

Image of China in Hong Kong Media

A content analysis of three Hong Kong newspapers from 2008 to 2018

Master thesis

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Name of the programme: Master of Science in Business, Language and Culture

Date of submission: 1 May, 2019

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Character count/ Page count: 117,192 / 63 pages

ABSTRACT

Despite being a popular subject of study worldwide, image of China is rarely studied in Hong Kong media. Moreover, in the high time of recurrent warnings about Chinese influence on Hong Kong media and threats towards press freedom, this study is conducted to fill the existing literature gap to unravel the image of China presented in Hong Kong newspapers and explore the degree of more Chinese-leaning reports for the past decade. This research employs content analysis on 961 news articles from Apple Daily, Sing Tao Daily and Ming Pao Daily during 2008 to 2018 using constructed week sampling. Framing theory and agenda-setting function theory served as the basis of this study and directed the design of the research. Volume, theme and favorability frame of all news articles were recorded and analyzed.

In short, this study suggests that a multifaceted coverage of China is presented in Hong Kong media. Depiction of China includes political, social, cultural, technological and economical aspects. Social news dominates the news in from 2008 to 2013 and political and international affairs dominates the news from 2013 to 2018. From 2008 to 2018, overall average favorability on reports of China remains relatively constant. It is also observed that coverage of China from newspapers have become more politically aligned. Conservative and liberal newspaper significantly reduced negative coverage while anti-Beijing newspaper has shown an increase in unfavorable representation.

Key words: National Image of China, Hong Kong-China tension, framing theory, agenda-setting function theory, media

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1.Introduction

Image of China on worldwide media has been studied since the early 1980s. In recent studies(Li, 2010; Li, 2012; Yu, 2017), scholars suggested that while China views herself as a peace-loving nation, international cooperator and autonomous actor, it is often depicted as a militant, an obstructive force and an authoritarian state in the West(Zhang, 2010).

Traditionally positioned as the gateway to China, Hong Kong has a unique status of being a fusion of the West and East. After the handover in 1997, Hong Kong media enjoys press freedom yet they are also substantially influenced by the Chinese government. Regardless of the strategic importance of Hong Kong and the ongoing controversies about China-Hong Kong tension, little studies were conducted on the national image of China in Hong Kong media.

Meanwhile, in recent years, Hong Kong Journalist Association(2018) and Reporters Without Borders(2016) have warned the society about the increasing Chinese influence and worrying future of Hong Kong's press freedom. Solid evidence is yet to be disclosed.

Combining both, this study serves to fill the existing literature gap by exploring the image of China captured in Hong Kong media and to verify the speculation of media manipulation by investigating the change of media portrayal of China for the last decade.

A quantitative content analysis was conducted within the theoretical frameworks of agenda-setting function theory and framing theory. The volume and characteristics of the media representation of China were examined to reveal the salience of issues as proposed in agenda-setting function theory; Differences in media news coverage are recorded by comparing the news frames on China and favorability across time as propounded by framing theory. The data for this study came from 961

samples collected from 2008 to 2018 in three local newspaper, Apple Daily, Sing Tao Daily and Ming Pao Daily and the following research questions guide the whole study.

- 1) What is the image of China in Hong Kong media?
- 2) What are the differences among newspapers?
- 3) How did they change from 2008 to 2018?

The structure of this paper is as follows: Chapter 2, the literature review, contains a review of critical literature for the study. Chapter 3, theoretical framework, introduces the analytical framework and explained their significance. Chapter 4 explains the background and context of this study. Chapter 5, methodology, explains the method and detail the analysis procedure of this study. Chapter 6 reveals the result of the frame analysis and how the results apply to the proposed researched questions. Chapter 7, discussion, serves to interpret and explain results, answer research questions, compare with previous studies and draw implications. Conclusion and limitations are detailed in Chapter 8.

2. Literature Review

Before delving into this study, we will review previous studies in the field and outline the common findings from the studies of image of China in this chapter.

The research on the image of China in media have been conducted worldwide. These studies include investigations on western media, for instance United Kingdom (Zhang, 2010; Sparks, 2010) or the United States (Ching, 1998; Peng, 2004; Stone & Xiao, 2007), which were the mainstream investigative subjects over the years, and non-western media, which is gaining prominence since the 2010. This includes research of media in East Africa (Wekesa, 2013), Brazil, India and Malaysia (Yu, 2017), Latin America (Estupiana, 2017), Middle East (Arif & Hayat, 2018). Key findings are delineated as follows:

First of all, media attention on China has increases substantially since 1989(Zhang, 2017). Most of the studies found significant increases in media coverage about China across the years (Zhang, 2003; Peng, 2004; Stone & Xia, 2007; Sparks, 2010). Summarizing the reasons for the increasing coverage on China, most studies agree that the rapid economic expansion of China along with its increasing influences in international affairs(Zhang, 2017) attracted more international attention hence the coverage. It is also worth noting that Ching (1998) also attributed the rise of media attention on China to the fall of USSR.

In addition, multiple aspects of China were found to be reported in the media in the studies. They included domestic politics, international relations, military development, science and technology, sports and so on (Zhang & Cameron, 2003; Yu & Wang, 2017).

Nonetheless, scholars also found a change in topics' prominence over time. In early studies, commercial trade was the key focus (Li & Cyr, 1998). Over time, scholars found the dominance in political and ideological coverage in western media (Peng, 2004; Cheng, 2008; Li, 2012) and they are often reported with unfavorable image. Even though economic and cultural reports were captured in news (Stone &

Xiao, 2007; Yu & Wang, 2017), the attention was kept at a minimum level (Willnut & Luo, 2011). This aligns with the findings of Peng (2014), despite the increase in coverage of China from 1992 to 2001, the overall tone remained negative (especially in reports concerning political ideology) over the years in his research on New York Times and Los Angeles Times, most media representation of China yielded the same pattern.

Moreover, western and non-western media demonstrated a distinctive difference in their coverage of China. Scholars studying the western media often criticize the coverage of China of being “one-sided” (Yu & Wang, 2017; Arif, 2018). Mark (2002) remarks that “dominance of Western media and the extent of negative reporting about China, has resulted in a major image problem for China in the international front (p.50)”. Western media tends to highlight the human right issues (Chang, 2008), anti-communist (Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 2000), and Chinese government’s handling of crisis, which led to a predominance of negativity (Chang, 2008). Summarizing the studies that indicated a negative image were portrayed in Western media (Lisa, 2003; Peng 2004; Charles, 2015; Yu & Wang, 2017), Stone and Xiao (2017) concluded that the key ideas from media description is that China is an “oppressive nation with strained relationship with US”. In western media, an “us against other” mentality dominate the framing of China in the media.

On the other hand, non-western media have shown a greater emphasis on collaborations and portrayed as favorable partner instead of highlighting ideological differences. In particular, as found in Arif and Hayat (2018) comparisons of Middle Eastern Media and British media on Chinese coverage, the former pays substantially more attention to cultural issues such as discriminations, one-child policy and income gap in China while the latter covered the change of political system and economic reform. Estupiana (2017) also asserted an advancement to a more multifaceted China was presented in media in Latin America from the monolithic communist image in the past.

In the search of the explanation on general portrayal of China in the west, Wang and Shoemaker(2011) found a significant positive correlation between political freedom and positive media coverage in western media. On the other hand, Arif and Hayat (2018) speculated a different agenda followed by western and non-western media. Western media values multi-party system, democracy and freedom of expression and the lack thereof in China. On the contrary, developing countries such as Pakistan stressed on the development of Chinese political structure, system and politics. Country's own foreign policy might affect media orientations in Wang and Shoemaker(2011)s' proposition.

Other indirect studies about media portrayal of China includes the study of US media on the visits of Chinese leader from 1949 to 2006 (Chang, 2018), the change in image of Beijing in foreign media (Yu, 2017), the national image of China in BBC news in the events of Government reform and occupy central movement in Hong Kong Charles (2015) and so on.

All in all, studies on coverage of China in media has a well-established history and similar pattern was found. Despite the large amount of study in this regard, similar study is rare in the context of Hong Kong.

Study of China's image in Hong Kong media

The only study found was Chen (2012). He conducted a study on the image of China in Hong Kong media in the second half of the first decade of handover (2005-2010). In his research, he revealed an increased coverage of China in three local Chinese newspapers. Moreover, the tone of reports, for instance on Chinese culture and science achievement won high favorability. Overall, an image of busy prosperous and promising China with a high economic growth was portrayed. On the soft power side, "a passionate, active, young, colorful and diversified social of China was presented. On the other hand, stories on social problem also represents the negative consequences of social transformation in China.

As one of the seventeen investigated territories their study, Willnat and Luo(2011) showed that Hong Kong media have the most diverse coverage of news from including topics on, internal politics, internal order, business, economy, accidents/disasters, transportation, communication, social relation..etc, which are the references of the coding scheme in this study.

To conclude, the current literature presents a gap in the collection of studies concerning about Hong Kong media. Despite the close relationship between Hong Kong and China, concrete evidence on media studies towards China in Hong Kong is not found in current investigations.

3. Theoretical framework

The studies mentioned in the last chapter are built on different theories. In this chapter, I will discuss the important theoretical framework that are used as the basis of this study. These theories do not only build the foundations of the current research, but also direct the design of research questions and reveal implications of the findings. We will first discuss the power of media in terms of social construction of reality, then explore the agenda-setting role of media and the impact of media framing with framing theory. All of these are critical in understanding and interpreting this research paper.

Media and pseudo-environment

In a mega and globalized society like nowadays, every person has a limited reach of information, especially with the growing size and complexities of society. Therefore, with information one gathers through direct and indirect channels, he/she would construct his/her own mental image of the world, which is a coined as one's "pseudo-environment"(Lippmann, 1922). It is a subjective, biased, and necessarily abridged image of the world(Takeshita, 1997). The role of media, according to

Lippman(1922), is to provide information for everyone's pseudo-environment. Essentially, people "live in the same world, but they think and feel in different ones" Lippman(1922, p.5).

Building upon this concept, McQuail(1962) added that mass media play a role in "shaping the individual and collective consciousness by organizing and circulating knowledge which people have their own everyday life and of the more remote contexts of their lives" (p.13). Fujitake (1968) argued that a person could easily regard the pseudo-environment as identical as the reality for three reasons. First, with limited access to the world beyond sight, people regard media as important channels to obtain information. Second, with the common consumption of media, the information obtained is likely to work as a token of social exchange. A pseudo-environment constructed by media provides resources for social exchange among people and be reinforced as a "common world". Finally, the ever-updating journalistic activities provides a momentum to keep people's attention to the ever-changing pseudo-environment(Takeshita, 1997), which likens the ever-changing nature of reality and direct people away from checking the alignment of reality and pseudo-environment they are placed in. These provide ground for people to accept media's portrayal of reality as a legitimate surrogate for reality.

However, media is not a neutral intermediary between the creator and consumer. Instead, it participates in the formation of dominant understanding of the world and the highest values in the society(Kellner, 2004). It actively contributes to the construction of reality by providing basis of which we determine what it meant to be strong and weak, success or failures. This is often coined as media's role in the social construction of reality. It shapes consumers' thoughts and value, impressions and actions. This function of the media has significant implications for politics: In a contemporary mass democracy, it is people's cognitions and choices based on them that determine the main direction of a policy in the long run(Takeshita, 1997). This also have important implications on national image, the subject of this study.

Image refers the sum of people's cognition, affection and evaluation regarding an object that arouse idea, feelings, opinions and perceptions in light of their belief, values and expectations. National image can be seen as "the cognitive representation that a person holds of a given country, what a person believes to be true about a nation and its people" (Kunczik, 1997, p. 46), and "the total of all descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs one has about a particular country" (Martin & Eroglu, 1993, p.193). In this study, country's image is defined as "a representation of a country's positive or negative standing in media, in terms of historical, political, economic, military, diplomatic and religious context" (Hanan, 2006, p. 8).

Within the pseudo-environment, image of another country relies on information obtained from media. It is created by the media as an "imagined community" (Scannell and Cardiff, 1995). In their representation and reports, media make a nation real and tangible(Scannell and Cardiff, 1995). Media infuses information with ideological, political and cultural contexts to produce representation of images from which individuals picture the world in their heads and construct their conception of 'us' and 'them' (Kellner, 1995). Notably, in media coverage of a foreign country, a specific aspect or a particular event that occurred in that country, rather than the county as a whole, is often featured. It is often argued that media coverage on a certain country-related topic or issue is likely shape how people view the country as a whole(Kellner, 1995).

