

How China Media Frame Domestic and Overseas Corruption Scandals: The Comparison of Media Frames on Scandals of “Two Chen”

Abstract

The basic perspective of framing analysis lies in the different influence made upon the different frames (Chen, 2010). When and how do different media use different frames on the same issue? Few empirical studies have been really done to answer this question. In light of China’s special political system, “one country two systems”, this study argues that different newspapers of Mainland and Hong Kong will frame a controversial issue or event with different perspectives.

This study chooses two highly similar controversial issues, Chen Liangyu and Chen Shuibian corruption scandals, as the research cases. The mainstream newspapers of Mainland and Hong Kong are selected as research subjects. They are *Ming Po*, *Apple Daily*, *Guang Zhou Daily*, *Southern Metropolis Daily*, *Liberation Daily*, and *Xinmin Evening News*. This study examines how those different newspapers frame “Two Chen” corruption scandals in the following four perspectives: definition of issue, description of issue, reason of corruption, and probability of corruption.

A content analysis of the sample of 628 reports shows that those media did use different frames in their coverage of “Two Chen” corruption scandals. To be specific, on Chen Liangyu’s case, HK media more likely covered the scandal with the frames of *power struggle*, *tip of ice-burg*, and *dramatic story*. On the contrary, Mainland media more likely covered this with the frames of *government clean corruption*, *system fallacy*, *individual morality*, and *rotten apple*. On Chen Shuibian’s case, it is found that HK media more likely covered the scandal with the frames of *individual morality* and *dramatic story*. Meanwhile, Mainland media didn’t deliberately use some frames to cover this case with high frequency.

Keywords: empirical study, generic framing analysis, media frame functions, competing media frame, content analysis, corruption scandal, Chinese newspapers