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Framing city image: A content analysis of Chinese city image construction on Korean press

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Abstract

With Wenhai big data SaaS cloud platform.2.0, this study analyzed data of 135 news reports relating to Chinese city Chongqing from Yonhap News Agency and ten South Korean mainstream newspapers from May 1st, 2018 to September 30th, 2022. Under the framework of Frame Theory, this research conducted data mining and analysis on how Korean mainstream media shaped city image of Chongqing, what kind of city images were shaped from dimensions of politics, economy, society, culture & sports as well as tourism and whether they are consistent with those in Chinese media. At the last part, discussions and suggestions was made.

1. Introduction

As the only municipality in western China, Chongqing is a famous historical and cultural city as well as a comprehensive transportation hub in southwest China. With becoming an Internet sensational city, Chongqing's domestic city image has been greatly improved in recent years. But how its image construction in overseas media? After governments of China and South Korea (hereafter referred as "Korea") set up China-Korea Industrial Park in Chongqing Liangjiang New Area, bilateral economic exchanges between two sides have become increasingly frequent. Historically, Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea (hereafter referred as "Provisional Government") experienced its most glorious period with the help of the Chongqing government.[1] Moreover, Korea and Chongqing connect in religion, geography, and many other aspects. Under the framework of Frame Theory, this research conducted data mining and analysis on how

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Korean mainstream media shaped city image of Chongqing, what kind of city images were shaped and whether they are consistent with those in Chinese media.

2. Theoretical background and literature review
2.1 Frame theory and news frame

Framing theory is proposed by Erving Goffman in his 1974 book *Framing Analysis: An essay on the organization of experience. Gamson, an important researcher of frame theory,* believes that framing is an active process of meaning production, through which people construct meaning and understand the cause and context of social events(Gamson, 1989). [2] Beyond that, Gitlin continues and develops Goffman's view with a clearer definition of frame. A frame, he emphasized, is the criteria for choosing, emphasizing, and expressing what is, what is happening, and what is meaningful (Gitlin,2003).[3] News frame has been one of the research focuses since Frame Theory was introduced into the field of news communication. News frame specifically refers to that when reporters compile news, they select certain aspects of subjectively perceived reality, highlight and emphasize these aspects while ignoring or weakening other aspects in the news, the components of the news framework include problem definition, causal analysis, moral evaluation, and solution suggestions (Li and Liu, 2013). [4] Semanko and Valkenburg (2000) proposed one of the most common applied classification methods to distinguish different frame types. According to their analysis, five general frameworks exist in news reports: attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality. [5] Taiwan scholar Zhang (1999) divided news framework into three levels: macrostructure, mesostructure, microstructure. The macrostructure deals with the theme of news event; mesostructure is composed of main events, preceding events, history, results, impact, attribution, evaluation and other aspects; mircrostructure is the level of linguistic and rhetoric.[6]

2.2 City image and Chongqing image in foreign media

The concept of "city image" was proposed by Kevin Lynch from his book *The Image of the City*. Environmental images are the result of a two-way process between the observer and his environment. The environment suggests distinctions and relations, and the observer—with great adaptability and in the light of his own purposes—selects, organizes, and endows with meaning what he sees (Lynch, 2017).[7] Chongqing has unique culture source (Xiang, 2018).[8] Recent years, the image of Chongqing in Chinese media has been focused on culture and tourism. In social media, Chongqing has become new internet sensational city of China (2020, Yang).[9] For instance, Chongqing is the first city whose video has been viewed more than 10 billion times in TikToK and has become the most popular city on it (2021, Chen). [10] And *People's Daily* has reduced the coverage on Chongqing's image of " the city of furnace" (due to hot weather）and "the city of fog" (due to thick fog) that Chinese people were familiar with Chongqing, instead increase the coverage on its cultural sites and agenda on tourist city which is suitable to live in (2020, Yang).[9] Concerning the political and economic image, it is mainly positive, for instance, *Chongqing Morning Paper* constructed Chongqing government as one that follow the policy from central government (Meng, Gao, Li, 2017);[11] and in *People's Daily*, the development of Chongqing is primary and promising (Jiang, Jin, 2019).[12] In general, Chongqing is a popular tourist city with positive political and economic image in domestic media.

