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ABSTRACT

Sources provide information subsidies to journalists at a low cost with the intention of passing on their agendas by providing the information subsidies to the media. This process is called agenda building, serving as the theoretical framework guiding this study.

Many studies have examined agenda building in political campaigns, while others have looked at it in a business context. This study tries to further test agenda building by investigating in the context of mediated public diplomacy to see how foreign leaders use the news to build images in another country. Such image building efforts have the potential to influence the perceptions of foreign nations and political figures.

On November 15, 2012, China welcomed a new chairman, Xi Jinping. This study examines how the Xinhua News Agency utilizes news releases for building the image of President Xi in the US. The issue and attribute agendas of four of the elite U.S. media outlets, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Associated Press* were compared to those of the Xinhua News Agency in regards to President Xi. The sampling periods are from November 2012 to March 2013 and from November 2013 to March 2014.

The results show that the Xinhua News Agency had an impact on the issue agenda of *The New York Times*. No evidence was found for the second-level agenda building. However, the direction of the agenda building effect was proved to be from the Xinhua to the U.S. news media. Consistency of the issue and attribute agendas found among the U.S. news outlets implied inter-media agenda setting effects.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE FIRST- AND SECOND-LEVEL OF AGENDA BUILDING
WITH THE IMAGE OF CHINA'S PRESIDENT XI JINPING
IN XINHUA AND FOUR U.S. NEWS OUTLETS

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THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Media
Studies in the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication of the Graduate School of
Syracuse University

August 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to acknowledge my advisor, Professor Guy Golan, for his guidance and support throughout this process. I am also very lucky to have an excellent committee. Dr. Kinsey introduced us to many Newhouse outstanding professors in the introduction class. Professor Hua Jiang is always there for me, ready to offer help. Professor Fiona Chew is my mentor of how to conduct research. She always set high standards, which helped me advance my knowledge. I am very grateful for the support of my companion, Bohan Chen. His love and support are immeasurable. I am fortunate to have support of my parents. Without them, I cannot be here today. Finally, I am fortunate to have been surrounded by brilliant professors and caring friends.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

On November 15, 2012, China saw a man, Xi Jinping, become the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee. On March 14, 2013, Xi was elected as the new president and the chairman of the Central Military Commission of China. He would head the fifth generation of China's leadership, the successor to President Hu Jintao. Since then, he has been the most powerful person in China.

Xi was born into privilege as a "princeling". His father, Xi Zhongxun, who fought with Mao, rose to be a vice premier after the establishment of New China. However, Xi spent his teenage years in a distant and poor village in Shaanxi Province during the Cultural Revolution. After the overturn of the Cultural Revolution, Xi gradually accumulated experience as a governor and became a rising political star in the circle. He met his second wife, Peng Liyuan, in 1987; she was a singer who was far more famous in China than he was. He became the Vice President of China in 2012.

Now, as the head of a rising super power, Xi needs to build an image that is better than it was before. The Chinese government has become aware of the importance of image building and has enhanced its public diplomacy efforts. Some recent efforts include the 2008 Olympics Games in Beijing and the 2010 World Exposition in Shanghai.

Public diplomacy activities are defined as "efforts by the government of one nation to influence public or elite opinion in a second nation for the purpose of turning the foreign policy of the target nation to advantage" (Manheim, 1994, p. 4). Media plays an important role in the efforts of influencing the public and elite opinion in foreign nations. Most of the time, people in

one country will only know what is happening around world through media. Thus, public relations practitioners have to first transfer agendas to the media in another country.

This process is called mediated public diplomacy, an attempt by nations to influence the media in other countries (Sheafer & Gabay, 2009). It is “the initial step in a public diplomacy process” (Sheafer & Gabay, 2009, p. 448). As cited by many other researchers, “the press may not be successful in telling us what to think but is stunningly successful in telling us what to think about” (Cohen, 1963). Regarding perceptions of a foreign country, the media tell the public what to think about that foreign country, particularly on such issues as international trade or conflicting territories. Then, the public will form an image of the foreign country with the issues and attributes conveyed by the media. Such effect is called agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004). Agenda setting has two levels. The first-level of agenda setting is about the salience transfer of sets of objects, and the second-level of agenda setting is the process of numerous attributes competing for attention (McCombs & Shaw, 1993). Since the groundbreaking study by McCombs and Shaw (1972) about the 1968 presidential election, hundreds of studies have tested the agenda setting effect of the interface of the mass media agenda and the public agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1993).

