Toffler 1990), Wang argued that culture subsumes knowledge and in a broad sense the following categories can all be grouped under the cultural umbrella: political system, national morale, ethnic culture, economic system, science and technology, and ideology. Unlike economic and military resources, culture is diffusive and cannot be seized by a single group of people. These characteristics make it a pillar of soft power (Wang 1993, 91). In his causal view, acceptance of a cultural form or practice from Country A in Country B and more widely in the international community may be seen as an effect of Country A's soft power and may add to it. Soft power relies on the international acceptance of certain cultural values and systems. He also thinks that to develop a country's national power in the contemporary world order, from a soft power perspective, efforts should be made from the aspects of developing industrial civilization, science and technology, modernisation of political system, internationalisation of domestic culture and localization of international culture, national morale enhancement and national acceptance. Wang's article is more an emphasis of the role of culture as a pillar of soft power than an introduction of Nye's soft power concept. Glaser and Murphy (Glaser and Murphy 2009) take the view that the cultural school of soft power led by Wang has won the preference of China's soft power policy and strategy community. The different Chinese understanding of soft power to Nye's original threefold conception (discussed below), with the Chinese emphasis on culture, could find a theoretical base here.

China Soft Power: Achievements and limits

In discussion of China's soft power, academic literature focuses on the following aspects: The characteristics and perceived effectiveness of China's soft power, the wielding and limits of China's soft power.

In the context of China's investment in soft power initiatives and the adoption of soft power into the top level political discourse, a large body of research has been generated on the topic of China's soft power. As pointed out by Glaser and Murphy, the culture school is guiding China's soft power practice, influencing policies, media development and programs including the establishment of Confucius Institutes, state funded cultural events with the 'go global'/'go out' strategy for Chinese culture and media; the hosting of the Olympic Games in 2008; and the Shanghai Expo in 2010. The politics school, led by some scholars in international relations, does not deny the significance of culture, but focuses on political power such as in the form of international institution building and agenda setting. They also realise, that different to Nye's original framework of soft power, the concept in China has Chinese characteristics – combining internal and international aspects (Glaser and Murphy 2009). Judging from China's practice and political discourse, especially in recent years, the importance of the elements in the latter school is gaining more and more significance exemplified by a series of initiatives such as the newly proposed One Belt One Road Initiative. Through these initiatives, China is trying to provide a Chinese Solution to global governance (Shi and Zhang 2016).

The resources for making up soft power are an important topic in soft power debates. Although Nye's three pillars are widely recognised, some academics see limitations with Nye's conception of soft power, based as it is on the US experience after the cold war (Hayden 2012; Sharp 2005). In China's case, like Wang (as mentioned above) other scholars also express the necessity of breaking the constraints of Nye's original conceptualisation of soft power. According to Nye, soft power has three basic resources: culture, when it is attraction to others; political values when they are implemented both domestically and internationally; and foreign policy when they earn legitimacy and moral authority in the eyes of others (Nye 2011, 91). Some Chinese scholars, basing their analysis on China's situation, expand the conventional list of

resources of soft power and the measurement of these resources. For example, Chinese scholars Yan et al., redefine soft power through recognising three components: International appeal, international mobilisation and domestic mobilisation. Following this, they provide five quantifying indicators: appeal of political system; cultural allure; power to lay down international rules; mobilisation capacity among the domestic elite; and the mobilisation capability among domestic grassroots (Yan, Xu, and Ma 2008). Men summarises the core elements of Chinese soft power as culture, ideas, developmental model, international institutions and international image (Men 2007). Similarly, Pang identified the following as elements that could be included as a country's soft power resources: education system; research system; culture; well-educated population and ordered society; media with international influence; political and economic experience model, theory and concept; success in diplomatic policy and diplomacy; healthy interaction between government and society; virtue and the worldwide appeal based on it; and the sharing of global responsibility (Pang 2005).

Different scholars have drawn different conclusions about the significance of China's soft power to the world. Many scholars think that China's soft power is still weak, but others think it will transform the world (Li and Chitty 2009). Nye (2005) himself is not optimistic about China's soft power development. On the one hand, he calls for a US response to China's rise in soft power; on the other, he claims that it is impossible for China to achieve substantial gains in soft power. Based on the constant negative opinion poll results about China, he summarised the following reasons for his pessimistic perception on China's soft power: 1. China is not a western democracy; 2. the difficulty for incorporating soft power as a government strategy lies in the fact that the target has more control; 3. the inconsistency between what is projected through soft power initiatives and the problems in the country. He offers two specific cases on the limits of China's soft power: nationalist sentiment in the country and the limited use of civil society. In his view, the lack of civil society and its cultural products – like Hollywood and its movies and pop culture, high-ranking universities and their ideas – are the main deficits in China's soft power (Nye 2011; 2015). Shambaugh (2015) expresses a similar observation in relation to political and human rights issues. Albrow (2015) and Rawnsley (2012) see constant disjunction between what China says and does in cultural diplomacy projection, while the former pointed out that the US has the

same problem. Flew (2016) has argued that support for entertainment industry is more likely to support the aspirations of the Chinese government than news media, although news is likely to be prioritized for political reasons.

Although a pessimistic outlook on China's soft power is entertained by scholars such as Nye (2011; 2015) and Shambaugh (2015), other scholars hold different opinions. For example, Kivimäki (Kivimäki 2014) notes that China's soft power initiatives have specific objectives. China is not primarily trying to seek to persuade others about the benefits and superiority of its own system, unlike the US during the Cold War when it sought to prove the superiority of the capitalist ideology over that of communism. From this perspective, China's soft power initiatives may be discerned as being relatively successful. As an anti-hegemonic big power seeking complementarity and mutual gains, it is not the purpose of China to promote its ideology and governance model. China's mainstream discourse aims at seeking acceptance rather than winning. China analyst Shanthi Kalathil has the view that China's rise is widely acknowledged because the rise is facilitated by a sophisticated and comprehensive soft power strategy (Kalathil 2011 cited from Hayden 2012). Cho and Jeong (Cho and Jeong 2008) also think that the swift rise of China's influence in the world is the result of the adoption of soft power and its use in policies. Ding's analysis in 2006 acknowledged the achievements of China's overall level of soft power with a successful development model that has won global admiration and a 'new diplomacy' characterised by more active and responsible participation in international affairs, through both of which China's agenda setting abilities and national image have been strengthened (Ding 2006).

Regarding the intended effectiveness of China's soft power strategy, conclusions are also diverse. Glaser and Murphy conclude that there is no comprehensive national strategy of soft power because initiatives such as the Confucius Institutes and overseas media outlets are under different state regulatory bodies and there is a lack of 'coordination among ministries or agencies' and 'no central leading group or leader has been assigned to oversee soft power promotion' (Glaser and Murphy 2009, 25). There are studies that seek to link Chinese soft power efforts and audience effects in other countries. Ding's research, for instance, reports that over the years China's soft power efforts have yielded different outcomes in different regions. In

Southeast Asian countries, the perception of China is more positive; while in regions such as the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, the anxiety over China's rise is alleviated by its challenge to US dominance that is becoming attractive; and the effectiveness of Chinese soft power is very low in Western liberal democracies (Ding 2006). Huang and Ding (Huang and Ding 2006) assume that as an authoritarian state, China may encounter difficulties in winning over public opinion in democracies. But they also express some optimism on this because the intention is to make and implement policies in a more consistent way. They posit that assessment of the effectiveness of soft power wielding should include the country's foreign policy objectives. Based on the resources identified by Nye, they conclude that the success of China's soft power building varies between regions; and on the whole there still are gaps between China's foreign policy objectives and its limited soft power resources. Many scholars agree that China's soft power has lagged far behind the growth of its hard power. Some scholars think that China's soft power is restrained by the lack of consensus on 'what constitutes Chinese culture and values' (Li 2009, 2). Li (2008) discerns a lack of clarity in some aspects of China's soft power: the trajectory through which soft power can be transformed towards achieving specific policy goals; uncertainties related to China's transition are preventing the transformation of the Chinese state and society. Western media are powerful in shaping world opinion, but they are not the submissive tools of government. On the contrary, they often unveil negative aspects of government.

In speaking of China's principles and mechanisms, Kivimaki (2014) holds the view that China's power strategy is based on equality and common interest unlike that of the US which was based on a fiercely competitive and hegemonic nature since the cold war. Although changes have been observed in China's international strategy recently, no hegemonic nature has been detected in the official discourse in the analyses conducted by Shambaugh (2015), Nye (2005; 2011; 2015), Ikenberry (2008), and Rawnsley (Rawnsley 2012; Rawnsley 2009). Kivimaki (2014) notes that based on the analysis, China has been developing cooperative relationships that aim at win-win outcomes. By analysing the discourse of Chinese scholars' research on soft power, Wuthnow (2008) identifies three mechanisms of China's soft power initiatives: 1. Projects for projecting Chinese culture to foreign actors; 2. Focus on the developing

world with economic incentives; 3. Means to show the status of ‘responsible great power’ to neighbouring states. In speaking of specific methods, according to Sun (2012) in *Japan and China as Charm Rivals: Soft Power in Regional Diplomacy*, China takes the context of factors, such as culture, international status, and political values, into consideration when wielding soft power and adopts different methods in different situations (Zhang, Wasserman, and Mano 2016 cited from Zhang et al., 2016). The approaches China employs to strengthen its soft power include the following: cultural initiatives and exchange programs; construction of political values and institutions; media expansion purposed for public relations (Li 2008). These echo Yuezhi Zhao’s point: China needs a clear elaboration of an alternative political, economic and cultural imagination as a substitution of capitalist globalisation (Zhao 2013). Similarly, Jiang (2011), after examining the power status transformation since the industrial revolution, concludes that developing countries and regions that are enjoying economic booms should seek support from indigenous cultures to maintain their booms in a sustainable way. In this sense, China should challenge dominant discourse and create an alternative for its own development.

The above reviewed research on China’s soft power indicates that there are many divergences in speaking of China’s soft power mechanisms, effectiveness and potentials. Firstly, the analysis of China’s soft power is mostly based on Western, more specifically US, experience and political values. The evidence of Nye (2011, 2015) and other scholars like Rawnsley (2015) use, to prove the ineffectiveness of China’s soft power, is drawn from public opinion polls such as Pew. But a similar one by the same organisation on the Opinion of China, the result of Chinese people’s response is always higher than 95%, while the US self-perception figures are seldom above 50% (Pew Global 2008-2014). The problems with this explanation are twofold. Firstly, it is built on the realist conflict theory (Sherif 1966) framework in which China is viewed conveniently with prejudice and discrimination as a outgroup classified mainly based on its political system without careful investigation of the mechanism that leads to the internal and external poll results difference. Mowlana (1996) argues that ‘if we are to improve our knowledge in the face of change, we must understand alternative version’ (p.113). It is obvious that in this case, no alternative versions are considered. Secondly, their explanation seems to fail to explain the phenomenon effectively. The recent trend

in China's international policy indicates that there is no appetite to follow the Western model. Also, in the state-advocated socialist core values, democracy is listed second among eleven others. One might say that judging by the traditional Western standards of democracy, there is no democracy at all in China's media landscape; but the deeper problem is 'why'? Sparks raises this question and calls for the Western world to make deep reflection on the problems of their own democracy not working well in recent years.³ To what extent is China, with a different cultural background, suffering from being stereotyped as an ideological other or as really troublesome, is a question deserving exploration.

From practice we can see that promotion of soft power in China is invested with a strong character of the top-down model, which is one of the factors of the country's long term economic development and also a focus of its soft power criticism (Nye 2011; 2012; Ang, Isar, and Mar 2015). But one must understand before making judgement that although the people-to-people connection is prevail in the networked society, most public diplomacy activities are funded by state (Clarke, Cento Bull, and Deganutti 2017) and their engagement is on behalf of the state. Ang et al., (2015) try to explore the possibility of viewing culture relations as being driven by ideals instead of as interest driven cultural diplomacy among countries; they believe the former could generate a dialogic model based on an attractive soft power dimension within culture. Looking at the definition Nye gives to soft power – the ability to let others do what you want (2011, 2014), the ultimate aim lies in the action for which pure attraction is not enough for action, for example, one likes an ancient Chinese painting, but not necessarily like what China does. But if one acknowledges China's cultural values, which encompass the political values, one can accept the way China deals with things. This is distinct from pure attraction.

Ang et al., (2015) view communication as a social process of co-production of meaning. But with the dominant discursive power of the Western countries (Thussu 2012), is dialogue really possible? What China tries to achieve, with soft power, in its own narration, is to alleviate the discourse deficit and the constant misunderstanding in

³ Colin Sparks said as such at the IAMCR 2016 annual conference, at the Panel on Democracy lessons for BRICS countries, UK, 2016

main stream world opinion against it (Shi 2013). This echoes what Thussu (2012) proposes – De-Americanisation. But in the Western media coverage, China's rise is viewed more as a threat. Debates like this indicate the long existence of the condition of post-truth.

The underpinnings behind the judgements of scholars like Ang et al., may be the long term tradition of pushing back against authority in Western society. But reality shows that most international engagement are always based on certain types of interests (national, commercial or individual) as shown in the case of Hollywood which is a typical case used by Nye (2011) as evidence of civil society engagement in soft power projection. But even in the case of Hollywood, the message delivered is mainly consistent with what the whole the state tries to promote “a national personality cult around America” (Jacob 2017, 140) and is an expression of Ellul's (1965) ‘sociological propaganda’.

If examined in a way to assess a corporation's branding activity, the persuasion power lies initially in the strategic planning and then the way the marketing plan is implemented. It is true that international relations are different from corporations' activities in terms of institutions, norms and responsibilities imposed on the states, but to a certain extent, both have their constraints. Strategic planning and well-designed activities will be definitely more helpful than no plan at all. The questions are how the plan should be implemented and what factors will enhance or constrain actions.

Media as a public diplomatic tool for soft power projection

Media, world politics and soft power

The role of media in power dynamics is determined by the function it plays. Some scholars observed that we are living in a virtual reality, one created by media (Said 2008) and using the media-generated images to construct meaning about political and social issues (Gamson et al. 1992; Castells 2004). Edwards (2001) has proposed the theory of mediapolitik addressing the interrelationship between the mass media and world politics and he believes that media has the obligation to enrich human interest by

covering news events. Extraordinary performances of a couple of international media outlets lead to new theories named inductively after them. The CNN Effect theory, for instance, proposes that ‘news coverage – especially gripping visual storytelling – was influencing foreign policy throughout the world’ (p.3). The Al-Jazeera effect ‘encompasses the use of new media as tools in every aspect of global affairs, ranging from democratisation to terrorism and including the concept of “virtual states”’ (p.5). These theories are all based on the function media played in significant events. Seib (2008) views Al-Jazeera as a symbol of the new context which helps cohesion among Muslim community globally (x).⁴ Media can be ‘tools of conflict and instruments of peace; they can make traditional borders irrelevant and unify peoples scattered across the globe’, put in one word, reshaping the world (xii). The image framed by media could strengthen existing factors (Sharkey 1993) while in times of conflict, media ‘can have [an] incendiary effect’ by ‘playing on fears and exacerbating tension’ and can also ‘discourage internal conflict by fostering transparency and giving those who might be caught up in disorder a chance to see a preferable world outside their own borders and experience’. The multiplicity of opinion available to the public in the world has ‘expanded the range of discourse and fostered new levels of public debate’ (Seib 2008, 8-9). World politics is a complex stage and media cannot be a single factor. Some theorists have recognised the limitation of the influence. With the boost of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the correlation among government, journalism, and public opinion in foreign policy making is in flux (Gilboa 2005, Edwards 2001).

Previous research sought to relate media and soft power strength. For example, Thussu examines the history of the United States’ soft power and its becoming dominant in the wake of WWII; and discloses the importance of story framing by way of state media in telling ‘America’s story to the world’. (Freeman and Thussu 2012 cited from Thussu 2013). Nye (2011) elaborates on three facets of power behaviour with both hard and soft approaches – to induce others to do what they otherwise would not do; to change others framing and agenda; and to shape subject’s preference. The hard approaches to all three dimensions involve the use of force or inducement while

⁴ This claim needs to be seen in the light of the breaking of diplomatic relations by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE and several other Muslim countries, one of the reasons being Qatar and Al Jazeera’s support for the Muslim Brotherhood.

the soft power approach is through attraction and/or institutions. During the process, Nye emphasises the importance of interpretation and persuasion to ensure the success of policy. In the age when power is diffusing from state actors to non-state actors, Nye sees the importance of public diplomacy – the indirect form of diplomacy aims to influence other countries by way of communicating with the publics of the countries – ‘as a means of promoting a country’s soft power’ (p.94). He segments public diplomacy into three stages in the generation of soft power: everyday communication – the explanation of domestic and foreign policy decisions; strategic communication – PR campaigns that reinforce certain themes or advance certain policy; development of lasting relations with exchange programs targeting key individuals. Among the three stages, he emphasises the mass media approach, which plays an important role because of its audience reach and its capacity to draw public attention and set the agenda. The usage of mass media can ‘correct daily misrepresentations of their policies as well as try to convey a longer-term strategic message’ (p.107). Nye views public diplomacy as a tool of soft power.

Public diplomacy is an inevitable topic when talking about media and soft power. It is normally regarded as the extension of traditional diplomacy. The modern sense of public diplomacy can be traced back to Edmund Gullion, a former US diplomat who founded the Edward R. Murrow Centre of Public Diplomacy at Tufts University. His concept of public diplomacy was summarised in an early brochure of the centre as:

[D]eals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications. Central to public diplomacy is the transnational flow of information and ideas. (Waller 2007)

Gullion’s definition located the transnational flow of information and ideas at the centre of international affairs. And the Edward R. Murrow Centre of Public

Diplomacy⁵ itself built upon Murrow's legacy as an outstanding journalist who witnessed the decisive role played by radio in winning people's minds during WWII (Seib 2010). International broadcasting as an effective way in public diplomacy has been addressed by many scholars. Browne (1983) states that most international stations started with the mission of informing in 1920s and 1930s, during that period, the 'informing mission had taken on a heavily ideological character for many stations even the BBC finally entered the battle in January; this continued until the end of the Cold War. Although the amount of entertainment had increased, 'much of the entertainment had its own ideological flavour, the news predominated and the entertainment served as "bait" for it' (Browne 1983, 205-206). As Seib (2010) has noted, international journalism can be the core factor of public diplomacy for major world players, although the outcome is different from case to case. Countries like Germany (Deutsche Welle, 1992) France (France 24, 2006), Russia (Russia Today, 2005), China (CCTV-9, 2000-2010; CCTV NEWS, 2010 - 2016, CGTN since the end of 2016), Iran (Press TV, 2009) with the aim to 'diversify the perspectives expressed in international issues debates' in the world broadcasting dominance by the U.S. and Great Britain, to improve national image, have founded their own English broadcasting (p.736). Although scholars like Powers and Gilboa (2007) take the view that this role of transnational news organisation does not fall into any types of non-traditional actors categorised by scholars in international relations, Seib (2010) posits, after examining the role Al-Jazeera has played in the fabrication of pan-Arab and pan-Islamic outlook, media organisations are non-state actors which function more than as an information delivery system, but in an crucial public diplomatic way to 'further national interests and wield soft power' (p.743). In practice, especially after 9/11, and later the growth of terrorism, the state actor began to re-emphasise the important of the information war. For example, in 2011, the then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the US is in an information war and was losing it to global media networks (Snow 2011).

⁵ Recognising shifts in relative importance of technologies, the centre is now called The Murrow Centre for the Digital World and addresses cyber, media and public diplomacy.

Various terms have been absorbed by scholars addressing the relationship between media and public diplomacy such as ‘newspaper diplomacy’, ‘radio diplomacy’ (Rawnsley 1996), ‘television diplomacy’ and ‘headline diplomacy’ (Seib 1997), that fall under the rubric of media diplomacy, a concept developed by Cohen (1986) and Gilboa (1998; 2002), that refers to the use of media by country leaders and policymakers to propagate a preferred national image in the international community. Another two concepts addressing media and public diplomacy are media broker diplomacy and mediated public diplomacy. The former refers to international mediation implemented and occasionally initiated by media professionals, especially at times when the two parties are in adversarial stances and no third party is available to help them resolve their differences (ibid.). Additionally, mediated public diplomacy refers to governmental attempts at influencing the framing of its foreign policies in the global media (Entman 2008; Golan 2013; Wang 2011c). These concepts reveal the instrumental function of media in international relations and sometimes as an independent actor in diplomatic activities.

The above models of public diplomacy of media and diplomacy mirror the dynamics among soft power and media. Soft power can be transmitted by communication, reside in the process of communication or be created through communication. Communication is understood through linear and non-linear perspectives: as a linear information transmission process with the aim of persuasion or control; or as a social process of relationship construction (Zaharna 2009). Viewing soft power as a communication-based activity, Zaharna (2004; 2009; 2010) proposed a theory of soft power differentials based on the two aspects of communication apprehension: linear process and relational process. Under the linear process, states use the strategic communication approach and a mass communication model to wield soft power. In this model, messages are designed by states and delivered through mass media. Within the relational process, messages are exchanged through networks and through relationship building which Zaharna characterises as public diplomacy. This process can enhance understanding among different cultures through dialogic exchange of information and thus create soft power.

There is also a gloomy outlook on the role of media in the social media age. But as Edwards (2001) has claimed, the cyber age will not replace mass media but rather will build on the media development of former ages (p.3). It is true that new technology has diffused power to a larger public, but the dynamics seems to be little changed. It is obvious that social media play important roles in events like the Arab Spring revolution and Occupy Wall Street, but the ability of social media to lead to a better solution has not been proved significantly through these cases. In the case of Trump's use of Twitter to connect to the public, while the traditional role of media in Western democracies as watchdog seems to be challenged, media outlets still offer fact-check services for purposes of verification. In addition, the way the president communicates directly with the public is in some ways an unusual practice – anywhere in the world. However, it should be remembered that other media have been used for this purpose; Reagan's weekly radio broadcasts come to mind. Although the battleground has been moved to social media dramatically, arguably it is serving more as a channel for trivia rather than originating essential content, especially in politics/world politics. People cannot usually get coherent narratives from friends' social media posts about what is going on nationally and globally without their friends having accessed media stories, with their frames. In addition, as demonstrated in the 2016 US Presidential election, social media, although invested with the advantages of quantity and speed, is vulnerable to misinformation because of the lack of journalistic normativisation among social media users and adequate industry self-regulation of websites. There is a long path to be trodden for social media to become recognised as an authoritative and reliable information source. So in this project, the stance is taken that social media is an advanced channel for media. Although it can bring some changes in certain areas, looking at the whole picture we see that media continue to function, but in the form of Omni media.

Soft power strength reflected in the imbalance in information flow

'The study of the international flow of information is another approach to the study of international relations' (Mowlana 1997, 23). One imperative issue and common reason for some countries to develop their own version of international

broadcasting is the fact of imbalance in information flows between developed and developing countries, the net advantage being with the former. Since the release of the MacBride Commission Report in 1980, debates around information flow have been a concern of international communication studies. In the 1980s, much research proved repeatedly the existence of an information gap between information-rich and information-poor states, which provided evidence for developing countries to strive for more voices (Mowlana 1985; MacBride 1980). Although three decades have passed, the situation seems to have changed little. Even in the time of new media when information is easier for more communities to access, studies show that the information is still US-centred (Chang, Shoemaker, and Brendlinger 1987; Kim and Barnett 1996; Peng 2004; Segev 2008; 2010; Segev and Blondheim 2013; Hills and Segev 2014).

It is worth noting that, it is not only the developing countries that sense the imbalanced flow of the information. For instance France needed France 24 to spread its own stance and voice in world affairs (Anderson 2006 as cited in Seib 2010). Other state-supported or state-run broadcasters as mentioned above form the force of what Thussu (2006) calls contra flow of information. In the eyes of Thussu, the significance of counter flow resides in reducing inequalities in media access, contributing to a more cosmopolitan culture that may affect national, regional and even international political dynamics in the long run, shaping cultural identities, energising disempowered groups, and helping to create political coalitions and new transnational private and public spheres (Thussu 2006, 3).

‘Information creates power’ (Nye 2011, 103). Nye and Owen (1996) posit that the American information edge accumulated from investments in information processing technologies – space-based surveillance, direct broadcasting, high-speed computers during the Cold War – is a multiplier of its diplomacy and soft power. In the view of Chitty (2017a), media (along with mobility and cultural industries) is a key multiplier of soft power. Imbalance of information contributes to weakness of those with deficits in setting agendas and framing and denies such countries an important soft power multiplier (Nye 2011, Chitty 2017b).

The formation of US soft power during the Cold War demonstrates the strength of information power in the generation of soft power. Thussu and Freedman (Freedman

and Thussu 2012 cited from Thussu 2013) observe that with the former state strategic approach, together with the latter one where through its private media organisations' expansion around the world, the US establishes its dominance in infrastructure (such as networks, cyberspace and the spectrum) and content. These together with its political, economic, technological and military superiority, allowed the US to successfully acquire the ability to make its vision and version of global events into a global agenda. This kind of ability is Nye's sense of soft power. Chinese scholar Shi (2016) observes that the change of world order is closely connected with the reconfiguration of the global communication order. One of the most important signs of the establishment of *Pax Americana* is the abolishment of the news agency treaty among Britain, Germany and France in 1934 in order to ensure the free flow of news and thus prepared the ground for U.S. discourse dominance (Shi 2016). The attractiveness of a country's institutions involves the transmission of information and meaning and ultimately the creation of consensus on that country's information, behaviour and values among other countries.

As widely criticised in the concept itself, vagueness exists in the elaboration of the relationship between soft power and public diplomacy, and further that of soft power and international media. Many scholars take for granted Nye's assumptions to analyse international media practice under the framework of soft power (Sun 2009; Wang 2011b; Wasserman 2016). A few scholars like Chitty (2017a) posit that electronic networked media is one of the channels and multipliers of active soft power in the literature on soft power. However, no specific research has addressed how the interaction occurs; and what the mechanism might be is still an unanswered question.

CCTV NEWS in the context of China's soft power strategy

China's international broadcasting as an important public diplomacy approach

China has been experiencing a dramatic socio-economic and geopolitical transition over the last three or so decades, rising all the way from being a poor, backward country to a world power. It has paid increasing attention to improving its

national image through public diplomacy initiatives. Although the term public diplomacy was not widely used in China's public and political discourse until very recently, the practice can be traced back to even before the founding of the People's Republic of China. d'Hooghe (d'Hooghe 2008) cites from Edgar Snow's *Red Star over China* to illustrate the skills of the Communist Party in using media to win hearts and minds. Han places China's public diplomacy efforts in two categories: information and cultural programs (Han 2011), to which Jiang and Yan (2015) added economic programs. Developing an international communication strategy was an important undertaking of the People's Republic of China in conducting its public diplomacy. The Communist Party began foreign broadcasting in 1941. From the establishment of PRC in 1949 to the late 1970s, China's international broadcasting (also known as external publicity) was focused on the 'socialist camp' and third world countries, carrying strong political and ideological content with the aim of developing friendship and sharing socialist ideology with other socialist countries. The media branches used were Xinhua News Agency for print stories and CRI for radio stories (Han 2011). Since the 'reform and opening up' policy was adopted, international broadcasting activities have become more proactive. Zhong and Wang summarised the three stages of China's external propaganda according to content: provide publicity about New China and support world revolution; enhance reform and the process of opening to outside world; safeguard world peace; denounce the China threat discourse (Zhong and Wang 2006 cited in Wang 2008)

In the early 1990s, the Chinese government began to actively promote international broadcasting activities to shift negative images and win international goodwill for its economic development efforts. Zhao Qizheng, the former director of State Council Information Office, argues in his 2012 book, *How China communicates: Public diplomacy in a global age*, that it is urgent for China to 'improve the understanding and recognition of foreign publics on its basic national conditions, values, development path as well as its domestic and foreign policies' as its relations 'with the international environment have become closer after 30-plus years of reform and opening up' (Zhao 2012, 2). Image considerations have long been the core task underpinning the publicity strategy: for a long time, there have been research and top leaders' speeches indicating that Western media's coverage of China has been twisted,

biased (Hu 2008) and even demonising (Li and Liu 1996; Zhao 2012; Xiang 2013), all in the extreme sense. In the milder sense, some scholars see a divergence between China's self-perception and perceptions of China by others (Wang 2011a). In China, the reason behind the image issues is widely considered as being stereotyped by others, especially by Western countries with their discourse dominance when pitted against the weakness of China's discourse power (Meng 2012).

Investment in international media saw a huge increase after the Beijing Olympics (Sun 2015). From the Olympics, the Chinese leadership and scholars realised that despite China's organisational ability and economic capacity that enabled it to successfully host a mega media event, China was seriously deficient in international media and discourse power. International public opinion is still in the control of those countries with more competitive media outlets. Arguments have been made that under these circumstances it is impossible to set an effective agenda and turn international opinion because of the strong framing capacity of Western media on issues such as Tibet and human rights (Sun 2009, 2015). After 2008, the transformation in geopolitics and economic order, with China playing an enhanced role, some Chinese scholars formed the view that there is a need for a new information order beyond NWICO (New World Information and Communication Order) and WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) (Shi and Zhang 2016). Since then, media as a channel of external broadcasting has been included in China's grand strategic plans such as the *2009-2020 Master Plan for the Construction of China's Major Media as an International Dissemination Force*. Six media outlets including the *People's Daily*, China Radio International, CCTV, Xinhua News Agency, *China Daily* and China News Service have been listed as major organisations with special financial support under the plan.

Traditionally, there are two motivations behind Chinese media expansion strategies. Firstly, China seeks to counteract the imbalance of information flow suffered by the third world, an imbalance identified by NWICO in UNESCO; NWICO on the one hand indicated a quantitative deficit to the disadvantage of third world countries and on the other a negative representation of these countries in the West (MacBride 1980). Secondly, China seeks to match its rising political and economic power with its discourse power. With its economic success driving China's status up in the world

steadily, China's rhetoric of international communication has begun to reflect big power status on the world stage (Wang 2010; Wang 2011a; Wang 2011b; d'Hooghe 2014; Hartig 2012). But China's negative image in the West undermines its 'integration into the global economy and hinders China's ambition to become a respected world power' (Wang 2011a:49). It recognises from the lessons from history, 'whoever occupies the public opinion high ground will have the possibility – although it might be only temporary and short-lived – to seize the pre-emptive opportunity, gain the upper hand and in “understanding” and “support” from the international community and the public' (Zhao 2012, 47-48). Under the Xi Administration, more aggressiveness in the discourse regarding external publicity may be noted, with the rhetoric of China offering solutions to world problems. Xi has urged external publicity media workers, on many occasions, to forge new concepts, categories and formulations that may be circulated in China and abroad (Xi 2013) under the concept of community of common destiny for all mankind – as a Chinese approach to global governance (Xi 2014).

With the aim of projecting a better national image for soft power purposes, efforts have been made in various media sectors. At the institutional level, relevant governmental organisations have been established. In 1980, the Foreign Propaganda Group was formed under the CCP Central Committee. In 1991, the State Council information office was established and following this a press conference system was institutionalised. A spokesman system was established in 2003 (Ding 2006). Under the new post-2009 strategy, more significant progress has been witnessed. In 2009, the first World Media Summit was convened by Xinhua News Agency together with major international media organisations (WMSDOHA 2016). In 2010, Xinhua News Agency launched its television service. By 2017 CCTV had expanded its reach by establishing five foreign languages channels; and overseas branches in Washington DC and Nairobi; and fielding more than 70 reporting teams around the world (Zhu 2012, CGTN 2017). In addition, at the operational level, the major outlets employed local staff as well as adopting technology innovations and a greater audience orientation, through use of social media; these initiatives have enhanced their practice. The new initiatives have at least made CCTV NEWS look more like its Western counterparts stylistically.

The international communication approach of China's soft power promotion is not without challenges. The credibility issue is the main hindrance to effectiveness vis-a-vis the audience, according to many scholars (Nye 2011; d'Hooghe 2008; 2011; 2014). Research into China's media practice, in South Africa, shows that media workers clearly had an awareness of the soft power role of Chinese media outlets. However, these workers were not confident about soft power effects, because of perceived mistrust by audiences (Wasserman 2016). Wang analysed other reasons why the perceptions are sometimes different: Some images are objective facts that leave little space for interpretation; while others are subjective. One factor is whether there is consistency of words and deeds. Also, psychological theories of perception have been employed, that people tend to accept information that is consistent with their existing perceptions to explain the phenomenon; for instance, even if China acts benevolently, Americans do not perceive its actions as benevolent (Wang 2011a). Shi also observed the plight facing China in the projection of its ideals and discourse: China's political discourse, though rooted in attractive traditional political concepts such as rule of law and societal aspirations (such as the Chinese Dream following the American Dream meme), do not easily translate into positive narratives in Western media. This is despite international media coverage of China trending toward more topic diversification in recent years (Shi and Xue 2016). What is worse, as Hu and Ji have observed, the Chinese side is not quite clear on the question of whether the voice China tries to spread is unified in internal context within the complicated reality in the country and whether the voice can be decoded by target western audiences as intended (Hu and Ji 2012, Lee 2010).

The media expansion was labelled as a 'charm offensive' by some scholars and media (Kurlantzick 2007). But Chinese scholar Shi (2013) views it more as a 'charm defensive', to win hearts and minds in a second country, than an offensive, because it is part of broader engagements including various levels of interactions between the two countries rather than a one-dimensional form of 'soft power'. Reviewing China's recent moves in soft power promotion – the investment in foreign language media outlets and 'going out' strategy of cultural industry and the top leader's discourse such as 'Chinese Dream' – all these seem not to exceed what the Americans did during the WWII and Cold War periods. Thussu (2013) discloses the techniques and approaches the US

employed then by examining the history of the US soft power dominance since WWII. State planning dominated the practice at the early stage. For example, the United States Information Service (USIS), which later became the United States Information Agency (USIA) was created in 1953 and charged with a mission to ‘tell America’s story to the world’. Under USIA leadership, official media such as VOA played an important role in promoting American values by propagating the American way of life together with approaches such as economic aid, military diplomacy, and cultural action subsidised by government bodies. The negative reception of Chinese discourse in the Western world, especially in the US could be explained by two assumptions: On the one hand, it could be interpreted as the demonstration of the wide acceptance of liberal values that are against China’s practice; on the other hand, the Chinese side may interpret it as a purposeful deterrence against China’s rise led by the US.

CCTV News: A tool of China’s soft power projection?

Previous research on CCTV NEWS and its processor channels have focused on a variety of aspects including its editorial operations (Jirik 2008; 2015; 2004; Ning 2013; 2013), content (Zhang 2013; Ning 2013; Jirik 2008; Marsh 2016), professional aspects (Zhang and Simon 2016), audience (Gorfinkel et al. 2014, Zhang 2011), and its soft power significance (Rawnsley 2012;, Wasserman 2016; Zhang 2011; Jirik 2016; Sun 2015; 2009; Wang 2011b).

Jirik, with his unique experience of working for CCTV-9 and then CCTV NEWS for many years, offers a comprehensive picture of the operation of the English Channel, especially the dynamics of the power mechanism in the channel which is seldom seen by scholars who have no experience of CCTV NEWS or media practice.

Jirik witnessed the relaunch of CCTV-9 in May 2004 from a comprehensive channel to a news channel. A widely known major Chinese journalism characteristic is that the news systems are part and parcel of the governance system and there is a guideline that there should be positive reporting regarding the governing system (Jirik 2008; Li 1991). Anything that may cause social instability or challenge party principles

would not be allowed on air, though increasingly one finds that there is greater expression of critical opinion in academia. The foundation of the English Channel and the successive relaunches over the years were undertaken under the party's strategic guidance – under the supervision of Central Publicity Department or the regulatory body, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT). According to Jirik, although the launch and relaunch were impelled by strong political volition, the process reflected a certain degree of negotiation between the authorities and management staff; most of the editorial decisions were made within the channel. The directives were usually given as suggestions about the party representative's opinions of good angles for a story, and the significance of certain events. The editors would respond with their notions of audience's interest and the way they could tell the story appropriately. Also, there were political editors, usually experienced retired journalists, who ensure that no political errors were made. In the management hierarchy, the top management always rises within the CCTV system, working with great caution, being more managers and fewer journalists, facing pressure to leverage news content. However, editorial control has been shifting more in favour of news makers. The measurement for adoption of topics is their sensitivity (Jirik 2008; 2016). Under the propaganda narrative, news workers' professional skills in state-run media are usually under challenge. But according to Jirik's observation, the domestic journalists are 'extremely good at their job', they are clearly 'not puppets or marionettes dancing to the tune' of the authorities (Jirik 2008, 1).

China's official preference for positive reporting is viewed as being questionable from the point of view of liberal news values. However, Gagliardone (2013) prefers to see it as a challenge to the Western conception of media watchdog role (Gagliardone 2013; Gagliardone, Stremlau, and Nkrumah 2012; Gagliardone, Repnikova, and Stremlau 2010). Other scholars have tried to analyse the CCTV Africa reports from a new paradigm of constructive journalism characterised by positive reporting with a constructive purpose of representing Africa and building China-Africa relations (Zhang and Simon 2016).

Western media could be influenced so greatly by ratings and circulation-driven news values that they could inordinately feature conflict, crime, deviance, disaster and

sex. As indicated earlier focus on this mix to the exclusion of achievements, cooperation, development and social harmony, does not represent the best professionalism, nor does focussing on the latter to the expense of problems in a society. Striking a balance between the positive and the negative, and between social and individual interest, remains a constant challenge to the media professional.

Research on CCTV NEWS' content follows various trends which are always contrary to each other. In many occasions, the Chinese authority and news workers from CCTV NEWS expressed their aspiration of building CCTV NEWS to be a channel that provides alternative perspectives of China and the world to Western media (Jirik 2008, Zhang 2011, Zhang 2013; Marsh 2016). This is the point many scholars have tried to confirm. Jirik (2008; 2016) examines the problem of CCTV NEWS being reliant on external materials from international news agencies such as Associate Press and Reuters which supply much of the on-air material and on-the-ground correspondents. He regards this reliance as a contradiction of its mission to be a channel to represent Chinese voices and perspectives. Using content analysis and discourse analysis, Marsh (2016) finds that some similarities exist, including the visual presentation of the programs and the region covered in CCTV NEWS' African program *Africa Live* and BBC's *Focus on Africa*. As to whether CCTV Africa presents an alternative to Western media coverage of Africa, she concludes that the frames are 'frequently but not always' similar to BBC's *Focus on Africa* (Marsh 2016, 64). There are more post-production traces on *Africa Live* than that in *Focus on Africa* which always presents a film completely from on-site (Marsh 2016). She interprets this as a sign of following the official perspectives and warns of the danger of cultural dependence through the use of agency materials that usually reflect the values of US and British organisations. Zhang (2013) found out that CCTV Africa devoted much to criticising the West. But Marsh (2016) found out three years later that it was no longer the case. This may indicate the constant improvement of CCTV Africa's practice. But the contradiction leaves space for further investigation into the channel.

That CCTV NEWS, as a young channel, has been improved at a rapid speed can be seen from its relaunches over the years. In a study conducted by the staff of CCTV NEWS, the ratio of in-house to news agency and other external material, in programs

News Hour was found to be 1:2 – similar to the ratios in CNN's *News Stream* and BBC's *Global News*, that are programs in the same time slot. The study further reveals that CCTV NEWS led in the width of news coverage but lagged behind in terms of depth. In addition, a large proportion of coverage of CCTV NEWS is on China-related topics while the other two are on international issues (Wu and Huang 2015). In an evaluation report by CCTV Overseas Centre, the channel's general in-house production capacity increased 21-fold from 2009 to 2012, reaching 38.5% in 2012 (CCTV Overseas Centre 2013). With expanding investment in in-house production, this figure is expected to keep growing.

Through content analysis, the motivation of the channel can be identified. Examining CCTV Africa's program *Africa Live*, Zhang (2013) concludes that CCTV NEWS 'not only aims to guide global views of contemporary Sino-Africa relations, but also to create a discourse on international affairs, as an alternative to a "Western discourse" and [has] the ambition to change the global order' (p.97). However one cannot see an alternative discourse in CCTV NEWS, only condemnation of the West and West-led international system and calls for a 'system that allows the co-existence of different systems' (p.99). Liu discovers, through analysis of CCTV America's news coverage, that there are both statist news values and internalised neoliberal news values reflected and thus its position in the global media system is ambivalent, which is the reflection of the internal tension of China's current social, political and ideological situation (Liu 2014a).

Audience may have been the biggest conundrum to both scholars and the channel. From interviews with CCTV International managers, the purpose of CCTV International was seen to be to influence foreign public opinion, not to make a profit (Jirik 2008; Zhang 2011). But that does not mean audiences are not important. Despite the continuing improvement in news-making, the channel's penetration rate is low. Some research has uncovered that much of the audience was intent on learning Mandarin or watching programs about history and culture rather than news (Zhang 2011). The pilot survey by Gorfinkel et al. (2014) in Kenya and South Africa reveals that there is a 'slightly greater interest and awareness by white audiences in Kenya, and a problem of lack of awareness or sustained interest by black Kenyans and educated pay

TV subscribers in South Africa' (p.86). However, according to a later survey by Guan and Wang (2015), this seems to have improved although not by much. In the survey, 15.6% of respondents in the US report having watched CCTV NEWS in 2011 more than once. CCTV is ranked third among China-run English media in the US market. In a broader sense, US media is the first source from which Americans learn about China; this is followed by Chinese people, Chinese restaurants, Chinese commodities and the media of mainland China – all in America. This shows that Chinese media has a role even if it may be in fifth place.

Jirik (2016) analyses two different aspects of the audience challenge: cultural proximity (Straubhaar 1991) and soft power. With regard to cultural proximity, he claims that the use of local staff and local stories are strengths for CCTV NEWS. Regarding the soft power perspective, varying from Nye's understanding that media effectiveness in spreading a country's values depends on its reach, Jirik argues that to sway a polity, targeting elites is possible. This concurs with Rogers' two-step Diffusion of Innovation model through which messages are sent to the wider society through opinion leaders who are essentially influential elites (Rogers 1962). The target audience of CCTV NEWS are elites as defined by a member of its management team as 'middle- and upper-class North Americans, as well as people who are interested in issues related to China' (Jirik 2016). However perhaps, under a Rogers' model, more could be done to target identified opinion leaders, in key areas such as Hollywood or who have a large social media following, so as to influence larger numbers of people.

In the cultural proximity perspective, the audience are mostly passive, without any motivation of information acquisition. This may be true about entertainment media. In reality, for news broadcasting, there is always an audience that seeks information in order to make sense or decisions. Among these would be members of policy and business communities. But, as there are alternative sources, a news organisation needs to be competitive in providing information.

Nye's prognostications for China's international media push are not hopeful. He sees China's ability to successfully generate soft power through media to be hampered by credibility issues associated with state-run media (Nye, 2013). But could he not be seeing the wood for the trees here? Firstly, US soft power dominance in terms

of its political ideology was ramped up by the US government during the Cold War through state-run agencies such as USIA (Thussu, 2013). There were also state broadcasters such as Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and Radio Marti. Secondly, so called media credibility is more an ideal than the reality as articulated by many academic researchers (Boyd-Barrett 1980; Herman and Chomsky 1988; Paterson 2011; Jirik 2013) and media specialists, like Jirik who used to work for a mainstream Western media organisations and was ‘cynical about the claims to balance and objectivity made by Western and international news organisations, including my former employer Reuters, over and against the clear biases evident in the objectivist news tradition that political economic analyses of institutional histories and behaviours and longitudinal analyses of so-called objective news content have consistently shown’ (Jirik 2016, 35-38).

But it is hard to deny that credibility is a huge hindrance for CCTV NEWS especially in Western countries. The media system in China is not just a social issue, but also one that is deeply intertwined with politics and government. In China, media are state-owned and are part of the power system (Jirik 2008, 28). In the ideological narrative followed in the media sector have always adhered to Marxist, Leninist and Mao’s thought, Deng’s theories and those of later administrations. The function of media is widely recognised as to be a Leninist ‘transmission belt’ for indoctrination and social mobilisation (Shambaugh 2007). The position of the media in the Chinese system is defined as mouthpiece of the government and the Party with the function of positively publicising and explaining the policy of the Party and the government; motivating people to work hard towards social and economic goals; providing comprehensive and unbiased views of society and the world; helping the Party and government in smooth governance of the country and maintaining established order and stability. As a key part of the Chinese system, it is meant to ensure system stability. Another dimension defining China’s media system is the emphasis on safeguarding China’s national interest and traditional culture in foreign policy. At the same time, television should be the major information source providing an accurate coverage of society and the world. Furthermore, it should encourage people to be more confident in the country and the values as articulated by the administration (Li 1991). In this sense, positive reporting is regarded higher than negative news, unless negative news can

discourage offenders and prevent crime or help find an early solution for social problem, without generating social disquiet. From this sense, it is not hard to understand Jirik's thesis; state organs like the Foreign Ministry can advise media about what they cannot report. There is dual track supervision: Party supervision by the publicity department focuses on ideology and state supervision by administrative organizations focuses on operations, but without excluding ideological aspects (Liu 2007). Zhao Yuezhi (1998) describes the television system in China to be closer to a public media system.

Professional practice is another dimension through which to understand the dynamics of the credibility problem. Onuf (2004) has posited hierarchy, hegemony and heteronomy as three rules for functional grounds for world politics. He has used the term hegemony 'abstractly to describe a form of rule that manifests itself in a great variety of social arrangements.... [and] that professionalisation fosters hegemonial rule' (Onuf 1993, 91-92). Professionalism is after all itself a set of norms that engenders a normative hegemony. This may also apply with respect to the norms of journalistic professionalism.

One fact that has to be mentioned here is that since the 'opening up' policy, reform in media sector witnessed enormous transformation not only in media practice but in the professional perception of the media workers. Lu and Pan (2002) note that journalism practice and journalism education in China incorporate Western liberal professionalism as part of Chinese professional perception, causing some discordance with traditional Chinese intellectual values and contemporary Chinese socialist values among Chinese media workers. Zhao (1998) points out that the market has joined the Party as a mover and shaker. In this context, Jirik, comparing his experience at CCTV NEWS and Reuters, concludes that the lengthy and complicated history of modern Chinese journalism has not resulted in a blunt propaganda (Jirik 2016). He also notes that, ironically, the toughest critics of the propaganda model are communist party members while expatriate Western professionals (who previously worked in Western mainstream media outlets) are relatively comfortable with the role as the mouthpiece for the party and state, because of the belief that Western journalist values were illusionary. Research by Lee et al. (2006) found that journalists, in big cities like Shenzhen and Shanghai, where media marketisation is mature, articulated having little

difficulty in working within the party line while serving the market (Lee, He, and Huang 2006). In the case of CCTV NEWS, Jirik (2008) found that news makers in the channel 'balanced social responsibility and professionalism understood as serving the people with their mouthpiece function and professionalism understood as serving the Party and government' (p.449) by negotiating tactfully with the authorities.

