Analysis of the Framework of Media Reports on Policy Adjustment of Public Health Events

-- A Comparative Analysis of People's Daily and Times Before and after Lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy in Response to the COVID-19 Epidemic

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Abstract: The Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism of State Council of China released the Circular on Further Optimizing the Implementation of Preventive and Control Measures for the New Crown Pneumonia Epidemic on December 7, 2022, marking a dramatic shift in prevention and control policy. Focusing on this policy change, the article compares the reports of two well-known newspapers media before and after this shift and analyzes the adjustments made by People's Daily and The Times in the narrative framework and the narrative characteristics they exhibit. This paper focuses only on the reports published by the two newspapers, and conducts a dual analysis based on word frequency and content frame. The results of the analysis show that the frames of the reports of the two media show more obvious differences, and the narrative frames of different media show significant differences.

Keywords: frame analysis, mainstream media, comparative analysis, COVID-19

1. Introduction

Chinese mainstream media have attached great importance to publicity and reporting on the prevention and control of the epidemic and have cooperated with the policy orientation to guide public opinion since the outbreak of COVID-19. In contrast, foreign mainstream media reports on the epidemic in China are closely related to the economic situation, showing a big difference in focus from Chinese mainstream media. The Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism of State Council of China released the Circular on Further Optimizing the Implementation of Prevention and Control Measures for the COVID-19 Epidemic on December 7, 2022, in which a number of new regulations made significant adjustments to China's epidemic prevention and control policies, and the relaxation of a number of these policies caused adjustments to domestic and international publicity frameworks. Both the People's Daily and the Times demonstrated obvious frame shifts before and after the release of the policy. This research will use framing theory to analyze how The

People's Daily used narrative devices to support the policy shifts, and how the Times influenced the policy decisions and responded to the policy adjustments through public opinion.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Overview of Framing Theory

"Framing is metacommunication" [1]. In its early years, framing theory was viewed as a cognitive structure used by people to recognize and interpret social life experiences, "a set of rules by which individuals transform social life experiences into subjective perceptions" [2]. Since its introduction to journalism and communication in the 1990s, framing has been viewed as involving selection and highlighting, that is, selecting aspects of perceived reality and making them more salient in a communication text in such a way as to contribute to the definition of a unique problem, causal explanations, ethical evaluations, and advice on how to deal with it [3]. After the introduction of framing theory to China, it was pointed out by Tsang et al. that "the most important part of the concept of (news) framing lies in understanding why the news media choose a particular content (value) and what weight is given to that choice". [4] Specific steps in the analysis include: "First, to reduce the individual news statements into 'micro propositions'; second, summarize the micro propositions into 'mega propositions' or 'mega-propositions' through analogization, reorganization, and retention; third, take the 'mega propositions' to further analyze their formal status and weight in the news". And subsequent studies by Chinese scholars have basically been under the framework and boundaries drawn by Zang, with the analysis of communication effects as the main focus [5].

Another research direction of framing in the field of journalism and communication is reflected in the "embedding" of framing studies in culture and putting them back into cultural context, i.e., "frames and their embedded cultures and ideologies are able to be presented in texts through a series of framing devices" [6]. This perspective has led to the cross-fertilization of multiple theories with framing theory. These include different directions such as comparative studies on the differences in reporting frames between different regions and countries, and studies on the differences between different media types under a unified topic. For example, Chen analyzed the media coverage of the 2009 "7-5" incident in Urumqi, Xinjiang, China, and found that different sources in the media would present different factual reports and causality, and that the media's attribution of the incident is often inextricably linked to the framing of the report [7]. Then Nan et al. (2014) discussed whether different worldviews would have an impact on public opinion regarding public opinion related to willingness to vaccinate against HPV, finding that people with a hierarchical worldview would be more supportive of the behavior and have more positive thoughts, and the opposite was true for those with an egalitarian view [8]. Another example is Xu et al. who explored a decade of coverage of China's image in The New York Times, comparing the change of China's image under the two time points of The 16th Party Congress and the 18th Party Congress by means of quantitative calculations, and found that the reporting perspective has changed from overlooking and contempt in the past to equalization and understanding, but it has not yet completely shed its stereotypical image of China [9]. A large number of studies have quantitatively analyzed the text data in new media platforms, but few studies have used quantitative calculations to compare the differences in media reporting frames reflected in the media narrative frames of mainstream media in Chinese and English contexts.

