Other-projected environmental image: A conceptual framework

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to develop a conceptual framework for the evaluation of other-projected[1] environmental image in an international context. It is based on a case study of an Australian projection of China's environmental image. By conducting inductive framing analysis and inductive content analysis, the research analyses 315 articles from two of the most important broadsheets in Australia — *The Australian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*,[2] from the year 2000 to 2011, and focuses on three special events. The findings reveal four generic frames — *environmental problems*, *environmental governance*, *global role*, and *international cooperation* and other issue-specific frames. The research is a first try at conceptualizing a framework for other-projected environmental image.

KEYWORDS: conceptual framework, deductive content analysis, environmental image, generic frames, inductive framing analysis

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INTRODUCTION

With the increasing salience of environmental issues on the agenda of national policy and in the theatre of world politics, it is necessary to postulate and investigate a new category of image — environmental image. An investigation of this concept is initiated in this article and a conceptual framework is developed herein for evaluating environmental image in an international context. This is undertaken through an examination of the construction of China's image in relation to environment by the Australian media.

The study firstly examines the conceptualization of image in media frames following a social-psychological orientation. Inductive framing analysis and deductive content analysis are conducted on 315 news articles from the two leading Australian

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[1] Other-projected is projected exogenously, e.g. China's image projected by an institution in the West.

[2] Fairfax Media, the publishers of *The Sydney Morning Herald*, changed the physical format of the newspaper from broadsheet to tabloid in the first quarter of 2013.

broadsheets from the year 2000 to 2011. Four generic frames and eight specific frames are revealed that compose the conceptual framework for the environmental image.

A CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION

A social-psychological orientation

Taking a social-psychological orientation, one sees that a typology of image reveals (even outlining the divisions between) that which is sent and the way that which is sent is received — the projection of image (projecting image), desired image (Jervis, 1970), or projected image and perceived image. Projected image is an active behavior, which provides preconditions for the occurrence of perceived image, whilst perceived image is a subjective process (that can include cognitive and affective elements) of the projected image by individual receivers. Importantly, receivers (perceivers) are able to draw on several projected images, from different sources, in constructing their perceived image. The simple relationship summarized between *perceived image* and *projected image* is that individuals perceive the world via the projected images and form their own images in their minds based on their own perception and knowledge. I would like to call this *personalized image*, a term which is meant by me to include the affective and cognitive components as well as the selective distillation of aspects of image from different sources. There can be several sources — including various forms of media, training and education as well as interpersonal contact through daily life and travel. In terms of this social-psychological based typology, each category of image can be classified into two sub-images, such as projected political image and personalized political image, China's projected image and China's personalized image.

I also take the position that the projection of image could be endogenous (self-projected) and exogenous (other-projected). Likewise, the perception of an object could be accomplished both by self and others. In short, the categorization of image can be disclosed as: projected image (self-projected and other-projected) and personalized image (self-personalized and other-personalized).

Other-projected image

Projected image, to belabor the point, is an active behavior that provides preconditions for the occurrence of perceived image. Jervis (1970, p. 18) divides behavior into two categories: signals and indices. As he defines the term, signals "are statements or actions the meanings of which are established by tactic or explicit understandings among the actors. As all actors know, signals are issues mainly to influence the receiver's image of the sender." Indices relate to the inherent credibility of the statements and actions. Jervis argues that most of the signals issued

by senders are a state's direct statements of intention, which can be either deceptive or honest. Thus, in most cases, projection of image cannot be purely objective, but is a purposive process, unless the object is "out there" and not in interaction with human beings. And it is notable that projection does not simply and mechanically reflect reality, but constructively "makes" and "remakes" reality with new meanings as a process of human communication with all its variables. Surely, differential reception of projection is engendered by context as well as personal experience, resulting in personalization of the image. Moreover, the projected image is influenced by "frame sponsors," which are connected directing the perception and the frame selection by journalists for the reporting of an event.

Images will not become visible until they are communicated. There are many tools or channels for the projection of images of an object, but summed up as coming under three categories or three levels based on communication categories: interpersonal communication, organizational communication and mass communication. All these communicative patterns can effectively formulate and disseminate images. Nevertheless, as Castells (2004) has argued about communication power, news media are the key structuring intermediary in the conduct of public affairs, so media perhaps act as the strongest image shaper and transmitter in the organized "standardized representations" of an object (Rivenburgh, 1995) and can reach the largest audiences. "[W]e walk around with media-generated images of the world, using them to construct meaning about political and social issues" (Gamson et al., 1992, p. 374). The nature of media determines that it can maximize the transmission speed, amount of messages and ways of representing the image. It can actively influence the way that individuals perceive images and refresh old images in their minds by strategically controlling the flow of messages and repeatedly selecting, priming and presenting external events like "spectacular events" and "cumulative events" (Kelman, 1995, p. 135).