In short, media played a substantial role in cultivating people's perceptions of foreign countries(Adoni and Mane, 1984; Wolfsfedl et al., 1988). Also, media's stereotypes, organizational ideology, corporate and government influence, among other factors, help to create and reinforce nation's image in media coverage (Hanan, 2006, p. 7). Ultimately, media is commented as the "first rate competitors for the number one position as international image former" (Galtung & Ruge, 1965, p. 65).

News, agenda-setting function theory and framing theory

While news is supposed to be about facts(Lau, 2012) and journalism roots in truthfulness, accuracy, fairness and accountability(Friend and Singer, 2007), it is undeniably a member of the media and contributes to the social construction of reality. In fact, news is “a sequence of socially manufactured messages, which carry many of the culturally dominant assumptions of our society (Glasgow University Media Group,1976, p.1).” In the production of news, media engages in the production and transformation of ideologies in the society (Hall, 1981). Factors such as social, economic and political position of news institution influence media orientations in their reports and presentations (Fowler, 1976). News is a socially constructed product and a cultural outcome influenced by a host of factors (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). Newspaper, indeed, has a significant stake in the society (Patterson, 2000). There are two key theories that illustrate the ability of newspapers’ influence on pseudo-environment of individuals in the society, agenda-setting function theory and framing theory.

Agenda-setting function theory is established by McCombs & Shaw (1972), who were inspired by McQuail(1962)’s social construction of reality. By hypothesizing and proving a significant positive relation between the perceived importance in the public and the prominence given to the issue by media, McCombs & Shaw (1972) proposed that mass media possess the power of focusing public attention and shaping the understanding of an issue. Through careful selections, prioritizations and various deliveries in newspapers or television news, the media draws public attention and influence perceptions of what the important issues of the day are (McCombs & Shaw,1972). This ability to shape the salience of topics on the public agenda has come to be referred to as the agenda-setting role of the mass media (McCombs, 2004). This reinstated the pivotal role of the provision of mediated view played by mass media for its audience. In other words, the media agenda determine, to some degree, the audiences’ (public) agenda (Takeshita, 1997).

As an extension of agenda-setting function theory, framing theory delved into a deeper level of influence for issues presented by media. Frames determines how people think about an issue. Framing examines how issues are evaluated, or from which perspective the issue is reported. Through framing of media discourses, the reality is rearrange and organized(Entman, 1993).

Goffman and Bateson (1972) proposed that people in society share frames. He coined psychological frames as a “spatial and temporary bounding of set of interactive messages” (Bateson, 1972, p. 197) that operates as a type of metacommunication (Hallahan, 2008). In other words, frames are references people used to formulate and communicate meanings within and outside their pseudo-environments. In 1990s, Entman (1993) further proposed framing theory as an approach in media analysis. He refers framing as the selection of “some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Entman (1993) also suggested the omnipresent nature of frames. He stated that it “exists everywhere in the communication process—not only in the communicator and the message or text, but also in the receivers of the message and within the culture in which the message circulates(Chu, 2010, p.3)”.

It was then widely adopted by scholars in their communication research. It has been agreed by scholars that framing is an inevitable part of meaning-making in the construction of media products (Choi, 2006). In studying framing practices in the media, a frame is defined as a “central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue” (Gamson, 1989, p. 157); Frames are information-processing schemata (Entman, 1991, p. 7; Norris, 1995). They are the “principles of choices, emphasis, and presentation composed of tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters (Gitlin,1980, p.6)”. Gitlin (1980) defines media frames as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, significance, and exclusion. In this study, we identify

frames in the newspaper articles and conduct a macro-analysis in identifying their pattern to understand the characteristic of China's national image portrayed by the media in Hong Kong.

In news media, journalists commonly work with news frames to simplify, prioritize and structure the narrative flow of events (Norris, 1995). Framing is the stage at which journalists define problems, diagnose causes and make moral judgements (Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad, 2000). News frames provide "a template that guides journalists in assembling facts, quotations, and other story elements into a news story, as well as orients the interpretations of the audience" (Han, 2007, p. 41).

In its operations, news frames are embodied covertly in "key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images emphasized in a news narrative rather than explicit statements" (Entman, 1991, p.7).

Importantly, key operation of news framing is not just about the selection and highlights of some parts of reality but also about the omitted ones (Entman, 1993).

Entman (1993) has indicated that in practice, media practitioners frame events, or stories, to highlight differences in their attributes or stages. These media products influence our understanding of the world to different degrees, and therefore the information causes misperceptions through unbalanced or biased reports (Saleem, 2007). In the field of communication studies, the "image of a country" in media is often analyzed through the language used by media, including value-laden (words, phrase, metaphors, sentences and adjectives etc.,) which appear in support or opposition to that country's government policies on various domestic and international issues (Hanan, 2006, p. 151).

The manipulation of frames by journalist is affected by several factors. According to propaganda models, media professionals are limited by cultural, economic, ideological, and political factors (Herman and Chomsky, 2002). Similarly, Scheufele (1999) suggested at least five factors that potentially influence how journalists frame a given issue: social norms and values, organizational pressures and constraints, pressures of interest groups, journalistic routines, and ideological or political orientations of journalists.

Media framing theory and the agenda-setting theory of communication both provide an insight to how the media can influence their audience. To sum up these two theories, De Vreese (2005) explained that, “while agenda-setting theory deals with the salience of issues, framing is concerned with the presentation of issues” (p. 53). These theories point to the role of media in performing these functions by choosing what to cover, which issues to promote as most newsworthy, and how to cover issues (Entman, 1993; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Following the two theories, this study first explores the frames commonly used in news coverage, then calculate the frequency of visibility to examine the salience placed on particular issue, and perform an analysis on the differences of newspapers to examine the different agenda set by each news organization. Finally, I aggregate the found attributes to approximate the pseudo-environment on the national image of China constructed by Hong Kong media.

4. Background

4.1 Hong Kong-China relationship

In this chapter, we will provide background of different aspects of Hong Kong-China relationships. This is important to the study because these incidents directly affect media’s orientations in the representations of China. In fact, most of the issue below are widely covered by the media.

On July 1st 1997, Hong Kong became part of China as a Special Administrative Region under the effect of Sino-British Joint Declaration, ending a century and a half of British administration. Under Hong Kong’s constitutional document, the Basic Law, the existing economic, legal and social systems will be maintained for 50 years (HKSAR, 2008). It states that while Hong Kong is an “inalienable” part of the People’s Republic, its “high degree of autonomy” is approved by the Chinese Parliament to enjoy independent executive, legislative and judicial power. China is responsible for defense and foreign

affairs, but Hong Kong runs its own internal security. The Chinese government is barred from the intervention of Hong Kong's affairs, and the Communist Party has no official presence in the political system. Freedom of speech, press, religion and protest are all upheld by law.

"One country, two systems" remains to be the core principle of Hong Kong-China relationship. The concept was designed to soothe public anxiety about the modern capitalistic society incorporates back to communist China at the transition period(Chao, 1987). After the 1989 June 4th incident, then President of CCP Deng Xiaoping reinstated the 50-year-vision of protecting and maintaining the uniqueness of Hong Kong. He famously proclaimed, "Horses will still run, stocks will still sizzle, dancers will still dance" (South China Morning Post, 2018).

However, when one looks for information about Hong Kong-China relationship online in 2019, the first search and most searched result on Google would be "Hong Kong-Mainland China Conflict". The rapid integration with China has brought unprecedented opportunities and challenges to Hong Kong. This leads to a complicated relationship between the two places. In the midst of massive changes and transformation, media plays a role of delivery of information and can significantly sway public opinion towards the motherland. In the following, we will discuss China-Hong Kong relationship in different perspectives.

Economically, the two places operate under different systems. China operates under "socialism with Chinese characteristics" while Hong Kong remained in capitalism as British legacy. The "One Country, Two Systems" principle provides Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy in economic, trade, financial and monetary matters. These include continuance of the capitalist economic and trade systems, free flow of goods and capital, free port and separate customs territory(HKSAR, 2012). In addition, tariff preferences and other economic arrangements obtained or made by the HKSAR are enjoyed exclusively by the HKSAR.

The two systems have been complementary in the development of both places (Cheng & Findlay, 1998). According to figures from Hong Kong government, Chinese's share in the amount of global trade conducted in Hong Kong raised from 9.3% in 1978 to 50.2% (HK\$4,136.0 billion or US\$530.7 billion) in 2017 (HKSAR, 2019). China has become Hong Kong's largest trading territory since mid-80s. In 2003, Hong Kong and the Mainland signed the "Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement" (CEPA), providing tariff free treatment to all Hong Kong-origin goods meeting the CEPA rules of origin and other mutually beneficial economic terms. The economic ties between China and Hong Kong is a mutually beneficial relationship for the two territories. Nonetheless, with the rapid development of China, the significance of Hong Kong in Chinese economy had a substantial drop. Lui (2017) pointed out that Hong Kong's GDP was equivalent to 19.65% of Chinese GDP in 1997 but was down to just 2.78% in 2016.

"One country, two systems" experienced a bumpier ride in terms of political and social domain. Before the handover, Fortune Magazine pessimistically proclaim the handover as the "death of Hong Kong" in 1995. However, the separate systems were set to protect the uniqueness of Hong Kong being an international city, a window on the world for China(Lo, 2007). After 1997 handover, the West deemed Hong Kong as a fitting venue for disseminating Western democratic ideas to the mainland. After nearly two decades, on the contrary of the thought above, it seems Hong Kong has been involuntarily pulled toward China under the latter's huge political and economic gravity (So, 2007).

In fact, political and social integration has met with resistance for the past two decades. While scholar like So (2011) asserted that successful integration between Hong Kong and mainland China must be done at political, economic, socio-cultural, and legal levels, other argues the repaid assimilation process to be mainlandization and even re-colonization (Lo, 2007). Researchers noted that Hong Kong people resisted this kind of aggressive nationalism (Wu, 2016) and there was a rise in resistance, especially

among the youth (Fong, 2017). In the review of Hong Kong-China relationship from Chan (2004), he concluded democratization was reversed, freedoms were fragile, and rules were bent.

Since the handover, significant event of resistance includes 1 July Demonstration in 2003 with five hundred thousand participants against the introduction of National Security Bill, four silent protests of Hong Kong Bar Associations concerning the undermining of Hong Kong judicial independence, moral and education controversy in 2012. Most prominently, umbrella movement for universal suffrage and democratic reform in 2014.

In addition to political engagements, anti-mainland China sentiment spreads through Hong Kong in the recent decade. China-Hong Kong conflicts includes controversies about 150 immigrant daily quota, parallel goods traders and cultural conflicts. These sociocultural conflicts initiated unprecedented political effects. In recent years, government official has changed the interpretation concerning one country two systems. "Hong Kong is (incorporated under) China." It is simultaneously part of China and not part of China. It is a land "in between," situated between "the 'open' world of the West and 'closed' world of Communist China" (Jones, 2015, pp. 30–31). Finally, "two (systems) is subsumed under one (country)."

After all these incidents, Lee (2017) conducted a crucial study about the change in public confidence in "One country, Two systems" and the role of media in it. He found a negative correlation between political, social news coverage and the confidence of the "one country, two systems" claim. Moreover, public confidence in the system is declining. According to the University of Hong Kong Public Opinion Poll, in July 1997, 63.6% of the Hong Kong people were confident in the idea of "one country, two systems." The highest confidence score was recorded in April 2007 at 77.7%, and the lowest was in September 2014 at 37.6%. As of September 2017, the figure remained relatively low at 47.5% (Lee, 2017. P.13).

In short, even though one country two systems remained to be the key of Hong Kong-China relationship, it does not prevent conflicts between the two territory and has raised concerns over its implementation for the last two decades.

4.2 Perception of China in Hong Kong

After briefly reviewing the history of Hong Kong-China relationship, this section provides solid data to reflect the perception of China in the eyes of Hong Kong people. The Public Opinion Program from University of Hong Kong conducts regular public polling about (Hong Kong) citizen’s feeling towards government or people around the world. For the time period of study in this research (2008-2018), the negative feeling towards Chinese government increased from 12.7% in 2008 to 38.9% in 2018. On the other hand, negative feeling towards Chinese people has increased over the decade from 12.9% to 28.9%. In the discussion section, I will compare the two figures and investigate its correlation with the coverage of China in local newspaper.