More questions were generated along the agenda setting research. One question is how the information sources influence the media content. Gandy (1982) suggested that “we go beyond agenda-setting to determine who sets the media agenda, how and for what purpose it is set, and with what impact on the distribution of power and values in society” (p. 266). The step beyond agenda setting is called agenda building.

Agenda building describes the process of how the information sources influence the media agenda. The information gathering process of gatekeepers is influenced by “the twenty-

four hour news cycle, downsizing of newsrooms, multiplicity of media channels, fragmentation of news audiences, and the quickening of journalistic work routines” (Kiouisis, Kim, McDevitt, & Ostrowski, 2009, p.547). Every story means some cost. To reduce the cost, journalists rely on information subsidies from news sources. By providing information subsidies - such as news releases, advertisements, speeches, brochures and other materials - to cut the cost of newsgathering, news sources hope that journalists gain their points of view in order to shape the news content. Thus, agendas of the information sources can pass through the media to form the public opinion.

The efforts of China to build the desired images of President Xi offer a wonderful example of agenda building and mediated public diplomacy. One appealing reason is that all the news about President Xi in China comes from one single news outlet: the Xinhua News Agency.

The Xinhua News Agency originated from its predecessor, Red China News Agency, which was established in 1931 in Ruijin, Jiangxi Province. Since then, one of the responsibilities of this news agency has been to legitimize the existence of the Communist Party of China and to promote the ideology of communism (Xin, 2011). It functions as “the party’s throat and tongue”.

The phrase, “the party’s throat and tongue”, came from Mao Zedong, who was the first president of the new China. On October 10, 1944, the dawn before the Communist Party of China took the entire mainland, Chairman Mao visited the printing house of Xinhua News Agency in Yanan and delivered a speech to the editors there (Li, 2013). He stressed the importance of the work of news publishing and compared the news agency to the “the party’s throat and tongue”, the representation of the party’s will. Since then, the core leading idea for the news workers and the first priority of the Xinhua News Agency is to be the propaganda tool for the Communist Party of China. Accordingly, the Xinhua News Agency enjoys the privilege of

reporting international news and politically sensitive news. It takes orders directly from the State Council. All news about important political figures is carefully written and edited. The news of President Xi is no exception.

The aim of this study is to test agenda building by examining and comparing the news releases from the Xinhua News Agency and the elite U.S. news outlets. The current study tries to find if the Xinhua News Agency can successfully transfer their issue and attribute agenda to the U.S. news outlets.

Therefore, this study includes the following research questions for agenda building:

RQ 1 Is there any first-level of agenda building effect by the Xinhua news releases on the U.S. news media?

RQ 2 Is there any second-level of agenda building effect by the Xinhua news releases on the U.S. news media?

RQ 3 Is the direction of influence from the Xinhua news releases to the US news media?

In the next chapter, definitions of key terms, the two levels of agenda setting and agenda building research will be reviewed. Also, this study will review previous studies about mediated public diplomacy and some research about China. Three hypotheses are generated accordingly. In the methods section in the third chapter, operational definitions of key conceptual terms are given, together with the methods of analysis strategies. Results are reported in the fourth chapter with tables and figures. The last chapter summarizes findings, states the theoretical implications, and shows the direction of future study.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

Agenda building connects information subsidy providers and the media, whereas agenda setting examines the connection between the media and the public. In the following section, agenda setting concepts as they are taken up in previous studies will be reviewed. Scholars have proposed to adapt the theoretical framework of agenda setting onto the agenda building concept (e.g. Kioussis, Mitrook, Wu, & Seltzer, 2006; Regas, Kim, & Kioussis, 2011). They share the same terms, concepts and constructs. An agenda building theoretical framework will be made clear through the review of agenda setting. The reasons for proposing agenda building research, the definitions of terms and the results of previous research will also be reviewed. The difference between framing and agenda building will be clarified. The concept of mediated public diplomacy will also be clarified, which is one of the applications of agenda building in an international context.

After the theoretical framework review, I will explain the rationale for foreign news studies and for the choice of Chinese President Xi as a case study.