Correspondingly, in communication studies, framing scholars have identified two types of frames — *media (news) frames*, serving as "devices embedded in political discourse," and *individual (audience) frames*, serving as "internal structures of the mind" (Kinder, Sanders, 1990, p. 74). News frames are "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse" (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). Media projected images are the organized "standard representations." These "standard representations" are equivalent to the "persistent patterns" of the news. The image is the representation of integrations of frames (Ji, Chitty, 2012). Thus, it can be seen that uncovering the frames in the news is the key to detecting the images projected by the media.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

In the constructionist paradigm of framing theory, some framing scholars (i.e. Gamson, Modigliani, 1989) interpret "media discourse" as a set of "interpretive

packages" that give meaning to an issue (de Vreese, 2003). What journalists do is to create those "interpretive packages" and then reflect and add to the "issue culture" of the topic (Gamson, Modigliani, 1989). Van Gorp (2005, p. 487) also identifies that a frame is "a specification of the idea that connects the different framing and reasoning devices in a news article." The purpose of framing analysis is to unpack or reveal the interpretive packages that shape the meaning of an issue, by identifying "symbolic devices" or "framing devices" and "reasoning devices" that are embedded in news texts.

Regarding "framing devices", there have been several highly-used models identified by framing scholars such as Gamson and Modigliani (1989)'s five framing devices — metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions and visual images, and Pan and Kosicki's (1993) four devices in the structural dimensions — syntactical structure, script structure, thematic structure, and rhetorical structure. In each structure, their corresponding subdevices are included.

This study assembles framing devices and subdevices for image analysis selectively in a new two-tiered framework. The study selects two structures from Pan and Kosicki's four structural dimensions as the first level of framing devices — thematic structure and rhetorical structure.

Thematic structure refers to a core idea in a story, so the themes normally facilitate audience comprehension of core ideas of the text and, what is more, salient themes in an issue normally determine the primary perception of receivers on the issue. The analysis of stylistic choices in the rhetorical structure helps to comprehend how journalists use language symbolically to invoke images, to increase the salience of a point, and to heighten the vividness of a report. These two structural dimensions have been identified as having more manifest elements to be unpacked in order to reveal the framework for image.

Under each structure, I identify the second level of framing devices — subdevices. I suggest the examination of headlines and leads that are supposed to condense the core meaning of the entire text as subdevices of thematic structure. I restructure the rhetorical structure with subdevices of metaphors, depictions and catchphrases, in order to detect stylistic choices in the representation of an issue. It is noticed that metaphor is entailed with an essential role, in both language and thought, under the constructivist paradigm and in the way in which we think and think about the world. The identified framing devices construct a framing matrix, which is viewed as the end product of the inductive phrase of framing analysis.

Concerning "reasoning devices," some framing scholars posit the presence of causal reasoning, as a second step bridging frame and policy options, existing in the realm of news discourse; that is considered to be of direct relevance to public policy making (Pan, Kosicki, 1993). Drawing on Entman (1993)'s four framing functions, this study develops five reasoning devices for application — define problems (problem definition), diagnose causes (causal interpretation), make moral judgment

(moral evaluation), indicate effects (effect indication) and suggest remedies (treatment recommendation).

Content analysis has been adapted as a method for analyzing frames that is compatible with framing analysis. Content analysis can assist in taking subjectivity out of framing analysis, as it traditionally provides standards of validity and reliability (Van Gorp, 2010), and it also has the virtue of being able to deal with large amounts of data, a capacity that is required in the present study. Hence, this study uses qualitative content analysis as a complementary method for framing analysis.

Moreover, Van Gorp indicates that inductive framing analysis (IFA) reconstructs a repertoire of frame packages, whilst the deductive content analysis (DCA) provides techniques for validating the reliability of the results. This study combines IFA and DCA to reveal news frames in a large number of samples. IFA is conducted in a qualitative mode to extract a repertoire of frames from three case studies, and DCA is used for analysis of the data generated over a nine-year period.

Adopting the relevance-sampling method, two dominant broadsheets — *The Australian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)* were selected, and the timeline of data sampling was selected as 2000 to 2011. After a few rounds of search and selection in the "Factiva" database, 315 articles were found that were pertinent to the research.

