FRAMING THE SHARING ECONOMY: A TRANSNATIONAL

FRAMING ANALYSIS

by

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STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

With the development of globalization, the sharing economy - a business model that refers to peer-to-peer based access to goods and services - has caught media attention worldwide but remains understudied by communication scholars. Based on framing theory, this study uses an international perspective to explore how the media in the United States and China frame the global issue of the sharing economy. Following a transnational framing analysis model, this study finds that media in both countries may construct the sharing economy as corporate behavior with conflicts between governments and corporations. The U.S. media may construct an individual-oriented frame while the Chinese media present a corporate-oriented approach. These and other findings of this study confirm the applicability of the transnational framing model in framing research and identify the possible influence of culture on media coverage, and potentially on public acceptance of an innovative concept. Theoretical implications and practical suggestions for global coverage of the sharing economy are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since 2010, the term "sharing economy" has been discussed by the media worldwide, particularly with the growing popularity and controversy of startup companies like Uber and Airbnb. The sharing economy was even selected as *Oxford Dictionary*'s Word of the Year 2015, as well as Australia's Word of the Year 2015 by The Australian National Dictionary Centre (Macdonald, 2015). According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, a sharing economy is "an economic system in which assets or services are shared between private individuals, either for free or for a fee, typically by means of the Internet" ("Sharing Economy").

The idea of sharing goods is not new. However, it has only recently become well known by the public and been mainly interpreted as an innovative business model (Sundararajan, 2014), with the global expansion of companies based on sharing, such as Airbnb and Uber (Belks, 2014). Founded in 2009 in San Francisco, Airbnb and Uber have become two successful international companies with valuations at $25.5 billion (Nusca, 2015) and $62.5 billion (Newcomer, 2015) as of 2015, respectively. These companies provide online marketplaces where goods and services, such as homes and vehicles, are shared with the consuming public. Consumers can enjoy goods and services at lower prices at a "previously unimaginable scale" (Kaplan & Nadler, 2015).

Entrepreneurs are optimistic and enthusiastic about sharing economy because the market opportunities that sharing economy has provided, defining it as "the value in taking underutilized assets and making them accessible online to a community, leading to a reduced need for ownership of those assets" (Stephany, 2015, p. 9).

In spite of its success in business, the sharing economy has been interpreted as more than a business model. It is also defined as a socioeconomic phenomenon that is "the most promising trend arising from this global, mobile and social connectivity" (Stephany, 2015, p. xi). According to the professional consulting firm Price Waterhouse Coopers, revenues from the sharing economy were $15 billion in 2014 and are expected to reach up to $335 billion by 2025.

Despite these positive financial trends, the sharing economy has stirred public debate because of its disruptiveness. It has challenged the traditional economic, social, and regulatory systems (Trivett & Staff, 2013). In the long run, the sharing economy will be "the predominant economic force" that contribute to the economic revolution (Kassan & Orsi, 2012, p. 2), for the reason that it will significantly influence current economic growth by "stimulating new consumption, raising productivity and catalyzing individual innovation and entrepreneurship" (Sundararajan, 2014, p. 1).

Because of the popularity of the sharing economy in a global scope, along with the uncertainty of its impact, the news media have given exemplars of the sharing economy (e.g., Airbnb and Uber) increased attention. Media scholars have yet to examine how the media in different nations interpret the sharing economy, what similarities and differences there may be among media coverage, and how that coverage may influence the public opinions about the sharing economy. This study applies framing theory to

examine how the media portrays the sharing economy in the United States and China.

Because framing theory refers to how media organizations define and present an issue to the public (De Vreese, 2001) and it is one of the most widely applied mass communication theories (Brayant & Miron, 2004), framing theory serves as the appropriate theoretical foundation to address those questions.

This is one of the first studies to analyze the sharing economy from the perspective of communication and to explore the initial step in communicational process: media framing. This study is important for at least the following three reasons: firstly, the sharing economy is a global issue which has influenced individuals, the national economy, and the global economic system; secondly, China and the United Sates are two of the biggest economics entities in the world where the sharing economy is widely discussed; thirdly, China and United States have completely different media systems, as well as different political systems and cultures. So conducting a comparative framing study between China and United States has significant implications.

By conducting a quantitative content analysis of media coverage in both the United States and China, where the sharing economy is popular, this study contributes to current framing research by discussing a popular global phenomenon that lacks adequate academic attention and by providing a comparative perspective that goes beyond the limitations of nations and cultures.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

<u>2.1 The Sharing Economy in the United States and China</u>

2.1.1 The Sharing Economy

The sharing economy was defined around the turn of the millennium as the idea that people pay to get short-term access to a good or service through "fee-based sharing" (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014). This practice was also called "collaborative consumption" (Botsman & Rogers, 2010), an innovative business model born in the internet age (Belk, 2014). Historically, the sharing economy was treated as the second major economic innovation driven by the Internet (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014). While the first innovation was the creation of websites where information is shared, this second innovation helps people share goods (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2014). The sharing economy was facilitated by the development of digital technologies, digital institutions, urbanization, and globalization (Sundararajan, 2014). Additionally, the ecological and resource considerations promoted the expansion of the sharing economy (Sundararajan, 2014).

As the popularity of the sharing economy has increased worldwide, there has also been an increase in academic research about the influences of the sharing economy on politics, economics, business, and culture (Sundararajan, 2014; Zervas, Proserpio, &

Byers, 2014). From the socioeconomic perspective, Zervas et al. (2014) studied the effects of the sharing economy on the traditional hotel industry in the case of Airbnb. They found that the rapid growth of Airbnb has had a clear negative effect on traditional hotels' revenue and has imposed, mostly through government oversight, new regulations placed on Airbnb (Zervas et al., 2014). These scholars have also found the sharing economy, especially in the case of Airbnb, has caused social welfare to shift from society as a whole to individuals (Zervas et al., 2014).

Although the sharing economy has been found beneficial for social welfare (Bostman, 2012), its impact can come with a social risk, bringing a "dark side" to each industry it touches (Malhotra & Van Alstyne, 2014). For example, Kaplan and Nadler (2015) observed that Airbnb has challenged the existing social systems and called for effective regulations on the sharing economy (Kaplan & Nadler, 2015). Outside general discussion, various researchers from different fields have formed their own standpoints. For instance, in the lawmaker's perspective, the sharing economy has become an issue that requires lawmakers to pass regulations (Kassan & Orsi, 2012). Relatedly, marketers have found the more utility, trusts, and savings the sharing service provides, costumers are more likely to adopt it (Möhlmann, 2015).