2.2. Overview of Topics Related to COVID-19 Epidemic Outbreak from a Communication Perspective

Communication studies on COVID-19 epidemic-related content in mainland China is mainly based on empirical studies of case studies, which include: communication strategy analysis and

recommendations, media content analysis, communication effect analysis, and a small amount of cross-analysis with other disciplines. In terms of communication strategy, Hou analyzed the content of People's Daily from January to March 2020 on topics related to the new coronary pneumonia and concluded that People's Daily, with the help of its own all-media matrix content platform, adopts the strategies of emotional contagion, archetypal precipitation, and the use of symbols to emotionally guide the audience, and ultimately achieves the effect of empathy establishment and emotional sublimation [10]. Niu et al. analyzed the factors affecting the public's evaluation of and satisfaction with the risk communication effect at the beginning of the COVID-19 by means of a questionnaire survey and found that the audience's overall satisfaction with this communication strategy was high, and showed a high degree of information compliance behavior, but due to the differences of communication surveys among different groups, we should also pay attention to the characteristics of the needs of different groups, and give full play to the advantages of the pluralistic media channels. However, due to the differences in communication surveys among different groups, attention should also be paid to the characteristics of the needs of different groups and the respective advantages of multiple media channels should be fully utilized [11]. There are also studies that focus on a specific media and put forward communication suggestions tailored to the characteristics of the media, such as Zhao et al. suggesting that county-level integrated media centers should strengthen the "interpersonal relationship" mode of information service [12]. In discourse content analysis, one study used the MIP metaphor identification mechanism to compare the discourse analysis of Chinese media and the New York Times reports on the New Crown Pneumonia outbreak in China. 201 reports on the outbreak of COVID-19 in China were selected from the New York Times in 2020, and the newspaper mainly used the metaphor of war: the outbreak was a metaphor for war and drama, while China's propaganda was a metaphor for drama and competition [13]. Some studies have used Bayesian networks to construct a model for evaluating online public opinion and analyzed the online public opinion situation by taking the "COVID-19 epidemic" incident as an example [14]; Wang L. et al. conducted an empirical study from the perspective of information ecology by using thematic analysis, social network analysis, and sentiment analysis to study in-depth the characteristics of the communication of online public opinion on the COVID-19 epidemic [15].

Most of the above studies come from the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak when information dissemination was mediated by the Internet, and discourse analysis within China dominated. In the comparative analysis with the English media, researchers focus on the image of China in the English media, more on the ideological differences between China and the West as reflected in different media reports, while comparative studies on the construction of media frames are relatively weak. Based on the above research gaps, this paper compares and analyzes the similarities and differences in the construction of media frames between the Chinese mainstream media, People's Daily, and the *British media*, The Times, at the end of the COVID-19 epidemic.

3.   Research Methodology

This research uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods for analysis, with word frequency analysis for the quantitative part manual reading for the qualitative part, and content analysis using framing theory. For the domestic media, *the* People's Daily selected the 15-day reports from November 30, 2022, to December 14, 2022, with the epidemic as the theme for text analysis; for the foreign media, the Times selected the reports with China as the main body of the report and the theme related to the epidemic in the same period for content analysis. Both newspapers take December 7 as the turning point, separate the contents of the week before and the week after December 7 for independent analysis. Using the frame theory to analyze and compare a total of four groups of independent texts of the two types of media, we summarize the similarities

and differences between the reporting frames of the Chinese mainstream media and the foreign mainstream media in the events related to the epidemic, as well as how such reporting frames serve the economic and political tasks, and how they affect the economic and political environments [16].