There are only four studies on Chongqing's city image construction in foreign media. From the four aspects of reporting frequency, reporting type, reporting source and reporting tendency, Zhao and Cui (2018)

[13] analyzed Chongqing's city image in Singapore Lianhe zaobao from January 1st , 2007 to December 31st , 2016; and Deng (2020) [14] analyzed the city image of Chongqing in the mainstream media of the United States, Canada, The United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines (with English as the official language) from 2010 to 2019;the symbolic text of ABC series documentaries about Chongqing was analyzed by Yang and Lai (2020);[15] lastly, Liu, Yin, and Qin (2021) analyzed the image of Chongqing in 501 reports of 383 media from 43 countries and regions.[16] so far there is no relevant study comparing Chongqing images in native and foreign media, but relevant literature support that media of different regions will construct one city by different news frames (Zhang, Wang, 2013; Zhao, 2010)[13][17]. Thus, here hypothesis was supposed as:

H: Chongqing city image constructed by Korean media is different with that by native media

3.Methodology

Big data SaaS cloud platform 2.0(Wenhai Big Data SaaS Cloud Platform 2.0 is a big data platform released by Beijing Zhongke Wenge Technology Co., Ltd. it is based on multi-modal Internet open-source intelligence covering 182 countries and 42 languages around the world. And it is the world's leading multi-language, cross-modal, omni-channel Internet open-source intelligence analysis cloud platform.) was utilized to retrieve Chongqing related coverage from Korean biggest news agency and ten mainstream media (Korean biggest news agency is Yonhap News Agency. The ten media include four national comprehensive newspapers with the longest running history, including *Chosun Ilbo, Dong-A Ilbo, Joongang Ilbo,* and *Korea Ilbo*, economic newspapers *Korea Economic Daily*, cultural newspaper *Culture Daily*, daily issued both in Korean and English *Kyeonghyang News*, Korea's first English language daily *The Korea Times*, Korea's largest English language daily *The Korea Herald*, and English language business newspaper *Business Korea*).from May 1st, 2018 to September 30th, 2022. Deleting invalid and repeating data, 135 news reports, of which title include Chongqing, was acquired. The present research is mainly based on Zang's news framework, applying content analysis and text analysis, examined the microstructure framework (text, word frequency), mesostructure framework (the number of reporting, semantic tendency), and the macrostructure framework (theme: economy, politics, culture and sports, society, tourism). Table 1 and Table 2 present the news frame analyzing coding adopted by present study.

Table 1. news frame analyzing category coding

Level 1	Level 2	Explanation
macrostructure	theme	Theme is categorized into economy, politics, culture and sports, society, tourism, and further theme category coding is shown in table 2.
mesostructure	The reporting volume	Reporting volume of selected media and total reporting volume of all media
	semantic tendency	Semantic tendency is categorized into positive, neutral, and negative
microstructure	Text and word frequency	text analysis and high word frequency was conducted basing on 5 macrostructure frames

Table 2. Theme categories

T1. Politics	T2. Economy	T3. Culture & Sports	T4. Society	T5. Tourism
T1.1 Official Personnel Transfer T1.2. Policies and Regulations T1.3. Meetings and other Activities T1.4. Others	T2.1 Automotive Industry T2.2 Electronics T2.3 Frontier Technology Industry T2.4 Economic exchanges, development and prospects T2.5 Others	T3.1 Diet T3.2 History and Cultural Relics T3.3 Festivals and Traditions T3.4 Film and Television Entertainment T3.5 Sports Stars and Events T3.6 Others	T4.1 Accidents T4.2 COVID-19 related T4.3 Ecological environment T4.4 Food and Safety T4.5 house price problem T4.6 Education and employment issues T4.7 Others	T5.1 Attraction description and consumption T5.3 tourism Intention T5.4 visa related T5.5 tourism impressions and feelings T5.7 Others

Under the reliability index of the Holstein coefficient, the reliability value of various items is all above 0.80, which can meet the general requirements for the reliability standard between coders.