2.1.2 Media Coverage on the Sharing Economy

For such a complicated and nuanced issue, media coverage of the sharing economy has been equally synchronous. At the same time, discussion of the sharing economy has caught the public's attention online. Figure 2.1, created using Google Trends, shows online searchers' interest in news about the sharing economy from 2008 to February
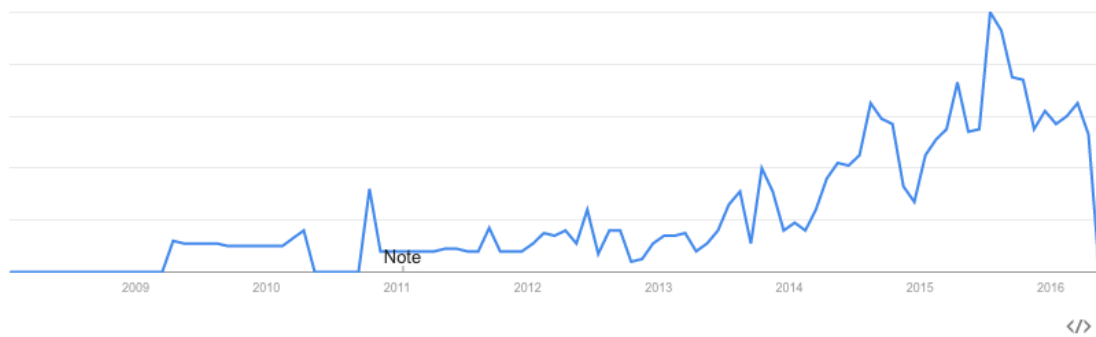
Figure 2.1. Search interest of news about the sharing economy in the US (Google Trends)

2016, when the study was conducted, in the United States. As the figure shows, audiences' interests in relevant news have exploded since the middle of 2014.

Compared to the United States, where the term "sharing economy" has appeared since 2000, the concept has attracted more media attention in China since 2015, especially growing with the entry of iconic companies like Airbnb and Uber into the Chinese market. Specifically, Uber entered China in February 2014, earlier than Airbnb, which officially entered China in August 2015. Having seen huge potential in the Chinese market, the Chinese consumer base for Airbnb has grown up to 700% since 2014 (Chesky, 2015). According to the Media Attention Index provided by Baidu, the largest Chinese news search engine, media coverage of the sharing economy was rare in 2014 and early 2015 (Figure 2.2). On October 10, 2015, however, media coverage on the sharing economy rose to a peak as the Chinese government published a draft of regulations for the ride-sharing industry.

The increase of media coverage about the sharing economy in both China and the

Figure 2.2. Online media coverage in China (Baidu Index)

United States potentially indicates the media's presentation as influential in audiences' perceptions and adaptations about the sharing economy. As a result, it is important to study how the media have interpreted the sharing economy differently and its influences in different countries.

2.2 Media Framing

Since the frame theory addresses the media's influence on people's perception of an issue, frame theory serves as an appropriate pathway to explore the media's interpretations and coverage of the sharing economy. First developed by sociologist Goffman in 1974, framing theory explains how the information senders define and construct a piece of information to the public in mass communication (Goffman, 1974). In Goffman's study, the information recipients interpreted information though primary framework, which is based on interpreters' personal experience and is influenced by external social factors such as cultures, ideologies, or journalistic patterns (Goffman, 1974). Based on these different functions, framing techniques were classified into natural and social frames (Goffman, 1974).

Since the 1990s, research of framing theory has been abundant, and framing theory has been applied as an interdisciplinary theory, which reveals a critical part of the

communication process (Borah, 2011). In the communication field, framing theory is exceptionally useful in analyzing how a certain issue, event, discourse, and phenomenon is constructed and confined by media organizations, media professionals and their audiences over the past 40 years (Gamson, 1992; Reese, 2001). According to the classic definition of "framing" proposed by Entman (1993), framing is to "select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation for the item descried" (Entman, 1993). Due to its significant potential for bridging senders with content and audiences, and for creating a completely connected communication process, framing theory is attractive for communication scholars (Reese, 2001).

Although there are many studies on framing, Scheufele (1999) criticized the vagueness of previous research, both theoretically and empirically (Scheufele, 1999). To alleviate that theoretical ambiguous, Scheufele (1999) proposed a theoretical model to conceptualize framing research, in which he classified framing into media frames and audience frames (individual frames). Audience frame, or individual frame, refers to the "mentally sorted clusters of ideas that guide individuals' processing of information" (Entman, 1993, p. 53). Media frame refers to "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events…the frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987. p. 143). In other words, media frames provide information senders, such as journalists or editors, a method to "package" information purposely and deliver it to their audiences efficiently (Gitlin, 1980). In media frames in news coverage, Vreese (2005) identified two main

frames, which were issue-specific frames and generic frames. The issue-specific frame referred to frames related only to a specific topic, while the generic frame referred not only to specific topics, but also thematic issues "over time and in different cultural contexts" (Vreese, 2005, p. 54). Many studies have been conducted to analyze the issue-specific frames of various topics in political, cultural, and social fields, such as the Columbine school shootings case (Chyi & McCombs, 2004).

Furthermore, regarding generic framing, previous studies have argued that comparative framing is an effective way to examine framing devices, especially for generic framing (Kuypers, 2005), because it allows researchers to "go beyond a mere textual analysis to a contextual examination to uncover how the message framing results from different journalistic framing" (Wu, 2006, p. 254). By applying comparative framing, previous studies have extracted media frames and explained the reasons in global issues. For example, political protests have been studied including the anti-Vietnam War movement (Gitlin, 1980), the Occupy Wall Street protests (DeLuca, Lawson, & Sun, 2012) , the Iraq War (Lee, Maslog, & Kim, 2006), and the nuclear test in North Korea (Dai & Hyun, 2010). In addition, some economic events such as the launch of the Euro (H. De Vreese, 2001), and natural disasters such as CNN's coverage of the 2011 Japan Earthquake (Chattopadhyay, 2013), or cases in a specific country such Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in China (Wu, 2006) have also been studied from a media framing perspective.

<u>2.3 Framing Devices</u>

Even though the issues vary in previous research, one common question previous research has tried to answer is*:* How is an event structured in media and what are the differences in media frames of different countries? Or, what contributes to those differences*?* Entman (1993) argued that the prominent methods of media frames are selection and salience, which means to select "some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). As many scholars have suggested, analyzing media coverage about an issue and examining the forms and volumes of that issue in media is an effective way of studying media frames (DeLuca et al., 2012). Furthermore, as a key role in the communication process, newsmakers, or journalists and editors may employ various frames in their coverage by choosing what and how to present an issue (Vreese, 2005). Combining those factors together, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) proposed the concept of the "media package," which includes both the frames in message and the journalistic routes underlying those frames, in order to capture frames. In this media package, journalistic framing devices commonly include: metaphors, exemplars, catchphrase, depiction and visual images (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Previous framing studies have provided some insights into how scholars can capture framing devices.

In a study of the differing media frames in China and the United States, with regard to the Foxconn suicides in China, researchers examined framing as a cultural phenomenon and found the Chinese press framed the incident as a physiological problem, while the American press framed it as a China-specific human rights issue (Guo, Hsu, Holton, & Jeong, 2012). This study confirmed the "anti-communist ideology" that

Western media holds in framing China, while Chinese media coverage has been heavily influenced by business corporations and tends to be noncritical regarding controversial issues (Guo et al., 2012). In Wu's comparative analysis of U.S. and Chinese media coverage of Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in China, Wu (2006) identified an antigovernment frame in U.S. media, while identifying a progovernment frame in China (Wu, 2006).

At the same time, frames are also viewed as "cultural structures with central ideas and more peripheral concepts-and a set of relations that vary in strength and kind among them" (Reese et al., 2001, p. 142). In his 2001 study of online news magazines, Reese used Ghanem's four dimensions of framing as categories: presentation, subtopics within a particular issue, cognitive attributes, and affective attributes. Jensen (2006) classified the framing methods into a positive frame and a negative frame, which emphasized the advantage and disadvantage of an issue separately (Jensen, 2006).