Being aware of the warning by scholars against the dichotomous framing of China's media under the Party/State and market structure, Jirik (2008) provides another insight: framing China's journalism as 'speaking on behalf of the power structure' (p.449) or as being against the power structure are equally incorrect because it is part of the power structure – an agency that is at the same time both an instrument and critic of power.

The management of CCTV NEWS summarises the channel's goals as being twofold: to project China's voice worldwide; and to become a player in the international retail news market (Jirik 2016). These can be examined within the framework of soft power. This perspective has been adopted by several scholars (Sun 2009; Wasserman 2016; Wang 2011; Zhang 2011; Jirik 2016; Gagliardon 2013; Gorfinkel 2014; Marsh 2016). But different researchers have drawn different conclusions. Sun (2009) takes it as a 'mission impossible' because in her view, '[g]lobally, the Chinese state media needs to convincingly present itself as a player whose values, ethics, and sensibilities are compatible with, if not superior to, its international counterparts', but in reality, in speaking of influencing public opinion, media content and format and the system they work in are different from those of the West. Marsh (2016) posits that it is questionable to assume that China's state media can be 'harnessed' and 'imposed' by state media when the media are restrained by self-censorship that may be associated with a propagandist media (p.68).

But according to Shi (2013), the role imposed on media is to be defensive not offensive. Gagliardone (2013) holds a more positive view of CCTV and sees the launch of CCTV Africa is a 'mix of strategic decisions and a series of fortuitous events' (p.29). He thinks the role is meant to enhance perceptions of China not through projecting directly a positive image of China but rather by providing a new way of looking at Africa. It is trying to create an 'Africa rising' narrative. He sees the potential for a

mutually enriching encounter between the Chinese and African peoples; and notes that any success in acting as a persuader will depend on CCTV's ability to offer news about the continent to people where there is a demand for such news. He has described what many researchers have ignored when they place China's values and strategic expansion in the prism of threatening Western values and market share: through the process of development, a mixed and hybridised model, one that draws also on models that developed in different contexts, may emerge. CCTV Africa is a 'transactional venue' where Chinese, African, and Western ways meet; while in an internationalising media, 'a major transaction in a venue is the production of hybridity' (Chitty 2009)

Others have taken different approaches such as seeking to prognosticate the direction CCTV NEWS will take or identify the problems CCTV faces. Zhang (2011) points out that it should be make clear how China's cultural and political appeal is projected, whether a China's state-centric, one-actor model is the answer to public diplomacy challenges, and to what extent the effort will help to advance China's soft power. Jirik (2016) suggests a way forward for CCTV NEWS, meant to overcome its audience deficit. His recommendation is that CCTV should follow the practice of its rivals and thereby attract audiences that are used to certain practices. He also expressed concern about whether state funding will continue, although CCTV NEWS' management was sanguine about financial support from the government being continued.

Research gaps proposition and questions

Research gaps

Through the previous review of existing literature on the debate about China's rise and its interpretation (Chapter One), the communication approach that China employs to enhance image and then discursive power, and the case of CCTV NEWS as an example of Chinese international media, several trends of academic debates emerged. Notably, the discourse on China's rise, the soft power initiatives and the media expansion under its framework are all interpreted in diverse ways. Scholars like Nye

(2005, 2011, 2015), insist that China's international model of soft power is doomed to fail because of the credibility deficit caused by the top-down propaganda model, while others take the combination of scrupulous planning and implementation as an innovation. There are several possible interpretations addressing this diversity of analysis conclusions. One is the realistic international relations view according to some scholars (Liu 2014b). Noopolitik (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 1999) may provide an applicable direction because both the debates around China's rise and its media strategy fall into the information realm (Noopolitik will be discussed further in the next chapter). Another problem with existing English literature is that much of it is based on frameworks conceptualised under Western perspectives; while few are based on the Chinese reality. As Zhang (2015) notes, assessment of China's soft power without an exact knowledge of the Chinese definition of it, whom China is targeting at, and how the messages are received, leaves room for questioning. It is not only true for the understanding of China's soft power, but also true for the studies on CCTV NEWS. An understanding of Chinese perspective also includes the understanding of the way Chinese people perceive their image and the way they deal with events.

An endemic research on Chinese media is the disproportionate focus on media ownership and the conclusion that this is problematic based on the Western model of an adversarial press, vis-à-vis the government. From the point of view of soft power expansion, whether or not media can fulfil their role effectively depends on how well they can spread Chinese perspectives among their audiences, ideally through the professional performance of the channel. Considering that various degrees of self-censorship commonly extant in almost every news outlet, as noted in the political economic perspective of the 'propaganda model' (Chomsky and Herman 1988), the mere fact of state ownership is not a sufficient factor for denying the legitimacy of the products of CCTV NEWS and the channel's ability to spread a Chinese perspective. Especially, its frequent expansion drives and relaunches have attracted many Western media workers to join the CCTV news team. How the professional dynamic is working is a question that is necessary to ask and answer in order to better to understand CCTV's general role in communicating Chinese perspectives and discourses.

Although media coverage of China has surged dramatically in the second decade of the 21st Century, in tandem with the country's rise in status, Chinese ideas (including perspectives and narratives) and practices are still new and even poorly presented in Western media. It is reasonable to treat these as innovations in a diffusion and adoption of innovation process. Targets accept innovations at different stages. At the early stage, there are a relatively small number of early adopters (who are opinion leaders). They spread the innovation, leading to there being an early majority of adopters, followed by a late majority and finally the laggards (Rogers and Shoemaker 1971). But if one takes into account the inertia of constant negative opinion about China, the diffusion of Chinese perspectives will have an uphill climb rather than a flat race track. Then arises a question: what are the real problems CCTV NEWS is facing? Are these: (1) the stereotypes that Western audiences have of China; or (2) that CCTV NEWS' ability to make news in a way that attracts Western audiences is limited; or (3) both? To find the answer to this question, audience perspectives need to be included in an investigation. So far only a few of researchers have ventured beyond pure analysis to interview members of audiences. Focusing on a group such as taxi drivers' CCTV NEWS viewing experience, as mentioned previously, Gorfinkel et al. (2013) would have missed targeted opinion leaders – the elites identified by CCTV NEWS management.

With much of the earlier research focusing on segments of the communication process, a complete picture is not available. To rectify this and to form a picture of CCTV NEWS' capacity to deliver Chinese discourse and perspective, a focus on the whole process, including the sender, media and audience and the soft power mechanism during the process, will help draw a picture of how China's soft power will be generated through the delivery of its resources. Whether or not the media approach is effective depends on the degree of the frames' compatibility, i.e. the framing of China's soft power resources projected by CCTV NEWS and the frames of China in the minds of audience members, in the two stages among the three stakeholders.

CCTV NEWS is invariably regarded as a soft power tool of China when mentioned in media, political documents and academic research. But it would seem few questions are asked about the nature of the relationship between soft power and media, specifically China's soft power and CCTV NEWS which is the focus of this project.

Nye attached great importance to information and mass media in soft power projection through public diplomacy (Nye 2011; Nye and Owens 1996). Chitty views electronic media as one of the multipliers of active soft power along with mobility and cultural industries (Chitty 2017). But it is still unclear through their work as to what kind of role media plays in power dynamics. Zaharna (2009; 2014) posits that soft power is inherently a communication-based activity and that different communication strategies can produce different soft power outcomes, that is soft power differential from network communication and mass communication in public diplomacy. However, network society is information based. It is not possible to separate mass communication from network communication in the wake of the convergence of technologies of telecommunication and broadcasting. In this project, these aspects are going to be addressed.

Propositions and research questions

Based on the discussion above, the propositions made in the previous chapter will be revised within the communication process of Chinese soft power through CCTV NEWS as follows:

1. The public diplomacy policy elites in China have a clear consensus of a preferred self-projected frame for China.
2. The Chinese government strategically regards CCTV NEWS as an important agency of soft power.
3. CCTV NEWS frames a clear image of China to the target audiences abroad.
4. CCTV NEWS' frames of China have an influence on the target audiences' frames of China.

To figure out how and how well CCTV NEWS could deliver its voices with soft power end, inquiries should be made in three aspects: in the sender part – how the stories are framed; in the CCTV part – how stories are framed by media workers in a professional environment; and in the receiver part – how will the target audience read CCTV NEWS frames. Specific questions will be:

1. What kind of frames on certain stories does China intend to deliver to the world?
2. How are China's stories framed in CCTV NEWS?
 - a. How congruent are CCTV NEWS frames on certain topics to the state's frames?
 - b. How is the framing determined by the professional performance of the news workers in the channel?
3. How congruent are CCTV NEWS frames of China with those of Australian stakeholders of China-Australia relations in the CCTV NEWS audience in Australia?
 - a. What kinds of frames of China do the Australian stakeholders of China- Australia relations entertain?
 - b. What do Australian audiences believe to be the ways in which CCTV NEWS production affect their frames of China and under what circumstance(s)?
4. What role does CCTV NEWS play in China's soft power projection?

Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on China's soft power framework, China's media approach to soft power, and the development of CCTV NEWS as a core of China's soft power strategy. The literature review exposed the blind spot of empirical examination of the role of media in discourse framing in the soft power dynamics in the context of China's rise, and the lack of detailed investigation on how China's international media approach works. Based on these, a trajectory of research on the process of CCTV NEWS' framing of the China's voice and dynamics of the interplay was identified. Propositions and research questions were refined.

In the following chapter, the analytical models of the interaction of media and international relations will be reviewed and then the theoretical framework will be elaborated based on framing theory under a constructivism perspective.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Chapter Two reviewed earlier research on China's efforts to counter the 'China threat' discourse through soft power approaches using the international broadcaster CCTV NEWS as a strategic tool. Gaps in inquiry into this soft power – media dynamics and the actual influence CCTV NEWS has on its target audiences have also been identified. The aim of Chapter Three will be to present and discuss the theoretical perspectives of the project. This chapter will firstly address the foundational issues of the philosophical aspects of getting to know the world; and then go into detail about the evolution of theories that will be employed in this project. Following this, a theoretical framework will be elaborated on for the further conduct of this project.

To answer the research questions identified in the previous chapter, the main task here is to analyse how the meaning of messages about China's image is constructed through state officials, mediated through the state's international media outlets and interpreted by target audiences – and whether and how the process fulfils the nation's soft power objectives. As indicated in the first chapter, this project intertwines two fields of inquiry, international relations and international communication, and a common interest – soft power. Discussion will start with the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism and social constructionist, which addresses the meaning construction and delivery from human interaction in a continuing process. Following the symbolic interactionist tradition of the Chicago school, framing theory offers a tool for detailed analysis. The following section will turn to the real situations of

international relations. Following the constructionist tradition, constructivism in international relations, which holds the view that the world is one of our making (Onuf 1989), and it will be a natural habitat for soft power (Chitty and Dong 2015). The constructivist view will be adopted as a way to interpret macro world relations. Its focus on norms, identity and culture make it a proper underpinning for the emergence of noopolitik which is becoming a new highlight in world politics. The importance of information strategy in noopolitik leads to the necessity of a discussion of its micro-level meaning delivery. Following this, the role of communication and international media will be discussed within soft power dynamics. It is widely noticed that in the networked society, where personal interaction is booming thanks to technology development, mass media seem to be on the decline. It is argued in this project, that international media is still irreplaceable in world politics in setting agendas and framing discourses. Framing is important in the formation of individual and collective cognition of issues. Culture is important during the framing process. In this project, professionalism as the reflection of media culture will be addressed in particular, because it not only influences the media framing but is also a reflection of power dynamics within the organisation and even the state. In the end, a theoretical framework will be developed and presented and a summary of the whole chapter will be provided.

Constructing and describing society

Theoretical underpinnings

Getting to know the world humans live in, and its relationship with human beings, is an ageless conundrum. This leads to a more basic element of information sharing to forge meaning. This section will focus on the theoretical underpinnings of the construction process of meaning.

Symbolic interactionism and social construction

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical perspective on the human construction and communication of reality through language and symbols in everyday life. It lays the ground for the research based on disciplines that are based on human experience

(Pernecky 2016). The term symbolic interactionism was coined by Blumer (1986) to label an 'approach to the study of human groups and human conduct' (p.1). The approach has had contributions from scholars, from different tracks of thought, but who belong to the Chicago School, including George Herbert Mead, John Dewey, W.I. Thomas, Robert E Park, William James and Charles Horton Cooley. Its main ideas have roots in George Mead's (1934) theories of self, mind and society. Mead's theory is based on the belief that 'the individual act is seen within the social act' (p.164), with the presumptions of 'the pre-existence of the group', interaction among members of a group, physical endowments and capacity and the ability of taking the role of others. Human beings have the ability to be self-reflective, which is a core mechanism for them to face and deal with the world. With the ability to communicate, the individuals impose meaning on pre-existence and convey common meaning in society through symbols. During the on-going process, of 'communication involving participation' (p.153), society experiences development.

Based on Mead and other scholars, Blumer (1986) identifies the following premises of symbolic interactionism: 1) '[H]uman beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them' – things refer to physical existence and relationships such as friends, institutions, guiding ideals, activities; 2) 'the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows'; 3) 'These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters' (p.2). Different from the traditional ways of interpreting meaning that either regard meaning as the instinct part of things arising from reasoning around sensory experience of physical phenomena (positivism) or the accretion by the person to whom the things have meaning (rationalism), the symbolic interactionist approach sees meaning as generated/constructed in the process of interpersonal interaction (p.3-5). Society is a symbolic interaction. People understand others' actions through the interpretation of meanings attached to the actions. In the social context, individuals take the roles of others by fitting into the action of others. This has significant implication for the understanding of the nature of human beings, human action and human association in a society. 'Social organisation is a framework within which acting units develop their actions. Structure features, such as culture, social systems set conditions for their action

but do not determine their action. Acting units act not toward culture, social structure but toward situations.’ (87-88)

Social construction can be viewed as a broader societal level of reality construction (Berger and Luckmann 1966). The term was introduced into social science by Berger and Luckmann, with the concept that people and social groups create meaning of each other’s actions through interaction. They acknowledged they are indebted to the influence of Mead and other contributors to symbolic interactionism as well as others like Marx, Schutz and Durkheim on their thinking. In their view, social knowledge is disseminated in semantic fields where language and signs play an important role serving as an ‘index of subjective meanings’ and language, as ‘the most important sign system of human society’ (p.51) is ‘capable of becoming the objective repository of vast accumulations of meaning and experience, which can then preserve in time and transmit to following generations’ (p.35-39). Mutual observation of the way of doing things in everyday life leads to mutual agreement, which develops into habitualisation and customs, and then may be institutionalised as routines. The concept of social construction applies the philosophical constructivism into the social realm. The term is often used interchangeably with constructivism. But it is usually believed that constructivism incorporates a tendency to trace the origin of people’s constructions of the world to processes intrinsic in the individual mind, while social construction is more about human relationships.⁶

Framing theory: organisation of experience

The last section reflected on the theoretic perspective of symbolic interactionism which focuses on individual construction of meaning. Following the same sociological tradition of the Chicago School, Goffman’s (1974) frame analysis offers a broader analytic tool to address the organisation of experience. According to scholars like Mead (1934), Blumer (1986), and Goffman (1974), the understanding of experience and the

⁶ Crotty distinguishes the two terms by viewing the constructionism as the collective generation and transmission of meaning while constructivism focused on the individual experience. But there seems to be very little difference in essence when using them to refer to the way to understand existence and social life. Here they are not used specifically as the project aims to find out the collective experience through individual perspective.

world are in constant struggle. Despite its sociological foundations, frame is usually traced back to Bateson's essay on the psychology of perceptions where he defined it as a psychological concept to include certain elements and exclude others in the delivery of meaning (Bateson 1955).

Goffman observes that in order to process new information effectively, individuals employ 'schemata of interpretation' or 'primary frameworks' to 'locate, perceive, identify, and label' occurrences (Goffman 1974, 21-24). Goffman developed a new cognitive style of framing, by following former scholars' ways of thinking. Apart from Mead, another scholar whose thinking Goffman followed was the American sociologist William James, a distinguished figure of pragmatism, whose academic tradition was unfolded in his famous *Perception of Reality* (1890). In the course of understanding reality, instead of asking what reality was, James asked the question in a different way: under what circumstances do we think things are real? In his eyes, the important thing about reality is our sense of its realness in contrast to our feeling that some things lack this quality. Then a further question can be asked: under what conditions is such a feeling generated? To answer this question, he thought the focus should be on the devices that make the 'reality' rather than the results of the making. As Goffman puts it, one looks at 'the camera and not what it is the camera takes pictures of' (Goffman 1974, p2). James attached more importance on the factors of selective attention and intimate involvement. More importantly, he made a stab at differentiating the several different 'worlds' that our attention and interest can make real for us, the possible sub universes, the 'orders of existence', in each of which an object of a given kind can have its proper being – the world (James 1950, 283-324) . After James, Austrian social scientist Alfred Schutz proposed the idea of *Multiple Realities*. His argument followed James' tradition but gave more attention to the possibility of revealing the conditions that must be achieved to generate one realm of 'reality': 'We speak of provinces of meaning and not of sub-universes because it is the meaning of our experience and not the ontological structure of the objects which constitute reality' (Schutz 1962, 207-259). In *Frame analysis*, Goffman focuses more on the implicit rules that, by 'defining the situation', shaped the meanings generated within it (Goffman 1974, 2). What he says he is trying to do is to offer his own version of a line of thinking begun by James and elaborated by Schutz. Goffman assumed that when individuals

attend to any current situation, the question they need to answer is: what is it that's going on here? He attempts in his book to elaborate a framework that could be helpful in giving the answer. Goffman defines frames as a set of concepts and theoretical perspectives that organise experiences and guide the actions of individuals, groups and societies. 'To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described' (Entman 1993, 52). Framing is thus a process of giving meaning and interpretation. Framing involves selection and salience. It could contain substantial connotations because frames highlight and include some elements while excluding others (Borah 2011) and thus is the core of public opinion formation (Chong 1993).

Since the book by Goffman *Frame Analysis: An Essay in the Organization of Experience* was published in 1974, framing theory has been applied in many fields such as communication studies, news, politics and social movements. The definition and characteristics of framing theory are developed along with the application in a diversity of areas. In today's social life, media are important carriers in social meaning transition, and 'a site on which various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality' (Gamson et al. 1992, 385). The media offer platforms where symbolic contests take place among contesting sponsors of meaning. The effectiveness in the eyes of sponsors depends on how well their preferred meanings fare. But the prominence of a certain stance depends on how the audience interprets it (Gamson et al. 1992).

In message delivery, framing not only impacts a statement in a positive or negative way, but also defines social issues through the salience imposed on the frame (Rothman et al. 2006). Frames function as both 'internal structures of the mind' and 'devices embedded in political discourse' (Kinder and Sanders 1990, 74). Pan and Kosicki (1993) posit that news frame can be used as a cognitive device in information encoding, interpreting and repossessing under certain journalistic norms. Thus, framing can be analysed as news discourse construction and procession strategy or the feature of the discourse per se.

Without any doubt, under the perspective of meaning construction, framing consists of ‘collective efforts’ (Goffman 1974, p.21). The participants in the framing process consist of the meaning initiator, message receiver and the interaction between them in the meaning negotiation. In addition, social reality can be viewed and interpreted from diverse perspectives (Chong and Druckman 2007a). Consequently, framing studies diversify in different directions: On the one hand, in the presentation of frames by certain groups, such as politicians, media can be used for a special persuasion purpose (Entman 2010). It is classified as macro-level framing constructing by some scholars (Gans 1979; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Shoemaker and Reese 2013). On the other hand, how the frames impact the perception of the receivers, i.e., the framing effect, which is also labelled as micro-level framing, is another important part to consider (Scheufele 1999; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). The potential of the framing embeds in the communicative processes (de Vreese 2012); the whole process is another focus holding the researchers’ attention.

As introduced in the previous section, framing offers an analytical approach to social meaning construction. To make sense of social reality, an understanding of frames is essential. From Goffman onwards, many scholars have explored the concept of frame and offered different interpretations from sociological, cognitive, and psychological perspectives. For example, Gitlin (1980) views frames as ‘persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion’ (p.7). For Gamson and Modigliani (1989) a frame is a ‘central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events’ (p.143). While others believed that frames are ‘central part of a culture and are institutionalised in various ways’ (Goffman 1974, 63), and thus ‘cognitive structures of mind are not labelled as frames’ and an ‘individual frame’ (Scheufele 1999, 107) does not exist, rather, a frame should be treated as a meta – communicative message (Van Gorp 2005). The different understanding of frame is more a result of difference of observation angle. Observed individually, frames exist inside one person’s recognition process of outside knowledge; while in a community, a certain degree of group framing is possible because of inter-subjectivity, within similar contexts. That is the ground of organisational identity.

The frame is moderated by the characteristics of individuals and a social group or the group's interpretive schemas and other attributes in the social environment (Ardèvol-Abreu 2015). Because of the nature as information schema, frames can trigger knowledge and activate 'stocks of cultural morals and values, and create contexts' (Cappella and Jamieson 1997, 47). As Chong and Druckman (2007a) have argued, frames are not all equal in strength. It depends on frequency (the times the frame is repeated), accessibility (audience's familiarity with the frame) and relevance (the importance of the frame to the issue or audience). This explains the frame differentiation among different groups on the same issue.

In recent years, scholars in framing studies turn to a constructive dimension which emphasises the cultural context of frame making, communicating, receiving and interpreting. Frames detail the relationship between various intertwined elements which determine how an issue or a topic would be defined and interpreted (Bateson 1955; Van Gorp 2007). Frames work differently in different contexts and they are not natural entities but socially constructed ones. They can be constructed by different producers, e.g., journalists, politicians and publics (Vliegenthart and vanZoonen 2011). Thus there is a classification of individual frames and media frames. Because of leeway for stakeholders to construct the meaning, frames can be strategic in nature. Various stakeholders, such as social movement organisations, political actors etc. use strategic methods to diffuse meaning to influence framing for specific purposes (Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Tewksbury et al. 2009). Because it is under certain cultural phenomena, framing is labelled by Van Gorp (2007) as a stock of culture. The existence of frames in social construction is invisible (Gamson et al. 1992) and thus they may serve the power mechanism by strategic framing (Van Gorp 2007). 'They can be products of a variety of actors in a variety of matrices – whether international organisations, states, media, corporations or non-government organisations or actors and audiences within these – to name the principal categories' (Chitty 2015, 9).

The mechanism of framing is reflected in the devices. Most literature discusses framing devices in the context of media framing where devices are embedded in news texts (Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Pan 2004) and invoke the schemata in audiences. There are reasoning devices and auxiliary devices such as rhetorical devices and

structural devices. Reasoning devices are essential to framing and reflect Entman's (1993) four framing functions. Some devices are powerful enough that single ones can activate a schema, while others may need the facilitation of other devices. The schemata activated are not always the same as those intended because the process is more a negotiation between frames makers and interpreters (Van Gorp 2007). In spite of the focus on media framing, it is fair to assume that framing devices exist in individual frames as well. The way a topic or an issue is framed by individuals reflects the devices, although they might not be the same with those in media frames. In media frames, rhetorical devices such as metaphors, catchphrases, quotes, pictures, exemplars etc., may be more common and most of the time, they are used strategically; while individual frames always contain fewer devices than in the textual media frames, exemplars, comparisons, statistics are more often to be used; they are usually identified through the way an individual converses subconsciously.

Framing usually happens in three steps: the reception of message, the integration of prior knowledge with the newly received information and the construction of a discursive model, and the formation of the new recognition (Rhee 1997 as cited in Ardèvol-Abreu 2015). Because of cultural lenses, there can be multiple frames of the same event from different interpreters at different stages of the communication process (Van Gorp, 2007). This indicates that when interpreting a phenomenon or event, investigation from different cultural contexts is essential.

Framing the external world

After addressing the basic issues of how to see the world in general terms, this section will go closer to the real world and review the concepts that involve the stage where the discourses on one country are created, communicated and interpreted. Constructivism international relations will be discussed and the dynamics of the process will be viewed as a communicative one in which media play a unique role. The frame of weak global republican confederacy (GRC) (Chitty 2017a) will be adopted to refer to the global stage. GRC is republican because of representative government reflecting mixed interests and is humanist; it is weaker than a federal system and hence a

confederation but it is also relatively weak as a confederacy (Chitty 2017a). The role of media in the interaction within the GRC and noopolitik will be combined with the purpose of drawing a macro picture for the understanding of soft power formation through international broadcasting.

Constructivist international relations and The Global Republican Confederacy

Similar to the social construction approach to seeing the world, is Onuf's (1989) international relations constructivism. This describes the situation in which the state, like the individual, exists in 'a world of our making'. From a broad social theoretic point of view, Onuf assumes that deeds done, acts taken, and words spoken are all facts, people and societies construct each other. He emphasises the role of language (both representational and performative), and rules in reality construction and professionalisation in dealing with interactions among states (Onuf 2013; 2016). In his eyes, rather than in an anarchic status, states are regulated by rules with hegemony, hierarchy and heteronomy serving as functional grounds for world politics (Onuf 2014). Wendt, following Onuf's conceptualisation of constructivism, has tried to go beyond the traditional realist thesis within which international relations are driven by security and material interests of states, and the liberal theories which focus on the interdependency of international actors and the constraints that define the operations, proposed that the interactions of international actors are shaped and influenced by identities and ever-changing normative institutional structures (Wendt 1992; Roach, Griffiths; O'Callaghan 2014). According to constructivists, the fundamental structures of world politics are social instead of strictly material; material objects have different meanings in different situations and international relations are not merely impacted by power politics, but also by ideas. They emphasise identity, social norms and culture in social construction of meaning in understanding social facts in international relations (Finnemore 1996). In this sense, in international relations, allies and enemies are shaped by certain ideational and cultural contexts; and changes in the nature of social interaction among states can lead to significant shift towards international relations (Jefferson, Katzenstein, and Wendt 1996; Baylis, Smith, and Owens 2013).

Following the constructivist tradition, Chitty characterises the contemporary world order with 'a condition of rule' or 'no anarchy' (Onuf 2014), global civil society

(Onuf 2004; Kaldor 2003; Onuf 2004; Kaldor 2003) together with its moral economy (Calabrese 2005) as a weak global republican confederacy (GRC) which refers to 'evolving institutions of world governance, actors and cultures that include both rule-making and ruling elites as well as the ruled and recusants' (Chitty 2017a, 11). The governing institutions such as state, organisations under UN and economic institutions such as those of the Bretton Woods system are diplomatic forums where the legal actors of the GRC interact to shape and reshape of the confederacy. Following the principle of republicanism which promotes the common good of the whole over the good of individuals, the GRC provides a framework for world order. The global polity 'is based on internationally accepted rules and states and non-state actors adhering to the consensual rule-making and rule framework as well as outlaws ad recusants and polities that have not been accredited by the system' (ibid). The goals of GRC align with enhancing human security and consist of both multilateral institutions and bilateral relations within the members of nation states and civil society organisations. Among the GRC, 'there are systemic processes for incorporation, proscription, containment or destruction of out-groups' (p.12). The proposal provides a framework or umbrella to talk about the world politics in a way beyond anarchy and disentropy.

The working dynamics within GRC

In speaking of the dynamics of control, Onuf (2014) has identified three types of *rule* that consist of the governance of international relations associating with three different types of *rules*; hegemony, hierarchy and heteronomy associated with directive-rules, instruction-rules and commitment-rules respectively. In his understanding, rules are tools for social control and rule is a system for the distribution of privilege. In Onuf's view, exercise of social power means domination. Hierarchy, hegemony and heteronomy are all connected with dominance and might induce desires for autonomy. Onuf uses these terms to address the whole picture of the rule of the politics and world politics. In the broader sense within GRC, the states as actors can also be seen as individuals with the desire to gain autonomy, which characterises one aspect of world politics. Examining from the individual perspective, Chitty conceived that the great puzzle for man in a society is to maintain autonomy while accepting a measure of favourable heteronomy – pointing to the psychological response of serenity in the

concept of homonomy discussed by Angyal (1969), in relation to belonging to a system.⁷ ‘Every concept reveals itself to be a metaphor’ (Onuf 2016, 1). Assumption is made here that individual mindset could be form a force of group consciousness during to the constructionist nature and the similar contexts. Homonomy is used here in a broader sense in a context of global governance.

Power is another core concept in world politics may offer a tool with which to portray world order. In Onuf’s words, power is the mode of social control (Onuf 2014). Power is classically defined as the ability to get others to do what they otherwise would not do (Dahl 1957). Nye (1990; 2004; 2011) further categorises power into hard power and soft power and concludes that soft power is the more favourable strategy in a time where interdependence is the mainstream trend of world politics. He goes further by distinguishing the active and passive approaches of soft power. The former refers to the method with intended efforts to make attraction while the latter refers to the attraction embedded in an actor’s values (Nye 2011; Chitty 2017a). With the strong scale of the world power, some scholars prefer influence to power in speaking of the relations.

⁷ In an interview with Naren Chitty conducted by the author on June 2, 2017 Chitty elaborated on homonomy, a psychological concept, drawing on a forthcoming chapter: ‘homonomy is constructed by the individual in his or her mind when a suitable balance of reciprocal constraints results in a happy acceptance of the relationship with the system, in a mature stoicism, where the will of the individual and the larger entity do not clash’. He acknowledged the following: ‘To be happy with one’s own lot is easier if one’s lot is presented in terms of an attractive ideology, where there is an attractive variable, such as an ideology invested in soft power, between an actor exercising heteronomy over another and the other, homonomy becomes possible as something generated in his or her own mind by the actor over whom heteronomy is exercised’. He further explained the following: ‘homonomy can be facilitated by soft power relations or interactions of attraction overlaying any heteronomic relationship through attractive ideology, but the generation of homonomy will still be in the mind of the individual. An ideology deemed attractive may be dismissed by an individual, so while rhetoric may deliver, there is a psychological dimension for an individual’s acceptance’. Chitty advised that these ideas would appear in a detailed elaboration in Naren Chitty & Sabina Dias, ‘Artificial Intelligence, Soft Power and Social Transformation’, In *Life Communication: Data, Symbol and Wisdom*, (Ed.) Shi Zengzhi, Beijing: Peking University Press (at press)

Taking Lasswell and Kaplan's (Lasswell 1950) view, Chitty (2017b) treats power as a special form of influence; he quarters power/influence in international relations thus: (1) intended influence/active hard power; (2) unintended influence/passive hard power; (3) intended influence/active soft power; and (4) unintended influence/passive soft power. Within these distinctions of influence/power group, Chitty reconfigured influence/power, hegemony, heteronomy, homonomy and autonomy according to influence/power dynamics. Hegemony is the form of power through which dominant groups are integrated in laws, rules, norms, habits and even general consensus (Gramsci 1971). In the long history of world politics, the hegemonic position of certain countries or values always exists despite the ups and downs of specific countries. In Chitty's conception, hegemonic status can generate a condition of heteronomy on others. This can be further received in three ways: with unhappy acceptance of heteronomy; with happy acceptance through homonomy likely because of an acceptable balance of heteronomy and autonomy, or with rejection of heteronomy. The latter will result in autonomy if the rejection can be sustained. If we expand the process further, a personal response of homonomy may further strengthen the status of hegemony, as an acceptable hegemony. Ironically, this may be regarded as a soft power effect. Putting the scenario into the dynamics of global governance, hegemonic status can generate the effect of heteronomy to others. There could be in affected countries an unhappy acceptance of the condition of heteronomy; or a happy acceptance in affected countries because of the hegemonic state's soft power – through individual psychological response to homonomy; or a rejection of hegemony which if successful would lead to the affected countries' autonomy or drive to achieve autonomy. In today's networked society, pure forms of autonomy are almost impossible, as recognised by Onuf (2014). Individuals (in the sense of both the states and NGOs) operate in networks. From this point of view it is possible for a national or cumulative rather than individual psychological response of homonomy

The assumption of GRC can be understood from two aspects. Firstly, it places world politics under the lens of global governance. Secondly, it emphasises the public. These two aspects take the analysis away from the realist anarchy and the constant conflict over the limited resources. From this aspect, there needs to be consideration of how to facilitate globe homonomy. This highlights the importance of the flow and

interpretation of information. Such a global condition of homonymy equate with harmonious coexistence in a community similar to the Confucius ideal of He-harmony which was originally used to portray the situation where various rhythmic sounds responding to one another ‘in a mutually promoting, mutually complementing, and mutually stabilizing way’ and then was expanded to a more broader sense in ancient Chinese literatures. ‘[Philosophically], harmony presupposes the existence of different things and implies a certain favourable relationship among them’ (Li 2006, 584)? In *Analects*, Confucius adopts *he* as a criterion for the good person (*junzi*) in his famous saying ‘The *junzi*’ harmonises but does not seek sameness, whereas the petty person seeks sameness but does not harmonise’ (*Junzi he er butong, xiaoren tong er buhe*) (*Analects* 13.23). He posits *li* (rites) as the device to achieve harmony. Mencius, another key figure in Confucius philosophy, also emphasizes *he* by listing it one of the most important things in human affairs: ‘[Good] timing is not as good as being advantageously situated, and being advantageously situated is not as good as having harmonious people’ (*Tianshi buru dili, dili buru renhe*) (Mencius 3B.1 cited in Li, 2006, p.585). Harmony in Confucianism can occur within the individual level, at the level of a family with harmonious relationship among individuals, and at the level of community, the nation and the world. In the context of world politics, *he* finds its place in the third level. It will be argued here that with the emphasis on the wellbeing of the governed in the republics proposed by Western philosophers, GRC has similarity in the sense of the ultimate aim of the whole community of the world.

The time of noopolitik and information flow

Constructivism highlights the construction of meaning in international relations. Thus the interpretation of information becomes more and more important at the time of technological, organisational and ideational networking. Noosphere, an information processing and information structuring system should be taken into account equally if not more importantly than the geosphere, biosphere, (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 1999). Noosphere was coined by French theologian and scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, referring to the realm of the mind (Teilhard De Chardin 1965 cited in Arquilla and Ronfeldt 1999). It calls for the ‘analyst and strategist to think in terms of the roles of ideas, values and norms’ (p.20). Within the noosphere, ‘the world is moving to a new

system in which “power” is understood mainly in terms of knowledge and the information strategy should focus on the “balance of knowledge,” distinct from the “balance of power” (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 1999, 44). Arquilla and Ronfeldt also introduced the concept of noopolitik – politics based on ethics and ideas and information strategy, ‘an approach to statecraft, to be undertaken as much by non-state as by state actors, that emphasises the role of soft power in expressing ideas, values, norms, and ethics through all manner of media’ (p.29). It emphasises the importance of cooperative advantages in addition to traditional comparative advantages and competitive advantages. Under the framework of noopolitik, traditional strategies are fused with new implications: in the economic realm, it means the ability to shape the legal structures and norms; military strategy should focus more on the shaping of partners with mutual security arrangements; in the political realm, the participation of non-state actors is valued. To build a cooperative global noosphere, Arquilla and Ronfeldt have identified both the bottom-up grassroots effort to foster cooperation and top-down model to establish strategy are important.

As a security strategy for the US, Arquilla and Ronfeldt put the US values, norms and ideas as models to be shared by the world. But in reality, they may have less attraction to the US than to China, because, as the authors have mentioned, the US already has much capital in areas as political values and norms, which echoes those in soft power (Nye 1990; 2004; 2011). The openness required by the noosphere means openness to others’ values, ideas and norms and this, to a certain extent, decreases US dominance. On the contrary, China with its rising status in the world economy is eager to seek acceptance of its ideas, values and norms on the one hand; and to increase its discourse power on the other; and to find legitimacy of its values that may be significant to the Western world. If looked at carefully, the concepts proposed by Xi Jinping, like ‘Community of Common destiny of Mankind’ in 2013 (2013), and ‘shared future in cyberspace’ (Xi 2016) are evidence of the effort to contribute ideas and norms to the global noosphere. Based on these ideas, the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, the founding of the Asian Infrastructure Bank (AIIB), the World Media Summit (WMS), and World Internet Conference Wuzhen Summit (WICWS), together with the international media expansion, China can be analysed in the prism of information processing and structuring approaches (Shi and Zhang 2016). What the

moves could potentially achieve might be interpreted as new hegemonisation in a post-hegemonic world, for which normative and sponsoring responsibilities are required as posited by Reich and Lebow (2014 cited from Chitty 2017a). The problem with this interpretation is that new hegemony is almost a mission impossible in today's reality when there are several rising powers and the world is more sensitive to hegemony. Since it is a post-hegemonic world, maybe not considering hegemony as salient phenomenon for analysis is worthy of attention as a solution.

In noopolitik, information is an important resource. In practice, how information interplays within world politics is another important question. As early as in the 1980s, Mowlana (1986) started to view international information flow as an analytical framework in international relations studies. He argued that our power in 'national and international system involves more than just the reallocation of economic, political, and technological values and bases. It involves multidimensional factors with authority, legitimacy, and will play crucial roles' (p.5). Mowlana emphasises that 'control of the distribution process is the most important index of the way in which power is distributed in a communication system' (Mowlana 1997, 30); thus he has proposed a two-stage international flow of information model which helps understand the dynamic process of international communication. The process consists of the production stage where messages flow from the source or communicator to production of the message and the distribution stage, which consists of message distribution and destination or recipient. At each stage, there are intra-and extra-media variables like ownership, economic resources and technology etc.

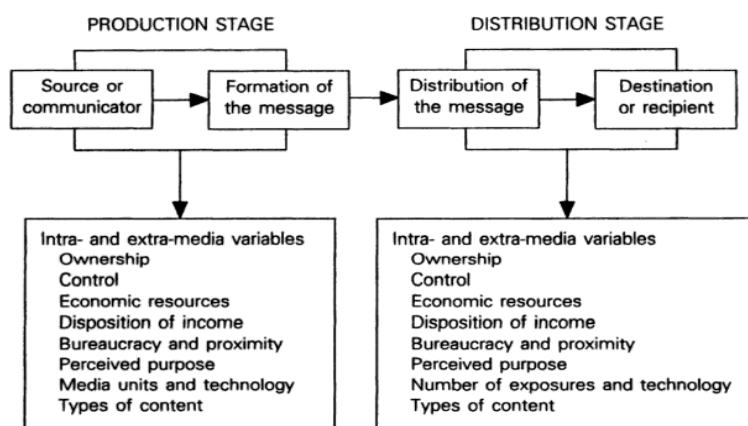


Figure 3.1. The two stages of information flow (Mowlana 1997, 31)

Through the information flow, different actors (governmental, transnational and individual) send and receive messages with different effects (change in nature of power, change in nature of resources, change in values and perceptions of individuals and change in national and international systems) which in turn have impact on individuals, institutions, inter-group, ethnic and minority groups, nation-states and the globe. In the end, there will be consequences in issues and policies.

From the perspective of global public opinion, this process can be called in Chitty's terms as 'communicating world order' (Chitty 1994) in which information travels through the dynamics within a state and inter-states and influences the trajectory of discourse formation. Since the Cold War, information flow has been dominated by Western countries, especially the US. At the time of the global media boom, Thussu (2010) noticed the contra-flow of information represented in media industries by Bollywood, Al-Jazeera and CCTV towards a new cartography of global communication.

Although Mowlana did not use the terms soft power and public diplomacy in his book *Global Information and World Communication*, which was first published in the 1980s, he differentiated between tangible resources and intangible resources in power dynamics of international communication. The former consists of factors such as economics, technology, politics, cultural and educational products and military. The latter constitutes of belief and value systems, ideology, knowledge and religion. This anticipates some of the distinctions between hard and soft power resources, particularly the second category where all the items listed above could be soft power resources. The first includes some soft power resources (cultural and educational products) too. Also, the international communication he refers to here in figure 3.1 is more than communication through media, but has the broader sense of public diplomacy.

Chitty (2017) from a cooperative perspective of soft power, proposes a global governance based on an attractiveness generated through civic virtue, aligned with the humanistic republican values of GRC. He posits civic virtue providing '[t]he impulse to influence on behalf of the nation, whether in relation to civil or cultural diplomacy, high politics-related public or traditional diplomacy'. Civic virtue prompts the organisations, citizens and media of one country to engage in soft power enhancement activities that

demonstrate virtue or virtuosity (Chitty 2017a; 2017b). This offers a new framework for the networked world and the flow of information.

Theoretical underpinnings of media and soft power in world politics

Soft power as a communicative approach of power relations

In the construction of world politics, communication skills play a unique role. '[T]he long-term, deep structural forces and the dynamics of the power relations are making communication the central process in global, national, and local social organizations' (Harari 2014, 209). Harari has highlighted three types of communicative skills in human history relating to the ability to describe the environment, social relations and abstract concepts (Harari 2014 cited from Chitty, 2017a). The ability to conceptualise 'allows frame creation that organizes society over time' and that is 'elaborated as ideology' (Chitty 2017a, 13). Framing is the basis of human interaction. Power relations among the actors are realised through interaction which could be viewed as the communication of symbols, information and values. 'For soft power to be activated it needs to be cast as a message, be articulated attractively, as assertives, directives or commissives that are intrinsically attractive' (Chitty 2017a, 27). Culture, value system and foreign policy only become meaningful at two ends of a communication process.

Information, the core element in any sort of communication, is an important dimension in power exercising. According to Laswell (1950), influentials who wield political power, depend upon the success with which they manage their environment. This implies skill in handling flows of symbols, violence and goods and services, depending on the type of influential. At the same time, influential must withstand the attacks of other groups of aspirant influentials who strive for ascendancy through the use of all methods at their disposal. In practice, this is likely to mean a struggle for power in which the victory goes to the influential who wields most effectively the symbols of the common destiny (Lasswell 1950). Similarly, Haas views that 'control over information and knowledge is an important dimension of power and that the

diffusion of new ideas and information can lead to new patterns of behaviour and prove to be an important determinant of international policy coordination' (Haas 1992, 3).

Hayden has noted the interdependencies between the macro level of the nation-state and society, the meso-level media organisational actors, and the micro-level of the individual citizen. These interdependencies shaped not only collective interpretation of the events, but also the collective reaction and subsequent consent given to the representative government (Hayden 2003). Locating media under Nye's three facets of power, places it under the soft approaches of power dynamics. It is apparent that attraction and institutions are involved in the transmission of information and meaning, and ultimately the creation of consensus or acceptance of the original country's information, behaviour and values among other countries. 'Information creates power' as Nye claims (p.103). Hayden views soft power as a congregation of practical reasoning that 'informs linkages between strategic arguments about communication power and the subsequent practice of public diplomacy' (Hayden 2015, 5). Possessing soft power implies the capability of a state to maintain certain types of compliance or action and prescribe normative values for other states. These aspects echo the discursive function of international media.

Nye attached great importance to mass media in soft power generation (Nye 2011). But as widely criticised as the concept of soft power itself, vagueness exists in the elaboration of the relationship between soft power and public diplomacy, and further that of soft power and international media. The legitimacy of broadcasting's role in soft power lies in the role it plays in international affairs. Mowlana (1997) sees international communication as the new frontier of international relations research and the information. In his definition, power is in terms of 'control over the particular base values as well as in terms of the flow of interchanges between the main sectors of society reflecting the ability to act and to affect something'. Belief and value systems are the core in defining the nature and parameters of action (p.4-5). He views these as the context to understand international relations and information flow.

Chitty (2017a) posit that electronic networked media is one of the channels and multiplier resources of active soft power in the research of soft power. He has further distinguished public diplomacy, civil society and cultural diplomacy:

Public diplomacy is engagement variously between governments and publics (noting their diasporic nature), whether between countries or within one country, through use of media (including social media), mobility or cultural production (including by prosumers), for purposes of building sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships and generating mutual goodwill. Public diplomacy content and communication style can be based on attraction (soft power), coercion (hard power) or on strategic mixtures of hard and soft power – smart power (p.19).

Civil diplomacy is engagement variously between civil society in a country and the government to further the interests of civil society or promote the interests of the country, or between groups in civil society and civil society groups and/or governments abroad to engage in cooperation in furthering mutual interests or to develop sustainable and cooperative relationships (pp. 18-19).

Cultural diplomacy, a subset of public diplomacy, is a set of practices through which state or non-state actors draw on their heritage or contemporary culture, using media (including social media), mobility or cultural production (including presumption), for purposes of building sustainable mutually beneficial relationships and generating mutual goodwill in groups with which they wish to partner (p.19).

In his civic virtue model (p.26), he posits virtue-based behaviours such as listening, engaging in dialogue, exchanging values for mutual benefit, developing mutually beneficial relationships etc. as the key practices in civil diplomacy. He has reconfigured the passive soft power sources into heritage and contemporary ones which both consist of intangible (knowledge, behaviour and culture) and tangible (historical sites and artefacts under the rubric of heritage and culture products under the rubric of contemporary) categories; cultural industrial, media and mobility channels are regarded as soft power multipliers, tools of cultural diplomacy. In all the three types of public diplomacy, the key thread is the transformation of ideas, products etc., through communication.

International broadcasting in soft power mechanism

To examine international broadcasting through a soft power lens, one needs to figure out the role media plays in the soft power mechanism. Boyd (1997, 446) identified four motivations for broadcasting internationally by both state-run and private organisations: to enhance national or organisational prestige; to promote national or organisational interests; to attempt religious, ideological or political indoctrination; and to foster cultural ties. In the age of satellite-delivered television era, Straubhaar and

Boyd (2002) added two more reasons: to see ads for multi-country products and to sell access to pay-TV broadcasts. In the eyes of Browne (1982) international broadcasting is an instrument of foreign policy; and a mirror of society, symbolic presence, converter and sustainer, coercer and intimidator, educator, and entertainer (Browne 1982 cited in Straubhaar and Boyd 2002, 137). All these roles of international broadcasting directly and indirectly echo Nye's conception of the three stages of public diplomacy (government to government, government to people and people to people) in wielding soft power as mentioned above. With the development of globalisation and technology, the world has stepped into the junction of biosphere and infosphere (Chitty 2017a). Technology has shortened the distance between human beings. However, while diffusion of technology does not guarantee mutually recognised symbols and meanings, reorientation of value systems can.

One aspect of the ambiguity of soft power is how the three resources identified by Nye lead to foreign policy advantage (Reich and Lebow 2014 cited from Brown 2017). To explain this question, discourse may provide a convincing aspect to understand the mechanism from culture, values and foreign policies to soft power. Here discourse is regarded as the combination of the understandings of Foucault, Fairclough and Van Dijk with the focus on its capacity to define knowledge, meaning and norms of society and regulate people's cognition and actions. In Nye's neoliberal stance, soft power resides in power resources. But from a constructivist stance, power resides in relations. As Guzzini puts it '[p]ower does not reside in a resource but stems from the particular relation in which abilities are actualised' (Guzzini 2009, 7). International broadcasting on the one hand can be viewed as the information diffuser, and on the other as a player in the field of public diplomacy in which relationships are established.