The four sets of texts are first analyzed by word frequency statistics, and then by three levels of frame theory analysis.

3.1. Sample Composition

In this paper, we selected news articles from People's Daily and The Times from November 30 to December 14, 2022, a total of 15 days, with the theme of the epidemic. After filtering the thematic content, the total number of articles analyzed in this analysis is 34 for People's Daily and 32 for The Times.

3.2. Reasons for Sample Selection

3.2.1. Media Selection

According to the *Provisions on Functional Configuration, Internal Organizations and Staffing of the State Administration of Radio and Television*, Xinhua News Agency and China Central Radio and Television (CCTV) and People's Daily are the three main ministerial-level media organizations in China, of which CCTV contained mostly audio and video media materials, while Xinhua News Agency has a large number of missing articles in the same period. Due to the Sampling scientificity, People's Daily was finally selected as research material of the survey.

The Times, as a long-established and authoritative newspaper in the UK, has always been regarded as the first mainstream newspaper in the UK, and is known as "the faithful recorder of British society". Based on the comprehensive consideration of information access and authority, we select this newspaper as a sample article.

3.2.2. Considerations in the Selection of Time Periods for Research Materials

The Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism of the State Council of China on December 7 issued a "notice on further optimizing the implementation of the prevention and control measures of the COVID-19 epidemic" (Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism of China [2022] No. 113) requirements, which explicitly put forward such as "Various forms of temporary closure and control shall not be taken", "No longer checking negative nucleic acid test certificates and health codes for trans-regional migrants, and no longer carrying out landing inspections" and other requirements for lifting of the epidemic containment policy. This notice marks the end of the "strict defense" policy over the past three years. The change in the policy is directly reflected in the shift of the focus of the newspaper's related reports. Based on this change, this paper chooses to analyze and compare the framework of the relevant reports in the week before and the week after this time node (the two time periods will be referred to as "Before the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy" and "After the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy"). Comparing the media frames of the two periods of time, the shift in media frames can be seen more prominently.

4. Content Analysis of People's Daily

4.1. Word Frequency Statistics and Analyses

4.1.1. Word Frequency Statistics and Analyses Before the Lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy

We filtered out the words with a word frequency of 5 or more in all the related reports of "before the lifting of epidemic containment policy" and sorted them according to the word frequency. The results are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Word frequency analysis of the text "Before the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy" in People's Daily.

No.	Chinese Keywords	English Keywords	Word frequency	No.	Chinese Keywords	English Keywords	Word frequency
1	疫情	Epidemic	67	33	各地	in all parts of (a country)	6
2	防控	Containment	45	34	疫苗	vaccination	6
3	风险	Risk	17	35	二十条	The 20 New rules China is following to combat Covid	6
4	接种	Vaccination	17	36	地方	Local	6
5	做好	Well	13	37	生活	Life	6
6	检测	Detection	13	38	随意	Causal	6
7	工作	Work	12	39	防线	Defense/ Defensive	6
8	我们	Us/our	12	40	联防	Joint defense	5
9	群众	Mass	11	41	联控	Joint control	5
10	人民	People	11	42	介绍	Introduce	5
11	核酸	Nucleic acid (assay)	11	43	国家	Nation	5
12	落实	Implementation	10	44	管理	Manage	5

Table 1: (continued).