However, even though various research has been done regarding framing devices in both generic frames and issue-specific frames, research on generic frames that compare cases in different countries is still limited (Vreese, 2005). According to a content analysis of previous published framing studies in major journals from 1990 to 2005, 78% of frames studies addressed issue-specific frames while only 22% addressed generic frames (Matthes, 2009).

Although research on the sharing economy is somewhat substantial, previous research has mainly focused on economic and sociological effects without giving much attention to media framing effects. Because of the significance of the sharing economy and its impact on society and individuals, the way media frames the sharing economy

has reflected the media's ideology, especially in different cultural and political systems.

<div align="center">2.4 Transnational Frames Analysis</div>

Even though generic frames may apply to nations across the world, there are still national boundaries in using those generic frames, because journalists may adjust media frames to their audiences according to each nations' unique cultures, ideologies, political positions, and media systems (Guo et al., 2012). This adoption process for international issues is named "news domestication" (Clausen, 2004). By conducting translational comparative framing analysis, researchers can "explore the global media practices " (Guo et al., 2012).

To compare frames in different nations, Guo and her colleagues (2012) proposed a transnational framing analysis model to provide theoretical guidance for transnational framing study (Table 2.1). In this model, they summarized that cultures, ideologies, political positions, and media systems are four factors that drive distinct frames in different nations when cover the same issue (Guo et al., 2012). Since the United States and China are the primary economic entities that have vastly differences in the four factors, cultures, the comparison between the two nations is meaningful to reveal the global application of media frames.

Historically in Western media, China has been portrayed as a collective culture and a communist country with a peaceful political position and a government-controlled media system. For those reasons, researchers have found media frames in China to be a progovernment frame (Wu, 2006) and a negotiation frame (Dai & Hyun, 2010). For example, in covering HIV/AIDS, the national news agency in the United States has been

Table 2.1. Domestic Factors That Drive Different Frames (Identified by Guo, Holton, & Jeong in 2012)

	Media System	Culture	Political Systems	Ideology
China	Government-dominated	Collectivism	Communism	Communist
United States	Commercial	Individualism	Democracy	Liberalism, Conservatism

identified as an antigovernment frame, while the national news agency in China has been identified as a progovernment frame (Wu, 2006). Furthermore, in covering political issues like North Korea's nuclear test, U.S. news presented a "War on Terror" frame, while Chinese news applied a negotiation principle frame (Dai & Hyun, 2010), due to the different political positions those two countries hold regarding international issues. Ideology is also emphasized as critical reason in media coverage. In covering feminist events, United States media employed an anticommunist and antifeminist frame, while the Chinese media applied a proequality frame because of different ideologies (Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 1998). Furthermore, compared to Chinese media, United States media are more likely to apply a human rights abuser frame in portraying China-related issues (Guo et al., 2012; Wu, 2006).

Regarding the application of general frames in the media's global practice, although the previous study has compared different media outlets, the comparison of transnational usage of those frames is seldom considered. For example, for the differences in the application of those general frames, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) argue that the harder and more serious the media outlets are, the more frequently they use a responsibility attributes frame and a conflicts frame. On the other hand, the more sensationalist and softer the media outlets are, the more likely they are to use human interests frame (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

2.5 Research Statement

To compare the translational usages of general frames in media, an issue that has stimulated global debate in different countries (i.e., sharing economy) warrants examination. In order to reveal how and the media across the globe, or at least across two major global powers, frame the sharing economy and define relevant social actors, this study applied a transnational framing model and analyzed how media in China and the United States construct the sharing economy. Since China and the United States are different in the four factors that potentially drive different media frames, a comparative study between the two countries is typical for framing analysis.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a commonly applied method in communication study. It is defined as "a research technique for making a replicable and valid inference from the text (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorf, 2013, p. 24). By examining the texts in a qualitative or quantitative way, content analysis as a research technique that helps researchers with "new insights" and improves the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon (Krippendorf, 2013). To analyze frames in media coverage, qualitative content analysis and quantitative content analysis were commonly conducted as methodologies (Kosicki & Gerald, 1993). In qualitative content analysis, previous framing analysis has been based on small samples and discussed in-depth with detailed quotations (Kosicki & Gerald, 1993). On the other hand, quantitative content analysis has coded frames as variables, or coded with clusters instead of specific frames (Kosicki & Gerald, 1993). In that research, researchers normally first examine a sample of extracted frames, and then build a codebook and code.

Following this process, this study first took deductive approaches to extract main frames by closely examining the sample and reviewing the existing media frames that have been found by previous study. Then, this study followed an inductive approach to

build a codebook based on identified frames, and applied the codebook to the case of the sharing economy.

This study applied each story as coding unit because coding every article was commonly used in content analysis (Xu, 2013) and was enough to define the overall tones and themes (Hogg et al., 2008). Two graduate students proficient in English and Chinese were coders for this study. Before coding, coders were trained to be familiar with each measurement in the codebook and coded 12.5% random articles from the sample. Finally, coders coded all collected data and I interpreted the implications of the results.

3.2 Sample Collection

This study analyzes media coverage about the sharing economies in China and the United States. Since national news organizations "provided a significant local or national 'spin' to the framing of the news stories"(Vreese, 2005, p. 59) and showed the "generic" character of those news frames, this study focuses on the national news organizations in these two countries and mainly focuses on elite media. Even though the online media and social media are growing rapidly, the printed media, especially national newspapers are still regarded as the "elite media" which are powerful in influencing public opinion (Zhu & Lu, 2013). Furthermore, for practical consideration, the high duplications, large numbers, and ununiformed formats make it difficult to track all the coverage about the sharing economy in online media, broadcasts, and TV stations. To ensure the accuracy of coding as well as for practical consideration, this study focuses only on print media organizations that have dominant influence in the national discourse. As for the media in the United States, *The New York Times, The Washington Post,* and *The Wall Street*

Journal were selected due to their influences on public discourse (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2008). In addition, *USA Today* is also examined for its comprehensive coverage of the sharing economy. As a comparison, *People's Daily, China Daily,* and *Southern Metropolis Daily* were selected because they are the most influential national newspapers in China (Wu, 2006). Specifically, *People's Daily* represents the interests of the government, while the *China Daily* represents China's official voice to the world, because it covers global news in English. *The Southern Metropolis Daily,* another main national newspaper, call themselves an independent critical newspaper (Guo et al., 2012). This newspaper was also selected to represent the independent voice in China. *The 21st Century Business Herald* is the biggest national newspaper focusing on the economy, and works as a comparison with the *Wall Street Journal*. Overall, all the newspapers were selected not only because of their influence on their country, but also because of their representations of media ideologies.

This study used LexisNexis to collect English news articles from media in the United States. LexisNexis Academic, a tool that extracts journalistic documents from its database, was applied by researchers to collect data about media coverage (Guo et al., 2012). Additionally, WiseSearch, the biggest Chinese news information provider, was applied to collect Chinese news articles. The key word "sharing economy" in both English and Chinese and the time period from 2000 to the present were used to define news articles. After removing duplicated and nonrelevant articles, 705 articles were collected. Among them, as Table 3.1 demonstrated, 445 English articles and 287 Chinese articles of relevance were found. All Chinese articles were published after 2013 and the English articles were published after 2010. To make the coding practical and manageable,

Table 3.1 Sample Resources

U.S. Media		Chinese Media	
New York Times	57	People's Daily	8
Washington Post	38	China Daily（English Edition）	38
Wall Street Journal	10	Southern Metropolis Daily	17
USA Today	16	21st Century Business Herald	16
Total	121		79

N = 200

a sample consisting of 200 (28.4%, *N* = 705) articles was identified though random sampling. Specifically in the selected U.S. sample, 65 articles were from *The New York Times*, 47 were from *The Washington Post*, 12 were from *The Wall Street Journal*. For Chinese media, eight articles were from *People's Daily,* 48 articles were from *China Daily (English edition), 21* articles were from *Southern Metropolis Daily* and 20 articles were from *21st Century Business Herald*. The detailed description of the sample was demonstrated in Table 3.1.