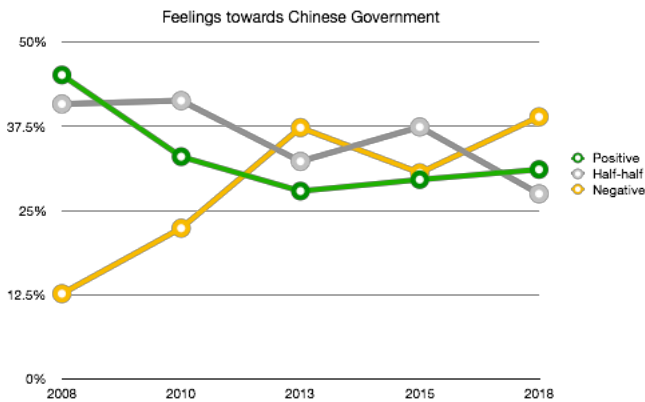


Figure 1 - Feelings toward Chinese government.

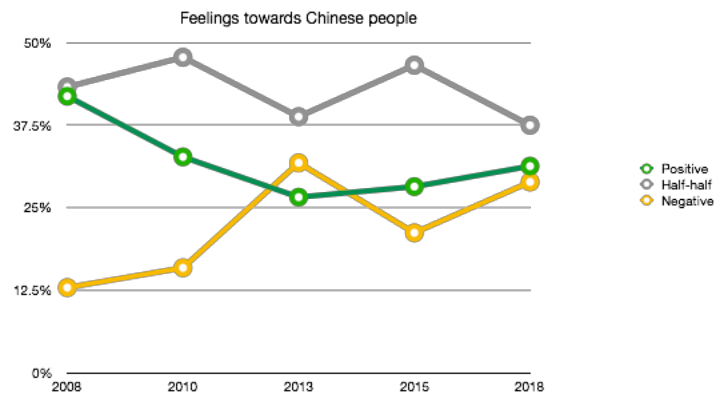


Figure 2 - Feelings towards Chinese people

4.3 Hong Kong Media Landscape

Hong Kong has a well-developed modern media system. As of July 2018, Hong Kong harbors forty-eight Chinese daily, twelve English daily, thirteen bilingual daily and five Japanese daily newspapers. Among the Chinese-language dailies, 42 cover mainly local and overseas general news, and the remaining ones specialize in other subjects such as finance. Most Chinese-language print newspaper are owned by private enterprises (Jiang & Jiang, 2013).

Under the “one country, two system” constitutional principle, Hong Kong citizen enjoy high degree of autonomy and freedom its media system. In Hong Kong, the high degree of press freedom is a cultural commodity and ideological apparatus of modern capitalism (Lee, 2000). Therefore, Hong Kong media is kept out of strict censorship control of the Chinese government. However, studies showed that instead of direct restrictions, Chinese authority indirectly influences Hong Kong media mainly through economic incentive and *guanxi*(relationship) (Lee & Chan, 2009). The Chinese government influences media owners by offering or withholding business opportunities—including advertising, which is crucial for commercial media outlets—in the mainland and Hong Kong(Luqiu, 2018). In terms of *guanxi*, Chinese government exerts a lot of effort to cultivate and maintain relationships with media owners, who are mostly tycoons in Hong Kong (Fung, 2007). Over 50 percent of media owners in Hong Kong have been appointed to the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (HKJA, 2013). This mass interest in the appeasing attitude towards Chinese government and formal warnings and criticisms toward the Hong Kong press set up a precedent of “political correctness” self-censorship for media.

Although a diversity of political stances is observed in Hong Kong media, Fung (2007) predicted that the rapid redistribution of political power and a realignment of social forces will move the “neutral” reporting towards the left after 2010s. As a whole, the news media in Hong Kong gradually has tilted

toward the pro-establishment side after its handover from the United Kingdom to China in 1997 (Fung, 2007). This means media are predicted to be more left-leaning and more likely to embrace Chinese favorable news. In the studies around the same period (Lee and Lin, 2006; Chan and Lee, 2007; Lee and Chan, 2009), most media practitioners agreed on a prospective decline of press freedom and growing self-censorship. Political and economic considerations remain to be media practitioners key concerns in operating the organizations(Fung, 2007). The balance among freedom of speech, political pressure and market expectations become major issue for the press.

Two key values are at the core of Hong Kong media, credibility and press freedom.

Media credibility has been the core pursuit of Hong Kong media outlets. Center for Communication from The Chinese University of Hong Kong conducts a survey every year on the public evaluation of media credibility in Hong Kong. In recent years, the survey has reported an overall declining average credibility score of paid newspaper since 1997, indicating the perceived loss of trust from the citizen to media in the past two decades. The credibility score for newspapers used in this study will be mentioned in the methodology section.

In the world press freedom index, the report which examines the degree of freedom of press in 180 countries and regions from Reporters Without Borders, ranked Hong Kong at the 34th in 2010 but 73th in 2017. The organization noticed the severity of the decline and published a special report on Hong Kong issue. According to the special report, Hong Kong journalist are reported to have experienced growing interference by the Chinese authority in the midst of polarization between Hong Kong “pro-Beijing” and “pro-democracy” divergence (RWB, 2019). Media practitioner admitted that it is increasingly difficult to cover subjects involving governance in either Hong Kong and mainland China.

The accustomed press freedom is under threat. Many online news outlets were founded in the wake of such resistance, hoping to expand the shrinking freedom of speech and press.

In a similar local yearly evaluation among media practitioners conducted by Hong Kong Journalist Association, the perceived press freedom has also dropped. In 2018, 73 percent of the journalists reported the feeling on the loss of freedom in the media just a year ago. Fear of retaliation of future opportunities because of the Beijing authority is named as the major reason of self-censorship within the industry, as mentioned by Hong Kong Journalists Association. The independent online news outlet, Hong Kong Free Press, who founded with the mission to safeguard press freedom in Hong Kong post umbrella movement era, remarks that " a series of ownership changes in the media industry shifted the media landscape in Hong Kong." Self-censorship also takes place the form of personnel re-arrangement, including management reshuffling within news organizations and shutdown of influential columns(HKFP, 2018). In recent years, Hong Kong Journalist Associations publicly decried the decline in press freedom in the city and expressed worries on unlawful accusation for reporting of government officials.

After the tenth anniversary of handover, various incidents raised concern on the Chinese control on Hong Kong media. Hong Kong Journalist Associations documented a soaring number of front-line journalist attack after Umbrella Movement. This includes assault on Ming Pao veteran chief editor Kevin Lau, the attack of Apple Daily owner Jimmy Lai in 2014, as well as the Chief Executive's public denouncement of student publication "Undergrad" from the University of Hong Kong in 2015. Each of these events were highly concerned by the media and often deemed as an intimidation of press freedom in Hong Kong at the time. The most recent incident happened in 2018, financial times correspondent Victor Mallet has his visa renewal or re-visit were both rejected because of a talk co-attended with the Hong Kong independence activist, Andy Chan.

4.4 The role of media in Hong Kong

Media is regarded as the “fourth estate” in Hong Kong. It upholds justice and holds ruling class accountable. As the democracy-deprived government hampers ordinary citizen’s power and representation in politics, the press became the critical resources for citizen to express their grievances or uncover injustice (Ng, 2017). Meeting public expectations of providing important information and independent forum for public debate helps media organizations to prosper (Chan and So, 2004). As a result, a range of “strategic rituals” was devised by media organizations to handle political pressure, market expectations, and journalistic integrity at the same time (Lee, 2000).

Hong Kong media is also known for their role in political participations. It was named as a crucial facilitator in the formation of citizen’s collective action (Chan and Li, 2007). In Chan and Li (2007)’s study, media was found to serve the function of promoting public agenda, heighten movement leaders’ words, share action-facilitating information, and indirectly convince citizen to join the movement (Chan & Li, 2007). Xia and Shen(2018) revealed that traditional news work as an efficacy facilitator to encourage political participation, whereas online alternative media use leads to non-institutional political participation through heightening levels of political dissatisfaction. Alternative media serve as a political dissatisfaction amplifier to fuel citizens’ protest participation. Alternative media together with traditional media construct a pluralistic media environment in which individuals are exposed to a variety of information and encourage to take part in different schemes of political participation (Kenix, 2011). The most famous movement of its kind motivated by the media was the July 1 demonstration in 2003, inspired participation of five hundred thousand Hong Kong citizen to protest against national security legislation and the growing incompetence of HKSAR government. It successfully pressured the government to postpone and further discuss the feasibility of the legislation. The demonstration was widely recognized as a victory of ‘people power’ (Chan, 2005).

5. Methodology

The methodology of this study is a combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The first was quantitative content analysis of a sample of news item from three major newspapers in Hong Kong to examine the aspects of China presented in the news and the qualitative analysis of the projected favorability of the news stories. To answer the research questions above, I adopt content analysis in analyzing newspaper content in the period between 2008 to 2018. Content analysis is the most popular means of research in media studies. It is renowned for its unbiased positivist method.

News articles in Apple Daily, Ming Pao Daily and Sing Tao Daily during the time period from 2008 to 2018 constitute the sample frame of news population. WiseNews was used as the database to obtain news articles. The author searched “China” column in the three newspaper and got 800 articles. These news articles are downloaded. The author read all of them and identified an average of 150 articles each year. The total number of news articles of the news sample is 961. The unit of analysis is a news article.

5.1 Selection of Sample

The objective of this research is to analyze comparatively the coverage of news of China from three local Hong Kong newspapers over a ten-year time span. Five years(2008, 2010, 2013, 2015, 2018) within the time period 2008 to 2018 are chosen for a snapshot comparison.

The selections of newspapers in this study are according to major principles: popularity and political orientation. This is to make sure the selection of paper to be representative and indicative of the Hong Kong newspaper industry. Apple Daily, Ming Pao Daily and Sing Tao Daily are three major daily newspapers in Hong Kong. Apple Daily is the most popular Chinese newspaper in Hong Kong, with a circulation of almost 200,000, and has a daily readership of 1.51 million. It is mass-oriented and hold a pro-democratic stance in the political spectrum(Lee & Lin, 2006). Ming Pao Daily has a circulation of

180,000 and often deemed as the elite-oriented newspapers. It has a liberal stance in the media political spectrum(Lee & Lin, 2006). Sing Tao Daily also has 180,000 circulation record and holds a pro-China stance in the spectrum. As shown, the newspaper samples in this study are amongst the most circulated papers and came from a different point in the political spectrum in Hong Kong, from conservative to moderate to liberal.

5.2 Background of data base and selected Newspaper

5.2.1 WiseNews

WiseNews was the database used in this study for the collection of the news articles. WiseNews is a product of Wisers, which was established in 1998 and has since “grown to be the world’s leading provider of Chinese media and market intelligence solutions.” Wisers (2017) claims to be “the world’s largest database of Chinese news and information, with database covers over 400,000 sources of news and information and an archive of over 50 billion items since 1979.” WiseNews covers almost all Hong Kong’s newspapers. All currently published Chinese daily newspapers are included in its database. With its full collection of Chinese newspapers, Wisenews become a credible source of extraction of newspaper articles for this study.

5.2.2 Ming Pao Daily

Ming Pao Daily is widely recognized as the most trustworthy newspaper in Hong Kong(Luqiu,2017). According to the public evaluation on media credibility from Chinese University of Hong Kong (2018), Ming Pao has been the most credible Chinese newspaper since 1997. Ming Pao Daily stresses on its professionalism and thus an objective approach to the news. However, following the general trend of Hong Kong media as a whole, its credibility suffered a drop across the two decades. Ming Pao was found by famous novelist Louis Cha in 1959(Chan & Lee, 2018). Before the Handover, Ming Pao Enterprise was

merged with two Malaysian media group and formed Media Chines International Limited. It was then listed on Hong Kong Stock Exchange and Bursa Malaysia Securities Berhad in 2008(Chan & Lee, 2018).

Several major controversies in the industry is affiliated with the organization.