13	有效	Effective/ Effectiveness	10	45	解决	Solve	5
14	老年人	Senior citizen	10	46	特别	Special	5
15	措施	Initiative	9	47	坚持	Persevere	5
16	精准	precise	9	48	问题	Problem	5
17	科学	Science/scientific	9	49	方面	Aspects	5
18	发展	Develop/development	9	50	机构	Institution	5
19	加强	Strengthen	9	51	坚决	Persevere	5
20	保障	Guarantee	9	52	部署	Deploy	5
21	重大项目	Major project	9	53	方案	Solution	5
22	项目	Project	9	54	抗击	Combat	5
23	当前	Present	8	55	全力	All-out (effort)	5
24	人员	Stuff/people	8	56	常态	Normal state	5
25	没有	None	8	57	攻坚战	War of attrition	5
26	服务	Service	8	58	强大	Formidable	5
27	机制	Mechanism	7	59	合力	Cooperate	5
28	持续	Continue	7	60	最大	Greatest	5
29	推进	Advance	7	61	经济社会	Economic society	5
30	优化	Optimize	7	62	每个	Every	5
31	生产	Produce	7	63	南京市	Nanjing(a city of China)	5
32	传播	Propagate/Propagation	7				

Word frequency analysis shows that the highest word frequency is "epidemic", reaching 67 times. The second is "Containment", reaching 45 times. "Risk", "Vaccination", "Detection" and other words accounts for a higher percentage. As a result, it can be seen that at this time the dissemination of the People's Daily focus on "epidemic prevention and control cannot be lax", emphasizing the many risks that the epidemic may bring and strategies that can be taken to avoid the risks. It is worth noting that in terms of title, People's Daily chose to use "we" to draw closer to the masses, and used words such as "the masses" and "the people" to maintain the mainstream media's consistent style of focusing on the interest of the people.

In addition, the high frequency of references to "Nucleic acid (assay)," "implementation," "effective," and "measures" proves that the narrative in this period was still focus strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of epidemic containment.

4.1.2. Word Frequency Statistics and Analyses after the Lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy

Table 2: Word frequency analysis of the text "After the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy" in People's Daily.

No.	Chinese Keywords	English Keywords	Word frequency	No.	Chinese Keywords	English Keywords	Word frequency
1	人民	People	42	35	需求	Demands	6
2	群众	Masses	26	36	要求	Require	6
3	发展	Development/ Develop	25	37	及时	Timeliness	6
4	疫情	Epidemic	24	38	实际	Practical	6
5	防控	Containment	24	39	中心	Central	6
6	保障	guarantee	20	40	强调	Emphasize	5
7	工作	work	15	41	落实	Implementation	5
8	优化	Optimize	12	42	国务院	the State Council	5
9	建设	Construct/ Construction	12	43	习近平	Xi Jinping	5
10	服务	Service	12	44	关心	Care	5
11	措施	Initiative	11	45	社区	Community	5
12	现代化	Modernize	11	46	医院	Hospital	5
13	坚持	Persevere	10	47	药品	Medicine	5
14	解决	Solve	10	48	十条	"10 new measures" to optimize COVID-19 response	5
15	问题	Problem	10	49	调整	Adjust	5
16	发热	Fever	9	50	经济社会	Economic society	5
17	医疗	Medical	9	51	发挥	Play	5
18	健康	Health	9	52	人员	Stuff/ people	5
19	患者	Patients	9	53	满足	Satisfy/ satisfaction	5
20	做好	Well	9	54	持续	Continue	5
21	不断	Unceasing	9	55	市民	Citizen	5

Table 2: (continued).

22	生活	Life	9	56	疫苗	Vaccine	5
23	企业	Corporations	8	57	回应	Response	5
24	民生	People's livelihood	8	58	为了	For	5
25	门诊	Outpatient service	7	59	正常	Normal	5
26	老年人	Senior citizen	7	60	提供	Provide/ Provision	5
27	新冠	COVID-19	7	61	基本	Basic	5
28	生产	Produce	7	62	成果	Result	5
29	部门	Departments	7	63	必须	Must	5
30	我们	Us/our	7	64	思想	Thoughts	5
31	接种	Vaccination	7	65	实现	Realize	5
32	各项	Various	6	66	促进	Promote	5
33	统筹	Plan as a whole	6	67	美好生活	Good life	5
34	就医	Seek medical advice	6				

As can be seen from the results, the word with the highest frequency is "people", reaching 42 times; followed by "masses", "Development/Develop", "epidemic", "Containment" and "guarantee" which all reaching more than 20 times. At this time, the People's Daily focused its communications on "people-centered, common development", emphasizing the opportunities that may arise from mitigating and controlling the epidemic, such as economic development and the return of a better life.