Following Zaharna's soft power differential model, mass media in public diplomacy may be viewed as a channel to wield soft power; networked communication facilitates the generation of soft power (Zaharna, 2010). However, in reality, the two channels are impossible to separate. Networked communication is telecommunication among individuals and organisations. Most of the time, information from mass media can be the primary source of information for networked communicators. How much they rely on each of the three channels (A, B, C) identified in Fig. 3.2 below, depends

on the expertise they possess. For example, diplomats and scholars will depend more on their own information acquisition channels during exchange with their counterparts in other organisations or countries. In the dynamics of framework, the generation of soft power means the wide acceptance of A's culture, value system and policies. And the wielding of soft power is to have B do willingly what is in A's favour. The success of the former will render what happens in the latter as a natural consequence. From this sense, the generation of soft power means the acquisition of discursive power. During the information flow process, the ideal effect will be the achievement of the recognition of A's belief, values and policies in B or the emergence of *sui generis* conditions of homonymy in relation to the larger system.

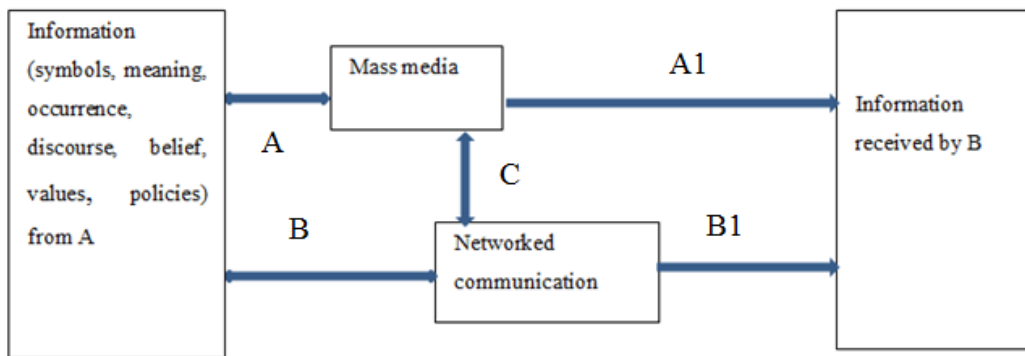


Figure 3.2. Information flow

Following this logic, it is easier to understand the great enthusiasm in investing in international broadcasting. From the World Wars through the Cold War, state-run broadcasting has demonstrated its usefulness in spreading host countries' voices, values and discourses, with VOA, BBC, Deutsch Welle etc. as the models (Castells 2007; Thussu 2013; Shi 2015; Seib 2010). With the development of satellite transmission and globalisation, commercial networks like CNN provide a new model for international broadcasting. The rise of Al-Jazeera witnesses the upswing of Islamic discourse in world politics that has inspired countries like China to promote their own discourse through international broadcasting.⁸ After the 9/11 terrorist attack in the US, a new wave of information war seems to have arisen. In recent years, Russia Today (RT) has

⁸ In the history of CCTV NEWS, the official discourses on its status have changed many times. At the beginning, the leaders of the Publicity Department and designers of the channel used the terms 'China's CNN' and 'China's Al Jazeera' to articulate the visibility goals of CCTV NEWS

drawn a great deal of attention with its strong anti-West discourse; it has been embraced by certain left and right wing groups in some Western countries while criticised by those at the centre. It will be useful to consider the non-Western types of ownership and operational models used by organisations such as RT when operating in the West. These could be characterised as being financially hybrid – part-commercial and part-state-sponsored – state-owned broadcasters. Within the same ownership pattern, there are different operational dynamics because of the differences in media systems in different countries. Sponsored by the UK Parliament, BBC's operations are characterised as that of an independent organisation while RT and CCTV NEWS are known to be under close state influence. From a soft power lens, the difference may be used to explain the different soft power approaches. In speaking of soft power resources, UK is on top in almost every aspect in comparative polls (Portland 2016; Monocle 2016). What it needs to do is to showcase and strengthen its attractiveness. China and Russia are in a totally different situation due to their own political and value systems. To foster attractiveness, CCTV and RT need to persuade potential audiences to accept or at least understand them, if potential audiences are not going to stay away because they view these broadcasters to be on the “dark side”. In other words these broadcasters need to gain discursive capacity. In this sense, RT's anti-Western discourse is not hard to understand although it may not be easy to accept except, by the extreme left and right in the West. Would they be better off targeting opinion leaders among mainstream audiences with less anti-Western rhetoric? CCTV seems to be more interested to filling the airwaves with neglected stories, while using news considered ‘hot’ in the West as audience bait.

Framing process

Framing has become a widely used theory in media studies and political communication where media frames and individual frames are distinguished. Entman (1993) noted the lack of a unified theory in explaining the construction of frames, the manifestation of frames in the text and the mechanism of the frames in the public. Efforts have been made by various scholars towards developing an integral framing process. In news framing studies, many scholars have tried to synthesise the process into different models and these are often characterised as having an effects orientation.

It is understandable that industry and government have an interest in effects to justify expenditure on communication campaigns. As stated earlier, the current research recognises the intent of communicators to cause effects, and draws on aspects of framing models that map such intent, but takes a different approach.

Snow et al. proposed the concept of ‘frame alignment’ which refers to the mechanism between the social movement and individuals in the form of frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension and frame transformation in the whole process (Snow et al., 1986).

Scheufele (1999) proposes four framing processes for framing research in the three stages of information inputs, processes and outcomes: framing building which refers to the dynamics of speakers selecting certain frames; frame setting, which focuses on the ‘salience of issue attributes’ and the interplay between media frames and audience perceptions (p.116); individual-level effects of framing, which address the influence of frames in thought and attitudes and subsequent behaviours; and journalists as audiences, which looks at the how the media frame can be affected by different social sponsors (see Figure 3.3). This model aims to investigate the framing effect by addressing the links of frame building, frame setting, individual-level framing processes and feedback from individual-level framing to media framing

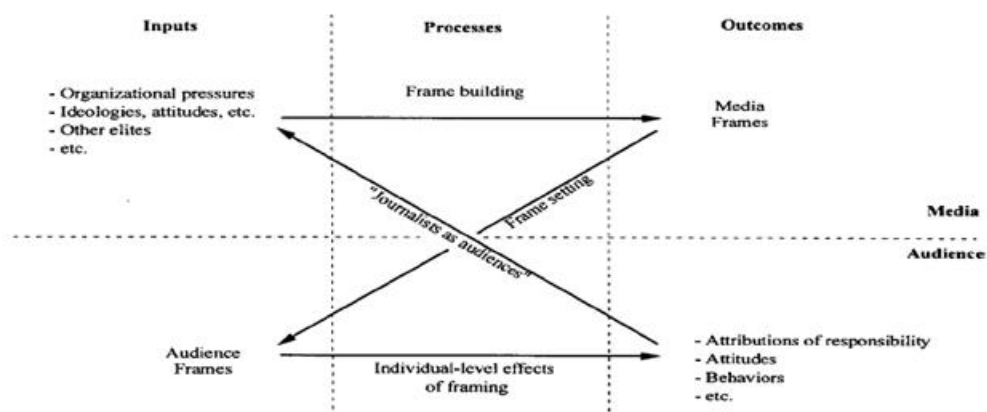


Figure 3.3. A process model of framing research by Scheufele (1999, 115)

With three information flows, D'Angelo's (D'Angelo, 2002) model of news framing process consists of three sub-processes with more comprehensive coverage. The sub-processes are frame construction flow, framing effects flow and a frame

definition flow. During frame construction flow, signifying elements of meaning are carried by framing devices (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997; Pan and Kosicki, 1993). What frames have effects is determined by a variety of elements from external discourses to individuals' prior knowledge. This indicates that framing effect is an interactive flow instead of a one-way flow. The frame definition flow indicates the finalisation after the previous stages of flow.

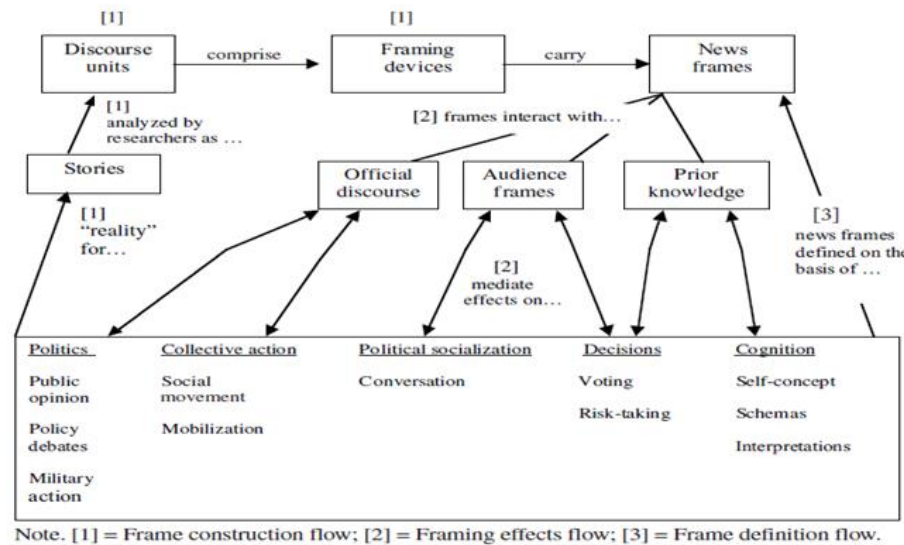


Figure 3.4. A model of the news framing process by D'Angelo (D'Angelo 2002, 880)

De Vreese (2005, 52) also emphasises the communicative processes of framing. He divides the process into frame-building and frame-setting. The frame-building stage stands between the news production and the news text, the determining factors include both internal (editorial policies, news values) (Shoemaker and Reese 1996), external ones (such as interaction between journalists and elite) (Gans 1979; Tuchman 1978; Snow et al. 1986), and social movements (Snow et al. 1986) that influence the structural qualities of news frames. Frame-setting is the stage between the news frames and the specific effects they have. It is the contest between the news frames and the audience's previous knowledge. The result would be the attitude or behaviour changes in the individual level or the collective actions such as decision-making about societal affairs.

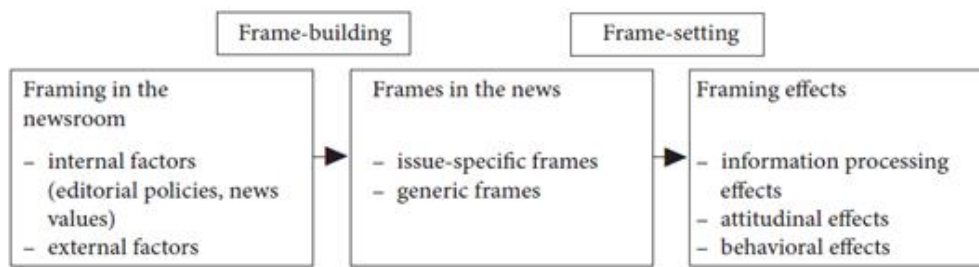


Figure 3.5. An integrated process model of framing by De Vreese (2005, 52)

The above four models are all from the point of view of the travelling of news. Matthes (2012) drew framing into the context of political campaigns and proposed an interdisciplinary research project which reflects the three sets of reciprocal processes among the political actors, media actors and citizens as actors and for the first time brought together the three separate but closely linked framing actors in one analysis (Matthes, 2012, 255). His findings suggest that media content is usually governed by political elites with political logic, but that citizens' frames are shaped by argument-based frames that were not suggested by political elites or media.

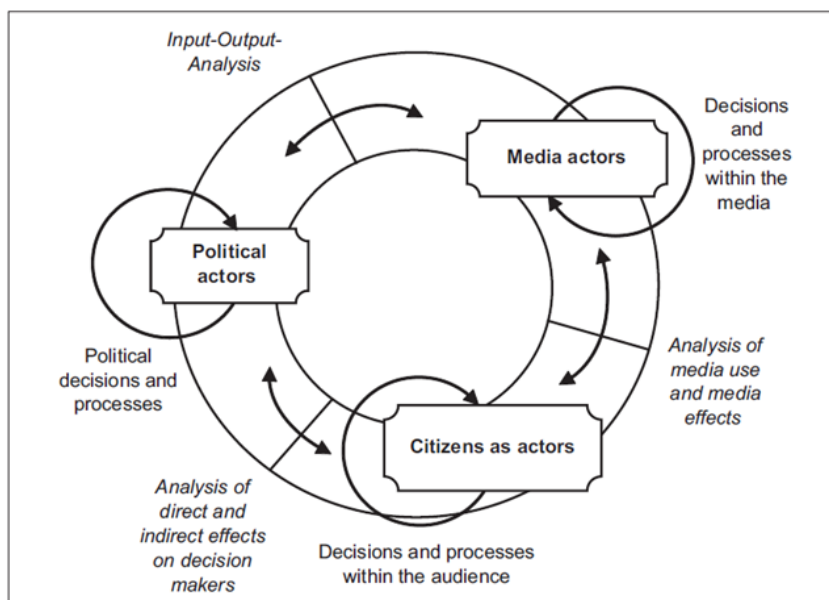


Figure 3.6. An interdisciplinary framing process in political campaign (Matthes 2012, 255)

In the context of political communication, frame dominance and contestation matter. With the aim of better explaining how the opinions and moods composing a

frame of the 9/11 attack travel from the White House to elites, news organisations, the media texts and then the public and who thus wins the framing contest, Entman (2003) proposed the ‘cascading network activation’ model. This model explains the way interpretive frames activate and are transmitted from the top level of a strategic system to the network of social elites and on to news organisations, media texts and the public, and then the upward flow of feedback from lower to high levels. During the process, Entman emphasises that public opinion is usually a dependent variable, but it sometimes influences elites through feedback; thus there is an upward flow from the public to the decision makers. He also takes the view that all actors in the process are under conditions of uncertainty and pressure, and process the information with prior knowledge and limited time for comprehensive comprehension. The further the flow travels, the less thorough the information becomes. The advantages of this model lie in its acknowledgement of variations within the levels of the system, its capacity to explain whether elite dissent emerges, the guidance on what information in the news is important to policy making, and the reflection of the flow from audience to policy makers.

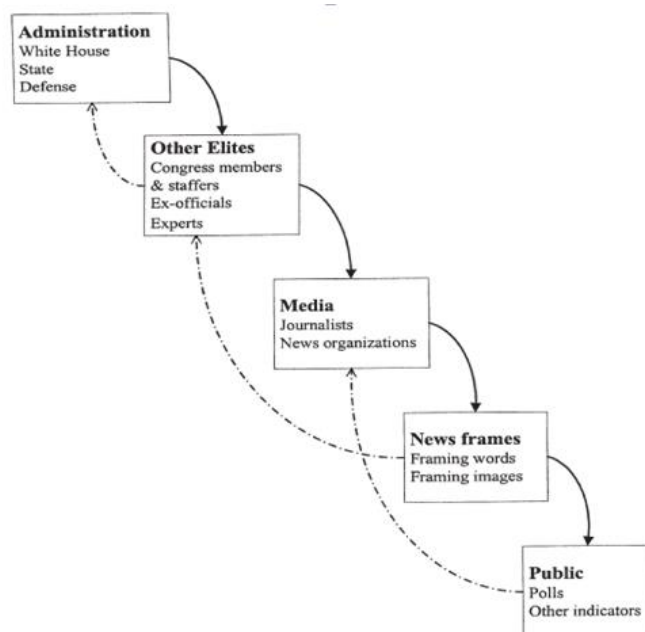


Figure 3.7. Cascading network activation model by Entman (2003, 419)

Similarly, but in a constructivist vein, Van Gorp (2007) also proposes an encompassing framing model which consists of frame selection and construction; key

events and the interaction with frame sponsors; the interplay between media content and receivers. Constructivist and receptionist perspectives are elaborated on below.

Different from research that focus on one part of framing process, e.g., media frame or individual frame, the above reviewed models all view framing as an integrated process. In the communication process, especially in transnational/transcultural communication, new frames will need to contest dominant frames, through what are called by Entman (2003) counter-frames – that are alternative narratives – to compete with the dominant frames which have discursive power in international relations. In the scenario of international discursive contest, framing would be meaningless without the investigation of frames among the communicator, media and the audience. One fact needs to be emphasised in framing relationships: framing does not happen in a vacuum; it is embedded deeply in the dominant culture (Van Gorp, 2007). For individuals, the better the external frame fits its internal schema, the easier it is to accept the new frames. At the societal level, the media frames that resonate with the dominant culture will find more social acceptance (Entman 2004). Frame makers, the media etc., consciously or unconsciously emphasise certain aspects and reflect certain aspects of social reality or certain groups' interests (Entman 1993; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Gamson 1988). Consequently, framing reflects certain power dynamics. This will explain the emergence of frame sponsors with strategic purposes to intervene in the framing process by not only advocacy, but also observable activities such as speech-making, interviews, advertising, articles etc. (Gamson and Modigliani 1989). According to Tromble and Meffert (2016), public officials are frequent sponsors of media frames. The frame that shares a similar background to the information available to receivers would undoubtedly gain easier acceptance (Chong and Druckman 2007a). Under this circumstance, there is the possibility for the existence of dominant frames (Entman, 2003). 'Television imagery is a site of struggle where the powers that be are often forced to compete and defend what they would prefer to have taken for granted' (Gamson et al.1992, 391). However, the fragmentation effect of media makes media discourse vulnerable for challengers such as social movements to provide alternative constructions of reality (ibid).

For effects-oriented framing theorists the potency of framing depends on the influence it has on the receivers – attitude change or action. On the other hand, for constructivist theorists the potency would lie in the ability of determining congruence or lack thereof of frames between different parties to a frame relationship. The constructivist Van Gorp (2007) posits that cultural resonances contribute to the acceptance of familiar frames. Similarly, Price et al. (2005) conclude from their research that despite exposure to frames, individuals draw their opinion on certain issues from limited patterns of religious, moral, legal and personal discourse. Thus the relationship between the media frames and audience frames is based on collective process of meaning negotiation, rather than exposure to media frames.

From a sociological perspective, Vliegenthart and van Zoonen (2011) note that media production and reception will be affected by individual differences, social and cultural contexts, structural divisions and power dynamics. ‘Frames are part of a collective struggle over meaning that takes place through a multiplicity of media and interpersonal communication; draws from a range of resources, among which are news media and personal experience’ (p.112), only strong frames can affect opinions.

All the above mentioned literature leads to the fact that receivers’ previous experience influence the way they negotiate reception.

Culture considerations: professionalism as an index of media framing culture

Culture is an important factor in the information flow and framing process (Mowlana 1997). The fact that ‘[c]ommunication research does not function in a political vacuum’ (Van Gorp 2007, 207) makes the concept of power a very relevant issue. And ‘frames are a central part of a culture and are institutionalised in various ways’ (Goffman 1981, 63 cited from Van Gorp 2007). The context in which media workers conduct their routine work can be seen as media culture in a broader sense. Media culture, in turn, is embedded in a broader social political context and can reflect, to certain extent, even broader power dynamics. Media culture can be found to have its maximum usage in what is widely called professionalism.

Professionalism is related to professions, it is regarded as an organising principle of an occupational cohort. The professional's work is based in a theoretical body of knowledge, shared values and norms, and common purpose (Gade and Lowrey 2011, 30). Journalistic and scholarly evangelism of democracy has been shaped by the good qualities, rules and ideals espoused by this body of knowledge. Journalistic professionalism is evaluated on the basis of adherence to these values and norms (Dahlgren 2010; Gade and Lowrey 2011; Li and Chitty 2017; Waisbord 2013; Zelizer 2005).

The existence of different media systems in the GRC determines the divergence in professionalism. The divergence of professional values relies firstly on political culture (Chilton 1988); and where reified by the state, it is the political system that underpins the working environment. The contention here is that in liberal democracies the terms 'political culture' and 'media culture' may be more applicable, while in polities where media is controlled by the state or/and ruling party the terms 'political' and 'media system' are appropriate to employ to indicate the comparative centralisation of media control mechanisms. Thomas Jefferson's advice "in all cases to follow truth as the only safe guide, and to eschew error which bewilder us in one false consequence after another in endless succession" as "inculcations necessary to render the people a sure basis for the structure of order & good government" reflect liberal theory that has informed the press. Freedom of expression and press ownership; the notions of public service, insistence on verity, comprehensive treatment of subject matter in objective, non-discriminatory and expeditious ways, are among values associate with professionalism in the literature (Deuze 2005; Gade and Lowrey 2011; Hanitzsch 2007; Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007; Li and Chitty 2017; Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm 1956; Weaver et al. 2009).

But it is fair to say that, empirically, because of variations in political systems and political cultures, there are no universal professional values of journalism. Even in Western countries, values are not always consistent (Kepplinger and Köcher 1990). Within an ideal liberal political culture, journalism as a profession is based upon the value of upholding democracy through providing citizens the information they need to self-govern (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007). This is the mainstream discourse employed

to judge world journalism; although there is more than one model around the world as demonstrated by the four theories of the press (Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm 1956) and the later three models of media and politics by Hallin and Mancini (Hallin and Mancini 2011). Ideal typical values are challenged by multimedia, multiculturalism as well as multinationalism (Deuze 2005). In Australia, for instance, the position that media should support government policies and transmit favourable images of political and business leadership is not without advocates (Hanusch 2008). Scholars with non-Western roots are trying to explore alternative narratives such as journalistic ethics under the framework of Islamic, Buddhist or Taoist philosophy (Hamada 2016; Gunaratne 2009; 2013).

News media has experienced dramatic disruption in the last few decades. The first disruption was through new media which had the audience effect known as polymedia where users choose variously from a smorgasbord of media technologies (Madianou and Miller 2013). The second was the spreading across borders of television news production values that are associated with the libertarian press whose natural habitats are liberal democracies. Countries like Russia and China, within their public diplomacy strategies, have launched foreign language channels for their state-owned broadcasters and founded overseas branches. They believe that they could generate more soft power abroad through sending messages via them. Osipova (2017) has questioned the effectiveness of their use because they have deficits in relation to the professional values identified above; notably they are not seen as warranted by or believable in the West.

In an age characterised by the pull of globalisation, national and local cultures have pushed back (Robertson 1995).

Some scholars identify the emergence of a transnational global professionalism (Reese 2001); however, a single package of journalistic values has not been identified. These include those who takes into consideration institutions (including levels of analysis in some instances) and epistemologies (Deuze 2005; Hanitzsch 2007; Li and Chitty 2017; Reese 2001). There has also been the suggestion that the notion of professionalism should be examined more objectively, after de-linking it from its western ideological construction and relying on a 'journalistic logic' (Waisbord 2013).

Another confusing aspect of journalistic professionalism is the puzzlement about describing it. When placed within certain journalistic cultures and ideologies, in mainly liberal contexts, the specific ideals adopted are different (Deuze 2005; Reese 2001; Hanitzsch 2007). Reese (2001) takes the view that professionalism is a problematic concept that is vulnerable to different interest groups. These may be identified as the power dynamic and operational groups; disseminators and interpreters are the journalistic roles (Hanitzsch 2007; Li and Chitty 2017).

To investigate the cultural influence around international broadcasting, media culture could be a good point to start. It can include the investigation of political system and traditional culture in the formation of media culture. One way to get to this is through examining the frames of a media organisation's staff about themselves as media workers and the organisation they serve. On the one hand, the frames can reflect the impact of external and internal factors power relations with the media practice; and on the other, the professional values they cherish in their work. Another way is to analyse the content of media production, which can be treated as a result of the interaction among the factors.

Framework

Understanding China's international media push as image and discourse promotion

The above theoretical perspectives offer an applicable analytical framework to understand China's image issues and China's discursive power promotion. First of all, according to the symbolic interactionist perspective and social constructionist perspective, the framing among countries can be viewed within the linked processes of meaning and experience construction. The opinion of a country as a whole (whether a majority view or a patchwork of group views) is under the meaning negotiation process in itself and others. Framing as the 'schemata of interpretation' (Goffman 1974, 21) can be adopted as the analytic tool of the process. Because of inter-subjectivity, every group forms its experience based on its own environment; the divergence of framing is

understandable and unavoidable to a certain extent. But at the same time, it leaves space for improvement through spreading a core message that favours one side (the information war in the Cold War being a good example) or promoting mutual understanding through showcasing the good side of a culture. A country to expecting maximum recognition from others, as does China, must gain recognition by construction, by the majority in a targeted country, of a meaning congruent with the one China holds; it needs to widely share its experience or to have wide recognition of its deeds, actions or way of life as legitimate and attractive. The strategic communication approaches, public diplomacy initiatives employed by states seem to be explicable from this aspect. From this sense, the importance of *noopolitik* is self-evident. China's enthusiasm in promoting its image seems to be able to find an acceptable interpretation from this constructivist perspective, to contrast the international relations constructivist making of world politics with the analytical social scientific method of constructivism. Some scholars like Rawnsley (2012; 2015) claim that China's public diplomacy has the aim of being liked. But examining the Chinese mainstream discourse, the terms usually used to label the country are those such as peace-loving, victim, socialist, revolution, anti-hegemonic, developing, major, co-operator and autonomous (Wang 2003; Wang 2011c). From the latter angle, it is more like a process of battling with biased perception by other states, especially the West that usually frames China as a weak state subject to US rules, sneaky and adept at scheming only for its own interest, an oppressor, an enemy, a negative existence (Liu 2014b) and a definite war-maker if not contained by the US (Kagan 2017). From the IR constructivist perspective, what China is doing in its communication strategy for the economic zone connecting by the One Belt One Road initiative, can be viewed as constructing the narrative of what its president proposed as 'a community of common destiny' (Xi 2013).

It is useful to note the role of language, the tool by which social experience is accumulated (Berger and Luckmann 1966) and social rules are delivered (Onuf 1989), in understanding image construction and discourse contest. Image is a kind of knowledge accumulated through social experience. In this sense, it is fair to conclude that image is transmitted in terms of language. Although it is easier to link image with visual signs, but in the case of image of certain states, it is more in the form of language. For example, when people say China is a threat, the linguistic feature is more obvious

and enduring. When taking power relational dynamics into consideration, discourse, as regime of truth (Foucault 1979) that influences social relations and knowledge systems through language (Fairclough 1992) sustains image, although contains more than image itself. Having particular access to discourse and communication means having one of the social resources that generate power and dominance. Framing has been called by some scholars, an approach to analysing discourse which is between the behaviouralism of content analysis and the structuralism of discourse analysis (Pan and Kosicki 1993). In the international sphere, which is posited by Chitty as a weak GRC (Chitty 2017a), the discourse – power mode exists. It is possible to assume that in this kind of confederacy, as within a society, discourse by a particular group has the dominant power to define certain relationships or status. In this regard, the framing of one country's image and status could be determined by not only itself within world politics, but also by forces that have more access to it. The problem puzzling mainstream perception is the unescapable trap of threat image that prevents China from deep engagement in world affairs. This problem can be analysed through the framing process model by comparing the degree of congruence or incongruence in different framing contexts. Pan and Kosicki (1993, 58) posit that 'framing analysis is not constrained within the content-free structuralist approach of news discourse,' rather, 'it retains the systematic procedures of gathering data of news texts in order to identify the signifying elements that might be used by audience members.'

A process model of information flow

As mentioned in 3.3.3, in the networked society, mass media not only serve as a channel to diffuse messages from the two ends of an information flow process, but also partly provides messages for the networked communication. As Zaharna has pointed out, the 'global communication era is defined by connectivity, interactivity and cultural diversity' (Zaharna 2010, 4); at each stage, it is impossible for the flow of information to be one directional, feedback will always influence the way information is framed at the beginning. In addition, during each stage of the process, framing is at work which could influence the way the receivers frame the information they get at each stage. Due to the background differentiation of the receivers, information through every medium will be different, more or less, from the original one. Especially when traveling through

different cultural filters, the information from Country A or Organization A to audience at B that is A's intended target, must change due to multiple filters (see figure 3.8). After the filtration, different outcomes will be emerging, homonomy or heteronomy, which will lead variously to happy acceptance or even rejection of the information from A by B. In this regard, the process of what A is framing, how it is re-framed by media and other medium forms in the middle and then how the targeted audience at B will interpret how it would reflect the dynamics of the multi-framing process.

Some details need to be mentioned here: Firstly, the information matters mainly to the stakeholders. As Nye has emphasised, attention is a scarce resource (Nye 2011). The reason why Australian people are interested in information about China must be because it is relevant to them. Secondly, the framing of information will be influenced by many factors: These include stereotypes, political factors, historical relations and political system which can be under a broader culture base (Chitty 2015). Thus, cultural elements are also an important variable in the information flow process which can be reflected by the different framing results. Culture is a broad concept that can be understood as a 'complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capacities and habits acquired by man as a member of society' (Tylor 1871, p.1). It is very difficult to incorporate all the elements of the culture into a single analytical framework. But as mentioned previously, professional culture can reflect to a certain extent the broader culture influence around it. In the case of CCTV NEWS there is now a hybrid journalistic culture due to the recruitment of foreign staff. The organisational frame of the professional culture – the role of this in society and the way organisations frame issues – can reflect not only the culture of the organisation itself but also the dynamics of the broader relationship between the organisation and the state political system. Its professional identity as an organ of state leaves with the targeted audience in the West the impression that CCTV NEWS is a propaganda tool. This framing of an organisation will definitely impact the effectiveness of its reach which in turn will push the media organisation to do its business taking into account of audience frames.

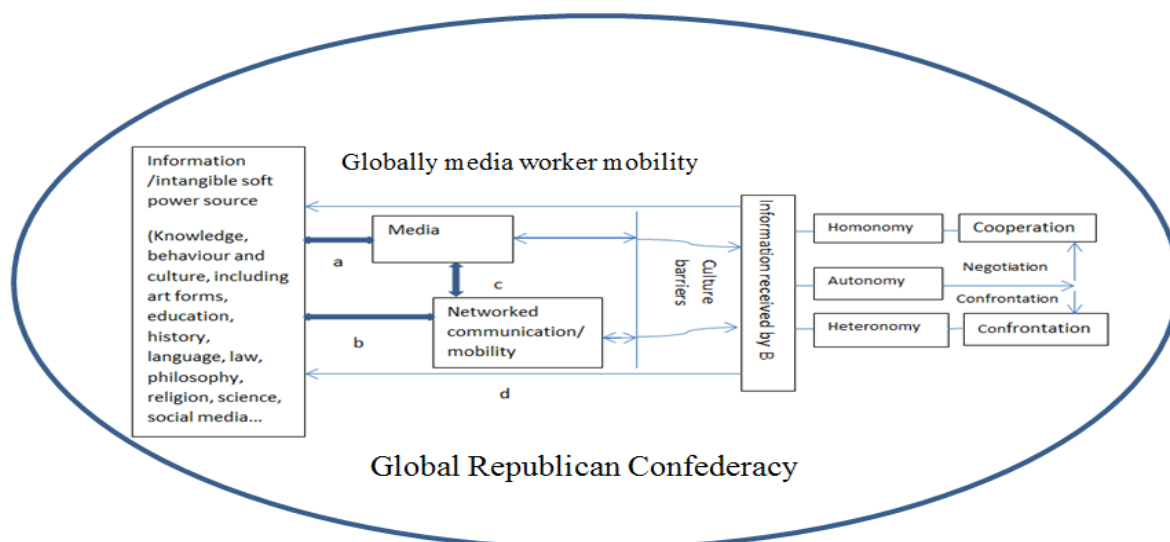


Figure 3.8. Soft power model of information flow

Chinese media culture

The professional culture in China is quite different to that in the West, being embedded in the socialist political system where the written rule is for media to be the ‘throat and tongue’ of the party and the government, and support governance (Sparks 2012). With a *sui generis* political system and an immensely popular social media, China’s media landscape is more complex than many scholars expect it to be. Professionalism is usually claimed to be limited because of state ownership of media and the ‘throat and tongue’ character (Tong 2011; Simons, Nolan, and Wright 2016; Tong 2011 as cited in Simons et al 2016). The commercialization of the media industry that started in the 1990s has led to a transition to market orientation, but the party line continues to dominate (Qian & Bandurski, 2011, as cited in Simons et al, 2016). Journalism in China suffers from contradictions: culturally, Confucian role expectations for public intellectuals vs. liberal expectations of press as watchdog; institutionally, party principle vs. people principle (Lee 2005; Tong 2011); and as a product in the market-based conception vs. the tool of governance (Hassid 2011; Pan and Lu 2003). But the idea of professionalism is widely accepted by journalists and educators alike and to a certain extent is changing the ideology of Chinese journalism with the purpose of reconstruction and amelioration (Shao and Dong 2016). Another survey indicates that Chinese journalists are taking a realistic attitude towards the idea of journalism and

can navigate between party and the professional lines (Simons, Nolan, and Wright 2016).

It is true for China as it is for the rest of the world that journalistic professional values are ideal and counter-factual (Örnebring 2010). The existing criteria seem simplistic when applied to the analysis of China's dynamically changing and historically-steeped reality. Despite the state ownership and the party imperative in the Chinese party-state, scholars discover that in practice, journalists have tried to establish a comfort zone for professional practice (Simons et al, 2016). Even so, the research shows that there is consensus among journalists that adhering to the rules is important when playing the game (ibid, 8). Jirik, comparing his experience at CCTV NEWS and other Western media outlets, concludes that the layered history of modern Chinese journalism, from the Qing Dynasty, is not one that can be reduced to the churning out of 'blunt propaganda' – one early influence having been Western journalism (Jirik 2016, 35-38). He also mentions that the toughest critics of the propaganda model were the communist party members, while foreign professionals who used to work in Western mainstream media outlets are relatively comfortable in their roles as mouthpieces for the party and state because of their disillusionment with Western journalistic values which they see as illusionary (Jirik 2016).

As noted by Sparks (2012) the existing research on China's journalism is over-concerned with political influence. Sparks specifies two problems in Chinese journalistic professionalism research: 1. The political focus is too much on the Cultural Revolution type totalitarian style which is far from today's true situation; 2. Ideological attachment leads to the illusion that marketisation will precipitate conflict with the party. Research by Lee et al. found that journalists in big cities like Shenzhen and Shanghai, where media marketisation is mature, articulated little difficulty in working both within the party line and serving the market (Lee, He, and Huang 2006). It is important to understand the dynamics of Chinese society, because in the complicated political structure even different administrative levels have different realities. An investigation of the characteristics of a specific organisation will be helpful to understand the practice and the content. CCTV NEWS' staff structure displays the international mobility of media workers with the mixture of local and foreign staff. In this context, the culture

must be unique as well as complicated. There must be an internal negotiation to achieve its special identity which guides the practice of the channel.

Two aspects are crucial to understanding the formation of its organisational identity. Firstly, there are multiple forces of influence: apart from the ‘dominant structure’ of Communist ideology, there is a ‘residual structure’ of Confucian intellectual ethics and an imported media professionalism as well as a globalisation-spawned market logic (Williams 1977 cited from Lee 2005, 122), that acts on Chinese media workers’ identity construction. Wang Han, a successful entertainment program host from Hunan TV Station quoted in a speech an expression by Song Dynasty Philosopher Zhang Zai to express his understanding of the media workers’ mission: to ordain conscience for Heaven and Earth; to secure life and fortune for the people; to continue lost teachings for past sages; and to establish peace for all future generations. This is a characteristic feature for Chinese intellectuals for hundreds of years under the philosophical idea of Tian Xia (Under-the-Heaven). Similar ideas are echoed by many main stream media workers when they talk about social responsibility. These echoes serve the ideological discourse of the state. This may be an important factor for Chinese media workers to find comfort in the face of external suspicion of their playing a propaganda role and supporting party principles. Secondly, the formation of organisational culture in the mixed-cultural organisation must be the result of interaction between the channel and Western staff which demonstrates a certain level of hegemonic rule (Onuf 2014) of the management in a Foucauldian disciplinary way on the one hand. On the other hand, the expertise of the Western staff earns space for them to deal with the news reflecting some professional values, although there are parameters for a small number of topics where chief editors have the final say. But ultimately media workers may respond to conditions with internal constructions of homonymy that will contribute to a unique identity of the organisation.

Reconciling the Chinese public diplomacy model with cross-cultural audience framing

To avoid the potential confusion among scholars from different perspectives of research in communication and cultural studies, this sub-section will wrap up briefly the

main framework of this research. First of all, this project is situated within the tradition of the field of international communication while engaging with international relations with the focus on soft power, communication under the broad culture context. To avoid falling into the long term but futile debates of framing collision on issues like China threat among different social groups, which further result in division of global opinion, this project absorbs the stance of viewing world opinion within GRC while admitting the differences among the states but emphasising the mutual good and benefit (Chitty 2017a). From the constructivist point of view, this project holds the basic understanding that soft power, as influence sans coercion or inducement, is basically a communication process – one whereby messages of attraction of heritage and contemporary culture of one country are delivered through personnel mobility, media and cultural industry; the virtuosity of the content and style of the message delivery playing a key role (Chitty 2017a). The concept of soft power is meaningful only in the context of relations (domestically and internationally) where a certain degree of influence is expected to be achieved.

Aforementioned literature shows that public diplomacy activities with the purpose of soft power can be grouped into three layers: state-initiated activities, state-funded activities implemented by civil society and cultural action initiated and run purely by civil society. The third category, with no specific diplomacy aims, is huge in scale but may not always deliver message that are deemed effective from the point of view of the state's soft power expectations. But their delivery of information is easier for the recipients to accept. In this sense, public diplomacy is essentially a top-down activity although elements can be implemented through the hands of civil society. This project will focus on the mechanism of message delivery with the soft power purpose, specifically, through the channel of media.

Being aware of the deficit in the investigation of the audience end in the soft power debate (Gillespie and McAvoy 2017; Chitty 2017a), the imbalance of world information flow (Thussu 2013) and the differences in the China narrative in Chinese and Western media, this project will look at the process from both ends: the initiator and the recipient. Listening has been said to have great importance to global governance, international relations and public diplomacy (Chitty 2017a; Onuf 2014; Cull 2008).

From Nye onward, the discussions of soft power always emphasises the importance of the target, a behaviouralist term, though Nye also emphasises the importance of listening and notes varied audience responses (Nye 2011). The inclusion of recipients of a soft power message is to: examine the effectiveness of China's international media approach; and explore the mechanism of message framing between the two ends of the process. In this regard, Hall's encoding and decoding theory provides a useful insight in that it emphasise the active role of audience in the interpretation of message under the influence of social context (Hall, 1980). Constructive framing analysis used in this project can on the one hand, take the contextual elements into consideration, on the other hand, reflect the cognition formation process whether or not they read the message delivered.

Culture is a complicated concept that can be viewed from different lenses (Jacob 2017). Here Sorrells' definition of culture, as a system of shared meaning (Sorrells 2015) which influence people's framing of things, is used. But it will only hold the position that culture is a background factor which can influence in different degrees people's framing. As elaborated earlier in this chapter, public diplomacy activities with soft power purposes are a matter of communication which can be impacted by culture, but not a problem of culture itself. With the aim to fully communicate, culture barriers can be overcome – this can be seen in many real life cases. In this regard, culture should not be an excuse of ineffective communication.

Summary

This chapter has combed through and combined theoretic aspects of this project from the fields of international relations and international communication and the problematique of balanced information flow. Starting from the symbolic interactionism perspective, it has addressed the social construction of meaning, framing theory and the constructive perspective of international relations. The major concept of frame has been discussed to help set the base for investigation. A frame of a Global Republican Confederacy (Chitty 2017a) is adopted for world politics. International communication is discussed under soft power dynamics in the context of information flow. A

theoretical framework has been proposed with the framing process and information flow as the micro and macro perspectives respectively. It is proposed that in framing relationships within information flow, frames of policy elites, broadcasters and audiences are equally important. In the networked society, mass media transmit information not simply from sender to receiver, but also to a plexus of actors who play an important element of public diplomacy. During the process, what are transmitted include message, symbols and most importantly discourses. The ultimate ends are responses to heteronomy one being an individual construction of homonomy. Culture elements were singled out because they influence every context of information flow. In the case of international broadcasting, media culture and professionalism are selected to represent the cultural considerations. Based on the theoretical discussion in this chapter, the next chapter will focus on methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The previous three chapters have identified the research gap, research questions and the theoretical framework. This chapter will move on to the conduct of specific research for this project. Researchers carrying out a research project are influenced by a variety of factors: These include their beliefs about the world and what they can know about it (ontology); the nature of knowledge and how they can extract it (epistemology); the objectives of the research and the way it is conducted (methodology). Methodology is a discussion of these issues. This methodology chapter will focus the philosophical considerations, the selection of methods, the environment and the operationalisation of the research.

A research methodology is a broad approach to scientific inquiry, specifying how research questions should be asked and answered. This includes world-view considerations, general preferences for designs, sampling logic, data collection and analytical strategies, guidelines for making inferences, and the criteria for assessing and improving quality. The project will adopt ontological and epistemological approaches that are realist and constructivist (Berger and Luckmann 1966) respectively, the latter holding that the world is understood by actors through meaning construction. This leads to the symbolic interactionist (Blumer 1986) theoretical perspective. This chapter will discuss these aspects. Following this introduction, the second section will address

philosophical foundations and research questions. The third and fourth sections address the selection of methods in data collection, conducting principles and method operationalisation for stages one and two data collection. The specific data-collecting methods of in-depth interviews, observation, and case study will be discussed and the relevant issues such as sampling, trustworthy points will be addressed. In Section Five, the last substantive segment, the data analysis method of framing analysis will be discussed at both theoretical and operationalisation levels. This will be followed by a brief summary.

Research methods include specific strategies and procedures for implementing research design, including sampling, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of the findings. The trustworthiness of research will be discussed to set the guidelines for the research design.

Research questions revisited under methodological lens

Philosophic foundations

This section will discuss the research questions and trustworthiness of data, the latter being a concept associated with qualitative research an example of which this project is. Although the design of social research, mostly qualitative in nature, is not as rigorous as that in science, it is necessary to articulate the methodology and methods employed to answer the research questions and justify the selection by elaborate the theoretical assumption and the philosophical views behind them. This section aims to clarify the confusion among categories arising from different philosophical assumptions that have been thrown together in voluminous literature (Crotty 1998); and articulate the ones that guide this project. Here Crotty's (1998) four elements (epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods) model will be followed as the main topics.

First of all, the most basic determining factor of the research is the basic duo: The judgement of the nature of existence (ontology) and the way it can be known by

human beings (epistemology). The ontological stance held here can be viewed as compatible with realism and relativism as Crotty put it (Crotty 1998, 64):

[C]onstructionism in epistemology is perfectly compatible with realism in ontology – and in more ways than one. ... Realism should be set against idealism. Idealism ... is the philosophical view that what is real is somehow confined to what is in the mind, that is, it consists only of ‘ideas’. Social constructionism does not confine reality in this way. Secondly, we should accept that social constructionism is relativist. What is said to be ‘the way things are’ is really just ‘the sense we make of them’. Once this standpoint is embraced, we will obviously hold out understandings much more lightly and tentatively and far less dogmatically, seeing them as historically and culturally effected interpretations rather than eternal truths of some kind. Historical and cross-cultural comparisons should make us very aware that, at different times and in different places, there have been and are very divergent interpretations of the same phenomena.

Reality may be meaningless in itself or to the social world unless it is put under social interaction (Crotty, 1998). In the field of social relations, the parts of interpretation and construction matter more where communication happens, relying heavily on the capacity of conceptualisation because we are living in a socially constructed world.

The research objective in this project is to investigate the frames of China by stakeholders at different public diplomacy stages: the Chinese side, the media, and their target audience in Australia. The project is positioned under the epistemology of constructionism/constructivism.⁹ Constructionism/constructivism posits that reality is ‘constructed by people under the influence of a variety of social and cultural factors that lead to shared construction’ (Guba and Lincoln 1989, 12). The meanings of existence depend on the way people interpret and construct them (Crotty, 1998). In his project, the frames of one country by people from another country and the media frames are viewed as social constructions. The frames on one hand depend on the performance of

⁹ Crotty distinguishes the two terms by viewing constructionism as the collective generation and transmission of meaning while constructivism is focused on the individual experience. But there seems to be very little difference in essence when using them to refer to the way to understand existence and social life. Here they are not used specifically as the project aims to find out the collective experience through individual perspective.

the observed country; on the other hand on the observers' previous knowledge and environment.

The corresponding theoretical perspective employed here is symbolic interactionist as a sub-form of interpretivism. Theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance behind a methodology which 'provides a context for the process' and 'a basis for its logic and its criteria' (Crotty 1998, 66). Interpretivism can be traced back to Kant's writing in 1781 *Critique of Pure Reason*, in which he argued that beyond direct observation, there are other ways to get to know about the world and that our knowledge about the world depends on 'understanding' (Ritchie et al. 2013). Other philosophers like Max Weber (1864-1920) also emphasised understanding (Verstehen) as the approach to get to know natural science and social science. Weber defines sociology as 'a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effect' (Weber 1968). Weber's Verstehen is trying to bridge natural science and social science into a united methodology and put the understanding of social actions in the context of material conditions (Ritchie et al. 2013). Schutz (1973) on the contrary argues that human and social sciences demand different methods from those of natural science. Crotty has divided the interpretative approach into three streams: hermeneutics, phenomenology, and symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is the theoretical perspective adopted in this project. Symbolic interactionism investigates the understandings within culture as the 'meaningful matrix that guides our lives' (Crotty 1998, 71). The methodological implication of symbolic interactionist perspective requires the researcher take the role of the actors in specific situation and interpret the situation as the actors understand it (Psathas 1973; Denzin 1974). As to the culture within which the social interaction happens, researchers should observe from as close as possible and try to understand the social interaction from the insider's perspective (Crotty 1998).

Within the symbolic interactionist perspective, Blumer (1986) has identified the methodological procedures of scientific inquiry: 1. 'the possession and use of a prior picture or scheme of the empirical world under study'; 2. 'the asking of questions of the empirical world and the conversion of the questions into problems'; 3. 'Determination of the data to be sought and the means to be employed in getting the data-data'; 4.

‘Determination of relations between the data-relations’; 5. ‘interpretation of the findings’; 6. ‘the use of concepts’. He further states that ‘any treatment of methodology worthy of its name has to cover the above matters since they are clearly the essential parts of the act of empirical inquiry in science’ (Blumer 1986). Specifically, the procedure may involve ‘direct observation, interviewing of people, listening to their conversations, securing life-history accounts, using letters and diaries, consulting public records, arranging for group discussions and making counts of an item if this appears worthwhile’ (p. 40).

