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**NEWS FRAMING ANALYSIS: THE 1997 HONG KONG ISSUE
IN THREE CHINESE-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the

School of Journalism and Mass Communications

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Jui-Yun Kao

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ABSTRACT

NEWS FRAMING ANALYSIS: THE 1997 HONG KONG ISSUE IN THREE CHINESE-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS

by Jui-Yun Kao

This thesis examined the differences of news coverage on the Hong Kong politics six months before and six months after the 1997 handover by using content analysis and news framing approaches. The sample articles were collected from three Chinese-language newspapers, published in the United States, the *World Journal* from Taiwan, the *Sing Tao Daily* from Hong Kong, and *The China Press* from China. To distinguish what were major frames in each newspaper and how news frames changed in the two study periods, this study analyzed sources, types, and tones of stories and developed four sets of news frames: political issue, political power, judgment, and news package.

The result of the analysis showed that there were significant differences among coverage period, newspapers, and news frames. The political power frame mainly fell into three categories: Hong Kong autonomy, China dominance, and people/public involvement. There were consistent results between story tone and the judgment frame. *The China Press* covered Hong Kong politics in a positive or neutral manner but the *World Journal* and the *Sing Tao Daily* did it in a mixed way.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The reunification of Hong Kong and China in 1997 marked a milestone in contemporary Chinese history. It not only represents an end of a colonial era which affected China for one and a half centuries but how China keeps its promise to let Hong Kong enjoy a high degree of autonomy for another 50 years.

More important, Hong Kong, “the Pearl of the East,” is experiencing a tremendous change. Hong Kong used to be a middleman between China and the international world in political economic, and cultural contacts. Currently, Hong Kong is the first Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China that is regarded as a living laboratory to practice Western capitalism and democracy under the Chinese communist sovereignty.

The recovery of Hong Kong is a means by which mainland China could open a door to Taiwan (Scott, 1989). As a matter of fact, Hong Kong, after 1997, is viewed as a model of China’s propaganda slogan of “one country, two systems” to regain the lost island. The Joint Declaration of 1984, the result of Sino-British negotiations on the post-1997 Hong Kong, also provides an assurance to Taiwan for future talks with the People’s Republic of China.

During the years leading to the 1997 handover, uncertainty filled the whole society of Hong Kong. In addition to the high wave of emigration and the ups and downs in economic indicators, the key issue was the development of representative government by changing the composition of the Legislative Council (LegCo) (Cheek-Milby, 1995). The political reform of 1991 and 1995 caused tension between China, Britain, and Hong

Kong. Especially, China announced that it would set up a provisional legislature to replace the LegCo which resulted from the election of 1995 under Governor Chris Patten's political proposal.

Scope of Study

The study examined the differences in news coverage on the Hong Kong political change before and after the 1997 handover. Both quantitative content analysis and qualitative news framing approaches were used in the study. The sample was collected from three Chinese-language newspapers during the six months before and the six months after July 1, 1997 when China took over Hong Kong. These three papers, published in the United States, are the *World Journal* from Taiwan, the *Sing Tao Daily* from Hong Kong, and *The China Press* from China.

Each selected paper has different political positions toward the Hong Kong issue. The news media in China serves as a propaganda channel for policy makers. In Hong Kong, journalists, facing the political change, have gradually adjusted themselves to the ideology of the communist ruling class in processing information. On the contrary, Taiwan's news media, since 1987, have been free from the control under the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) government, which proclaims its legitimate and independent status in the international world.

The major issues regarding Hong Kong politics in the study include the election of a legislature in 1998, human rights, handover activities, the provisional legislature, and the Executive Council of the post-1997 Hong Kong.

Purpose of Study

This study focused on the systematic analysis of the press portrayal of the 1997 Hong Kong issue. Most previous studies have dealt with the impact of the Hong Kong handover through the political, economic, and social aspects. Other studies concerning news media in Hong Kong emphasized press freedom and the journalistic paradigms during the transitional period; nonetheless, few of them studied how journalists conveyed the 1997 issue.

The study will enrich the developing and theorizing in framing analysis in mass communication, particularly with regard to the underlying ideology in news frames. To date, since there are no reported studies using framing analysis of the 1997 Hong Kong issue, the present study will provide insights into the issue by the comparison of three Chinese-language newspapers from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan with different political ideologies. In addition, it is useful to understand that a country goes through similar social and political changes.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter includes the review of Hong Kong history, the relevant studies on the 1997 Hong Kong return, the research on news framing, the background of the Chinese-language newspapers studied as well as research questions.

Brief History of Hong Kong

Hong Kong had been separated from China and under British colonial rule for 155 years. Historically, there were three treaties by which Hong Kong became a British possession. First of all, the Treaty of Nanking of 1842, resulting from China's defeat in the first Opium War, 1840-1842, officially ceded the Island of Hong Kong to Britain in perpetuity. After the second Opium War, China signed the Treaty of Tianjin and permanently added the Kowloon Peninsula to the Island as a British colony in the 1860 Convention of Beijing. Finally, in 1898, China granted Britain a 99-year lease on the New Territories, Hong Kong, Kowloon Peninsula, and outlying islands. The expiration of the lease was the year of 1997 and, at the time, the colonies would be retroceded to Chinese sovereignty (Benton, 1983; Segal, 1993; Shipp, 1995).

China never disclaimed its sovereignty over Hong Kong; however, Britain insisted on its legal status in the colony. When China became a permanent representative in the United Nations in 1972, ambassador Huang Hua made a declaration of the decolonization of Hong Kong and Macao to the Special Committee on Colonialism. The statement indicated that the territories were a part of China's domain and should not be granted

independence. It also stated that the question of Hong Kong should be resolved in an appropriate way when the time was ripe. In response to China's claim, Britain asserted the validity of the 1842, 1860, and 1898 treaties (Benton, 1983; Miners, 1995; Shipp, 1995).

Although Hong Kong had been stable and prosperous for several decades since the 1950s, its future was uncertain. As 1997 approached, Hong Kong citizens became increasingly concerned about the land-lease question beyond the expiration of the 1898 New Territories lease. Governor Murray MacLehose officially visited Beijing in March 1979 to seek an agreement with China on the problem. Instead, Deng Xiaoping requested him and investors in Hong Kong to "put their hearts at ease" (Segal, 1993, p. 35; Miners, 1995, p. 7). Deng's response also implied that the issue of Hong Kong after 1997, in fact, was a matter of sovereignty and the "unequal" treaties would not be renewed. More important, Deng suggested conducting formal talks to solve the problem (Shipp, 1995).

China stated the more manifest and comprehensive policy for the future of Hong Kong in 1982. It included China's sovereignty over Hong Kong, the continuity of economic and social system, the termination of all administration by Britain, and "Hong Kong run by Hong Kong people" (Segal, 1993; Miners, 1995; Shipp, 1995). At the time, the Chinese National People's Congress (NPC) adopted a new Constitution which proposed setting up Special Administrative Regions (SARs) with a high degree of autonomy and maintaining its existing economic and judicial system. Hong Kong would be the first SAR of China (Segal 1993; Miners, 1995).

The Sino-British negotiation on the future of Hong Kong. China and Britain agreed to enter into talks on the future of Hong Kong. They clarified the bargaining positions during British Prime Minister Thatcher's visit to Beijing in September 1982 (Scott, 1989; Shipp, 1995). Britain's stance was to seek an extension of the 1898 lease, an administrative presence in Hong Kong after 1997, and the maintenance of Hong Kong prosperity and stability. Thatcher also argued that two of three treaties permanently ceding Hong Kong and Kowloon Peninsula in 1842 and 1860 were still valid (Scott, 1989; Segal, 1993; Shipp, 1995). However, Deng stressed that China's primary aim was to "resume the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong" (Shipp, 1995, p. 33). China reiterated that since Britain's possession of Hong Kong had resulted from unequal treaties, there was no question of extending the lease. The stability and prosperity in Hong Kong were based on the complete recovery of sovereignty over the colony. At the end of the visit, both sides agreed to begin the negotiation with the common aim of maintaining the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong (Scott, 1989; Segal, 1993; Shipp, 1995).

The Sino-British talks were held in Beijing and lasted for two years, from October 1982 to September 1984. Chinese authorities refused to consider Hong Kong itself as a representative in the negotiation and was fearful of the legitimacy of Hong Kong's independent status (Segal, 1993). The talks were kept completely confidential. No details were released until the final agreement (Shipp, 1995).

The negotiations were divided into three phases. The preliminary phase was held in October 1982. The main issues in this phase were the presence of the British

administration in Hong Kong beyond 1997 and China's sovereignty over the territories. However, China and Britain failed to reach an agreement (Shipp, 1995).

Similarly, there was no compromise between both sides in the second stage of the talks, begun in July 1983 (Segal, 1993). By virtue of adding the Governor of Hong Kong to the delegation, Britain made an attempt to retain administration beyond 1997 (Segal, 1993; Shipp, 1995). However, China asserted that the Governor did not represent the people of Hong Kong but Britain; Hong Kong was just a matter for discussion (Segal, 1993). Finally, an ultimatum from China declared that China would settle the issue of sovereignty over Hong Kong beyond 1997 by its own means if no agreement was made by the end of 1984 (Segal, 1993; Miners, 1995; Shipp, 1995).

The negotiations in October and December 1984 for the first time ended with a declaration (Segal, 1993). After Britain made a concession to agree to China's sovereignty over Hong Kong, discussions began on how to maintain the stability and prosperity of the territory after 1997 (Segal, 1993; Miners, 1995; Shipp, 1995). Ji Pengfei, head of China's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, declared that the present social system in Hong Kong would be retained for 50 years beyond 1997 (Segal, 1993; Shipp, 1995) and Hong Kong people would enjoy "a high degree of autonomy" (Shipp, 1995, p. 45).

In the third and last phase of the negotiations of 1984, Geoffrey Howe, British Foreign Secretary, concluded the talks with the Sino-British Joint Declaration in Beijing (Segal, 1993). An announcement by Howe indicated that the British administration of Hong Kong would not continue after July 1, 1997 (Segal, 1993; Miners, 1995; Shipp,

1995). The agreement was formally signed by British Prime Minister Thatcher and Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang on December 19, 1984 (Miners, 1995; Shipp, 1995) and took effect in May 1985.

The Sino-British joint declaration. The Joint Declaration with three annexes documented the way in which Hong Kong would be run after 1997. All China's policies in the Declaration would remain in effect from 1997 to 2047. China would resume the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong from July 1, 1997 and establish it as a Special Administrative Region with a high degree of autonomy, except in foreign and defense affairs. The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region (HKSAR) would be appointed by China through elections or consultations. Hong Kong would retain its administration and law, its economic, financial, and monetary system, and lifestyle of the inhabitants. Its status as a free port and international financial center would not be altered. Existing rights and freedom would be protected by law. Using the name of "Hong Kong, China," the SAR could maintain its own economic and cultural relations and conclude relevant agreements with states, regions, and international organizations. In addition, during the transitional period, from 1984 to 1997, Britain would be responsible for the administration, the economic prosperity, and the social stability in Hong Kong. To ensure a smooth transfer of government in 1997, a Sino-British Joint Liaison Group (JLG) would be set up. China would give its cooperation in this effort.