In addition, the high frequency of mentioning "fever", "medical", "health" and "patients" proves that the policy has been reoriented to how to ease the medical squeeze and strengthen vaccination.

4.2. Comparative Analysis of Reports Before and after the Lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy

4.2.1. Comparison of Metaphor: The Rhetorical Framework of "Pandemic-Life Risk" and "Epidemics - economic Development"

Metaphor is regarded as one of the most essential features of language and one of the most common ways of thinking [17]. People's Daily adopts the metaphorical rhetorical framework of "epidemic-Life Risk" before the lifting of the Epidemic Containment Policy to emphasize how epidemic greatly affects people's lives, therefore verifying the necessity and urgency of the current control measures, which reflects the outstanding contribution made by the central government.

After the lifting of the Epidemic Containment Policy, however, the People's Daily used futuristic terminology in response to the epidemic, retaining the mainstream media's usual calm and neutral analytical style. It uses the metaphorical rhetorical frame of "Epidemic-Economic Development" to highlight the government's plans for the future by stressing the achievements that the government has made, which to some extent, contradicts the perceptions before the lifting of the Epidemic Containment Policy.

The framework points out that even faced with the difficulty brought by the epidemic, we must continue to pursue all aspects of economic and life development, presenting a metaphor of looking to the future and keeping everything under control.

4.2.2. Comparison of Topic: "Combating the Epidemic" and "Living with the Virus"

The choice of facts and the perspective of evaluation directly affect the reader's perception of the news event [18].

Before the lifting of the Epidemic Containment Policy, People's Daily focused on the government's actions, analyzing the performance and ability of government agencies in the prevention of the epidemic and constructing a scene of "all for one, one for all" by recounting the story of all people participate in the fight against the epidemic, such as dissemination of praises of frontline anti-epidemic personnel, the great efforts made by logistics to ensure the needs of the people's lives. Based on the above selection of factual content, the commentary focused on the concepts of "working together" and "unity of purpose". The theme centered on "overcoming all difficulties and fighting the epidemic to the end", with three sub-themes: safeguarding people's livelihoods, safeguarding industrial production and safeguarding medical supplies.

After the lifting of the Epidemic Containment Policy, People's Daily shifted its focus to the urgent need for economic development, sound medical care, timely response to people's needs, and protection tips to emphasize the necessity of the Epidemic Containment Policy. Specifically, the newspaper describes the government's contribution to guaranteeing production of enterprises, the supplementary supplies for sound medical care, and interviews with the public to respond to their needs with the overall core centered on "living with the virus".

4.2.3. Comparison of Value Framework: "Consensus on Values" and "Peace Scene"

Both before and after the policy change, the People's Daily used the "Framework for Conflict Resolution" [19] to construct its narrative.

Before the policy adjustment, the People's Daily used the fight against the epidemic as the main topic, and by emphasizing the three sub-themes mentioned above, it constructed a "value consensus framework" with the discourse strategy of emphasizing mainstream values, stressing value consensus and focusing on the big picture. Its mechanism of action is to utilize the common value beliefs formed by people in their common life, and the result of the action is to make the audience ignore the value differences between individuals but seek common development, hence willingly sacrificing individual interests to achieve collective security.

After the policy adjustment, the People's Daily focuses on the "Framework for Peace Scene" [19] which emphasizes economic development, improved living standards, and other future scenarios. The discourse strategy tends to highlight the possibility of conflict resolution and show happy endings after the conflict has been resolved. Its mechanism of action capitalizes on the audience's desire for a peaceful life, and its outcome is to motivate the parties involved in the conflict to work towards a peaceful resolution.