3.3 Coding Procedure

3.3.1 Codebook

To identify media frames in the case of the sharing economy, this study applied the transnational comparative framing model (Guo et. al., 2012) as guidance. As a structured guide for the transnational framing study, this model provided a framing pool with frames that have been identified by previous transnational framing studies and proposes a three-dimensional framing matrix. In this model, researchers were suggested to first sort

out the categories of frames: generic, domestic, and issue-specific frames. They should then classify those frames into three contexts: individual, national, and global (Guo, Holton, & Jeong, 2012), as shown in Table 3.2.

Following this model, this study first identified frames in the sharing economy as generic frames. Generic framing analysis has been commonly applied in transnational framing analysis, and some studies have found media in different countries utilized generic frames differently, even for the same issue (Zhou, 2008). Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) identified five prevalent generic frames in most news coverage: conflict, human interest, economic consequence, morality, and responsibility. To further explore the frequencies of those frames in news coverage, they analyzed the newspaper and television's coverage about the Amsterdam Meetings of European in 1997 and found the attributions of responsibility frame was the most prevalent frame (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). With initial analysis of sample articles, this study identified those generic frames as: 1) conflict frame, 2) human interest frame, 3) economic consequence

Table 3.2 Three-dimensional Framing Matrix (Guo, Holton, & Jeong, 2012)

Function Context	Frame	Define Problem	Diagnose Cause	Evaluate Morally	Suggest Remedy	Framing Devices
Individual	Economic Consequence					
Nation A	Economic Consequence					
Nation B	Economic Consequence					
Global	Economic Consequence					
Nation A	Conflict					
Nation B	Conflict					
Global	Conflict					

frame, and 4) responsibility-attribution frame. Since the morality frame was seldom mentioned in the sample, it was not employed as a main coding category.

Other than main frames, scholars also identified specific subframes to further reveal how media coverage presented an issue (Guo et al., 2012). Following the transnational framing analysis model, I sorted each main frame into the context of the individual, corporate, and national contexts. Global context was been replaced by corporate context because global context was rarely presented, while corporate context was salient in the sample. To further examine each subframe, this study also examined how social actors were presented in media coverage for the reason that news frames were constructed by negotiations between social actors (Snow, 2008). Social actors were defined as any people or group of people that engaged with one issue (Snow, 2008). In the case of the sharing economy, I identified three prominent social actors: individuals, corporations, and governments/nations. Therefore, I developed the actor-facilitated frame as a main frame, and I analyzed which social actor dominated media coverage.

This study also incorporated news formats and news tones as two coding categories, because those categories could uncover the overall tones and attitudes of media. Previous framing research has also applied coding categories to inspect overall attitudes. For example, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) incorporated episodic news and thematic news as news formats, which referred to either specific or historical perspectives of storytelling, suggested by Iyengar in 1991 (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). In Rossler's 2001 study of news magazines on the Internet, he used Ghanem's four dimensions of framing as categories, which included: presentation, subtopics within a particular issue, cognitive attributes, and affective attributes (Rossler, 2001). Arceneaux and Schmitz Weiss (2010)

applied four mixed opinions in media coverage of Twitter in different stages of adoption including: enthusiastic, positive, ambivalent, and antagonistic. In a study of media coverage about the blog, Hogg, Lomicky, and Hossain (2008) included story type, theme, format, and tone as coding categories in their codebook. Ghanem (1997) extracted four dimensions for media framing, including topic, size and placement, details of the frame, and tone.

Combining the previous literatures with existing frames in the case of the sharing economy, I identified the main frames as follows: 1) conflict frame, 2) actor-facilitated frame, 3) human interest frame, 4) economic consequence frame, 5) responsibility attribution frame. The following codebook (Table 3.3) demonstrated the general frames that have been identified in previous studies and coded in this study. Other than those main frames, news tones and news format were also coded as categories. Furthermore, subframes under each main frame are developed based on three different contexts: individual, corporate, and national.

The measures for identifying each frame were fully explained as follows:

3.3.1.1 Conflict Frame

This frame focused on the conflicts between individuals and various social groups. Previous studies have found that in covering political issues, especially political campaigns, conflict frames were the most applied frames (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). This study examined whether and how the media in different countries constructed the sharing economy as conflicts. Previous studies have found prominent usage of conflicts in Western story-telling (Luther & Zhou, 2005), and compared to

Table 3.3 Coding Categories

Main frame	Measurements	Subframes	Examples
Conflict Frame	Does the article mention any conflict, including regulations/challenges/competitions/security concerns?	If mentioned, which conflicts? 1) Corporations vs. government? 2) Corporations vs. corporations? 3) Individuals vs. corporations?	*"Government regulators, legislators and courts in the United States have started scrutinizing the app-mediated service sector……."*(New York Times)
Human Interest Frame	Does the article present individual/people's face/life?	What are the roles of individuals? 1) Passive Recipients: How they are influenced by the sharing economy? 2) Active participants: Their opinions about the sharing economy?	*"Twice a month, Ms. Jurdieu, 26, drives her Vauxhall Astra from Paris to her hometown in the Alsace region of eastern France to visit her family and boyfriend"*(New York Times)
Economic Consequence Frame	Does the article mention any economic interest?	If yes, how? 1) Individuals' financial gain/lose? 2) Corporations financial/economic gain/lose? 3) Nation's financial/economic gain/lose?	*"The first bought a Vera Wang wedding dress for $8,000 and then sold it on Tradesy for $3,000."*(New York Times)
Responsibility Attribute Frame	Does the story mention any suggestion for it?	If yes, who should conduct those suggestions? 1) Government? 2) Corporations? 3) Individuals?	*"To optimize the allocation of medical resources, Ma advised the government to remove the "hidden obstacles" that prevent doctors from becoming freelancers"*(China Daily)
Actor-Facilitated Frame	Is there any news resource/quotations cited (according to who)?	If yes, are those roles cited? 1) Corporations? 2) Government/officers? 3) Individuals? 4) Experts?	*"I thought, 'Oh, my God, it's so easy,' and it was free!" Ms. Ciancio said. "It was easier and faster than buying one or ordering one on Amazon."*(New York Times)

media in the United Kingdom and Hong Kong, American newspapers tended to be more critical and also more frequently covered conflicts in the case of the Internet in China (Zhou, 2008). Potentially, due to the ambiguous culture in China, Chinese media tended to be less critical and more tolerant in covering the conflicts in the sharing economy. To test this frame, two coders answered several questions to identify it. For example, did the story mention the disagreements or conflicts caused by the sharing economy? Detailed

measurements are explained in the codebook.