In 2014, after a controversial replacement of chief editor position with Beijing-tied Malaysian executive Tiong Hiew King, former chief editor Kevin Lau was brutally assaulted. It was widely speculated that the attack was in relation to his investigative work in collaboration with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) into the offshore assets of thousands of mainland Chinese and Hongkongers, including some related to China's leaders (Independent, 2014). This incident was heavily condemned from the industry and called out for pressure from China. The incident was reported worldwide and denounced as an attack to press freedom in Hong Kong(Reporter Without Boarder, 2016).

A year later, a story detailing Tiananmen Massacre was removed under the command of the new editor-in-chief was criticized from lawmakers and called out as shielding Beijing from embarrassment instead of acting in the interest of the public(Lee, 2014).

In 2016, the journal's executive chief editor, who worked on reports based on Panama Papers and wrote about sensitive topic about the future of Hong Kong, was removed from his position (Reporter Without Boarder, 2016). The overt dismissal on journalist-with-different-opinion was criticized and protested against in its labor union and columnist.

5.2.3 Sing Tao Daily

Sing Tao Daily has a pro-government history(Yu, 2014). Before the 1997 handover of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom to China, it was known to be a supportive press for the colonial government. After 1997, it turned its support to the Beijing government. In 2004, Sing Tao Media Group was sold to the

Group to Mr. Charles Ho. The new owner is a members of the National Political Consultative Congress of China(Yu, 2014). According to an international report about Chinese influence in worldwide media(Cook, 2013), Sing Tao Daily was named as one of the media outlets that was under influence or directly controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. Notable trace includes termination of high risk contributors and high journalist turnover rate due to an unpalatable editorial policy and the common practice of self-censorship(Cook, 2013).

In the report of public evaluation of media credibility conducted by center of communication research in the Chinese University of Hong Kong(School of Journalism and Communication 2018), Sing Tao Daily holds its fifth position in perceived credibility over the past two decades.

5.2.4 Apple Daily

Being the second best-selling newspaper in Hong Kong, Apple Daily is known for its populist and confrontational approach(Lee, 2014). In the post-handover sluggish economic situation, Apple Daily acted as a channel of expression and reinforcement of public discontent(Chan & Lee,2007). Politically, Apple adopted a prodemocracy and anticommunist stance and is most likely to support contentious politics (Lee, 2014). The overt anti-Beijing stance led to political and commercial pressure such as advertisement boycott from major corporations and numerous hacking attack on its attack (Reuter, 2015).

Key event involving Apple Daily includes its bold encouragement on street protest on 1st July in 2003 after SARS crisis in Hong Kong(Chan & Lee, 2007). On the day of protest, the front page of apple daily was seen on the street eminently as protest banners and in demonstrations. The 2013 protest was the largest scale of protest after the handover(Lee, 2009).

In 2014, Apple Daily's owner, Jimmy Lai, was attacked at the Occupied Central site (Reporter without Broder, 2016). In the following year, the office of NextMedia, and home of Jimmy Lai was fire-bombed (Reporter without Broader, 2016). These incidents were speculated to be related to the outspoken nature of Apple Daily.

In the report of public evaluation of media credibility (School of Journalism and Communication 2018), it was ranked the 6th among 15 paid newspaper in 1997 and dropped to the 8th in the 2016 study. Its credibility dropped for 17% across the two decades, more than the other two selected newspaper in this study, which both scores dropped for 11%.

5.2 Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was employed to identify the frames about China coverage in Hong Kong newspaper based on grounded theory approach that involves open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Becker & Stamp, 2005). The coding work involve two-step process. In the first step, the author did open coding and axial coding on 70 piece of randomly selected news articles (c.a. 10% of the sample). In open coding, the raw messages are broken down into idea units. Each convey a single idea. In the axial coding, the categories (themes and sub-frames) were identified around which the idea units grouped together based on the similar themes (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Previous studies on the Western media coverage of China (Willnat & Luo, 2011; Zhang & Cameron, 2003) were used as the reference schemes for this axial coding.

Then, the author coded other 35 randomly selected (10.9% of news sample) news articles using the categories developed by the primary coding process to find the content that cannot be coded by these categories. The author coded this content using the open coding and axial coding approaches and created more categories (subframes). In the second step, the open coding and axial coding were

repeated using other 70 random selected news articles. Altogether 5 main frames and 68 sub-frame categories were identified through these two steps of coding. The following are the examples of some sub-frames:

News	Major frame	Sub-frame
<p>旅游巴堕沟酿 11 死</p> <p>Couch falling off cliff caused 11 deaths</p>	Social News	Accident
<p>英相白高敦月中访华</p> <p>British Prime Minister Gordon Brown visit China mid-month</p>	International/Politics	Foreign Relations

5.2.1 Introduction to Content Analysis

Content analysis is an established and standard method within media studies for finding patterns and interpreting inference in communication content (Weber, 1990). It was first presented in 1927 by Lasswell for detection of propaganda. In current communication research, it is renowned as the “research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Berelson 1952, p. 18).” In general, content analysis is used in research for content description, hypothesis testing and inference facilitation (Neunendorf, 2002).

Content analysis is often used in communication research (Riffe & Freitag, 1997) and regarded as a systematic, objective and unobtrusive method in studying message content. Rooted as a positivist approach, explicit and consistent rules are followed in the analysis of news. Entman (1993) stated that content analysis has “the major task of determining textural meaning” and the identity of frames in the media (Entman,1993, p. 57).

Content analysis is chosen as both quantitative and qualitative operations are allowed in the analysis. Compared with mere qualitative methods, the quantified data allow objective and precise presentation of results. This allowed us to demonstrate overall changes of the frequency of issues related to China that are portrayed in media and evaluate the frames that are deployed. It would lead us to the answer of research questions.

5.2.2 Sampling

Constructed week sampling is a sampling technique that is becoming a popular tool for communication scientist. It is an example of purposive and stratified samples. Researchers (Luke, Caburnay, Charlene and Cohen, 2011; Song & Chang, 2012) have conducted studies to test the optimum sample size for an accurate population representation. Constructed week sampling is a type of stratified random sampling (SRS) technique popular in media studies in which the final sample represents all seven days of the week (Jones & Carter, 1959; Stempel III, 1952) to account for cyclic variation of news content (Riffe, Aust, & Lacy, 1993). The overall goal of constructed week sampling is to create maximum sampling efficiency while controlling for cyclical biases (e.g., weekly news patterns). Too few sampling units may lead to unreliable estimates and invalid results, whereas too many may be a waste of coding resources (Riffe et al., 1993). Varied results have been found from the studies that conducted by social scientist in identifying sufficient week count for efficient constructed week sampling for different population size (Lacy, Riffe, & Randle, 1998; Riffe et al., 1993; Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005). In the study of Song and Chang (2011), one constructed week in China would allow reliable estimates of content in a population of six months of newspapers even for highly volatile variables. Other sampling technique like random sampling or consecutive day sampling were proven to be last representative in their studies.

Accordingly, this study makes use of constructed week sampling in order to reflect the most accurate presentation of data in the population and one constructed week was collected as sample for a year representation in this study, following the suggestion from Song and Chang (2012).

A constructed week sample is formed by randomly picking newspaper articles from one of the fifty-two Mondays(/Tuesday/Saturday/etc) in a year and compose the sample of a week.

In the study, I use one constructed week each year and compare results for the five years. This results in three constructed weeks for a five time-point comparison. On average 120 pieces of article are examined every year from three newspaper.

5.2.2 Coding scheme

Coding schemes are developed with reference to studies about national images on media (Chen,2014; Li, 2012). Based on the framing theory, the news frames and favorability frames are coded in the collected samples.

News frames are the explicit themes revealed in the news piece. Five news frames used in this study are political frames, social frames, economic frames, cultural frame and science, technology and environment frame. A political frame is recorded if the story presents a political action, policy address or foreign affairs movement from the government officials. A social frame is recorded if the news piece presents social problem, conflicts, or civil litigations. An economic frame is recorded if the article concerns about economic activity such as businesses, economic growth or trade agreements. A cultural frame is recorded if the news piece is about cultural topics such as traditions, festivals, popular culture or languages. Finally, a technology, science or environmental frame is recorded if the reported activity involves technological advancement, scientific development, military activities or environmental consequences.

Favorability refers to the overall tone manifested in the individual stories and coded with reference to Likert Scale, which was determined by a modified index originally proposed by Budd et al. (1967, p.53-54). The index was created as a quantitative content analysis tool to judge how news reporting reflects prevailing impressions toward a social actor and its positive(+1), negative(-1), or neutral(0) range. With reference to the classification from (Estupinan, 2017), a positive story was defined as the overall tone or recurrent constituents in the new piece that suggest political, social and economic stability/strength, and progress and improvement, which has a propensity of promoting a favorable image of China. A negative story was defined as the overall tone or recurrent constituents in the story that suggest political, social and economic instability/weakness, conflicts, and human rights, religious and other problems, which is likely to reflect an unfavorable image of China.

Neutral stories reflected neither positive nor negative conditions when the report did not contain explicit evaluative references, or reflecting both positive and negative sides.

5.2.3 Coding example

Here I will present example of each favorability rating.

In the news piece of “广州传圣火警民互殴”(Fight between police and citizens during Olympic Torch relay in GuangZhou), the story reported a fight between the police and the civilian in the midst of the Olympic Torch relay. Since it is a social conflict in China, it is coded with the social theme and recorded as a negative story.

In “京城囚犯獄中傳奧運聖火” (Beijing inmates pass on Olympic Torch), it reported a story of the passing of Olympic Torch, letting prisoner feel the joy of the internationally-celebrated event. This is

about a social event that happened, and it shows the openness of Beijing government. Therefore, it is recorded as positive coverage.

“2 萬姓氏不見了(twenty thousand last names are gone)” reported about the fading of twenty thousand last names in China. It is categorized as cultural news because of it is a cultural phenomenon and a neutral coverage as it does not show weakness nor strength of the country according to the scheme.

5.3 Limitation

This study only sampled stories at five time points, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2015 and 2018. This might limit the study from identifying possible fluctuations of media frames within this time period and offering a more comprehensive picture. Also, as often found in framing analysis, the definition of frames and favorability ratings are largely the researchers' subjective, arbitrary inferences from the texts. Although this study has paid particular attention to sampling validity, there are still possible cultural and personal biases in coding and interpreting the findings. Finally, in doing content analysis, there is often the risk of “missing the substance while counting the numbers(Chen, 2012)”. Therefore, it is advisable for future studies to use both qualitative content analysis and qualitative textual analysis to examine the trends and characteristics of representation issues in international news.