FINDINGS

Thematic structures

Figure 1 reveals that the dominant frame overall is the *evaluative frame* (184 points in the percentage in total). Evaluation is the most salient frame in the reportage about UN climate change conferences (COP15 — 70%, COP17 — 55% respectively). It stands in the second position in other reporting (Beijing Olympics — 29% and pre-COP15 — 30% respectively). The *problematic frame* is secondly weighted in the available data (109 points in the percentage in total). The portion of the problematic frame in the reporting of sports event is dominant, with eight per cent higher than the evaluative frame (37% vs. 29%). In the pre-COP 15 long-term reporting of the environment, problematic frame is an absolutely dominant reasoning frame among the five, accounting for as much as half of the reportage. The tertiary reasoning frame is *solutions* (76 points in the percentage in total). The solutions frame holds second place in the reporting of UN climate change conferences, although the portions (COP15 — 10%, COP17 — 24% respectively) are far lower than the evaluative frame. Apart from causal frame, the *effects frame* is the least used frame (28 points in the percentage in total), which respectively possesses seven per cent, 10 per cent, seven per cent and four per cent in the coverage of three cases and pre-COP 15 reportage.
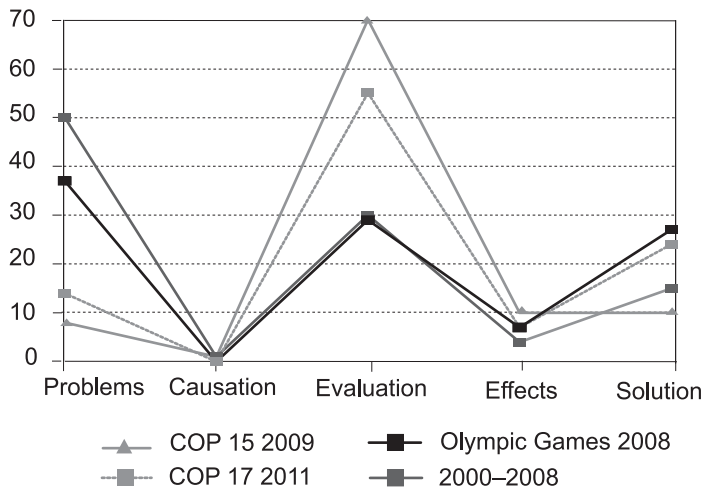
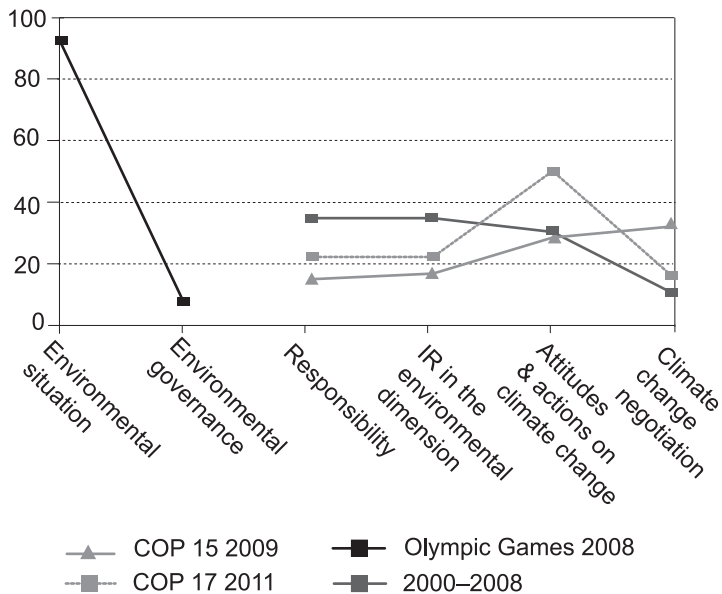Figure 1. Comparison of reasoning frames (in %)

Source: author.

Figure 2. Comparison of evaluative frames (in %)

Note: IR refers to International Relations.
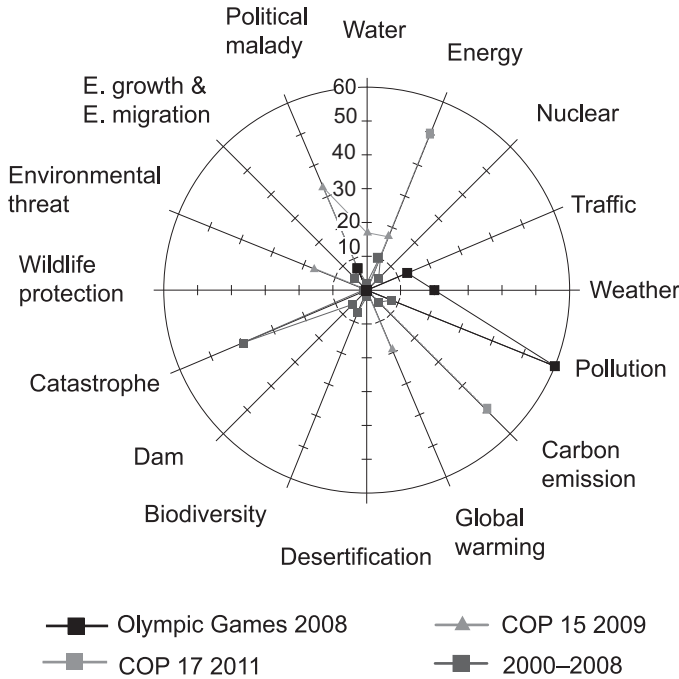
Source: author.

Figure 3. Comparison of problematic frames (in %)

Note: E. growth & E. mitigation refer to environmental growth and environmental mitigation.

Source: author.