The Basic Law. The Basic Law, the "mini-constitution" for the HKSAR, was promulgated in January 1990 (Miners, 1995; Shipp, 1995). All the basic elements of the

Joint Declaration were included in it. The HKSAR was authorized to exercise a high degree of autonomy. The socialist system and policies would not be practiced in the region and the previous capitalist system and the way of life would remain unchanged for 50 years. Residents in the region would have fundamental rights such as freedom of speech, religion, trade, travel, and social welfare. The number of direct-elected members in the Legislative Council would be 24 in 1999 and 30 in 2003 (Segal, 1993; Shipp, 1995).

Political developments and the election of 1991. While China and Britain initialed the Joint Declaration, the Hong Kong government proposed a series of political reforms, especially the increase of elected seats in the Legislative Council (LegCo) (Segal, 1993; Cheek-Milby, 1995; Miners, 1995; Shipp, 1995). Two official documents, the Green Paper and the White Paper of 1984, made an attempt to develop a more representative government by changing the composition of the LegCo. The Papers suggested that 24 seats should be elected from two constituencies—12 from the geographical and 12 from functional constituencies. The geographical constituencies, based on institutions such as the Urban and Regional Council, indirectly chose legislative representatives. Functional representation, based on the recognized professions such as medicine, education, and law, was elected from individual groups (Cheek-Milby, 1995; Miners, 1995). Another White Paper of 1988 indicated that 10 seats in the LegCo would be directly elected from geographical constituencies.

China made its claim concerning the development of the representative government. When the Hong Kong government sought public opinion on the 1988

legislative election, China stated that any change in legislative composition should be deferred until the promulgation of the Basic Law (Shipp, 1995). So an announcement from Hong Kong declared that the election to the LegCo would not take place until 1991 (Cheek-Milby, 1995; Miners, 1995).

After the publication of the 1988 White Paper, more than 500 residents of Hong Kong marched to the Government House to petition for direct legislative voting in the 1988 election. A political demonstration in Hong Kong had never occurred before the 1980s. This was the first time that Hong Kong people demonstrated their political awareness (Shipp, 1995).

After the Tiananmen crackdown of June 1989, more progress was made in developing representative government. In 1990 the Hong Kong government increased the number of directly elected legislative members from 10 to 18. The remaining seats were elected by constituency groups or appointed by the Governor (Miners, 1995). At the time, China also softened its attitude toward the political reform in the Basic Law which stipulated that 20 members in the LegCo would be directly elected (Miners, 1995; Shipp, 1995).

The first time a universal suffrage election was held in Hong Kong was on September 15, 1991. Fifty-four candidates competed for the 18 legislative seats. The number of eligible voters was 4 million but only 1.9 million registered to vote. The turnout was 39.2 percent of the registered voters. Sixteen of the 18 seats were won by pro-democracy candidates. The result of the election, moreover, showed that the people of Hong Kong wanted democracy (Shipp, 1995).

Governor Chris Patten's electoral reform. Chris Patten, the Governor of Hong Kong, proposed the 1995 electoral reforms in October, 1992. The number of directly elected legislative seats would increase from 18 to 20. The rest of the seats in the LegCo would be appointed by the governor and be chosen from the functional constituency. Under Patten's formula, the voting age would be lowered from 21 to 18. He also proposed creating nine new functional constituencies which would include all working people. Therefore, the voter participation for functional groups would raise from 1.1 million in 1992 to 2.7 million (Shipp, 1995, Cheek-Milby, 1995).

Patten's electoral reform set China and Britain on a course for the worst political crisis since 1984 (Cheek-Milby, 1995). China objected to the reforms because Patten did not get prior consultation and agreement from Beijing. China denounced Patten's action as violating the Basic Law and the Joint Declaration. Patten responded that the political change not only reflected the public opinion in Hong Kong but was in accordance with the previous agreements made by both sides. China even accused Patten of "jeopardizing cooperation between China and Britain, injuring the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, and placing obstacles before the smooth transition of Hong Kong in 1997" (Cheek-Milby, 1995, p. 100). Patten argued that his proposals "promoted rather than undermined political stability" (Cheek-Milby, 1995, p. 100). The regular meeting of the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group between China and Britain for reviewing transition progress was closed in November 1992. Ultimately, China announced that, if Patten continued pursuing political reform, Beijing would terminate the Joint Declaration and establish

new legislative, executive, and judicial councils after the 1997 handover (Cheek-Milby, 1995; Miners, 1995; Shipp, 1995).

In spite of China's boycott, Patten finally achieved his electoral reform in 1994. The LegCo approved of lowering the voting age, widening the franchise, and directly electing all legislators in the 1995 election (Shipp, 1993). Immediately, China claimed that the reform had completely closed the door on further Sino-British talks. It restated that the elected LegCo under Patten's proposal would be definitely terminated on July 1, 1997 (Shipp, 1993). Moreover, a statement from Britain openly supported Patten's reform in Hong Kong. This action made the relationship between China and Britain more tense. China announced that the "controversial" reform of political structure would be abolished and a "civil legislative committee" would be established as an alternative legislature for the territory before July 1997 (Keesing's Record of World Events, 1994).

The direct election of 1995. Before the 1995 election to the LegCo, there were two elections in Hong Kong. The first one, on September 18, 1994, was a full democratic election. A total of 346 seats on 18 district boards formed an electoral college to select the legislative members. The second, on March 5, 1995, was election to the colony's Urban and Regional Councils. All of the municipal councilors were elected for the first time. A total of 128 candidates contested for 32 seats on the Urban Council and 27 on the Regional Council. The result was a success for the pro-democratic party. The Democratic Party won 75 seats in the District Board and 23 seats in the Urban and Regional Council. (Keesing's Record of World Events, 1994, 1995).

The direct election to the LegCo was held on September 17, 1995. Under Patten's political reform, there were no appointed members in the new LegCo. All the 60 seats were elected for a four-year term. Twenty members represented the geographical constituencies, elected by popular vote; 30 members were elected through functional constituencies and the remaining 10 seats were chosen by an electoral college. The result showed that the Democratic Party emerged as the largest party with 19 seats. The pro-China faction won six seats and the pro-business Liberal Party took nine. The rest of the seats belonged to neither the pro-democracy nor the pro-China faction (Keesing's Record of World Events, 1995).

The Preparatory Committee. In December 1995, the Preparatory Committee (PC) was established to oversee Hong Kong's transition from British to Chinese sovereignty after a breakdown in Sino-British Joint Liaison Group talks. Lu Ping, Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs office of the Chinese State Council, assured that the committee was not a shadow of the Hong Kong government before the handover. The PC was composed of 150 members and led by Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen. Fifty-six members were from China and 94 from Hong Kong's business section, politicians in the LegCo, and professional or academic groups (Keesing's Record of World Events, 1995).

The task of the Committee included the preparation of a provisional legislature and the selection of the first Chief Executive of the HKSAR. At the meeting of the PC on March 24, 1996, members voted by 149 to one to replace the elected LegCo with the provisional council after the handover. The PC would create a selection committee to

choose the SAR's Chief Executive and elect new members of the provisional legislature. Additionally, Chinese President Jiang Zemin gave assurances that the Chief Executive would be a popular choice in the territory (Keesing's Record of World Events, 1996).

There were strong reactions from the Hong Kong government and the pro-democracy parties with regard to the termination of the elected LegCo after the handover. Governor Chris Patten denounced China for voting to "tear down" a freely-elected legislature. The leaders of the Democratic Party claimed that the party would fight for its survival after 1997 in the courts and on the streets (Keesing's Record of World Events, 1996).

Through secret voting, the Selection Committee decided the Chief Executive. The 400 members in the Committee were mostly pro-Chinese business groups and political parties. They voted 320 to 80 to choose Tung Chee-hwa, a shipping magnate and vice-chair of the PC, as the Chief Executive of the post-colonial HKSAR (Keesing's Record of World Events, 1996).

The Selection Committee, on December 21, 1996, elected a 60-member provisional legislature to replace the LegCo. More than 30 of the new members were legislators in the LegCo who mostly were pro-China. The Democratic Party leader, Martin Lee, described the provisional assembly as an illegal legislature and threatened to take action when any formal legislative move was made (Keesing's Record of World Events, 1996).

The year of 1997. The major events relating to the Hong Kong handover in the first half of 1997 included the Executive Council of the HKSAR, Deng Xiaoping's death, the U.S. concerns with democracy in post-1997 Hong Kong, and the issue of civil liberty.

Tung Chee-hwa, the first Chief Executive of the HKSAR, announced his Executive Council in January. The new body was composed of business and political people who were strongly linked with China (Keesing's Record of World Events, 1997).

China's officials declared that the policy toward the post-1997 Hong Kong would not be changed after Deng Xiaoping's death. Deng, China's leader and architect of its economic reform program, died on February 19, 1997 at the age of 92 (Keesing's Record of World Events, 1997).

Hong Kong's 1991 bill of rights and other civil liberties were repealed. The bill of rights was approved by the Hong Kong LegCo after the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown. The PC and the Chinese NPC voted to disband it. An official statement carried by the Xinhua News Agency stated that, because the Basic Law had included freedom of speech and assembly, the bill of rights was not necessary any longer. Moreover, Tung issued a document on civil liberties and social order. This order ruled out the political parties which breached "national security" or "public safety" and reclaimed the restriction on the rights of assembly and association (Shipp, 1995; Keesing's Record of World Events, 1997).

The United States made its position in the Hong Kong transition clear to China. The United States warned China that failure of a smooth transition would undermine Hong Kong's economy and China's self-interests. Additionally, in a meeting with

Democratic Party leader Martin Lee on April 18, U.S. President Bill Clinton gave assurance that the U.S. administration would support and promote the liberties of Hong Kong residents after the handover (Keesing's Record of World Events, 1997).

Relevant Study on the 1997 Hong Kong Issue

There were a few studies which analyzed the impact of the 1997 Hong Kong handover issue on news media outside of Hong Kong. A number of studies pertaining to the reunification between China and Hong Kong emphasized the political change, people's confidence, economic progress, and so on (Bottomley, 1989; Goodman, 1988; Lau, 1992; Sum, 1995). Specifically, the studies of media in Hong Kong, under the shadow of the Chinese Communist system, focused more on the press freedom and journalistic paradigm than news content itself (Chan & Lee, 1989, 1991a, 1991b; Fung & Lee, 1994; Keller, 1992; Lee & Chan, 1990; Lee, 1985; Lee, 1993; Sciutto, 1996). For instance, Chan and Lee (1991b) examined the shift of press paradigms in Hong Kong during the political transition. They concluded that "the structural transformation of the power configuration causes journalists to change their perceptions and attitudes" (p. 309).

The only study dealing with the news coverage of the 1997 issue in the different countries was conducted by Chan (1994). Her study examined the assumption of the state-press relationship that media took a pro-government stance in covering foreign affairs. The researcher compared foreign policy coverage on the 1997 issue by the *New York Times*, the *Times* of Britain and the *People's Daily* of China. Three critical events were chosen for the content analysis: the Sino-British negotiations between September

22. 1982 and December 23, 1984, the 1991 Hong Kong political reform between November 2, 1986 and December 16, 1989, and the right of abode between May 15, 1989 and March 1, 1991. The purpose of analysis was to find out the major theme of each story, each paper's attitude toward its government, and each paper's coverage on various actors' attitude toward Britain, China, and the Hong Kong people.

