American, Indian and Chinese Media on "Belt and Road Initiative"

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Abstract *This research treats contents of newspapers from America, China and India reporting on "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) with respect to US, India and China's foreign policies. The study investigates if unlike China, American and Indian press relatively report more 'risk' than 'opportunity' frames on BRI. Detailed literature on risks and opportunity frames is produced through media lenses, underpins regional and global significance and future status of BRI. Comparing framing techniques of The New York Times, Times of India and China Daily, contents of total 60 news articles are quantitatively analyzed. Finally, comparative research paradigm found both Indian and American press framing more risks than opportunities in news, therefore highlighting respective concerns of staying away from the signatory summit of BRI held in Beijing in May 2017.*

Key Words:

BRI, Silk Road, CPEC, News Framing, Content Analysis

BRI and CPEC

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is the Chinese President-Xi Jinping's strategic idea of overland transport corridors and maritime trade routes to widen economic activities of People's Republic of China (PRC) with Africa, Eurasia and Latin America. Primarily this initiative is based on mutual trades, finance, infrastructures, people-to-people interactions and cultural activities. BRI will build interest based relations between states (Aoyama, 2016). This research applies on reportage of signatory forum of BRI in the U.S, Chinese and Indian media. Beijing hosted BRI's signatory conference between 14-16 May 2017 welcoming more than 30 world leaders and nearly 68 ambassadors of the states to applaud the cooperation agreement. However, America and India stayed away from the summit expressing their wide-range of trepidations (Xin 2017; Blanchard and Wong 2017). For example, Chinese trillion-dollar spending roads, ports and energy projects are strongly objected by *The New York Times* (NYT, 2017). Similarly, *Economic Times*

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reported UN levitations of tagging red flags over financial, economic, social and environmental risks associated with BRI. *The Guardian* published EU repudiations on this multibillion-dollar project, litigating that BRI is not guaranteeing social welfare and environmental protections (Chaudhury, 2017; Phillips, 2017). Likewise, *Hindustan Times* warned China while publishing Indian isolation from the BRI's Summit (Patranobis, 2017).On other hand, the Australian *Financial Review* stated leaders from Russia, Australia, Indonesia, Greece, Vietnam, Spain and Italy greeted to brace the BRI, because it will heighten trade and business activities between Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America (Grigg and Lisa 2017). To the same note, *China Daily* published that Beijing is seeking sustainable trust and backing from all the states connecting with the BRI (CD, 2017a).

Previously, in 2013 Islamabad and Beijing mutually agreed on $62 billion project –CPEC propositioning extensive network of trade routes, railways, power and wind houses, special economic zones. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is known as one of the six economic corridors projected under premeditated Marshal Plan of BRI. This corridor will connect marine port in Gwader, Pakistan with Kashgar city in China. The dominant public opinion in the two countries consider CPEC as a landmark proposal of expediting economic and trade activities in the region. Two scholars from Pakistan mentioned CPEC-a game changer project creating nearly one million jobs in Pakistan to alter the fate of the region by overcoming energy crisis and economic revolutions (Abid & Ashfaq, 2015). On other hand two scholars Alam (2015) and Hu (2017), mentioned Strait of Malacca route if blocked, CPEC would function as a marginal trade route when conflict in Asian-pacific region is unceasing (Ali, 2015). Irrespective of 'win-win' scenario conferred by both Islamabad and Beijing, CPEC has provoked India on the trade route passing through Gilgit Baltistan. Likewise, two British newspapers, *The Telegraph* and *The Guardian* reported Chinese confrontation on Indian intrigue against this mega project and to reconsider its status (Xin, 2017; Connor, 2017). Newspapers from several other countries blamed the BRI for rapping New Delhi and Washington over their interferences in Asia. Both India and America tended to isolate themselves from the global initiative-BRI. Therefore, this study investigates international media encounters of reporting risks or opportunities of the BRI associated with international powers.

Mainly this research is aiming to discover framing strategies applied by the newspapers from America, China and India while reporting on the BRI. Thus, this study is supposed to depicts Sino-India and Sino-America relations accordingly to rate risk and opportunity frames published in the American, Indian and Chinese media. One of the objectives of the study is to examine how American, Indian and Chinese foreign policies on BRI are projected in the leading press. Finally, the study explores how the selected press framed the strategic process of reporting on BRI.