Table 3. Reliability test results

Category	Theme	Semantic Tendency	Composite Reliability
Reliability	0.96	0.85	0.87

4. News frame of Korean media

4.1 Macrostructure: 5 themes

The three themes with the highest reporting frequency are economy, society and politics, accounting for rate of 38.52%, 25.18% and 24.44% respectively. In addition, tourism (6.67%) and culture and sports (5.19%) attracted a small amount of attention from Korean media.

Figure 1. Coverage in terms of theme
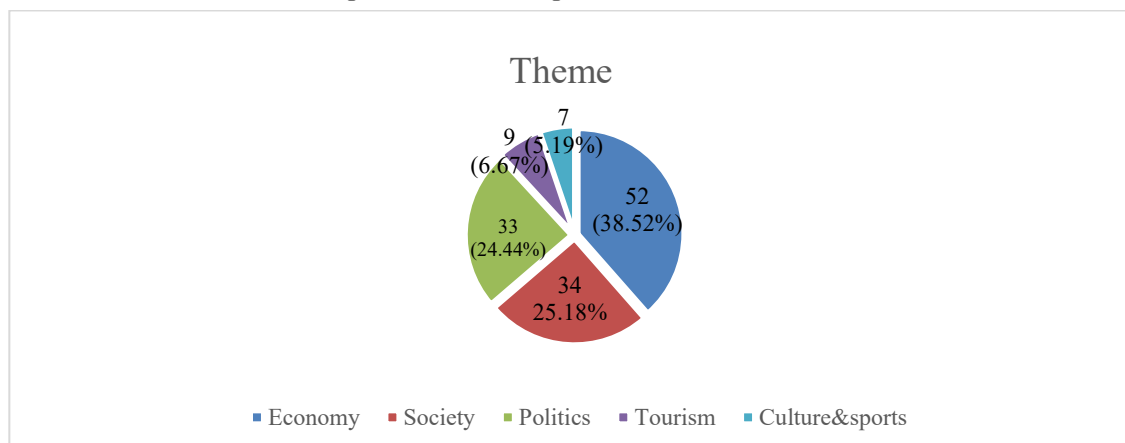
More than half of the economy-themed reports are "economic exchange" (55.77%), and the remaining are "development and prospect" (23.08%), "frontier technology industry" (11.54%), "other" (5.77%), "automobile industry" (3.84%). Among society-related reports, "Covid-19 and related" (41.18%) was reported most, followed by "accidents" (26.47%), "ecological environment" (14.71%), "other" (11.76%), "food and safety" (5.88%). As for politics reports, the highest proportion is "diplomatic meetings", accounting for 81.82%, followed by "others" (9.9%), "official personnel transfer"(6.06%), "policies and regulations" (3.03%).

4.2 Mesostructure: the reporting volume and semantic tendency

4.2.1 The reporting volume

In sum, from May 1st, 2018 to September 30th, 2022 (41 months in total), 135 Chongqing-related reports were retrieved. Zero coverage was found from *Kyeonghyang News* and *Cultural Daily*. Among the remaining 9 media, Yonhap News Agency reported most, with a total of 77 reports, accounting for 57%; *Korea Economic Daily* reported 21, accounting for 15.6%; the four comprehensive newspapers reported a total of 30, accounting for 22.2% (*Chosun Ilbo* 9, *Dong-A Ilbo* 8, *Korea Ilbo* 8, *Joongang Ilbo* 5); in addition, English newspapers reported a total of 7 (*The Korea Times* 3, *Korea Herald* 3, *Business Korea* 1).

In general, the coverage of Chongqing by Korean media is relatively small. *Kyeonghyang News* is one of the six major comprehensive daily newspapers, and *Culture Daily* is an influential cultural newspaper in Korea. However, neither did any reporting on Chongqing with 41 months. And the average monthly level of coverage is less than 4. As shown in Figure 1, out of the 41 months, there were 39 months in which reporting volume was only in the range of 0-9. Two reporting peaks occurred in March and December 2019 respectively.