3.3.1.2 Corporate-Facilitated Frame

This frame has been identified (Guo et al., 2012) in a study of the Foxconn suicide in China. In this frame, corporations' public relations campaigns had impacted media coverage in both China and the United States, because those corporations "represented the most prevailing voices in both countries' news discourse" (Guo et al., 2012, p. 497). In this frame, media hold a noncritical attitude towards corporations in covering the conflicts between individuals and corporations. Guo's research identified this frame by looking at what and how different news sources were quoted in media coverage by the following social actors: companies, experts, workers, or the government (Guo et al., 2012). Following this method, this study measured the most salient news sources in those stories to analyze which social actor dominated this conversation. Coders needed to answer those questions to judge: where did the most quotations come from in this story? Did they come from government (including any other official agencies), companies (or workers in the company), customers (or other individuals), or experts?

This coding category could reveal whether and how much the media was affected by their media systems. Potentially, media in both countries covered corporations noncritically. Furthermore, because the media system in China is more monitored by the government, the government may be the dominant news source in Chinese media stories. On the other hand, corporations may be the dominant news source in US media because of its commercial media system.

3.3.1.3 Human Interest Frame

This frame suggested that the media cares about individual's interests in the whole story and tried to attract audiences by presenting humans in an emotional perspective (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The application of the human interests frame in news media revealed an emotional, dramatic, and personalized interpretation of an issue, which was opposite with the factual frame. In the case of the sharing economy, the human interests frame referred mainly to how individuals' lives have been influenced by the sharing economy. The impacts of the sharing economy could be both personal and global, leaving the media with flexible interpretations.

Due to different media outlets and issues (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Zhou, 2008), the application of human interest frames could be different. From a transnational perspective, in a case study about the Internet in China, Zhou (2008) compared Western media and Eastern media, such as media in the United States, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, and Singapore, and found that Western media are more likely to use the human interests frame than Eastern media (Zhou, 2008). Zhou (2008) attributed this difference to culture differences. Specifically, because the individualism in Western culture, in which social members cared about themselves rather than profess loyalty to organizations or society, the media in the United Kingdom and the United States were more likely to care about human interests about the same issue, compared to media in Hong Kong or Singapore where the culture was collective and social members were expected to be loyal to social groups rather than themselves (Zhou, 2008). To test whether articles applied human interests frame, coders measured whether the story emphasized individuals' behaviors, or whether the story presented any individual to

some degree.

3.3.1.4 Economic Consequences Frame

Although the term of the sharing economy was mainly an economic issue, media in China and the United States potentially discussed the economic consequences differently. Since culture is one of the drivers of different frames (Guo et al., 2012) and American culture is individualistic while the Chinese culture is collective, media in the two countries may focus on either individual's interests or groups' interests regarding this issue. As Guo and her colleagues (2012) found in their study about the Foxconn suicide issue, although the economic development/consequence frame was salient in both Chinese and U.S. media, most media was in a Chinese context. As a result, the media in the United States may cover the sharing economy from an individual perspective, while the Chinese media may portray the sharing economy as a global trend and frame the sharing economy in China as part of the global economy (Guo et al., 2012).

Two subframes of the economic consequences frame, individual economic consequence and collective economic consequence, were developed to test whether the frames were consistent with the previous study. Regarding the individual consequence, media concerned individuals' roles in this issue. However, the collective economic consequence involved the group's interests, and the group was presented as a nation, a global community, or a community in a country.

To measure the two subframes, coders needed to judge whether the article mentioned any kind of economic or financial loss, or revenue issues. If the answer was yes, then coders needed to answer the following questions to judge which subframe was

more prominent: Did the article mention any nation or national communities, national groups' interests? If any of these were mentioned then the answer was entered yes, and it was coded as the collective economic consequence.

3.3.1.5 Responsibility-Attribution Frame

The responsibility-attribute frame presented issues in attributing reasons and suggesting solutions, either for the government, social groups, or individuals (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The responsibility attribution frame was the most prevalent frame in the previous study (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Other than that, the news outlet also influenced the percentage of this frame in the way that "the most sober and serious newspaper used this frame most frequently" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 103). Due to the prevalence of the responsibility attribution frame, it could be assumed that the responsibility frame was also an important frame in the case of the sharing economy. The government, social groups, or individuals may have their responsibilities in this issue. Additionally, the social power stratification and the media systems could be the underlying reasons that drive different responsibility attributions. For instance, the government was assumed to have responsibility for sharing economy in national news media in China, because the government is the most powerful actor for government-controlled media. In the United States, corporations were assumed to be responsible for the sharing economy because of the dominant commercial media system.

To test if the responsibility attribution frame was a prominent frame in this case, coders needed to answer these questions: Did the story mention who was responsible for the popularity of the sharing economy? Did the story suggest the

government/individuals/other social groups was/were responsible for regulating the sharing economy? Did the story suggest any solution for existing problems or potential problems? Did the story call for any actions for the sharing economy? (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). If the answer was no, then coders coded it as 0. If the answer was yes, coders continued to judge which social actors were attributed as the primary responsibilities.

Other than those measurements, to grab deeper understanding of framing devices, news tones and news formats were also coded. The news tones frame revealed the attitude of the journalistic tone. In this category, if the article objectively described the phenomenon, usually both positive and negative, it was coded as a neutral frame. If it emphasized the positive part, and used the positive terms in narrative, it was coded as a positive frame. If the article mainly used negative terms to portray the negative part of this issue, such as the regulations dilemma, negative influence on the social system, challenges, or risks to companies applying this concept, it was coded as a negative frame. For example, "The Dark Side of the Sharing Economy" and "Airbnb Listings Mostly Illegal, State Contends" (New York Times) were coded as negative frame. "Welcome to the 'Sharing Economy… This is powerful" (New York Times) was coded as a positive frame. "New York's Case Against Airbnb is argued in Albany" (New York Times) was coded as a neutral frame.

The coding category of news formats examined either news or opinions the article belonged to. This category helped to reveal the perspective and emphasis each article applied in covering the sharing economy. Potentially, because of the difference in media systems in the United States and China, the U.S. media may provide more opinions than

Chinese media. After coding, a closer context analysis of each main frame was conducted after quantitative content analysis.

3.3.2 Coding

Two coders firstly coded 25 articles (12.5%, N = 200) which were randomly selected from the sample to test the codebook. After coding, a Krippendorff's alpha (α) was calculated for each variable. As a change-corrected reliability measure, Krippendorff's alpha was widely suggested to measure agreements in coders (Krippendorff, 2012). The Krippendorff's Alpha for each frame was above 0.8 (Table 3.4), which was considered as acceptable for reporting (Coe & Scacco, 2016).

Table 3.4 Intercoder Reliability Report

Variables	Krippendorff's Alpha	N Cases
Tone	0.83	25
News format	0.81	25
Conflicts	0.89	25
Human interest	0.84	25
Economic consequence	0.84	25
Responsibility attribution	0.90	25
Actor-facilitated	0.88	25

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 General Positive Attitudes

As shown in Table 4.1, Chinese media is more positive than media in the United States when covering the sharing economy. More than 60% (N = 48) of the Chinese articles applied a positive frame, in which only the benefit of the sharing economy is presented. On the other hand, in U.S. coverage, 14% (N = 17) of the news articles were positive while 72.1% (N = 86) of articles were neutral. Furthermore, U.S. media were more critical about the sharing economy. Approximately 15% (N = 18) of the articles used a negative frame, while 3.8% (N = 3) of the Chinese media sample used a negative frame.