Literature on Framing Risks and Opportunities

To stabilize of power system in Asia, American foreign policy has eagerly cheered expansion of India against the rising China (Xiaoyu 2012). Likewise, China's card is widely played by the American media and politicians during election campaigns (Aldrich, Lu, & Kung, 2015). Golan and Lukitu (2015) found editorials of two American press framing emerging China a warning to the U.S uni-polarity. The most quoted researcher on framing studies, Entman mentioned frames have various locations of writing scripts, cultural background, message sender and target audiences. In communication process, frame focuses on some features of apparent information establishing them more prominent to highlight any problem. Based on ethical assessments, frames interpret treatments and recommendations for the problem reported. Therefore, by highlighting some portions of truth, media viewers are appealed to certain aspects and misled to disregard others. What is added in news is as significant, what is vanished from the news (Entman, 1993, 2003). To comprehend cross-national differences in news contents, generic framing is commonly applied technique to exceed thematic boundaries of a story (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Vreese, 2002; Vreese, 2005). Another study on structure and characteristic of contents of journalism declared typology of generic framing is conflict', 'attribution', 'moral values', 'economics', and 'human impact' (Neuman et al. 1992). Commonly, the concept of 'valence of frames' generated the idea of reporting risks and opportunities (Vreese and Boomgaarden 2003) incredibly indicating the choice between two contrasting characteristics- destructive or constructive and unworthy or worthy (Levin et al. 1986), dangers or prospects (Jackson and Dutton 1988), and lastly damaging or benefiting (Rutter 1987). Therefore ,journalists are continually cognisant about risks and opportunities frames while reporting news on gains or losses , threat or prospect , win or defeat and finally, giving or taking (Schuck & Vreese, 2006).

Pragmatically, risk framing is frequently applied, the idea of which is predominately derived from the prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) a process of decision making in risky conditions. For, example, BRI is framed in *The New York Times* reporting a fear that China will emerge as a new Colonial Clout (LARMER, 2017), similarly, *Times of India,* framed BRI with reference to possible intimidations to Baluchistan-a territory of Pakistan from where CPEC route is planned (TOI, 2017). Based on mentioned above literature on news framing, this study examines not only risk frames-unfavourable pictures of the BRI, such as reporting on the environmental risks claimed by the U.S along with Indian regional apprehensions on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. But also opportunity frames -a ray of hope and countries mutual reliance, probably highlighting favourable pictures. In fact, BRI proposing recompenses to the states associating with multi-billion projects. For example, BRI is positively framed in *China Daily*, calming a prosperous future for the least developed countries (CD, 2017b).

Quantitative Analysis

Since this study evaluates communication cryptograms denoted by numeric values, pragmatically quantitative research technique is desirable for social scientists to discover intrinsic values from communication contents. The quantitative research estimations are constantly believed as reliable even if they produce some acceptable errors in data processing (Kuhn, 1962, p.186). Noted by a group of researcher, to replicate framing numbers from newspapers, quantitative content analysis helps in accumulating and ordering data to discover symmetrical trends in news contents (as cited in May, 1997, p.171). Technique of quantitative contents analysis is essential to measure impacts in communication research (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005). Considerably this method is recommended to compare similarities and variations between the communication features (frames). Commonly, communication researchers consider this method in deductive research to test a hypothesis derived from a literary belief (Riff, Lacy & Fico, 2014, p.17). Primarily this method is applied to discover themes of matters from words, sentences, and pictures, appearing in press, legitimate papers, journals, snapshots, and websites, audio and visual media (Kohlbacher 2006). Predominantly, depending on nature of research questions, cultural artefacts from news contents are discovered (Bryman, 2012, p.295). Likewise, this study investigates emerging defiance of the U.S, Indian and Chinese media reporting on BRI, therefore quantifying to measure positive or negative aspects of China factor appearing in contents. This way the scope and complexity of press is vibrantly depicted to comprehend the future status of Chinese dream plan-the BRI.

Hypothesis and Research Questions

Q1: What framing techniques on BRI are produced by the American, Chinese and Indian media?
Q2: How framings on BRI differ by the U.S, Indian and Chinese Press?
Q3: How do international media differ in reporting risk and opportunity frames?

Research Method

In this study content analysis technique is applied to quantitatively analyse 60 selected articles from Indian, Chinese and American press each. Predominantly, these leading international newspapers are treated as nominal variables, whereas framing scores are considered as the scaled variables. This study proceeds with Bryman (2012, p.74) comparative design of carrying simultaneously two or more cross-sectional variables. Primarily, while investigating existing factors, the

researcher compares differences and similarities between countries (cited in May 1997, p.187). Same as Schuck and Vreese (2006) study of comparing risk and opportunity frames and Camaj (2010) studying international press reporting on Kosovo's status negotiations, this study also compares the amplitudes of risks and opportunities framed by the prominent selected international newspapers from America, India and China.