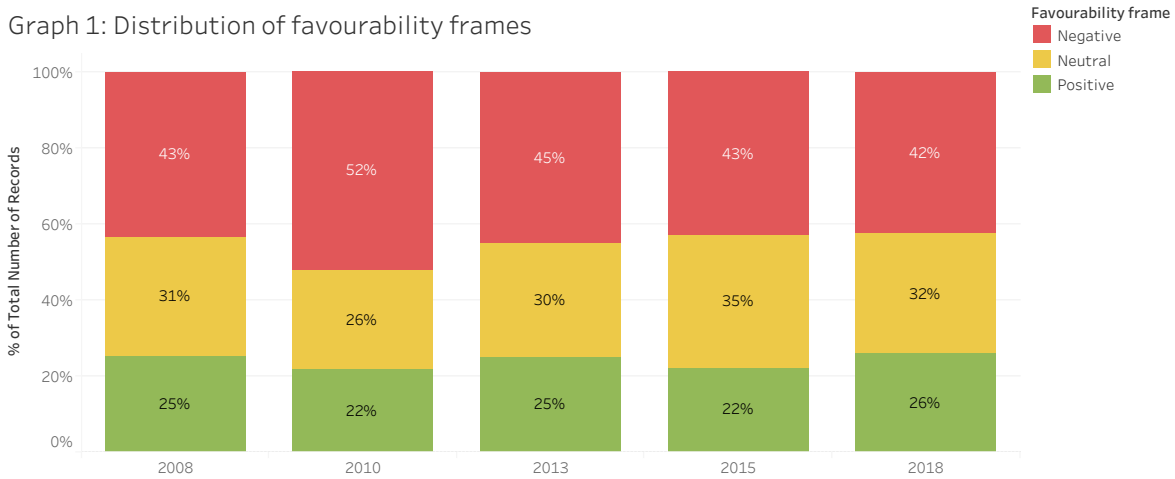
6. Analysis and Results

6.1 Overall outlook

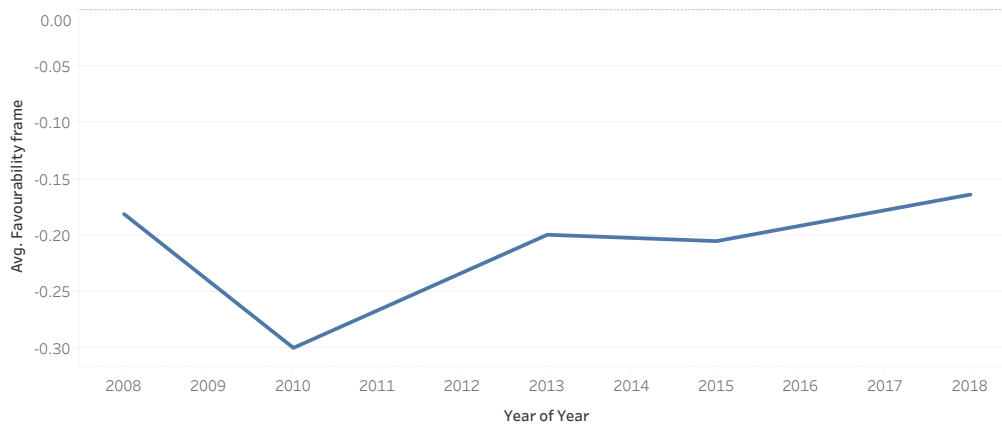
Following the procedures mentioned in the methodology section, 961 news articles from all the years were collected for content analysis. On average, 192 pieces of articles were collected each year. In the data, 30% of articles comes from Apple Daily, 35% from Ming Pao Daily and 35 % from Sing Tao Daily. Over the 11-year-observation, a gradual decrease in the number of coverages is observed. In 2008, each

of the three newspaper contributes around 8 pieces of articles every day to China’s coverage. In 2018, the total amount devoted to China showed a significant decrease, with only 5-6 articles from each newspapers every day. All of the newspaper showed more than 50% decline from 2008 to 2018.

Graph 1: Distribution of favourability frames



Graph 2: Average favourability means



6.2 Component of national image

In the 961 newspaper articles, five main categories of news were found. They include Politics, Society, Economy, Culture, Science, Technology or environment.

In total, from 2008 to 2018, news about Chinese society accounts for the largest share of coverage, seizing 37% of total news. 2018. The second largest share of news are politics or news on international relations, constituting 27% of the total coverage. The stories of culture make up the third largest share (18%), followed by 11% of economic news and 8% of science, technology or environmental news. This sums up the main categories of news found in the samples.

In terms of favorability frames, 45% of news were in negative frames, 24% were in positive frames and 31% were in neutral frames. Over the years, negative portrayal of China remains a consistent 42-50% portion and neutral portrayal remain around 26-35% of the news. The average favorability is negative, with a mean of -0.21.

Graph 3: Distribution of themes and favorability frames

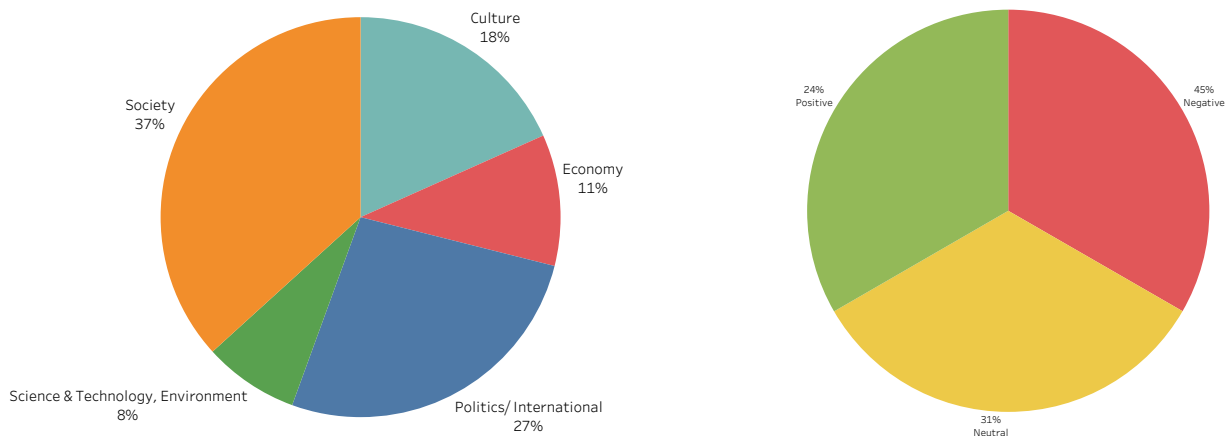
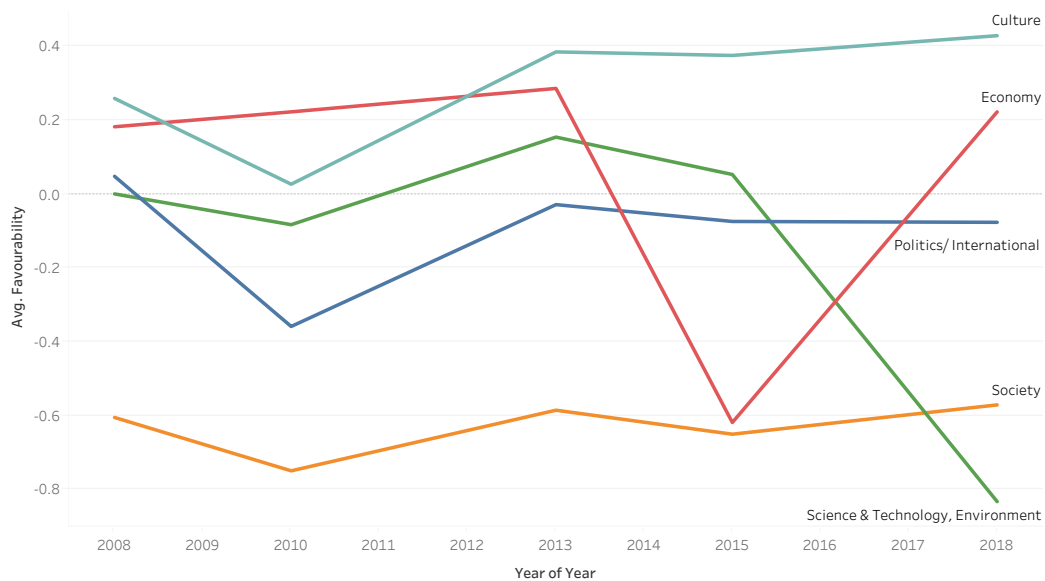


Table 1: Theme and favorability distribution

Category	2008			2010			2013			2015			2018			Total
	N	%	Mean	N	%	Mean	N	%	Mean	N	%	Mean	N	%	Mean	
Society	109	44%	-0.57	61	34%	-0.74	99	45%	-0.59	71	34%	-0.69	21	20%	-0.67	37%
Politics/ International	42	17%	0.05	39	22%	-0.36	69	31%	-0.03	67	32%	-0.07	39	38%	-0.08	27%
Economy	22	9%	0.18	26	15%	0.19	14	6%	0.29	13	6%	-0.38	18	17%	0.22	11%
Culture	58	23%	0.26	39	22%	0.05	26	12%	0.38	40	19%	0.38	14	13%	0.43	18%
Science and Technology, Environment	18	7%	0.00	12	7%	-0.08	13	6%	0.15	19	9%	0.05	12	12%	-0.83	8%
Total	249	100%	-0.16	177	100%	-0.30	221	100%	-0.20	210	100%	-0.20	104	100%	-0.16	100%

Breaking down by years, as shown in table 1, even though news about Chinese society accounts for the largest share of coverage, a steady decrease across the years from 44% of coverage in 2008 to 20% in 2018 is observed. The stories of culture which also showed a decrease in coverage (from 23% in 2008 to 13% in 2018). On the contrary, news of politics and international affairs gained prominence over the years, which rises from 17% in 2008 to 38% in 2018. News about science and technology or environment

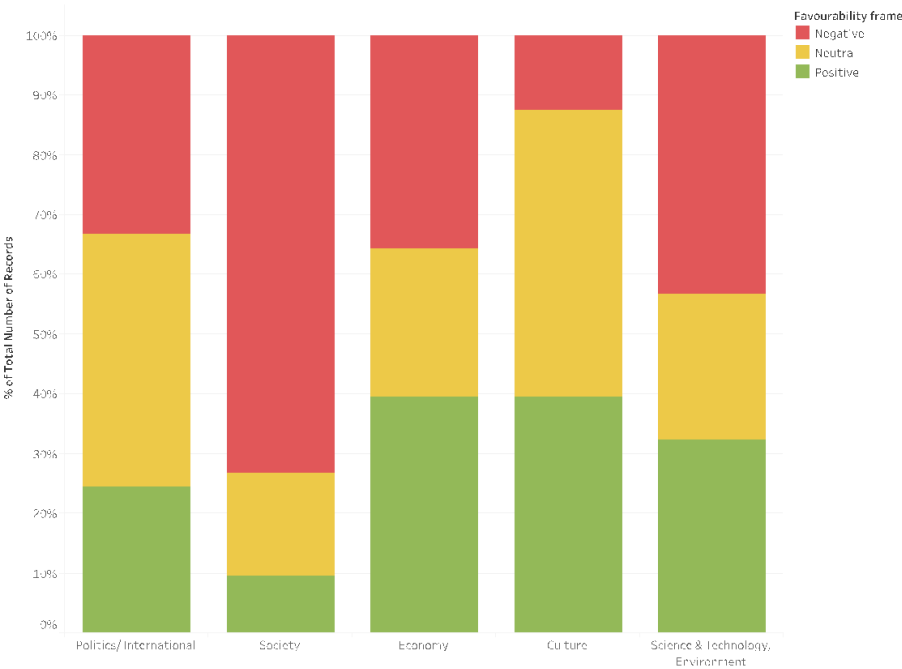
Graph 4: Average favorability trend



remained at 7% at the first half of the decade and increases steadily in the second half of the decade. News about the economy fluctuates across the period.

In terms of favorability, the overall favorability means showed an upward tendency after a drop in 2010. Cultural news is the only category that remained positive favorability. Economic news remained mostly positive except a significant dip in 2015. The favorability of politics news/international remains steady around the neutral line after the drop in 2010. Social news remained to be the most negative category of news across the period. News about science, technology and environment had remained neutral before 2015, but showed a drastic drop in 2018.

Graph 5: Favorability frames by theme



In the following, we will present attributes in different aspect of the national image of China presented in Hong Kong media.

6.2.1 Political Image

The political image of China reported in local media consists of two major elements: Domestic policy of CCP and international relation. 32% of the reports in political coverage concerns about the domestic

policy within the People Communist Party and 25% concerns about China’s international relation. In terms of favorability, 42% of the news in this category were presented in neutral frame, 33% in negative, and 25% in positive frame. This resulted in an overall slightly negative image with an average favorability of -0.086.

In the first half of the decade (2008 to 2013), coverage on domestic policy dominates this category (47%). Examples of news on domestic policies include a change of government appointment or a new law in household registration. The average favorability of domestic policy is 0.04, around neutral.

In the second half of the decade, news in foreign relations gained prominence in this category (37% in 2015, 44% in 2018). Foreign relations include reports of foreign affairs with different countries. It is worth noting that while Japan was major country mentioned in 2008 and 2013, United Kingdom and United States became the major focus of international relations in 2015 and 2018. This could probably due to the friendly relationship talks between China and Japan in 2008, whereas in 2018, China was in a trade war with USA. The impression on this subcategory of news remains neutral, with an average of 0.10 favorability across the years.

Top 3 sub-frames of political news by year (table 2)

2008		2010		2013		2015		2018	
Domestic policy	45%	Corruption/Anti-corruption	21%	Domestic policy	46%	Foreign relations	37%	Foreign relations	44%
Foreign relations	21%	Political figure	18%	Political figure	21%	Domestic policy	21%	Domestic policy	31%
Political figure	14%	Domestic policy	15%	Foreign relations	13%	Political figure	13%	Political figure	13%

On the other hand, political figures are also ubiquitous in the coverage. Introductions of political figures in China are usually accompanied by their actions. For instance, Pang Liyuan(President Xi’s wife)’s visit to

Sichuan was detailed and presented with a positive light. The violation of new anti-corruption guidelines from local government official Wu Guanzheng was also reported. Both positive and negative coverage of political figures are found in the articles. Finally, cross-strait relation is also a recurrent theme in political news.