Agenda Setting

Agenda setting is one of the most studied concepts in media effect research (McCombs, 2005). The volume and theoretical richness of research activity has remained high since the study by McCombs and Shaw in 1972. The concept of agenda setting was innovated by Walter Lippmann (1922) in his famous book, "Public Opinion," where he posited the notion that the media construct public views of the world. Fifty years later, McCombs and Shaw conducted the seminal study of agenda setting. This study has been called one of the 15 milestones in mass communication research (Lowery & Defleur, 1995). Agenda setting has two levels which set the

public agenda and influence public opinions. In the following section, previous studies will be reviewed that offer evidence of the two levels of agenda setting.

First-level Agenda Setting

The first-level of agenda setting deals with the transfer of object salience from the mass media to the public (e.g. McCombs & Shaw, 1972). It mainly focuses on the issues, events or political figures of the media agenda, and how the media agenda impacts audience perceptions about what issues are worthy of attention (McCombs, 1992).

According to Coleman, McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (2009), a more accurate definition of the first-level of agenda setting is the following:

“the process of the mass media presenting certain issues frequently and prominently with the result that large segments of the public come to perceive those issues as more important than others ... the more coverage an issue receives, the more important it is to people” (p. 147).

In other words, the amount of news coverage of an object would largely determine the perceived importance of that object by the audience.

The unit of analysis of first-level agenda setting is the object (Weaver, McCombs, & Shaw, 2004). Therefore, the first-level agenda setting process can be stated as the transfer salience of objects from the media agenda to the public agenda. Objects can be public issues - such as terrorism, crimes and immigration issues - or public figures - such as presidential election candidates. According to Kim and McCombs (2007), the term “object” is used in the same sense as the psychological term “attribute object”: “the thing toward which our attention is directed or toward which we have an attitude” (p. 300). Most agenda setting studies use the term “issue” more often than “object” due to their study focus on public issues.

Saliency

Saliency is a key concept in agenda setting studies. McCombs (2004) summarized that the operational definitions of saliency were defined on both the media's agenda and the public agenda. The media agenda saliency has an external characteristic (visibility), and an internal characteristic (valence) (Kiousis, 2004). Visibility can be further broken down into attention - which is the number of news stories of an object - and prominence - which is the location and length devoted to stories in print media and the time and length for stories on television and the radio.

The saliency of the public agenda is "the product of both personal and social forces that direct our attention" (McCombs, 2004, p. 550). This conclusion is originally from a conference paper presented by Evatt and Ghanem (2001). For society, the salient issues are measured by asking the following: "What is the most important problem facing the country today?" For any given person, the salient issue is the answer to the following question: "What is the most important problem that is personally relevant to me?"

The agenda setting process is a zero-sum game (Zhu, 1992). Since the resource of attention in the news media and among the public is scarce, various objects are competing for a place on both the media agenda and the public agenda (McCombs, 2004). Even for the seemingly unlimited storage capacity of the Internet, individuals' attention spans and the time spent on webpages still involves the process of attention competence of the objects. At one time, no more than five to seven issues exist on the public agenda (McCombs, 2004). These five to seven issues can be considered as salient issues.

Evidence

Empirical evidence has been accumulated for first-level agenda setting. In the pioneering work by McCombs and Shaw (1972), they limited their research to the Chapel Hill community in North Carolina to control the regional factor and media performance variation. The authors found from nine sources that, among the respondents studied, the media coverage of the 1968 presidential campaign conformed highly to what the Chapel Hill voters thought were important issues. For example, for *The New York Times*, the correlation between voters' emphases on issues and media coverage was .965 on average. This is the first classic article studying the agenda setting function of the mass media.

In 1976, McCombs and Shaw replicated their study (Weaver, Graber, McCombs, & Eyal, 1981). They conducted a panel study with a representative sample of all regional voters in the 1976 presidential election year. Panels of voters were interviewed nine times from February to December at three sites in New Hampshire, Indiana and Illinois. The agenda setting influence of national television and local newspapers reached the peak during the spring primaries. The correlation between the television and the public agenda was .63, whereas the correlation between newspapers and the public agenda was .34.