Unit of Analysis and Sampling

The *Factiva* database by applying the keywords 'China' and 'Belt' and 'Road 'produced total 1302 news articles in favour of the three-English language selected newspapers reporting on BRI from May 01, 2017 to May 31, 2017. This retro follows news stories on "Signatory Summit", of BRI held in Beijing. Primarily, The *New York Times* granted 52 news reports, *Times of India* 152 reports, and *China Daily* 1098 reports. Despite spotting online news feeds, articles printed from the head offices are considered. *The New York Times* illustrated 42 articles originated from the New York City. The *Times of India* showed 82 articles appeared from Mumbai. And, the *China Daily* presented 312 articles published from Beijing. Predominantly, this research ponders a sample of total 60 articles designated on a criterion of absolute occurrence of keywords 'China', 'Belt' and 'Road'. Based on chosen criterion, 20 out of 312 articles are carefully extracted from *China Daily*. Following the same patron, 20 out of 42 articles are nominated from *The New York Times*. And finally 20 out of 82 articles are entitled from *Times of India*. This method revealed overall 60 news articles, 20 each nominated from *Times of India, The New York Times, and China Daily.* To process this research each news article is cautiously considered as a unit of study. While noticing reactions of units of studies on participant replies to the research questions (Bryman, 2012, p.295), this study carefully code (1) if requisite news frame appeared otherwise (0).

Data Constructions and Methodological Issues

Kuder-Richardson (KR-20) alpha testing tool is processed to scale internal consistency of the available data in dichotomous-binary form (Cronbach, 1951, 1990; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Vreese et al. 2001; Acock, 2008, p.293). Alpha value with of conflict or risk framing scored 0.705, economic and opportunity 0.765, attribution of responsibility 0.724 and human interest 0.851. All 05 generic frames collectively provided Alpha value 0.822.Mentioned above higher than 0.70 values indicate adequate reliability or consistency levels between all the frames other than morality frame missing from the entire study. To make cluster analysis, 20 multiple research questions-RQ1.RQ2.RQ3…RQ20 are applied on a sequence of 60 news stories received from the *Factiva* database system. These rotating questions revealed some deeper clusters of original

framing. A criterion of at least 03 out of 20 rotating questions on each generic frame is applied. For example, risk or conflict frames are dignified with a scale of 4 questions, opportunities or economic frames with 03, attribution of responsibility with 05, human interest with 05 and finally morality frame with 03 questions. Hence, binary data representing yes (1) occurrence and no (0) absence of frame aggregately provided 6000 framing clusters accumulated by number of generic frames (5) x rotating questions (20) x articles (60). Purposefully, scaled data is derived by summing binary statistics of an individual article divided by 20-number of questions applied. The processed data scored against these all frames are now demonstrated into original positions ranging from 0 to 1(frame missing to frame significant). Higher scores manifest higher occurrence of frames. Finally, values of all 60 news articles are now designed with respect to 05 generic frames-opportunities, attribution, risk, human interest and morality. Other than Camaj (2010), *Kruskal–Wallis* and *Mann-Whitney U*tests are applied as ANOVA alternative techniques and nonparametric approaches to compare statistics when normality assumptions are violated (Ghasemi, Zahediasl, 2012; Urdan, 2016, p.205). To proceed, in first phase *Kruskal-Wallis* test is applied to compare scores within international media and framing. *Mann-Whitney U* test is applied in the second phase to compare scores between international media and the framing strategies.
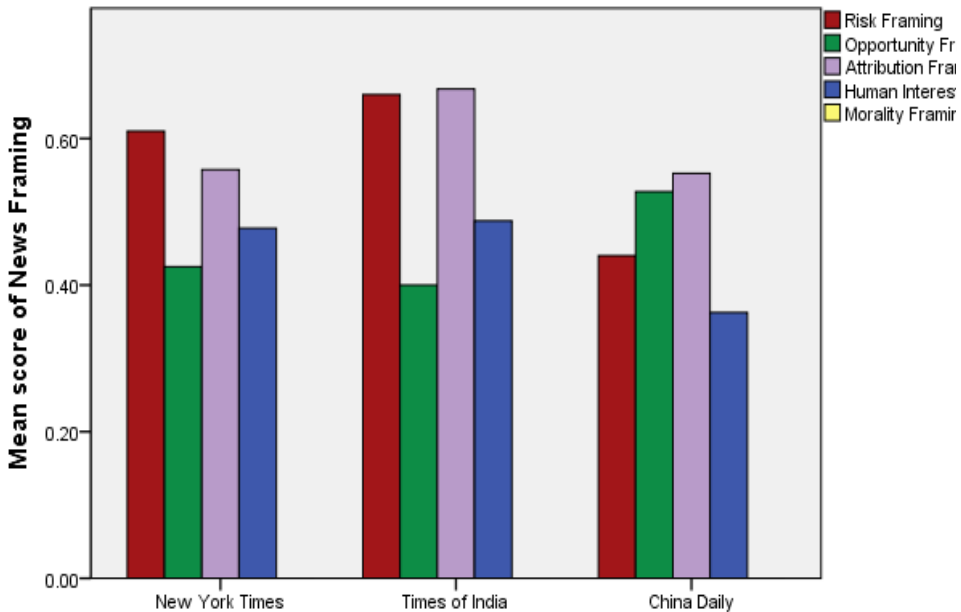
Findings and Data Presentation