Figure 2. Monthly coverage statistics

4.2.2 Semantic tendency

Positive reports refer to reports that praise, affirm, and encourage Chongqing; negative ones refer to these that criticize Chongqing or contain contents that can have an adverse impact on city image; reports present no obvious semantic tendency are classified as neutral reports. Among the 135 reports, 83.7% are neutral, 13.3% are positive and 3.0% are negative. The results of the chi-square test (Table 4) show that there were significant differences in the distribution of semantic tendency among different topic orientations (X^2=19.74 df=8 P=0.01<0.05). As shown in Table 3, the number of positive reports on economic theme is largest, with a total of 14, accounting for 27.5% of the total economic reports and 77.8% of the total positive

reports. In addition, positive travel coverage accounted for 22.2% of total travel-related reports. The lowest proportion of positive reports is social themed reports, accounting for only 2.9%.

Table 4. Coverage in terms of semantic tendency

SEMANTIC TENDENCY	POLITICS	ECONOMY	SOCIETY	CULTURE & SPORTS	TOURISM	SUM
POSITIVE	-	14	1	1	2	18（13.3%）
NEUTRAL	32	37	32	6	6	113（83.7%）
NEGATIVE	1	-	2	-	1	4（3.0%）
SUM	33	51	35	7	9	135

Table 5. Chi-square test result

CHI-SQUARE VALUE	Degrees of Freedom	P-VALUE(SIG.)	SIGNIFICANCE
19.737	8	0.0114	*

4.3 Microstructure: text and word frequency
4.3.1 Political Image: friendly government

Using DiVoMiner(DiVoMiner is a research tool developed by Zhuhai Hengqin Boyi Data Technology Co., Ltd. It integrates big data technology and artificial intelligence algorithms and can conduct text big data mining and analysis) word frequency analysis was conducted subjecting on all political reports. The results show that the most frequently used expression is "Provisional Government"(as shown in Table 6). As 81.8% of political coverage are on diplomatic talks between government officers of two sides, Korean side is grateful for what Chongqing government did for Provisional Government during 1940s and its current efforts to maintain it and reconstruct the former site of the General Command of the Korean Restoration Army.

Table 6. Word frequency of political reports

Word	Frequency of Occurrence
임시정부（Provisional Government）	80
총리/국무총리（Prime Minister ）	59
이재명（Lee Jae-myung [the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party of Korea in the 20th presidential election of South Korea]）	57
Tang Liangzhi (Note: 2018.10-2021.12 Deputy Secretary of the Chongqing Municipal Party Committee and Mayor of the Municipal Government)	43
이낙연（Lee Nak-yeon [Note: the presidential candidate of the Central Countermeasures and Election Committee of the Democratic Party of Korea]）	40

4.3.2 Economic image: globalized city and economic center of Western China

Concerning economic coverage, both the total reporting volume and the positive reporting volume are largest, and there is no negative report. Korean media introduced the rapid development of Chongqing's local economy. Chongqing's new technology industry districts and industrial parks are the frequent reporting subject. For example, *Joongang Ilbo* comprehensively introduced Chongqing Xiyong Microelectronics Industrial Park in a report titled "Chongqing, the world's 25% notebook computer producer, further expands exports"; another example, in the report on Chongqing Liangjiang New District, it was referred as "solid industrial foundation", and also its talent policy is introduced in detail. [18]

In addition, some Chongqing local brands was reported. For instance, the financing situation of Jiang Xiaobai(Jiang Xiaobai is a naturally fermented and distilled sorghum wine brand launched by Jiangji Winery, a subsidiary of Chongqing Jiangxiaobai Wine Industry Co., Ltd)was specially reported by Yonhap News Agency. In addition, economic exchanges between Chongqing and other countries and regions are extensively reported, including the introduction to Chengdu-Chongqing economic circle(On January 3, 2020, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed to promote the construction of the Chengdu-Chongqing economic circle. The core of building a twin-city economic circle is to highlight the leading role of Chengdu and Chongqing, so as to drive the development of the entire Chengdu-Chongqing region and even the western region. The Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle is an important part of the implementation of the "The Belt, The Road" initiative by Yangtze River Economic Belt). According to word frequency analysis result (Table 7), "Hynix", "automobile" and "trade" are all high-frequency words, which also reflects the frequent economic exchanges between Korea and Chongqing. In a summary, an image of a rapidly developing city with a promising future was constructed clearly.