Hundreds of studies followed the research of agenda setting. Rogers, Dearing, and Bregman (1993) identified more than 200 articles about agenda setting. In the review by McCombs (2005), there were more than 400 articles that fell under the umbrella of agenda setting. The meta-analysis by Wanta and Ghanem (2000) of 90 agenda setting studies found a mean correlation of +.53 between the salient news issues covered in the mass media and the public agenda.

Over the years, the first-level of agenda setting has proved to be a solid and fruitful research area. In the following section, definition of key terms and previous research in second-level agenda setting will be reviewed.

Second-level Agenda Setting

The second level of agenda setting expands the original definition of agenda setting and focuses on the transfer of attribute salience (e.g. McCombs & Shaw, 1993). The attribute agenda determines how people think about an issue, a public figure or an object (e.g. Kim & McCombs, 2007). It focuses on the attributes, characteristics and properties of an object (Kim & McCombs, 2007) that describe the object and the tone of its coverage.

There are two dimensions of second-level agenda setting: the substantive dimension and the affective dimension. The substantive dimension of the second level of agenda setting are the attributes of issues or individuals that the media select to cover and that help people to cognitively structure and discern the selected objects. According to Kioussis, Bantimaroudis, and Ban (1999), affective attributes refer to “those facets of news coverage that elicit emotional reactions from audience members” (pp. 416-417). The affective dimension is the tone of how news media reports the selected attributes, whether that be in a positive, negative or neutral way.

The study completed by Weaver et al. (1981) marked the beginning of a new phase of agenda setting research with the focus on the second level of agenda setting, the agenda of attributes. In this book, the researchers reported a relationship between the news coverage of the Democratic candidates’ images and the voters’ perceived images during the 1976 presidential election.

Although the new phase of agenda setting studies showed theoretical potential, it was not until 1995 that McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Lennon (1997) conducted more innovative research to officially test second-level agenda setting, using the election campaigns that year for the regional parliament of Navarra and for the mayor of Pamplona in Spain. The researchers examined both the agenda of substantive attributes and the agenda of affective attributes of ten candidates. The content analysis included news stories and political advertisements in local newspapers and on television. Attribute data were coded into substantive and affective dimensions. Under substantive dimension are qualifications, personality and ideology. Affective dimensions were measured on a positive, neutral and negative scale. A follow-up telephone survey used open-ended questions to elicit descriptions of the candidates from the audience.

In regard to the substantive dimension, the researchers found that television ads and news put their emphasis on the qualifications of the candidates whereas the newspapers focused on the ideology. However, the voters' descriptions were concentrated on the candidates' personality. Given the differences in substantive attribute emphasis, the correlation analysis showed that the newspaper advertisement and news agenda matched with the voters' descriptions for the parliament candidates, whereas only the TV news agenda had a match for the mayor candidates. In regard to the affective dimension, the news stories were highly correlated with the voters' descriptions ($p < .01$) for the parliament candidates, resulting in the highest correlation value. Images of the mayor candidates showed a significant correlation between the TV news and the voters' descriptions.

As one of the first studies in this area, it provided evidence for both substantive and affective dimensions of second-level agenda setting effects on the voters' agenda. The effects were stronger for the affective dimension than the substantive dimension.

Similar results of affective attribute dimensions were found by Kim and McCombs (2007). Their study showed the link between attribute agenda setting and opinions about candidates in the 2002 Texas gubernatorial and U.S. senatorial elections. The comments on the candidates were concentrated on the aspect of personal qualifications and characteristics. They found significant correlations between the media agenda and the public attribute agenda for the substantive attributes of each candidate. Regression analysis showed evidence of the impact of the affective dimension of attributes on public opinion, controlling for political identity, ideological orientation, age and newspaper reading frequency.

The experiment conducted by Kiouisis, Bantimaroudis and Ban (1999) proved a causal relationship between the media's agenda of attributes and the public perception of candidates. Among many substantive attributes, they chose qualifications (in terms of educational background) as well as personality traits (in terms of the corruption level of candidates) as the manipulated factors. The personality trait of being corrupt had a major effect on the perceived salience of the moral attribute. Several implications were generated from this study. First, second-level agenda setting exists and the causal relationship has been established. Second, not all the attributes have the same effects on the perceived attribute salience, which also proves the existence of the attribute agenda.