Blumer (1986) has also addressed mass media research within the perspective of symbolic interactionism. He challenges the traditional approaches to conduct research in media studies. In real society, content is under constant flux; it is near impossible for audiences to limit exposure themselves to a single medium form. As a result, it is necessary to consider how audience ‘are sensitised to the presentation and prepared to interpret’ (p.185). The sensitivity and responsiveness differ firstly between people among the audience and more importantly in given people through time. As mentioned above, social interaction is a continuing process which ‘fosters new objects of preoccupation, new lines of judgement, and new orientation of feeling’ (p.185). Different media forms follow the common area. All these in Blumer’s eyes challenge the methodological schemes – ‘to treat mass media as a single, homogeneous, and constant factor’ – followed by all research in media effects. As a solution, the communicative process should follow the real features as they exist. Thus, he proposed the principles that should govern inquiries: 1) treat the object of research as an attachment to a complicated process; 2) treat the object as undergoing formation; 3) the ‘audience’ must be viewed as ‘forging definitions inside their experience’, instead of ‘responding to stimuli’; 4) the network of relations must be put in a progressing process (p.186). Following Blumer’s suggestions, the research questions will be investigated in the flux of framing process, in which three stages of the communication process will be covered. As indicated in the precious chapter, the constructionist perspective of framing research always takes the cultural elements into consideration. The involvement of audience response to the investigation will take the ‘forging definitions’ inside audience experience into consideration.

Research questions revisited

In the previous chapter, the national image issue has been discussed under the framework of information flow in the soft power prism in international relations. It is proposed that in a macro sense, the international broadcasting strategy can be interpreted as an effort to create the integrated frame of China – a happy acceptance of one's place in a system. The position taken here is that tailored discourse of a rising power like China can create the conditions for a homonomous inclusion of that discourse in an individual's symbolic world. The ability to create such conditions is indicative of soft power capacity. In the micro sense, the discourse is reflected partly in people's minds as image while the formation of image occurs within the process of framing. Thus, frame is viewed as the analytical unit. To figure out the effectiveness of the international broadcasting in promoting national image, an understanding of what the country intends to convey through its own frame, how well the media mediate the intended frames and how the targeted audience reframe the frames is necessary.

In the case of China's effort to improve its image through international broadcasting, the Research Questions of this project are as follows:

1. What kind of frames on certain stories does China intend to deliver to the world?
2. How are China's stories framed in CCTV NEWS?
 - a. How congruent are CCTV NEWS frames on certain topics to the state?
 - b. How is the framing determined by the professional performance of the news workers in the channel?
3. How congruent are CCTV NEWS frames of China with those of Australian stakeholders of China-Australia relations in the CCTV NEWS audience in Australia?
 - a. What kinds of frames of China do the Australian stakeholders of China- Australia relations entertain?

b. Does CCTV NEWS production affect the Australian frames of China and under what circumstance?

4. What role does CCTV NEWS play in China's soft power projection?

According to the interpretive/symbolic interactionist perspective, how an individual or a group understands the world or a situation and the context in which the understanding happens are the foci of inquiry (Snape and Spencer 2003). Specifically in this project, what are important are not only the frames in each stage, but also the context in which the framing occurs. The questions can be categorised at two levels. At the first level, it is about how the frames of China are constructed by both the Chinese side and the Australian side and about the role media play in their knowledge acquisition about China. Thus, the media use by the actors and their opinion on media outlets like CCTV NEWS are important factors in their media consumption. This can be achieved by the investigation of individual perspectives. In addition, to understand the context in which the framing occurs will be helpful for the understanding of individual framing. Thus, the selection of research methods for this level should try to address these aspects.

At the second level, it is the framing process on specific issues that involves the communicators, media and target audience. At this level, a proper case connecting the three sections of stakeholders will help the investigation. In addition to assuming that media plays a role in this process, how the role is played by the media through professional practice is another important factor to be considered of. Media organisations like CCTV NEWS are widely known for their state media position and are usually regarded as a propaganda tools. What are the routine operations of CCTV NEWS like and what kind of professional values do their staff hold, are questions that would influence the quality of their productions and could serve as one parameter to understand audience judgement. Observation of the operation and the opinions of staff could be effective ways to find answers for these questions.

Combining the research questions and the methodological principles mentioned above, the following aspects should be investigated in seeking the answers for the research questions: 1) the individual frames of the senders; 2) the media frames; 3) the

audience frames; and 4) the media workers' opinions and their working environment. To address these aspects, requires the investigation of specific topics which can reflect the framing dynamics among the communicator frames, media frames and audiences frames change. The selection of specific research methods, the operationalisation and the relevant issues involving trustworthiness will be discussed in following sections.

Research design

Based on the theoretical framework, the philosophical principles of methodology, and the refraction of data types (the individual frames of the senders; the media frames; the audience frames; and the media workers' opinions and their working environment), the data collection tasks include at least two levels of conceptualisation: firstly, to understand China's frames in the communicative context, it is necessary to uncover the frames and frame changes that happen during the context on a certain topic. However, to understand this, one must understand first in what circumstances this topic is framed. As mentioned in previous chapters, framing will not happen in a vacuum and will be influenced by many factors which could be under the umbrella of culture in a broader sense. Thus, these factors that may influence the framing will be identified. For example, the frames China intends to promote would usefully be influenced by an understanding of the way China is perceived by intended target audiences. This could be viewed as a parameter of their seeing the specific topics. Thus, at the first level, the general frames of China in the eyes of the Chinese, and their audience should be explored and compared. These are at the macro level of the expected research outcomes.

Secondly, in the involvement of media frames identification, the comparison of frames will be expanded to three parts: communicator, media, and audiences. Also, the media practice and professional values will help to triangulate the content investigation. In addition, what is crucial here is a specific topic. In this project, China's One Belt One Road (OBOR)¹⁰ initiative will be chosen as the case. A few factors contribute to the

¹⁰ The name of the initiative has changed slightly over the years. In September, 2015, the official English translation of the project was confirmed as 'the Belt and Road' with the abbreviation of 'B&R' by the Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce of the P.R.C. These are used in current documents and media reports. However, before that, OBOR was widely

selection: A) it is a noopolitik strategy which aims to increase China's influence not only through economic but also through cultural and discursive approaches; B) the media coverages on this topic will reflect the effectiveness of CCTV NEWS in spreading the Chinese voice as a state organ; C) the initiative has drawn a huge amount of attention over the years. This is the micro aspect of the research. The macro and micro levels of investigation are one strategy to ensure the triangulation of this research. The detailed methods and elements involved in the project will be discussed during the detailed description of methods selection and operationalisation.

In the following part, the general principles of trustworthiness, triangulation and authenticity will be addressed, followed by a section where the specific data collecting methods of in-depth interviews, observation, and case studies will be discussed and the relevant issues such as sampling, trustworthy points will be covered.

Trustworthiness through triangulation and authenticity

One important factor to measure the quality of the research in social science is the trustworthiness of the research in reflecting the world. In natural science, where the positivist approach dominates, the research deals primarily with statistic data and interpretation acquired from strictly objective empirical tests. Reliability and validity are two important measurements for evaluation of the trustworthiness in positivist approaches which ensure dependability or consistency and the truthfulness between the construct and the data. While in social science, the interpretation of phenomena is subjected to the subjectivity of the observers in the observation process and the interpretation process, especially under the constructionist perspective where investigator is usually regarded as part of the investigation. Also, the situations are not always stable over time (Neuman 2002).

The criteria that matter more for qualitative researchers are triangulation and authenticity. Triangulation is a way to stabilise data by the employment of multiple methods (Lindlof and Taylor 2010; Creswell 1994). Neuman (2002) proposed different

used in media reports including the ones analysed in this project. The initiative will be called OBOR in this project for consistency.

types of triangulation: triangulation of measures, referring to the adoption of more than one measure by researchers to see all aspects of the objects; triangulation of observers – multiplying the perspectives through the requirement of multiple researchers; triangulation of theory – using more than one theoretical perspectives in research planning and data interpretation to increase the chance of developing new ideas; triangulation of methods – using more than one method in research. In this project, due to the nature of the project, more attention will be paid to the triangulation of measures and methods. For instance, to ensure the triangulation, multiple research methods will be employed and the selection of participants will be recruited to mediate the diversity of perspectives (discussing in the following section).

Authenticity means ‘a fair, honest, and balanced account of social life from the viewpoint of someone who lives it every day’ (Neuman 2002, 171). In qualitative research, many data are from the interview of individuals or observations of a certain community. How to recount them faithfully is a challenge to researchers. This requires cautiousness in the selection of methods and the conduct of research. More details on authenticity will be addressed in details in the following sections on research methods selection.

First level data collection: Methods, conducting principles and operationalisation

Following the philosophical principles of methodology and the questions in this project, this section will talk in details about the methods used in data collection that will be employed in this project. There are three different types of data needed to answer the research questions: the frames on China’s image in China and Australia and the factors hidden behind the opinion formation, the media coverage within certain professional guidelines and the response from the audience. In-depth interviews, observation, online focus group and case studies will be used to collect the data (see figure 4.1). In-depth interviews will be used to detect the individual frames on China, on the role that media plays in their understanding of the world and the effect of media frames on target audiences; while observation will be employed to detect part of professional culture in CCTV NEWS in which the production is made. Case study aims

to compare the communicator frames, media frames and audience frames during the communication process. Online focus group use is to facilitate the understanding of audience frame change. In the following two sections, the characteristics of each method and their operationalisation will be discussed. In each part, apart from the methods itself, the relevant aspects such as the sampling, the participants' recruitment, and the operationalisation procedure will be covered where relevant.

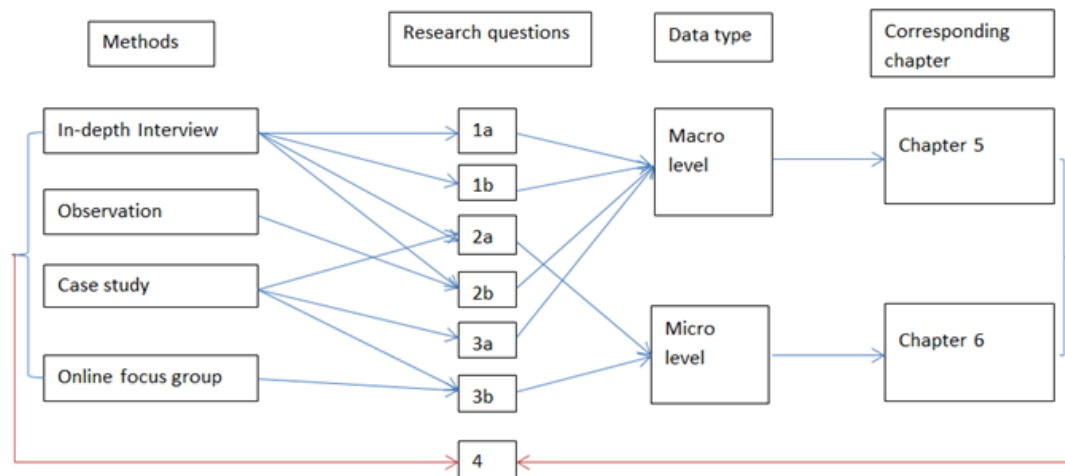


Figure 4.1. Research design

In-depth interview

One important part of data needed in this project is the frames of Chinese and Australian people on China and their possible attitude change after the TV program viewing. This goal may be achieved through a large scale survey. However, due to the research topic and the time and resources constraint, in-depth interviews will be a more efficient method to collect data on individual frames. Opinions will appear in similar types even in a large scale survey; these types can also be drawn through interviews. But in-depth interviews provide superior depth and breadth, which can better reflect the elements hiding behind the phenomenon.

Taylor and Bogdan (1998, 87) define in-depth interviewing as ‘repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed towards understanding informants’ perspective on their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words’. The method finds its theoretical roots in the interpretive traditions.

Through these interviews, the researchers aim to gain insights into certain issues with the guidance of semi-structured questions. Kvale (1996) uses the miner and traveller metaphors to describe the depth and breadth of knowledge the interviewers try to acquire through interviews from different perspectives. These metaphors reflect the nature of co-construction of knowledge between the interviewer and interviewee (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). In-depth interviews can also help to get to know the context of an individual. Usually, the insights are from an insider perspective. Interaction with the interviewee with rapport and open, empathic questions will help to achieve both the in-depth and insider perspectives (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2010).

The following features of in-depth interviewing contribute to its fitness for this project. Firstly, it combines structure with flexibility. In-depth interviews are always conducted with structured guidance, which sets out the key topics and issues. However, due to the convenience of face-to-face interaction, it allows flexible follow-up responses from the interviewer to the interviewee's response, and thus allows for full probing and exploration. Secondly, in-depth interviews are interactive in nature and, thus thirdly, the achievement of depth of answers is possible. Fourthly, the in-depth interview is generative and thoughts could be generated during the interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Ritchie et al. 2013).

The purposes of qualitative research are to gain a detailed understanding of a certain phenomenon, behaviour and beliefs, to identify socially constructed meanings of the phenomenon and the context where things happen. This not only requires a smaller number of participants so that issues can be explored in depth, but also necessitates the recruitment of participants with specific characteristics, who can best inform the research topic. Participants in qualitative research are chosen because they have particular characteristics or experiences that can contribute to a greater understanding of the phenomenon studied (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey 2010).

Purposive recruitment of participants is usually used in qualitative research by selecting people who are 'information-rich' on the study topic on purpose. These are people who have specific characteristics or experience of the study topic and can provide detailed understanding of the research issues. It is also deliberate in seeking a diverse range of participants, who can provide a variety of experiences on the study

topic. Previous research has identified four sectors in public diplomacy, including state, corporate, civil and media sectors (Chitty 2007a). And in fields like international relations, only stakeholders/intermediate experts are really concerned with certain topics. Intermediate experts are those elites with expertise in specific issue areas and are classed as being intermediate because they bridge between policy elites and the general public and are influential in policy-making processes. In addition, intermediate experts are more accessible than the statesmen who may be constrained from expressing their true opinions (Chitty 2007b; Li and Chitty 2009; Wang 2000). In this project, interview data will be collected from in-depth interviews with intermediate experts in public diplomacy (public diplomacy elites as they will be called later text) in both China and Australia with the aim of collecting data for Research Questions (RQ) 1a, 1b, 2b, 3a, 3b (details in figure 4.1).

In qualitative research, the number of participants is relatively small; the focus is on the characteristics a participant carries that meet the requirement of the research objectives. A theoretical principle employed by researchers to determine the size of participants is saturation (Glaser and Strauss 2009), where the information collected by researchers is seen at a point to become repetitive. That means the final number of participants can only be confirmed after the data collection is underway (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey 2010).

Intermediate experts, from above mentioned in China and Australia, will be identified through their visibility in contributing to the policy discourse in public organs in their countries, supplemented where necessary by a snowballing technique where selected participants may be requested to suggest others. During the interview with Australian participants, CCTV NEWS clips will be shown to the participants to observe any shifting of frames (RQ3).

Table 4.1. Questions to Chinese public diplomacy elites

| |
|--|
| 1. What do you think of China's general image in the world (mainly negative or mainly positive)? |
| 2. Do you think the outside world sees China in an objective way? |

| |
|--|
| 3. What are your impressions of China in the following topics: The general impression of China in the eyes of foreigners China's political system; China's culture; China's economy; China's science and technology |
| 4. Would there be any problem for China if images of China are negative? If yes, what are they? |
| 5. What in your mind are the objective/ truthful images of China in the spheres of politics, culture, its economy and science and technology? |
| 6. What ways do you know the Chinese government is using to promote China's image? Do you think the way/ways the Chinese government promotes the national image is effective? |
| 7. Do you think that the strategy to develop Chinese international media is an effective way to expand China's soft power? |
| 8. Have you ever watched the programs on CCTV NEWS? |
| 9. Do you think CCTV NEWS and other Chinese international media outlets, as state organs, can showcase China's image effectively? |
| 10. Do you have any suggestions to CCTV NEWS in showcasing China? |

Table 4.2. Questions to the Australian public diplomacy elites

| |
|---|
| 1. Could you tell me the general impression of China in your mind? |
| 2. Do you think you know China well? |
| 3. What are your impressions of China in the following topics The general impression of China in the eyes of foreigners China's political system; China's culture; China's economy; China's science and technology |
| 4. How do you acquire knowledge about China? |

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| 5. | What's the media's role in your understanding of China? |
| 6. | Which media do you usually use? |
| 7. | Do you watch programs by Chinese media? |
| 8. | Do you agree or disagree with the following statement about CCTV CCTV is mostly propagandists News about China by CCTV seeks to be balanced CCTV Chinese news is different to CCTV English news |
| 9. | Have you ever heard of OBOR? How much do you know about it? |
| Video Playing | |
| 10. | Did you learn more about OBOR from the video? |
| 11. | Who do you think the program targets? How about the quality, are you used to the way they presenting facts? Do you think it is the same with the Western media? |
| 12. | Does the video clip change the way you look at China on xx issue? Why or why not? |
| 13. | Do you think now CCTV NEWS could be a reliable source to learn about China? |

There are challenges and constraints in in-depth interviews as in other types of methods. To be specific in this project, the challenges lie in two areas. Firstly, the elite status of the participants' poses challenges itself. As mentioned by some scholars, many elites in politics and business receive media training on how to dodge certain questions (Harvey 2011). In addition, in countries like China, public opinion is under a certain degree of control or scrutiny. People working in certain sectors may be extremely cautious on certain topics. To overcome these potential problems and get the most truthful and accurate insights as possible, preparations will be made before the interviews on the background of the participants so that the interview can start with topics familiar to the participant, with the purpose of building trust between the interviewer and interviewee. Also, specific scenarios would be made to create resonance from the interviewees. Secondly, elite participants prefer to talk about their perspectives but might show little interest to instructed tasks such as the video clip viewing in this project. To offset this potential problem and seek triangulation, a revised focus group-online focus group will be adopted to facilitate the might be deficiency in responses.

Observation

The media culture under which the CCTV NEWS programs are made is a question that is hard to capture directly through interviews. The channel has grown into a hybrid professional culture community with staff from different countries which hold different media systems and professional values. In-depth interviews could, to certain extent, provide certain insights on how the hybrid channel works. But because of the regulations, free speech especially is under certain constraints; in a state-run organisation like CCTV, there may be restraints against certain questions. To tackle this problem and seek triangulation for the in-depth interview data, observations were conducted at the studios in Beijing and Washington DC. Observation is a data collection method which is able to understand and capture the context where the interaction occurs. It provides firsthand experience for further discovery of the working context. It might provide an opportunity to dig out new things, perspectives that people may be reluctant to discuss in interviews (Howell 2012; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). In this research, observation focused mainly on the dynamics between management staff and journalists, and Chinese and foreign staff, in deciding what would be included in the news during editorial meetings.

The sampling of observation objects belongs to theoretical sampling, which will be guided by the developing theory of the researcher (Neuman 2002). In the framing process, the media frame is usually treated as the result of a contest of multiple forces: the information source, the professional environment and the organisational orientation (D'Angelo and Kuypers 2010; Matthes 2012; Van Gorp 2007). In the case of CCTV NEWS, the ownership and the mixed professional culture as a result of the employment of foreign staff play significant roles in shaping the final production. The observation will focus on the dynamics in the newsrooms during the editorial meetings. The aim is to firstly, detect the decision-making process and secondly, seek to triangulate the interviews which may be partial and constrained because of organisational pressure.

Jotted notes will be taken during the observation for later analysis. Jotted notes are the 'short, temporary memory triggers such as words, phrases or drawings taken inconspicuously notes written in the field' (Neuman 2002, 364). The focus will be on the interaction between the journalists and the senior staff.

Additionally, for RQ2b and clarification of the details obtained from the observation, CCTV NNEWS producers and Chinese state media officials – from the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China, The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China (SCIO) and State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of The People's Republic of China (SAPPRFT) – will be selected from organisation charts. In total, one key officer from each administrative organisation, and eight professional staff from CCTV and CCTV NEWS, will be interviewed in Beijing and Washington DC between July 2015 and March 2016 during the observation is conducted. The inclusion criteria also cover the accessibility and relevant work area of the participants. These interviews will seek to uncover the frame-making process in respect of information releases about China. The interviews will be conducted with the guidance of the guide with semi-structured questions that vary with different groups. However, flexibility will be allowed when follow-up questions are needed or when confronted with difficult participants who are reluctant to answer certain question. In the latter case, questions would be asked in a scenario that is familiar to the interviewees.

Table 4.3. Questions to publicity officials and CCTV NEWS staff

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|---|
| 1. What do you think of China's general image in the world (mainly negative or mainly positive)? |
| 2. Do you think the outside world sees China in an objective way? |
| 3. Why does China need its own international media? |
| 4. Do you agree that international media outlets such as CCTV NEWS are instruments to promote soft power? If yes, how do you fulfil this role during your news selection and editing? |
| 5. How does the administrative supervision department coordinate with CCTV NEWS? |
| 6. What about CCTV NEWS' news practice is different to that in the West? |
| 7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of emphasising China's perspectives? |
| 8. What kind of principle do CCTV NEWS staff adhere to during the news editing process? |

| |
|---|
| 9. How do you understand professionalism, what are the most important values and norms in CCTV NEWS? |
| 10. What is the most important thing when you decide what kind of news to broadcast (significance of the news, national interest or audience interest)? |
| 11. What do you expect from CCTV NEWS? |

Second level data collection: Methods, conducting principles and operationalisation

The first level of this research provides a broader picture of the frames of China by Chinese and Australian public diplomacy elites, the general role played by media in their public diplomatic experience and the contextual background of the professional practice in CCTV NEWS. To go further in the investigation of the role of CCTV NEWS in promoting China's frames, a communicative process case study will be chosen for further data collection. In the case study investigation, the framing process of China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative will be analysed. A government documents on OBOR, the CCTV NEWS coverage and the audience response will be investigated. Thus three different types of data will be collected under the Meta case study: individual framing, media framing and audience framing.

Case studies

A case study is the empirical examination of a particular phenomenon with specific instance/instances. In social science, a case study usually focuses on cases with greater complexity. The principles behind the selection of cases may because of the researcher's interest or the case's 'capacity to be informative about a theory, an issue, or a larger constellation of cases' (Mabry 2008, 214). Here the reason the OBOR case is chosen is that it is a representative of China's effort in foreign policy not only in the realm of realpolitik but also the realm of noopolitik. It is firstly a comprehensive strategy in economic cooperation among the world: how the state media as the mouthpiece of the government frame reflects the mechanism of China's state-run international media in spreading the country's discourse as well as its effectiveness. Secondly, it is a long term, systematic strategy involving economy, politics, and culture

aspects etc., and thus could arouse interests among relevant countries and sectors, which is a base for audience interest.

OBOR is the short form of Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st century Maritime Silk Road, China's newest development initiative and framework, which aims to boost connectivity and cooperation among China and Eurasian countries. It was first proposed by China's president Xi Jinping in 2013. In March 2015, the guiding document *Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Belt and Road* was co-issued by China's National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China with State Council authorisation. Corresponding to the plan, two financial institutions, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Silk Road Fund were founded to support the infrastructure constructions and businesses along the areas.

The proposal of OBOR with the broad coverage of more than 60 countries in the corresponding areas has drawn great attention and debates on the initiative itself and its impact on responding areas among policy makers and academia around the globe (Wang 2015). Its supporters posit that the initiative will create business opportunities and aids in needy economies. At the same time, critics and concerns expressed by some. For example, the initiative has been regarded as China's version of the (US) Marshall Plan with the aim of seeking dominance in the neighbouring area and challenge world order, and thus calls for prudence in decisions to embrace it (Tiezzi 2014; Wade 2016).

In this case study, the discourse is about OBOR in the communicative process from communicator-China's state framing on the initiative, the media framing of it and the target audiences' responding framing. These three framings will be collected from three sources: the government document about the initiative and relevant government interpretation reflected in *Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Belt and Road*; and the media clips consisting of two 30-minute episodes of the weekly feature show *Closer to China with R.L.Kuhn*. The program 'deals with the substantive, sophisticated and sensitive issues that China faces, primarily domestically but also internationally' with the aim to 'bring the true, complex story of China to the world through candid, intimate discussions with China's thought leaders and decision makers in all sectors'. The host, Robert Kuhn, is a China political/economical commentator and has worked with

China's leaders and the Chinese government for over 20 years. He is widely known as the author of the biography of former Chinese president Jiang Zemin (CCTV.com 2014). These programs are selected because they comprehensively projected the *One Belt One Road Initiative* and provide panorama not only through detailed introduction to the initiative but also discussion on the disputes and doubts. The videos are divided into six to 10-minute clips based on the themes and will be played during the in-depth interviews with Australian target audiences. To avoid the deficit in responses in the interviews, the clips and the whole episodes of the programs are posted on a Facebook page for an online focus discussion (see next section).

Online focus group

Focus groups encompass elements of two of the main techniques used by qualitative researches: observations and interviews. Focus groups can be used to explore a specific set of issues and explore individual experiences, opinions and concerns. They can provide a more accurate perspective of social constructions of those participating. The method is perceived as a mechanism for overcoming the interviewer's bias and subjectivity in terms of beliefs and values directing the interview. Focus groups are similar to other methods in that they enable access to individual opinions and life stories; they also allow means of dealing with the 'self/other divide in the research process' (Howell 2012, 202). Focus groups allow horizontal as well as vertical interactions and even though power-plays may surface among participants, these will be more authentic than the artificial relationship between the researcher and the participants.

The possible interaction among peer participants in a focus group provides opportunity of observing natural hierarchies and their development within the group, which can provide some very rich data. Communication allows the participants to build on each other's thoughts and opinions and new perspectives may be generated through the interaction. During the interaction, individual response becomes honed and refined to a profounder level (Ritchie et al. 2013).

With the development of technology, focus groups have been conducted in various forms; for example, through *virtual focus groups* such as internet blogs which

can overcome the constraint of space (Marshall and Rossman 2014). Inspired by the comments and interactions on Facebook, a Facebook page will be created with selected CCTV NEWS clips. The participants will be initially asked to go to a link to fill in some demographic information and their general interest in and impression of China, and then back to the page to choose at least one video clip ranging from seven to 10 minutes long and then leave their takeaway frames and their opinion on how well the content was framed. The most frequently viewed videos would be deleted after more than five people comment in order to leave space for other videos.

Regarding the task of sampling of media clips and participants, as with other research methods, the sampling method used here is again purposive sampling. With this approach, the sample units are chosen for their particular characteristics which help reach the central themes (Ritchie et al. 2013). The participants were allowed to choose freely from the posted video clips.

The participants were selected by snowballing technique from the communities whose members share interests in China, such as Mandarin-teaching organisations and business associations.

Data analysis

Framing analysis

Data collection methods and procedures were articulated in the above sections. The following part will discuss how the data collected is analysed. The previous chapter identified framing analysis as the analytical unit to investigate how the information would be processed to interpret China's frames in the eyes of different beholders during the information flow process. This section will focus on the characteristics of framing analysis and how it could serve to answer the questions raised in this project.

One may question why only framing analysis is chosen, since discourse is one of the keywords in this project. There are a couple of reasons. Firstly, as analysed in the previous chapter, discourse is regarded as a macro concept in social interaction where

certain power dynamics are involved. Framing provides a more concrete analytical unit as the schema of information (Goffman, 1974). Secondly, as Pan and Kosicki (1993) learned, discourse analysis focuses too much on the structural side of issues and is usually content-free. Framing analysis can address both the structural and content issues. On the one hand, it 'recognises the ability of a text ... to define a situation, to define the issues, and to set the terms of a debate' (Tankard 2001, 96); on the other hand it also reflects the richness of discourse when a particular issue is presented in different manners. Thirdly, with the single analytical unit, the comparison of framing in the three stages of the information flow process is possible. Here a clarification of concepts is needed because of the confusion and ambiguity in framing research. For example, research on framing is always labelled in different ways, such as frame analysis (Goffman) and framing analysis. It is viewed here that framing analysis is an approach addressing broader issues than frame analysis. Frame analysis can be viewed as the deconstruction of frame components. While framing analysis covers not only the analysis of frames, but also the process and contextual elements.

In this project, how China's discourse is framed by the Chinese side (intended frames) and the audiences' side (audience frames) are investigated through the identification of individual frames and the comparison of them. How CCTV NEWS frames it is media frames. These two types of frames are similar in essence but there are differences in details. This section will identify the similarity and difference through the review of previous research on framing analysis. The reason framing analysis is adopted for further analysis of both the collected data and original media content is that it can provide a consistent unit for the comparison of the frames at different stages.

Although most framing analysis focuses on media frames, there is more than one type of frame. Frames can be classified into different types according to different criteria. Depending on the participants involved, frames can be divided into individual frames, media frames etc. In the eyes of Vreese, Peter and Semetko (2001), some frames are generic frames while others are issue-specific frames (De Vreese, Peter, and Semetko 2001; De Vreese 2005). The term generic frames can be applied to a variety of topics over time and within diverse cultural contexts and make it possible to compare different frames or frames in different topics or framing exercise in different cultures;

while issue-specific frames apply to particular topics. They can offer analysis of particular events in a detailed and specific way. In analysing news frames, Iyengar (1990) distinguishes between episodic frames and thematic frames. Episodic news frames focus on individual perspectives or specific events while thematic news frames contain information with general trends, such as the poverty rate etc., and treat issues in general contexts at the social and governmental level. Here a brief review of different models tried by former scholars will be done based on which the specific analytical framework for this project will be elaborated in next section.

Framing analysis consists of the detection of frames and the analysis of the dynamics behind them. To detect frames, the first thing that should be done is to understand what a frame is and what a frame is made of. One prominent characteristic of frame analysis is that there is no widely shared procedure and structure to conduct the analysis, like those in content or discourse analysis, because of the diversity of the definitions of frame and framing. This leaves both convenience and difficulty for performing framing analysis. Different approaches of framing analysis have been applied by different scholars based on different understanding of frame and framing.

Entman suggests that frames in the news can be examined and identified by ‘the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotypical images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments’ (Entman 1993, 52). Shah, Watts, Domke, and Fan refer to frame identification as ‘choices about language, quotations, and relevant information’ (Domke et al. 2002, 367). Tankard (2001) has categorised the frame analysis approaches into three groups according to different understanding of frame and framing: media package approach, multidimensional concept approach and the list of frames approach. The media package approach developed by Gamson and Lasch (1983) and then Gamson and Modigliani (1989) influences many models to come. They label the unit of identifying the issue as interpretive package/frame package. An interpretive package consists of frame and position. The elements reflecting the characteristics are called signatures. The signature elements are divided into framing devices which suggest integration and synthesis and reasoning devices that provide justifications or reasons for a position. Frame suggests the core organising idea consists of devices such as metaphor,

exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, visual images; and reasoning devices consist of roots, consequences and appeals to principle were identified. The issue is presented in a signature matrix. In this perspective, 'frame finds expression in latent meaning structures that are not perceived directly' (Van Corp 2007, 71). It is difficult to grasp, but possible to reconstruct from the frame process. Multidimensional concept views framing as a process involving various elements of stories, such as the gender of the writer, placement of the article, terms used to refer to certain issues, the stance on the issue, the morality orientation etc. (Swenson, 1990 cited from Tankard, 2001, 99). The list of frames approach usually makes the rules for the frame identification by following distinct steps: 1) identify the range of potential frames; 2) make a manifest list with the possible frames; 3) use devices like keywords, catchphrases and symbols to help identify the frames; 4) doing content analysis with the frames in the list as categories; and 5) coding according to the categories (pp 101-102). Tankard (2001, p. 100) suggests a list of 11 framing mechanisms or focal points for identifying and measuring news frames: (1) headlines, (2) subheads, (3) photos, (4) photo captions, (5) leads, (6) source selection, (7) quotes selection, (8) pull quotes, (9) logos, (10) statistics and charts, (11) concluding statements and paragraphs. In this approach, they define frame as '[a] central organising idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration' (Tankard et al. 1991 cited in Tankard, 2001, 100).

Another widely employed approach is the linguistic approach elaborated by Pan and Kosicki (1993), which identifies the selection and location of words and the textual structure. This approach deconstructs each news story by detecting the syntactical (the location of relevant frames in the news structure, the presentation of professional values), script (the literal and social functions embedded in news stories), thematic (addressing one issue or topic with the coverage of several events related to it) and rhetorical (stylistic choices to achieve certain effects) structures and then presents with a data matrix. This approach provides systematic and thorough analysis of news texts, but fails to make explicit logical connections among the structures that signify a frame (Matthes and Kohring 2008; Matthes 2012).

Most approaches reviewed above are for the analysis of media frames. As mentioned earlier, this project not only involves the media frame, but also the individual frames and collective frames from the government documents. Thus the selection of the analytical elements must be considered over the types of frames. For example, for the media frame, stylistic elements exist in the news text, while in the individual frame, the style is more casual. The choice of elements must be inclusive and at the same time flexible.

The operationalisation of framing analysis

From Goffman onward, numerous scholars have developed framing analysis, with the focus mostly on media frame analysis. This development contributes to both broadness and ambiguity to framing research which is reflected in the diversification of defining frames and consequently analysing them.

To do the framing analysis, the initial task should be to choose a stance from varied definitions. To figure out what a frame is Goffman's original idea is worth revisiting. Goffman assumes that when individuals attend to any current situation, the question they need to answer is: 'What is it that's going on here?' It is a process of looking at 'the camera and not what it is the camera takes pictures of' (Goffman 1974, 2). To define the object in the camera, the object itself, and the factors that influencing the effect such as light, focus...need to be considered. To detect a frame, the components should be identified as the concept of strip used by him – 'any arbitrary slice of cut from the stream of ongoing activity (p.10)'. Later scholars go further to determine the working dynamics of accentuating information through inclusion and exclusion of certain elements, thereby making certain elements more salient (Entman 1993). Cultural context is highlighted in the process of framing by many scholars (Entman 1991; 1993; Chong and Druckman 2007b; Gamson 1988). Others emphasise the role of actors/sponsors in influencing the framing where strategic measures are taken for certain effects like those in political communication (Van Corp 2007; Gamson et al. 1992).

In this study, framing analysis will be conducted by the analysis of frames and the contextual issues. Frame is formed through the salience of certain elements. Frames

at different stages could be interpreted differently by interpreters from different background. They will be identified through the detection of the components and devices. Framing could be an unconscious process as well as a strategic move by certain actors. For example, at individual level, frames usually emerge unconsciously. According to the requirement of this project and the constructive perspective held, frame will be viewed as an interpretive package with defining elements, presenting elements and the contextual elements (see figure 4.2). The defining elements consist of the theme of the frame, the position/stance it holds and the function it could have with others. The theme is about the topic or core meaning. The position/stance is the attitude embedded in the frame towards the issue it addresses. In the case of Chinese issues, the stance may be different among different actors. For example, what the Chinese side thinks positive may be negative in the eyes of Australian audiences. The function indicates the effect the frame has. It could be informative, persuasive or defensive in the case of China's government documents on OBOR and CCTV NEWS' framing of relevant issues. The presenting elements consist of devices that help highlight certain elements of an issue. It could include the syntactic and script structures used by Pan and Kosicki (1993), and other rhetorical devices like metaphor, exemplar and visual devices. The contextual elements refer to the cultural environment where the frame is formed in certain ways instead of others. It is important to figure out that not all the elements exist equally in all stages. For example, in government documents and news texts, the syntactic and rhetorical devices might be more than those in individual frames. Thus, the inductive approach will be used to identify as many frames as they emerge. Contextual elements can be identified through the analysis of institutions, the professional practice, etc.

It should be noted that individual frame is usually a subconscious reaction to the world while media framing could be strategic. Thus with similar constituents, the framing devices identified might be different. For the former, the devices may be resources of the frame formation; while for the latter, they might be tools for persuasive purpose.

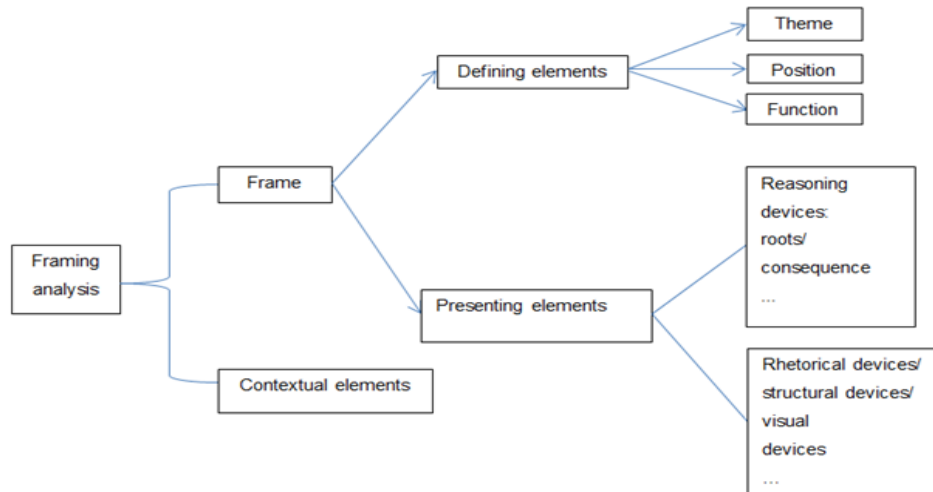


Figure 4.2. Matrix of framing analysis

Summary

This chapter has discussed the methodological issues in this research project. It started with the philosophical aspects of ontology and epistemology that determine the choice of theoretical perspective and methodology. After reviewing the research questions and the principle requirements to keep trustworthiness of research, specific data collecting methods of in-depth interview, observation, case study and online focus group discussed were identified as the main approaches in the two stages of data collection. The operationalisation and relevant issues such as sampling were discussed. Framing analysis was then reviewed as the main approach of data analysis and a matrix of framing analysis was elaborated. In the next two chapters, finding and discussions of the research will be presented, followed by a conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH FINDINGS ONE: FRAMING CHINA

Introduction

The previous chapters have clarified the research questions, theoretical frameworks and methods of this project. From this chapter on, findings will be presented, which will later be discussed and conclusions will be drawn. This chapter focuses on the frames of China in the eyes of Chinese and Australian public diplomacy elites; expectations of the Chinese on their international media role in the country's soft power projection; and Australians' media use in acquiring information related to China. Following Nye's discussion of soft power resources, and Chinese scholars' understanding of China's soft power resources, interviews with 35 Chinese and 22 Australian public diplomacy elites sought the following impressions held by them: (1) general impressions; detailed impressions on (2) economy, (3) culture, (4) political system, and (5) science and technology, which could be regarded as manifestations of Chinese virtuosity that generate soft power, following Chitty's use of the concept vis-à-vis soft power (Chitty 2017b) . The political system is however generally not attractive to those in liberal societies, but it has its admirers. Their responses have been subjected to framing analysis with framing devices being identified. Following this introduction, two sections present the frames in the five above-mentioned categories from the Chinese and Australian participants respectively, with commentary. In each frame matrix, the theme, position and framing devices are detected with the aim to discover the way framing occurs. The fourth section switches to media and findings on Australians' channels to get information about China and the Chinese side's expectations on media in expanding China's voices will be

presented first. The interview results are recorded below. The participants are coded with one letter plus a number. The letter ‘c’ stands for Chinese participants and ‘a’ for Australian participants. The numbers were allocated at random at the time of coding. The chapter ends with a brief summary.

China in the frames of the Chinese

To find out how the Chinese people frame the state, during the in-depth interviews, general impressions of China were solicited. Nye’s triad of soft power resources and Chinese scholars’ understanding of soft power resources, economy, political system, culture and science and technology which had potential to be considered as examples of Chinese virtuosity, were picked out during the interviews, to ask the participants to evaluate China under the above aspects. The main results will be presented in the following five subsections. The main opinions from participants will be quoted in italics followed by tables hosting the main framing elements. A short paragraph of analysis will be presented after the each table where there would be an exploration of cultural backgrounds of the framing.

‘Complex China frame’

The individual framing of China by Chinese public diplomacy elites demonstrated the complex results. On the question of what are the most distinct features to describe China, most participants used the word ‘complicated’. This complexity was reflected in four categories: the ambiguity in national branding, the changing context, the measurement of judgement, and the stance held by the observers.

Although a participant mentioned the 24 core socialist values proposed by the ruling party (c14), most felt that there were no clear aspirations that could define the country – like democracy and freedom used by many Western countries (c14, c21, c34). It seemed that settling on some striking and impressive descriptors for the country was not easy. Bewilderment was detected among the participants.

Another element contributing to the complexity was the rapidly changing context where the defining elements reside. For example, some participants mentioned China's image from the historical perspective by mentioning the peak moments in history; In the Tang dynasty and 17th to 18th centuries A.D., the influence of China was far reaching; there was a decline from the 19th to the 20th century, with an insular policy encountering the rapid and invasive development of the West; the opening up policy resulted in China's image being restored (a10). It was widely agreed that the situation is in flux, thus making the image hard to capture. As one participant put it:

It is like a running person, if the mirror is put in a fixed position, what one can see is only a rapid passing figure. (c12)

The complex frame of China also reflected the different judgements arrived at from consideration of different foci of measurements. For example, the leaders' closer contact with the people, the rapid economic development, and dramatic improvement of people's lives (c16, c11, c25, c35), good governance and stable social life (c17) were seen to add positivity to the judgement of the outside world. But the pollution problems, the ever increasing gap between the rich and the poor, the relative constraints in the political and cultural environments and ideological control were seen as contributing to negative perceptions. The difference lay in where one chooses or happens to look or to highlight:

In recent years, the top leaders show close contact with the people, this may be a positive factor in our national image. (c11)

The general impression of China should be becoming better and better because of our achievements in economic development and the improvement of people's life. (c25)

The position to observe is another factor contributing to the complex frame. For example, most participants agreed that the perceptions of China by Chinese people are better than perceptions from people of other countries (c12, c17) and different countries have different views due to varying relationships with China, the differences in ideology and the corresponding interpretation on certain issues (c16).

There is difference in our own perception of our country and others. Generally speaking, our own perception is better than others. (c17)

The framing devices identified under this question included exemplars, quotations of poll results and metaphor. For example, the participants mentioned the Tang dynasty and the portrait of Confucius in Voltaire's study to demonstrate the influence of China in earlier times. Contradictory perceptions are cited to illustrate the varied perceptions on China: these are positive Pakistani and negative Japanese perceptions. Different polls were referenced by participants to present different figures. The participants had concluded that the results shown by polls by China's *Global Times* and China International Publishing Group on global public opinion on China were better in general than those from BBC and Pew and that they indicated an image improvement over the years although the degree of preference varied with region.

Table 5.1. 'Complex China frame'

Table 5.1. Complex China frame

| Complexity Frame package | theme | Root | Devices | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| | The ambiguity in national branding | Traditional vs. modern-No clear position | Exemplar | Quotation | Metaphor |
| | | | -- | -- | -- |
| | The changing context | 17-18 th centuries better than 19-20 th century/ in a process of rapid changes. | Tang dynasty; Voltaire had portrait of Confucius; | National image poll by CIPG, Pew International Image poll | Lion Running person |
| | Judging from different dimensions | Good in economy/ Bad in air quality etc. | Leader's engagement with the people; pollution | -- | -- |
| Judging in the position of different beholders | Self- good/ Others different | Pakistan-good; Japan-bad | Pew poll, CIPG poll, Global Times | -- | |

'Economy frame': the main source of attraction

Many participants viewed the economy as the most attractive factor to other countries. Firstly, it was a measurable element; secondly, it sometimes could be combined

with cultural elements like food and fashion industries and thus generate attractions in other domains.

Also, economic success demonstrated the advantage of other factors, such as the political system – as one participant suggested:

The 30 years continuous growth is worthy of attention. It cannot be explained by the economy per se. Some scholars credit it to political system, political model and the approach of governance even the leadership of the communist party. So there are theories like Beijing Consensus talking about the Chinese model. This is not done by Chinese, it is by the Westerners. Although the development is slowing down, but the market size is huge, it might to a factor of attraction. (c12)

c7 echoed this point in relation to the cohesiveness the political system:

If the energy is used towards one direction, it (economy) could be an advantage because the governance and policies are stable and continuous.

But confidence could not hide the problems. Although participants were quite confident in the attractiveness of the economic development, there were problems that were mentioned, like the irrational economic structure, the modest size of per capita income, etc.:

Economy can't be ignored; it is big but not strong. (c18)

Economy is big in size. Figures show that China has surpassed US in terms of purchase power; it might surpass US quickly with the 7% growth rate versus 2%-3% in US. But China has a large population, four times of that of US. If we count the per capita income, it may need 20 more years to catch up with the US. (c21)

China lacks quite a few factors to be a strong economy, for example, Chinese currency is not an international currency, state and individuals are not getting rich simultaneously. (c14)

The economic development of China is obvious. But the economic system reform needs to continue. (c9)

There were also pessimistic views based on the structure of the economy:

I am not so optimistic for China to become the strongest economy in 2050. There are complicated elements. The quantity is impressive, but the structure is not good enough. The gap with US is not small at all. (c5)

The devices presented include exemplars and statistics within comparison

perspective (see figure. 5.2). For example, the Beijing Consensus was used by one participant to prove the influence of China's economic development model. When talking about the growth rate, figures were quoted. Also, the comparison with US is used by more than one participant when talking about speed and potential of economic development.

Table 5.2. 'Economy frame'

| | Theme | Position | Devices | | |
|------------------------|---|-----------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| | The continuous growth is obvious | Positive | Exemplar | Statistics | Comparison |
| | | | Beijing consensus | -- | -- |
| 'Economy frame' | A factor showcase the strength of other factors | Positive | -- | 7% growth rate | 2-3% in the US |
| | The market is big | Positive | -- | 1.3 billion | -- |
| | Has the potential to further development | Positive | -- | -- | -- |
| | Big in size but not strong in quality | Sceptical | currency | -- | -- |
| | Big in whole but not in per capita | Sceptical | -- | 1.3 billion | Four times of that of US |

Digging the background of the framing diversity, the responses demonstrated the relatively sober-minded evaluation on China's economic strength as a source of attraction by the participants. That might be the result of domestic publicity being diffused from a single source, making government policy well known. This may provide a clue as to why terms such as 'political system reform' and 'economic structural reforms' were quoted repeatedly by participants; they are frequently used in the public discourse conducted by the government in the media.

'Culture frame': the card of soft power?

Culture has been regarded as an ace card in China's soft power resources. For example, in *The Soft Power 30 2016* ranking, China ranked 28th in general, and culture ranked 9th, the best index among digital, enterprise, engagement, education, government, polling (Portland, 2016). The state has been using cultural soft power in discourse to emphasise the role of culture in its soft power strength. However, the participants' views on culture seemed not as confident as expected, although acknowledgements exist.

First of all, there were different understandings of where the attractions in culture resided.