Figure 2 shows that the dominant frame is "China's attitudes and actions on climate change" (COP15 — 26%, COP17 — 50%, pre-COP 15 — 28%); the secondary theme under the evaluative theme is the theme of "international relations in the environmental dimension" (COP15 — 13%, COP17 — 19%, pre-COP 15 — 33%); the tertiary theme under the evaluative frame is categorized as "climate change negotiation" (COP15 — 30%, COP17 — 12%, pre-COP15 — 6%); the quaternary theme is "environmental governance," associated with government policy and practice of handling domestic environmental issues (Olympic Games — 8%, pre-COP15 — 33%); the fifth frame under the evaluative frame vis-à-vis climate change politics relates to the matter of "responsibility" in handling this transnational issue between developed countries and developing countries (COP15 — 11%, COP17 — 19%); the last theme with the least visibility is "environmental situation," which only appeared in the reporting of Olympic Games (92%).

Figure 3 displays a series of environmental problems represented in the two Australian newspapers. The theme of "environmental issues" (from "water" to "wildlife protection" in the circle) is obviously a dominant frame under the problematic
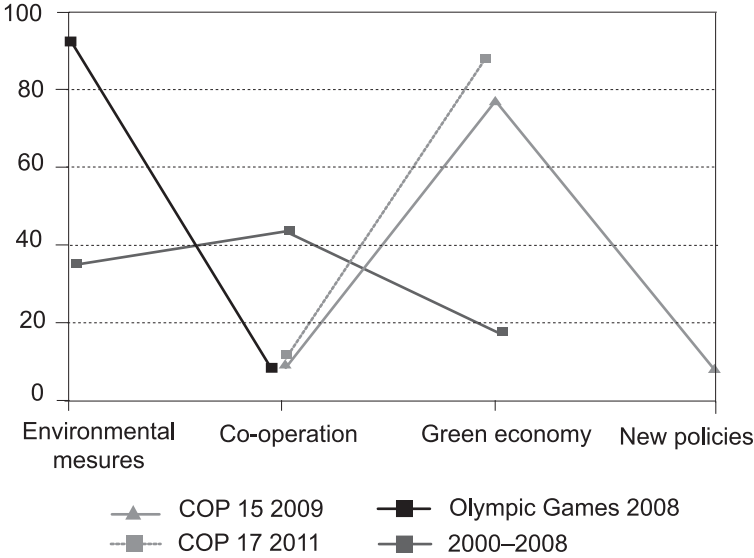
Figure 4. Comparison of solutions frames (in %)

Note: Green economy includes new technology and clean energy.

Source: author.

frames. The theme of "political malady" is the secondary theme under the problematic frames, while the other two frames are respectively "environment growth vs. environmental mitigation" and "environmental threat."

Figure 4 discloses that the "cooperation" theme was covered in all the reportage. The pre-COP15 coverage had the largest portion. The development of a green economy (new technologies and clean energy) was salient during the two COPs and the percentage increasingly raised from 2000 to 2011. The theme of environmental measures had the largest percentage in the reporting of the Beijing Olympic Games, which proves that media are concerned with environmental measures for the mitigation of environmental problems in the host country in the GMEs.

Rhetorical structures

Metaphors

Table 1. Metaphors about China's environment in the two Australian newspapers in the case of Beijing Olympic Games

Vehicles	Tenors
Waking tiger	China
As thick as a carpet	Seaweed
The ghost Games	Beijing Olympic Games
Smog blankets Games city	Smog
Pea soup	Smog
Lie of land	China
Green streaks	China's environment
Rain of terror	Rain dispersal rockets by Chinese military
A sailor's nightmare	Venue
A light in the fog	Hope of cleaning up air

Source: author.

Table 2. Metaphors about China's environment in the two Australian newspapers in the case of COP15

Vehicles	Tenors
The tiger in the road	China's booming economy
Authoritarian giant	China
Play ball	Engage in climate change deal
Mend fences	Repair its tattered relations with China
Green peril	An over-productive people whose use of coal and other filthy fossil fuels might pollute Western society and put the whole world on the fast track to irreversible disaster
Climate change villain	China is unwilling to commit to a firm emissions reduction target
Good guy, bad guy	China makes contribution to the world environment
China played its cards on climate change	China had named a target
Two big guns steal the show	China and the U.S. are reluctant to bind commitments into international agreement
Pours cold water on deal	China refuses to take on targets under an international treaty that forces the suspension of formal talks
Tempers flare	China is angry about the deal
China's climate stonewall	The complete refusal of the Chinese to engage in the talks
A rabble without a cause	China's directed G77
Elephant	China

Source: author.

Table 3. Metaphors about China's environment in the two Australian newspapers in the case of COP17

Vehicles	Tenors
Green giant	China's non-carbon-based energy production and aggressive promises to cut carbon emissions
Mirage	The reality of the greening of China
Moral obligations	China's responsibility in dealing with climate change
Chinese dragon is growing green scales	China cuts carbon emission to clean up the environment

Source: author.