Some studies reported findings that support the second level of agenda setting (e.g. Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs, & Lennon, 1998). However, other studies showed different results. Golan and Wanta (2001) tested second-level agenda setting in the New Hampshire

primaries; little evidence was found for the agenda of the affective attributes, which is the second dimension of the second level of agenda setting. Golan, Kiouisis and McDaniel (2007) only found evidence of second-level agenda setting effects on one of the candidates' political advertisements in the 2004 U.S. presidential election. They only found a significant correlation between the affective attributes of Kerry's ads and the public opinion of issues.

In a recent study by Ragas and Tran (2013), "actual indicators of salience" on public agenda were used to monitor the salience transfer from the media to the public agenda in terms of the issue agenda and the affective attribute agenda. The indicators, aggregate search query volume of President Obama in 2012, were retrieved from the U.S. Hitwise Search Intelligence data, which combined search query activity across all major search engines. After controlling the presidential public relations news releases and meeting materials, they once again found significant correlations of the issue agenda and the affective attribute agenda between the media coverage and search volume.

In general, the second level of agenda setting is supported by most studies. Given the theoretical background of agenda setting, the following section will show the connections between agenda setting and agenda building. Also provided will be definitions of key terms and a review of the previous research on agenda building.

Agenda Building

Origins of Agenda Building Studies

Traditional agenda setting studies focus on the degree of correspondence between the media and the public, including the salience of objects and attributes (McCombs, 1994).

Research is moved forward by accepting criticisms. Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang (1981)

pointed out one blind spot of agenda setting, that “the whole issue of how issues originate is sidestepped, nor is there any recognition of the process through which agendas are built...” (p. 448). Turk (1985) also called for closer examination of the various factors that influence the media content.

Some researchers noticed the need to go one step further. Gandy (1982) proposed the following:

“I suggest we go beyond agenda setting to determine who sets the media’s agenda, how and for what purpose it is set, and with what impact on the distribution of power and values in society” (p. 266).

In the 1980s, a new phase of agenda setting research appeared and focused on the sources of the media’s agenda (McCombs, 1994). In a few words, agenda setting researchers begin to ask: “Who sets the media’s agenda?” This question has stimulated the research of agenda building.

Concepts and Definitions

Agenda building is not a new concept. It has been established in the area of public relations. A conceptual review article by Bryan E. Denham (2010) identified three types of studies: policy agenda building, media agenda building, and public agenda building. The origin of the term policy agenda building is from a study by Roger Cobb and Charles Elder (1971). They applied the term to the process of transferring the agendas of interest groups to the agendas of policy. Thus, groups and issue entrepreneurs could draw the attention of the policymakers to address the issues.

Public agenda building resembles traditional agenda setting research. However, public agenda building stresses the behavioral responses of the audiences to the mass media and interpersonal communication, which may involve strategies such as door-to-door canvassing.

The third area of agenda building studies, which is the focus of this thesis, examines the interaction between media personnel and sources of information. It is the most frequently studied type among the three (Denham, 2010). The classic model of the relationship between media and sources is advanced by Shoemaker and Reese (1996). Their model of factors influencing media contents includes the characteristics and background of individual media workers, media routines, media organizations or corporates, influences from outside of media organizations and ideology. The influences from outside of media organizations are the foci of the current thesis.

In order to understand the process of agenda building and the influence of sources, the term of information subsidies should be declared, for they are what the information providers produce and what the public relations practitioners try to get the press to publish.

From a political economy perspective, Gandy (1982) argues that information can be compared to a type of commodity, which has shortages and surpluses. Sources try to influence the media content by offering “information subsidies,” which are readily available to journalists at a low cost. They rely on news releases, news conferences or news briefings along with meetings to get “information subsidies”, such as handouts, brochures, meeting documents and conversations (Turk & Franklin, 1988). Lieber and Golan (2011) defined them as “the currency of the trade within the marketplace of information” (p. 8).

The sources of information subsidies include policymakers, news media, businesses, voters, interest groups, activities, political candidates, parties and so forth (Kioussis et al., 2013). One important source of information subsidies is the government (Curtin & Rhodenbaugh, 2001;

Turk & Franklin, 1988). The information subsidies are prepared by the government officers so that the cost of gathering and distributing information is largely reduced. In this way, the government's public information officers aim for journalists to use the information subsidies to pass the messages to the public in the form of news. For example, in environmental reporting, 54.3% of the stories on the tip sheets assembled by the society of Environmental Journalists came from the government (Curtin & Rhodenbaugh, 2001).