For example, some participants interpreted it as the height of human civilization and emphasised the richness of its long history:

Chinese culture is one form of traditional civilization; it is a representation of eastern civilisation, tested by the long history it is where the value of Chinese culture lies. (c12)

The attraction is huge from the 5000 years accumulation of culture and history. It showcases in the ways of Chinese people's dealing with things, thinking, and architecture etc. This is obvious. (c3)

Interestingly, the mainstream discourse on China's culture inside China is always 'broad and profound', but it seemed that different opinions existed in some participants' minds, which could be seen in their use of words etc.:

I don't think China's culture is very attractive overseas. It may have certain attractiveness to some. (c11)

I think perhaps some of the foreigners are interested in China's culture but they might not be the majority. Some people may have curiosity about it. It is another thing, how much they like it. (c6)

(To say China's culture is) very attractive is inappropriate; cultural exchange may be easier than political exchange with other countries. But not all people like it. (c8)

Those functional elements of culture in which one can seek satisfaction may be attractive to others. (c7)

What element in our culture is attractive? Maybe Kong Fu, food, acrobatics, Confucius, philosophy etc. the classic things and tourism, nothing else. We think that it is broad and profound, but others might not understand that. (c5)

The above insight might partly be based on the different understanding of culture itself. Culture is a broad concept which could refer to everything in social life. This makes it hard to form a consistent view. This point was reflected in the responses of the participants.

China's cultural influence can be analysed at different levels. The most important part of culture is value system. Our core values are part of common human values,

they are universal and attractive, such as Benevolence, Righteousness, Courtesy, Wisdom and Trust (Ren, Yi, Li, Zhi, Xin), never do to others what you would not like them to do to you (Ji Suo Bu Yu, Wu Shi Yu Ren). These values provide a philosophical base, this is where the attraction of Chinese culture is. Others are the things that can be exhibited, like Taichi, food, language etc. that people may be interested in. (c12)

When we talk about restoration of traditional values, what are these, feudal monarchy? (c21)

While others held different ideas and had expressed concerns on the loss of core cultural values:

But how do we understand culture? Artworks are a good form. But the most important part of culture is values. In the film, all the values are what the Americans advocate: individualistic heroism, freedom and equality. What are the values reflected in our films, it is hard to tell. It may be clear as there are 24 terms socialist core values, but how many people can remember them? For some, we cannot achieve at present, such as socialist justice. I think Xiao (filial piety) is the core value of Chinese culture. (c14)

We need to make clear the core values and spirit domestically and cherish the culture inheritance, like its inclusiveness, expansibility and emphasis on peace. But it is very hard; look at the policy-making circles, most of them were trained overseas, what they cherish may not be our traditional culture. (c7)

Cultural attractiveness showed in the process of communication. It seemed that the communication of Chinese culture had not been satisfactory in the eyes of some participants.

The recognition on arts is high overseas. But we didn't communicate them well. The good side is we have large population which can serve as a medium. (c16)

Culture is abstract, and thus may be misunderstood. The attraction can be created. No culture has instinctive attraction to others. They may be interested in elements that proximate to their own. (c7)

In the field of cultural exchange, it is done relatively well. Like Confucius institute, the scale is large, but the depth is not enough. The intention is good, but it hasn't been rooted deeply in other countries. It is bluntly described as a channel to promote our culture in the countries that have had concerns on our behaviour, now they will think we are trying to overthrow their values with communism. On the contrary, the US understands our young people well and promotes their culture among our people in an invisible way. We have cultural products that go overseas, like the paintings, but just sold as products. The entrepreneurs are doing the jobs of artists. (c8)

Apart from the traditional elements, we have also those talents who keep pace with the times and their works and designs are on par with the world level, but they are little known. (c3)

The devices detected from the framing of China's culture include exemplars (traditional Chinese traditional values, Kung Fu, movie, Confucius Institute), depiction (the description like curiosity, not clear, impossible) and comparison (with Hollywood and US).

Table 5.3. 'Culture frame'

| 'Culture frame' | Theme | Position | Devices | | |
|------------------------|--|-----------------|-------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| | Representation of Eastern civilization | Positive | Exemplar | Depiction | Comparison |
| | | | Ren Yi Li Zhi Xin | Representation of Eastern civilization | -- |
| | Limited attraction | Sceptical | Kong Fu, movie | Curiosity/ Certain level of attraction | Hollywood |
| | Ambiguity in internal recognition | Negative | Ren Yi Li Zhi Xin, Xiao | Not clear | US |
| | Deficiency in communication | Negative | Confucius institute | impossible | Hollywood |

The unexpected lack of confidence in culture might be explained from the historical perspective. In the most recent one hundred years, the revolution, the New Cultural activities and the socialist movements almost always denied all traditional values. The adoption of Western culture before and after the opening up policy further dimmed the memory of traditional culture. In the last several decades, reflections on the loss incurred through denial of traditional culture in recent history, has led to a revival of interest in traditional culture. But how well traditional values can be restored may need the test of time.

‘Political system frame’: The best choice?

As to the question on the political system, the answers were even more unanimous than other items. The political system was generally viewed as being suitable to the situation. Most of the participants seemed to be happy with the system:

Every country has its own situation, so independent thinking is important. You can't just follow suit. China should stick to what suits the country and the people best. (c11)

The choice based on unique situations and characteristics that might not be understood by others. This may increase the difficulty for others in understanding... There is an inevitable question on what's behind the continuous growth of China's economy in the last 30 plus years. At first people talked about economics alone. But gradually, it is found out that it also has something to do with the political institutions and model, the governance even the leadership of the communist party. Traditional western political economics will draw this conclusion. That's why Beijing Consensus was raised by Remo to discuss the Chinese model. It is not the empty talk on institutional superiority, but a theoretical exploration. (c12)

Basic democratic institutions and the polity of multi-party cooperation, under the leadership of the communist party, make sure of the unity of the country. Without this, it may be another situation. Value-building is needed, otherwise, look at USSR. (c8)

Sometimes we have been too sceptical about our model. There are numerous top research institutions from Western countries that are studying China's healthcare, agriculture. We need to be confident about these and highlight achievements. (c2)

Debates about systemic problems are not rare among intellectuals and even among ordinary people, especially on social media, when incidents happen. ‘Many problems in China are caused by the existing system’ is a common narrative shared even among people working within the system. The criticism is even stronger from the outside world. Some Chinese participants harshly criticised the current Chinese system, but few were able to propose an alternative; this was especially so because they figured that the price of system change might be destabilisation of the state.

From the normative perspective, it is problematic, but from the practical perspective, the so called best system may not yield best results and vice versa. There are a lot of problems in the Chinese system, but if you merely follow the Western model, it might not work. Reform is necessary, but cannot be done in a hurry. No one can afford the consequence if hasty reform is adopted. (c5)

Of course it faces difficulties, but we have a complicated situation comparing with others. (c12)

Stability is very important, the African journalists I work with think that the very parts of China that are deserving of their study are its stability and [its ability] to develop within a stable environment. It is incredible for China to keep its own stability in such a disturbing world. Pakistani journalists also said Chinese people are amazing to concentrate on development in such a chaotic world. (c16)

It is a relatively effective system at present, it is not perfect. China has many problems, but the situation is special. (c9)

Despite the suitability with the country's situation, few respondents thought the system to be attractive to others despite the quotation of measures of admiration from some third world countries in one case. Interestingly, one participant refused to comment because she thought that the question was not reasonable:

The American system may not be completely suitable for the US, so it is in China where some parts work well but others may not. From the perspective of national branding, some harsh criticism on China is just because of ideological difference and that people in other countries do not understand China's situation and culture. (c3)

The devices embedded the frames of participants mainly include exemplar, depiction and quotation. For example, the Beijing consensus and the collapse of the socialist system of the USSR are mentioned as exemplars. When China was mentioned, adjectives such as special and complicated were used repeatedly by participants.

Table 5.4. 'Political system frame'

| | Theme | Position | Devices | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|--|-------------|---|
| | The choice of special and complicated | Positive | Exemplar | Depiction | Quotation |
| | | | Economic development/ Beijing consensus | special | African journalists; Pakistani journalists |
| 'Political system frame' | Not perfect | Understanding | USSR | complicated | -- |

China is well-known for its ideological and speech control. Participants at discussions on political system may have been influenced by this. But many participants expressed their understanding of the nature of academic research and the anonymous nature of data collection after human ethics protocols were explained to them. A couple of participants did forbid the use of recording devices in advance. Perhaps the answers could be seen as the majority view on the issue. The Pew polls revealed that Chinese perception of their own country is exceptionally positive (PewGlobal 2008-2014), which is congruent with the majority positive responses. In addition, about one-sixth of the participants in the current study have experiences of studying overseas and are aware of the political advantages and disadvantages of both China and the second societies. Their responses demonstrate that although they do not think China's political system is flawless; their consenting to it is not unlikely.

'Science and technology frame'

Science and technology (S&T) has become one of China's fastest growing fields in recent years. In the *2014 China National Image Global Survey* jointly conducted by the Centre for International Communication Studies under China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration, British multinational market research firm Millward Brown and global online survey company Lightspeed GMI, the average positive evaluations of China's S&T innovation capacity is 64%; in BRICS countries, the average figure was above 80% with the highest of 90%. Similarly, some participants expressed their confidence in S&T development.

China's investment in S&T is the third in the world now. The number of workers in research and development, and the patent placement are both the 2nd in the world. This is a bonus of economic development. (c10)

I am confident in China's S&T. They are on the right track. Our scientist got the Nobel Prize last year and President Xi highlighted that at his New Year Speech. The government attaches importance to that and Chinese people never lack the ability of innovation and research. Although the investment cannot always be satisfactory, Chinese people are dedicated. We can see that in the recent Consumer Electronics Show (2016), one third of the products exhibited were made in China. (c7)

Again, large population, state support, and market size were viewed as the most important incentive factors for S &T development:

China has a large population size. Implementation is quick; central control allows people to practice creativity, innovation etc., and [in a] large population [its] very easy for things to come out. There are a lot of Chinese internet entrepreneurs; they are not hampered by systems and processes and bureaucracy. I think that's a positive thing to yield creativity and innovation. (c27)

Scepticism also existed among a small number of participants. For example, c5 thought the gap between China's S & T and that of the US was huge (although the pace of development was fast) depending mainly on cloning with very few genuine innovations. Core technologies were seen as rarely being developed in China, e.g., the engine of passenger planes could not be made domestically; essential parts needed to be imported, in many industries.

More problems such as industrial transformation capacity, and capital-chasing behaviour by entrepreneurs, and intelligence protection were also mentioned by participants:

S&T is stressed by policy making level. But the transformation to industry is weak. And some core technologies are still weak, like automobile engines and software for computers. It is not the problem of policy, but the short-sightedness of entrepreneurs. (c8)

The speed is good. The problem lies in the innovation and intelligence protection. (c11)

The framing devices included exemplar, statistics and metaphor (see table 5.5).

Table 5.5. 'Science & Technology frame'

| | Theme | Position | Devices | | |
|--|--------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| | Fast developing | Positive | Exemplar | Statistics | Metaphor |
| | | | Consumer Electronics Show | 2 nd , 3 rd | -- |
| 'Science & Technology capacity frame' | Lack of innovation | Sceptical | Engines; Software | | Clone |

China in the frames of the Australian public diplomacy elites

Australian frames of China, like the Chinese frames, were analysed in both general and specific sense, within a matrix of commentary. The general frames of China in the Australian participants' minds demonstrated complexity as among Chinese participants, in spite of the differences in details. It needs to be mentioned that all Australian participants showed a certain degree of understanding of China through their various experiences. All of them had visited China at least once. Some had become acquainted with China through travel, media and friends or family members; some had, either at the time of the interview or earlier, regular business interactions with Chinese organisations; four had China-related topics as their areas of research expertise. Some of the participants' first visits to China went as far back as the 1970s, before China's Opening Up policy was adopted. The main opinions from participants will be quoted in italics followed by tables with main framing elements. A short paragraph of analysis will be presented after the each table where applicable as the exploration of cultural backgrounds of the framing.

'Complex China frame'

Firstly, there were some aspects that enjoyed clearly favourable reception, such as a long history replete with colourful cultural treasure (a17, a20), industrious, kind and rational people (a14, a21, a1, a11, a12, a13), abundance of opportunities, impressive cities, unbelievable changes thanks to rapid economic development (a1, a15, a11, a12, a13), delicious food and beautiful scenery (a5) and diversity (a9).

If you look at the way in the world, a lot of people seem [to be] going mad, like Trump, lack rationality, so are the protesters. I don't see this in China, in China people seem to be very rational. (a14)

China is a huge country, with a long history and many people. (a17)

The attractive part of China for me is its tradition and culture, rich culture treasure. (a20)

The positive part of China is that people are very industrious, want to do well, (a21)

In China there are lots of opportunity, very cultural, food, cultural connections and background. (a11)

I love China, its people, culture, beautiful scenery, impressive cities like Shanghai, Beijing. There are huge, unbelievable changes. (a1)

Variations among the people and places are remarkable. (a17)

The most impressive part of China for me is its diversity. (a9)

Also, some negative aspects were clearly identified from the Australian perspective: for example, the environmental issues (a19), the trials around human rights issues and imprisonment of dissenters (a5), political system (a20), more aggressive and bullying posture on issues such as South China Sea (a8), and the limitation of individual rights (a7).

Environmental damage is a huge problem. (a17)

My worst impression about China is its pollution. (a19)

Political system, from a West[ern] point of view, may be problematic. (a20)

From my perspective, what is uneasy is that people don't always have the opportunities to be individuals. (a7)

One scholar explained that the emphasis on humanity in Chinese culture – the dependency on the benignity and rectitude of the ruler rather than laws and law enforcement – is difficult for Australians, who have a good framework of laws, to accept.

For me one of the difficult things to come to terms with in Chinese culture is its emphasis on humanity rather than discipline or laws. You know in history, Chinese always said if you have a good ruler then the country will be in good order, everything will be good, it all comes from the goodness of the ruler, whereas in the West we tend to think if you have a good government, if you have a good frameworks of laws, if everything is orderly then it is more important than the person. (a2)

A former diplomat turned scholar thought the Chinese logic to be problematic and difficult to apply to many situations, as in the dispute of South China Sea, the Chinese diplomatic discourse has always been that it has been China's territory since ancient times

and that China had maps to support its claim. 'Others may have maps as well; you need to convince people through detailed and logical evidence' he said (a6).

The general impression reflected some widely recognised problems both among the Chinese and Australian participants. But most aspects fell into the disputed realms not only with the Chinese but within the Australians. The most salient trends were:

The people vs. government division

A very common statement on their impression on China among Australian people was that the people are good, but the government is not. As mentioned above, people were regarded as one positive factor by some participants.

My observation is that, when I talk with Westerners about Chinese as people, they are usually quite positive. They are more positive than they were because they think the Chinese are fitting into the society well. Some other communities don't fit in the western society; they keep to their own traditions. (a11)

I have an overwhelmingly positive view on Chinese people. So [my criticisms] are nothing against Chinese people, it's against the way in which political and economic direction is headed. (a1)

However, the Chinese people were not always shown in a positive light. For example, those who encountered negative behaviour of certain groups had adopted a negative impression.

[Chinese people] lack public etiquette. (a17)

Chinese people are queue-jumping, loud, and chaotic. (a18)

Having wealth, they don't know how to behave. They don't know how to treat other people in a global community with compassion and respect, but still talk about how much money you've got. There are growing immigrants and a lot of Chinese students coming to Australia to study and I think that's great; the problem is that they live in communities but seldom interact with locals. International relations are starting with grass roots people. If people understand people, it will make things much easier. (a3)

Participant a8 sensed the aggressiveness in the Chinese attitude in international relations in his encounters.

In 2008, Kevin Rudd gave a speech at Peking University. There was a very articulate Chinese student commenting on Rudd's speech saying that even though he studied China, had been working in China for a long time, knew about a great deal about China and use idioms in his speech, she said that he is not Chinese, he doesn't love China, there is no reason for us (the Chinese) to listen to his comments or criticism about Chinese circumstances; and as far as she was concerned, that was the end of discussion. Many of her contemporaries share the same horrible nationalistic attitude. Since then, my impression about China changed from positive to concerned.

Another characteristic of Australians' impressions of China was the different levels of concern and scepticism they expressed. In addition to concerns on the nationalistic attitude among the young people as expressed by a8, there were other concerns that were embedded in a variety of contexts ranging from the possible threat China presents to neighbouring countries to the rise of Chinese issues in domestic politics.

I think people in countries like Australia do have human rights concerns in China and also they have concerns for the environment. But I think that the view is on balance positive, when I say on balance, obviously, some Australians do have anti-China views but also balanced views that are positive. (a15)

[We are]) anxious that China can get too powerful and will be pursuing its own satisfaction over others. (a16)

While acknowledging the economic success, concerns were also expressed by some participants on future prospects because of different internal problems they learnt about through various channels.

... but you know there are substantial problems, different problems perhaps to the West, but substantial problems, and it has some human rights issues they have to deal with. [The substantial problem] I suppose in the top of my head I would say is how to cope with 'only having had one child' policy for a long time, perhaps there are some social issues we in the west don't hear much about. This is my impression, mainly, maybe wrong, the dismissal perhaps, of having daughters so there are too many men in China, that brings social problems; but also pollution and things like that, very fast growth they are not managing, or they are trying very hard to manage both pollution, and also how to deal with energy in future. Then I guess politically I certainly don't see it as evil empire in any way but it's still a one-party system and they don't have a free vote. (a21)

We have concerns on the strong China, on other strong countries as well. It was unilateral strength; that has problems. It will always be a problem with US relationship and China; it always plays in that context, like South China Sea, whatever. If the US weakens, and China strengthens, you know the world have to adjust to that. (a7)

We've seen 2 million manufacturing jobs lost in 3 years. There are more protests taking place; ... the anti-corruption drive against tigers and flies is important but it be used politically against political enemies. (a1)

Interestingly, the above comments all came along with the prospect of China's rise economically and politically in world stage with the rhetoric of 'yes, it has been very successful/it may become one of the strongest economies, but there are problems'. This may indicate the lack of confidence or the existence of scepticism in China's future development which has resulted from the information they acquired from different channels. The conclusions varied dramatically when evaluated from different perspectives. This phenomenon reflected in the different perspectives of interpretation of the same issue indicates the participants' information source preferences. In other words, the Chinese found comfort in the state media information which mainly focuses on positive issues, while the Australian participants favoured Western media, which prefers to believe the pessimistic side. This may be further evidence for selective exposure theory which indicates that individuals tend to believe or access the information that reinforces their pre-existing views, while avoiding contradictory information (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1968). This in turn will reinforce their sceptical judgement.

'Economy frame'

The 'economy frames' on China also reflected multi-faceted receptions from the Australian public diplomacy elites. On the one hand, some participants acknowledged that economic success had won for China much admiration. On the other hand, concerns had been expressed over the potential threat and uncertainty in world order as a consequence of China's economic rise. Some participants' knowledge of China's economic development was very direct and focused on the achievements. For example:

China is going to overtake the US; power is shifting in China's favour; I think there's still a lot of admiration for China's rise economically. (a14)

It (China) is a world leader economically already. (a2)

China is a great power. With 1.3 billion people and the economy which is the second largest in the world, you cannot not be a great power. Whether you want to exercise your power, militarily or some other way, that's a different issue. But at the moment China is no doubt a great power; I mean it is the second largest economy. (a1)

However, not all participants had confidence in the prospect, because of the distrust of the Chinese way of economic operation.

I thought if China sticks to what they had undertaken in the last 30 plus years, which means keeping the market open and free, this will be something that would place China in a growth trajectory, which would leave the West's economy behind. But now China is going to take the other direction (the increase of central planning), I think it's very disappointing. We've seen 2 million manufacturing job losses in 3 years. (a1)

It's [China's economy becoming the world largest] going to happen. The issue is whether the growth can be continuing, but I would expect that. (a7)

Concern about the political system was also an element that instilled distrust in economic cooperation with China. As was expressed by participant a21, a renowned economic journalist in Australia:

I do think that people are worried about it, you know if you are a business person ... and you know we had a number of Australians thrown into jail in China and sort of left there without charge, so that makes people nervous I think. Again this is the level of distrust. So if we do this fantastic business with you, will I end up in jail? Of course some of the people have done the wrong thing, and that's probably the source of that, but to be in jail for months without trial as a foreigner, that's very hard for Australians to stomach. If you spoke to Blackmore's CEO, she would say nothing but superbly positive things, she loves China. Some of the businessmen benefit so much from their relationship with China, and Australia has benefited from it, Australia as a country has hugely benefitted from the relationship with China. But there is still a low level of scepticism and I think suspicion is too strong a word, maybe angst. (a21)

China's increasing presence in Australia was another factor that made them feel insecure about many things they used to be very familiar with.

Yes, there could be a lot more cooperation, but also a kind of nervousness around China buying our agricultural land which we were using to produce food, cattle ranches, ports, mines, and all that kind of thing. So China has changed the way it invests in Australia slightly. I do see that in Australia there would be a level of mistrust of China or maybe that's even too strong a word, it's not knowing whether we should be mistrustful, it's not knowing whether we can trust them to be a great trading partner and a friend, or are there other designs. (a21)

I am not sure if China offers to potential partners [an opportunity] to build cooperative relationships in two-way exchange. (a8)

However, participant a14, a scholar who regularly taught in China's top universities, was quite comfortable with Chinese economic operations. He analysed the concern, even hostility, towards China, as bias and even jealousy.

Economically, the West tends to be very sceptical; they think their way of doing of economics is the best. And I think there's an amount of bias. [There's] another thing that's very difficult to deal with: I think it's a kind of jealousy. You see in the big picture, hundreds of year, what's happening now is that China is rising, the West may still be rising, but it's not rising as quickly as China, but the long term trend is that the balance of power, the balance of economic forces is changing in China's favour and if that goes on and on and on, China will rise and the West will decline, and China will become No.1 and the West will become No.2. So a lot of Westerners don't like that. It's not surprising, is it? If you are No.1, you don't want to be No.2. (a14)

The framing devices detected in 'economy frame' include exemplar, depiction and statistics.

Table 5.6. 'Economy frame'

| 'Economy frame' | theme | Position | Devices | | |
|------------------------|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | Huge achievement/ Bright prospect | Acceptance/ admiration | Exemplar | Depiction | Statistics |
| | | | -- | 2 nd largest/ admiration | 1.3 billion people/ 2 nd largest |
| | Uncertain prospect | Suspicion | job loss/ protest increase | Disappointing | 2 million job losses |
| | Australian's concern about a rising China | Concern | Businessmen thrown in jail | Concern/ Suspicion/ Distrust/angst | -- |

'Culture frame'

Frames of Chinese culture in Australian public diplomacy elites' eyes reflected diversity because of the background differentiation of the participants. Firstly, the profound and historical reputation is well known. For example, the most mentioned

adjectives and phrases relating to Chinese culture included: appealing, interesting, diverse, cultural treasure, fantastic and rich (a10, a12, a15, a20, a21, a9).

Beyond the impression, there was the multi-layered recognition in terms of both the access to and the nature of culture per se. Culture can be the physical artefacts, the behaviour and the tradition and values, of a society. Participants' opinions have reflected some of these elements respectively because of their own experiences.

For many, culture meant delicious food and hospitable people:

Chinese food is charming; I have a very positive view on that. (a7)

One of the things I always enjoy about, my interest in Chinese things is that I can travel any part of the world and could meet people with shared interests about China. In Europe, US, etc., I can go to the museum see the Chinese architecture; I can go to a town and eat at a Chinese restaurant. These are the great resources of Chinese soft power. (a8)

China's culture has an attractive part, I guess, I travel a lot in the country, Chinese people are very friendly, very hospitable. (a5)

While for a21, a5, a2, culture meant the historical and philosophical heritage:

I have to say I don't know enough about Chinese culture but in the past millennium it has been a fantastically rich culture. Perhaps that [became] subdued a bit in the past hundreds of years and now I see it's coming out so I am a supporter of that. (a21)

I think the most positive part of China is that China's culture and philosophy have been very strong in history, and Australia has a lot to benefit from bringing two different cultures and philosophies, ways of life together. I believe if you bring together two different ideas or two different cultures, it would be a great source of energy. (a2)

Some traditional values received positive comments, although they were different to participants' own values and ethics, like Chinese filial piety, the Chinese collectivist family and the Chinese work ethic.

I used to not like the fact that parents got to work and leave their children to their grandparents. But now I begin to think it is a nice thing because I think it is one way people get respect for the elderly. (a4)

While for a3, a third generation immigrant with Chinese origins, culture was seen as the people's public behaviour, which was not necessarily a positive resource for China:

I think the issue with its culture, is behaviour, it's how people behave in business, how they behave with wealth, how they behave towards other people. I think that Chinese people have ..., their economy has changed quite quickly for some people and I think that because they used to have been struggling, now they've got money, they don't know how to behave like countries that have had wealth for many years. So I don't think it's a matter of [whether] culture is good or bad; it's about behaviour, behaving ethically in business; behaving in a way that is authentic and in line with people they are cooperating with. Sometimes I don't think that Chinese people would do that, maybe that's the aspect of their culture that impedes it, like saving face and all those sorts of things. (a3)

a7's observation echoed the comment by the bizarre behaviour he heard of from friends, like Chinese people buying houses with one million dollars cash.

One striking feature in the context of the 'culture frame' was that Australia was seen as a multicultural country which had access to many cultures. In addition, it had intrinsic connections with Western countries. As a result, Chinese culture might not have been viewed as being as unique as many Chinese might have expected.

We are so dominated by American culture; since 1950s when television came and Australia saw every bit of American popular culture. They have the same sort of Western democratic kind of tradition. (a21)

So I think Australia has an enormous advantage (to integrating different cultures) because where we are in the world, our neighbours are the Pacific islands, New Guinea, Indonesia, South East Asia, China, Japan, Korea, India, all these different friends have intellectual traditions and we are in the middle of that, very exciting. (a2)

Various parts of Chinese culture are very similar to [those of] other countries, like the importance of family values. I think these values are embedded in other countries as well. But I think the general cultural norms of Chinese society are similar to many societies. (a3)

Like any culture, it has its charming aspects – like every culture. (a9)

China has been promoting its culture through various channels, including organisations like the Confucius Institute. But in some participants' eyes, these were not working efficiently in getting people to know about China's culture and thus there was still a demand for learning more.

[Cultural diplomacy] - It's clearly not working. If the Chinese government brings a song and dance group to perform here, almost all people who go are Chinese. I personally have no problem with organisations like the Confucius Institute. The problems with it in my opinion are not a problem of the Chinese, they are the fault of business bodies who know nothing, very often, or some Chinese who have their own interests. What do they do? They teach Tai Chi, fan dancing , teach people how to make Jiaozi etc., but I am going to say if they make any popular academic cultural lectures, like Chinese Science and Technology History or about the poet Tao Yuanming, and other topics... there are hundreds of thousands of subjects, that would be more attractive. (a6)

To tell you the truth, if there is a dance troupe visiting the Opera House from China, I don't rush to see it, because maybe I don't understand that well enough so I don't see if I enjoy it much, but I probably should go and have a look, as my cultural knowledge, I would say, is limited. But the impression is it is also coming along but perhaps China has encouraged from national point of view, business and investment more than they have culture. They really should increase their presence. (a21)

Table 5.7. 'Culture frame'

| ‘Culture frame’ | Theme | Position | Devices | | |
|-----------------|---|----------|--|---|--------------------------|
| | Attractive aspects | Positive | Exemplar | Depiction | Comparison |
| | | | Food/ History | Appealing/ Very positive view | -- |
| | Multi-layers of cultural elements | Mixed | Behaviour-buying house with cash/ Tradition-family connection | Friendly, hospitable/ Benefit a lot/ Strong/fantastically rich | Hollywood |
| | Appreciated within multicultural background | Mutual | -- | Has its charming aspects like every culture/similar to many societies | US/Korea/Pacific islands |
| | Inefficiency in communication | Negative | Confucius institute | Clearly not working | -- |

‘Political system frame’: Diversified

Frames on China’s political system were also diversified in the Australian public diplomacy elites’ eyes. Being used to the democratic system, China’s political system was definitely not considered by them to be an attractive one that could be an exemplar. But a certain degree of acceptance existed among some because of the current dilemma facing Western democracies and discouragement from the countries struggling towards democratisation.

I believe in democracy, but if you look around the world, it’s very difficult to say you must have the same political system everywhere. But it’s also very difficult to say that democracy works very well everywhere. I’ll just make 2 points on this: if you look at Arab Spring that began in 2011, it is run by people loving democracy, but look at the result, and it’s terrible. In Tunisia, it is fine; but look at Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. The other point, if you look at the West, which loves democracy for example, in Australia, it is a good place to live; I don’t think our political system is very good. It is terrible the way all the leaders have been thrown out. Moreover, they’ve done surveys, and the young people don’t think democracy is very good. But in China, many people say they like their system very much. It might be because they don’t say otherwise because of the supervision, that maybe true, but I do think some people like their system. Our system is a good system, but I don’t think it is the best. I think some people, like the Americans, tend to say our system is good, yours are wrong, so you should follow us, they often do that. But it is not necessarily true. (a14)

I am not sure democracy is the best choice. In US democracy, most people don't vote. Look at our democracy; we have had five Prime Ministers in how many [seven] years, so it's a different way [with its own problems]; the proposal of the new airport and the train line, it takes forever. (a4)

Almost everybody says the system is very bad; the worse thing is they've got no alternative. I don't think the system here is quite good. Look at Brexit, Trump, France, every system has its own problems. The good thing here is that Australia is a rich country and children are going to do what they want, you have personally freedom. But now in China your generation has so much personal freedom compared with your parents. What ordinary people are talking is about corruption, no so much about communism. (a6)

Some found legitimacy in the China political system to arise from the demands of the country’s immense size and complex situation, although this was not for some to admit.

[Is the political system suitable for the situation?]... there is probably something true in that, it is such a large country, one that would be very hard to govern in a fragmented way. (a15)

I moderately agree that China's current system is suitable to the situation. It's developing. A lot of people [in China] don't have the knowledge to run [affairs] in a democratic way. Like in stock market, people buy stocks according to the person who are standing next to them. You got government structures to move them along, but you have a large population who don't understand, only small population who do understand. So I think China may need things that are very tightly structured until the economy increases and you've got most people [being] rich. (a27)

It's a big nation, it's gone through some big battles politically and historically, and it's very hard to drive intensive economic progress and intensive social change particularly the growth of all those new big cities without a government that can just be totally focused, so I can understand that most people in China think the current political system is suitable to the country. It's made impressive outcomes. (a7)

China's political system can be a positive resource, we are seeing in the West now the increase in protectionism and insularity, people are looking in and want to exclude the others and the vision in politics makes it very difficult for the political class to do what they believe in the best interest of their country. But in China where political opposition is not a problem, so favourably, the opportunity for the political class to carry out positive reforms is very considerable. The problem is it can also be negative. This is the problem at the moment. So I say that it's in balance. But there are tremendous potentials there for soft power. (a8)

I don't have a strong view that [it] is not suitable. Managing 1.4 billion people is always going to be a difficult job. (a9)

There are so many people. I used to be dogmatic about those sorts of things – freedom of speech is always No.1, but when you look at it from the Chinese point of view, you can understand the speech controls, in order to achieve economically. (a7)

There were doubts about the one-party system in which the concentration of power may lead to misuse of power, the potential of decision-making mistakes or the over-reaching of power in areas such as the economy, where according to one participant's liberal belief, the market always has the best solution. This doubt extends its shadow on to perceptions of China's ability to play significant roles on the international stage. Significant concerns about the political system were also seen to reside in the individual rights issues often found in specific cases under the communist system.

My view is that to have a communist system, we [need to] know we saw the sins the communism system commits, not necessarily in China. (a21)

I think China has more problems with putting those in prison for what they believe. But things probably have to change because of the internet; technology; people are travelling; people are getting to know what it is like overseas; people are getting wealthier; when people get wealthier, they get more demanding and I guess systems have to change as well. But maybe that's Asian culture that has a different view of freedom. I think China emphasises economy before politics. (a4)

[If] China wants to become a global power, it has to become more responsible – treat its citizens with a little bit more respect, it has to have rule of law that is fair. I think with the middle class becoming richer, they will expect that from the government and the government will change, too. China will change; you can't have a wealthy middle class and not have that middle class expect more say and power. Perhaps it is like Singapore; Singaporeans are prepared to sacrifice some civil rights and democratic freedoms for a stable and wealthy life. China will probably follow that model [rather] than [the] Australian model. Probably it won't be a democracy like Australia, but a democracy like Singapore might be possible. (a5)

From my perspective, what [makes me] uneasy is that people don't always have the opportunities to be individuals. (a7)

The framing devices detected from the frames include exemplars, depiction and comparison. (See table 5.8)

Table 5.8. 'Political system frame'

| | Theme | Position | Devices | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | Cautious acceptance | Acceptance | Exemplar | Depiction | Comparison |
| | | | Economic development/ People's satisfaction | It's also very difficult to say that democracy works very well everywhere. But in China, many people say they like their system very much. | China's social stability vs. Arab Spring/ China's rapid speed vs. Australian Prime Minister swaps & public decision inefficiency |
| 'Political system frame' | Different level of suspicions | Concern/ Suspicion/ angst | Centralisation of power/ Arrest of dissents and business person | Concern/ Scepticism/ angst | China vs. Australia vs. Singapore on individual rights |

It is worth mentioning that the starting point of both Chinese and Australian participants seems to be the comfort zone of their own familiar political environment. For the Chinese, radical change may not be a wise choice because democracies have their own problems, and evolutionary reform through continuous progress would be preferable. While for the Australian side, the Chinese political system is a problematic one, no matter what improvements have been and will be made under the current system.

‘Science and technology frame’

As for frames on other issues, the Australian frames on China’s S&T were also multi-faceted and different in judgement based on participants’ own experience or second-hand sources. For example, those who had direct experiences with Chinese mobile phones and high-speed trains were quite impressed with them:

Chinese technology in internet is becoming the best in the world; in many areas, they surpass anywhere in the world, and are leading the world. (a10)

My impression with China’s technology like high-speed trains is [that it is] efficient, fast, and modern. (a12)

I am amazed at China's ability for rapid and at the same long-time development over time; also the complexity and depth at telecommunications, like Huawei, Alibaba, and other massive companies. (a7)

Participant a1 quoted the statistics to confirm China’s achievement in S&T: China ranked No.2 in S &T investment; No. 3 in innovation and lodgement of patents.

Participant a3 attributed the development of S & T to the large population and China’s simplified procedures:

I think China’s S&T may have a chance to be stronger due to the large size of population. Another thing which I thought is fantastic, that is if you have an idea, you can do it pretty quickly in China, because there isn’t the sort of controls, [like] say [in] a country like Australia. We have got to go through this authority, that authority. I think being able to do that, it actually allows people to practice creativity, innovation etc. and I think with the large population, the way things are [easy] and how it is very easy just coming out with something new. I mean if you look at some of the technology entrepreneurs, some of the web entrepreneurs etc., a lot of them are Chinese. And I think it’s just not hampered by systems and

processes and bureaucracy. I think actually that's a positive thing to yielding creativity and innovation. (a3)

Again, there were concerns in this area for the possible generation of soft power attractions. For example, a8 commented:

I am not sure how much trust [there is] in both directions for technology and information transfer. China certainly developed a space program, all of the other things and technology areas at very rapid rates. But I am not sure how much China offers to potential partners to build cooperative relationships in two way exchange. It seems that China is very keen to operate high technology hacking facilities and intellectual espionage, these kinds of issues seem to be giving rise to potential conflict, it's not the way to building improved cooperation. (a8)

Framing devices detected in this frame include exemplar, depiction and statistics:

Table 5.9 'Science and technology frame'

| 'S&T frame' | Theme | Position | Devices | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| | Acknowledgement of achievements | positive | Exemplar | Depiction | Statistics |
| | | | High-speed train/ Huawei/Alibaba | becoming best in the world/ leading the world | China ranks No.2 in S &T investment; No. 3 in innovation and lodgement of patents |
| | Different level of suspicions | Concerns/ suspicion | Intellectual espionage | Not sure how much trust in both directions | -- |

The role of media

The above framing analysis of public elites' framing of China in different aspects reveals quite different perceptions on each topic. These differences come partly from the difference in experiences and channels of China related information. It is obvious that for those Australians who had experience with certain topics, the judgement came more from their experiences. For example, with people who have first-hand interactions with

Chinese people or Chinese technologies, like high-speed trains or internet products, their narrative of relevant topics tends to be based on feelings. While for those abstract topics or those individuals have no direct experience with China, their judgement always come from certain media. For example, high technology espionage and imprisonment of dissenters are stories often covered by Western media and at the same time are where the bias lies in Chinese eyes, because of the highlights in these stories. In this section, findings on the Chinese expectations of the media push, and the Australian participants' media usage habits, will be discussed in two subsections.

Chinese expectation on media push

This section will begin with a discussion of interviews with the Chinese public diplomacy elites, especially journalists' views of Western media coverage of China and their corresponding expectations on China's international media push.

As mentioned in chapter 2, a perception of biased perception by others, especially reflected in press coverage, is one of the most important reasons for China to develop its own international media. The public diplomacy elites' understanding on the issue will offer a channel to further understand the logic behind the state's international communication strategy. The interview results with the Chinese public diplomacy elites showed diversified understanding of the issue. For some, there were always certain unfavourable discourses from press coverage:

There are always biased coverages of China in the Western media; it is obvious, especially on issues such as polity, human rights, freedom of speech and South China Sea. Sometimes, as media people, we feel very angry. For example, the 3.14 incident targeting ordinary citizens (the riots happened in Lhasa in 2008), was described by many Western media as heroic protests; CNN even used fake pictures. But we always cover terrorist attacks which happened in their countries, such as the Boston Marathon Bombing as terrorist attacks; never tried to justify the evil attacks on civilians. I am not saying we are perfect in all these issues; China has a lot of problems; with such a large population, so complicated a situation, China cannot solve all the problems at once; I think many Westerners just ignore the efforts we are making – the government is endeavouring, the people are endeavouring; a sound civil society is forming gradually. (c18)

[Much negative reporting on China] is not just bias, but on purpose – to discredit. They are telling the world China is bad; China's overseas business activities are with no good intention. (c2)

As a media worker, I think there is much biased coverage on China in Western media. For example, on the issue of RMB devaluation, they are unanimously against China and leave the impression that China will collapse soon. (c13)

Even our undergraduate students can come to the conclusion through simple content analysis of the so called mainstream Western media coverage that they are discrediting China. (c19)

The discourse context is unfair to China. There are many state-funded media outlets, BBC is one of them. When others entered the market, no one judged them on that; but when we enter the market, everyone is talking about state-funding, suddenly it became a problem. (c6)

Sometimes the positive reporting is increasing, but at crucial moments, on the important political and diplomatic issues, the bias is still obvious. (c10)

Some participants viewed the non-objective media coverage as misunderstanding caused by cultural and ideological difference, or sometimes the source of their information.

The judgement of other countries on China is always based on their own value outlook; it is not appropriate; the main reason may be the limitation of their information resource. (c3)

No one is perfect. Sometimes the bias is caused by the difference in cultural background. (c6)

Little reportage on China is objective. It is because the ideological intentions of others and the weakness of our communication power. (c8)

Their people won't read it if they cover only good things. A US correspondent said, after he had lived in China over 30 years, he found out that the foreigners are not misunderstanding China, they just don't understand China. (c33)

Some thought that the perception on China is close to what it is and found explanation for unfavourable coverage at the information dissemination:

It [foreigners' perception on China] is close to objective, but there is some bias which is inevitable. Most information spreads through media; while one characteristic of media is that bad information travels faster. (c10)

China in other countries' eyes may not be so amiable. Too many reports on the economic achievements may make others feel you are a threat. (c4)

In general, I think the judgement is objective, but there are some communities who do not agree or appreciate the Chinese way of dealing with things. (c10)

We couldn't tell our modern story well, the story of talents with international views. They are the main force pushing China's continuous development. (c3)

In results of Western polls, China's image is falling. But the Chinese poll results see the rise of positive perceptions. It should be becoming better because the economy keeps growing and the country is more open politically. (c10)

On the question of the role of media in soft power strategy, the following views were expressed:

Firstly, media could play certain roles in soft power. It could be a component of soft power strength as a tool of bridging over the understanding chasm through creating a more informed public and proliferation of stories responsibly told. (c29) (a12)

We cannot calculate the proportion of the role media can play in promoting soft power of one state, but it does play certain roles when necessary. For example, when the US and UK were involved in wars and during the Cold War period, they had their international media playing roles. When they try to promote their values of democracy and freedom, they need international communication. (c7)

Under an unbalanced international public opinion context, the role of international media for China was seen as being more specific: to check the balance of information flow on China-related topics.

The bias on China's image is partly because negative things always make news when information is transmitted to other states. It is true for every state. Others' understanding of China depends significantly on their information source. But we don't have our own platform that can offer the source. (c3)

For others, the increasing demand for China-related information was seen as another motive for the media push with the aim of enhancing acceptance through deeper understanding:

The primary role of China's international media is letting the world accept us as who we are. We were not good at telling our stories. Of course, the increase of national strength is essential for the outside interest which is the chance of our media to be a good information source for the Chinese story. When China is becoming stronger, we suddenly find out that the outside world is curious to hear what role China is playing in international affairs, what is exactly happening in China. The topics in our program like social insurance, education, are talking about how bad they are; these are hot topics for the research bodies in top universities in the world. They want to discuss with us. So it is not we who are trying to tell China's story well, the truth is the world is interested in us. (c2)

One main task of our media is to provide explanations for the issues that cause negative judgements. We are not going to debate with others, but we should present China as a country like other countries. We should not be treated differently. (c4)

But media's functions were seen to have their own boundaries. Media acted more as a projector of what's happening in a state and had its own mechanism. People-to-people interactions were playing a more significant role.

Media cannot shape the image of a state but it can reflect it. (c12)

Media is the channel to project soft power. But what is important is whether they are capable of telling stories. We have international media outlets. But the audience do not have to listen to you. You must learn to understand media use preference, their [Westerners'] discourse system and their narrative. We still lack the intercultural communication talents. (c2)

Media is only part of international communication. People-to-people interactions are more important. It is unrealistic to expect too much from media. (a12)

In the Chinese context, the expectations of media seemed to be more significant than just as a projector, especially for state-run media outlets like CCTV NEWS. According to a producer, it could be a broker in international affairs that can convey China's stance on world affairs.

We not only telling China's story. CCTV NEWS is acting more and more like a mediator in international affairs. For example, when others accuse China of not sharing responsibility in world affairs, we could tell the world what China has done. When examining issues like Middle East, we could ask 'who has caused the chaos today? Is there anyone who is fighting against terrorists seriously?' No! How to express these opinions on world affairs should be the mission of our international media outlets. (c2)

Australian framing of media

This second section reveals the Australian public diplomacy elite's views on media and their media use habit. For Australian participants, the information channels for getting China related knowledge were various, and mostly were personal channels and Western media. Catching a glimpse of their media use habit and their views on the role of media can lay the ground for the understanding of the framing differentiation among the Chinese communicators, media and the target audiences in Australia. The findings in this subsection are from the in-depth interviews with Australian public diplomacy elites.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the participants had different degrees of personal interactions with Chinese communities. Beyond that, media still played an important role in their acquisition of China-related information. Here, ‘media’ refers not only to traditional media like newspapers, television, but also social media and other forms of information dissemination like newsletters. Table 5.10 shows details of media use habits of the participants.

Table 5.10. Channels for China-related information

| Participants | Media for China related information | | | | |
|--------------|--|--|---------------------|---|---|
| | P2P channel | Australian media | Other Western media | Chinese media | New media |
| A1 | Business trip | The Australian/ ABC | Economists | CCTV - NEWS occasionally | Newsletters |
| A2 | Study/ diplomatic exchanges | SCMP/ SMH | -- | -- | Newsletters |
| A3 | Friends/work | ABC/SBS | BBC | Used to watch CCTV NEWS | Facebook |
| A4 | Seminars/ friends | SMH/SBS | CNN | -- | WeChat |
| A5 | Travel | western press, newspapers, mostly SMH | -- | -- | China related accounts on Facebook |
| A6 | Study/teaching diplomatic exchanges | SMH | BBC | CCTV when visit China | -- |
| A7 | travel business partners | SMH | Economist/ CNN | CCTV NEWS very occasionally | -- |
| A8 | Travel/ Friends/ Research/ language class | SBS etc. | -- | Articles from Chinese newspapers/ watch CCTV NEWS when travel abroad/Used to watch CCTV in Australia | Internet |

| | | | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------------|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| A9 | Family/ friends | Music TV | BBC etc. | China National Radio | Online TV shows/ podcast |
| A10 | Friends/ Chinese class teachers | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| A11 | Travel/ family | SBS | Economist | TVB | Internet |
| A12 | Travel/ friends | SMH | -- | A little bit CCTV- NEWS | Youku |
| A13 | Family/ friends | SMH/SBS | -- | -- | Baidu |
| A14 | Travel/ teaching | ABC/SMH | -- | CCTV occasionally | Internet/ WeChat |
| A15 | Personal connection with Australian foreign correspondent in China | SMH | Economist/ BBC | CCTV- NEWS when visit China | -- |
| A16 | Friends and Family | ABC/SMH/ SBS | CNN/ Bloomberg | -- | -- |
| A17 | Travel | ABC | -- | -- | Friends on WeChat, |
| A18 | Friends | -- | Al-Jazeera | -- | Shanghaiist |
| A19 | Study | -- | -- | China Daily | Weibo |
| A20 | Study/ Language class | SBS | -- | A lot of Chinese movies/ series. | -- |
| A21 | Academics/ Business people who do business with China. | SMH/ The Australian | Bloomberg | Very occasionally watch CGTN | Internet |
| A22 | Business visit/talking with friends and family | SMH | Documentary | China Daily online occasionally | Internet |

Beyond the people-to-people interactions, Australian media were the major information sources with the widest audiences compared with the other channels listed

here. The media from other Western countries, although not as prevalent as the Australian ones, enjoyed the highest level of audience loyalty and they were characterised as reliable sources whenever they were mentioned by the participants. While for the Chinese media, the words used by most participants were ‘occasionally’ or ‘very occasionally’ and they usually were not sure if they could be reliable sources. A couple of participants mentioned that they knew that the mission of CCTV NEWS was to spread Chinese perspective. They were aware of the propagandist nature of that, but they accepted that and what they wanted from it was for a faithful rendition of the Chinese perspective.

There were a couple of trends discernible in the Australian participants’ understanding of China’s international media strategy. First of all, how to deal with China was viewed as a heated topic in Australian discourse. The underlying problem was how to evaluate China: as a friend or as a potential threat? One view advocated strengthening cooperation with China positing that Australia had failed to understand China and one reason for that was Australian media’s failure to present a true picture of China. Bob Carr, former Australian Foreign minister, commented thus at a seminar:

[From] Australian media's coverage of China, I find out virtually nothing about the Chinese economy development ... from reading the Australian media and ... I didn't remember the last article that answer my curiosity about these aspects that are quite important in China (Australian-China Relations Institute, 2016).

Others expressed their expectation of consuming Chinese English language news in Australia.

I do think Chinese English language [news], both television and newspaper, should be more visible here or we should all use it more or interview the correspondents or [be] having them on their programs or to talk about the view from China. (a20)

The need for some was to help Australia to access multiple points of view.