Newspaper comparison

On the international/politics section, Sing Tao Daily presents a positive image over the years; Ming Pao shows a rather neutral image and Apple daily shows negative favorability. What is worth noting is that Apple daily originally ranked the most positive reporter on international/politics section in 2008, but it gradually declined over the years.

6.2.2 Social Image

Social image is the least favorable image amongst all. 73% of social news were negative, 18% were neutral and 10% were positive. This resulted in a -0.6 average favorability over the years. The majority of news were about the livelihood of people in China. These reports account for 27% of total social coverage in 2008 to 71% in 2018. This includes the depiction of daily lives in China such as the lack of coal for warmth in winter or community collaborative effort in the elimination of crimes. The major favorability frame is also livelihood, which tend to be negative(-0.2 average favorability). Criminal offences and accidents are the second popular reports.

Top 3 sub-frames of social news by year (table 3)

2008		2010		2013		2015		2018	
Livelihood	27%	Livelihood	26%	Livelihood	40%	Livelihood	35%	Livelihood	71%
Crimes	26%	Food safety	13%	Accidents	20%	Accidents	14%	Government misconduct	10%
Accidents	17%	Crimes	11%	Crimes	11%	Human Rights	12%	Human rights	10%

In addition, it is worth noting that public figure and government misconducts are persistent reported items in the news, which accounted for 8% to 11% across five time points. This includes celebrity criminal convictions, corruptions of government officials or police abuses. Food Safety was a highlight in 2010 as poisoned milk powder flow into the market again and various inspection reveal food safety problems in factories. Human rights issue began to gain prominence since 2018. The news coverage include suppression against human right activist and Tibet.

The average favorability value is relatively stable across the period(orange line in graph 4), with an average of -0.637 and ranged from -0.586 to -0.738.

Newspaper comparison

Among the three newspaper, only Sing Tao Daily shows an upward favorability trend across the years. It has the least favorable portrayal of Chinese society in 2008. Reports about livelihood, accidents, crimes and government misconduct were most prominent. However, coverage on these issues decreases over time. In 2018, little coverage was found on crimes and misconduct. Livelihood of people in China became the most prominent item in Sing Tao Daily. It would appear that Sing Tao daily has selected a different set of news to cover in the latest coverage. For example, stories about protest against corporations or common frauds in China.

On the contrary, Apple Daily showed a downward favorability trend. In addition, the range of news became narrower across time. Coverage in 2008 on livelihood of people had a diverse range of topic. For instance, living quality of citizen in GuangZhou or school policies on stock market investment. In 2018, most social news are crimes and accidents in China in Apple Daily.

6.2.3 Economic Image

Major news items that represent economic image of China are businesses. Unscrupulous business practice seized 19% of economic coverage, other business news accounts for 16%. Unscrupulous business practices include addition of prohibited food additive, business's refusal to pay its workers and fake honey productions. Other business news included new development of Nokia in China, change of business landscape in Guangdong provinces or discounts strategies from various business during Chinese New Year. Economic agreements or associations ranked third in the most covered items in economic news(15%). With the rise of international trade, China has signed multiple economic agreements with countries like Japan and Taiwan. News on this topic mainly focuses on the agreements and its implication to local businesses. Property news are also popular items in this category of news(16%).

Top 3 sub-frames of economic news by year (table 4)

2008		2010		2013		2015		2018	
Business	18%	Economic agreements/as sociations	19%	Property	43%	Unscrupulous business practice	62%	Investment	33%
Property	14%	Business	15%	Business	29%	Business	14%	Unscrupulous business practice	28%
Unscrupulous business practice	14%	Unscrupulous business practice/ Market	12%	Economic agreements/as sociations	14%			State-owned Enterprises	17%
Economic agreements/a sociations	14%								

In terms of favorability, 40% of economic news adopt positive frames and 36% adopt negative frames.

The average favorability maintained positive except 2015(see red line in graph 5). The majority of

economic news in 2015 were unscrupulous business practices, resulting in sudden drop in the favorability of news that year.

Newspaper comparison

Sing Tao Daily devoted most articles in economic news, seized a total of 45% in economic news. It is also the most positive outlet on average (0.17 favorability). In addition, Sing Tao Daily has a different focus compared with other newspapers. The major focus in Sing Tao Daily were property market, economics associations and businesses. On the other hand, both Ming Pao Daily and Apple Daily mainly reported on market situation like the possibility of gambling market in China, unscrupulous business practices and government investment into the economy like railway construction. The average favorability for Ming Pao Daily and Apple Daily is 0.00 and -0.13 respectively.

6.2.4 Cultural image

Culture is manifested in multiple ways in the coverage of China, which makes cultural image the most diverse coverage amongst all. As a nation with long history, cultural coverage includes special talents in people from different area, traditions in different provinces, animals, language variations, celebrity stories, social entertainment, movies and so on.

Top 3 sub-frames of cultural news by year (table 5)

2008		2010		2013		2015		2018	
People	21%	Cultural event	33%	People	46%	People	33%	Movie or books	44%
Cultural event	17%	Pop culture	13%	Traditions	21%	Cultural events	13%	People	31%
Cultural development	14%	People	10%	Historical figures	13%	Pop culture	5%	Sports	13%

The most popular sub-frames of cultural coverage are reports of eccentric people in China. For instance, a person who could write calligraphy with eyes or the most crowdfunded cancer patient in China. On the other hand, news about celebrities are sometimes reported. For example, doctoral thesis of president Xi was found and detailed in an article.

In terms of favorability, cultural coverage is the only category that maintained a positive image throughout the years. 41% of the coverage adopted positive frames and 50% adopted neutral frames. Cultural news has a slightly improving favorability means (see cyan line in graph 5).

Newspaper comparison

All three newspapers showed positive portrayal of culture image of China. The content of culture is also more diversified among the newspapers. Apple daily devoted most articles (22%) in this category and has the most diverse cultural coverage. For instance, it introduced traditions, historical figures, movie or books, Sports in its reports on culture. Sing Tao Daily reported more on cultural events and celebrity news such as mass wedding in Northern China or YaoMing(the first Chinese NBA basketball player)'s visit to childcare center at Mid-Autumn Festival. Finally, Ming Pao has a special coverage dedicated to introducing popular culture in China such as current slang or popular wedding requirements. This is rarely found in other newspapers. Different from other categories, cultural coverage on all newspaper has a positive growth of favorability.

6.2.5 Science, Technology or Environment Image

The science, technology and environment image of China constitutes mainly of military news and the nature. The former accounts for 23% of coverage, the latter includes 18% abnormal weather reports, 11% natural disaster and 10% pollution news. Overall, the favorability is around neutral except for 2018. Military news includes the launch of new fighter jets, introduction of new aircraft carrier or successful missile launch. Abnormal weather reports include destructive rainstorm, snowstorm or heat waves. The

frames of coverage composed of 32% positive, 24% neutral and 44% negative. For the first half of the decade, there was a growth in positive frames in its coverage with the boost of military coverage. However, with the absence of military news, a significant drop of favorability was found in 2018.

Top 3 sub-frames of Science, technology or environment news by year (table 6)

2008		2010		2013		2015		2018	
Abnormal weather	28%	Pollution	25%	Military	38%	Military	37%	Science	33%
Military	17%	Natural Disasters	17%	Natural Disasters	31%	Infrastructure	21%	Weather	33%
Technology	14%	Technology/Military	17%	Pollution	15%	Science	11%	Natural Disaster	17%

Newspaper comparison

Ming Pao Daily spend 9% of the coverage in this category, even more than economic news. In comparison, Apple Daily and Sing Tao Daily spent least of their coverage on this category, only 6% and 7% respectively. All three newspapers showed similar fluctuation in the favorability as they have similar coverage.

6.3 Newspaper comparisons

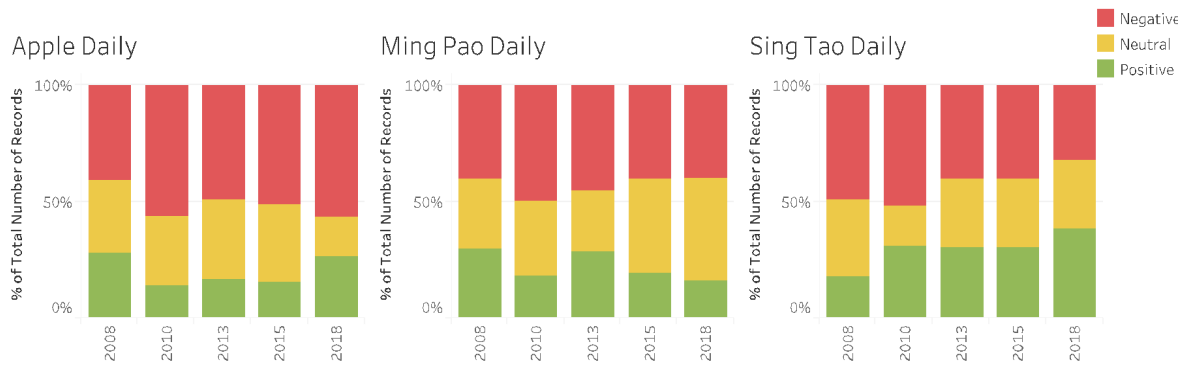
This study collected sample from three newspapers, Apple Daily, Ming Pao Daily and Sing Tao Daily. In the following, we will explore the differences among the newspapers with two dimensions: Selection of news and presented frames.

Selection of news are mostly similar across newspapers. In terms of coverage, we can observe that each newspaper has a similar distribution of themes despite having different amount of devotion in each

category. However, readers of different newspapers are likely to develop different impression of China with their different focuses.

There are distinctive differences among the three newspapers in their orientation of framing.

Graph 6: Favorability distribution by newspaper



As seen in graph 6, all of the newspapers constitute mostly negative frames. In total, Apple Daily has the highest portion of negative frames in its coverage(48%). Ming Pao Daily has the highest portion of neutral frames in its coverage(34%). Sing Tao daily has the highest portion of positive frames in its coverage(28%). The trend of frames also agrees with this distribution. In Apple Daily, negative frame has an increasing tendency over the period. The portion of negative frames rose from 41% to 57%. In Ming Pao Daily, the coverage of neutral frame increased over time from 20% to 44%. The portion of negative coverage were steady. In Sing Tao Daily, the coverage of positive frame increases from 18% to 38%, along with a 17% drop in negative coverage.

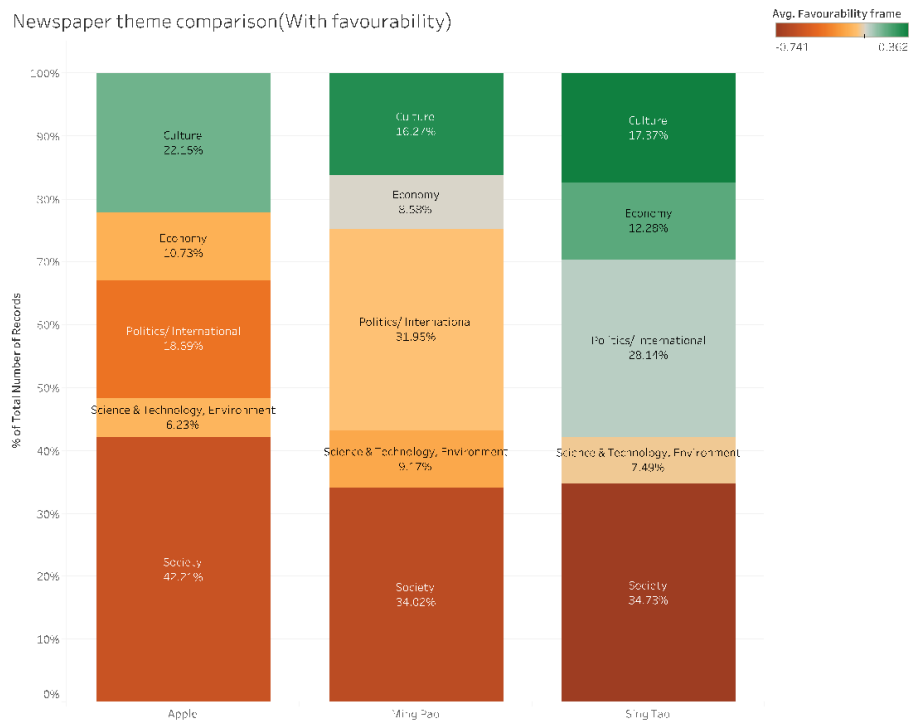
Table 7 – Distribution of themes in newspapers

Apple Daily		Ming Pao Daily		Sing Tao Daily	
Society	42%	Society	34%	Society	35%
Culture	22%	Politics/International	32%	Politics/International	28%
Politics/International	19%	Culture	16%	Culture	17%

Economy	11%	Science, technology and environment	9%	Economy	13%
Science, technology and environment	6%	Economy	9%	Science, technology and environment	7%

In terms of themes, each newspaper has its unique composition of news. Apple Daily has a significant majority of social news (42%). Ming Pao Daily has similar amount of coverage on social and political news. Sing Tao daily has a more evenly distributed distribution of themes compared to the other two newspapers.