Thanks to the agenda setting function of the mass media, public information and public relations officers consider the media as the purveyors of government information. At the same time, gatekeepers, such as editors and journalists, try to gain the autonomy to remain objective. Only one-third to one-half of the information subsidies are used (Turk & Franklin, 1987). The most important factors for acceptance or rejection of the information subsidies are news worthiness and motivation (Curtin, 1999; Turk, 1985). The gatekeepers would use information subsidies voluntarily if the perceived motivations of the information sources are having public service, and not a profit motivation (Curtin, 1999). The profit motive, especially for corporations, is perceived as using the information subsidies to gain free advertising.

After defining information subsidies, the definition of agenda building is followed. After scrutinizing the process of how the Watergate Scandal gained the attention of the public, Lang and Lang (1981) surmised that the agenda building process is "a continuous one, involving a number of feedback loops" among political figures, the press, and the public (p. 466). This process stressed the mediated function of the mass media between the government and the public.

Agenda setting examines the transfer of issue salience from the media to the public. In contrast, agenda building in political public relations explores the reciprocal linkage among several stakeholder groups in the process of salience formation, transfer, and exchange (Hughes

& Dan, 2009). To separate agenda setting and agenda building, Ohl, Pincus, Rimmer, and Harrison (1995) defined agenda building as the following: “Agenda building refers to sources’ interactions with gatekeepers, a give-and-take process in which sources seek to get their information published and the press seeks to get that information from independent sources” (p. 91).

This definition points out the dynamics of interaction between the information providers and the media. The media rely on the source providers to get information subsidies, yet they also try to remain independent from the influence of the sources. This relationship is described as “a symbiosis among friendly adversaries” (Berkowitz & Adams, 1990, p. 724). The sources include government, political parties, candidates, organizations, activist groups, and other organizations (Kioussis et al., 2009).

To sum up, agenda building can be defined as the process by which sources try to use information subsidies to influence the media content in terms of the salience of objects and attributes and the tone used to describe the attributes. The ultimate goal of agenda building is to pass the object and attribute agenda through the media to the public.

Building the Bridge

Agenda building researchers try to combine the theoretical framework of agenda building with that of agenda setting. Being consistent with agenda setting, agenda building also has two levels. The first level of agenda building is the process of object salience transfer from sources to the media. The second level of agenda building describes how sources influence the media with respect to the substantive and affective aspect of attributes. One of the tools public relations

practitioners use to influence the media content is information subsidies. In the following section, literature will be reviewed on the two levels of agenda building research.

Evidence of Agenda Building

Public relations activities have an impact on media content (Cameron, Sallot, & Curtin, 1997; Curtin, 1999). Public relations practitioners try to use information subsidies to shape the media's agenda and hope that it can pass the messages to the public agenda. A series of early studies provided evidence confirming the influence of public relations activities on media content. For example, in a study by Kaid (1976), during the 1972 campaign of Kenneth vs. Buzbee for state senate in Illinois, all the news releases of Buzbee and relevant articles from 25 newspapers were collected for analysis. 18 press releases were carried by the newspapers. Among the 50 news articles, 30 of them were verbatim from the news releases or with some minor changes. Hale (1978) reported a correlation between court releases and the newspaper content. In 1972, California and Illinois were the only state supreme courts that hired a public relations professional. Hale found a significant correlation between the length of court releases and the amount of space assigned by the newspapers ($r=.623$, $p<.001$).

The government public relations officers try to put the government's agenda of important issues on the media's agenda. They want to make sure the public knows and understands the issues and policies of the country so that the constitutional rights of citizens are ensured. If the government can make agendas transparent to the public through media, then the public can know the policies better and increase trust in the government.

Turk (1985) observed that among the 225 subsidized stories, rank-order correlation of the issues from two sides was statistically significant, which means that newspaper content reflected

the issue priorities exhibited by the information subsidies from the public information officers. Although 94% of the published stories were neutral in tone, 5% were favorable to the agents. Turk concluded that newspaper stories which contained government information, were more likely to be favorable to the organization than those had information from other sources. Thus, this study offers evidence for two levels of agenda building. Turk's study also suggested that different sources have different effects on the tone of media content.