When I visited China, I watched CCTV NEWS, I don't watch [it] here. I think it's a good thing and China should do it. I think our international media is too much dominated by the US; it's good to have other points of view. So it would be good if China could develop good quality, not just reporting on China but also reporting maybe on central Asia or South East Asia using their overseas correspondences. We will have more sources of information about what's going on in the world. I am sure they will cover China first but they could do more. They could cover, for

example, China's projects in Africa, they could report on that. It will be interesting, too. (a2)

However, demand was one thing, how satisfactory the audience would be with the media products was another. CCTV NEWS' constant improvement in appearance and content received positive feedback from some participants. However, there were also problems in the media content that are not familiar to Australian audiences. For example, participant a20 found that the Chinese media content may not be interesting enough for local audiences because the style was not colloquial. Another issue was that getting used to the liberal media environment; the audiences were expecting an adversarial role vis-à-vis the government. Even soft criticism was rare in state media like CCTV NEWS. For example, for participant a8, a good program format for current affairs was reported as a panel discussion with guests from opposite parties expressing opinions and then letting the audience make their own decisions. But he expressed that in his mind, because of the one-party system, this could not be possible in China's state media. Thus doubts on state media's credibility arose:

CCTV has come a long way and now it's a modern-looking channel, but the issue is, is it believable, can it be trusted? The state media like RT, is called Putin's channel; but if you look BBC, it is never any Prime Minister's channel. It will give government a hard time if there is a problem. So I wonder what way it (CCTV NEWS) will take. (a7)

To understand better their views on CCTV NEWS, their general views on media as a whole could offer a triangulation. Firstly, under the liberal system, media's established role was to challenge the authority. This was what the media should do in the eyes of both Australian journalists and audiences.

From a journalist's perspective, I don't get paid just to push government views in the West and in Australia; and I think you would know journalists are supposed to question government, question authority, question what's being done, that sort of thing. (a21)

At the same time it was revealed in comments that liberal media in the West were suffering from a low level of trust:

Most information is incorrect; they are making news to appeal to audience, what they say is usually wrong. (a10)

But I think Westerners are still quite used to the situation that media run everything down and say everything is terrible. Western media tend to be negative to everything, obsessively negative about everything. (a14)

It is a kind of paradox, broadcasting in the West has the freedom to do whatever it likes within respected or certain lines, but they are biased. The only thing which is slightly balancing is if you've got different channels like CNN, ABC, MSNBC etc., they are broadcasting a particular point of view and you've got Fox who presents an alternative view. I agree that they only value freedom but they are blind about ideology, they want America to project an ideology and they want the Americans to follow that ideology and that's in my opinion contrary to their best interests. (a1)

Summary

This chapter has presented the findings in the following three parts: (1) the Chinese public diplomacy elites' framing of China; (2) the Australian public diplomacy elites' framing of China; (3) the understanding by Chinese and Australian public diplomacy elites of the role of media as a tool for soft power promotion. The findings show that both Chinese and Australian public diplomacy elites understood China through their own cultural (in the broad sense) lenses, although a small number of people on each side held different opinions from their own group. The complexity of China was reflected in the views of both groups, but with different focuses. For the Chinese side, the acceptance of the current situation and expectation of improvement were at the core of detected frames. Acknowledgement of achievements, acceptance of the current situation, a modicum of suspicion, and a measure of angst were embedded in the Australians' frames. For the latter, personal engagement was their most reliable source for information related to China, the second being Western media. Most of them had experience of consuming Chinese media (mostly English language ones), but were not sure about its reliability.

The next chapter will provide findings and a discussion based on research on the China's Belt and Road narrative as an example of the delivery and reception abroad of Chinese discourse through China's own media organisation – CCTV NEWS. It will also throw light on the operational culture of CCTV NEWS and question whether or not this might be an exemplar for media workers' mobilisation across the international borders.

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH FINDINGS TWO: ONE BELT ONE ROAD IN THE FRAMING PROCESS¹¹

Introduction

The previous chapter has presented the findings on the Chinese and Australian public diplomacy elites' framing of China, and their views on the role of media in soft power projection, through in-depth interviews. These findings hopefully provide a parameter for understanding the way the Australian target audiences react to the media frames. This chapter will present the findings on how China's discourse on the One Belt One Road initiative (OBOR) is framed by communicators (Chinese government), the media (CCTV NEWS) and the target audiences in Australia at these three contexts in the information flow. This chapter with the case of OBOR will address partially the first three research questions: what kind of frame about OBOR does China intend to deliver to the world; how is OBOR framed through CCTV programs; and how would the target audience response to it?

Following this introduction there will be three substantive sections. The first section presents the framing of OBOR in China's state documents. The second section

¹¹ The name of the initiative has changed slightly over the years. In September, 2015, the official English translation of the project was confirmed as 'the Belt and Road' with the abbreviation of 'B&R' by the Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce of the P.R.C. These are used in current documents and media reports. However, before that, OBOR was widely used in media reports including the ones analysed in this project. The initiative will be named as OBOR in this project for consistency.

focuses on the framing of OBOR in CCTV NEWS. The audience reception of OBOR is presented in the third section. This will be followed by a brief summary.

OBOR in state framing

OBOR is seen as China's newest foreign policy and development strategy, proposed by China's president Xi Jinping in 2013. OBOR references the ancient Silk Road, a network of trade initiated in the Han dynasty connecting the East and West, and which witnessed the interaction of ancient civilisations and the integration of cultures at the crossroad of Eurasia. In the proposal, OBOR refers to the Silk Road on land – the Silk Road Economic Belt – and the 21st century Maritime Silk Road.

The Chinese government has been attaching exceptional importance to the initiative since the notable pledge of 40 billion USD to the Silk Road Fund in late 2014 and the setting up in the same year of the Leading Group on the Construction of the Belt and Road¹² in 2015; a team consisting of top leaders serving under a Vice Premier, to oversee the implementation of the initiative; and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. In addition to the institutional development, multiple means have been employed to promote the initiative. For example, an official website has been set up with data, news and information on policies, cooperation priorities, international cooperation and enterprises relevant to OBOR (see BeltandRoadPortal 2015). Special versions have been launched at the websites of major Chinese media outlets, such as at Xinhua News agency, in multiple languages (see Xinhuanet 2016). With the conceptualisation of the head of National Development and Reform Commission of China, this commission being where the initiative is centred, and under the co-supervision of Office of the Leading Group on the Construction of the Belt and Road, the Publicity Department, CPC and the State Council Information Office, PRC, China Central Television (CCTV) produced a four-episode documentary on the initiative in multiple languages. Also, seminars and

¹² The English title 'the Leading Group' has been used in different ways over the years. Leading Group on the Construction of the Belt and Road is officially used on the official website of the initiative, which was set up in 2015. The usage is adopted here.

workshops have been convened by government organisations and academics at various levels to interpret the initiative and discuss the achievements and difficulties.

In this chapter, the focus will only be on how the initiative is defined and interpreted by Chinese government, the state-owned media outlets, CCTV NEWS and how the Australian target audiences respond to the framing. As in the previous chapter, the frames will be detected inductively with the aim of uncovering as many frames as possible.

OBOR in state framing

Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Belt and Road (Vision and Action) was released in March 2015, the very first state-level document that comprehensively introduced the background, working principles, framework, priorities, operational mechanisms and China's current engagement on OBOR. The master document located the initiative in the context of complex and profound changes in the world: the lingering impact of the international financial crisis; the slow recovery of the world economy, uneven global development; the huge adjustments in the international trade and investment landscapes and rules for multilateral trade and investment; and the major developmental challenges facing many countries. As claimed in the document, OBOR aims to promote cooperation among the countries along the OBOR routes through policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds.

Various discussions have been held around the world by academics, media and policy makers with different interpretations. Seeking economic dominance in the region by China is a view with a wide consensus. Concerns and cautiousness are usually blended with enthusiasm in the discussions. An investigation on the way the initiator and the recipients frame the issue will help in creating a better understanding of the initiative and the appeal it may have to different stakeholders. In the following section, the focus will be on the framing of the initiative by the Chinese government. The framing will be uncovered through the analysis of the state document *Vision and Action*. Attention will be paid to the identification of main frames, the function of the frame and the devices used.

multipolar world, economic globalisation, culture diversity and greater IT application’ and thus working together on the OBOR initiative is an ideal solution for the interests of the world community – reflecting the common ideals and pursuit of human societies:

It is aimed at promoting orderly and free flow of economic factors, highly efficient allocation of resources and deep integration of markets; encouraging the countries along the Belt and Road to achieve economic policy coordination and carry out broader and more in-depth regional cooperation of higher standards; and jointly creating an open, inclusive and balanced regional economic cooperation architecture that benefits all.

Accelerating the building of the Belt and Road can help promote the economic prosperity of the countries along the Belt and Road and regional economic cooperation, strengthen exchanges and mutual learning between different civilizations, and promote world peace and development. It is a great undertaking that will benefit people around the world.

The Belt and Road Initiative is a systematic project, which should be jointly built through consultation to meet the interests of all, and efforts should be made to integrate the development strategies of the countries along the Belt and Road.

Except for the ideal aspect, the *Vision and Action* provides concrete details about the cooperation in the initiative: the cooperation scope and mechanism. In the document, the cooperation scope refers to two aspects: the scope of potential partners and the scope of working fields. As for the potential partners, as indicated in the title, they firstly refer to the countries along the Belt and Road route:

The Belt and Road Initiative aims to promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas.

However, there are also indications in the document that the targeting partners are not confined to the regions along the B&R:

The Initiative will enable China to further expand and deepen its opening-up, and to strengthen its mutually beneficial cooperation with countries in Asia, Europe and Africa and the rest of the world.

The Initiative is open for cooperation. It covers, but is not limited to, the area of the ancient Silk Road. It is open to all countries, and international and regional organizations for engagement, so that the results of the concerted efforts will benefit wider areas.

It accommodates the interests and concerns of all parties involved, and seeks a conjunction of interests and the ‘biggest common denominator’ for cooperation

so as to give full play to the wisdom and creativity, strengths and potentials of all parties.

The second dimension of cooperation relates to fields of cooperation. It is usually viewed that infrastructure investment is the major dimension of the initiative. However, it is articulated in the *Vision and Action* that the foci are on five areas: ‘policy coordination’, ‘facilities connectivity’, ‘unimpeded trade’, ‘financial integration’ and ‘people-to-people bond’. The whole proposal not only addresses the width but also the depth of the cooperation in each area. For example, in the facilities connectivity section, the proposal has not only mentioned railway and port construction, but also information and communication passageway construction:

We should jointly advance the construction of cross-border optical cables and other communications trunk line networks, improve international communications connectivity, and create an Information Silk Road. We should build bilateral cross-border optical cable networks at a quicker pace, plan transcontinental submarine optical cable projects, and improve spatial (satellite) information passageways to expand information exchanges and cooperation

And trade in the proposal means not only the exchange of goods, but also the involvement of labour division, and research and development.

We should improve the division of labour and distribution of industrial chains by encouraging the entire industrial chain and related industries to develop in concert; establish R&D, production and marketing systems; and improve industrial supporting capacity and the overall competitiveness of regional industries.

People-to-people bonds are seen as a way of assuring ‘public support for the implementing the Initiative’. Similarly, the proposal gets into specific details:

We should carry forward the spirit of friendly cooperation of the Silk Road by promoting extensive cultural and academic exchanges, personnel exchanges and cooperation, media cooperation, youth and women exchanges and volunteer services, so as to win public support for deepening bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Thirdly, cooperation is proposed at multiple levels involving the government, political organs, corporations, students, research organisations etc.:

We should give full play to the bridging role of communication between political parties and parliaments, and promote friendly exchanges between legislative

bodies, major political parties and political organisations of ... We should carry out exchanges and cooperation among cities, encourage major cities in these countries to become sister cities, focus on promoting practical cooperation, particularly cultural and people-to-people exchanges, We welcome the think tanks in the countries along the Belt and Road to jointly conduct research and hold forums.

We should strengthen cooperation with neighbouring countries on epidemic information sharing, the exchange of prevention and treatment technologies and the training of medical professionals, and improve our capability to jointly address public health emergencies.

We should send more students to each other's countries, and promote cooperation in jointly running schools. China provides 10,000 government scholarships to the countries along the Belt and Road every year. We should hold culture years, arts festivals, film festivals, TV weeks and book fairs in each other's countries

The mechanism of cooperation is based on the existing bilateral and multilateral mechanism as well as kinds of international forums, exhibitions and festivals convened particularly for the initiative:

We should enhance the role of multilateral cooperation mechanisms; make full use of existing mechanisms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), ASEAN Plus China (10+1), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)...

We should continue to encourage the constructive role of the international forums and exhibitions at regional and sub-regional levels hosted by countries along the Belt and Road, as well as such platforms as Boao Forum for Asia, China-ASEAN Expo, China-Eurasia Expo, Euro-Asia Economic Forum. ...

We should support the local authorities and general public of countries ... to explore the historical and cultural heritage of the Belt and Road, jointly hold investment, trade and cultural exchange activities, and ensure the success of the Silk Road (Dunhuang) International Culture Expo, Silk Road International Film Festival and Silk Road International Book Fair.

The mechanism not only involves cooperation at international level, but also the domestic level. In *Vision and Action*, the regions in each direction in China were allocated corresponding international areas according to their advantages; for example, Xinjiang with Central, South and West Asian countries; Russia with Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning provinces.

Devices of exemplar, depiction and appeal to emotion have been used to articulate the theme. For example, the mention of the ancient Silk Road and Silk Road Spirit helps to explain the aspiration of the initiative and importance of communication and cooperation. The use of words such as ‘jointly’ and ‘integrate’ indicates the emphasis on the expectation for wide participation. With the expressions like ‘[The silk spirit has] passed from generation to generation’, ‘promoted the progress of human civilisation’, ‘contributed greatly to the prosperity and development of the countries along the Silk Road’, ‘symbolising communication and cooperation between the East and the West’, ‘the *Silk Road Spirit* is a historic and cultural heritage shared by all countries around the world’, ‘coexist in peace’, ‘common prosperity’, and ‘works to build a community of shared interests, destiny and responsibility’ etc., the emotional side of the common memories and wellbeing is likely to be awakened in the target audiences and, in turn, may prompt action.

Table 6.1. ‘Cooperation frame’

| | Theme | function | Devices | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| | Co-operation is times call | Appealing | Exemplar | Metaphor | Depiction | Appeal to emotion |
| | | | Silk Road Spirit | -- | Benefit all/ Jointly/ Integrate | Progress of human civilisation/ historic and cultural heritage shared by all countries around the world/ common ideals and pursuit of human societies community of shared interests, destiny and responsibility |
| Co-operation frame | Co- | informing | Asian Infrastructure | Biggest common | Not limited | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------|---|-------------|---|----|
| | operation scope | | Investment Bank/ BRICS New Development Bank/ Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) financing institution / The Silk Road Fund / China- ASEAN Interbank Association / SCO Interbank Association | denominator | to/ coordination / connectivity/ integration/ | |
| | Co- operation mechanism | Informing | Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) ASEAN Plus China (10+1)/ Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)... | -- | Bilateral/ multilateral/ leverage the strengths | -- |

‘Development frame’

Development is another key word in the *Vision and Action* document. Firstly, development is portrayed as one of the themes of common human society. The narrative places the initiative in the context of the development of mankind, the whole world and the countries in the region.

China is committed to shouldering more responsibilities and obligations within its capabilities, and making greater contributions to the peace and development of mankind.

Jointly building the Belt and Road is in the interests of the world community. Reflecting the common ideals and pursuit of human societies, it is a positive endeavour to seek new models of international cooperation and global governance, and will inject new positive energy into world peace and development.

In addition to the conceptual connotation of development of mankind, development has been put in more specific context – the development of specific fields and areas:

We should increase cooperation in the exploration and development of coal, oil, gas, metal minerals and other conventional energy sources; advance cooperation in hydropower, nuclear power, wind power, solar power and other clean, renewable energy sources; and promote cooperation in the processing and conversion of energy and resources...

We should increase the openness of our service industry to each other to accelerate the development of regional service industries.

Development of relations among the countries along the Silk Road is another dimension of development:

We should strengthen bilateral cooperation, and promote comprehensive development of bilateral relations through multi-level and multi-channel communication and consultation.

Development is also revealed in the document as an approach of the OBOR implementation, in which cooperation will occur and progress towards:

The connectivity projects of the Initiative will help align and coordinate the development strategies of the countries along the Belt and Road.

The Belt and Road Initiative aims to promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas, establish and strengthen partnerships among the countries along the Belt and Road, set up all-dimensional, multi-tiered and composite connectivity networks, and realise diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development in these countries.

The conceptualisation theme in the development frame has the potential to appeal to audiences to join the initiative for the wellbeing of partners, thus this theme has the

function of appealing. The other two themes with specific information will help others learn about the details. The devices found in this frame include exemplars and depiction, listed with examples in table 6.2.

Table 6.2. ‘Development frame’

| The development frame | Theme | function | Devices | |
|-----------------------|--|-----------|---|--|
| | Development in conception | Appealing | Exemplar | Depiction |
| | | | -- | Peace and development of mankind. |
| | Development in specific areas | Informing | Development of regional service industries | Comprehensive development of bilateral relations |
| | Development as an approach of B&R implementation | Informing | Align and coordinate the development strategies | Diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development |

‘Rule-abiding frame’

Rules are an important factor in international cooperation. The way rules, norms and regulations are defined would indicate the approach of the initiator implementing the cooperation. The concerns regarding the OBOR in many countries are partially the suspicion of lawful performance. In *Vision and Action*, China defines the Belt and Road Initiative within the framework of rules:

The Initiative follows market operation. It will abide by market rules and international norms, give play to the decisive role of the market in resource allocation and the primary role of enterprises, and let the governments perform their due functions.

The Belt and Road Initiative is in line with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. It upholds the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

[Countries along the Belt and Road should] work to ensure that the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement takes effect and is implemented.

As in the development frame, rules and norms are not just mentioned in the conceptual sense, they are embedded in specific fields:

Countries along the Belt and Road should enhance customs cooperation such as information exchange, mutual recognition of regulations, and mutual assistance in law enforcement; improve bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the fields of inspection and quarantine, certification and accreditation, standard measurement, and statistical information...

We should strengthen financial regulation cooperation, encourage the signing of MOUs on cooperation in bilateral financial regulation, and establish an efficient regulation coordination mechanism in the region. We should improve the system of risk response and crisis management; build a regional financial risk early-warning system...

The emphasis on rules is also reflected in the establishment of rules and agreements:

We should increase cross-border exchange and cooperation between credit investigation regulators, credit investigation institutions and credit-rating institutions.

[We should] speed up investment facilitation, eliminate investment barriers, and push forward negotiations on bilateral investment protection agreements and double taxation avoidance agreements to protect the lawful rights and interests of investors.

The abstract theme in this frame has the function of assuring potential partners that China will abide by rules in the Belt and Road initiative. For the remaining two themes, the call for rules and agreements on the one hand inform the audience of China's stance, and on the other hand call for the action of all parties to work together to sustain a lawful environment in the OBOR implementation. The framing devices used include exemplars and depiction (See table 6.3.).

Table 6.3. 'Rule abiding frame'

| 'Rule abiding frame' | Theme | function | Devices | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|---|
| | Rules and norms in concept | Assuring | Exemplar | Depiction |
| | | | WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement | Abide by/work to ensure... is implemented |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------|----------------------|---|
| | Rules and regulations in specific area | Informing/appealing | Financial regulation | Comprehensive development of bilateral relations |
| | Establish rules and agreements during the cooperation | Informing/appealing | -- | Protect the lawful rights and push forward negotiations |

‘Open and mutual benefit frame’

The OBOR initiative is said to be proposed under the background of China’s further opening-up strategy and the open world in the official discourse. ‘Open’ indicates cooperation with other partners, and mutual benefit might be the most important factor that determines the enthusiasm of the potential partner’s participation. *Vision and Action* sets the open and mutual benefit tone for the Belt and Road Initiative:

The Belt and Road Initiative is a way for win-win cooperation that promotes common development and prosperity and a road towards peace and friendship by enhancing mutual understanding and trust, and strengthening all-round exchanges.

The Initiative is an ambitious economic vision of the opening-up of and cooperation among the countries along the Belt and Road. Countries should work in concert and move towards the objectives of mutual benefit and common security.

The potential benefit lies in the creation of a cooperative environment for mutual benefit among neighbours:

We should strive to improve investment and trade facilitation, and remove investment and trade barriers for the creation of a sound business environment within the region and in all related countries.

Countries along the Belt and Road have their own resource advantages and their economies are mutually complementary.

Mutual benefit is also elaborated on, within specific contexts such as investment, information technology, health care etc. It is not simply a trading interaction; it is also the mutual building of certain mechanisms and mutual recognitions of rules.

We should expand mutual investment areas, deepen cooperation in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fisheries, agricultural machinery manufacturing and farm-produce processing,

We should promote in-depth cooperation with other countries along the Belt and Road in new-generation information technology, biotechnology, new energy technology, new materials and other emerging industries, and establish entrepreneurial and investment cooperation mechanisms.

We will provide medical assistance and emergency medical aid to relevant countries, and carry out practical cooperation in maternal and child health, disability rehabilitation, and major infectious diseases including AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Countries along the Belt and Road should enhance customs cooperation such as information exchange, mutual recognition of regulations, and mutual assistance in law enforcement.

In *Vision and Action*, mutual benefit is designed between China's domestic regions and the neighbouring countries. For example, the proposed border trade and tourism and culture cooperation between the Tibet Autonomous Region and neighbouring countries like Nepal; and the 'regional interaction and cooperation and industrial concentration' around the inland provinces.

The tone of open and mutual benefit might have the function of appealing to potential partners to join the initiative. The other two frames have the function of informing the audience of China's intentions and thus might also have the effect of appealing. The framing devices are mainly exemplar and depiction, with the examples listed in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4. 'Open and mutual benefit frame'

| 'Open and mutual benefit frame' | Theme | function | Devices | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------------------------|
| | The tone of open and mutual benefit | Appealing | Exemplar | depiction |
| | | | -- | Win-win/work in concert |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------|---|--|
| | Open and mutual benefit in specific areas | Informing/appealing | Mutual investment areas | Mutual recognition of regulations And mutual assistance in law enforcement. |
| | Mutual benefit connecting domestic and international regions | Informing/appealing | Border trade and tourism and culture cooperation between Tibet Autonomous Region and neighbouring countries | Make use of the advantages |

‘Role of China frame’

What role China will promise to play is an important question regarding China’s role and intention with the OBOR Initiative. Most people with concerns think that it is China’s ambition to dominate economically in the Silk Road regions. An investigation on how China defines its own role in the master document of *Vision and Action* will help to understand China’s position of itself in the initiative.

Vision and Action repeatedly mentioned China’s intention of further opening up and promoting cooperation:

China's economy is closely connected with the world economy. China will stay committed to the basic policy of opening up, build a new pattern of all round opening up, and integrate itself deeper into the world economic system. The initiative will enable China to further expand and deepen its opening up, and strengthen its mutually beneficial cooperation with countries in Asia, Europe and Africa and the rest of the world.

China will fully leverage the comparative advantages of its various regions, adopt a proactive strategy of further opening up, strengthen interaction and cooperation among the eastern, western and central regions, and comprehensively improve the openness of the Chinese economy.

Also, as the initiator, efforts have been made to promote the initiative from the highest level of leadership:

President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang have visited over 20 countries, attended the Dialogue on Strengthening Connectivity Partnership and the sixth ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, and met with leaders of relevant countries to discuss bilateral relations and regional development issues. They have used these opportunities to explain the rich contents and positive implications of the Belt and Road Initiative, and their efforts have helped bring about a broad consensus on the Belt and Road Initiative.

In the document, China also positions itself as a co-operator who hopes to work together with other countries along the *Silk Road* in planning, implementing the initiative:

China will join other countries along the Belt and Road to substantiate and improve the content and mode of the Belt and Road cooperation, work out relevant timetables and roadmaps, and align national development programs and regional cooperation plans.

China will work with countries along the Belt and Road to carry out joint research, forums and fairs, personnel training, exchanges and visits under the framework of existing bilateral, multilateral, regional and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms, so that they will gain a better understanding and recognition of the contents, objectives and tasks of the Belt and Road Initiative.

China will work with countries along the Belt and Road to steadily advance demonstration projects, jointly identify programs that accommodate bilateral and multilateral interests, and accelerate the launching of programs that are agreed upon by parties and ready for implementation, so as to ensure early harvest.

As always, China defines itself as a responsible player on the world stage. In the initiative, China continues to define itself as a country that takes responsibilities:

China is committed to shouldering more responsibilities and obligations within its capabilities, and making greater contributions to the peace and development of mankind.

China provides 10,000 government scholarships to countries along the Belt and Road every year.

During the framing, the first theme provides the basic information about China's self-position as an initiator. The co-operator and responsibility-sharer themes, to a certain extent, provide assurance to potential partners about its role. The framing devices used here include exemplar, depiction and sponsor. The examples are listed in table 6.5.

Table 6.5. 'Role of China Frame'

| 'Role of China frame' | Theme | function | Devices | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|---|--|---|
| | The initiator of opening up and cooperation | Informing | Exemplar | depiction | Sponsors |
| | | | -- | Further expand and deepen its opening up | President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang |
| | The co-operator | Assurance | Mutual investment areas | Join other countries/work with countries/jointly | -- |
| | The responsibility sharer | Assurance | China provides 10,000 government scholarships | shouldering more responsibilities | -- |

Framing the One Belt One Road in CCTV NEWS

The last section presented China's framing on the OBOR initiative. As an official document, *Vision and Action* showcases the bright side of the initiative. But in reality, there are other perspectives, such as suspicions and concerns. In this section, framing of the B&R in two episode of a news magazine program in CCTV NEWS' *Closer to China with R. L. Kuhn* will be analysed. Although CCTV NEWS is a state-owned medium, the programs did provide coverage of a wide range of topics around OBOR. Together with *Vision and Action*, these programs can be viewed as part of Chinese framing of the initiative directed at the world audience.

The two programs selected here are in-depth discussion programs with face-to-face interviews as the main format. Different from the state document, television programs have their own framing techniques. For example, apart from the syntax elements, the ways of introducing the topics, visual devices and structures, and the sponsors representing certain viewpoints are widely used for the purpose of attracting audiences. Differently from the individual framing (in which framing devices are mostly a subconscious happening), the framing devices in television programs might be used with intention of presenting certain points of view instead of others. In the analysis of the programs, except for the identification of the themes and the position/function, attention

will also be paid to the elements mentioned above. Again, in order to get an all-round picture, an inductive approach will be used to identify as many frames as possible.

Professionalism as an index of media culture

As shown in the previous chapter, being familiar with the liberal media, Australian public diplomacy elites are suspicious of CCTV NEWS' reliability as an information source – although they also have concerns about Western media's credibility issues (see Chapter Five, the subsection 'Australian framing of media'). With the expansion in other countries and the employment of local staff, CCTV NEWS is becoming more and more a transnational organisation that accommodates media workers who exercise mobility across borders and face different professional value contexts. This sub-section will present findings of the media workers' understanding of their organisation, CCTV NEWS, based on data through observations of their editorial meetings in Beijing from mid-December 2015 to mid-January 2016; in Washington DC of CCTV America in March, 2016; and interviews with two officials from the watchdogs of CCTV (the Publicity Department of the China Communist Party and State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of The People's Republic of China), and four Chinese and five Western staff during in the course of observation research. Reporting of interview results is to be found dispersed below. C refers to Chinese and W to Western staff, and each interviewee is identified with a letter and number.

Table 6.6. Interviewees during observation

| Interviewee | Background | Code |
|--------------------|---|-------------|
| Chinese 1 | Executive with both Chinese and Western training in journalistic practice | C1 |
| Chinese 2 | Executive with Chinese training in journalistic practice | C2 |
| Chinese 3 | Program producer | C3 |
| Chinese 4 | Program coordinator | C4 |
| Chinese5 | Official at Publicity Department | C5 |
| Chinese 6 | Official at SAPPRFT | C6 |
| Western staffer 1 | Western training and journalistic practice | W1 |
| Western staffer 2 | Western training and journalistic practice | W2 |
| Western staffer 3 | Western training and journalistic practice | W3 |
| Western staffer 4 | Western training and journalistic practice | W4 |
| Western staffer 5 | Western training outside journalism and non journalistic practice | W5 |

Structurally, CCTV NEWS now consists of three parts: the headquarters in Beijing with about 500 Chinese staff and 60 foreign staff; CCTV America in Washington DC with eight Chinese, who are mainly in management positions, and more than 120 local staff who are in charge of the daily operation of news-making for the English language programs; and CCTV Africa in Nairobi, with about 150 staff in total, and a similar proportion of Chinese and local staff to CCTV America. By March 2016 when the field research ended, Beijing headquarter provided 10 hours of first-time broadcast programs, CCTV America five hours (expected increase), and CCTV Africa two hours for the whole day's program. The research conducted mainly in Beijing and Washington DC. In CCTV America, as in CCTV Africa, the operational structures are relatively flat with the director, two editorial managers who are Chinese and the main production teams made up of local staff with, on average, one Chinese staff member in each team. The local staff are the main force behind program production and the Chinese make sure that China-related information is accurate and that certain sensitive topics will not hurt China's interest. For example, in early March 2016 before the 'two sessions' conferences in China, when the research was conducted at Washington DC, the local production editor, during the editorial planning meeting, mentioned leaving a large time slot for the coverage of 'two sessions', but the manager decided it was too early because the conferences would not start until the week after, and that week some warm-up coverage was enough. The mixture of Chinese and foreign staff makes a new sort of media professional culture that may be different from both Chinese and Western ones in the traditional sense. The understanding of their own perceptions of their values helps us to understand the operational principles which in turn determine the media content. The background factors, the organisational and professional perceptions of the staff will be presented below as the clues.

In CCTV NEWS, the hiring of Western staff is a way to open markets in the West, and their expertise in Western journalism is the bargaining chip Western staff members have with which to negotiate their autonomy of practice. There are comments made by CCTV America's Jim Spellman who said in a TV interview with his former employer, CNN, that no one tells staff directly what to do or what not to do. Also, 'censorship' (at least in effect) exists in different forms. In the West, the pressure comes from ratings; while in CCTV NEWS, it may come from the consideration of national interests (C1, C2,

and W3). Participants from supervising organisations mentioned censorship as a guide, not on a daily basis (C5, C6). But without any doubt, on certain sensitive issues that may influence the national interest or social stability, the watchdogs have the ultimate say over the media organisation. This kind of power has the absolute hegemonic role that prevents the media workers from crossing the line

Another background factor is that the entry of CCTV NEWS into certain markets, like America, was in the context of a slump for Western media with many lay-offs (C1). As one participant said: 'It is just a job' (W5). Their willingness to work with the network comes after the consideration of the existence of certain taboos – that are derived from national interests (C1, C2, and C3).

Regarding journalistic values in China, it should be repeated that one of the missions of media in China is to facilitate governance for a stable environment for development. It is not only the doctrine of a socialist system, but also, as one participant commented, it is the historical tradition. From the earliest form of journalism in ancient times, its function has been to facilitate social governance (C5). This is echoed the previous mention that journalists in certain Chinese contexts have the obligation to take on the social responsibilities of traditional intellectuals. Participant W5 observed that Chinese journalists feel a certain sense of privilege for working for the organisation within the system. Of course, it is under the ideal normative context. In reality, the hierarchy within the system may make it very difficult, especially for young people, to secure the position and at the same time find comfort in the context of the collision of professional values and ever increasing pressures of everyday life. This makes it hard, even in Beijing, to find enough talent adept at English language media practice. That is also one of the reasons for the recruitment of foreign staff. (C2)

In Beijing, we are short of professional staff. Many of our new staff were young graduates in English language, and have no media experience.

Shortage of qualified guests is another driving factor behind the employing of local staff, as C3 and C2 mentioned:

When the world needs us to tell Chinese stories well, you will find out that we have to rely on the foreigners. In China, almost all the top talents in every field

are in Beijing, but in Beijing, there are only 100 people who are qualified to be our guests (in terms of language and performance on TV).

In China, we don't have many experts who can speak good English; the officials don't want to speak to media. It is very hard for us to invite big figures to our studio except for some scholars. (C2)

Also, CCTV NEWS is under rapid development. A participant (W5) shared a 'Reminder' that she received more than a decade ago, which listed 'MAJOR HOT BUTTONS' associated with the usage of certain terms. For instance 'the Chinese mainland' must not be referred to as 'Mainland China'. But as a participant (W1) said, with live broadcasting, correspondents did sometimes lapse into using 'Mainland China' and no one noticed the breach of rules. Furthermore, in relation to the strategy of offering Chinese perspectives to the world, foreign staff mainly focus on affairs in prescribed areas; there is little chance to cross the rhetorical line set to protect Chinese interests.

The combination of management staff from China and US and international expertise at CCTV AMERICA make the channel more competitive in the broadcaster market than a purely mono-cultural one. The internationalisation of broadcasting staff follows the early CNN model. Ma Jing, the director general of CCTV AMERICA described the launch of CCTV AMERICA as a natural development for China's Central Television. She attributed the expansion of CCTV to Washington DC to the saturation of domestic market with 42 channels in China in a interview with PBS (PBS 2012).

The Senior Consultant of CCTV AMERICA, Jim Laurie, expressed a view similar to that of the Chinese executives in an interview indicating that as a big power, China wants to follow suit the international media strategies of BBC and CNN (Folkenflik 2013).

Both Chinese executives and Western employees consent that the motivation of the foundation of CCTV AMERICA is unbalanced news coverage about China – in terms of both volume and agenda, even in the principal media organisations who enjoy huge profession reputation. W2 thinks CCTV NEWS provides audiences interested in China and international relations with responsible and credible television programs. C2 views

the move of CCTV NEWS as filling the gap of un-uttered Chinese voice in international news market.

According to the participants, the pressure of ratings has resulted in a shrinking of international reporting, even in the international Channels. But with the growth of China's role in the world, the demand for information and stories is growing accordingly. CCTV NEWS can fill the void in this sense. With the increasing status of China on the world stage, there is an increase in the demand for Chinese stories globally. However, international reporting has been shrinking globally because of financial pressures based on dependence on ratings. CCTV America can offer China focused content in voluminous amounts unlike other media outlets, say *The Wall Street Journal*. (W3)

However, there is a concern about the lack of audience research in the eyes of some participants: CCTV NEWS operates under the overall CCTV structure and audience research is under a department external to CCTV NEWS. Also audience research takes place under budget constraints. W2 admitted that although they sense the demand for China-related information, the Channel seldom undertakes the kind of comprehensive audience research that many other international broadcasters usually undertake. This is because audience surveys are under the budget control of the overall CCTV structure.

In addition to the quantitative deficit in China news in the West, most participants agree that an agenda slant is very obvious in news produced by Western broadcasters. Cases demonstrate that in the coverage of international affairs, national interest and nationalism are at the forefront even in reputed media organisations. For example, W2 mentioned in the interview that 'what Western media cover [about China] is partial with the emphasis on human rights, conflicts; it is because the perceptions, of what journalism is, are different'. W4 expressed a similar view. He observed that in a case like the South China Sea, US media such as the Washington Post always cite US sources. But CCTV America will include voices from China as well. This is what W3 called stories "inclusive of the Chinese agenda"

Another factor that provides rationale for Western broadcasting practitioners working for CCTV NEWS is the deterioration of professional standards in the Western news industry because of the market pressure (W3, W4). W4 noted that there is a lot of

‘low cal news’ but very little appetite for important [high cal] news in Western media. CCTV America, unfettered by ratings pressure, is able to cover ‘stories with meaning’.

Professional norms and self-perception of the role of journalist is another factor that may have an impact. As previously mentioned, in spite of the mouthpiece identity of Chinese media, professionalism is a hot topic in media practice and scholarly debates in China. The interview results in this project show that the understanding of professionalism among CCTV NEWS staff has both broad and narrow aspects. For example, W1 viewed that professionalism is associated with how a channel looks at, sets and presents a program.

It could be regarded as one of the contributions of the Western employees with the new look and operational style. The Western employees and display formats become signs of professionalism. ‘It's changing very quickly,’ former anchor Yin says in an interview. ‘I can tell you even from the time that we came on-board here to where we are today, we've changed a lot. We're covering stories from sometimes very controversial angles.’ (Folkenflik, 2013)

Both interviewees, who were Chinese management staff, emphasised the importance of objectivity, balance and fairness in their operational norms although they admitted that there was not a 100% application of the norms by any of the broadcasters. C1 listed objectivity, balance, fairness and diversity as most important elements in their perception of professionalism. C2 said in the coverage of issues like Syria, they are doing well, in balance, by presenting the story of both the government and the opposition.

While being aware of the doubts about whether Chinese media adhere to professional values, Western staff working for CCTV NEWS are also aware of the limitations in professional practice in Western media. For example, W3 read about shortcuts taken by many Western broadcasters. In the eyes of W5, bias exists in every media, the difference is just a matter of degree.

Another professional value emphasised by CCTV NEWS is inclusivity. It's journalists view the Chinese perspective to offer a unique character to the channel that is

different from that of Western broadcasters (W4). In addition to a Chinese perspective, they emphasise solidarity with developing countries.

One participant noted that their perception of a media organisation is determined by people's perception of journalism. In the West, raising doubts, challenging authority and covering conflict are the main responsibilities of journalism. One thing is clear among the participants in this project: they perceive CCTV NEWS and the practitioners themselves as information disseminators aiming to fill up the story and voice of China and other developing countries which are usually ignored or overlooked in international broadcasting market.

Framing the OBOR in *Closer to China*

Closer to China with R.L.Kuhn is a weekly news magazine co-produced by CCTV NEWS and Kuhn Foundation, an organisation, described in its own words, as focusing on the dissemination of understanding in science and philosophy, which supports cultural endeavours and promotes good relations between America and China. The Kuhn Foundation is the producer of the TV series *Closer to Truth* broadcast on the US Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). According to the official webpage of the program, *Closer to China* aims to reveal China-related matters through in-depth discussions with China's decision makers and opinion leaders.

The selected episodes '*Closer to China: "One Belt One Road" I – Economic Development and Cooperation*' and '*Closer to China: "One Belt One Road" II – International Affairs and Diplomacy*' were broadcast on 22 March and 29 March 2015 respectively. These episodes focused on the detailed explanation of OBOR and the challenges facing it. As a news magazine, most of the content is presented through interviews with Chinese officials and experts or stakeholders in relevant areas both from China and other countries.

This project's analysis will focus mainly on frames of the content with the facilitation of devices identification. The following graphics showcase the timeline of the program and the general topics covered:

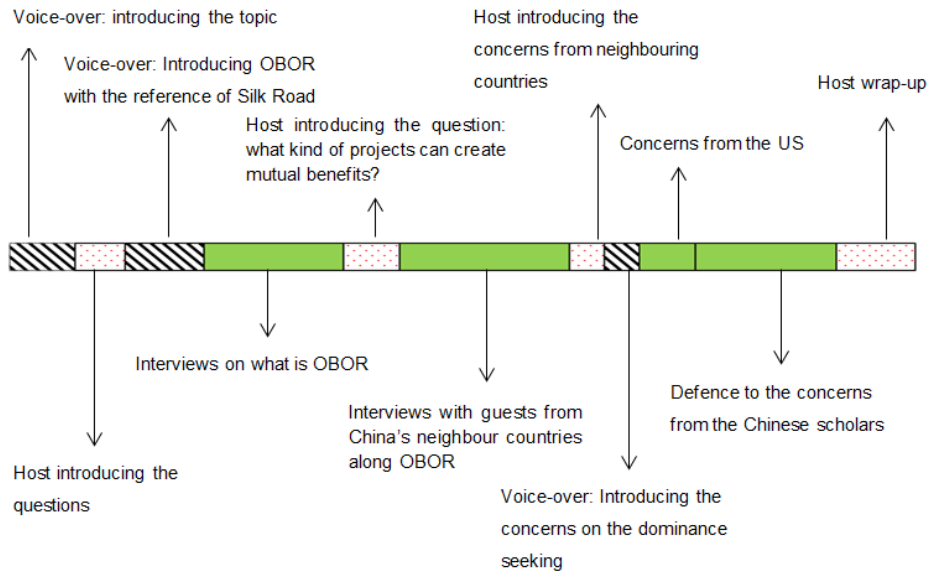


Diagram 6.2. Timeline of the program and the topics in *Closer to China I*

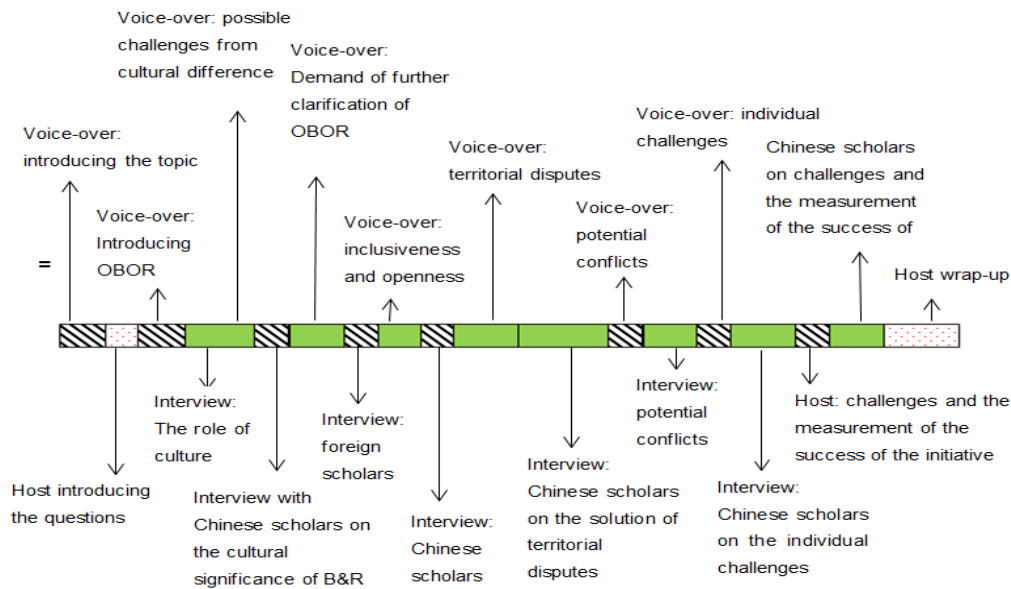




Diagram 6.3. Timeline of the program and the topics in *Closer to China II*

 Voice-over
  Host
  Interview

This part will reveal the frames demonstrated in the program through the various sponsors. The topics are framed in the two main aspects around the OBOR initiative: explaining OBOR, and deconstruction of concerns on OBOR.

‘Defining OBOR frame’

At the beginning of the program, the host introduced OBOR as a ‘strategic initiative’ and a ‘foreign policy priority’ and raised the question of why it was proposed. The first interviewee, a vice-ministerial level official then in charge of the China International Publishing Group, an organisation with the mission of introducing China to foreign countries through publications and websites, stated that ‘the strategic relevance, regional relevance and the overall relevance are extensive’. He believed that the international response to it ‘is generally positive, because everybody knows that we are entering into a new era, or rather, the new normal of economic and social development’ and to solve the problems by regional cooperation is a widely shared agreement. He said that the proactive posture reflected in the OBOR initiative is a way to show China’s consciousness of responsibilities as an economic power:

Now China’s economy has grown this high with, enormous economic clout and China has become one of the biggest international traders and is the biggest trading partner for 120 countries. Under such circumstances, China will have to be conscious of its responsibilities as an economic power and take them on and act in a way that matches up with its newly found economic strength to meet the global community’s expectations. (Zhou Mingwei, President of China International Publishing Group)

The ‘positive response’ was presented by three other interviewees, from China’s neighbouring countries, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan – from business, government and media sectors – and a businessman from a Saudi Arabian oil company who thought OBOR was a mutual beneficial, open-minded and cooperative initiative in a new era.

It is a more positive and beneficial way [of doing business] with China. (Emil Umetaliyev, Businessman, former Minister of Economy, Kyrgyzstan).

China’s investment is better for Kyrgyzstan. US aid through grants and donor money not investments, Russia is a big investor in energy sectors. The most active investor is China; cooperation with neighbouring China is more natural for Kyrgyzstan. There is mutual interest in each other. (Zhyldyz Satieva, Ministry of Economy)

In my view OBOR is a very open-minded concept that has been introduced by the China’s leadership and it shows the broad mindedness to share the hard-earned fruits of development of China with the other developing countries of the World. Pakistan, being a developing country looking forward to benefiting from it in a win-win situation. (Daily Mail International, Pakistan: Babar Amin)

But some observers from other relevant countries thought more clarification on the initiative was needed, although it interests other countries:

OBOR is a concept which can mean different things to different people. Even the Chinese themselves not really define the concept. It's a quite general concept which is quite useful for Chinese foreign policy and it will obviously... something that is developed over the Next several years so the whole world and Europe Union is watching very closely how it develops. (Fraser Mac Taggart Cameron, EU-ASIA CENTER, UK)

I don't know yet (what OBOR is), to be honest, because I think that this can be a very important starting point for new politics but should not be a political mean to exercise power. (Patrizia Catori, L'Orientale University of Naples, Italy)

So far the Indian government hasn't made up its mind on the initiative for the Silk Road, that's partly because the Chinese government has not informed what exactly the ABCDs of the Silk Road are. We keep hearing that the 21st century Silk Road will be based on certain rules, we do not know what exactly of those rules except for a few blank statements about win-win cooperation and so on, but we do not know exactly the concrete ideas behind the Silk Road as yet, so if this is going to be a 21st century initiative then India would also like to know what are the rules based on, the components of those rules. I think a lot of issues were unsaid. And this is one reason probably why India is taking time to see whether it is part of the Silk Road or not. (Srikanth Kondapalli, Chairman, Centre for East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University)

The Chinese interviewees showed a detailed understanding of the initiative highlighting cooperation, openness, culture connection.