The research findings showed that the *London Times* did not cover the Hong Kong issue from the British government's point of view. On the theme of stories, the paper mainly focused on the people of Hong Kong such as the people's crisis in confidence regarding Hong Kong's future and Britain's duty toward the people of Hong Kong. The researcher found that news coverage in the paper presented more criticism than approval toward London's Hong Kong policy. The result also indicated that the unsupportive view increased as time went by: 10% between 1982 to 1984, 13% during political reform in the middle of the 1980s, and surged to 22% on the right of abode issue between 1989 to 1991.

The *New York Times*, like the *London Times*, reported the issue independent of the U.S. government position, which officially proclaimed its support for the transfer of sovereignty. The major news coverage in the paper included people's crisis in confidence and direct election to the Hong Kong political system. The result showed that the *New York Times*, with respect to its view of Britain, China, and the Hong Kong people, was not the most neutral when compared to the other two papers. In the report of political reform, for instance, only 51% of the *New York Times*' coverage was neutral while 95% of the *People's Daily* was. On the theme of the right of abode, the *New York*

Times (36%) was slightly less neutral than the *London Times* (36%) while 20% of *New York Times*' report on the episode was anti-Britain. In terms of attitude toward its own government's Hong Kong policy, Chan concluded that the paper mentioned extremely little about its home government but it was not significantly more neutral than the other two papers.

Another conclusion was that the *People's Daily* reflected a state-owned paper's coverage of international affairs. The paper devoted almost one-third of its paragraphs to diplomacy but most of what was covered were schedules of meetings and procedures. More interesting, on the theme of world reaction, all reported that the international reaction to Beijing's takeover of Hong Kong after 1997 was positive. Moreover, the *People's Daily* was consistent in its pro-China stance and had been significantly pro-government. For example, on the paper's attitude toward its own government's Hong Kong policy, the *Daily* devoted 67% of the report to supportive views toward Beijing; in reporting the right of abode issue, it devoted most of its coverage (51%) on anti-British view.

In conclusion, Chan stated that the *New York Times* and the *London Times* departed significantly from their governments' respective positions while the *People's Daily* had followed Beijing's stance.

Review of News Framing Analysis

A frame is associated with a picture or an idea through which people can organize and construct the outside world. Goffman (1974) originally defined a frame as "the principles of organization [of the life experience] which govern events . . . and our

subjective involvement in them” (pp. 10-11). Similarly, Gitlin (1980) stated that frames are “principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (p. 6). Thus, a frame, in Gamson’s (1989) viewpoint, is “a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue” (p. 157).

The concept of frame has arrived at a theoretical definition. Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, and Ghanem (1991) reviewed previous research about media framing and proposed a more comprehensive and economical explanation of a news frame. Tankard et al.’s theoretical definition is as follows:

A frame is a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration (p. 5).

Sociological and psychological perspectives of news frames. Applying media frames in news working practices, news workers can assemble, organize, and present reality more naturally. A news frame functions as both an “internal structure of the mind” and a “schema of interpretation embedded in news content” (Kinder & Sander, 1990, p. 74). For instance, Gitlin (1980) studied media coverage of the New Left movement between 1965 and 1970. He found that “journalists [by the means of frame] process large amounts of information quickly and routinely: to recognize it as information, to assign it to cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences” (p. 7).

Researchers, moreover, provided the sociological and psychological perspectives to examine news frames and framing process in the news media (Pan & Kosicki, 1993;

Iyengar & Simon, 1993). In terms of the sociological perspective, frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation (Gitlin, 1980). The news media tend to use story lines, symbols, and stereotypes to develop news stories (Iyengar & Simon, 1993) through interpretative and symbolic processes (Park & Kosicki, 1995). News frames are largely unspoken and unacknowledged (Iyengar & Simon, 1993). They consist of shared beliefs or “common sense” accepted by a majority of the society (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Thus, frames provide not only meaning to a related issue but a set of symbolic devices of various policy positions to audience (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

The psychological concept of frame emphasizes the structure of individual cognitive representation and the guideline of processing information (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Iyengar (1991) viewed the framing process as “alterations in the statement or representation of judgment” (p. 11) through placing information and elements of the issue in a unique context. The selected elements of frames become an individual’s cognitive resources and influence an individual’s judgment (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). This perspective is applied to study, for example, the influence of television news frame on viewers’ attributions toward the responsibility for political and social problems (Iyengar, 1991).

In short, news framing is “a strategy of constructing and processing news discourse” or “a characteristic of the discourse itself” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 57) which provides a way to “locate, perceive, identify, and label” occurrences and information (Goffman, 1974, p. 21).

News frames and senders. Framing analysis mainly examines the intent of the message senders. The presentation of a news frame is the combination of journalistic professional routines and fundamental sources such as government officials and law enforcement for issues or events (Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Reese & Buckalew, 1995; Tuchman, 1978). As Gamson (1989) argued, a particular frame may favor the interests of a particular organization or source. For instance, Entman (1991) studied news frames employed by U.S. media in its coverage of both the Korean aircraft shot down by a Soviet fighter in 1983 and the Iran air crash by a U.S. Navy ship in 1988. Two distinctive frames were used. The former emphasized the Soviet moral responsibility for the tragedy while the latter focused on a technical problem for the crash.

News texts and the structure of frames. As for the news text itself, frames consist of the words, symbols, pictures, and concepts in a narrative. All of them together convey consistent information by repetition and reinforcement to make issues salient across media and time. The news content, especially television news, is both referential and representational. It is replete with metaphors, catchphrases, and other symbolic devices that provide a shorthand way of suggesting the underlying story line (Barkin, 1989; Gamson, 1989). They also can be recognized, experienced, conceptualized, and communicated.

Pan and Kosicki (1993) presented framing analysis as a constructivist approach to examine news discourse in their study, *Framing analysis: An approach to news discourse*. They said that the lexicon choice of words, the fundamental element of framing, functions as a “designator” to construct the news frames. News frames can be

conceptualized into four operational dimensions—syntactical, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, pp. 61-63).

First of all, the syntactical structure of a news frame refers to professional conventions in news texts such as the inverted pyramid structure. An inverted pyramid pattern arranges ideas of news discourse in descending order of importance. The professional rules such as objectivity in framing devices appear by quoting official sources, experts, or empirical data (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). The principle of syntactics is an appropriate way to understand news content (Barkin, 1989).

Second, script structure refers to news as stories that cover newsworthy events. This story-oriented structure integrates a sequence of activities or components of an event—five Ws and one H—in news content (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Generally speaking, this kind of narrative frame dramatizes or personalizes events by a sense of temporal succession or a relation of causality (Barkin, 1989; Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

Thematic structure focuses on one issue and its relevant information, events, and actions. Such a frame is viewed as “a set of propositions that form a system of causal or logic-empirical relations” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 61). Causality can be presented through the uses of such words or phrases as because, since, or not unless. Moreover, journalists tend to empirically present their observations in a descriptive manner. The use of examples, quotes, and background information logically functions to support the main theme (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

The last is rhetorical structure. It comprises five framing elements—metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images (Gamson & Lash, 1983; Gamson

& Modigliani, 1987). Journalists use these various devices to reinforce news accounts such as being factual, invoking images, and increasing salience of a point (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

These categories and components are the basis for conducting a frame analysis. They lead analysts to illustrate how journalists and editors make the choice of words and how they convey information.

The application of framing analysis. Scholars have studied a variety of issues and classified news frames into different patterns according to issues, news routines, and the meanings of events.

1. Episodic and thematic frames. Two typical news frame patterns—episodic frame and thematic frame—were developed by Iyengar. In the study of the impact of news frames on public opinion about public policy issues, Iyengar assumed that “news about political issues almost invariably take either an episodic or a thematic frame” (Iyengar, 1991, p. 2).

Iyengar and his colleagues conceptualized the episodic and thematic news frames. The episodic frame shapes news accounts in the form of a specific event or a concrete instance such as an unemployed worker or a homeless person. This event-oriented report presents on-the-scene coverage and makes for “good pictures.” The thematic frame, by contrast, focuses on an issue in terms of general or abstract content and shows itself as the form of a “takeout” or “backgrounder” report. Such coverage is directed toward a general outcome or condition through in-depth or interpretive analysis (Iyengar, 1991; Iyengar & Simon, 1993). “The essential difference between episodic and thematic

framing is that episodic framing depicts concrete events that illustrate issues while thematic framing presents collective or general evidence” (Iyengar, 1991, p.14).

2. Conflict, control, and consensual frames. Linking news coverage with the routine workings of media organizations, Reese and Buckalew (1995) proposed three specific news frames in examining the 1991 Persian Gulf war. The conflict frame arranges a conflict between two unlike sides and is useful for its audience appeal. This form helps reporters maintain the professional convention of objectivity. Second, the control frame is based on the relationship between media and law enforcement. Media are seen as the representatives of social order and place dissent as a threat within the frame. Additionally, to seek consensus, media see themselves as involved members to establish a sense of local community through common symbols and interests in consensual frame coverage.

3. Value-frame. A value-frame is an issue-oriented frame, consisting of the criterion by which people, events, and issues are evaluated. This frame serves as a symbolic tool or an encoding/decoding mechanism for constructing the meaning of issues or events (Ball-Rokeach, Power, Guthrie, & Waring, 1990).

Ball-Rokeach et al. (1990) stated that value-frames are particularly useful in understanding matters of contested legitimacy. Through applying the media system dependency to the contested issue of abortion, they stressed that reporters are implicated in the negotiation of legitimacy of opposing positions on an issue. Under the opposite and various values, the role of media may be conceived as both proactive and reactive (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1990).

The advantage of framing analysis. The framing approach systematically analyzes how an event is portrayed in a news story (Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Tankard et al., 1991). The approach is derived from the concept of agenda setting (Tankard et al., 1991) which McCombs and Shaw posed in 1972. Although they stressed that the press successfully influences what readers think about an issue, McCombs and Shaw did not explain how an issue is chosen by journalists (Tankard et al., 1991). On the contrary, framing analysis of news stories extends the idea of agenda setting and further explores how we think about an issue, especially journalists, in addition to what we think about it (Tankard et al., 1991).

In most cases, framing analysis is an empirical analysis of news texts. This approach views news texts as sets of organized and symbolic devices. By identifying the symbolic elements within news frames, media scholars can learn how journalists use them to process information and construct reality (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

The manifest-latent distinction of news content is bridged by news framing analysis. It is possible that journalists covers the same event within different stories because they tend to emphasize a certain frame (Gamson, 1989).

Background of the Chinese-language Newspapers

This section covers the background of selected Chinese-language newspapers, the *World Journal*, the *Sing Tao Daily*, and *The China Press*, in three regions and their political affiliations.

Hong Kong press and the Sing Tao Daily. Before Hong Kong was handed over from Britain to China, the Control of Publications Consolidation Ordinance governed the

press and listed offenses which were peculiar to the press. The Ordinance gave the Registrar of Newspapers the administrative power to suspend or suppress any newspapers. However, there was no press censorship in Hong Kong and the government showed admirable restraint and tolerance and allowed journalists more press freedom (Chang, 1968).

The major characteristic of the Hong Kong press is party-press parallelism. Politics in Hong Kong before the handover were sharply divided on the line between the Communist Party in China and the Kuomintang in Taiwan. The British government had tolerated the CCP-KMT propaganda war in the colony. The press is closely linked to party organization, identifies with party goals, has an ideological stance, and has ties with political parties. Ideologically, it spans the full range of the ultraleftist-centrist-rightist-ultrarightist spectrum (Chan & Lee, 1991a).