Depictions and catchphrases

Table 4. Depictions and catchphrases about China's environment in the two Australian newspapers in the case of the Beijing Olympic Games

Categories	Depictions/catchphrases
Environmental Problems	*Environment:* The heavily polluted environment; Poor environment; Fast-decaying environment; Environmental crisis; Drive environment to breaking point.
	Pollution: The worst day of pollution; The world largest emitter; One of the world's worst CO2 emitters; One of the most polluted cities; Terrible pollution; Notorious pollution; Horrendous pollution; Heavy pollution; Smoke on the water; Most polluted cities; Mining has devastated the landscape and poisoned rivers and valleys; Heavily polluting vehicles.
	Water: Water contaminated by pollution; Dirty water.
Environmental Problems	*Air:* Toxic air; Polluted air; Hazardous to merely bad air;

Categories	Depictions/catchphrases
Environmental Problems	Dirty air; Contaminated air; Serious air pollution; Poor air quality; Beijing's air quality is routinely rated among the worst in the world.
	Traffic: The polluted and congested streets of Beijing; The dangers of walking in China; Real threat to road safety; One of the most congested cities; Cruel road; Clogged streets; Clogged highways; Beijing's notoriously clogged streets; Beijing's traffic police die young; Perpetually gridlocked streets.
	Weather: Smoggy skies; Smog to dictate start of the events; Smog threat; Ringleader clouds; Persistent dense fog; Perpetually gridlocked streets; Notorious smog; Muggy heat; Eye-stinging pea-soup haze; Exceptionally hot weather; Dissident weather elements; Dirty haze; Dense smog; Choking smog; Beijing was blanked in a dense white haze; A toxic, photochemical smog.
Environmental Governance	*Measures:* Traffic controls; Tough measures; Ambitious plans; Smog fighting; Green Olympics; Critical phase of pollution control; Brutal climate censorship; Beijing deathly under the pre-Olympic Games controls; Aggressive action on renewable energy and energy efficiency; A massive pollution clean-up.

Categories	Depictions/catchphrases
Environmental Governance	*Evaluation:* Unsuccessful pollution-reducing efforts; Treating the problem seriously; Question China's ability to handle emergencies; More positive role in the world with tighter controls at home; Green credentials.
Environmental Consequences	Olympics had appeared doomed to angst and disconnection; Environmental interdependence.
Environmental Solutions	World-leading clean energy; Smog masks; Environmentally-friendly industries.
China's Polity	Recentralising authority; Authoritarian state.

Source: author.

Table 5. Depictions and catchphrases about China's environment in the two Australian newspapers in the case of COP15

Categories	Depictions/catchphrases
Environmental Problems	The world's largest, and fastest growing, greenhouse gas emitter; The biggest greenhouse gas polluting nation (the world's biggest emitter); Highest total emissions; Rapidly advancing dystopia where rivers run black; Placing the world on the fast track to irreversible disaster; Particularly dirty; Filth, pollutants and toxins; Fastest-growing polluter; Dust, waste and dirty water; Carriers of diseases and pollutants; A severe shortage of water.
Responsibility	Vague promises; Reluctance; Nebulous promises; Defiance of world opinion; China's brazen stonewalling of efforts; Hold the fate of the earth.

Categories	Depictions/catchphrases
Leadership	Unsatisfactory great power; The pivotal power of the 21st century; That's the world of the future; Superpower; Rapidly shifting global power; Biggest power; More powerful than ever; Leading the world on commercial-scale wind farming; Key player; Group of Two (G2); Greater global leadership; Dominate the global solar industry; Champions of globalization; Big player; A world leader in greenhouse gas reduction efforts; A lonely rising power.
Role in Environmental Politics	The U.S. and China which dominated the Copenhagen summit; The key to success (progress) at Copenhagen; Repeatedly blocked negotiations; Wrested control of the strategic decision-making; Peculiarly threatening nation; Increasingly defiant and dismissive of the West; Hijacking the summit; Harbingers of climatic disorder; Developing countries gamed by China; Dramatic change; Weightier offer; Dictated the multilateral talks; Determine the outcome of the Copenhagen submit; Destroyer; Copenhagen debacle; China solution; A leader in debate; A farce of anti-Western, anti-capitalist.
China's Polity	Weaknesses and insecurities of the regime; Vulnerabilities and humiliation; Dysfunctional heart of China; Authoritarianism.
Solutions	Green global economy

Source: author.

Table 6. Depictions and catchphrases about China's environment in the two Australian newspapers in the case of COP17

Categories	Depictions/catchphrases
Environmental Problems	The world largest emitter of greenhouse gas; The biggest polluter; Carbon polluter; Voracious power needs; Huge environmental and pollution problems; The major driver of emissions; The world's top producer of carbon emissions; Ubiquitous smog; Industrial haze blanketing places.
Responsibility	Aggressive promises; Lack of ambition.
Role in Environmental Politics	Abrasive diplomacy; Game plan for the green race; Unwarranted and unwelcome Chinese assertiveness; Key to the talks' success or failure.
Leadership	A world leader in taking up renewable power; The world's biggest investor in clean technology (leading investor in low-carbon, clean-energy technology); Lead the world in clean energy; The world's largest producer of wind turbines and solar panels; The largest spender in the clean technology sector.
China's Polity	Communist state
Solutions	Highly efficient, energy secure, technology-based new economy; Winner from solar subsidies.