OBOR, especially maritime Silk Road is the way to solve our common problems and tackle our common challenges. The strategy was intended to encourage countries to join hands, communicate and cooperate with each other to achieve win-win results. But the fact is that we are facing challenges. These challenges share common features. Overcoming these challenges depends on the cooperation between countries and regions. In this sense, I think we have confidence in this model and strategy. It is not significant to China, but to the region and global village. (Zhou)

If we give a clear definition to the OBOR initiative, it is first a historical heritage; second, it is cultural rejuvenation; third, economic and trade cooperation; fourth, future innovation. The Silk Road is actually a road of future innovation. We are using history to discuss the Silk Road, and the story is about creating a wonderful future. So we should focus on the road of future innovation. In terms of space, President Xi has said that his hometown Shaanxi province is the starting point of Silk Road. President Xi has also said in Australia that the Maritime Silk Road naturally extends to Australia. So the Silk Road has a broad spatial coverage. (Xiong Chengyu, Dean, Communication Studies, Tsinghua University)

I think there were two important elements, one is the economic initiative ... everybody is putting economic development on top of the agenda; the other is the cultural element. The ancient Silk Road, I think it had two purposes; it links China with central Asian even further to Euro, the culture link was very important. Now we are in a more problematic world and there are all kinds of disputes, suspicions, scepticism and distrust, so the cultural element I think, is very important where often they should go together if not having cultural exchange go first. (Huang Youyi, Vice president, China International Publishing Group)

In *Vision and Action*, people-to-people bonds and mutual benefit are two key themes; in the program, Chinese experts interpreted them and their relationship with economic development through the cultural lens. For example:

OBOR strategy can not only promote trade and business, it will bring about mutual exchanges that go beyond trade and interest, a vital part is culture. Over the past 2000 years, through the Maritime Silk Road, in spite of variant backgrounds, religions, skin colours and economic development levels, how did China through cultural exchanges, in addition to exchanges of goods and people connect with various countries closely? (Zhou)

Today we are building OBOR and I think we should learn from the past and history to find out what our ancestors had done when building the ancient Silk Road and what other people had done. To know what should be continued by us, we need to know other countries' histories, cultures, traditions and demands. We should stand in their positions to consider problems. I believe this is a good way of co-existence at least from the point of culture. Then economically speaking, surely we want to make profits and we must have input and output. But culturally speaking, we intend to make friends. To make friends, we must think for others rather than just seeking our own profits. Mutual benefits and development are the essence of true friendship. So culturally speaking, we need to learn each other's history tradition, culture and demand, and then together we can find ways for win-win results. This is very important in culture. (Xiong)

'Concerns deconstruction frame'

Concerns prevail on the international stage about China's motivation and its territorial disputes with other countries, which may pose challenges for the implementation of OBOR. The two episodes drew concerns of experts from other countries and explanations from Chinese experts.

One concern is about the initiative's analogy with colonisation in some states' perception. Asked by the host whether China is an exploiter in the cooperation proposed

in OBOR, a businessman from a Saudi Arabian oil company denied it from a historic and mutual benefit perspective:

This relation is not started from today, it is from history. Since the early stage of Silk Road, there is a lot of mutual understanding, mutual benefit, that is the essence of the entire relation, if we invested in China and they invested in Saudi Arabia, so we have collateral relation, your interest is my interest and your interest is what my interest as well. (Ibrahim Al-Buainain, President Aramco Asia)

The second concern presented by the host is that with its growing influence, China will try to dominate all of Asia and conflict may be inevitable. This view is echoed by American Political scientist John Mearsheimer who thinks:

Where there will be resistances with the Silk Road [is where] it goes over water, because here we are talking about coming through the Straits of Malacca coming through Southeast Asia into the Indian ocean in the Arabian Sea and there the US navy and the Indian Navy will be waiting and we will go to great lengths to make sure that China does not dominate those large bodies of water. The US has a deep-seated interest in maintaining control of the sea and control the sea is very much a zero-sum game. Whether the Americans dominate the seas or the Chinese dominate the seas and we now dominate those seas and will go to great lengths to prevent the Chinese from replacing us as the masters of Indian Ocean or the masters of the Arabian Sea.

The Chinese experts denied the China-centric purpose of the OBOR initiative thus:

One characteristic for OBOR is its openness, US and Japan seemingly are excluded, and the fact is they didn't join us because they are unwilling to do so. The US' core focus on Asia is TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), which is a very important part of the US rebalanced development toward the Asia-Pacific region, while Japan has decided to participate in TPP. The US and Japan are afraid that China will be a big country dominating this whole area, so they refuse to accept OBOR by China. The US also urged their allies not to participate in the AIIB (Asian Infrastructural Investment Bank) (Li Xiangyang, Director National Institute of International Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Science)

OBOR is open to developed countries. Literally the countries are identified. But all these countries have very close economic ties with US and Japan. It is impossible to exclude any countries.

As presented, the concerns did not only come from the states, but also from the individuals. The Chinese scholar who addressed this problem seemed to be well aware of the problem, but he did not propose much of a solution, apart from waiting for mutual understanding on China's behaviour to deepen:

We are concerned that the fast opening-up process will influence some countries involved. The influence, through individual engagement, will cause unexpected results, for example conflicts with locals. After all, we cannot control the behaviour of individuals. And we know that we also have our share of problems, some of us are not very well-behaved. Sometimes, to pursue our interests, we might affect local residents' life or local environment. These things happen and influence the locality. But I think that during the process people will gradually understand the difference between China's opening up and the so-called neo-colonialism. I think people will come to see that. China does not seek the export of its values; china never claims that its values are universal. China never claims that its systems and values are suitable for other countries in the whole world. (Li Peilin, Vice president, Chinese Academy of Social Science)

Territorial disputes were another problem raised which not only concerned the observers but also influenced the determination of participation by countries like India.

Well, if you look at the Xinhua map which published the continental Silk Road and the maritime Silk Road, the continental Silk Road possibly passing through some of the disputed territories of Kashmir and that is one concern for India because it is a sovereignty-related issue for India. (Kondapalli)

The program also presented the Chinese expert's explanation of Chinese solution to the disputes of South China Sea.

OBOR or the Maritime Silk Road initiative, is not targeted at solving the South China Sea issues, it is more about calling for maritime cooperation...That is also why we call on the surrounding countries of the South China Sea to prioritise cooperation over disputes and participate in the development of this maritime road. We want to see more cooperation with them to establish mutual political trust and put in place certain infrastructure. Also, I think judging from the development of the issues over the decades, it is not likely the disputes will be solved in a short time. But our Chinese government has proposed a very good solution to solve the problems in the South China Sea with double-track strategies. That means regarding the many problems, negotiations will be held between China and the relevant countries. But for peace and stability over the region, China will work with the ASEAN countries to exercise management and control. So in this aspect, we say that development of the Maritime Silk Road involves problems on two levels. (Lin Yongxin, Deputy Director, Institute of Maritime Silk Road National Institute for South China Sea studies)

Economic cooperation and development were viewed by some Chinese experts as a solution to territorial disputes, based on observation of other countries' experiences.

But as we can see from the regional economic cooperation in other areas, the economic cooperation will help reduce or alleviate the non-economic conflict and contradiction between countries there, for example, the confrontation between

France and Germany has, with the integration of Europe, gradually dissolved. And in South America, the contradiction between Argentina and Brazil has mitigated because of the establishment of Mercosur, the South American common market. So theoretically, as China further cooperates with countries along the belt and with whoever is having territorial disputes with it, the dispute will eventually disappear. And at the same time, we cannot wait for that to happen. In the future construction of the OBOR, we need to build some mechanisms to ease or remove the disputes. (Li Xiangyang)

The basic structure of the program went on in a linear way: the voice-over with pre-recorded videos to lead in the topic, then the shot with the host's (Kuhn) monologue introducing the questions followed by the discussion between the host and one guest each time. Occasionally, pre-recorded questions from people who are interested in the topic or video clips relevant to the Silk Road were inserted between the questions. Each episode consisted of several segments like this and was followed by a summary by the host which echoed the official discourse about the initiative.

Host lead-in (Episode one):

Why did President Xi Jinping propose the OBOR strategic initiative for China? Why did he call the Silk Road a foreign policy priority? What relevance today of these ancient trade routes connected East and West? How does OBOR help achieve China economic objectives and diplomatic goals?

Summary (Episode One):

Five principles or links, policy communication, road or logistics connectivity, unimpeded trade, monetary circulation and understanding between peoples. It stresses economic cooperation in energy, infrastructure and commerce, such cooperation is the natural result of China's economic requirements, integrated with other country's developmental needs. Key is Chinese investment, especially in manufacturing, agriculture, petrochemicals and resources and in introducing advanced tech. OBOR is a grand vision that requires huge investments and only a partnership between government and business with the market playing a decisive role can enable success. How will success of the One Belt One Road initiative be measured? By bilateral trade, economic integration, infrastructure development, new growth areas, higher employment enhanced domestic growth and reduction of risks? It is in China's core interest to secure global peace and stability and to promote global development and prosperity, all are required for China's own continuing development. The OBOR articulates well with China's overarching policy and exemplifies China's increasing importance on the global stage; the 21st century Silk Road is surely is surely closer to China.

Host lead-in (Episode Two):

Kuhn: *The OBOR strategy – the Silk Road Economic Belt over the land and the 21st century maritime Silk Road over the oceans – is President Xi Jinping's new initiative for multinational development. How does it exemplify his strategic thinking? How will it affect other nations? What are the challenges and obstacles ahead? Let's seek an organising principle to analyse China's OBOR strategy in terms of China's overall foreign policy objectives. That will get us closer to China*

Kuhn: *We cannot ignore China's maritime border disputes, particularly in the South China Sea, the origin of 21st century maritime Silk Road. How will competing claims of sovereignty affect the overall strategy?*

Host wrap-up (Episode Two):

Kuhn: *OBOR exemplifies China's new proactive foreign policy multipolar world 50-60 countries are involved, complex and volatile issues such as economic inequalities, religious tensions, terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crimes, peaceful development, economic plans coordinated to foster regional cooperation. No Hegemony, China does not and will not seek dominance. Vigilance against war, joint efforts to avoid military confrontation, people to people communication, multi-channel multi-level exchanges including cultural activities in pd. Community of shared destiny, countries with different races cultures and beliefs can enhance mutual development as long as they persist in tolerance, cooperation and win-win outcomes. There are multiple challenges to the OBOR strategy, huge capital investments requiring long term financing, asymmetric commerce and imbalance trade national instability in many countries, non-traditional security threats, particularly terrorism, disputes between countries competing geopolitical strategies,. What are the principles of the Silk Road spirit? President Xi describes four: mutual learning between civilizations, respecting choice of developmental path, mutually beneficial cooperation and dialogue and peace, the 21st century Silk Road, land and maritime originating in China surely gets us closer to China.*

The framing was mainly facilitated by the sponsors from China and other countries who expressed their interpretations of OBOR and their concerns based on their own stances; the program structure, or the syntactical structure as called by Pan and Kosicki (1993, p.59), i.e., the arrangement of the segments which the question/doubts followed by the responding answers and the highlights of the key points by the host; and the visual devices at the beginning and during the transition between shots which might help viewers understand the topics (see Table 6.7).

Table 6.7. Framing OBOR in *Closer to China*

| | Theme | function | Devices | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | | Sponsors | Syntactical structure | Visual image |
| Defining OBOR | A proposal responding new era call | Explanation | Chinese official & people from neighbouring countries | Question-explanation sequence/ Highlights with host's summary | Automation maps/ Scene of Xi's speech/ Shots with different peoples, architectures with different styles/ Scenes related to Silk Road, e.g. camel troops in desert |
| | A proposal of cooperation | Explanation/ Clarification | Chinese officials and scholars | | |
| | A proposal of openness | Defence/ Clarification | Chinese officials and scholars | | |
| | A proposal of mutual benefit | Defence/ Clarification | Chinese officials scholars and Saudi Arabian businessman | | |
| | A proposal for cultural connection | Explanation/ Clarification | Chinese officials scholars | | |
| Concerns deconstruction | Analogy with colonisation | Defence | Saudi Arabian businessman | | |
| | China domination | Clarification/ Defence | US scholar (pro) Chinese scholars | | |
| | Territorial disputes | Explanation/ Clarification | Chinese scholar | | |

The Australian framing of the One Belt One Road Initiative

Since the proposal of OBOR in late 2013, the initiative has drawn massive attention in policy-making circles, academia and media. Most of the Australian participants in this project expressed their knowledge of it although the knowledge was of various degrees. The following two sections present the Australian participants' frames of OBOR and their reaction to CCTV NEWS' framing of the OBOR in *Closer to China*.

Australians' understanding of OBOR

The interview results showed that most participants had previous knowledge about OBOR before although most of their knowledge focused on only one or two aspects. Most of the participants were aware of the economic, trade aspects (a1, a6, a8, a9, a14).

It a strategy put up probably in the last 3 years also by president Xi, to sort of re-establish economic ties I guess, increase trade along that classic traditional Silk Road, but also have a maritime route. (a21)

Some thought economy is the foundation of the initiative:

[OBOR] is a good idea, another form of free trade area, with countries with joint binderies with china; you've got different cultures, different histories, different perspectives and religions, all sorts of differences but they can be united under common economic interest to advance trade. (a1)

There were others thinking trade was an ultimate end and China would gain increase in economic influence in the world through the initiative:

[OBOR] is a strategic building connection between countries to do trade along this line, connecting them together boost trade. (a9)

China will become more globalised, especially through this OBOR, and it's going to spread its economy elsewhere all over. America is withdrawing. (a14)

Another theme reflected in the participants' responses was that it was a strategic move towards power dominance against the US.

Basically China tries to connect all the countries along Silk Road, recreate the Silk Road, basically to sort of ... countering the US dominance. (a11)

It is interesting that Xi Jinping and the associated government institutions are using history to promote China's future greatness. The museums are filled with people and their children who are hungry for knowledge of the past. (a23)

OBOR is a..., by historically, it's a ring next to the Silk Road in terms of its contemporary relevance; it's a turn to the East as a counter balance, to a less extent EU, but definitely to the US. The US Obama administration is promoting its TPP, it excluded China, and so OBOR draws a different set of connections across Eurasia. It is really interesting because it's diplomatically interesting, it requires China and Russia to have an agreement, and I think Turkey is in it in an interesting way. I just think it probably stems from a sense the West has done a lot of damage in Middle East and there are new opportunities for the strategic partnerships. (a15)

Only one participant mentioned soft side of the initiative: the flow of ideas in the initiative:

OBOR is sort of 21st century Silk Road, trying to draw people together to improve trade, communication the flow of ideas and products. It is a good thing. I was very disappointed at Britain's decision at Brexit, because I believe the way to forward is to try and improve the flow of ideas, to reduce barriers. (a8)

The participants' attitudes towards OBOR were diversified although, as shown above some thought it was a good concept:

I think it's a big concept which should be good for, particularly for those countries in central Asia which are china's neighbours. It's good for China to develop. (a2)

But most of them thought that it was no more than a political narrative for resource exploitation:

This is another [example]of China's mentality, it takes quite a bit of getting used to make up very implausible stories and think people are going to believe them and this happens all the time. Of course it is not totally bad, colonialism isn't totally bad. It depends on what they are doing in the countries. In Africa for example, there is iron ore, they build railroads and they are happy with that, but the main use of the railway is to transport iron whatever to the port and bring it back to China. So I tend to believe that there is no such thing as a free lunch. Countries just don't give away huge amounts for no reason. (a6)

Participant a1 expressed his disdain of the idea that China was trying to provide a Chinese solution for the world through OBOR because of its own domestic problems:

OBOR is great, but China itself has got real social and economic problems going forward. I don't believe the policy will solve China's problems let alone anyone else's problems. It is wrong to suppose your own idea can work for all. (a1)

Also, the suspicion of the possible political imperative made some very cautious towards OBOR and thus want to learn more about it:

I am very unclear on what the political imperatives; are there any, what they are trying to do politically or is it just economic?... but it has been a bit hard to sort of pin down exactly what it is that is the Chinese vision for OBOR, is it just try it? (a21)

They may think there are some other intentions. E.g., Australia refused a Chinese telecommunication companies contract because of the suspicion that they may use it to collect information. (a7)

Beyond the suspicions, other participants mentioned further possible challenges facing the initiative, like the notorious corruption problems in countries along the OBOR target region:

OBOR means more relations with neighbouring countries, but there are also a lot of problems, like infrastructure, also with corruption, not corruption in China, corruption in countries like Kazakhstan. So it's not easy to overcome those problems, but it's good to have a vision on what you are going to achieve. I think one of the great things about China is to take a long term point of view and plan for the future, our government, especially our present government is not good at it at all. (a2)

I see the greatest problem for China (in pushing OBOR) is the overcoming of the corruption associated with gift giving – Guanxi. (a23)

Response to the CCTV NEWS framing of OBOR

This following part contains the results of the in-depth interviews on the participants' responses to the *Closer to China* videos. As mentioned earlier, being qualitative research, this project will not make any effort to attribute causality. The foci of the questions in this part were: general impressions of the production values, the way OBOR was framed, whether or not there was an informing or persuasion intent factor that participants could detect in the videos, and their response to that.

A balanced stance was seen by some of the participants who watched the videos, although CCTV NEWS always accompanied by the label of 'propaganda'. Some participants thought that different views were presented and in this sense, the format was not that different from programs in Western media, which they were familiar with.

I think the program on OBOR is interesting. I don't think it is propaganda; it is informative. (a15)

It was good because it is quite good for me to hear that China is quite happy for Western companies to be involved. The information seems well balanced to me. The problems with the maritime Silk Road and China's regional neighbours will be solved in the end by negotiation. (a4)

It was good. The belt and road economic trade route seems like history repeating, just like the Silk Road hundreds of years ago. Once again, [it seem to be] another example of China as a large opportunity for trade and investment. The way of the story telling was not that different from what I usually view in Western media. (a7)

It's interesting in terms of that you hear some people from the smaller countries around China talking about OBOR and the way they were looking sort of positively towards the potential benefits to them, closer economic relationships. That was interesting. (a23)

I thought they were good and there was coverage about the challenges and what the disputes are; I thought they were good because you've got different views about that. You need to see Chinese officials being challenged, not necessarily in an aggressive way, but it need to be challenged about whether America is excluded from this or is it just a way for China to insert political influence on that new route or are you going to be working and trying to dominate all those countries and is India is included, why is it go through Kashmir and that is going to upset Indians, have you spoken to each country directly and,... so just see they are challenged and therefore they provide more balanced view rather than just, 'Oh this is a grand vision by president Xi and we should all get on board.' The rest of us don't have to unless we understand what it's really all about and how can we all benefit. (a21)

But some still found the promotion of the Chinese perspective to be very obvious in the program:

I felt that the presenter was trying to push a positive line. (a4)

The program is not hard to understand. It may be a promotion instead of propaganda. Propaganda would say something like we are good people, it is a good project, and you should support us. (a19)

I have no problem with the Chinese perspective; this is what the channel is supposed to do. (a1)

But participant a22 thought that largely one-sided perspectives were common for the programs addressing governments' agendas, even in Western media. According to his experience, Western media did not do better in presenting diversified opinions:

Yes, it is [the program] largely one-sided, largely positive of the policy, but at least there was one bit in that video I thought interesting, which was where the criticism was raised – isn't it just a new version of colonialism and I thought that was quite interesting at least that idea has been put forward as a kind of counterpoint to the positive side of it. That wasn't developed in any way but at least was put forward. It was good to a certain extent; there was still at least one opposing view point that was part of the mix. You've got to expect something like that to be largely positive and pro the policy, but at least criticism had still been raised. You've got to kind of expect, you really should expect that from the media anywhere, you can understand any media in any country, they are going to be largely positive in terms of the government agenda, but you won't want the media to raise counterpoints. I don't have a very high opinion of Australia media; I think there is some part of Australian media they tend to be smaller, more independent. But the mainstream media, including Fairfax, I just think they don't get many useful or interesting insights into what's going on, I mean the trouble with the media in Australia is it is presented with slower facts, you have people who have opinions on radio and television usually strongly oriented towards one-sided politics. You just don't see too much counterbalance, you see a little bit with the ABC and SBS, but even those organisations, they self-censor to a light degree often, you just don't see too much diversity of opinion and analysis in Australian media. (a22)

As for the intent to persuade, although some participants expressed their confirmation on the informative side of the program, persuasion intent was hardly seen:

I can argue some of the measures the Chinese government is taking, the one I would not be recommending. Policy direction will not achieve what the government says [it wants] to achieve. I don't think it's a long term benefit for the ordinary Chinese people. (a1)

[The program is good], but again, I sort of want to know can I trust this report, who is Robert Kuhn, what views is he putting, is he a China government person, or is he a long time former New York Times reporter or ..., you know I didn't know anything about him. (a21)

For me, I don't mind if it is a Chinese point of view, but I would like to hear something about the islands because that's the thing that worries me as a foreigner. Also, it worries some of the little countries. China said they have developed AIIB, they made the point that America could join it if they want to.

Australia has joined it, It's a worry becauseI don't know what's going to happen because history shows when you've got a rising power, you've got a downing power, sadly that often causes trouble. Also there were few debates, no why. They pose the tone that China is exploiting the countries but then they oppose that Chinese investment is better for Tajikistan. There was a big emphasis on win-win cooperation. It felt like the presenter Kuhn was reading something written for him by the government. The Chinese professor sounded like a spokesperson for the government. Good to hear a different view from the American professor. It would have been good to hear from a Japanese or Korean person. (a4)

Summary

This chapter has presented the research findings of framing around China's OBOR initiative at different stages during a communication process: the initiator – Chinese government, the state media CCTV NEWS TV news magazine program *Closer to China with R.L. Kuhn* – and the Australian target audiences' response to the coverage. CCTV NEWS' working mechanism and professional values as a professional hybrid organisation with the mix of Chinese staff and foreign staff were also presented. In the state document, OBOR was framed as a project with the aim to boost mutual development of the region and a broader human society with regional cooperation and rule-abiding approaches. The program presented the frames to clarify the outside concerns on the initiative; in addition, to explain the OBOR initiative in the cooperation, open, mutual benefit and culture connection perspectives. Through the analysis of interview data based on the clarification of journalistic identity and professional values, it was found that in the view of employees, CCTV NEWS is an information disseminator about China and other countries that are neglected by Western international broadcasters. The rationale of the existence lies in the inadequacy of information being provided in the broadcasting market. Under this self-image, the media workers define their role as disseminators with the professional values of objectivity, balance, fairness and, most importantly, inclusivity. The target audiences' responses to the program demonstrated that the storytelling techniques of the program are relatively satisfactory with the balanced views presented. However, because of the broader concerns on China and the state-owned identity of CCTV NEWS, the persuasion effect is limited.

The findings have been presented in this and the previous chapter. The next chapter will discuss the findings in relation to the research questions and propositions raised in the first two chapters. A brief conclusion will follow the discussion.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The previous chapters have presented the findings from the research questions through the analysis of data collected by in-depth interviews together with small-scale online discussion, media content analysis and media studio observation, accompanied by interviews with media workers at CCTV NEWS. In this wrap-up chapter, further discussions will be undertaken. Firstly through addressing each research question and proposition in detail. Then the theoretic indications of this research in framing theory, information flow and the soft power will be drawn, based on the above discussion. After this, the significance and limitations of this research project will be addressed followed by an outlook on future research in the related area.

Congruity of findings to research questions

RQ1.What kind of frames on China and OBOR does China intend to deliver to the world?

China's intended frames to the world have been examined at two levels: at the first level the Chinese public diplomacy elites' frames of domains of societal activity where society is able to demonstrate virtuosity that can exercise soft power (Chitty 2017b) – economy, culture and science and technology and the controversial domain of the political system – are examined; at the second level the state perspective is

examined through the case study of the framing on OBOR in state documents. The design was based on the assumption that public diplomacy plays an important role in framing a country's information, image in the context of noopolitik, and will project soft power. As discovered in the interviews with Australian participants, this level of framing did have some congruence with individual's framing of specific issues.

The findings show that among public diplomacy elites, the framing of China was generally complicated, mirroring the current situation of China which is at the junction of integrating to the world stage while rapidly ascending in status. The complexity in public diplomacy elites' frames was also reflected in their perceptions of the selected fields of economy, culture, political system and science and technology. Judgments on the various themes and diverse attitudes towards their relevance to public diplomacy elites arise from the interviews, but there was no consensual position on any single theme (See table 7.1). For each frame, both positive and negative themes were identified. However, underpinning the various attitudes was the fact that all the participants were positioning themselves to consider the projection of China's image based on China's current situation and to try to understand the outward oriented information/image delivery questions.

Table 7.1. Participants' attitudes towards different frames

| | Theme | Position |
|---|---|-----------------|
| 'Economy frame' | The continuous growth is obvious | Positive |
| | A factor showcase the strength of other factors | Positive |
| | The market is big | Positive |
| | Has the potential to further development | Positive |
| | Big in size but not strong in quality | Sceptical |
| | Big in whole but not in per capita | Sceptical |
| | | |
| 'Culture frame' | Representation of Eastern civilisation | Positive |
| | Limited attraction | Sceptical |
| | Ambiguity in internal recognition | Negative |
| | Deficiency in communication | Negative |
| 'Political system frame' | The choice of special and complicated | Positive |
| | Not perfect | Understanding |
| 'Science & Technology frame' | Fast developing | Positive |
| | Lack of innovation | Sceptical |

Although inquiries were made in the context of public diplomacy with China's image in the eyes of foreigners, the participants' basic positions on the issues were defensive and reactive, seeking only for better ways of projecting China's image. That is to say, their intended framing was for the direction countering of assumptions like 'China threat'. Bearing in mind the biased perception from many Western countries, what most participants expected was that an objective image of China should be sent to the outside world on the basis that China is a country that has achieved greatly, focused on development and designs no threat to other countries – although not all the aspects were positive in their own eyes.

The incongruity among the Chinese public diplomacy elites' frames was obvious. Here framing differentiation will be used to refer to the incongruity among different frames. In this group, the framing differentiation exists in the themes and positions. This differentiation might reflect the current situation in China: there are traditional values and aspects of cultural heritage, thanks to the country's long history, and the socialist values that have dominated the political system since 1949; but the rapid economic development over the last 30 some years has endowed the country with a more modern visage and Western values. It seems that settling on some striking and impressive – and quintessential – descriptors for the country is not easy. This is a condition that creates bewilderment among the citizens of a rising China.

The state framing of OBOR was understandably focusing on the promising side of the initiative with the purpose of informing the potential partners of the possible benefits of the initiative and offer assurances of China's responsible status in the progression of OBOR. In the master document *Vision and Action*, China was framed as the promoter of cooperation in world development and cooperation, the rule abiding participant and the responsibility sharer – a virtuous 'citizen' in the Global Republican Confederacy. This positioning complies with its responsible big power discourse in international relations.

Looking at the two levels as a whole, the framing differentiation between the public diplomacy elites and the state framing vary in scope; that is, the state framing on OBOR is focused on the 'sunny side' of everything, while the public diplomacy elites

did not confine themselves to the positive sides of issues about China, but did recognise benign intentions.

RQ2. How are China's stories framed in CCTV NEWS?

RQ2a. How congruent are CCTV NEWS frames on certain topics to the state's frames?

CCTV NEWS framing of China's story was also detected through the case of OBOR. The framing occurred under two main themes: the interpretation of OBOR under the state framework and addressing the doubts and disputes raised by international stakeholders. As the product of a state-owned media outlet with soft power aims, the two-episode program entitled *Closer to China* unsurprisingly did not pose any fundamental challenge to the initiative. The function it played had three goals: describe the initiative; defend China's stance; and dispel any doubts of external parties. At variance with the conventional wisdom in the West that CCTV NEWS resorts to positive reporting, the news magazine program did raise some thorny issues like power dominance, resistance from some countries and disputes, such as the one about the South China Sea, around OBOR. But the tendency to resort to apologetics – through defence and clarification – was clear and even inevitable considering that expert guests on the show were mostly from the state sector or foreign policy think-tanks. Resolution of divergence was not always offered; lead-ins and wrap-ups by the host left some audience members with the impression that he was a mouth-piece of Chinese government (see Chapter Six).

A comparison of the frames, frame themes and their functions between the state document *Vision and Action* and CCTV NEWS program *Closer to China* shows both similarities and differences.

Table 7.2. Key elements in media frames of OBOR

| Frames in <i>Closer to China</i> | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Frame | Theme | function |
| Defining OBOR | A proposal responding new era call | Explanation |
| | A proposal of cooperation | Explanation/Clarification |
| | A proposal of openness | Defence/Clarification |

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | A proposal of mutual benefit | Defence/Clarification |
| | A proposal for cultural connection | Explanation/Clarification |
| ‘Concerns deconstruction’ | Analogy with colonisation | Defence |
| | China domination | Clarification/Defence |
| | Territorial disputes | Explanation/Clarification |

Table 7.3. Key elements in state frames of OBOR

| Frames in <i>Vision and Action</i> | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| Cooperation Frame | Theme | function |
| | Cooperation is the call of the time | Appealing |
| | Cooperation scope | Informing |
| | Cooperation mechanism | Informing |
| | Development in conception | Appealing |
| The development frame | Development in specific areas | Informing |
| | Development as an approach of B&R implementation | Informing |
| | Rules and norms in concept | Assuring |
| ‘Rule-abiding frame’ | Rules and regulations in specific area | Informing/ appealing |
| | Establish rules and agreements during the cooperation | Informing/ appealing |
| | The tone of open and mutual benefit | appealing |
| | Open and mutual benefit in specific areas | Informing/ appealing |
| | Mutual benefit connecting domestic and international regions | Informing/ appealing |
| ‘Open and mutual benefit frame’ | The initiator of opening up and cooperation | Informing |
| | The co-operator | Assurance |
| | The responsibility sharer | Assurance |

In both the state document and CCTV NEWS program, the themes of cooperation, development, open and mutual benefit, and cultural connections of OBOR were highlighted. Both contain information that would help people understand the initiative. However, each piece has its own unique aspects. For example, in *Vision and Action*, the role that China would be playing and its intention to abide by relevant rules during the implementation of the initiative were presented. Clearly the Chinese government was seeking to give assurances to the potential partners to whom it was appealing, in this state document. But in *Closer to China*, there are no such assurances.

In the state document, there was narration of the benefits of OBOR that was viewed as a technique of appealing; while in the TV program, there were aspirational elements, but no apparent direct appeals were detected. In the TV program, doubts and suspicions had been raised and addressed. Defensive remarks and clarification were provided from the perspectives of Chinese scholars. Principles for resolution were expressed on issues such as territorial disputes where ultimate resolution was considered possible. While in the state document, disputes and doubts were invisible. These inclusion and exclusion of certain parts in the state document and CCTV NEWS program could be interpreted as products of institution-specific professional practice by both: the government as the initiator of the strategy played its role in informing its target audience, of potential OBOR partners, of what OBOR was about, how the plan could be operationalised and what was OBOR's significance; the TV program showed its audience-orientated coverage of both the bright side and the controversial side.

The functions CCTV NEWS performed in framing OBOR can be evaluated through professional logic and political logic. Professionally, in the context of news practitioners' global mobility, interviews with both Chinese and foreign staff threw light on the role of professional norms in the practice of CCTV NEWS' program production. Through the analysis of interview data based on the clarification of journalistic identity and professional values, it was found that in the view of employees, the channel is an information disseminator about China and other countries that are neglected by Western international broadcasters. The rationale of its existence lies in the inadequacy of information being provided in the broadcasting market. Under its self-determined position, CCTV NEWS staff defined the channel's role as information

disseminators with professional values of objectivity, balance, fairness and – most importantly – inclusivity. Under this self-perception, professionally, it played a role in informing the audience of what the OBOR initiative was about, and how it would be implemented. Facing a suspicious international public opinion, it introduced doubts and negative understandings that counter the typical Chinese media practice of ignoring the doubts in the environment while spelling out strategies and addressing them in detail from the Chinese perspective. The practice conformed to the employees' self-perceptions of the role of a disseminator of the Chinese perspective. The political logic is that CCTV NEWS is a state-funded media organisation having the aim of flipping the international information flow that is perceived to be imbalanced – against China. Its defensive and clarifying stance could find ground from this perspective.

RQ2b. How is framing determined by the professional performance of news workers at the channel?

As introduced in the preceding chapters, with the strategy of employing foreign staff, CCTV NEWS has embraced Western professional skills and values. The participants' feedback shows that the presentation of CCTV NEWS has little difference from their Western counterparts. This could be interpreted as the result of its foreign employment strategy. The interaction between the channel and Western staff demonstrate a certain level of hegemonic rule (Onuf 2014) of the management in a Foucauldian disciplinary way on the one hand. On the other hand, the expertise of the Western staff purchased space for them to reflect some professional values while presenting the news, although there is a modicum of restriction on topics that are deemed to be of a sensitive nature; chief editors are the arbiters.

Findings indicate that expatriate staff at CCTV NEWS, untrammelled by the yoke of ratings, feel free to produce programs that are more aligned with some of their professional values – not needing to embellish content to attract audiences. Western commercial media face the need to compromise professional values, e.g. in content allocation, because of the need to accommodate advertisers. Expatriate staff have individually constructed conditions of homonymy, however uneasy, through making trade-offs between, in some cases, being without work in a libertarian press culture, and being gainfully and visibly employed, with some political constraints but with liberation

from enslavement by ratings. While there are some incursions into professional preferences, government intervention is not within the parameters of what is acceptable. Indeed, CCTV America's team has won some journalism awards including an Emmy for a feature story, in 2016. From management's perspective, the expertise from local Western staff at CCTV America generates quality content – a key to attracting Western audiences. The local staff strives for the greatest leeway in making programs. This aspect too contributes to their constructions of homonymy even if some consider the need to continuously negotiate stances on certain topics to be a nuisance. Like one participant said, CCTV America reported the visits of the Pope and Dalai Lama to the US in 2012, but not in 2016.

Accordingly, the professional value they adhere to is the presentation of varied voices and stories. As to the crucial questions of the channel's censorship and credibility deficits, they admit their existence without giving these any emphasis. One of the reasons is that in actual journalism practice, structural pressure or Foucauldian capillary power is everywhere; the differences are in the form and locus of their presence (Foucault 1998). For the commercial broadcasters, the pressure comes from ratings, advertisers; for public broadcasters of the ilk of BBC, the 'pressure' may be more of a gentle massage.¹³ For CCTV NEWS, it comes simultaneously from the

¹³ "In particular, *Yes, Minister* was the first show on British television to dramatize with deadly accuracy the twisted and contradictory logic that passes for standard political dialogue. It was, for example, Jim Hacker, MP, who famously uttered the line: 'I don't want the truth; I want something I can tell Parliament'. And it was in an episode from Series 3 called *The Challenge* that we saw how the Government succeeds in exerting pressure on the BBC by applying the best twisted logic the executive machine can deliver. Hacker wants an embarrassing interview he has recorded with Ludovic Kennedy to be prevented from going on air because he has uttered some misleading information. Sir Humphrey Appleby argues that, while you can't censor the BBC, you can 'persuade them to withdraw programmes voluntarily if they're not in the public interest'.

'Well,' replies Hacker, 'it's definitely not in my interest, and I represent the public, so it's definitely not in the public interest.'

Later, Hacker and Sir Humphrey meet the BBC's Director of Planning over a nice club lunch and suggest they might set up a select committee to scrutinise BBC expenditure, with particular reference to corporate boxes at Wimbledon, Ascot, Wembley and Lords.

investor and the supervisory body. Self-censorship and the 'invisible scissor' phenomenon are also well known across the world in different types of polities.

It is clear through the above analysis that, following the discussion of role identity and professional values, few international staff at CCTV NEWS who were interviewed mentioned any coercive dynamic in their organisations. Homonomic accommodations of different interpretations of professional values may be seen. In a hybrid cultural organisation such as CCTV NEWS, professional norms demonstrate their hegemonic character in the practice of news making. However, the hegemonic effect is not unidirectional; it is interactive, with a negotiation between power granted naturally by the media system and professionalisation. During the process, a unique working culture, a third space, favourable to hosting homonymy for at least some of the Western employees, is fostered among the staff from multiple backgrounds.

RQ3. How congruent are CCTV NEWS frames of China with those of Australian stakeholders of China-Australia relations in the CCTV NEWS audience in Australia?

RQ3a. What kinds of frames of China do the Australian stakeholders of China-Australia relations entertain?

Through the findings in chapter five and chapter six, clear characteristics of Australian public diplomacy elites' framing of China can be summarised as follows: from the onlookers' perspective both positive and negative sides were discerned; but onlookers had their own vision limits. As in the Chinese participants' case, multiple themes emerged from each topic. The differences were that the attitudes were more diversified. From economy to science and technology, each topic was accompanied with positive, negative, and – more prevalent – suspicious or worrying attitudes.

The shocked director stoutly maintains that there can be no question of the BBC giving in to government pressure, but agrees not to broadcast the interview anyway. His reason? If the minister says something misleading in the interview, that constitutes factual error, and the BBC can't broadcast factual errors since it sets the highest possible standards of journalistic accuracy. Armando Iannucci 2004 'Yes, Minister: nothing changes' *The Telegraph*, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3602329/Yes-Minister-nothing-changes.html>

Perceptions were influenced hugely by participants' experiences: their interaction with China and the contexts they were in. For example, those who had personal contacts with China had perspectives on China that were closer to that of Chinese organs than those who depended mainly on media.

Table 7.4. Key elements in Australian frames of China

| | theme | Position |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 'Economy frame' | Huge achievement/ Bright prospect | Acceptance/ admiration |
| | Uncertain prospect | Suspicion |
| | Australian's concern about a rising China | concern |
| | | |
| 'Culture frame' | Attractive aspects | Positive |
| | Multi-layers of cultural elements | Mixed |
| | Appreciated within multicultural background | Mutual |
| | Inefficiency in communication | Negative |
| 'Political System' | Reasonable elements exist | Cautious acceptance |
| | Different level of problems | Concern/ Suspicion/ angst |
| 'S&T frame' | Acknowledgement of achievements | Positive |
| | Different level of suspicions | Concerns/ suspicion |

Secondly, being used to their own political system and culture, scepticism clouded the lens of comparison used to observe China. For example, concerns about Communist Party rule and the possible threat presented by a rising China, lurked behind almost every aspect of some participants' understanding of China-related issues. This might explain the situation where the Australian media and government show tremendous enthusiasm for special cases such as human rights issues; react sensitively to political

donations made by the Chinese diaspora; and cautiously assay Chinese investment in Australia.

Thirdly, living in a multicultural environment, Australians view China in the context of many cultures, in which Western culture is the mainstream. This suggests that Chinese culture is usually regarded as something that could be appreciated or researched by a group of people, but is not amenable to being profoundly understood by the wider society.

The above comments all accompanied the prospect of China's rise economically and politically on the world stage, with the rhetoric of 'yes, it has been very successful; it may become one of the strongest economies, but there are problems'. This may indicate scepticism about, or lack of confidence in, China's future development, which has resulted from the information they acquired from different channels. The conclusions varied dramatically when evaluated from different perspectives. For example, in the eyes of most Chinese participants, China's economic achievements were significant; systemic advantage played roles in them and problems resided in the structure that needed continuing reform; while in the eyes of most Australian participants, it might be these were systemic coincidences – ones that would end sooner or later.

Through the comparison lens, the above-mentioned characteristics determine the situation that the framing of China happened in two quite different fields: the framing field of the Chinese and the framing field of the Australians. In each field, a variety of frame themes emerge with different attitudes or positions towards certain topics. These themes differ for each individual inside and outside the fields (shown as the figures 7.1 and 7.2), but similar trends exist. Underpinning the themes and attitudes are core elements that determine the real difference or the degree to which an individual or a group in one field could trust or accept framing from other fields. The core elements may include social norms, ideology, culture, and belief, etc. It is easier to achieve integration among individuals within each field because of the similarity in the core elements. But between the different fields, the integration might be harder to achieve (as shown in figure 7.3).

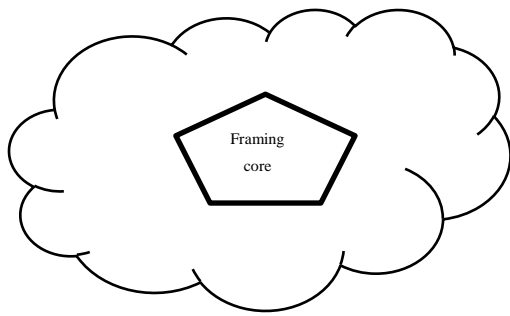


Figure 7.1. Framing field A

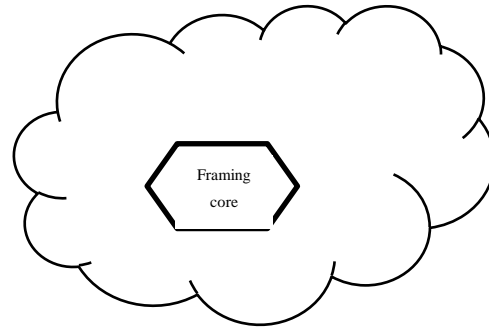


Figure 7.2. Framing field B

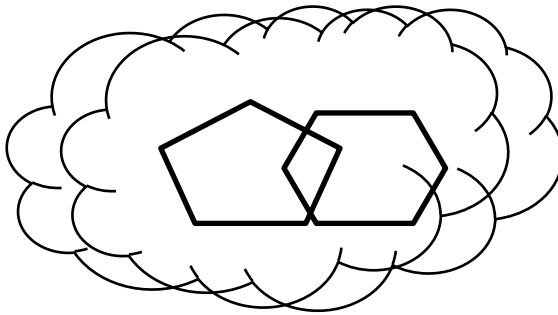


Figure 7.3. Framing integration between different fields

RQ3b. Does CCTV NEWS production affect Australian frames of China, and under what circumstance?

This question was also tested through the case of OBOR. The findings in Chapter Six indicate that the presentation and format of the *Closer to China* program on OBOR were seen as not much different from that in Western media, which they usually watch. The propagandist tone or format was hardly seen, while the informative function was eminently visible. So the direct conclusion could be drawn that the congruence of CCTV NEWS frames with Australian frames, on OBOR, was limited, although a certain viewership particularly sought in CCTV NEWS the Chinese perspective.

The problem can be analysed in the following manner: firstly, due to the participants' previous knowledge, their media consumption habits and the core values they held, CCTV NEWS was viewed as one part of most participants' cautiously constructed frame of China, due to its status as a state-owned media and mouthpiece of

the ruling party; for the latter reason, its credibility as a reliable information source was challenged by most participants.

Secondly, Australia has a very open media environment. Beyond the domestic media product suppliers, many world famous media outlets around the world can be accessed by Australians. In this case, although the local media may suffer from credibility and quality issues, many alternative choices are still available, like the BBC, CNN, Al-Jazeera and news journals like *The Economist*. These are exemplars that CCTV NEWS had been mimicking in its lifetime of less than two decades. Trying to surpass them and become the audience's primary medium, even if only for Chinese news perspectives, requires a quantum leap in the storytelling and topic selection virtuosity of CCTV NEWS; the latter may encounter great barriers under China's current media system which always has taboos on some topics. Although one of the editorial management staff claimed during the interview that there is no topic that cannot be reported, she also expressed that the bottom line in editorial guidelines is national interest. In this case, perhaps CCTV NEWS needs to reconsider its strategies professionally and politically – while focusing on Chinese perspective, to compete with well-established public broadcasters like BBC, and commercial networks like CNN; and how to make sure the Chinese perspective is delivered with the virtuosity of foreign staff. If the questions cannot be answered satisfactorily through the programs of CCTV NEWS, it cannot overcome the trap of being seen as a propaganda tool, a problem which can prevent its bringing congruence to its saying and doing.

RQ4. What role does CCTV NEWS play in China's soft power projection?

Having evaluated its capacity to influence the audience as limited, the role of CCTV NEWS in China's soft power projection can be reconsidered through the following aspects: its expected role; its actual role and the difficulties.

In the theoretical chapter, Chitty's (2017a) positioning of media as multiplier of resources of soft power was adopted. Under this classification, the intangible soft power sources – knowledge, behaviour and culture in various forms like art, education, folklore history, language, news etc. – take effect through the channel and multiplier resources like mobility, electronic networked media and cultural industries. Seen from

this sense, news is an intangible passive soft power sources and media is a channel and active soft power resource. In Chapter Three, the proposal was made in a way that information through media was disseminated in two directions to the audience – directly and through domestic networks. According to the soft power model proposed in the theoretical framework (Chapter Three, page 74), soft power sources take effect only after the information is accepted in a homonomic frame of mind. Research findings show that compared with media as a source, people tend to believe the information they receive through personal interaction. So the mobility channel through networked communication will definitely weigh more in the information flow. Thus the model could be revised to the following way (see figure 7.4).

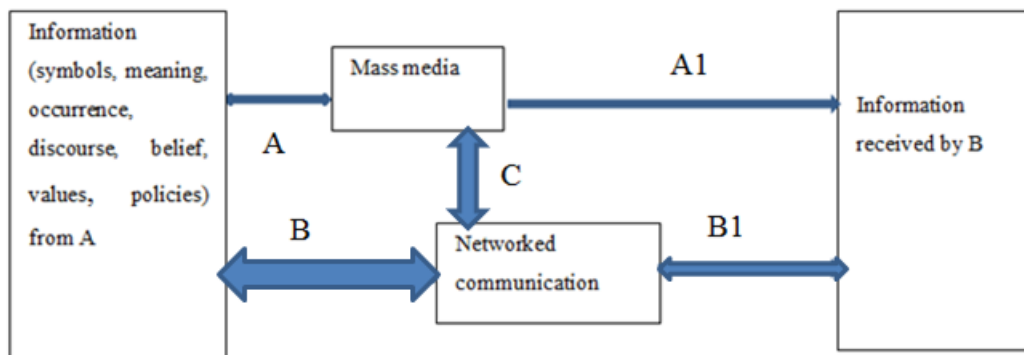


Figure 7.4. Revised information flow

As discussed previously, CCTV NEWS' capacity is limited in impacting Australian staff effectively. But it may find a certain degree of fulfilment in its domestic market; because from the early stage, CCTV English language broadcasting has attracted many English language learners in China. This method of information diffusion may be much easier because there are fewer cultural obstacles to understanding the information. CCTV NEWS narrative can to a certain extent turn into the narrative of people in public diplomacy interactions. Here again arise problems identified at management level. Interviews with CCTV NEWS management staff indicate that, at the strategic level, they did not pay serious attention to this group of viewers. In addition, with the speeding up of overseas expansion, the domestic market has been suffering a calculated shrinking. One Australian scholar, who travels frequently to Chinese universities, complained during the interview that in a top

university in Beijing he visited regularly, signals from CCTV NEWS were no longer available.

Another difficulty for the spreading of Chinese voices is its rhetorical differentiation between domestic discourse and external discourse. The most successful improvement of CCTV NEWS is its news presentation format, which changed from the traditional way of news selection, such as in domestic channels, where the most important news is usually the activity of state leaders. In CCTV NEWS, this practice has been abandoned. In addition, CCTV NEWS has been trying to expand its scope to touch upon some sensitive topics which are seldom covered by domestic channels. This is usually regarded as proof of China's inconsistency in discourse even in the eyes of some Chinese people. Also, differentiation in rhetoric and media coverage may enlarge the chasm between media and its public diplomacy participants. This may be a less than effective way to deliver China-related information.

Congruity of research findings to propositions

Based on the research findings in previous chapters and discussion addressing the research questions above, this section will address the propositions posed in the opening chapters. The propositions were (1) China has a clear consensus of a preferred self-projected frame for China; (2) the Chinese government strategically regards CCTV NEWS as an important agency of soft power; (3) CCTV NEWS frames a clear image of China to the target audiences abroad; (4) CCTV NEWS' frames of China have a congruence with the target audiences' frames of China. The corresponding key points to each will be discussed below.