The *Sing Tao Daily* was founded in August 1938, one of Hong Kong's two oldest newspapers, with a historical tilt toward the KMT. Its circulation was 200,000 in the 1960s and 500,000 in the 1980s (Li, 1994). The rightist paper pursued a more neutral and balanced stance as it catered to real estate and business circles in the 1980s. This newspaper supported a continued British rule throughout the Sino-British negotiations. "It also overestimated the role of China's economic dependence on Hong Kong while underestimating its political motive of using Hong Kong as a showcase for reunification with Taiwan" (Chan & Lee, 1991a, p. 87). However, it was eventually forced by the Joint Declaration to acquiesce to China's resumption of power in Hong Kong after 1997 (Chan & Lee, 1991a).

In 1964, the *Sing Tao Daily* published its first North American edition in San Francisco. Its overseas editions are now also published in New York, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Toronto, and Sydney. The U.S. West Coast edition reaches a circulation of 35,000 daily. Most of its readers are Cantonese from Hong Kong and China (Li, 1994).

Taiwan press and the World Journal. There are no restrictions on press freedom and no press censorship in Taiwan. However, the press on the island is not totally free from pressure (Hu, 1973). Since the KMT lost the mainland in the 1949 civil war and fled to Taiwan, the ruling party considered itself as being at war with the CCP. It had imposed martial law on the island between 1949 and 1987. At that time, news stories were not allowed to criticize either government policies or politicians. The press had to avoid press offenses, listed in the publication law, and some political taboos against political leaders and policies.

The government of Taiwan effectively controlled the mass media. In 1951, a press ban froze the registration of new press licenses until 1987. It restricted the number of newspapers on the island to 31, half published by the government or the military, limited to twelve pages per issue, and imposed a price control on newspapers (Rampal, 1994; Gunther, Hong, & Rodriquez, 1994).

Taiwan removed two significant restraints on the press. First, a 38-year-old ban, that controlled print press publication, was lifted in 1988. Second, the “Temporary Provisions,” that expanded the president’s power to limit freedom of press and speech, was canceled (Rampal, 1994).

The lifting of restrictions have created a climate for press freedom. The 1996 statistic showed that more than 100 newspapers are published in Taiwan with a total circulation of about 7 million. The Taiwan press has developed several newspaper groups to survive in a increasingly competitive market (The 1996 R.O.C. News Media Yearbook, 1996). Among them, the *United Daily News* group, which launched the *World Journal* in North America, is self-sufficient in finance but is ideologically inclined to the KMT.

The *World Journal* is the first Chinese-language newspaper to be published and distributed throughout the United States. It has had offices in New York and San Francisco since its founding in 1974. Its circulation reaches up to 250,000, half of the total circulation of Chinese-language newspapers in North America (The 1996 R.O.C. News Media Yearbook, 1996). According to publisher Tih-Wu Wang, one objective in establishing the *World Journal* was to unify all anti-Communist Chinese to recover the mainland and carry out Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People, which are The Principle of Nationalism, The Principle of People's Rights, and The Principle of the People's Livelihood. Thus, most of its readers are from Taiwan.

China press and The China Press. The press in China are owned by and under the control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the government. It is totally integrated with the political structure and serves as propaganda weapon. The role of the press is not to satisfy the people's needs for information or reveal public opinion, but to make the masses conform to Communist party policy. Freedom of the press is

interpreted and modified by the CCP's ideology and political philosophy (Zhang & Kraus, 1995).

The operations of the Chinese Communist press are determined by the Leninist and the Maoist conceptions of mass persuasion. The press delivers government information and policies, publicizes party decisions, educates the masses, agitates them to progress, forms and directs their opinions, and controls the whole society. Newspapers in China are a collective propagandist, a collective agitator, or a collective organizer (Liu, 1971).

The Chinese Communist newspaper system corresponds exactly to the Chinese territorial-administrative divisions (Liu, 1971). It consists of a national news agency, a national press, a regional press, and a local press. For control of news releases, the Central Communist Party Committee (CCPC) Secretariat, the propaganda leading group, has direct organizational control over high level media institutions, including the Propaganda Department of the CCPC, the Xinhua News Agency, and the *People's Daily*. It also controls the local level of media through a registration system. News needs to be in accordance with the party policies and ideologies and to adhere to the principles of Marxism-Leninism and "Mao Zedong's thought" (Li, 1994).

The 1978 open-door policy, economic and political reforms in China, generated media reform. The media system appeared to be open, discussing capitalist economies and social achievement in Western societies. News reports covered some negative aspects of China's society, official corruption, the Cultural Revolution, educational issues, and population issues (Hong & Cuthbert, 1991; Zhang & Kraus, 1995). The

number of newspapers has increased from 1,953 in 1994 to 2,200 in 1996 (The 1996 R.O.C. News Media Yearbook, 1996; China Journalism Yearbook, 1995).

In the wake of its open-door policy, *The China Press*, in 1990, was founded in New York. It mainly covers China's economic and political progress. Most of its readers are immigrants from China. In 1992 and 1994, *The China Press* published southern and northern California editions in Los Angeles and San Francisco, respectively. During five years, it has become one of the larger Chinese-language newspapers in North America in addition to the *World Journal*, the *Sing Tao Daily*, and the *International Daily News* (The 1996 R.O.C. News Media Yearbook, 1996; China Journalism Yearbook, 1995).

Research Questions

Based on the literature, the research questions for this study on how Chinese-language newspapers covered Hong Kong's return to China are as follows:

1. What were the major frames used by the *World Journal* to report Hong Kong political issues before and after the handover? To what extent and how did the frames change in the two time periods?
2. What were the major frames used by the *Sing Tao Daily* to report the Hong Kong political issues before and after the handover? To what extent and how did the frames change in the two time periods?
3. What were the major frames used to cover the political uncertainty in Hong Kong in *The China Press* before and after the handover? To what extent and how did the news frames change in the two time periods?

4. What were the differences in news frames, if any, among these three Chinese-language newspapers before and after the handover?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This study uses content analysis and news framing approaches to explore manifest and latent news content. According to Stempel (1989a), content analysis is used to quantitatively examine manifest content. News framing analysis focuses on the underlying meaning of news content and how journalists portray an event (Tankard et al., 1991). To see how political ideology affects the content of reports, this newspaper analysis examines sources, type, and tone of reports as well as news frames in terms of political issue, political power, judgment, and news packaging on the 1997 Hong Kong handover.

The study was designed to determine whether there were changes in the news coverage of Hong Kong politics before and after the 1997 handover. Several major events during the transitional period in Hong Kong raised a degree of political uncertainty, for instance, the establishment of the Preparatory Committee, the provisional legislature, and the selection of the Executive Council of post-1997 Hong Kong. These actions also caused a crisis of the Hong Kong people's confidence toward China's promise that Hong Kong would enjoy a high degree of autonomy after the handover.

The year of 1997 was chosen as the study period. The study used the first of July, when the Hong Kong handover took place, as the dividing point for the comparison of news content six months before and after the handover. The reason for the choice is that two crucial events happened in early 1997. The Executive Council of post-1997 was established by the Chief Executive Tung Chee-haw in January 1997 and the provisional

legislature, in December 1996, was set up to replace the Hong Kong LegCo after the handover. Both had led to tension in Sino-British relations, the diminishing of democracy in Hong Kong, and the uncertainty on the future of Hong Kong.

Data were collected from three Chinese-language newspapers published in the United States. These three North American editions of newspapers are the *World Journal* from Taiwan, the *Sing Tao Daily* from Hong Kong, and *The China Press* from China. The reason for selecting these three papers was because they are affiliated with three Chinese regions with different political ideologies on the Hong Kong issue.

Sampling

The sampling technique is constructed-week sampling. According to research by Riffe and his colleagues, this sampling requires all the different days of the week to be represented so it is more efficient than others, like simple random and consecutive day sampling (Riffe, Aust, & Lacy, 1993).

With regard to the number of constructed weeks, Riffe et al. (1993) found that four constructed weeks are efficient for a population of six months of editions. Based on their conclusion, the present study selected eight constructed weeks from each Chinese-language newspaper in the year of 1997. Four weeks were from January to June and the other four from July to December.

The number of days of a constructed week in each paper is different. The sample from the *World Journal* and the *Sing Tao Daily*, publishing seven days a week, was a constructed week of seven days. Since *The China Press* prints only six days a week, its sample was six days a week.

The sampling steps included randomly selecting four months in two periods and then choosing a constructed week in each month. Therefore, there were 160 issues selected for the study. The specific date of sample weeks were as follows:

Pre-handover	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Monday	January 27	March 24	May 26	June 2
Tuesday	January 7	March 11	May 20	June 24
Wednesday	January 8	March 19	May 7	June 4
Thursday	January 16	March 27	May 1	June 19
Friday	January 31	March 14	May 2	June 20
Saturday	January 4	March 15	May 10	June 7
Sunday	January 19	March 16	May 4	June 22
Post-handover	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Monday	July 21	August 11	October 20	December 15
Tuesday	July 15	August 12	October 21	December 23
Wednesday	July 2	August 27	October 8	December 3
Thursday	July 17	August 21	October 2	December 4
Friday	July 25	August 8	October 10	December 5
Saturday	July 26	August 16	October 11	December 13
Sunday	July 6	August 17	October 5	December 7

The total number of news articles analyzed were 1,255. The selected stories before the handover were 701, including 263 from the *World Journal*, 192 from the *Sing Tao Daily*, and 246 from *The China Press*. As of the post-handover period, the total sample was 554 which included 229 items from the *World Journal*, 154 from the *Sing Tao Daily*, and 171 from *The China Press*.

Coding Process

The study analyzed the content of news reports and editorials about Hong Kong issues. Essays, letters-to-the-editors, advertisement, and document-type articles such as the Sino-British Joint Declaration and Hong Kong history were all excluded. The sample articles were coded according to the following criteria:

1. Time of story. News from each Chinese-language newspaper was divided into the pre-handover (from January, 1997 to June, 1997) and post-handover (from July, 1997 to December, 1997) periods.

2. Name of newspaper. *World Journal*, *Sing Tao Daily*, and *The China Press*.

3. Source of story. News from newspaper staffs/reporters, Central News Agency (Taiwan), Xinhua News Agency (China), China News Service (China), Hong Kong Chinese News Agency, AP, Reuters, and AFP.

4. Type of story. This included hard news, soft news, editorial/commentary, and news analysis. Hard news included government affairs, announcements, election news, and politicians' addresses. Soft news was human interest stories, personality profiles, and reports of the handover celebration/ceremony. An editorial or commentary was defined as a statement or a point of view regarding public issues by reporters or editors. A news analysis was material written or delivered by a commentator and used to explain news or action.

5. Tone of story. Since there were a lot of arguments and concerns about how the HKSAR was established before the handover and how it worked after the handover, the major focus of this category was each paper's attitude toward China's policy and

government affairs in Hong Kong. The tone of coverage was evaluated on a three-point scale: favorable, neither favorable nor unfavorable, and unfavorable. Budd, Thorp, and Donohew's (1967, p. 53) criteria for judging the tone of news was employed:

Favorable. Those news stories reflecting political cohesion, cooperation, stability, and/or strength were coded as favorable. Favorability was judged on the basis of cooperation with regard to political or government affairs in which China, the Executive Council, the legislative body, political parties, or any group or individual representing them was depicted as strong, right, or cooperative. For example, events and issues which depict China, the Executive Council, the legislative body, political parties, or any group or individual as progressive, successful, moral, intelligent, lawful, or unified or as exercising leadership was considered favorable.