Source: author.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

The interpretation of the environmental images of China portrayed by the Australian print media is based on the analysis of how the two Australian broadsheets frame China's environmental image. Following on from the previous presentations of findings, the percentage of each frame and the dominant frames at each level, and the environmental images of China portrayed by the newspapers will be abstracted and placed in order in terms of the visibility of each frame (from high visibility to low visibility).

Global role (dominant frame)

The analysis of thematic structure and rhetoric structure indicates that the dominant frame is *global role*. The frame includes subframes of *attitudes* and *actions*, *responsibility* and *leadership*.

The research outcomes show that Australian media portray a *Janus image* of China with regard to China's attitudes and actions on tackling the global climate change issue. On the one hand, the Australian discourse showed that China held positive attitudes and was proactive in dealing with carbon emissions, and China actually is doing more on cutting gas emissions than the U.S., and has greener energy than Australia. The expressions such as "play ball," "respect for environment," "draft plan," "makes green priority," "cleaner thoughts," "promise," "keen," "helpful," picked up by the newspapers intensively in the coverage in 2007 and 2008, demonstrate the reorganization of China's active attitude that the Australian media gave to China. On the other hand, the Australian broadsheets depicted an inactive facet of China's "attitudes and actions" on setting an emissions target. For instance, *The Australian* reported that China did not attach a concrete number to its pledge to curb carbon emissions, which did not live up to expectations at the UN meeting in September 2009. However, overall, the positive facet has the advantage over the negative one regarding this image.

Regarding *responsibility*, the Australian discourse represented China a *rabble image*. China didn't cooperate with western countries in climate change negotiation.

There was considerable news coverage about the on-site climate change negotiation particularly during the Copenhagen Conference, which was considered to be a good test of China's sense of responsibility and its stance in cooperating with western countries. The Australian media identified the COP15 as a failure, and they ascribed it to China's inaction and noncooperation. For instance, the expression — "China dampens hopes" shows the opinion of the Australian media towards the outcome of the COP15. A very popular case for China not technically cooperating with the developed countries that the two Australian broadsheets depicted, was that the Chinese Premier "refused to attend the Friday morning talks" and sent out a third-ranking junior official to attend the meeting .

The two Australian broadsheets framed the ending of the Copenhagen Conference as China's triumph. China was the "big winner." *The Sydney Morning Herald* released an editorial — *China changes global climate* (December 22, 2009) — claiming, "China won, the world lost" in the climate change negotiations and considered that China lost in the test of being a responsible superpower. The Australian broadsheets used some harsh rhetorical depictions such as "defiance of world opinion," "brazen stonewalling of efforts," "hijacking," "destroyer," "debacle," and the metaphorical words "bad guy," "villain" and "rabble," which denote antagonism in the literature, to portray China as a negative character against

the western camp in international climate change negotiations. The expressions "stonewall," "pour cold water," "tempers flare" and "steal the show," as behavioral depictions in relation to China's action during the negotiation at COP15, corroborating the villain and rabble images, depict China's non-cooperative actions in climate change negotiations.

With respect to *leadership*, China has been framed as having an *uncertain leadership image* in the Australian media discourse. China and the U.S. are framed as G2 — the two largest carbon emitters in the world. The Australian media started to call on China to play a responsible and leading role in the climate change deal with the U.S. on the international stage; nevertheless, China sometimes is not able to take the lead in tackling climate change on the international stage.

During the COP15, *The Australian* carried an editorial — *China must be part of the Copenhagen solution* (December 14, 2009), expressing very clear perspectives on China's role in the international community. The editorial also showed Australian media constructing the discourse that China, as a growing economic power, has an obligation to recognize and define its responsibility and leadership role in coping with international affairs. Depictions such as "hold the fate of the earth," "biggest power" and "a world leader in greenhouse gas reduction efforts" demonstrate that the media regarded China as a crucial actor in dealing with climate change. The Australian media expected China to take its world leadership, but when China did not play cricket, the media would offer criticism and express its displeasure characterizing China as an "unsatisfactory great power" and warning thus: "don't look to Beijing for global leadership."

Environmental problems (secondary frame)

The research findings (Figure 3, Tables 1–6) reveal various environmental problems of China depicted in the Australian media discourse, especially Figure 3 shows a vast spectrum of the environmental problems existing in China — *environmental issues, political malady* and *economic growth vs. environmental mitigation*.