As for the news formats in those news articles, both Chinese media and U.S. media mainly followed a news format that covered the sharing economy with facts and obvious news recourse (with 83.5% of Chinese articles and 74.4% of U.S. articles). However, 25.6% (N = 31) of articles in U.S. newspapers followed an opinion format, in which the authors subjectively stated their opinions about the sharing economy, and this percentage was more than Chinese media (16.5%, N = 13).

Table 4.1 General Results

		Chinese Media		U.S. Media	
	Positive Frame	48	60.8%	17	14.0%
News Tone	Neutral Frame	28	35.4%	86	71.1%
	Negative Frame	3	3.8%	18	14.9%
News Format	News	66	83.5%	90	74.4%
	Opinions	13	16.5%	31	25.6%
	Total	79	100.0%	121	100.0%

4.2 Emphasis on Economic Consequence Frame and Conflict Frame

Table 4.2 indicates that the actor-facilitated frame was the most prominent frame (78.5% in China and 89.3% in the United States), followed by the economic consequence frame (68.4% in China and 68.6% in the United States), conflict frame (50.6% in China and 54.5% in the United States), and human interest frame (48.1% in China and 58.1% in the United States). The responsibility attribution frame was the least employed frame (22.8% in China and 33.9% in the United States).

The frequent application of the first three frames confirmed that those general frames are the most prevailing frames in Western media, including U.S. media (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), as well as in Chinese media. In addition, the wide usage of actor-facilitated frame confirmed that the news articles are clearly facilitated by certain actors. In the coverage about the sharing economy, 78.5% of the articles in China and 89.3% of the articles in the United States involved at least one main actor, either individuals, corporations, or governments to different extents. Although the frequencies of general frames are similar in two countries, the contexts in which each frame is constructed are different, which is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Table 4.2 Results of Main Frames

Main Frames	Chinese Media		U.S. Media	
Conflict Frame	40	50.6% (3)	66	54.5% (3)
Human Interest Frame	38	48.1% (4)	63	52.1% (4)
Economic Consequences Frame	54	68.4% (2)	83	68.6% (2)
Responsibility Attribution Frame	18	22.8% (5)	41	33.9% (5)
Actor-Facilitated Frame	62	78.5% (1)	108	89.3% (1)
Total	79	100%	121	100%

4.3 Salience of Corporation-Facilitated Frame

As in Table 4.3, for conflict frame, in each country more than half of newspapers mentioned the conflicts among corporations, governments, and individuals. Those conflicts included corporations' conflicts with governments or regulation systems, competition between companies, and individuals' dissatisfaction with corporations. Among them, conflicts between corporations and governments were the most prominent in both countries (31.6% in Chinese media and 39.7% in the U.S. media). Instead, the Chinese media may be more likely to cover conflicts between corporations, as 22.8% of Chinese articles covered conflicts between corporations, while 14% of U.S. news articles covered the same topic. In addition to that, the U.S. media more frequently covers the conflicts between individuals and corporations (19% in U.S. media and 13.9% in Chinese media).

For human interests frame, even though human interests frames are prominent both in Chinese and the U.S. media, because half of the news articles in both countries presented an individual in stories (48.1% and 52.1%), individuals are presented differently in news coverage. In Chinese media, 53.2% of the news coverage presented an individual's face while only 3.8% of the articles cited individuals' opinions about the sharing economy.

Table 4.3 Results of Subframes

Frames	Chinese Media	U.S. Media
Conflict Frame		
Corporation vs. government	31.6% (1)	39.7% (1)
Corporation vs. corporation	22.8% (2)	14.0% (3)
Individual vs. corporation	13.9% (3)	19.0% (2)
Human Interest Frame		
Passive Recipient	53.2%	50.4%
Active Participant	3.8%	38.8%
Economic Consequence Frame		
Individual	20.3% (2)	45.5% (1)
Corporation	46.8% (1)	43.8% (2)
Nation	17.7% (3)	8.3% (3)
Responsibility Attribution Frame		
Government	20.3% (1)	28.1% (1)
Corporation	5.1% (2)	5.8% (2)
Individual	0.0%	2.5%
Actor-Facilitated Frame		
Corporation	58.2% (1)	69.4% (1)
Government	22.8%（2）	24.8%
Individual	12.7%	35.5% (3)
Expert	20.3%（3）	39.7% (2)
Total	79	121

To the contrary, in the U.S. media, individuals are more likely to be cited as active participants (38.8%) and those news articles cited individuals' opinions about the sharing economy.

For economic consequence frame, even though the economic consequence frame was the most prominent frame in both Chinese and the U.S. media (68.4% in Chinese media and 68.6% in the U.S. media), but the contexts they portrayed were different. Specifically, 46.8% of Chinese news articles and 43.8% of news articles in the United States presented economic consequence in the context of corporations, making the corporations' economic consequence the most prominent subframe in both countries.

Furthermore, 45.5% of the news coverage in the United States mentioned the economic consequence for individuals, while only 20.3% of Chinese news articles mentioned individual's economic gain or loss. In terms of a nation's economic consequence, Chinese media presented a higher percentage (17.7%) than U.S. media (8.3%).

The responsibility frame was the least prominent compared to other general frames. Only 22.8% of articles in Chinese media and 33.9% of articles in the U.S. media employed this frame. Other than that, both media in China and the United States attribute the majority of responsibility to the government (20.3% and 28.1%), and limited responsibilities are attributed to corporations (5.1% and 5.8%). The results of subframes were demonstrated in the Table 4.3.

For actor-facilitated frame, the results indicated that corporations demonstrated news coverage, with 58.2% of news articles in China and 69.4% of the news articles in United States citing corporations as a news resource. Moreover, the government was the second dominant actor in Chinese media (22.8%) while experts or professionals were the second dominant actor in the U.S. media (39.7%). Individuals also dominated media coverage in the United States with 35.5% of articles citing individuals, while only 12.7% of Chinese news articles did.

To summarize, the findings demonstrated that the Chinese media constructed the sharing economy more positively, while the U.S. media was more critical towards it. In addition, the U.S. media tended to provide more opinions than Chinese media and Chinese media tend to provide more facts. For the general frames, the frequencies were similar in both countries and the actor-facilitated frame was the most prominent frame in both countries. Both countries' media emphasized the economic consequence frame,

conflict frame, and human interest frame, and presented the weakness of the responsibility attribution frame. Chinese media tended to construct the sharing economy in corporation context, framing it only as a business behavior. While the U.S. media emphasized its influences on individuals' lives. At the same time, both media had near-ignorance of global context.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 The Sharing Economy in the Media

This study illustrated that in the case of the sharing economy, considering frequencies of each media frame, media in China and the United States presented the sharing economy similarly, although the two countries have different ideologies and media systems. Thus, the overall image of the sharing economy in media coverage could be extracted.

Firstly, as to tones and formats of news stories, the U.S. media provided more opinions to analyze the sharing economy phenomenon, while Chinese media provided more news facts to the public. At the same time, the news in Chinese media was mainly positive while the U.S. media was mainly neutral. Those differences may attribute to the difference phase of the sharing economy in the two countries. Since this term is relatively newer in China, the media focused on providing more news facts to spread the sharing economy while it downplayed the negative influence of the sharing economy. Thus, the news about the sharing economy was more enthusiastic and optimistic in China. However, the sharing economy has been known by the public for more than 10 years in the United States. As the public's understanding of the sharing economy increased in the United States, the U.S. media started to cover the negative part of the

sharing economy and portrayed it neutrally. As a result, news coverage in the United States was more critical. In this way, to some degree, media has promoted the diffusion of the sharing economy, especially in China.