Unfavorable. Those news stories which report political conflict, disorganization, instability, and/or weakness were coded under this category. Unfavorability was judged on the basis of tensions and civil disruption with regard to political or government affairs in which China, the Executive Council, the legislative body, political parties, or any group or individual representing them was depicted as weak, wrong, or uncooperative. For example, events and issues which depict China, the Executive Council, the legislative body, political parties, or any group or individual as backward, negative, immoral, impractical, unlawful, or disunited or as lacking in leadership was classified unfavorable.

Neither favorable nor unfavorable. Those news stories which reflect neither favorable nor unfavorable conditions either through balance of content or a lack of

controversial material were coded under this category. For example, news stories reporting the announcement of the 1988 election schedule were considered neither favorable nor unfavorable.

News Frames

Four sets of news frames were developed and applied to studying what were differences in news coverage during the pre-handover and the post-handover periods. The categories included issue frame, internal/external political power frame, judgment frame, and news package frame.

Issue frames. The issue frame category of Hong Kong politics was broken down into 12 subcategories as follows:

1. The Executive Council. Stories that reported the transition of the Executive Council from Chris Patten to Tung Chee-haw, the continuity of civil service, the appointment and resignation of officials, the announcement of administrative policy, official visits, and any relevant events.
2. The Legislative Council. News coverage of the dispute over the legitimacy of the provisional legislature, meetings of the assembly body, and the like.
3. Election. News coverage of the enactment of the election law for the 1988 post-handover legislature to replace the provisional legislature, election of Hong Kong's delegates for the Chinese National People's Congress, the criticism of the new election plan from pro-democracy campaigners, and any event related to the election.
4. Legislation. News coverage of the amendments to civil liberty's ordinances, the publication of consultation documents on civil liberties and social order, and the like.

5. Demonstrations and human rights.
6. Political party. News coverage of political parties' activities, Democratic Party delegates' visits to other countries, and the formation of new political parties.
7. Handover. News coverage of any celebration, activity, or ceremony about the handover in Hong Kong and China.
8. Confidence issue and the future of Hong Kong. News coverage of people's confidence toward the future of Hong Kong, the Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, and any political or government policy as well as coverage of any statement regarding Hong Kong's future.
9. Hong Kong and China. News coverage of any statement from China asserting its sovereignty or affirming its position toward Hong Kong, China's institutions installation and official appointment in Hong Kong such as the role of Xinhau News Agency, meetings of the Preparatory Committee, and the entry of the Chinese Liberation Army.
10. Hong Kong and Taiwan. News coverage of the impact of the handover on Taiwan, Taiwan's reaction toward the handover, the talks between Hong Kong and Taiwan, Chief Executive Tung Chee-haw's attitude toward the Taiwan question, Taiwan's institutions in Hong Kong, and the like.
11. Diplomacy/Hong Kong and the world. News coverage of Tung's visits to other countries, any foreign affairs with the world, and the like.
12. Others. News coverage of Sino-British Joint Liaison Group and any political event not included in the other 11 categories.

Internal/external political power frames. The second frame category was the internal and external political power frame. The purpose of this frame was to isolate political factors affecting the presentation of stories. The frames were as follows:

1. Hong Kong autonomy. This frame reflected Tung's executive council, the provisional legislature, or any political event that would develop a more democratic and autonomous atmosphere in the HKSAR. For example, Hong Kong's provisional legislature, a Chinese-appointed body, began the lawmaking process for the first time on April 12, 1997. Coverage, in *The China Press*, of this move suggested that it initiated a new era in the legislature history as well as symbolized the fact that the people of Hong Kong enjoy real autonomy.

2. China dominance. This frame referred to China's interference with Hong Kong affairs and Tung's administration. News stories presented about Tung's subordination to China were coded under this category. It included statements about the applause for the "one country, two systems" principle, initiated by Deng Xiaoping, and reassurance about China's position toward Hong Kong's internal affairs. For example, on February 2, 1997, the *World Journal* said the repeal of civil-liberties laws implied that China could modify or explain its policy from different aspects along with different situations.

3. End of British colonialism. This frame referred to articles about the end of Great Britain's colonial era and Hong Kong's British government. It included emotional expressions about the end of Hong Kong's British government by Patten during the pre-handover period. For example, on July 1, 1997, when Prince Charles and Chris Patten

boarded the royal yacht Britannia to depart Hong Kong after the handover ceremony, newspaper coverage described this as an end of a 156-year colonial history in Hong Kong and an end of Great Britain's colonial empire.

4. Taiwan's reaction. This frame referred to stories that presented the Taiwan government and institution's response, attitude, or reaction toward the Hong Kong political transition and the handover and how Taiwan sought a balance in the relations with Hong Kong.

5. World's attention. This frame presented any statement and opinion from countries other than Britain toward political issues in Hong Kong. For example, U.S. President Clinton met with the leader of the Democratic Party and showed his support for democratic development in Hong Kong.

6. Hong Kong political parties' tendency. This frame referred to articles that presented a politician's position, attitude, opinion, or argument toward the Hong Kong issue from the standpoint of his political affiliation.

7. People/Public involvement. This frame referred to stories that conveyed any concern, apprehension, prediction, or expectation from civic organizations, academic organizations, or profession associations.

8. No political power. News articles that presented no political power.

9. Others. News articles that could not be identified by the other eight frames, including opinion from editors and reporters.

Judgment frames. The judgment frame is used to determine what aspect or angle of an issue that reporters or commentators displayed. The purpose of this frame was to measure how news stories convey issues or events in a way of figurative expression.

1. **Confrontation/Conflict.** This frame reflected stories that openly reported the opposition to or disapproval of China or Tung's decision about issues or the HKSAR government. It included any coverage on reprimands, resistance, or boycotts. For example, on January 30, 1997 (*Sing Tao Daily*), the Democratic Party argued the legitimacy of the provisional legislature. The democrats claimed that the body had no basis in either the Joint Declaration or the Basic Law. Another example, on January 30, 1997 (*Sing Tao Daily*), Patten criticized the rights restriction which he said would cause the decrease of people's confidence toward the future of Hong Kong; however, on February 1, 1997 (*The China Press*), China argued that the changes were necessary because the civil-liberties laws went against the territory's Basic Law.

2. **Admonishment.** This frame reflected any form of mild disapproval in a tactful way of news articles presenting a warning to China or Hong Kong. The negative consequences, such as diplomatic tension and lowering of people's confidence, caused by an issue, were coded as this frame.

3. **Concern.** This frame reflected an interest, attention, or importance about policies, issues, claims, or statements and about politicians or leaders. It included news articles which conveyed a state of uncertainty or apprehension on Hong Kong's politics and future.

4. **Constructive criticism/Suggestions.** This frame referred to news conveying the fact that it was more important to take the whole situation into account and put the effort into building a prosperous and stable Hong Kong rather than disputing issues. For example, a May 11, 1997 (*Sing Tao Daily*) article conveyed that Patten's criticism of the Provisional Legislature was not necessary; on the contrary, the alternative way was to oversee how it worked and whether it functioned properly.

5. **Approval/Support.** This frame reflected an obvious consensus about a specific policy and acceptance of leaders, institutions, or political norms and sanctions in news stories. It included establishing diplomatic relations and developing contacts, exchanges, equality, mutual benefit, cooperation, and association. For example, on July 1, 1997 (*World Journal*), British Prime Minister Tony Blair, during a meeting with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, accepted an invitation to visit China.

6. **Jubilation.** This frame reflected expression of great joy in news stories about the handover such as wiping out China's shame since the 1840s, recovering Hong Kong, and celebrating a historic victory.

7. **Sorrow.** This frame was applied to news articles that conveyed the end of British colonial era in a farewell situation.

8. **Indifference.** This frame reflected news stories that reported a state of no interest in, not caring about, not noticing, or uninvolvement in the handover.

9. **Prediction.** This frame reflected any positive or negative prediction about the future of Hong Kong or any political issue.

10. **Factual/No judgment.** This frame referred to stories that reported the description of an issue and event in a neutral way.

11. **Others.** Stories could not be identified by the other 10 frames.

News package frames. To examine how news stories were covered, the news package frame focused on the writing pattern by reporters. These frames were as follows:

1. **Event/Activity description.** This frame mainly focused on articles that described events such as the coverage of conflict situations in demonstrations, coverage of preparation and celebrations of the handover, and the like.

2. **Horserace/Election politics.** This frame referred to any article relating to direct election for the post-handover legislature and the delegates chosen for the National People's Congress such as coverage of potential candidates, formation of new political parties, the election campaign, fund-raising, and the like.

3. **Day-to-day political routines.** This frame referred to coverage of routine procedures of Hong Kong administration and legislation such as appointment of Tung's executive council, executive policy addresses, meetings of the provisional legislature, the Legislative Council, the Joint Liaison Group, and the Preparatory Committee, publication of the consultation document on civil liberty and social order, the election law, and the like.

4. **Survey/Public opinion.** This frame referred to coverage of public polls to predict and estimate the degree of people's confidence on the future of Hong Kong before the handover or Tung's executive performance and to track people's reaction to Hong Kong society after the handover.

5. **Humanization/Personalization.** This frame referred to coverage of politicians, especially Tung Chee-haw and Chris Patten, in terms of their lives, characteristics, thoughts, and the like.

6. **Comparison.** This frame referred to stories presenting one event or issue with another related or similar event or issue that happened before. It was mainly applied to reporting the differences between the pre-handover period and the post-handover period in a comparative way.

7. **Issue-and-opinion.** This frame referred to stories that discussed or expressed a certain point of political issue or event with personal opinion or comments.

8. **Background.** This frame referred to any explanation or interpretation about issues and events in news stories.

9. **Others.** Stories that could not be identified by the other eight frames were coded in this category.

Item and Statistical Tool

A single news article about a Hong Kong issue was chosen as the unit of analysis. The criteria for determining a single coding item were as follows: (1) An article under a single dateline was considered as one item, (2) A news story under several datelines and one headline was counted as several items, and (3) A news story continuing to another page was counted as one item.

Chi-square analysis was used to test whether there were significant differences in the variables between the two time periods.

Intercoder Reliability

Ten percent of the total sample (126 of 1,255) was randomly selected from all stories to be recoded by a second coder and to measure the accuracy of the coding process and the news framing. Scott's *Pi* index was used to calculate the percentage of intercoder agreement by comparing the data from the second coding set to that from the original set.

$$pi = \frac{(\% \text{ observed agreement} - \% \text{ expected agreement})}{(1 - \% \text{ expected agreement})}$$

Scott (1955) noted that the observed percent agreement “represents the percentage of judgments on which the two analysts agree when coding the same data independently;” and expected percent agreement is “the percent agreement to be expected on the basis of chance. *Pi* is the ratio of the actual difference between obtained and chance agreement to the maximum difference between obtained and chance agreement” (p. 323).

The study's Intercoder reliability were as follows: (1) time = 100%, (2) newspaper = 100%, (3) sources = 95%, (4) type = 87%, (5) tone = 83%, (6) issue frame = 85%, (7) political power frame = 84%, (8) judgment frame = 81%, and (9) news package frame = 86%.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In examining the news coverage of Hong Kong politics, the content analysis and the news framing answered the research questions in two ways. One outlined the news frames used in the *World Journal*, the *Sing Tao Daily*, and *The China Press* in terms of issue frames and political power frames. The other compared the result of story types and story tones with that of judgment frames and news package frames to determine the position, attitude, and presentation of each newspaper.