The overall image relating to environmental problems portrayed by the two Australian newspapers is the *dirty/green peril image*. The rapid economic growth in China has caused serious environmental problems and contributed to severe environmental degradation consequences. The Australian broadsheets selected very negative words and phrases to depict China's environmental problems. For instance, in the reporting of the Beijing Olympics (see Table 1), the newspapers used metaphors such as "nightmare," "pea soup," "seaweed as thick as carpet," to signify the environmental situation in China. The metaphors emphasized an intolerant image of China's environment. The rhetorical words such as "worst," "most," "notorious," "horrendous," "heavily," "devastated," "poor," "highest" and "severe" exaggeratedly depicted China's environmental image as being soiled, and the adjectives vividly presented the unsatisfactory nature of the current situation.

After China was identified as the largest carbon emitter, China has been intensively framed as "the world largest carbon emitter" in the Australian media discourse. This is the most highly used catchphrase in the Australian news discourse to portray China, particularly since the Copenhagen Conference. The "largest carbon emitter" almost becomes the label of China. It is annexed to "China" in most of the news stories in relation to environment or climate change.

As China has a very poor environmental situation at home, it is considered that it would contribute to damaging the world ecosystem if it does not take action to mitigate the environment. The Australian media selected the expression "green peril" to denote China as an environmental threat to the world, harking back to the "yellow peril" of the Californian Gold Rush. "Yellow peril" is a stereotyped metaphor for the portrayal of Chinese people immigrating to Western countries as coolie slaves or laborers in literature and news discourse since the 19th century. Now the Australian media has translated this to "green peril" to describe the menace from China to the world environment.

Environmental governance (tertiary frame)

Environmental governance is characterized as "the set of regulatory processes, mechanisms and organizations through which political actors influence environmental actions and outcomes (Lemos, Agrawal, 2006, p. 298)." Australian media discourse basically covers *governance efficiency* and *governance attribute* of China's environmental governance.

Regarding the *governance efficiency*, Australian media depicted that China's environmental governance is domestically efficient, but the measures adapted are very rigid.

The emergency measures taken by the government are normally regarded as a means for evaluating the efficiency of the government. The Chinese government received criticism for its tardy response to the environmental disasters that occurred before 2008. For instance, in the famous Songhua River toxic spill issue, *SMH* released a news article — *China takes hard line on pollution after toxic spills* — criticizing Chinese local governments' delay in releasing information to the public about the issue. In contrast, the Chinese government gained credibility for its efficient tackling of the Wenchuan earthquake. *SMH* compared the different approaches that the two governments — Burma and China — adopted to cope with similar natural disasters in its editorial — *A tale of two disasters*. In the news article, it criticized the Burmese government's inadequate response, but commented favorably on that of the Chinese government.

During the Olympic Games, the two Australian broadsheets reported several major environmental measures taken by the Chinese government including a car ban, smoking ban and shutting down factories to mitigate air pollution and traffic congestion. In the reportage, the newspapers used depictions such as "controls,"

"tough," "stringent" and "tighter" to describe the rigid measures taken by the government.

China's *governance attribute* is still regarded as authoritarianism. Along with the ideological divergence from the Cold War, the Australian media differentiate China from the democracies (mainly including the West, Japan and South Korea) based on China's polity. China's polity is considered as a modern authoritarian political system that always receives criticism from western media. The commonly used rhetorical vocabulary in the Australian media consists of "authoritarianism," "recentralizing authority," "authoritarian state" and "communist state."

The authoritarian system, related to the frame of environmental problems, is represented as "political malady." It is always related to other political problems such as censorship and corruption, and is also considered as the primary reason for the insecurity of the international community. For instance, *The Australian* released an article, entitled *China's rain of terror*. It offered a negative interpretation of events, notably that the Chinese government had ordered troops to launch "rain dispersal rockets" to intercept a cloud belt moving towards the stadium. The harsh utterances picked up in the article such as "terror," "military crackdown" and "dissident weather," portrayed China as a rigid authoritarian state. In the reporting of the two COPs, the Australian media correlated China's political system with its unstable stance in the international arena. For instance, in the case of COP15, the depictions such as "weakness and insecurities of the regime," "vulnerabilities and humiliation" and "dysfunctional heart of China" prove that the Australian newspapers regarded China as an unstable and unsustainable regime. These characteristics contribute to China's insecurity in dealing with international affairs. Nevertheless, according to the portion associated with the theme of political malady, the authoritarian image is no longer a prime image of China, especially when China shows active attitudes and actions in dealing with the climate change issue on the international stage.

International cooperation (quaternary frame)

The Australian news discourse has promoted the cooperative idea as an effective solution to cope with climate change in the global stage. The international cooperation mainly covers developing clean energy, new technology and clean energy and technology-based green economy.

Australian newspapers held a view that Australia could help China to alleviate carbon emissions by providing clean coal and technology. This idea has been becoming more and more popular since China became its largest trade partner, especially since China got more extensively involved with the coal mining industry in Australia. *The Australian* released a feature — *Energy alternatives offer clean start* before the Clean Energy and Environment Dialogue in Beijing in April 2008, which emphasized the increasing environmental interdependence between Australia and

China, the importance of Australia in helping China to maintain its continuing and sustainable growth, and expressed the idea that Australia could grasp the chance to help China clean its energy.