Figure 1:

Table 1. Framing Statistics

International Media		Risk Framing	Opportunity Framing	Attribution Framing	Human Interest Framing	Morality Faming
New York Times	Mean	.6100	.4250	.5575	.4775	.0000
	N	20	20	20	20	20
	Std. Dev.	.13338	.23255	.13404	.21304	.00000
Times of India	Mean	.6600	.4000	.6675	.4875	.0000
	N	20	20	20	20	20
	Std. Dev.	.08367	.15131	.18937	.21143	.00000
China Daily	Mean	.4400	.5275	.5525	.3625	.0000
	N	20	20	20	20	20
	Std. Dev.	.19908	.17508	.16818	.26846	.00000
Total	Mean	.5700	.4508	.5925	.4425	.0000
	N	60	60	60	60	60
	Std. Dev.	.17252	.19430	.17119	.23557	.00000

Q1: What framing techniques on BRI are produced by the American, Chinese and Indian media?

Figure-1 labelling red bars to risk frames, green to opportunities, pink to attributions, blue to human interests and yellow to morality frames are actually displaying typology of generic frames. Relatively, *The New York Times* is revealing higher devotion to risk frames, followed by attribution, human interest, and opportunity frames. *The Times of India* is found more committed to attribution of responsibility frames followed by risk, human interest, and opportunity frames. Likewise, *China Daily* is eager to attribution of responsibility frames followed by opportunity, risk, and human interest frames.

Table-1 further estimate Figure-1 by displaying standard deviations and mean scores of the newspapers attributing higher values of responsibility frames (M: 0.59, SD: 0.17), chased by risks (M: 0.57, SD: 0.17), opportunities (M: 0.45, SD: 0.19), human interests (M: 0.44 SD: 0.23), and morality frames producing no score. Principally, mentioned below average scores of 20 articles determined dictions of press to certain frames, while providing less attention to others, for example, *The Times of India* is eagerly reporting attribution frames (Mean: 0.67) pursued by risk (M: 0.66), human interest (M: 0.49), and opportunity frames (M: 0.40). Likewise, Risk frames (Mean: 0.61) are highly reported by *The New York*

Times, chased by the attribution (Mean: 0.58), human interest (M: 0.48), and opportunity frames (M: 0.43). Finally, *China Daily* is more attributed to responsibility frames (Mean: 0.55) as compared to the opportunity frame (M: 0.53), risks (M: 0.44), and human interests (M: 0.36).

Lastly, data displayed in table-2 and 3 is derived after application of statistical tools tested under 5% level of significance, describing difference in result if p-values is lesser than 0.05, or otherwise not.

Table 2.

Kruskal Wallis Test Results	$x2$	Df	P-Value
Generic Frames	26.219	3	0.000
Newspaper	3.358	2	0.187

Q2: How framings on BRI differ by the U.S, Indian and Chinese press?

Table-2 is referred to differences and similarities within the press and generic framings. In this regard, *Kruskal Wallis'* result χ2 (3) = 26.219, p < 0.001 indicating generic frames expressively different. On other hand, χ2 (2) = 3.358, p =0.187 argues, irrespective of framing categories, aggregate volume of press reporting is not significantly different. Based on the above conclusions, *The New York Times*, *China Daily* and *Times of India* are claimed as framing BRI differently.