Table 7. Word frequency of economic reports

Vocabulary	Frequency of Occurrence
산업(industry)/industries/industry/industrial	145
경제(economy)/economic/economy	111
development/발전(development)/개발　　(development)	109
하이닉스（Hynix [Note: Korea SK Hynix Semiconductor Co.]）	57
trade/무역(trade)	49
자동차(automobile)	48

4.3.3 Societal image: Accidents occur frequently with irregular regulation

The largest proportion of society-related coverage is covid-19 related, including reports on material donation from the Korean government to Chongqing during the epidemic, the measurements adopted by the Chongqing government, impact of the epidemic on the city, diagnosis of one Korean employees of the Hynix factory and so on.

On the other hand, Korean media focused their reporting on incidents, including the discovery of swine fever case, the death of wild animals due to disinfectants, over-hot weather, poor air quality, road collapses, bus crashes, etc. And media also tracked the accidents by continuous reporting. Although the objective reports on covid-19 have demonstrated the effectiveness of the Chongqing government's measures to control the epidemic, the concentrated coverage on accidents have presented a negative societal image. In its report on the carbon monoxide leakage accident in Songzao mine of Chongqing on September 27th, 2020, *Dong-A*

Ilbo mentioned the past mining accidents in Guizhou and Shandong, and quoted the AFP reporter's words, criticizing the "In China, where safety standards are poor and regulations are not strict, mining accidents are very common." [19] Reporting the rainstorm disaster, Korea Economic Daily also implied that Chinese government did not provide enough information to media. [20]

4.3.4 Cultural and sport image: Chongqing local culture was ignored

There are only 7 such reports, 6 of which are directly related to Korea, such as the commemorative activities of the Provisional Government held in Chongqing, Korean variety shows shoot in Chongqing, the restoration of the former site of the General Headquarters of the Korean Restoration Army in Chongqing, as well as former coach of Chongqing appointed as coach of Korean men's soccer team. However, no coverage was made on local culture of Chongqing. Consequently, it has barely played any role in shaping the image of Chongqing's cultural and sports.

4.3.5 Tourism image: a sharp gap with image constructed by domestic media

There are a total of 9 reports on tourism, among which 3 reported China lifted ban on group tour to Korea, 2 reported the number of Korean tourists to Provisional Government significantly reduced due to the impact of the epidemic and 2 reported free-visa policy for staying in Chongqing. Only 2 reports are directly related to Chongqing tourism. In the report titled *Han Hyejin Visits the General Headquarters of the Restoration Army...China Chongqing Shows Its Charm* by *Korea Economic Daily*, [21] from the observation perspective of female Korean artist Han Hyejin, subscribers can read information on classic scenic spots of Chongqing, including Liziba light rail station(Liziba light rail station is the first straddle-type monorail elevated station in China that co-exists with commercial and residential buildings. It is widely known by for the characteristics of "train passing through the building")the cable car across the river, and the landmark building Jiefangbei. In addition, Chongqing was mentioned as "the home of hot pot", and also Chongqing noodles was described as "spicy and fragrant, taste- stimulating, and the most cost-effective food". Another report is a special report on Liangjiang New Area made by Yonhap News Agency. [22] The report introduced the cultural tourism value of Liangjiang New Area. Citing data released by Tik-Tok and other platforms, it reported that Chongqing has attracted 5 times online attention compared with last year. Although the semantic inclinations of the two reports are positive, neither is it easy to form news agenda nor influence public agenda due to the small coverage. Comparing with the intensive agenda of famous tourist city set by domestic media and fixed cognition of internet sensational city by Chinese people, there indeed exists a big gap.

5. Discussions

First, the coverage is insufficient. A total of 135 articles were reported in 41 months by 11 Korea mainstream media, with an average of less than 4 reports per month. A lack of coverage is a lack of proprieties. Comparison can be more persuasive. According to Zhao and Cui (2018), from January 1st, 2007 to December 31st, 2016, there are a total of 549 Chongqing-related reports from Singapore's Lianhe Zaobao, with a monthly average of 4.58. Both Korea and Singapore established diplomatic relations with China in the early 1990s, and both are APEC members and important economic partner of China. However, the reporting volume of eleven Korean mainstream media is even smaller than that of one Singapore media, which indeed reflects the problem of insufficient reporting.

