

This proposal is for a short paper.

## **Framing terrorism in Chinese media: A computer-assisted frame analysis**

**Keywords:** *Framing theory, Text mining, Cluster analysis, Terrorism*

Terrorism is a ‘high-threshold issue’ that ordinary people hardly experience directly (Johnson-Cartee,2005:29); thus, media, as people’s primary source of information, are vital to shape people’s opinion about terrorism. This proposal aims to study media representations of terrorism based on a Chinese newspaper corpus.

Framing theory is an effective approach to examine media content (Li,2007). Media frames refer to discursive constructions of news narrative, which can be seen as structures of meaning, involving central ideas and organizing principles. Thus, identifying frames used by media is key to studying the nature and possible societal impact of media discourse. However, previous studies on deriving media frames have two main shortcomings. First, the majority of the studies adopt qualitative methods by manually coding small samples. Existing quantitative studies still rely on manual coding to a greater extent (Mathes&Kohring,2008). Second, quantitative framing research is oftentimes limited to the identification of general themes rather than frames. Our study aims to move beyond this and look deeper into the argumentative structure of the (issue-specific) frames.

To fill in those gaps, in a first step, we will attempt to use a quantitative approach, namely cluster analysis, to explore the extent to which we can automatically detect and identify frames based on a relatively large data set. More specifically, using complete news articles as the research object, we will cluster articles based on a k-means clustering algorithm (cf. Burscher et al.,2016). Next, we will first adopt a deductive approach to list a priori defined news frames used by previous studies, and then classify them into two categories (De Vreese,et al,2001):

1) Generic frames are suitable to all kinds of specific news events with different topics, times, and cultural contexts.

2) Issue-specific frames are tied to a particular topic.

Specifically, generic and issue-specific frames can be linked to episodic and thematic frames (Iyengar,1991). In this study, episodic frames refer to representations of specific terrorist attacks, while thematic frames focus on general background and context of those terrorist attacks. Finally, we will further analyse and elaborate the findings of the cluster analysis by a combination of deductive and inductive approaches.

To test our method, we extracted 6518 texts which include the keywords “恐怖主义 [terrorism]”, “恐怖事件 [terrorist attack(s)]”, or “恐怖分子 [terrorists]” from the Chinese media Corpus (Dynamic Circulating Corpus) for 2015. As we took the complete news texts as our object, after preprocessing (including segmentation), we created a document-term matrix based on the weight of tokens. Then, k-means clustering was used to cluster those texts into 8 clusters using the ‘elbow method’ (cf. Burscher et al.,2016). Next, those clusters can be summarized as 2 episodic frames, namely narrative of attacks and description of agent, which related to the description of a specific terrorist attack, and 3 thematic frames, namely international relations and war, economic issues, and security. Then, we assigned them into 4 generic frames, namely conflict, morality, economic consequences, and human-interest frames, and 3 issue-specific frames geopolitical, official and military frames.

## **References**

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