Graph 7: Newspaper theme comparison (with favorability)



Combining favorability and theme distribution, it can be observed that newspapers have different favorability orientations in each category of news.

In the newspaper theme comparison in graph 7, color gradient represents favorability. The deeper the brown is, the more negative it represents. The greener it is, the more positive it represents.

For Apple Daily, most of its reported news were in negative light except cultural coverage(as shown with four out of five categories in brown/orange). On the other end of the spectrum, Sing Tao Daily has a more positive orientation in reporting news from China. Three out of five categories of news were presented as positive stories. Finally, Ming Pao Daily has relatively more neutral coverage. Its stories about China were relatively balanced in framing orientation.

This distinction could also be seen in sub-category analysis. Even though news of the people's livelihood, domestic policies and foreign relations are all ranked top three popular categories among the three newspaper, readers of Apple daily are likely to perceive a negative impression(average favorability of top three subcategories: -0.2); Ming Pao readers are likely to perceive a neutral impression(0); Sing Tao Daily readers are likely to be positive on these coverage(0.1).

7. Discussion

In this section, we will discuss the theoretical ground of the findings above, relate them to previous studies, and illustrate the implications of the results.

7.1 Important findings of study

7.1.2 National image of China

First of all, a comprehensive representation of China is presented in local Hong Kong newspaper. This includes five categories of news including politics, society, culture, economy, and science and technology. The wide range of coverage stemmed from the availability of resources in the news organizations and specific section dedicated to news about China. Unlike media in other countries, Hong

Kong newspapers do not categorize Chinese news in “international” section, but dedicated a “China” section to contain them, which seized around one fifth of the newspaper. This enables ample resources within organizations and space on the newspaper to collect multi-perspectives news about China. Also, compared to media of other country, Hong Kong has a special political position of being part of China yet out of Chinese government’s control. The freedom of press allows Hong Kong media to report news of China without official censorship. This motivates newspaper organization to explore and reports news about China.

Moreover, each category presents a unique side of China.

Politically, the presented image of China consists mainly of domestic policies and international relations and presented a neutral outlook. Cooperative international relations and numerous social constructing policies makes politics in China look progressive, yet the misconducts of political figures revealed the room for improvement in its system.

In addition, the reflected social reality of China consists of crimes, accidents and different social issues, which make social image the most unfavorable representation of China.

On the other hand, the coverage of economy shed a positive light in China’s development. The presented reality includes thriving businesses, increasing economic intra and international integrations, prospering real estate market yet recurrent business morality problem. The overall image of prosperity is presented in increasingly positive light.

Furthermore, the diverse representations of China in cultural news inform readers about the historically rich and favorable side of China.

Finally, the presented facts about science and technology mainly constitute of military strength, resulting in a favorable image for the first half of the decade. In terms of the environment, coverage of both natural and man-made disasters are prominent, which attributes to an overall neutral image of China in this regard.

From the above, the most positive sides of China include culture and economy. Politics and science, technology and environment have a neutral reflection of China. Societal news represented the worst of China yet seized the most significant among of coverage.

All in all, Hong Kong newspaper presents China as a country with strong foreign relations and improving domestic government structures. However, numerous social problems exist especially food safety and human right issues. China's economy is booming evidently with internal trade agreement and associations as well as the soaring housing market. Finally, from the coverage we could also observe a culturally rich China with improving military power. Pollutions, natural disasters, unscrupulous business practices are recurring problems across the last ten years.

7.1.2 Difference among newspapers

The crucial finding about newspaper differentiation is that while the three newspaper generally agree on the content of news stories, different focuses and favorability trends in their coverage of China is observed.

Apple Daily has shown a strong focus on social news. Ming Pao Daily has a more extensive coverage on politics and international news along with social news. Sing Tao Daily has the most dispersed distribution of the themes of the news.

In terms of framing, even though all three newspapers had negative frames as their majority, differences in the distributions of frames are noted. Apple Daily has the highest portion of negative

frames in its coverage (48%). Ming Pao Daily has the highest portion of neutral frames in its coverage (34%). Sing Tao daily has the highest portion of positive frames in its coverage (28%). The development of trends was also in accord with this distribution. Apple Daily has increasing negative frames in their coverage; Ming Pao Daily shows increasing neutral frames; Sing Tao Daily increased their positive coverage.

In short, while all three newspapers report on similar set of topics, overt favorability differences in coverage was observed. Therefore, even though readers of different newspapers were informed about similar range of topics, their idea on strengths or weaknesses about China could be different.

7.1.3 Change from 2008 to 2018

In terms of volume, a gradual decrease in the number of articles is found in the sample. The average daily China coverage went from 9 articles per day to 6 articles per day in general.

In terms of themes, the major focus of the first half of the decade, social news, is replaced by news on politics and international affairs (44% to 20%) (17% to 28%). News about science, technology and environment has also increased. News in other themes fluctuates across the period.

Also, even though the overall distribution of favorability frame remains relatively constant (42% negative, 31% neutral, 24% positive), a change in favorability distribution on each newspaper was found and seems to be more aligned with their political stance. In other words, larger amount of positive coverage is found in the post-establishment newspaper (Sing Tao Daily), increased neutral reports were found in liberal newspaper (Ming Pao Daily) and soaring amount of negative coverage are found in anti-Beijing newspaper (Apple Daily).

7.2 Potential impacts

From the above, we can approximate the pseudo-environment created by Hong Kong newspaper for its readers. Through the multi-perspective reports of China in the newspapers, Hong Kong readers develop a seemingly holistic understanding of China.

On the other hand, the changes in newspaper could re-establish the image of China in readers' eyes.

According to agenda-setting function theory, one of the strengths of media is its power to shift focus or make issue salient for its readers (McCombs & Shaw,1972). With the same token, a change in topic or amount of topic could change the direction of readers' focus. For example, the increases in political news on international affair could shifts the major perception of political strength or weakness of China from domestic policies to international relation.

Finally, the differences in newspaper would lead to divergence of readers' perceptions of China. For instance, readers of Apple Daily was shown with a less favorable image of China than readers from Ming Pao Daily. Sing Tao Daily readers would be more optimistic about China as more of them are exposed to positive coverage.

7.3 Explanation of results

In this section, I will explain key findings above, including the overall decrease in negative coverage and the distinction of three newspapers.

7.3.1 Reason for overall decrease in negative coverage

It is observed that negative coverage decreased in all newspapers, especially in Ming Pao Daily and Sing Tao Daily. This could be due to a difference in the selection of news, or a different in editorial style in the newspaper. In this section, I will analyze the motive of such a change with the major pressure faced by

newspaper organization in the last decade. As mentioned in literature review section, Hong Kong media are mainly governed by political and market pressure(Luqiu, 2016).

Firstly, tightening control of media from China is becoming more obvious for the last decade. Since handover, media executives have been regularly invited to meet with senior government officials in Beijing. Officials from China Communist Party often hints media executive about their role in bridging the Hong Kong society with China:“(To) lead society in reaping the benefits of China’s economic growth.” Spoke by then Vice President Li Yuanchao in 2014. “I hope the media of Hong Kong could consider the collective benefits of the country and Hong Kong society and operate objectively, fairly, and impartially to lead society to grasp the new opportunities that have come with the country’s reforms and developments,” Li added(Yeung, 2018). He also repeatedly emphasized that Occupy Central were an illegal movement in the midst of controversies in Hong Kong that year(South China Morning Post, 2018). The message channeled back to Hong Kong society and was interpreted as a soft reminder to the media for them to oppose the civil disobedience movement or, at least, not to add fuel to fire by giving prominent coverage to the protests(Yeung, 2018). The political purpose of media is explicitly stated in these exchanges. After that, in 2018, China’s propaganda chief has reportedly warned Hong Kong’s senior media executives not to allow the city’s newsrooms to “become a base for interfering with mainland politics” as Beijing ramps up pressure on challenges to its authority(Leung, 2018). This alerted Hong Kong Journalists Association. Huang’s remarks were commented as “an obvious case of telling media what they should do and what they should not do”. The president of Hong Kong Journalist Association warned that it was “plainly a clear effort, a clear attempt, to influence the media sector here(Yeung, 2018, P.1)”. All of these showed increasing political pressure exerted by Chinese government on media in Hong Kong.

In addition, ad denial is the economic measure for media repression. This was mentioned in Luqiu(2018)'s study on media landscape of Hong Kong, "The Chinese government also influences media owners by offering or withholding business opportunities—including advertising, which is crucial for commercial media outlets—in the mainland and Hong Kong. Challenges to journalistic independence in Hong Kong come increasing from self-censorship due to the infiltration of Chinese capital into the local media system.(Luqiu, 2018, p.68)" As in other market economies under a libertarian media system (Siebert et al., 1956), commercial power is harder to counter than government power(Luqiu, 2018). This became the vulnerability of Hong Kong Press (Luqiu, 2018). In 2012, Mark Simon, an executive of Apple Daily reported that Liaison Office of the Central People's Government had ordered removal of advertisement from non-pro-Beijing media including Apple Daily, Hong Kong Free Press, Stand News and so on(Simon, 2018). In addition, in investigating the "invisible hand" that controls Hong Kong media, reporter-without-boarders pointed out the termination of advertisement contract between HSBC, Standard Chartered and Hang Seng Bank with Apple Daily was out of political pressure instead of business logic (Reporters Without Borders, 2018). There were multiple speculations that it was stemmed from the political orientation of the paper. This economic factor further deters media from reporting China-opposing contents.

The third factor is self-censorship. As early as in 2007, 70% of journalist attributed self-censorship in the industry to the tightening press freedom in Hong Kong(Hong Kong Journalist Association, 2017). They indicated that the most serious forms of self-censorship were downplaying information/issue unfavorable or believed to be sensitive to Central government(HKJA, 2017). Since 2013, Hong Kong Journalist Association has been conducting Hong Kong press freedom index from journalists and the index maintained at a low of 39-42%, significantly lower than a passing score. This includes an increasing prevalence of reservations in criticizing Chinese government. Pressure from Chinese government has

become the second most considered factor when evaluating press freedom in Hong Kong(HKJA, 2017).. From 2013 to 2017, increasing practitioners indicated a removal or edition of content out of the fear for Central government. Finally, several incidents, such as brutal attack of Chief Editor, disappearance of causeway bay bookseller and pressure on introduction of Article 23 were agreed by the industry to be detrimental to press freedom(HKJA, 2017).. In 2016, When the HKJA asked 537 journalists to evaluate the level of self-censorship on a scale of 1 to 10, their average rating was 7. The fear of the above two factors, political and commercial pressure, induces self-censorship in local media.

All in all, the decrease in negative coverage could be attributed to the factors above, political and commercial pressure, as well as induced self-censorship. These hold journalist back from collecting or reporting negative information of China.

7.1.2 Reasons for differences among newspapers

According to the agenda-setting theory mentioned in literature review, media agenda becomes public agenda and the reason for differences in media agenda can be attributed to five factors: social norms and values, organizational pressures and constraints, pressures of interest groups, journalistic routines, and ideological or political orientations of journalists.