5. Content Analysis of Times

5.1. Word Frequency Statistics and Analyses

5.1.1. Word Frequency Statistics and Analyses Before the Lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy

Similarly, this research filters out words with a frequency of 9 or more in all relevant reports of Before the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy from articles in The Times before December 7th. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Word frequency analysis of the text "Before the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy" in Times.

No.	English Keywords	Word frequency	No.	English Keywords	Word frequency
1	China	98	33	other	12
2	cent	62	34	million	12
3	said	49	35	global	12
4	Chinese	42	36	growth	12
5	not	42	37	Europe	12
6	more	26	38	last	11
7	protests	25	39	public	11
8	government	25	40	two	11
9	Beijing	22	41	first	11
10	covid	21	42	communist	11
11	one	20	43	still	11
12	people	19	44	year	11
13	world	19	45	pandemic	10
14	new	18	46	cities	10
15	down	18	47	week	10
16	China's	17	48	being	10
17	also	16	49	company	10
18	party	16	50	time	10
19	west	15	51	football	10
20	lockdowns	15	52	three	9
21	apple	15	53	years	9
22	policy	14	54	cases	9
23	president	14	55	even	9
24	most	14	56	foreign	9
25	state	14	57	health	9
26	shares	14	58	officials	9
27	now	13	59	Britain	9
28	economic	13	60	month	9
29	economy	13	61	according	9
30	country	12	62	April	9
31	restrictions	12	63	much	9

Table 3: (continued).

32	too	12	64	European	9

Words in the top ten in terms of frequency include "China", "Chinese", "protests", "government", "Beijing" and "covid". "Protests" referring to the several protests in Beijing against the dynamic zeroing policy (the policy made by Chinese central governments in order to eradicate the covid entirely) before the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy. It is also worth noting that "lockdowns" appeared 15 times and "restrictions" 12 times, both of which appeared in almost all of the articles, in the context of the figurative manifestations of the dynamic zeroing policy. The choice of more visual, negative, and even fearful terms, such as lockdowns, closure and protests, builds a disturbing, even anti-human image of the dynamic zeroing policy.

In addition, "economy" and "economic" together are used more than 26 times, which means that most of the articles focus on the negative impacts of closure policies on the economy in their narratives, a logical construction that reinforces the negative image of dynamic zeroing policies. It is worth mentioning that "football" appears ten times, and this article mainly describes the contrast between the scenes of people from all over the world getting together and partying during the World Cup games and the scenes of silence in the whole city of China, which further deepens the negative impacts of the closure and control policy.

In these negative narratives, the media attempted to build negative public opinion to pressure the policymakers by emphasizing the economic impact and associating it with subjective attitudes such as "selfishness" and "irresponsibility".

5.1.2. Word Frequency Statistics and Analyses after the Lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy

Table 4: Word frequency analysis of the text "Before the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy" in Times.

No.	English Keywords	Word frequency	No.	English Keywords	Word frequency
1	China	50	35	restrictions	13
2	not	43	36	beijing	13
3	year	39	37	war	13
4	cent	39	38	down	12
5	covid	36	39	month	12
6	more	34	40	zero-covid	12
7	Chinese	34	41	need	12
8	said	32	42	time	12
9	new	27	43	japan	12
10	last	24	44	beer	12
11	also	23	45	times	11
12	world	23	46	week	11
13	china's	22	47	economic	11
14	people	19	48	back	11

Table 4: (continued).