Research findings arising from investigating Research Question 1 suggest that, from the different levels identified, frames of China and China-related issues in the discourse of state, public diplomacy elites and the media, are not strictly congruent in scope and from interpretative angles, but the core values are highly congruent. That is to say, framing differentiation exists internally on the Chinese side. On specific issues, the differentiation is even more diversified among the public diplomacy elites; but the

framing differentiation is on the surface level, not at the fundamental level. Under the international lens, the bias against China and China's weakness in influencing international public opinion were clearly seen in a consensual way among both the state and public diplomacy elites; and thus the externally-oriented frames are consistent among the state and public diplomacy elites. In this way, for the first proposition, although there is internal framing differentiation at the detailed level, the framing core and externally oriented framing are consistent.

As reviewed in the first two chapters, Chinese media is usually viewed simply as a propaganda tool. In this project, research findings show that the strategic position of CCTV NEWS could be interpreted from different levels. Firstly, from the state level, CCTV NEWS is under the national strategy plan for promoting China's discourse and image together with other media organisations and public diplomacy approaches. The continuing financial support is proof of that. The public diplomacy elites are also aware of the inconformity between China's rising status and its capacity for influencing world discourse. They thus had expectations on media development. In CCTV NEWS, staff confirmed their role of promoting Chinese discourse and the consideration of national interest in discourse – based on the judgement of unbalanced international information flow and the widely recognised biased framing in world main stream public discourse. These three levels of expectations on CCTV NEWS could be interpreted as its soft power resources positioning.

The logic behind media strategy could be further explored under the noopolitik (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 1999), context and China's desire to expand its discursive power. Noopolitik emphasises the importance of knowledge and ideas. According to Onuf (1989), interaction between speakers and listeners is the process through which norms of international governance are carried through the international system. International information flows have been dominated by Western countries. Research findings show that in China's public diplomacy elites' eyes, the demand for being heard as a rising power is widely agreed on in China.

The framing quality of China's image in CCTV NEWS in proposition three depends on two factors. Firstly, from the Chinese perspective, shown in the case of OBOR, the state frames were clearly reframed in CCTV NEWS with additional

defensive perspectives presented. However, the quality should also be investigated from the target audience's perspective. The audience response to CCTV NEWS' framing revealed in this research is that most participants took cognisance of the format but were not impressed by the content. But there are participants who expressed interest in the Chinese perspective delivered by CCTV NEWS. In this sense, the framing of the Chinese perspective in CCTV NEWS is clear enough to suggest that CCTV NEWS excels as an organisation specialised in delivering a Chinese perspective. But one must note that the Chinese perspective per se is a double-edged sword: on the one hand it could be a unique selling point with which to carve out a share of the audience; on the other hand it might be interpreted as hard proof, for those who believe that CCTV is nothing more than an organ of propaganda, and result in a refusal to accept it as a reliable media source.

While this thesis prefers to look at congruencies, Chinese policy makers and broadcasters look for proof of influence. To discuss the notion of influence of CCTV NEWS' frames on target audiences in Australia, the term influence should be clarified. In media, potential to effect could be indicated through multiple dimensions. The report of CCTV (CCTV Overseas Centre 2013) cited in Chapter Two looks at effectiveness in terms of expanding the organisation's reach into households. CCTV-NEWS may be available in every household in Australia that has Foxtel or a networked computer or mobile phone, but this only amounts to potential to influence, not actual influence. There are also the individual ways in which frames are received that were discussed earlier: Receivers may negotiate readings, constructing their own counter-hegemonic preferred readings (Fisher and Lucas 2011; Hall 1980). The new frame may be adopted, new knowledge may be added to an existing frame modifying it; or the old frame, perhaps a counter-hegemonic one, will be retained. One could speculate that the influence of CCTV NEWS would likely be shown to be very limited if quantitative research were to be conducted. For those who found it useful to learn about Chinese perspectives through viewing CCTV NEWS, there might be some new knowledge added to their framing of China. But for those who started with doubts about the credibility of CCTV NEWS, it is unlikely that there would be any positive influence

Arriving at conclusions

The previous two sections have discussed the research findings in connection with the research questions and propositions. This final section will wrap up by highlighting the achievements and limitations of this project. It consists of four substantive subsections: elaboration of theoretical indications, highlighting of significance, limitations and future research directions.

The theoretical indications

This subsection will identify the theoretical indications in this particular research project in three areas upon which the framework of this study has been based to set the stage for discussing the significance of this thesis: framing theory, international information flow and soft power. This project has been based on the proposal of intangible soft power sources travelling through international broadcasting. The discussion will be located in the context of GRC (Chitty 2017b) and uncover how the above mentioned three aspects are functioning in the context of it.

Framing theory

In the context of GRC, the delivery of information or the intangible sources of soft power is for the aim of better understanding frames from different contexts to facilitate homonomic reactions – which is the basic underpinning of GRC (Chitty 2017b) – or the Chinese concept of *He* or harmony (see Chapter Three). Under this framework, consensus or at least understanding needs to be reached on specific issues. Frame, as the ‘schemata of interpretation’ (Goffman 1974, 21), is directly responsible for the construction of interpretations of information. To explain this idea well, three concepts were used in the previous discussion: framing integration; framing differentiation and framing core. Framing integration was used to refer to the situation that similar understanding is achieved at the two poles of information flow. Framing differentiation refers to the difference existing in the framing among different individuals or groups. Framing core determines the most essential part of framing which allows uncovering the nature of framing differentiation. When framing cores are similar, the framing differentiation is at a surface level and is easier to overcome.

The introduction of these three concepts, in this thesis, will help uncover the mechanism of framing in a detailed way. In the context of international information flow, framing integration will be a positive sign to reach mutual understanding. Research findings in this project indicate that framing integration on China-related topics is hampered at least by two levels of framing differentiations: the internal differentiation among its own public diplomacy elites and the differentiation between internal and external stakeholders. The difference between the internal framing differentiation and external framing differentiation lies in the framing cores. For the internal framing differentiation, the differences among different individuals in a group will not determine the nature of framing and such differences are easy to overcome. For the external framing differentiation, the divergence lies in the fundamental factor and is hard to overcome. In the case under consideration in this project, the internal framing differentiation lies in different Chinese participants' views of the same topic from different angles. But when viewing Chinese views of external bias vis-à-vis China, there is a congruent trend that is discernible. However, when comparing the Australian participants' framing with that of their Chinese counterparts, hard attitudinal shells are sensed around each group. A striking example in this project is the Australian audiences' concern about China due to differences in political systems and culture. Many issues, like media and OBOR were influenced by this kind of concern. The cause of the differentiation is the framing core, the cultural factors that determine their belief system and the way they interpret issues. The core could be permeated by people with expertise in both cultures but this would be more difficult for others. China's media strategy together with other public diplomacy means can be viewed as *modus operandi* to tackle the framing cores. But the gestation period would be lengthy.

Information flow

Information flow is one problem to consider when investigating the international media landscape and power dynamics in discursive capacity in which China's international media strategy is grounded. Under constructivist international relations, information flow, as it includes discourse, contribution to the construction of social reality; because as Onuf (1989) puts it, the interaction between speaker and hearer is a

process of normativisation in international relations. In this project, information flow is viewed under a soft power lens where an intangible side of information is emphasised. The mechanism of information flow has been tested through framing analysis.

China's media strategy aims to draw on the noosphere to firstly flip its negative valence as seen in public opinion polls and secondly to strengthen its own discursive capacity in the international public sphere. To achieve these goals, it needs firstly to diffuse the noosphere with attractive information to international audiences, and secondly, to compete with well-established media outlets and establish its own reputation among media consumers. The first action demands macro efforts such as investment and policy support, while the second layer needs the development of virtuosity in storytelling, in essence, prowess in framing. Research results show that China has made and is making both kinds of efforts. At the macro level, financial support from the state facilitates continuous operation and expansion. The establishment of overseas branches, the recruitment of foreign staff and incorporation of some Western professional values are efforts at the micro level. According to audience feedback in this research, the format change in CCTV NEWS is obvious. In addition, following China's rise in the ranks of the economically powerful with the status in world affairs that accompanies this, the demand to become familiar with the Chinese perspective has grown among some of the public diplomacy elites in Australia. CCTV NEWS' strategic focus on the Chinese perspective makes invests it with the potential to fill a market void. But research results also suggests that among a large group of audience members, this potential of filling the market gap is hindered by framing differentiations at the core level, which views CCTV NEWS as being trapped in the mist of Communist China and thus having questionable credibility. From this sense, the primary challenge for CCTV NEWS is to consider how to compete with dominant media organizations in framing Chinese perspectives in crucial moments and earn the audiences' trust, now that it has its own delivery systems and multinational personnel.

Soft power

Soft power is a key concept in this research project and is elaborated under a communication lens. Identifying the ambiguity in mechanisms in Nye's (1990, 2004, 2011) model of soft power resources and its relationship with public diplomacy, this

project employs Chitty's (2017a; 2017b) model and examines soft power in information flow. The soft power model of information flow, developed herein, is firstly a model to test the role of media as channel of soft power source transition. Different from Nye's blunt claim that mass media plays an important role in soft power, Chitty's model distinguishes between passive and active soft power sources to which news and media belong respectively. This project picked CCTV NEWS as its media example and investigated its role in spreading Chinese frames. As repeatedly mentioned, the motive behind China's media expansion is to tell Chinese stories for mutual understanding and twist the imbalanced information flow. The motivating factor is civic virtue in Chitty's (2017a; 2017b) civic virtue model of soft power, and the purpose is to frame China as a virtuous state in GRC.

Compared with military coercion and economic inducement, a media approach which focuses on the transmission of intangible soft power values, like cooperation, development and mutual benefit, in OBOR, can be viewed as a soft use of power which conforms to the spirit of GRC, or *He* in a traditional Chinese sense.

In this project, media can be understood from different angles in soft power dynamics. It is firstly the channel for information delivery for promoting mutual understanding, or a multiplier of virtuosities, to put it in Chitty's terms. In the CCTV NEWS' case of this project, delivery of the Chinese perspective has the potential to promote better understanding of China's OBOR and to meet a measure of the audience demand for a Chinese perspective. In this sense, beyond having a channel function, by meeting audience demand media can be seen by CCTV NEWS managers who would be looking for effects as a measure of success, to have a soft power effect. This thesis does not employ the currency of effects and prefers to rely on examining congruence or lack thereof.

Secondly, judging from the hybrid structure of CCTV NEWS with both Chinese staff and foreign staff, as discussed in Chapter Six and the second section in this chapter, professional mobility could be facilitated by the self-construction of a measure of homonymy by expatriate staff. In this sense, the organisation itself becomes a node in a civil diplomacy (Chitty 2017a) network. Thus, CCTV NEWS itself plays a dual role in soft power dynamics: On the one hand, it can be viewed as the information diffuser, a

soft power multiplier; on the other hand, it is a player in the field of civil diplomacy in which connections are established.

Significance of this research

The above sections have discussed the research results addressing each research question and proposition; the theoretical indications have been elaborated under framing, international information flow and soft power theory. This section will highlight the significance of this project to existing literature from the academic angle as well as the social significance. To summarise generally, academically, this project has broken the information war routine in the investigation of state-owned media and legitimises the practice under a model where information flow is viewed as a means to reach mutual understanding for a harmonious coexistence; it uses the discourse on China's OBOR in CCTV NEWS under a soft power model and proposes a holistic model, with horizontal and vertical aspects, to test the soft power and framing dynamics respectively. The social significance of the research is naturally at the level of GRC and world politics; it provides a new approach to broadcast media construction of social reality in international affairs, which, as the case of Australia and China, may enhance the quality of foreign policy making. The details will be recounted below.

Firstly, the project has been developed on the civic virtue model of soft power under the context of GRC, a model of investigating soft power in information flow and tested the intangible sources of soft power through media channel. China's CCTV NEWS' soft power dynamics have been investigated through the case of OBOR being framed in different contexts. This thesis revealed empirically unexplored aspects of soft power and international broadcasting studies, namely the dual function of media as both a channel and civil diplomacy player in soft power dynamics.

Secondly, the project presented a multi-level investigation model on the frames of one country in the positions of its own people and people from another country in the context of exposure to the latter to the former's broadcasting media. In this project, the framing of China has been detected in the eyes of Chinese public diplomacy elites,

China's international media outlets, CCTV NEWS and Australian public diplomacy elites at the macro level. At the micro level, the research design distinguished itself from most previous research in that it uncovers a whole framing process under different contexts and explores in detail the framing dynamics. The concepts of framing integration, framing differentiation and framing core were proposed to help unveil the framing dynamics.

Thirdly, through the above mentioned two aspects, new dynamics of interpreting China and CCTV NEWS have emerged. Through the soft power framework in the context of GRC, the different framing angles of China have been presented and compared. CCTV NEWS, the equivalent of a propaganda tool, has been unveiled in the perspective of global media worker mobility. Professionalism under this context was reconfigured through the eyes of staff from both China and Western countries, and working in the new type of hybrid organisation.

Another highlight relating to framing theory in this project is that framing was tested in the information flow by examining congruity. Most previous qualitative research, that continued to seek to discuss effects without actually speaking of causality, usually addressed one stage of framing, particularly media framing, with the focus on media production and then assumed that the media frames had an effect on audiences. In this project, examination of the nature of congruence in framing in different contexts of information flow demonstrates a different perspective, to understand how one topic is framed by different stakeholders, and under what circumstance.

The research in this project also has significance for both state actors and media organisations in public diplomacy that aim to gain stronger soft power. Firstly, the constructivist understanding of international relations indicates the importance of framing. Frame integration is the ideal situation for mutual understanding. But the differentiation might be more determinative in most cases. Thus identification of the core elements of the differentiation and an open mind for listening and dialogue might be the crucial solutions to international affairs. This finding has significance for policy makers. In the context of Australia's foreign policy formulation towards China, swinging from one position to another has been a constant feature, as in the swing in favour of joining OBOR. Better understanding virtues, the core values, that determine

China's policy making and framing would definitely shorten the period of hesitation in such policy making.

For media organisations like CCTVNEWS that suffer institutional bias from their target audience, acquiring a deep understanding of target audiences' framing characteristics and dynamics is the primary challenge. But competitive framing capacity, in terms of virtuosity, is the crucial way in which to win over the trust of audiences from the dominant competitors.

Limitations of this research

The research is limited by constraints of time and material resources which have had an impact on method selection, sampling size and investigation depth. Within the parameters of a three-and-a-half-year PhD candidacy model, there are time limits that prevent the planning and conducting of a more complicated project. Access to the research objects is another factor that may impact the thoroughness of research. In the conduct of research, use of participant snowballing techniques can result in a recruitment result that includes larger groups with participants of similar background. This can affect the diversity of views. Also, at CCTV, it being a state organ, staff view researchers with great caution, and their suspicion about research intent posed a huge challenge in accessing participants at different levels within the organisation, particularly at very senior levels. Reaching principals may be difficult in most societies. However efforts were made to get in touch with the CCTV NEWS general director through CCTV's international public relations department, to no avail. The organisational policy is ironically that interviews are only accepted from international media organisations like CNN, BBC who are their competitors.

Future research

There is further research that deserves consideration as listed below:

Firstly, a future tracking of the development of CCTV NEWS is worthy of attention. CCTV NEWS has been experiencing dramatic transformation over the years. But under China's strategic plan in the context of its emerging presence in the news market, what kind of path will it follow and what the significance of the lens of soft power will be in providing new perspectives for international broadcasting studies are questions that need to be continually addressed at different stages.

Secondly, within the civic virtue model, there are more multipliers than media; how mobility and cultural industries interact with media and what other sources will help to develop the model further could be a new direction of future research. A measure of this has taken place in the current research by examining professional mobility. But with the focus on CCTV News it has not been possible to look at CCTV's role as a player in Chinese cultural industry. Additionally, the level of drilling into OBOR did not allow the uncovering of cultural industry projects that may become associated later with what is largely at present a project for infrastructure development for trade. Trade is of course relevant also to cultural industry.

As indicated in the previous section, the orientation of the current project might have missed detailed observations in each context that may generate new findings. For example, at the audience end, larger sample sizes under a mixed qualitative and quantitative inquiry, or controlled experiment, may draw a more detailed picture of audience framing and audience response to CCTV NEWS framing.

Conclusion

In this study, China in the frames of its own public diplomacy elites, its state owned broadcaster's CCTV NEWS arm and Australian public diplomacy elites have been examined under the framework of a soft power model of information flow. Major questions investigated in this project include: How frames of economy, culture, political system, and science and technology, domains of societal activity where society is able to demonstrate virtue and virtuosity that can exercise soft power, have been framed by Chinese and Australian public diplomacy elites; how the public diplomacy elites

perceive the role of media in the acquisition of knowledge of other countries; the case of China's One Belt One Road Initiative and how it has been framed in China's state discourse, in CCTV NEWS and in the eyes of Australian public diplomacy elites and their response to CCTV NEWS' framing of it and the soft power indications in the flow of information through media. The main methods that have been used include in-depth interviews, observation, case study and framing analysis. Horizontally, the investigation has been conducted under the framework of information flow in the context of civic virtue model of soft power in the background of Global Republican Confederacy (Chitty 2017a) where citizens', organisations' and states' participation in the international system as a way of developing soft power. Vertically, beyond the level of information flow, framing mechanisms – individual and collective – have been analysed in detail. Findings show limited congruence in frames at different contexts of information flow; direct civil diplomacy – in this case as a by-product of professional mobility – shows better relationships of congruence in particular respects. At the micro level, framing differentiations exist in both the internal and external fields with different characteristics. The differentiations among the two countries caused by framing cores are the main reason hindering framing integration, a state of congruency in framing among different individuals. This project has broken the information war routine in the investigation of state-owned media and legitimised the practice under a model where information flow is viewed as a means of reach mutual understanding for a harmonious coexistence with the case of China's OBOR in CCTV NEWS under a soft power model and proposed a holistic model horizontally and vertically to test framing dynamics. Finally, I would like to hark back to John Burton's advice as a diplomat and IR theorist.¹⁴ Burton (1967) took the position that it is only sensible that states should seek to better understand each other as through such a learning process conflict could be avoided. CCTV NEWS can play a valuable role in this respect.

¹⁴ Burton was a former Australian foreign secretary and diplomat who was later at Oxford University, University of Maryland and George Mason University, as an IR and conflict resolution theorist.

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APPENDIX 1

Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Belt and Road

Issued by the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, with State Council authorization

March 2015

Preface

More than two millennia ago the diligent and courageous people of Eurasia explored and opened up several routes of trade and cultural exchanges that linked the major civilizations of Asia, Europe and Africa, collectively called the Silk Road by later generations. For thousands of years, the Silk Road Spirit - "peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit" - has been passed from generation to generation, promoted the progress of human civilization, and contributed greatly to the prosperity and development of the countries along the Silk Road. Symbolizing communication and cooperation between the East and the West, the Silk Road Spirit is a historic and cultural heritage shared by all countries around the world.

In the 21st century, a new era marked by the theme of peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit, it is all the more important for us to carry on the Silk Road Spirit in face of the weak recovery of the global economy, and complex international and regional situations.

When Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Central Asia and Southeast Asia in September and October of 2013, he raised the initiative of jointly building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road (hereinafter referred to as the Belt and Road), which have attracted close attention from all over the world. At the China-ASEAN Expo in 2013, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang emphasized the need to build the Maritime Silk Road oriented towards ASEAN, and to create strategic propellers for hinterland development. Accelerating the building of the Belt and Road

can help promote the economic prosperity of the countries along the Belt and Road and regional economic cooperation, strengthen exchanges and mutual learning between different civilizations, and promote world peace and development. It is a great undertaking that will benefit people around the world.

The Belt and Road Initiative is a systematic project, which should be jointly built through consultation to meet the interests of all, and efforts should be made to integrate the development strategies of the countries along the Belt and Road. The Chinese government has drafted and published the Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road to promote the implementation of the Initiative, instill vigor and vitality into the ancient Silk Road, connect Asian, European and African countries more closely and promote mutually beneficial cooperation to a new high and in new forms.

I. Background

Complex and profound changes are taking place in the world. The underlying impact of the international financial crisis keeps emerging; the world economy is recovering slowly, and global development is uneven; the international trade and investment landscape and rules for multilateral trade and investment are undergoing major adjustments; and countries still face big challenges to their development.

The initiative to jointly build the Belt and Road, embracing the trend towards a multipolar world, economic globalization, cultural diversity and greater IT application, is designed to uphold the global free trade regime and the open world economy in the spirit of open regional cooperation. It is aimed at promoting orderly and free flow of economic factors, highly efficient allocation of resources and deep integration of markets; encouraging the countries along the Belt and Road to achieve economic policy coordination and carry out broader and more in-depth regional cooperation of higher standards; and jointly creating an open, inclusive and balanced regional economic cooperation architecture that benefits all. Jointly building the Belt and Road is in the interests of the world community. Reflecting the common ideals and pursuit of human societies, it is a positive endeavor to seek new models of international cooperation and global governance, and will inject new positive energy into world peace and development.

The Belt and Road Initiative aims to promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas, establish and strengthen partnerships among the countries along the Belt and Road, set up all-dimensional, multi-tiered and composite connectivity networks, and realize diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development in these countries. The connectivity projects of the Initiative will help align and coordinate the development strategies of the countries along the Belt and Road, tap market potential in this region, promote investment and consumption, create demands and job opportunities, enhance people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and mutual learning among the peoples of the relevant countries, and enable them to understand, trust and respect each other and live in harmony, peace and prosperity.

China's economy is closely connected with the world economy. China will stay committed to the basic policy of opening-up, build a new pattern of all-round opening-

up, and integrate itself deeper into the world economic system. The Initiative will enable China to further expand and deepen its opening-up, and to strengthen its mutually beneficial cooperation with countries in Asia, Europe and Africa and the rest of the world. China is committed to shouldering more responsibilities and obligations within its capabilities, and making greater contributions to the peace and development of mankind.

II. Principles

The Belt and Road Initiative is in line with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. It upholds the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

The Initiative is open for cooperation. It covers, but is not limited to, the area of the ancient Silk Road. It is open to all countries, and international and regional organizations for engagement, so that the results of the concerted efforts will benefit wider areas.

The Initiative is harmonious and inclusive. It advocates tolerance among civilizations, respects the paths and modes of development chosen by different countries, and supports dialogues among different civilizations on the principles of seeking common ground while shelving differences and drawing on each other's strengths, so that all countries can coexist in peace for common prosperity.

The Initiative follows market operation. It will abide by market rules and international norms, give play to the decisive role of the market in resource allocation and the primary role of enterprises, and let the governments perform their due functions.

The Initiative seeks mutual benefit. It accommodates the interests and concerns of all parties involved, and seeks a conjunction of interests and the "biggest common denominator" for cooperation so as to give full play to the wisdom and creativity, strengths and potentials of all parties.

III. Framework

The Belt and Road Initiative is a way for win-win cooperation that promotes common development and prosperity and a road towards peace and friendship by enhancing mutual understanding and trust, and strengthening all-round exchanges. The Chinese government advocates peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit. It promotes practical cooperation in all fields, and works to build a community of shared interests, destiny and responsibility featuring mutual political trust, economic integration and cultural inclusiveness.

The Belt and Road run through the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, connecting the vibrant East Asia economic circle at one end and developed European economic circle at the other, and encompassing countries with huge potential for economic development. The Silk Road Economic Belt focuses on bringing together

China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe (the Baltic); linking China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea through Central Asia and West Asia; and connecting China with Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean. The 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road is designed to go from China's coast to Europe through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean in one route, and from China's coast through the South China Sea to the South Pacific in the other.

On land, the Initiative will focus on jointly building a new Eurasian Land Bridge and developing China-Mongolia-Russia, China-Central Asia-West Asia and China-Indochina Peninsula economic corridors by taking advantage of international transport routes, relying on core cities along the Belt and Road and using key economic industrial parks as cooperation platforms. At sea, the Initiative will focus on jointly building smooth, secure and efficient transport routes connecting major sea ports along the Belt and Road. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor are closely related to the Belt and Road Initiative, and therefore require closer cooperation and greater progress.

The Initiative is an ambitious economic vision of the opening-up of and cooperation among the countries along the Belt and Road. Countries should work in concert and move towards the objectives of mutual benefit and common security. To be specific, they need to improve the region's infrastructure, and put in place a secure and efficient network of land, sea and air passages, lifting their connectivity to a higher level; further enhance trade and investment facilitation, establish a network of free trade areas that meet high standards, maintain closer economic ties, and deepen political trust; enhance cultural exchanges; encourage different civilizations to learn from each other and flourish together; and promote mutual understanding, peace and friendship among people of all countries.

IV. Cooperation Priorities

Countries along the Belt and Road have their own resource advantages and their economies are mutually complementary. Therefore, there is a great potential and space for cooperation. They should promote policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bonds as their five major goals, and strengthen cooperation in the following key areas:

Policy coordination

Enhancing policy coordination is an important guarantee for implementing the Initiative. We should promote intergovernmental cooperation, build a multi-level intergovernmental macro policy exchange and communication mechanism, expand shared interests, enhance mutual political trust, and reach new cooperation consensus. Countries along the Belt and Road may fully coordinate their economic development strategies and policies, work out plans and measures for regional cooperation, negotiate to solve cooperation-related issues, and jointly provide policy support for the implementation of practical cooperation and large-scale projects.

Facilities connectivity

Facilities connectivity is a priority area for implementing the Initiative. On the basis of respecting each other's sovereignty and security concerns, countries along the Belt and Road should improve the connectivity of their infrastructure construction plans and technical standard systems, jointly push forward the construction of international trunk passageways, and form an infrastructure network connecting all sub-regions in Asia, and between Asia, Europe and Africa step by step. At the same time, efforts should be made to promote green and low-carbon infrastructure construction and operation management, taking into full account the impact of climate change on the construction.

With regard to transport infrastructure construction, we should focus on the key passageways, junctions and projects, and give priority to linking up unconnected road sections, removing transport bottlenecks, advancing road safety facilities and traffic management facilities and equipment, and improving road network connectivity. We should build a unified coordination mechanism for whole-course transportation, increase connectivity of customs clearance, reloading and multimodal transport between countries, and gradually formulate compatible and standard transport rules, so as to realize international transport facilitation. We should push forward port infrastructure construction, build smooth land-water transportation channels, and advance port cooperation; increase sea routes and the number of voyages, and enhance information technology cooperation in maritime logistics. We should expand and build platforms and mechanisms for comprehensive civil aviation cooperation, and quicken our pace in improving aviation infrastructure.

We should promote cooperation in the connectivity of energy infrastructure, work in concert to ensure the security of oil and gas pipelines and other transport routes, build cross-border power supply networks and power-transmission routes, and cooperate in regional power grid upgrading and transformation.

We should jointly advance the construction of cross-border optical cables and other communications trunk line networks, improve international communications connectivity, and create an Information Silk Road. We should build bilateral cross-border optical cable networks at a quicker pace, plan transcontinental submarine optical cable projects, and improve spatial (satellite) information passageways to expand information exchanges and cooperation.

Unimpeded trade

Investment and trade cooperation is a major task in building the Belt and Road. We should strive to improve investment and trade facilitation, and remove investment and trade barriers for the creation of a sound business environment within the region and in all related countries. We will discuss with countries and regions along the Belt and Road on opening free trade areas so as to unleash the potential for expanded cooperation.

Countries along the Belt and Road should enhance customs cooperation such as information exchange, mutual recognition of regulations, and mutual assistance in law

enforcement; improve bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the fields of inspection and quarantine, certification and accreditation, standard measurement, and statistical information; and work to ensure that the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement takes effect and is implemented. We should improve the customs clearance facilities of border ports, establish a "single-window" in border ports, reduce customs clearance costs, and improve customs clearance capability. We should increase cooperation in supply chain safety and convenience, improve the coordination of cross-border supervision procedures, promote online checking of inspection and quarantine certificates, and facilitate mutual recognition of Authorized Economic Operators. We should lower non-tariff barriers, jointly improve the transparency of technical trade measures, and enhance trade liberalization and facilitation.

We should expand trading areas, improve trade structure, explore new growth areas of trade, and promote trade balance. We should make innovations in our forms of trade, and develop cross-border e-commerce and other modern business models. A service trade support system should be set up to consolidate and expand conventional trade, and efforts to develop modern service trade should be strengthened. We should integrate investment and trade, and promote trade through investment.

We should speed up investment facilitation, eliminate investment barriers, and push forward negotiations on bilateral investment protection agreements and double taxation avoidance agreements to protect the lawful rights and interests of investors.

We should expand mutual investment areas, deepen cooperation in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fisheries, agricultural machinery manufacturing and farm produce processing, and promote cooperation in marine-product farming, deep-sea fishing, aquatic product processing, seawater desalination, marine biopharmacy, ocean engineering technology, environmental protection industries, marine tourism and other fields. We should increase cooperation in the exploration and development of coal, oil, gas, metal minerals and other conventional energy sources; advance cooperation in hydropower, nuclear power, wind power, solar power and other clean, renewable energy sources; and promote cooperation in the processing and conversion of energy and resources at or near places where they are exploited, so as to create an integrated industrial chain of energy and resource cooperation. We should enhance cooperation in deep-processing technology, equipment and engineering services in the fields of energy and resources.

We should push forward cooperation in emerging industries. In accordance with the principles of mutual complementarity and mutual benefit, we should promote in-depth cooperation with other countries along the Belt and Road in new-generation information technology, biotechnology, new energy technology, new materials and other emerging industries, and establish entrepreneurial and investment cooperation mechanisms.

We should improve the division of labor and distribution of industrial chains by encouraging the entire industrial chain and related industries to develop in concert; establish R&D, production and marketing systems; and improve industrial supporting capacity and the overall competitiveness of regional industries. We should increase the openness of our service industry to each other to accelerate the development of regional

service industries. We should explore a new mode of investment cooperation, working together to build all forms of industrial parks such as overseas economic and trade cooperation zones and cross-border economic cooperation zones, and promote industrial cluster development. We should promote ecological progress in conducting investment and trade, increase cooperation in conserving eco-environment, protecting biodiversity, and tackling climate change, and join hands to make the Silk Road an environment-friendly one.

We welcome companies from all countries to invest in China, and encourage Chinese enterprises to participate in infrastructure construction in other countries along the Belt and Road, and make industrial investments there. We support localized operation and management of Chinese companies to boost the local economy, increase local employment, improve local livelihood, and take social responsibilities in protecting local biodiversity and eco-environment.

Financial integration

Financial integration is an important underpinning for implementing the Belt and Road Initiative. We should deepen financial cooperation, and make more efforts in building a currency stability system, investment and financing system and credit information system in Asia. We should expand the scope and scale of bilateral currency swap and settlement with other countries along the Belt and Road, open and develop the bond market in Asia, make joint efforts to establish the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and BRICS New Development Bank, conduct negotiation among related parties on establishing Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) financing institution, and set up and put into operation the Silk Road Fund as early as possible. We should strengthen practical cooperation of China-ASEAN Interbank Association and SCO Interbank Association, and carry out multilateral financial cooperation in the form of syndicated loans and bank credit. We will support the efforts of governments of the countries along the Belt and Road and their companies and financial institutions with good credit-rating to issue Renminbi bonds in China. Qualified Chinese financial institutions and companies are encouraged to issue bonds in both Renminbi and foreign currencies outside China, and use the funds thus collected in countries along the Belt and Road.

We should strengthen financial regulation cooperation, encourage the signing of MOUs on cooperation in bilateral financial regulation, and establish an efficient regulation coordination mechanism in the region. We should improve the system of risk response and crisis management, build a regional financial risk early-warning system, and create an exchange and cooperation mechanism of addressing cross-border risks and crisis. We should increase cross-border exchange and cooperation between credit investigation regulators, credit investigation institutions and credit rating institutions. We should give full play to the role of the Silk Road Fund and that of sovereign wealth funds of countries along the Belt and Road, and encourage commercial equity investment funds and private funds to participate in the construction of key projects of the Initiative.

People-to-people bond

People-to-people bond provides the public support for implementing the Initiative. We should carry forward the spirit of friendly cooperation of the Silk Road by promoting

extensive cultural and academic exchanges, personnel exchanges and cooperation, media cooperation, youth and women exchanges and volunteer services, so as to win public support for deepening bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

We should send more students to each other's countries, and promote cooperation in jointly running schools. China provides 10,000 government scholarships to the countries along the Belt and Road every year. We should hold culture years, arts festivals, film festivals, TV weeks and book fairs in each other's countries; cooperate on the production and translation of fine films, radio and TV programs; and jointly apply for and protect World Cultural Heritage sites. We should also increase personnel exchange and cooperation between countries along the Belt and Road.

We should enhance cooperation in and expand the scale of tourism; hold tourism promotion weeks and publicity months in each other's countries; jointly create competitive international tourist routes and products with Silk Road features; and make it more convenient to apply for tourist visa in countries along the Belt and Road. We should push forward cooperation on the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road cruise tourism program. We should carry out sports exchanges and support countries along the Belt and Road in their bid for hosting major international sports events.

We should strengthen cooperation with neighboring countries on epidemic information sharing, the exchange of prevention and treatment technologies and the training of medical professionals, and improve our capability to jointly address public health emergencies. We will provide medical assistance and emergency medical aid to relevant countries, and carry out practical cooperation in maternal and child health, disability rehabilitation, and major infectious diseases including AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. We will also expand cooperation on traditional medicine.

We should increase our cooperation in science and technology, establish joint labs (or research centers), international technology transfer centers and maritime cooperation centers, promote sci-tech personnel exchanges, cooperate in tackling key sci-tech problems, and work together to improve sci-tech innovation capability.

We should integrate existing resources to expand and advance practical cooperation between countries along the Belt and Road on youth employment, entrepreneurship training, vocational skill development, social security management, public administration and management and in other areas of common interest.

We should give full play to the bridging role of communication between political parties and parliaments, and promote friendly exchanges between legislative bodies, major political parties and political organizations of countries along the Belt and Road. We should carry out exchanges and cooperation among cities, encourage major cities in these countries to become sister cities, focus on promoting practical cooperation, particularly cultural and people-to-people exchanges, and create more lively examples of cooperation. We welcome the think tanks in the countries along the Belt and Road to jointly conduct research and hold forums.

We should increase exchanges and cooperation between non-governmental organizations of countries along the Belt and Road, organize public interest activities

concerning education, health care, poverty reduction, biodiversity and ecological protection for the benefit of the general public, and improve the production and living conditions of poverty-stricken areas along the Belt and Road. We should enhance international exchanges and cooperation on culture and media, and leverage the positive role of the Internet and new media tools to foster harmonious and friendly cultural environment and public opinion.

V. Cooperation Mechanisms

The world economic integration is accelerating and regional cooperation is on the upswing. China will take full advantage of the existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms to push forward the building of the Belt and Road and to promote the development of regional cooperation.

We should strengthen bilateral cooperation, and promote comprehensive development of bilateral relations through multi-level and multi-channel communication and consultation. We should encourage the signing of cooperation MOUs or plans, and develop a number of bilateral cooperation pilot projects. We should establish and improve bilateral joint working mechanisms, and draw up implementation plans and roadmaps for advancing the Belt and Road Initiative. In addition, we should give full play to the existing bilateral mechanisms such as joint committee, mixed committee, coordinating committee, steering committee and management committee to coordinate and promote the implementation of cooperation projects.

We should enhance the role of multilateral cooperation mechanisms, make full use of existing mechanisms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), ASEAN Plus China (10+1), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF), China-Gulf Cooperation Council Strategic Dialogue, Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) Economic Cooperation, and Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) to strengthen communication with relevant countries, and attract more countries and regions to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative.

We should continue to encourage the constructive role of the international forums and exhibitions at regional and sub-regional levels hosted by countries along the Belt and Road, as well as such platforms as Boao Forum for Asia, China-ASEAN Expo, China-Eurasia Expo, Euro-Asia Economic Forum, China International Fair for Investment and Trade, China-South Asia Expo, China-Arab States Expo, Western China International Fair, China-Russia Expo, and Qianhai Cooperation Forum. We should support the local authorities and general public of countries along the Belt and Road to explore the historical and cultural heritage of the Belt and Road, jointly hold investment, trade and cultural exchange activities, and ensure the success of the Silk Road (Dunhuang) International Culture Expo, Silk Road International Film Festival and Silk Road International Book Fair. We propose to set up an international summit forum on the Belt and Road Initiative.

VI. China's Regions in Pursuing Opening-Up

In advancing the Belt and Road Initiative, China will fully leverage the comparative advantages of its various regions, adopt a proactive strategy of further opening-up, strengthen interaction and cooperation among the eastern, western and central regions, and comprehensively improve the openness of the Chinese economy.

Northwestern and northeastern regions. We should make good use of Xinjiang's geographic advantages and its role as a window of westward opening-up to deepen communication and cooperation with Central, South and West Asian countries, make it a key transportation, trade, logistics, culture, science and education center, and a core area on the Silk Road Economic Belt. We should give full scope to the economic and cultural strengths of Shaanxi and Gansu provinces and the ethnic and cultural advantages of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and Qinghai Province, build Xi'an into a new focus of reform and opening-up in China's interior, speed up the development and opening-up of cities such as Lanzhou and Xining, and advance the building of the Ningxia Inland Opening-up Pilot Economic Zone with the goal of creating strategic channels, trade and logistics hubs and key bases for industrial and cultural exchanges opening to Central, South and West Asian countries. We should give full play to Inner Mongolia's proximity to Mongolia and Russia, improve the railway links connecting Heilongjiang Province with Russia and the regional railway network, strengthen cooperation between China's Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning provinces and Russia's Far East region on sea-land multi-modal transport, and advance the construction of an Eurasian high-speed transport corridor linking Beijing and Moscow with the goal of building key windows opening to the north.

Southwestern region. We should give full play to the unique advantage of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region as a neighbor of ASEAN countries, speed up the opening-up and development of the Beibu Gulf Economic Zone and the Pearl River-Xijiang Economic Zone, build an international corridor opening to the ASEAN region, create new strategic anchors for the opening-up and development of the southwest and mid-south regions of China, and form an important gateway connecting the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. We should make good use of the geographic advantage of Yunnan Province, advance the construction of an international transport corridor connecting China with neighboring countries, develop a new highlight of economic cooperation in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, and make the region a pivot of China's opening-up to South and Southeast Asia. We should promote the border trade and tourism and culture cooperation between Tibet Autonomous Region and neighboring countries such as Nepal.

Coastal regions, and Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. We should leverage the strengths of the Yangtze River Delta, Pearl River Delta, west coast of the Taiwan Straits, Bohai Rim, and other areas with economic zones boasting a high level of openness, robust economic strengths and strong catalytic role, speed up the development of the China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone, and support Fujian Province in becoming a core area of the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. We should give full scope to the role of Qianhai (Shenzhen), Nansha (Guangzhou), Hengqin (Zhuhai) and Pingtan (Fujian) in opening-up and cooperation, deepen their cooperation with Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and help to build the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Big Bay Area. We should promote the development of the Zhejiang Marine Economy Development Demonstration Zone, Fujian Marine Economic Pilot Zone and Zhoushan Archipelago

New Area, and further open Hainan Province as an international tourism island. We should strengthen the port construction of coastal cities such as Shanghai, Tianjin, Ningbo-Zhoushan, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhanjiang, Shantou, Qingdao, Yantai, Dalian, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Quanzhou, Haikou and Sanya, and strengthen the functions of international hub airports such as Shanghai and Guangzhou. We should use opening-up to motivate these areas to carry out deeper reform, create new systems and mechanisms of open economy, step up scientific and technological innovation, develop new advantages for participating in and leading international cooperation and competition, and become the pace-setter and main force in the Belt and Road Initiative, particularly the building of the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. We should leverage the unique role of overseas Chinese and the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions, and encourage them to participate in and contribute to the Belt and Road Initiative. We should also make proper arrangements for the Taiwan region to be part of this effort.

Inland regions. We should make use of the advantages of inland regions, including a vast landmass, rich human resources and a strong industrial foundation, focus on such key regions as the city clusters along the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, around Chengdu and Chongqing, in central Henan Province, around Hohhot, Baotou, Erdos and Yulin, and around Harbin and Changchun to propel regional interaction and cooperation and industrial concentration. We should build Chongqing into an important pivot for developing and opening up the western region, and make Chengdu, Zhengzhou, Wuhan, Changsha, Nanchang and Hefei leading areas of opening-up in the inland regions. We should accelerate cooperation between regions on the upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze River and their counterparts along Russia's Volga River. We should set up coordination mechanisms in terms of railway transport and port customs clearance for the China-Europe corridor, cultivate the brand of "China-Europe freight trains," and construct a cross-border transport corridor connecting the eastern, central and western regions. We should support inland cities such as Zhengzhou and Xi'an in building airports and international land ports, strengthen customs clearance cooperation between inland ports and ports in the coastal and border regions, and launch pilot e-commerce services for cross-border trade. We should optimize the layout of special customs oversight areas, develop new models of processing trade, and deepen industrial cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road.

VII. China in Action

For more than a year, the Chinese government has been actively promoting the building of the Belt and Road, enhancing communication and consultation and advancing practical cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road, and introduced a series of policies and measures for early outcomes.

High-level guidance and facilitation. President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang have visited over 20 countries, attended the Dialogue on Strengthening Connectivity Partnership and the sixth ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, and met with leaders of relevant countries to discuss bilateral relations and regional development issues. They have used these opportunities to explain the rich contents and positive implications of the Belt and Road Initiative, and their efforts have helped bring about a broad consensus on the Belt and Road Initiative.

Signing cooperation framework. China has signed MOUs of cooperation on the joint development of the Belt and Road with some countries, and on regional cooperation and border cooperation and mid- and long-term development plans for economic and trade cooperation with some neighboring countries. It has proposed outlines of regional cooperation plans with some adjacent countries.

Promoting project cooperation. China has enhanced communication and consultation with countries along the Belt and Road, and promoted a number of key cooperation projects in the fields of infrastructure connectivity, industrial investment, resource development, economic and trade cooperation, financial cooperation, cultural exchanges, ecological protection and maritime cooperation where the conditions are right.

Improving policies and measures. The Chinese government will integrate its domestic resources to provide stronger policy support for the Initiative. It will facilitate the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. China has proposed the Silk Road Fund, and the investment function of the China-Eurasia Economic Cooperation Fund will be reinforced. We will encourage bank card clearing institutions to conduct cross-border clearing operations, and payment institutions to conduct cross-border payment business. We will actively promote investment and trade facilitation, and accelerate the reform of integrated regional customs clearance.

Boosting the role of cooperation platforms. A number of international summits, forums, seminars and expos on the theme of the Belt and Road Initiative have been held, which have played an important role in increasing mutual understanding, reaching consensus and deepening cooperation.

VIII. Embracing a Brighter Future Together

Though proposed by China, the Belt and Road Initiative is a common aspiration of all countries along their routes. China is ready to conduct equal-footed consultation with all countries along the Belt and Road to seize the opportunity provided by the Initiative, promote opening-up, communication and integration among countries in a larger scope, with higher standards and at deeper levels, while giving consideration to the interests and aspirations of all parties. The development of the Belt and Road is open and inclusive, and we welcome the active participation of all countries and international and regional organizations in this Initiative.

The development of the Belt and Road should mainly be conducted through policy communication and objectives coordination. It is a pluralistic and open process of cooperation which can be highly flexible, and does not seek conformity. China will join other countries along the Belt and Road to substantiate and improve the content and mode of the Belt and Road cooperation, work out relevant timetables and roadmaps, and align national development programs and regional cooperation plans.

China will work with countries along the Belt and Road to carry out joint research, forums and fairs, personnel training, exchanges and visits under the framework of existing bilateral, multilateral, regional and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms, so

that they will gain a better understanding and recognition of the contents, objectives and tasks of the Belt and Road Initiative.

China will work with countries along the Belt and Road to steadily advance demonstration projects, jointly identify programs that accommodate bilateral and multilateral interests, and accelerate the launching of programs that are agreed upon by parties and ready for implementation, so as to ensure early harvest.

The Belt and Road cooperation features mutual respect and trust, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, and mutual learning between civilizations. As long as all countries along the Belt and Road make concerted efforts to pursue our common goal, there will be bright prospects for the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, and the people of countries along the Belt and Road can all benefit from this Initiative.

APPENDIX 2

Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Approval Letter

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor
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MACQUARIE
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29 May 2015

Professor Naren Chitty
Department of Media, Music, Communication, and Cultural Studies
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Macquarie University

Dear Professor Chitty

Reference No: 5201500324

Title: *How China's Image in CCTV NEWS Affects the Overseas Viewers' Frames of China*

Thank you for submitting the above application for ethical and scientific review. Your application was considered by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities)) at its meeting on 24 April 2015 at which further information was requested to be reviewed by the HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) Executive.

The requested information was received with correspondence on 22 May 2015.

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) Executive considered your responses at its meeting held on 19/05/2015

I am pleased to advise that ethical and scientific approval has been granted for this project to be conducted at:

- Macquarie University

This research meets the requirements set out in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007 – Updated March 2014) (the *National Statement*).

This letter constitutes ethical and scientific approval only.

Standard Conditions of Approval:

1. Continuing compliance with the requirements of the *National Statement*, which is available at the following website:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research>

2. This approval is valid for five (5) years, subject to the submission of annual reports. Please submit your reports on the anniversary of the approval for this protocol.

3. All adverse events, including events which might affect the continued ethical and scientific acceptability of the project, must be reported to the HREC within 72 hours.
4. Proposed changes to the protocol must be submitted to the Committee for approval before implementation.

It is the responsibility of the Chief investigator to retain a copy of all documentation related to this project and to forward a copy of this approval letter to all personnel listed on the project.

Should you have any queries regarding your project, please contact the Ethics Secretariat on 9850 4194 or by email ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures are available from the Research Office website at:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) wishes you every success in your research.

Yours sincerely



Dr Karolyn White

Director, Research Ethics & Integrity,
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (Human Sciences and Humanities)

This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007) and the *CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice*.

Details of this approval are as follows:

Approval Date: 22 May 2015

The following documentation has been reviewed and approved by the HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities):

| Documents reviewed | Version no. | Date |
|---|-------------|------------------------|
| Macquarie University Ethics Application Form and Appendix B: Research to be Undertaken Outside Australia | 2.3 | July 2013 |
| Correspondence from Miss Mei Li responding to the issues raised by the HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) | | Received 22/05/2015 |
| MQ Participant Information and Consent Form (PICF): interview | | |
| MQ Participant Information and Consent Form (PICF): online | | |
| Invitation email: English version | | |
| Invitation email: Chinese version | | |
| Safety protocol | | |
| Information sheet for snowballing recruitment: English version | | |
| Information sheet for snowballing recruitment: Chinese version | | |
| Recruitment flyer | | |
| Questions for Chinese intermediate experts: English version | | |
| Questions for Australian target audience | | |
| Questions for publicity officials and CCTV News staff: English version | | |
| Questions for publicity officials and CCTV News staff: Chinese version | | |
| Questions for Chinese intermediate experts: Chinese version | | |