China has gained positive acknowledgement from the Australian newspapers about its efforts in developing new technologies and applying clean energy to its economy since 2009. Moreover, the newspapers delivered a message and view that China is taking leadership in clean energy and green technologies, particularly the solar industry (i.e. "Chinese the winners from solar subsidies," *The Australian*, June 4, 2011). The development of clean energy and new technologies nowadays and investigating the Chinese market have become a trend, not only to help to mitigate carbon emissions, but also, more importantly, as a way of seizing the new growth opportunities and opportunity in competing in the new race towards a green economy.

At government level, Australia has agreed to promote low-carbon economies and co-operation on climate change action at the meeting between China's special representative on climate change and 40 Australian business executives and leading officials. Cooperation is obviously becoming a trend in the climate change domain between Australia and China. The Australian newspapers also advocated that the whole world should act in concert on climate change; otherwise, everyone would lose during the COP15 period (i.e. "Unless we all act together on climate change, everyone loses", *SMH*, September 22, 2009). Certainly, according to the percentage of the cooperative theme, it is so far not a dominant theme in the Australian media discourse, and the cooperation areas are still confined to new technologies and clean energy.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the news frames, it can be seen that the international coverage of other countries' environmental issues contains four frames — *environmental problems*, *environmental governance*, *global role,* and *international cooperation*.

Based on the research outcomes, a conceptual framework for the evaluation of environmental image in other international contexts can be presented as follows:

The first two frames refer to the target country's domestic environmental situation including "problems" and "governance." The "problem-governance pattern" reveals that media discourse is concerned about the problem itself, and about the government's function in resolving the problem. The third and fourth frames indicate that media discourse pays attention to the target country's global role and its international cooperation in dealing with environmental affairs, because of the global attribute of the environment. Apart from these frames, according to the literature on environmental communication, particularly Hansen's series of questions about media and communication on environment, the framework of other-projected
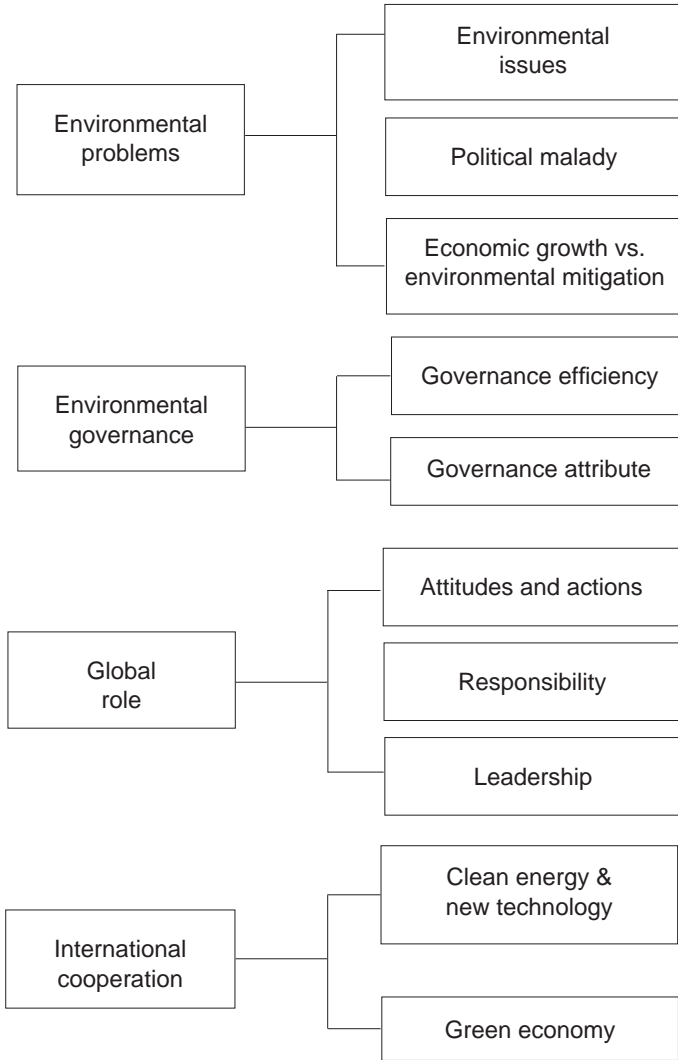
Figure 5. A conceptual framework for environmental image

Source: author.

environmental image can probably be extended to cover frames about "environ-mental movement" (efforts toward environmental mitigation made by civil soci-ety), "the environmental debate among major stakeholders" and "public debate on environment." According to the analysis of news frames in this research, I would like to suggest that the "causal frame" in the reasoning frames could be strength-ened. Such fortification can probably help with more comprehensive understanding of the environmental situation of other countries.

This research is attempting at developing a conceptual framework for the evaluation of environmental image. The research outcomes are based on the case study of Australia projecting an environmental image of China. It is the first attempt of conceptualizing a framework for environmental image. The framework obviously needs to be tested and proved by more empirical research in the future.

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