First of all, a total of 1,255 articles were analyzed (Table 1). In terms of the amount of news coverage in each Chinese-language newspaper, the *World Journal* accounted for 39% ($n = 492$) of all stories in the sample, *The China Press* accounted for 34% ($n = 417$), and the *Sing Tao Daily* 27% ($n = 346$). In addition, for each study period, a chi-square test ($p > .20$) found no significant difference in the amount of coverage during the two time periods by the three newspapers. The *World Journal* accounted for 53% of its coverage concerning Hong Kong politics and handover during the pre-handover period and 47% in the post-handover. The *Sing Tao Daily* accounted for 55% of its sample in the pre-handover and 45% in the post-handover; *The China Press* had 59% in the pre-handover and 41% in the post-handover. The overall news stories in the pre-handover period totaled 701 (56%) of the 1,255 and those in the post-handover totaled 554 (44%).

Table 1

Distribution of News Coverage on Hong Kong Politics and Handover in the World Journal, the Sing Tao Daily, and The China Press Before and After the Handover

	World Journal (<i>n</i> = 492)	Sing Tao Daily (<i>n</i> = 346)	The China Press (<i>n</i> = 417)	Overall (<i>n</i> = 1,299)
Time	%	%	%	%
Pre-handover	53	55	59	56
Post-handover	47	45	41	44

$$X^2 (2, n = 1,255) = 2.84, p > .20$$

Issue Frames

The research questions asked what were the major frames used by the *World Journal*, the *Sing Tao Daily*, and *The China Press* as well as whether the frames changed from the first to the second time period. Table 2 showed that there was no predominant issue in all news coverage while issues about the handover (16%), the executive council (15%), and Hong Kong/China (11%) were considered as the three most used issue frames among the 12 issue categories. Stories on the handover were those that reported any event in preparation for the handover ceremony. The executive council news mostly concerned the transition from Patten's British Hong Kong government to Tung's HKSAR. An issue frame related to Hong Kong/China focus on China's statement or announcement concerning the principles or policies toward the 1997 Hong Kong issue. These observed results were reasonable in that, as expected, the three issues were a focus of public interest and concern in the historic year of 1997.

Another interesting finding was that the political party frame accounted for only 1% of the frames, which was less than that for diplomacy (4%) showing that, in spite of

the uncertainty and anxiety about democracy in Hong Kong during the transition, the activities of political parties and their attempts to develop a democratic environment received little press attention.

A chi-square analysis (Table 2) indicated that there was a significant difference ($p < .001$) in the reporting of Hong Kong politics before and after China's takeover of Hong Kong. The majority of stories before the handover fell into three categories: handover (18%), executive council (16%), and confidence/future (11%). For coverage in the post-handover period, most of the issues presented were handover (15%), Hong Kong/China (15%), executive council (14%), election (14%), and Hong Kong/Taiwan (14%).

Table 2

Percentage of Issue Frames for all Stories

Issue Frames	Pre-handover ($n = 701$)	Post-handover ($n = 554$)	Overall ($n = 1,255$)
Handover	18%	15%	16%
Executive Council	16	14	15
HK & China	8	15	11
Election	5	14	9
Confidence/future	11	7	9
HK & Taiwan	4	14	9
Legislation	9	4.5	7
Demonstrations	7	4.5	6
Legislative Council	6	4	5
Diplomacy	3	5	4
Political Parties	1	1	1
Others	12	3	8

$$X^2 (11, n = 1,255) = 134.51, p < .001$$

Table 3, which compares issue news frames in the *World Journal*, the *Sing Tao Daily*, and *The China Press* before the handover, a total number of 701, shows that there was a significant difference ($p < .001$) about the reporting of political issues among the three papers. Handover stories accounted for 31% of the issue frames in *The China Press*, but only 14% in the *World Journal*, and 7% in the *Sing Tao Daily*. This interesting finding showed that *The China Press* gave more attention to the Hong Kong handover than the other two papers did. In addition, the executive council issue in the *Sing Tao Daily* at 19% (approximately one-fifth) was the main issue. The other obvious difference among the three Chinese-language newspapers was that the *World Journal* and the *Sing Tao Daily* gave the same proportion to the demonstration issue (9%) while *The China Press* had only 2%. In the *World Journal* before the handover, the issue of Hong Kong politics was not a predominant frame in that each category was less than 15% (one-sixth) of its coverage and the differences between the larger issue frame, handover (14%), and the lowest category, legislative council (5%), was 9%.

News coverage of Hong Kong political issues in the post-handover period (Table 4) showed a significant difference ($p < .001$) among the *World Journal*, the *Sing Tao Daily*, and the *The China Press*. Of all issue categories in each paper, the handover issue in *The China Press* accounted for 35% of the issue frames, ranking as the first one; however, it was only 6% in the *World Journal* and 5% in the *Sing Tao Daily*. The fact that coverage of *The China Press* focused most on the handover in the two study periods showed that the paper served as a propaganda tool for China to promote the 1997 Hong Kong handover. The larger frame in the *World Journal* was the Hong Kong/Taiwan issue

with 21%, compared with 14% in the *Sing Tao Daily* and 5% in *The China Press*. This finding suggests that the *World Journal* from Taiwan was more concerned about how the handover would affect Taiwan. Similarly, the issue related to the relationship between Hong Kong and China accounted for 20% in *The China Press*. Conversely, the *Sing Tao Daily* from Hong Kong focused on the election issue (21%), especially the new election law for the 1998 post-handover legislature. These results suggest that, because of different political ideologies, the coverage differed among the three newspapers.

Table 3

Percentage of Issue Frames in the World Journal, the Sing Tao Daily, and The China Press Before the Handover

	World Journal	Sing Tao Daily	The China Press	Overall
Issue Frames	% (<i>n</i> = 263)	% (<i>n</i> = 192)	% (<i>n</i> = 246)	% (<i>n</i> = 701)
Handover	14	7	31	18
ExeCo.	13	19	17	16
Confidence	11	10	11	11
HK & China	9	7	7	8
Demonstrations	9	9	2	7
HK & Taiwan	7	4	2	4
Election	6	6	4	5
Legislation	6	13	8	9
Diplomacy	6	2	0.5	3
LegCo.	5	7	7	6
Others	14	16	10.5	13

$\chi^2 (20, n = 701) = 88.53, p < .001$

Table 4

Percentage of Issue Frames in the World Journal, the Sing Tao Daily, and The China Press After the Handover

	World Journal	Sing Tao Daily	The China Press	Overall
Issue Frames	(<i>n</i> = 229)	(<i>n</i> = 154)	(<i>n</i> = 171)	(<i>n</i> = 554)
HK & Taiwan	21%	14%	5%	14%
ExeCo.	14	14	15	14
Election	14	21	6	14
HK & China	14	11	20	15
Confidence	7	11	5	7
Demonstrations	6	6	0.5	4.5
Handover	6	5	35	14
Legislation	5	6	2	4.5
Diplomacy	4	5	5	5
LegCo.	3	5	5	4
Others	6	2	1.5	4

$$X^2 (20, n = 554) = 125.90, p < .001$$

Internal/External Political Power Frames

The internal/external political power frame examined how news coverage was presented in three Chinese-language newspapers based on the underlying political ideologies. The proportion of political-power-framed stories in Table 5 revealed that the Hong Kong autonomy frame (21%, *n* = 263), the China dominance frame (17%, *n* = 211), the mixed frame (16%, *n* = 195), and the people/public involvement frame (15%, *n* = 186) occurred the most frequently among the 10 political power categories. The mixed

political power frame was the frame in which stories had more than one power frame in a single article.

A chi-square test found that there was a significant difference in the amount of coverage given to the political power frames between before and after the handover. The majority of the political power frames fell into three categories in each period: Hong Kong autonomy, China dominance, and public involvement. The obvious difference between the two periods was the end of British colonialism, 9% of space in the pre-handover but only 2% in the post-handover period. Additionally, the frame of Taiwan's reaction increased from 3% in the pre-handover to 7% in the post-handover period.

Table 5

Percentage of Political Power Frames for all Articles

Power Frames	Pre-handover (<i>n</i> = 701)	Post-handover (<i>n</i> = 554)	Overall (<i>n</i> = 1,255)
HK autonomy	19%	23%	21%
China dominance	17	16	17
Mixed frame	17	14	16
Public involvement	14	16	15
End of British colonialism	9	2	6
Political party's tendency	5	8	6
No political power	6	2.5	5
Taiwan reaction	3	7	4
World attention	5	3.5	4
Others	5	8	6

$\chi^2 (9, n = 1,255) = 63.14, p < .001$

The significant differences among the political power frames in the three newspapers are shown in Tables 6 and 7 which display the coverage of the pre-handover and post-handover periods. In the pre-handover period, *The China Press* devoted two-thirds of its coverage to these three predominant frames, Hong Kong autonomy (26%), China dominance (20%), and public/people involvement (20%). Articles in the *World Journal*, similar to *The China Press*, presented China dominance (19%), Hong Kong autonomy (14%), and public/people involvement (12%), while the *Sing Tao Daily* mainly covered the end of British colonialism (16%) in addition to Hong Kong autonomy (19%) and China dominance (13%). The finding that the *World Journal* had 23% of its stories

Table 6

Percentage of Political Power Frames in the World Journal, the Sing Tao Daily, and The China Press Before the Handover

Power Frames	World Journal (<i>n</i> = 263)	Sing Tao Daily (<i>n</i> = 192)	The China Press (<i>n</i> = 246)	Overall (<i>n</i> = 701)
Mixed frame	23%	20%	9%	17%
China dominance	19	13	20	17
HK autonomy	14	19	26	19
Public/People	12	9	20	14
No power	9	3.5	5	6
End of British colonialism	7	16	5	9
World	5	4	5	5
Political party	4	8	3	5
Taiwan reaction	3	4	1	3
Others	4	3.5	6	5

$$X^2 (20, n = 701) = 74.72, p < .001$$

in a mixed-frame, while the *Sing Tao Daily* did 20% in the same frame. as compared with *The China Press*, 9%, suggests that the papers from Taiwan and Hong Kong considered the issues from various political perspectives. In each newspaper, the fact that Taiwan's reaction frame was less than 4% of all pre-handover stories implied, during the crucial time of the Hong Kong transition, newspapers paid less attention to Taiwan when compared with other major political power frames.

The political power frame of Hong Kong autonomy (23%) for all post-handover articles was ranked first, 19% in the *World Journal*, and 27% in the *Sing Tao Daily*, and 25% in *The China Press*. The *World Journal* gave the same amount (19%) of its coverage to China's dominance as it did to Hong Kong's autonomy. Stories in the public/people involvement frame ranked second in *The China Press*, accounting for 23%. The rest of the political power frames in *The China Press* such as the end of British colonialism, the world's attention, and the political parties' tendency were the focus of only 3% of the news stories each. The frame of political parties' tendency, accounting for 12% in the *Sing Tao Daily*, had run 9% more than that in *The China Press*. In the *World Journal*, this frame had 9% of its coverage, 6% more than in *The China Press*. As for Taiwan's reaction frame, it was more than double in both the *World Journal* and the *Sing Tao Daily*, as compared with their pre-handover coverage. In contrast, *The China Press* gave this frame very little coverage in both periods. This surprising finding again suggests that the news media were affected by their underlying political ideologies. In addition, the fact that the frame for the end of British colonialism had less than 3% in

each paper was regarded as reasonable because, after the handover, the news content would be more focused on Hong Kong's internal affairs.