15	million	18	49	policy	11
16	government	17	50	former	11
17	one	17	51	pandemic	11
18	now	17	52	president	11
19	were	16	53	global	11
20	britain	16	54	saudi	11
21	years	15	55	iphone	11
22	next	15	56	sunak	10
23	many	15	57	get	10
24	even	15	58	less	10
25	apple	15	59	first	10
26	months	14	60	only	10
27	country	14	61	countries	10
28	most	14	62	in-	10
29	way	14	63	defence	10
30	growth	14	64	almost	10
31	other	14	65	intelligence	10
32	hot	14			
33	such	13			
34	protests	13			

Compared with the text before the lifting of the Epidemic Containment Policy, the word frequency of "China" has dropped significantly, and the data of related reports have decreased significantly, which indicates that the newspaper's coverage of the epidemic in China has decreased with the adjustment of the policy. In addition, the word "new" is often used in the text as "new world order", where the Times emphasizes that China's policy changes will re-influence the world order and form a new economic and political situation.

In terms of the economy, both macroeconomic and concrete events were reported in the coverage. The word "Apple" appears 15 times and "iPhone" 11 times, with articles focusing at length on the dramatic impact of the sudden change in Chinese policy on Apple's production. As one of the largest companies operating in China during the pandemic, Apple's turnover was dramatically impacted by the drop in factory production due to the large number of employees infected with COVID-19 after the policy change. In addition, due to the sudden lifting of the policy, a large number of residents were infected in a concentrated manner, and productivity was severely affected during the same period, with numerous accusations of international trade and production inefficiencies.

In addition, many of the reports focused on the severe medical resources panic squeezing on China, including the hoarding of medicines and round-the-clock shifts. The words "protests" and "restrictions" continue to appear frequently in the text, demonstrating a negative attitude towards this policy.

5.2. Comparative Analysis of Reports Before and after the Lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy

5.2.1. Comparison of Metaphor: Consistent Use of the Rhetorical Framework of "Policy-threat", but with a Reduced Level of Condemnation

Before the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy, the Times uses the metaphorical rhetorical framework of "policy-threat" to construct and reinforce the logic of China's failure to take control of the policy as a subject of action. The premise of this logic is based on the view that there is no support for the policy, and the article constructs a metaphor for the irrationality of the policy by emphasizing and highlighting the anti-human nature of the policy through the use of facts such as forced blockades and protests, and by accusing China's policy of blocking and controlling the import and export of commodities from the point of view of international trade as a serious obstacle to the import and export of commodities, thereby interfering with the normal order of international trade. On the basis of this logic, the media continually force the subjects to adjust their policies by denouncing those in power in China - the subjects who implement the policy.

After the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy, however, the Times' attention to the topic began to decline, with the metaphorical rhetorical framework of "policy-threat" unchanged, but the level of condemnation declining, in large part because the substantive bearer of the threat shifted from the global economy to the Chinese people and the global economy. The level of condemnation declined, in large part because the substantive subject of the threat shifted from the global economy to the Chinese people and the global economy. Coverage began to focus on the potential problems for the Chinese people, and the volume of coverage of the negative impacts on the global economy declined. The media attempted to reinforce this reader's negative feelings about policy and those in power by portraying the magnitude of the problem.

5.2.2. Comparison of Topic: Economic and Political Issues Are at the Center of the Report

Before the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy, the theme of the Times' coverage centered on three aspects: the attitudes of those in power in China, the negative impact of the policy on the economy and trade, and the attitudes of the Chinese population towards the policy.

The reports on political topics introduce the current political situation and implementation trends in China. One of the articles covers the grand funeral of Jiang Zemin. The article utilizes a large portion of Jiang Zemin's life story to help the reader better understand why his funeral was so significant. This political information serves as both the foundation for the establishment of why the COVID-19 policy in China was implemented and the body responsible for its negative effects. It is also worth noting that the policy-related coverage implies a comparison between Xi Jinping's "totalitarianism" and Jiang Zemin's free and open style of politics, suggesting that Xi's current governing philosophy runs counter to the basic norms of freedom, and then using subsequent negative events to deepen this implication.