Table 3. Reporting Risk and Opportunity Frames

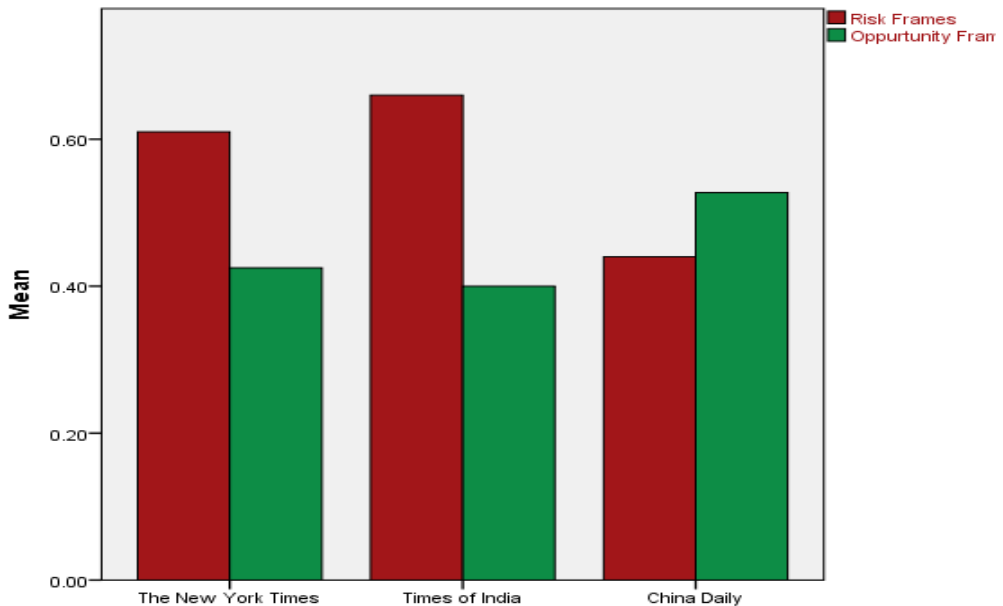| Mann-Whitney U Test Results	Opportunity			Risk		
	U	Df	P-value	$x2$	Df	P-value
The New York Times & Times of India	174.00	38	0.495	149.50	38	0.174
Times of India & China Daily	109.50	38	0.013	69.50	38	0.000
The New York Times & China Daily	151.00	38	0.192	106.00	38	0.01

Figure 2: International Media

Q3: How do international media differ in reporting risk and opportunity frames?

Table-3 illustrates cross-sectional research investigating comparisons between frames and international press. While applying Mann-Whitney U test on data of risk frames, results U (38) = 149.50, p=0.174 indicate *The New York Times* and *Times of India* provide similar scores. On other hand, U (38) = 69.50, p <0.001 argue, the press in India and China score differently followed by the American and Chinese media U (38) = 106.00, p =0.01. Different from Chinese media, both American and Indian press are discovered with nearly similar devotion to risk frames-confirming the argument produced in figure-2. Now, after testing opportunity framing data, following phenomena produced parallel results, for example, American and Indian media U (38) = 174.00, p=0.495,Indian and Chinese media U (38) = 109.50, p =0.013, and American and Chinese media U (38) = 151.00, p =0.192 .The three newspapers are exclusively found posturing parallel attentions to opportunity framing. While associating cited above outcomes with the results displayed in figure-2, *China Daily* executed frames on opportunities, higher than both American and Indian Press .Finally, based on above findings research hypothesis can safely be defended that: contrary to Chinese, American and Indian press are relatively publishing more 'risk' than 'opportunity' frames.

Discussion

The study delivers a pragmatic validation of existing generic frames-risk, opportunity, responsibility and human interests. However, morality frame does not appear in the entire research, possibly because selected newspapers have not produced any ethical or moral angle on BRI. Following Schudson (2001)'s claim of U.S media reporting the nature of conflict frames with objective journalism, this study also finds U.S media is paying relatively less attention to risk frames than the Indian media while reporting on BRI. Interestingly, results demonstrate three newspapers almost similarly projecting opportunity frames. However, above all *China Daily* is relatively considering more frames opportunities. Surprisingly, regardless of the geo-political hesitations, both American and Indian media report opportunities associated with the BRI. Additionally, a thorough analysis on the bar chart discovers American press reasonably more committed to objective journalism than in Indian because of relative attention to opportunity frames. Therefore, in the entire study attribution of responsibility frame is repeatedly published in Indian press referring China as responsible for their strategic distress on CPEC. Unexpectedly, media in both America and China are correspondingly less devoted to responsibility frames. Other than reporting opportunities, Chinese media is comparatively more focussed on the attribution frames. Likewise, China claimed that BRI is planned for non-hegemonic international collaboration for economic development. Finally, unlike China, both American and Indian press dominantly apply human interest frames while reporting on the environmental risks.

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