Table 7

Percentage of Political Power Frames in the World Journal, the Sing Tao Daily, and The China Press After the Handover

	World Journal (<i>n</i> = 229)	Sing Tao Daily (<i>n</i> = 154)	The China Press (<i>n</i> = 171)	Overall (<i>n</i> = 554)
Power Frames				
HK autonomy	19%	27%	25%	23%
China dominance	19	10	17	16
Mixed frame	13	15.5	12	13
Public/People	11	15.5	23	16
Taiwan reaction	10	8	2	7
Political party's tendency	9	12	3	8
World attention	5	3	3	3.5
End of British colonialism	2	1	3	2
Others	12	8	12	11

$X^2 (16, n = 554) = 38.03, p < .001$

Judgment Frames vs. Tone of Story

The first-ranked judgment frame was the factual frame, accounting for 26%. The other major frames were approval (20%), concern (13%), and confrontation (13%).

Interestingly, the jubilation frame was found in 10% of the stories while sorrow over the end of British colonialism was found in only 1% of all stories.

There was a significant ($p < .01$) difference between the time of judgment frames for the two time periods. The results in the pre-handover period indicated that the majority of the frames fell into factual (29%), approval (20%), and concern (12%) frames. More than half of the post-handover coverage was on factual/no judgment (23%), approval (20%), and confrontation (17%) frames. The proportion of stories with confrontation frames increased from 10% in the pre-handover to 17% in the post-handover period.

Table 8

Percentage of Judgment Frames for all Articles

	Pre-handover ($n = 701$)	Post-handover ($n = 554$)	Overall ($n = 1,255$)
Judgment frames			
Factual	29%	23%	26%
Approval	20	20	20
Concern	12	14	13
Confrontation	10	17	13
Jubilation	11	9	10
Admonishment	8	10	9
Constructive criticism	5	4	5
Prediction	2	1	2
Sorrow	1	1	1
Others	2	1	1

$X^2 (9, n = 1,255) = 27.12, p < .01$

A chi-square ($p < .001$) comparison of judgment frames in the three newspapers (Tables 9 and 10) indicated that there were significant differences between the newspapers in the two time periods. The *World Journal*, before the handover, gave 26%

of its coverage to the factual frame. Similarly, in both *The China Press* and the *Sing Tao Daily*, the factual frame was the most presented frame, 30% and 31%, respectively. However, the jubilation frame ranked third in *The China Press* (20%) but next to last in the *World Journal* (7%) and in the *Sing Tao Daily* (4%). The implication is that *The China Press* focused more on the handover than did the others. Another major result was that stories with the approval frame accounted for 30% in *The China Press*, more than twice those in the *World Journal* and the *Sing Tao Daily*.

In the post-handover period, 86% of the news coverage in *The China Press* was characterized by four frames: approval (26%), jubilation (21%), factual (21%), and confrontation (19%) frames. Conversely, the *World Journal* was characterized by factual (22%), concern (21%), confrontation (19%), admonishment (14%), and approval (14%) frames. Two frames, factual (28%) and approval (23%), were dominant in the *Sing Tao Daily*. In addition to the factual frame, the fact that the approval frame was found to be the major frame in *The China Press* and the *Sing Tao Daily* showed that two papers presented a positive view of Hong Kong politics. Especially, an increase of 8% in the approval frame in the *Sing Tao Daily* after the handover indicates that the Hong Kong paper modified its view on the HKSAR.

Table 9

Percentage of Judgment Frames in the World Journal, the Sing Tao Daily, and The China Press Before the Handover

	World Journal	Sing Tao Daily	The China Press	Overall
Judgment frames	(n = 263)	(n = 192)	(n = 246)	(n = 701)
Factual	26%	31%	30%	29%
Concern	15	18	5	12
Approval	14	15	30	20
Confrontation	13	12	5	10
Admonishment	10	9	4	8
Jubilation	7	4	20	11
Constructive	5	6	5	5
Others	10	5	1	5

$X^2 (14, n = 701) = 100.54, p < .001$

Table 10

Percentage of Judgment Frames in the World Journal, the Sing Tao Daily, and The China Press After the Handover

	World Journal	Sing Tao Daily	The China Press	Overall
Judgment Frames	(n = 229)	(n = 154)	(n = 171)	(n = 554)
Factual	22%	28%	21%	23%
Concern	21	12	8	14
Confrontation	19	12	19	17
Approval	14	23	26	20
Admonishment	14	13	1	10
Constructive	4	4	3	4
Jubilation	3	3	21	9
Prediction	1	2	1	1
Others	2	3	0	2

$X^2 (16, n = 554) = 98.54, p < .001$

The tone of stories was used as a measure of position and attitude toward Hong Kong politics in the three Chinese-language newspapers with different political viewpoints. As shown in Table 11, the chi-square test between the story tone and the coverage period indicates that there were significant differences ($p < .05$) between these two variables in the two time periods. The neutral coverage decreased from 36% to 30%, while the favorable tone increased the most, from 37% to 41%.

Table 11

Percentage of Story Tone for all Articles

	Pre-handover ($n = 701$)	Post-handover ($n = 554$)	Overall ($n = 1,255$)
Tone of Story			
Favorable	37%	41%	39%
Unfavorable	27	29	28
Neutral	36	30	33

$X^2 (2, n = 1,255) = 5.09, p < .05$

In terms of the differences among the three newspapers concerning coverage tone, two of the chi-square tests in each of the selected time periods concluded that there were significant differences ($p < .001$) between them (Tables 12 and 13). In the *World Journal* before the handover, 37% of its news coverage was unfavorable, 39% was the number of neutral stories, and 24% fell into the category of favorable tone. Results were similar for the *Sing Tao Daily* also. *The China Press* was significantly more favorable in tone (62%) than was the *World Journal* (24%) and the *Sing Tao Daily* (23%). However, *The China Press* was far less neutral (27%) than the other two, the *World Journal* (39%) and the *Sing Tao Daily* (42%). The *World Journal* became more unfavorable and less neutral

after the handover while the *Sing Tao Daily* became more favorable as did *The China Press*.

Table 12

Percentage of Story Tone in the World Journal, the Sing Tao Daily, and The China Press Before the Handover

	World Journal	Sing Tao Daily	The China Press	Overall
Tone of Story	(n = 263)	(n = 192)	(n = 246)	(n = 701)
Favorable	24%	23%	62%	37%
Unfavorable	37	35	11	27
Neutral	39	42	27	36

$$X^2 (4, n = 701) = 111.66, p < .001$$

Table 13

Percentage of Story Tone in the World Journal, the Sing Tao Daily, and The China Press After the Handover

	World Journal	Sing Tao Daily	The China Press	Overall
Tone of Story	(n = 229)	(n = 154)	(n = 171)	(n = 554)
Favorable	23%	34%	70%	41%
Unfavorable	47	32	5	29
Neutral	30	34	25	30

$$X^2 (4, n = 554) = 117.97, p < .001$$

News Package Frames vs. Type of Story

The news package frame was used to determine how news was covered and presented. The dominant package frame (Table 14) for overall stories of Hong Kong politics was the day-to-day routines frame (50%); additionally, the event/activity

description and issue-opinion frames ranked as the second and third patterns with 19% and 16%, respectively. The rest of the frames were counted as less than 5% each.

Table 14

Percentage of News Package Frames for all Articles

Package Frames	Pre-handover (<i>n</i> = 701)	Post-handover (<i>n</i> = 554)	Overall (<i>n</i> = 1255)
Political routines	51%	49%	50%
Event description	17	19	18
Issue-opinion	17	15	16
Humanization	5	4	4.5
Mixed frame	5	3	4.5
Survey	3	3	3
Horserace	0.5	5	2
Comparison	0.5	2	1
Others	1	0	1

$X^2 (8, n = 1,255) = 37.89, p < .001$

The result of a chi-square test (Table 15) indicated that the news package frames varied significantly in the newspapers before the handover. The major frames in the *World Journal* were day-to-day political routines (44%) and issue-opinion (24%) frames. But the day-to-day political routines frame accounted for 69% in the *Sing Tao Daily* while both the political routines (45%) and activity description (27%) frames dominated news coverage in *The China Press*. In addition, the *World Journal* gave the mixed frame (10%), a single story with one more package frame, more coverage than in the *Sing Tao Daily* (3%) and *The China Press* (2%).

In the post-handover period, the political routines frame was 49% and ranked first. A chi-square test ($p < .001$) showed that there was a significant difference among

the three papers in terms of the news package frames. Stories in the *Sing Tao Daily* were mainly packaged as a day-to-day political routines frame (56%). This frame also came in first in the *World Journal* (45%) and in *The China Press* (46%). News coverage in *The China Press* devoted one-third of space in the event/activity description frame (33%, 57 of 171). More interesting, approximately 80% of coverage in *The China Press* used two frames: political routines and event description. In terms of horserace and humanization frames, the *World Journal* and the *Sing Tao Daily* gave them more weight than *The China Press* did.

Table 15

Percentage of News Package Frames in the World Journal, the Sing Tao Daily, and The China Press Before the Handover

	World Journal (<i>n</i> = 229)	Sing Tao Daily (<i>n</i> = 154)	The China Press (<i>n</i> = 171)	Overall (<i>n</i> = 554)
Package Frames				
Routines	44%	69%	45%	51%
Issue-opinion	24	12	15	17
Description	12	11	27	17
Mixed frame	10	3	2	5
Survey	4	1.5	3	3
Humanization	3	3	7	5
Others	2	0.5	1	2

$\chi^2 (12, n = 701) = 77.30, p < .001$

Table 16

Percentage of News Package Frames in the World Journal, the Sing Tao Daily, and The China Press After the Handover

	World Journal (<i>n</i> = 263)	Sing Tao Daily (<i>n</i> = 192)	The China Press (<i>n</i> = 246)	Overall (<i>n</i> = 701)
Package Frames				
Routines	45%	56%	46%	49%
Issue-opinion	18	12	15	15
Description	14	11	33	19
Horserace	6	7	1	5
Humanization	6	3	2	4
Survey	4	5	1	3
Comparison	1	3	2	2
Others	6	3	0	3

$X^2 (14, n = 554) = 54.24, p < .001$

With regard to type of story, three-fourths of all articles were classified in the category of hard news written in a clear or straightforward manner. In both the pre-handover and post-handover periods, the major type of story was hard news while approximately 10% of all stories fell into editorials and news analyses. The proportion of each news type in each newspaper before and after the handover was almost the same.

Table 17

Distribution of Story Type for all Articles

	Pre-handover	Post-handover	Overall	
Type of Story	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%
Hard news	509	404	913	73
Soft news	113	90	203	16
Editorial	71	59	130	10
News analysis	8	1	9	1
Total	701	554	1,255	100

Table 18

Distribution of Story Type in the World Journal, the Sing Tao Daily, and The China Press Before and After the Handover

	World Journal		Sing Tao Daily		The China Press		Overall	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Type of Story	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
Hard news	195	172	160	134	154	98	509	404
Soft news	34	24	19	11	60	55	113	90
Editorial	33	32	10	9	28	18	71	59
News analysis	1	1	3	0	4	0	8	1
Total	263	229	192	154	246	171	701	554

Finally, in terms of news sources, the number of stories written by the newspaper's own reporters accounted for 84% of all articles in both study periods. In terms of stories from news agencies, the *World Journal* which used stories from Taiwan's Central News Agency, used more wire stories than the other two papers did; similarly, *The China Press* gave more space to news from Xinhua News Agency and China News Service than the others did. However, stories in the *Sing Tao Daily* were written primarily by staff writers (95%).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

After 150 years as a colony, Britain returned Hong Kong to China in 1997. In a series of Sino-British negotiations, during 1982 and 1984, the Chinese authorities asserted their sovereignty over the territory, never considering Hong Kong as an independent state. Britain attempted to possess Hong Kong after 1997 by extending the 99-year lease, signed with China in the 1800s. Both agreed to maintain the state's economic and social prosperity with a high degree of autonomy—provisions that were included in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. In the transitional period, from 1984 to 1997, the British government promoted political reform to develop the representative government of the Legislative Council in Hong Kong. These moves led China to establish the Preparatory Committee to oversee Hong Kong's transfer, electing Tung Chee-haw as the first Executive of the HKSAR, and claiming that the provisional legislature would replace the LegCo after the handover.