Second, the hypothesis was verified true. 1) social and political issues were interpreted in a negative way. The political turmoil and personnel changes in Chongqing happened a few years ago has been interpreted negatively, and the street CCTV system has also been interpreted as sort of "monitoring" that violates human rights. Concerning the societal coverage, accidents occurred in Chongqing have attracted special attention, and the government has been criticized for "inaction" in the handling of accidents. These negative interpretations are partially caused fundamental differences of stance. For instance, in early 2017, the Korean government ignored China's territorial security interests and provided a venue for the THAAD system. As a legitimate counter-attack, the Chinese government banned group tours to Korea. Yonhap News Agency used the term "THAAD revenge" to describe this move. In early May of 2018, following the lifting of the ban in Beijing and Shandong, Chongqing was added to this list. In the report, the Yonhap News Agency did not welcome such a gesture of goodwill, but instead ridiculed China for "not having a great power pattern." 2) 88.14% of the coverage focuses on economic, social and political aspects, while reports on culture & sports and tourism totaled only 11.86%. The reports on Chongqing's local culture and tourism are scarce, and consequently play little effect on the shaping of Chongqing's relevant image. In contrast, as mentioned above, in the construction of domestic media, from *People's Daily* to TikTok, Chongqing is a popular cultural tourism city. According to frame theory, news frames exist. Different media, especially media from different countries, have different themes, projection perspectives, and details presentation of a city news story due to different value orientations. The reports of the Chinese and Korean media on Chongqing once again confirmed this.

In 2016, at a meeting celebrating the 95th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized the importance of cultural confidence, and since then establishment of culture confidence has become national strategy. The dissemination of national culture should be driven by that of regional culture. Bayu culture(Chongqing is abbreviated as "Yu" or "Ba". Bayu culture exists and disseminated in Chongqing, and has created profound cultural heritage on the land of Chongqing. Bayu culture has a long history and is one of the most distinctive ethnic cultures in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, and an important part of the splendid Chinese culture) is the regional culture of Chongqing with distinctive characteristics and an important segment of national culture. Meanwhile, according to the "2021 China Tourism Cities List" compiled by Jiemian News [23], a subsidiary of Shanghai Media Group, Chongqing ranks second among the most developed cities in China for tourism (Beijing is the first place), and tourism revenue accounts for 10.84% of the city's GDP in 2021. The coverage volume of Chongqing culture and tourism is sharply unmatched with the privilege of them. This is an urgent problem that needs to be solved and one that deserves reflection.

Facing with the above problems, what could be done? Zhao and Cui (2018) pointed out that the establishment of reporter stations in Chongqing has increased the scale of Chongqing-related coverage in Lianhe Zaobao. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that the establishment of reporter stations in Chongqing will be beneficial for solving the problem of insufficient reporting. Second, it is found that Korean media put a prominent focus on Provisional Government, which appear in most of the reports on political meetings, social events, cultural activities, and tourism. In history, after moving to Chongqing in 1940, with the help of Chongqing government, Provisional Government achieved unprecedented achievements in all aspects. This historical period is the witness of the friendship between two sides and also is an outstanding foundation for the current bilateral diplomatic activities. 2019 marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the

Provisional Government. As mentioned above, two peaks of coverage volume appeared in this year. Under this circumstance, Chongqing should take advantage of this convergence point more effectively and flexibly, create reporting convergence points of "Provisional Government + politics", "Provisional Government + economy", "Provisional Government + culture" and "Provisional Government + tourism", and gradually expand consensus. Lastly, take the initiative to increase the active output of information. The dissemination of the city image should first be based on the local media, which has a wider range of choices, a larger content carrying capacity, and can carry out in-depth and continuous reporting (Cao, 2012).[24] The image of one city is not static, and the main propaganda body of the image of Chongqing is still the local media in Chongqing. The active information output of Chongqing media is the most powerful solution to the current predicament.

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