Negative impacts at the economic level include the waste of large quantities of medical supplies due to enforced isolation, instability in the import and export of goods due to policy changes, and the impact of the absence of the Chinese link in globalized trade on the trade of other countries. The report emphasizes the irrationality of the "dynamic zeroing policy" and the many protests that have taken place in China, accompanied by interviews with Chinese residents. Through this negative feedback, the report presents the people's dissatisfaction with the implementation of the policy and their desire to see it adjusted, deepening the negative impression of the policy.

After the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy, the themes of related coverage continued to include three categories, adding concerns about China's tight supply of medical supplies in addition to the aforementioned political moves by those in power and the negative impact on the economy.

The political and economic topics are still dominated by condemnation and negative views, supported by a large amount of factual data, which are intended to reinforce the long-term dimension and the wide range of negative impacts caused by the closure policy. However, in comparison to the Before the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy text, the degree of condemnation is lessened, as the adjustment of the policy follows the direction of the previously reported pressure. Concerns over medical supplies are emphasized through the use of concrete events and personal interviews.

5.2.3. Comparison of Value Framework: The "Conflict-triggering Transformation Framework" Becomes Less Prominent after Policy Adjustments

Both before and after the policy adjustments, the Times constructed its narrative using the framework of "conflict transformation" and, more specifically, the "systemic flaws frame" [19]. By describing the three themes, the report creates a sense of multi-objective oppression against those in power in China, which leads to a tendency for the audience to make judgments that the system or policy is flawed, leading to dissatisfaction, which in turn leads to a willingness to adjust the policy, and an intention to improve the socio-legal system.

However, because policy adjustment is the meaning of the existence of the framework, the content of the report after the adjustment is significantly lower, the media condemnation is less strong, and the degree of prominence of this framework is relatively weaker.

6. Comparison of the Frames of the People's Daily and the Times

Overall, the People's Daily's coverage is positive, using details and facts to create heroes for its content and storytelling to describe official achievements. Both before and after the lifting of Epidemic Containment Policy, the framing used by the media is aimed at resolving or calming conflicts, trying to idealize the status quo, and conveying the image of the status quo as the ideal to the audience, and the content and means used are all in the service of the status quo, creating a favorable public opinion environment for the implementation of the policy.

On the contrary, the content of the Times is more negative, highlighting the problem itself by focusing on selected facts, using figures to reinforce the negative feelings constructed for the audience, and focusing on depicting the negative impacts and the negative feedback of the people involved in order to express dissatisfaction with the policy system and to force the main body of the policy decision-making process to recognize the loopholes in the current system and make adjustments and changes. In terms of means of expression, all the contents are based on the value judgment of "economic freedom", and all the facts can be dichotomized between right (conducive to economic development and personal freedom) and wrong (not conducive to economic development and personal freedom), and the article itself has a strong subjective tendency. The purpose of the article is to reach a more ideal state of reality in the value judgment and to serve the construction of a future world with a better policy system.

More detailed information please refer to the table 5.

Table 5: Summary of framework comparison.

	People's Daily	Times
Content	● Positive ● Storytelling ● Emphasizing what has been accomplished	● Negative ● Extensive use of numbers and factual information ● Emphasis on future problems
Rhetoric	Build heroes and mobilize audiences to understand emotions	Censoring of facts to highlight and mobilize audience dissatisfaction with the policy system
Purpose of the framework	Creating a public opinion environment conducive to policy implementation	Monitoring and identifying loopholes and pushing policy makers to improve their systems

7. Conclusions and Reflections

In the coverage of the COVID-19 epidemic, the media of the People's Daily has always been attuned to the needs of the policy and rationalized the narrative framework to achieve persuasive and promotional effects. The Times, on the other hand, would analyze the situation from multiple perspectives, such as the economy and human rights, to evaluate the policy and make suggestions, expecting the policy body to make adjustments. It is important to point out here that there is no superiority or inferiority between the two media frameworks. Different media organizations play different social roles in different countries and social systems, and their reporting frameworks and focuses will naturally show differences.

Due to the limited time and sample of this study, there are still many deficiencies in the research process, and follow-up scholars are welcome to complete the study.

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