In the findings above, negative frames increased in Apple Daily but decreased significantly in Ming Pao Daily and Sing Tao Daily. While social norms and values are held constant for all newspapers, pressure from different groups including organization, readers (interest group), political orientation played a significant role in this distinction among newspapers.

Political orientation is the distinctive difference among the three newspapers. This leads to a different trend and distributions of favorability frames in their coverage. As mentioned in background section, Apple Daily is oriented as an anti-Beijing newspaper(Luqiu, 2018). Hence reporters have the motive to

select and report the unfavourability aspect of China. The increasing portion of negative light could possibly due to a more distinct polarization of Hong Kong after Umbrella movement in 2014. After the attack of the organization owner, Apple Daily declared its anti-Beijing stance more explicitly and attracted more readers with its clear stance. The increase in readership could motivate even more negative coverage of China.

On the other hand, Sing Tao Daily is pro-establishment newspaper(Luqiu, 2016). The relatively positive portrayal of China matches government's agenda to promote integration between China and Hong Kong. Similarly, after umbrella movement, press's political stances are more overt due to political pressure from China. Sing Tao Daily could be motivated to select more positive stories in its reports to reinstate its stance. Also, Sing Tao Daily carried larger portion of economic story, thus presenting more stories in positive light in the context of the developing economy in China.

Finally, Ming Pao Daily stresses on objective reporting and has proved to be more neutral compared to the other two newspaper in this study. This agrees with their objective reporting style and renowned credibility. However, it should also be noted that chief editor has been replaced by Beijing-tied person since 2014. This could motivate less negative coverage in the news of China.

All in all, the political alignment with negative coverage of China is more obvious in this decade.

7.1 Comparison with previous studies

In this section, I attempt to compare this study to the articles outlined in the literature review section. I will first compare the finding of this study with two Hong Kong-related research and compare the image of China presented in Hong Kong media to those of the other parts of the world.

7.1.1 Comparison with Hong Kong-related research

While Chen(2012)'s study shared the same goal of finding the change of image of China portrayed in Hong Kong newspaper, agreement and disagreement of findings were found. Fundamentally, Chen's studied coverage of China from 2005 to 2010 while this study has a longer time frame of 2008-2018. Both studies employed quantitative content analysis.

In terms of distinction of the three newspapers, this study confirmed that Apple Daily is the most negative and Sing Tao Daily is the most positive in their portrayal of China. However, this study found an improving favorability trend in Sing Tao Daily from 2008 to 2018, which is not detected in their study.

In terms of coverage, both studies agree that cultural coverage is generally positive. Nonetheless, the distributions of article themes have discrete differences. His study discovered a major coverage on economy among newspapers (28.5% of total coverage). As a result, he proposed economic growth to be one of the major focuses of coverage China 2005 to 2010. In this study, economy is the forth popular theme(11%). The corresponding booming economy is not as prominent as a theme in this study, which investigates coverage from 2008 to 2018.

In terms of favorability trend, both studies confirmed a drop in average favorability in until 2010. This study then found a persistently increasing favorability mean. It means an increasing positive light are used in the coverage of China.

Finally, this study filled the gap of the lack of comparison among newspapers in different theme categories form the last study. It is found in this study that newspaper orientations in themes does not necessarily in accord with the overall favorability preference. In other words, Apple Daily does not always hold the most negative coverage in all categories, nor does Sing Tao Daily holds the most positive coverage in all categories. In this study, Ming Pao has the most positive culture coverage and the most

negative politics coverage. Sing Tao Daily has the least favorable representation in the social aspect of China.

In short, even though the two studies had similar scope and methodology, the extended years of investigations and more detailed comparisons showed deviations of findings in different regards.

On the other hand, this study draws similar findings with Willnaut and Luo(2011)'s research. In their investigation on global news coverage of China, a similar scale of diversity of topics in Hong Kong media were discovered. They have concluded that Hong Kong has the most diverse topics in the coverage of China in the world. Despite the differences of media analyzed by the two studies(TV news from Willnaut and Luo(2011) and newspaper in this study), this study confirms that all twenty-one out of twenty-four items were found in both studies, including internal politics, international politics, sports, business, accidents/disasters, transportation, communication, military, environment and so on. This indicates that the diverse coverage of China in Hong Kong is both evident in television news and newspapers.

Furthermore, So (2017) conducted a similar study that concerned about press coverage of “one-country, two systems” from 1998 to 2017 and its implication on Hong Kong citizen's confidence in the enactment. He found an increased coverage yielded less favorability towards the issue, which is the claim of one country two systems in his study. He proposed that “more (coverage) is less (confidence in one country two systems)”. Applying his proposition to this study, the decreasing coverage of China might diminish the negative feeling towards China.

7.1.2 Comparison with foreign media

In terms of topics, Hong Kong media exhibit a more diverse, comprehensive and balanced portrayal of China. In Yu (2017)'s article, on an aggregate level, the western media covered topics as much as Hong Kong: including politics, economy, society, culture and ecology. While foreign media paid little attention

in social and cultural elements in China (Willnut & Luo, 2011), over 55% of reports on China in Hong Kong concerns about these items.

In terms of favorability frames, Hong Kong media likens western media (US, UK, Australia), which adopted more negative frames than neutral or positive frames. Western media often has an “one-sided” image of China as mentioned in the literature review section. This could attribute to the “China Threat Theory” where China’s economic and rise as national threat to the United States.

Developing countries often use a collaborative frame in their reports on China. They pay substantially more attention to cultural issues such as discriminations, one-child policy and income gap in China. This is more similar to the reports on China except the problems presented in their media tend to be more macroeconomic problems. This could be deal to the difference in frequency of reports comparing with Hong Kong. Chinese news is reported every day in Hong Kong while it might only be reported once a week in the other countries. Therefore, reports on China in Hong Kong are usually in smaller scale.

From the above, it is obvious that the media portrayal of China is often corresponding to the political agenda of government. In the West, China Threat Theory nudges media to explore further and augment the issue. In developing countries, the economic and political ties tend to direct media’s attention to economic benefits and common social problems they face. Hong Kong is special because of its dual identity of independently administrated yet part of China. Even though Hong Kong is heavily influenced by the West because of its status of being an international financial hub, the political agenda of its government is drastically different from western governments, who tend to perceive China as a threat. Instead, the media are expected to facilitate integration and serve as a platform to inform citizen about knowledge and information about the motherland(Li, 2014). Therefore, the amount of information and perspectives provided by Hong Kong media is substantially greater than those in other media.

7.1.3 Correlation with other studies or statistics

This study has provided evidence on the increasingly pro-Beijing tendency of Hong Kong media as predicted by Fung (2007). In his study, Fung(2007) predicted a reduced diversity of opinion in media outlet and suggested that pro-China businesses would steer the media industry towards pro-Beijing reports in the long run. This study found a reduction of negative coverage on China in two of the three media outlet and shown a clear pattern that approximates Fung's prediction.

On the other hand, this study provide insights on the factors contributing to the negative feeling of China(as shown in figure 1 and 2). As mentioned in the literature review section, poll from the University of Hong Kong Public Opinion Programme indicated a rise in negative feeling towards Chinese government from 2008 to 2018. In this study, the favorability means fluctuations did not found to be significantly correlate to the negative feeling towards Chinese government. However, the report on government misconduct seem to be move to the same direction with the negative feeling. From 2008 to 2013, there was an increase in the coverage of government misconduct, corruptions and censorship, loosely resemble the trend of negative feeling. While this can be a clue on the rising negative feelings towards Chinese government and its people, it should be noted the negative feeling towards Chinese government could be a result of increasing Chinese influence over Hong Kong government, which stirred much of the controversies in the society over the decade in the study.

8. Conclusion

Through the analysis of 961 news article form three Hong Kong local newspapers, Apple Daily, Ming Pao Daily and Sing Tao Daily, the answers of the questions raised at the beginning of studies turned out to be more complicated than it appears on the surface.

1) What is the national image of China portrayed by media in Hong Kong?

National image of China in local media is comprehensive and mainly divided into five aspects, namely politics, economics, society, culture as well as science, technology and environment. Overall, China is represented as a country with strong foreign relations, improving governmental structures, multiple economic ties, culturally rich yet filled with social problems.

2) What are the differences among newspapers?

Newspapers seem to have different focuses in their reports of China. Apple Daily emphasizes on the social and cultural coverage of China; Ming Pao Daily covered the most in politics; Sing Tao Daily has the characteristic of covering stories in a positive light. In addition, even though the selection of news are similar across newspapers, the selection of frames chosen to represent them distinguished among newspapers. Apple Daily presents most categories in negative frame; Ming Pao Daily tend to present issues in neutral frames; Sing Tao Daily presents most categories in positive frame.

3) How did they change in the period from 2008 to 2018?

In terms of coverage of China, volume decreased. In terms of themes, news on politics gained prominence over social news to be the major news category across the decade. Also, even though the overall distribution of favorability frame remains relatively constant, a change in favorability distribution on each newspaper was found and seems to be more aligned with their political stance. In other words, larger amount of positive coverage is found in the post-establishment newspaper (Sing Tao Daily), increased neutral reports were found in liberal newspaper (Ming Pao Daily) and soaring amount of negative coverage are found in anti-Beijing newspaper (Apple Daily). It is discovered that this separation is becoming more distinct than ten years ago.

This study further explored the reasons behind such a trend and found an increasing political pressure that leads to commercial pressure and self-censorship.

This study contains several noteworthy limitations. Since this is an individual thesis and the writer is an active participant of Hong Kong politics, coder bias is an undeniable limitation. In addition, while three newspaper were chosen because of their credibility, popularity, and position in the political spectrum, this study might not reflect the entire industry in Hong Kong. Sample size can be expanded, and more newspapers can be included.

As mentioned in the introduction, the purpose of this study is the exploration of national image in Hong Kong media and to prove the existing theory of Chinese influence in Hong Kong media.

It is hoped that the findings of this study could be useful for different parties including, the public, government and media practitioner.

For readers, the finding indicates a clear distinction among newspapers in their selection of news, reporting and editorial style, as well as political orientation. While news reports are believed to be truthful and unbiased, readers should take into account the social, commercial and political pressure behind news organization that influences the delivery of different news. This could raise readers' awareness in their choice of newspaper and daily news consumption.

For the government, as the entity who upholds freedom of press in Hong Kong, along with the known influence of the role of media in previous literature, government officials should be aware of the current media trend and potential disruption of press freedom in journalism and reflect on the relationship with media. Moreover, this research provides useful information on the knowledge obtained from media about China. This is especially important as one core initiative in recent years is the promotion of national education, which educate citizen about China. This information on daily exposure on Chinese society and government could be valuable when determining the amount of information to disseminate into the education system and general education.

For media practitioners, this study provides solid proof for the change in the industry. As reports without broader pointed out, an invisible hand is at work and it can only be solved with collective effort in the industry. Through this report, it is hoped that media practitioner takes reference to the findings and review the content and their orientation, and check if it aligns with their political or social mission.

Finally, as exploratory research, this study hopes to provide grounds for further study in more studies on the role of media in Hong Kong and its implication to Hongkonger identity amidst HK-China tension.

Further research can be conducted with comparisons of perceptions of China to evaluate the role of media in directing the local sentiment. These questions would be invaluable to the future of Hong Kong.

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APPENDIX

Themes and subcategories

Culture

Animals
Architecture
Celebrity news
Censorship
Cultural development
Cultural events
Cultural phenomenon
Food
Gay right
Historical figure
History
Language
Medicine
Movie or book
Music
People
Pop culture
Sports
Traditions

Economy

Business
Copyright
Cost of living
Economic associations/area/agreement
GDP
Infrastructure
Investment
Market situations
Property
Public policy
State-Owned Enterprises
Stock market
Unscrupulous Business practice

Politics/ International

Censorship
Corruption/Anti-Corruption
Cross strait Relation
Domestic policy
Foreign Relations
Govt Misconduct
ISIS
Political figure
Tibet
Taiwan

Science, Technology and Environment

Cloning
Disaster
Disease
Infrastructure
Military
Natural disaster
Nature
Pollution
Power
Science
Space
Technology
Weather

Society

Accident

Animal

Censorship

Conflicts

Criminal

Disaster

Ethics

Food safety

Government Misconduct

HK-Chin

human rights

Injustice

Natural disaster

People

Public figure Misconduct

Riots

Social phenomenon

Violent

Weather