This study used news frames to examine news coverage of Hong Kong politics six months before and after the handover. Using the news framing approach as a measure of underlying factors or ideology in news content, this study categorized frames into four sets: issue frames, internal/external political power frames, judgment frames, and news package frames. In addition, the fixed political ideologies within each newspaper in the study were regarded as influential elements in analyzing how and what stories were presented and conveyed. These three papers possessed their own political philosophies. The *World Journal* from Taiwan supported the Kuomintang, the *Sing Tao Daily* from

Hong Kong was middle-of-the-road, and *The China Press* served as China's propaganda channel.

As the results indicated, there were significant differences in the coverage between the two time periods. In terms of the relationship between the coverage period and the news frame, each set of news frames had different major subcategories before and after the Hong Kong handover. On the issue frames, in the pre-handover period, for instance, the major frames fell into the categories of handover, executive council, and confidence/future; however, in the post-handover period, the news focus shifted to the relationship between Hong Kong and China as well as to Hong Kong and Taiwan. The findings relating to issue frames were consistent with those of the political power frames even if the primary power frames in both periods were same such as Hong Kong autonomy, China dominance, and public/people involvement. There were two tendencies, supporting this consistence, when compared to the pre-handover period. One was the decreasing proportion of British power, reflect which, in turn, led to a decrease in the amount of coverage from Britain's point of view. The other was an increase in the Taiwan reaction frames in the post-handover period, suggesting that news about the impact of the 1997 issue on Taiwan increased, perhaps, because of the increase in the amount of coverage.

The second conclusion was that newspapers with various political affiliations conveyed and presented stories with different emphases. On issue frames, *The China Press* focused on the handover and Hong Kong/China issue, while the *World Journal* emphasized the handover and Hong Kong/Taiwan and the *Sing Tao Daily* stressed issues

about the executive council and the election in Hong Kong. Additionally, the dissident or demonstration issue in *The China Press* was less than that in the other papers.

Generally speaking, the major political power frames, when considering the coverage period and the different papers, fell into three predominant frames: Hong Kong autonomy, China dominance, public/people involvement. This finding showed that most of the stories concerning any statement, attitude, or position toward Hong Kong politics were mainly from the perspective of the Hong Kong government, China, and the Hong Kong people. Nearly half of the coverage on Hong Kong politics presented three underlying political images. For example, not only did the frame of Hong Kong autonomy indicate that Hong Kong had a high degree of autonomy in internal political affairs but implied that China would practice its “one country, two systems” policy to maintain economic and social prosperity in the state.

Specifically, on the political power frames, the major frames in *The China Press* and the *World Journal* fell into Hong Kong autonomy, China dominance, and public/people involvement. However, the *Sing Tao Daily* focused on the power of Britain, Hong Kong, and China, which was consistent with Chan and Lee’s (1991a) statement that the *Daily* pursued a more neutral and balanced stance even if it supported Britain during the Sino-British negotiation in the 1980s. The other tendency of political power in the news content of each paper was that frames on Taiwan’s reaction and Hong Kong’s political parties increased in the *World Journal* and the *Sing Tao Daily* but decreased in *The China Press* when compared in both study periods. This may imply that the *World Journal* and the *Sing Tao Daily* gave more space to the dissident issue

portrayed issues related to Taiwan. It also suggests that *The China Press* played a role of collective propagandist, agitator, and organizer for China to resume the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong and to promote the unification of Taiwan with China.

In terms of the judgment frames in both periods, the major categories fell into factual, approval, and concern frames. Within the factual frames, an issue or event was reported in a descriptive way. The approval frame presented a consensual attitude toward the authorities and the concern frame presented attention and showed a sense of duty toward Hong Kong politics.

As for the differences among the three newspapers, before the handover, the paper from China covered Hong Kong politics in a positive or neutral manner but papers from Hong Kong and Taiwan did it in a mixed way. *The China Press* presented a positive view of Hong Kong politics; 80% of its stories fell into factual, approval, and jubilation frames. The other two papers presented major frames as factual, approval, concern, and confrontation frames. The more obvious result was that stories with a confrontation frame in the *Sing Tao Daily* and the *World Journal* were larger proportionately than in the *The China Press*. Additionally, the jubilation frame in *The China Press* was 13% more than in the *World Journal* and the *Sing Tao Daily*. On the difference between approval and confront frames, *The China Press* mostly covered the approval frame but the *Sing Tao Daily* and the *World Journal* did not show much difference.

In the post-handover period, in spite of no change on the major judgment frames, newspapers modified their coverage. For *The China Press*, the confrontation frame

increased from 5% in the pre-handover period to 14% in the post-handover period. The *Sing Tao Daily* increased the amount of coverage in the approval frame in the post-handover period. In contrast, an increase of proportion in the categories of confront and admonishment frames and a decrease in the concern frame were found in the *World Journal*. These results showed that the *Sing Tao Daily* modified its coverage and was inclined to support the authorities in the HKSAR. *The China Press* presented more confront frames to show its balanced attitude toward Hong Kong politics while the *World Journal* voiced its disapproval in both time periods.

With regard to the comparison of story tone with the judgment news frames, there were consistent results. The majority of stories in *The China Press* contained the favorable and neutral tones. This finding was consistent with that of the judgment frame in the paper which possessed the supportive or neutral frames like factual, approval, and jubilation. As for the *World Journal*, the unfavorable tone was the major tendency in news stories, especially since this tone increased 10% from 37% in the pre-handover period to 47% in the post-handover period. The results also were in accordance with that of the judgment frames because the categories of the judgment news frames with unfavorable or negative aspects like confrontation and admonishment showed an increase from the pre-handover to the post-handover periods in the newspaper. The *Sing Tao Daily* increased 11% in favorable tone in the post-handover period but its neutral tone decreased 8%; however, the unfavorable tone changed very little. This finding is similar to the result of the judgment frames in the *Sing Tao Daily* in which the approval frame increased from 15% in the pre-handover period to 23% in the post-handover period.

The above findings suggest that *The China Press* strongly supported China in dealing with the handover event and Hong Kong politics while the *Sing Tao Daily* modified its coverage and favored the authorities in the post-handover period. The *World Journal* kept its negative or disapproval attitude toward China and the Hong Kong government.

The fourth point is that there were different patterns in the way the three newspapers packaged issues. For overall stories, the majority fell into routines, description, and issue-opinion frames. The event description frame was used for the portrayal of events or activities; the issue-opinion frame served as the expression of opinions or comments and the political routines frame indicated daily government affairs. Although the political routines frame was the first pattern in packaging the news for each paper, *The China Press* had more (15%) in the description frame than did the others. This finding supports Chan's (1994) study. Her research result showed that most of the stories on the 1997 Hong Kong issue in the *People's Daily* were schedules of meetings and procedures. Consequently, the media from China primarily presented news in a narrative or descriptive way. However, the *World Journal* accounted for 10% more in the issue-opinion frame than did the others. This result showed that the paper from Taiwan was more accustomed to conveying a certain point of view on an issue than the others. Specifically, in the post-handover period, *The China Press* paid less attention to the horserace frame, which mainly portrayed election news, than the *World Journal* and the *Sing Tao Daily*. This indicates that Chinese media dealing with the election news for

the *Sing Tao Daily*. This indicates that Chinese media dealing with the election news for the legislature or the Chinese National People's Congress did not emphasize the campaign of the potential candidates or the political party's policy.

Contributions to the Literature

The present study, concerning political news, provided a more synthesized way to analyze stories. Not only did it focus on event-oriented or issue-oriented patterns such as issue and judgment frames, but it emphasized the constructive form, news package frame, and the underlying ideology within a frame like the political power frame.

This thesis supports Gamon's (1989) point that the presentation of frames may favor the interests of a particular news source or organization such as government officials or law enforcement for issues. Since three different newspapers were selected to study how news media were influenced by their own primary motivation for publishing overseas editions, this study paid more attention to determining the differences of framing presentation in the Hong Kong 1997 issue. For instance, the results of the political power frames indicate that the papers from Taiwan and Hong Kong covered more dissident issues than did the paper from China.

This thesis is different from previous studies which mostly discussed a particular event or issue in that it covered related political issues concerning the Hong Kong handover. This provided a more complete picture to review the issues, for example, political election, Tung's administration, relations among Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan, and so on.

and story type, this thesis suggested both judgment frame and package frame to clarify and classify implications and appearances. Conventional content illustrated one advantage of news framing, bridging the manifest-latent distinction of news content. These were consistent in the results when comparing the data from the content analysis to those from the news framing approach.

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APPENDIX

Code Book

1. Story ID Number
2. Time
 - pre-handover = 1
 - post-handover = 2
3. Newspaper
 - World Journal = 1
 - Sing Tao Daily = 2
 - The China Press = 3
4. Sources
 - Staff writer/reporter = 1
 - News analyst/commentator = 2
 - Central News Agency = 3
 - Hong Kong Chinese News Agency = 4
 - Xinhua News Agency = 5
 - China News Service = 6
 - AP = 7
 - Reuter = 8
 - AFP = 9
5. Type
 - Hard news = 1
 - Soft news = 2
 - Editorial/commentary = 3
 - News analysis = 4
6. Tone
 - Favorable = 1
 - Unfavorable = 2
 - Neither favorable nor unfavorable = 3
7. Issue Frame
 - Executive council = 1
 - Legislative council = 2
 - Election = 3
 - Legislation = 4
 - Demonstration = 5
 - Political party = 6
 - Handover = 7

Confidence/Hong Kong future = 8
 Hong Kong/China = 9
 Hong Kong/Taiwan = 10
 Diplomacy = 11
 Mixed frames = 20
 Others = 99

8. Internal/External Political Power Frame

Hong Kong autonomy = 1
 China dominance = 2
 End of British colonialism = 3
 Taiwan's reaction = 4
 World's attention = 5
 Hong Kong political parties' tendency = 6
 People/public involvement = 7
 No political power = 8
 Mixed frames = 20
 Others = 99

9. Judgment Frame

Confront = 1
 Admonish = 2
 Concern = 3
 Constructive criticism = 4
 Approval = 5
 Jubilation = 6
 Sorrow = 7
 Indifference = 8
 Prediction = 9
 Factual/no judgment frame = 10
 Mixed frames = 20
 Others = 99

10. News Package Frame

Event description = 1
 Horserace/election politics = 2
 Day-to-day political routines = 3
 Survey/public polls = 4
 Humanization = 5
 Comparison = 6
 Issue-and-opinion = 7
 Background = 8
 Mixed frames = 20
 Others = 99

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

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