Secondly, regarding the frequencies of general media frames, both China and the United States portrayed the sharing economy as an economic phenomenon with conflicts, revealing that the media also emphasized the disruptiveness and controversy of the sharing economy. Although previous research found the U.S. media tended to employ the responsibility attribute frame more often than other media (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Zhou, 2008), this was not obviously presented by the findings because all the newspapers that were chosen are serious national newspapers. The issue of conflicts was mainly aroused by governments' bans or regulations towards iconic corporations. For example, in China, the Ministry of Transport issued new draft regulations on car-sharing services in October 2015. In the United States, Airbnb hosts were also reported to have violated New York state law regarding short-term rentals in October 2014. Although controversy about the legal system similarly existed in both countries, the U.S. media more often evaluated government's activities, and proposed solutions and suggestions for the government. It also demonstrated that even though the media system in the United States is commercialized, the national newspapers still care about the government's responsibility in regulating the sharing economy. The salience of government responsibility-attribution in the U.S. media may be due to its democratic political system where media is freer to evaluate governments' performances. The following news article named "Sharing Conflicts in the Sharing Economy" (Bennet, 2014) in *The New York Times* in 2014 is an example of the government

responsibility-attribution frame:

> There is no reason that creative business models can't be regulated. In the case of apartment sharing and Airbnb, which has sparred with regulators in New York, officials should crack down on clearly illegal activity that makes it harder for people to find permanent housing, but allow more benign forms of apartment sharing. The city should, of course, be monitoring these big operations. But with only a dedicated team of 13 people investigating illegal hotels and related violations, the city cannot realistically enforce its rules against all rentals. (p. A18)

Thirdly, even though the media in China and the United States applied similar framing devices, the different contexts that news was constructed have been discovered by applying the three-dimensional framing analysis model. It was obvious that corporations dominated both the Chinese and the U.S. media. However, individuals were minimized in Chinese media while governments were equally involved in news story telling. In addition, the U.S. media applied more human interests frames than Chinese media, but the difference is limited. That is, the approaches that media used to frame the sharing economy have been influenced by their cultures, specifically, by the individualism in the United States and collectivism in China. Because in Chinese media, individuals were usually portrayed as general groups, such as drivers, costumers, or hosts, rather than specific individuals with detailed information. This quoted article in *China Daily* (Xin, 2015) titled "Can we have app-based and normal taxis both" provided a typical example:

> In the absence of insurance cover, passengers won't be able to claim compensation in case of accidents, which will lead to disputes between drivers or car owners and passengers. Such problems, however, can be solved if the authorities compel those operating such services to buy insurance and drivers to sign formal contracts with passengers, as well as check the records of drivers. (p. 9)

However, the U.S. media portrayed a person's story with their names, ages, and lives. For example, in an article published in the *Wall Street Journal* in 2014 titled

"When Uber is the Family Chauffeur" (Kapp, 2014) it says:

> Social freedom is a big reason teens love Uber. Ms. Martin's daughter, Sophie Robb, 15, takes Uber home from babysitting jobs and to friends' homes 30 minutes away in Mill Valley, Calif. She and her 7 and 10-year-old siblings often take an Uber car between their parents' separate homes. Sophie pays when the ride is for fun and not a necessity. (p. 1)

From those articles, it can be stated that the Chinese media constructed the sharing economy in a national context, while the U.S. media constructed it in an individual context. Because *People's Daily* and *China Daily* are both regarded as representing government's interests, the Chinese media focus on the nation's interests rather than individuals' gains and losses.

The following article titled "Sharing Economy" (Zhu, 2015) on *China Daily* in 2015 demonstrated how the nation's economic consequence frame was presented in China:

> The communiqué proposes developing the sharing economy over the next five years, which has raised building up a sharing economy to a national strategy. It is expected that the sharing economy will give new impetus to China's economic transition. (p. 8)

Those differences in constructing social actors and different contexts of each general frame confirmed that journalistic narratives have been influenced by domestic factors such as political systems, culture, and media systems.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

This study found both similarities and differences in covering the global phenomenon of the sharing economy in Chinese and the U.S. media. Although the four general media frames were found to be salient in both media, this was not adequate for comparing the usage of framing devices. To complement the vague of general media frame, this study applied the translational framing analysis model and found it useful to

reveal deeper implications in framing studies. Thus, the translational framing analysis model can work as a useful guidance for frame studies and can reveal nuances in frames that might not be discovered by general media frame research. In the future, more contexts can be added into the model according to specific texts.

This study also conformed the influence of cultures, media systems on media frames. The individual-orientated approach in the U.S. media coverage can be interpreted by its individual-orientated culture, while the corporation-orientated approach in Chinese media can be interpreted by its community-orientated culture. To be specific, because of individualism culture and democratic systems, the U.S. media is more likely to portray individuals and their opinions in storytelling than Chinese media, which values groups' and experts' opinions more than the individual's life.

Moreover, in the future, as it shows in the findings, in the case of the sharing economy, elite media's positive attitudes could increase the public's acceptance of the sharing economy. Previous studies have identified a technophobia phenomenon, which states that the media's attitude towards innovative technologies and concepts can be negative due to a fear of innovations (Miller, 1986). On the other hand, positive attitudes towards technology have potentially promoted the diffusion and acceptance of the sharing economy. For this assumption, future research is needed to provide experimental evidences about audiences' interpretation.

<u>5.3 Practical Implications</u>

5.3.1 PR Campaigns' Influence on Media Coverage

In terms of the social actors, corporations were prevailing in both Chinese and the

U.S. media with more than half of news articles citing a news resource from corporations

in each country. The dominance of corporations in both countries' media was consistent

with previous findings that corporations' public relations campaigns had an increasing

impact on news coverage (Brown, 2009; Guo et al., 2012). Since the sharing economy is

a business model that has disrupted existing regulation systems, corporations'

spokesmen and executive officers are commonly cited as a response towards this issue.

At the same time, corporations have actively engaged in media discussions by publishing

several statements and public letters to defend and justify themselves, which have been

quoted by different media. For example, after New York's attorney general reported

Airbnb's violation of state laws, Airbnb published a statement to express their desire to

work with local officers to "make New York a better place to live, work and visit." And

''this decision is good news for New Yorkers who simply want to share their home and

the city they love" (Airbnb, 2014). These statements have been widely cited by the

media. For example, most news cited those corporations as follows:

> Existing laws, Airbnb executives say, do not fit the sharing economy. "There are
> laws for people and there are laws for business, but you are a new category, a third
> category, people as businesses," Brian Chesky, Airbnb's chief executive, told an
> audience last fall. "As hosts, you are micro-entrepreneurs, and there are no laws
> written for micro-entrepreneurs." (Streitfeld, 2014, p. 1)

This process helped to propagate corporations' public relation campaigns, usually

positively influencing the public's perceptions about those corporations and the sharing

economy. Airbnb and Uber, due to their success and controversy, became the

representativeness and mostly cited corporations.

5.3.2 Social Responsibility of Media

The least frequency of the responsibility attribution frame in both countries' coverage suggests a lack of responsibility attribution in those media, especially for media coverage in China, where the responsibility was much less frequently mentioned than in the U.S. media. Thus, media was only uncovering the dynamics of the sharing economy based on facts, rather than providing proposals and guidance for the public.

5.3.3 Audiences' Engagement

In covering the sharing economy, individuals, governments, and experts were also involved in the storytelling in each country in a different way. In the United States, individuals and experts equally served as dominant actors aside from corporations, while in China, individuals were passive recipients of social changes. Another finding was the absence of individuals in the social responsibility attribution frame, which means there was no suggestion for individuals about their reactions towards the sharing economy. In that way, the individuals' voices and functions in promoting or hindering the sharing economy were overlooked. By contrast, individuals in the U.S. media were more proactive. All of those subframes regarding individuals were less frequently mentioned by the Chinese media. Potentially, the minimized individuals in Chinese media can be attributed to the collective culture, where a nation and community's interests are treated as higher than individuals' interests, and individuals are always passively influenced by social reforms like the sharing economy.

<u>5.4 Global Implications</u>

As for governments' functions in both countries, the government's impact on Chinese media coverage were not obvious compared to media in the United States. As previous research found, Chinese media cited government officials more often than Western media (Zhou, 2008), although this study did not present the same results. In U.S. media, regulation systems, government officials, and attorneys were substantial parts of the stories, suggesting that strict regulations had aroused wide discussion in the U.S. media.

Moreover, the frequencies of economic consequence frame in the nation and global context were limited in media in both China and the United States, while Chinese media more frequently mentioned it than the U.S. media. As a result, the sharing economy was primarily represented as an economic issue happening in corporations and industries in China and the United States, ignoring global economic development. It is not surprising that the sharing economy was constructed within the individual context in the United States and within the national context in China, on account of the different media systems in the two countries. Therefore, with the globalization of economy and society, global journalism is proposed to fulfill the demand of covering global issues, regardless of political differences.

This study contributed to the framing analysis by providing transnational insights about media coverage of the sharing economy, which is a global economic reform. It followed a transnational framing analysis model as a coding guidance developed by Guo (2012). This study supported the general frames existing in both countries but in different contexts, and it also confirmed the practicability of the translational framing

analysis model. However, there are some limits in this study that need further research**.**

5.5 Future Research

This study relied on a representative sample of elite newspapers in each county. Since the media coverage of the sharing economy may be different on digital and social media platforms, future research should consider a more holistic media sample based on the results provided here.

Further, to closely analyze connections between cultural, political, media, and social factors, future research should justify the motives that drive different frames. There should be other explanations for the different utilizations of frame devices other than cultural factors, such as different media vehicles. For example, social media, online media, TV stations, and broadcasts may apply frames differently. Those different media vehicles needed to be incorporated as samples in framing analysis. Third, this study only focuses on media frames. To shed light on the framing analysis, audiences' frames and their interpretations of frames needed to be analyzed. To put it another way, since audiences were actively engaging in the diffusing process of the sharing economy rather than passively influenced by the media, the analysis about audiences' perceptions should be addressed in the future, in order to reveal whether and how audiences' perceptions are influenced by different frames.

APPENDIX

Unite of Analysis: Article
Variables
- **Coders**
  - o   1=coder 1
  - o   2=coder 2
- **1. Positive/negative frame**
- If the article objectively describes the phenomenon, normally both positive and negative, code as *neutral frame.* If it emphasizes the positive part, including the potential benefits in both society and on a personal level and the applications of this concept, code as *positive frame*. If the article mainly used negative terms to talk about the negative part in this issue, such as the regulations dilemma, negative influence on social system, challenges, and risks of companies applying this concept, code as *negative frame*. For example, "The Dark Side of the Sharing Economy" "Airbnb Listings Mostly Illegal, State Contends" (New York Times) are coded as *negative frame.* "Welcome to the 'Sharing Economy... This is powerful" (New York Times) is coded as *positive frame.* "New York's Case Against Airbnb" (New York Times) is Argued in Albany" is coded as a *neutral frame.*
- If the article mentions both the positive and negative part of sharing economy, code as neutral. If only either part is mentioned, code as negative/positive frame.
  - o   0=neutral frame
  - o   1=negative frame
  - o   2=positive frame
- **2. News format**
- (What is the news format of the article, news or opinions? News normally objectively describes facts and with obvious news resources, while opinions usually have tendentiousness and use "I think" sentence, and its news resources is unclear. Coders can also tell it from sections of the article. for example, "I've given Uber a hard time about many of its policies, but on this we agree" (Washington Post)is coded as opinions.)
  - o   1=news
  - o   2=opinions
  - o   0=others
- **3. Conflict frame**
- Does the story mention any kind of disagreements/conflicts in the issue? (i.e.,

- conflicts
- between the local regulation system/companies/costmers, troditional indistry/startups, etc.)
  - 1=yes
  - 0=no
- under this main frame, codes need to decide what conflicts are presteted, corporations vs. government; Corporations vs. corporations; Individuals vs. corporations? for example, "*Government regulators, legislators and courts in the United States have started scrutinizing the app-mediated service sector with the idea of determining whether longstanding consumer protection and labor rules apply to these new delivery models.*" Shows the conflicts between government/legal systems and corporations.
- **4. Human interests frame**
- Does the story empathize individuals' behaviors or will humans be influenced by the sharing economy? Does the story present people's face to some extend? If not, code as no.
  - 1=yes
  - 0=no
- If any of the questions above is yes, coders need to judge how the human is portrayed, passively or actively. If an individual is cited to show how sharing economy influences individual's life, code as passive frame. If an individual is cited to show their opinions about sharing economy, code as active frame. For example, *"twice a month, Ms. Jurdieu, 26, drives her Vauxhall Astra from Paris to her hometown in the Alsace region of eastern France to visit her family and boyfriend"*(New York Times) shows how sharing economy influence individual's life.
- **5. Economic consequence frame**
- Coders need to judge whether the article mentions any kind of economic/financial lose/gain or expenses/revenue issues. If the answer is no, code as 0;
  - 1=Yes
  - 0=no
- If yes, which of the following economic consequences are mentioend?
  - 1) Individuals' financial gain/lose?
  - 2) Corporations financial/economic gain/lose?
  - 3) Nation's financial/economic gain/lose?
  For example, *" The first bought a Vera Wang wedding dress for $8,000 and then sold it on Tradesy for $3,000."*(New York Times) Is individual's financial gain/lose.
- **6. Responsibility Attribution Frame**
- Coders need to answer: Does the story mention who is responsible for the popularity of the sharing economy? Does the story suggest the government/individuals/other social groups is/are responsible for regulating the sharing economy? Does the story suggest any solution for existing problems or potential problems? Does the story call for any kind of actions for the sharing

economy? (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000)
- o   1=Yes
- o   0=no

If yes, who should conduct those suggestions?
- o   1) Government?
- o   2) Corporations?
- o   3) Individuals?

For example, *"to optimize the allocation of medical resources, Ma advised the government to remove the "hidden obstacles" that prevent doctors from becoming freelancers"*(China Daily), Is coded as government's responsibility to regulate the sharing economy.

- **7. Actor-facilitated frame**

Is there any news source cited?
- o   1=Yes
- o   0=no

Where are the main news resources? Government (i.e., officers/official agencies/regulations), companies (i.e., workers in the company), individuals (i.e., costumers) or experts? Is each of those actors cited? For example, *"I thought, 'Oh, my God, it's so easy,' and it was free!" Ms. Ciancio said. "It was easier and faster than buying one or ordering one on Amazon."*(New York Times) is individual's direct quotation.
- o   1) Corporations?
- o   2) Government/officers?
- o   3) Individuals?
- o   4) Experts?

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