Agenda building effects can also be seen in election campaigns. Candidates use information subsidies, such as television advertising, in an effort to transfer their issue agenda and images to the public through the media. Roberts and McCombs (1994) found strong correlation between TV advertising and the television news in the 1990 Texas gubernatorial election. The paid television political advertisements by political candidates served as "the most visible indicator of the agenda that the candidates wish to advance" (p. 250). The campaign between Republican Clayton Williams and Democrat Ann Richards generated 21 advertisements for a six-week period. The six weeks were divided into two three-week sessions. The results showed that the issue agenda of television ads during session 1 had strong correlations with the issue agenda of the television news ($r=.524$) during session 2 and of newspaper stories during session 2 ($r=.638$). Both passed the Rozelle-Campbell baseline, which is used to determine the significance of correlation in cross-lagged comparison. Although the news agenda sample size is quite small ($N=68$), the strong correlations confirmed the influence of political advertisements on the media content in respect to the first level of agenda building.

Boyle (2001) found similar results for the 1996 Presidential Election, showing that network advertising led the news coverage, not the other way around. To quantify the significance of the television advertising and the campaign news, the coders recorded the

seconds of the television advertising and news videos, and the inches of the newspaper articles about the campaign. Among the three major candidates, only Dole's advertising had a statistically significant influence on the seconds of the network news agenda and on the inches of newspaper news articles. The results indicated that challengers may have a larger impact on media agenda than the incumbent by focusing on several issues.

In addition to political advertisements, news releases from the campaign candidates also have an impact on the media contents. Sweeter and Brown's research (2008) suggested that up to 80 percent of news content is generated from information subsidies, particularly news releases. For the gubernatorial election in Florida in 2002, Kiouisis, Mitrook, Wu and Seltzer (2006) examined the transfer of issue salience from the news releases (N=77) of the candidates to the newspaper stories (N=654). The median Spearman's rho correlation value was .78. For the second level of agenda building of substantive attributes, significant relations were found for Republican candidate Jeb Bush's image between news releases and media coverage for five of six statewide newspapers. For the affective attribute, Bush's negative images were significantly related to the salience of candidate attributes in media coverage. Weak support was found for the influence of the media attribute agenda for Bill McBride, the Democratic candidate. It seemed that McBride, as a challenger, did not successfully convey the image agenda to the media's agenda. Although neither of the two candidates built an effective and positive media image, Bush's positive attribute agenda and McBride's substantive attribute agenda had a significant link with the public opinion data.

Kiouisis, Kim, McDevitt and Ostrowski (2009) examined the relationship between information subsidies, candidate news releases and political advertisements, and media coverage during the 2006 campaign in nine states, which were selected and balanced in terms of regional

influence, sociopolitical culture and state size. A total of 348 campaign messages from 17 candidates and 301 news stories were collected for analysis. This study found a median correlation coefficient of .48 between the salience of issues in news releases and the salience of issues in news media. 11 of the 17 candidates' news releases were significantly correlated with the news media coverage on the level of .05 or higher. For the salience of issue attributes, the median correlation was .66. Only 6 of the 17 candidates successfully influenced the issue attributes in the media content. One possible reason for this low ratio of successful attribute agenda building might lie in the coding schema for attributes. The attributes they used originated from framing theory, which may not be suitable for analyzing the attribute salience. Because the number of political ads included in the study is only 36, the results for the political advertisements do not stand strong enough in terms of statistics. Future studies may implement a better way to test the effects of political advertisements on media content.

Besides the government, interest groups, as another kind of political force, also exert their influence on the media. What they try to do is transfer their agenda to the media's agenda and shape perceptions of their images among the public. Their goals are to gain more support or recognition from the public. For example, the Christian Coalition, founded by Christian broadcaster Pat Robertson in 1989, tried to change the group's negative images and over-conservative agenda beginning in the early 1990's (Huckins, 1999). The Christian American is the group's official newspaper, which serves as a platform to reflect the agenda of the organization. Since the media descriptions of the Christian Coalition changed around 1993, one can conclude that the organization, acting as the information source, successfully upgraded its image in the media. The first step of the study sought to determine the direction of the influence between the Christian American and the media. The cross-lag analysis showed that for two

periods in 1992 and two periods in 1994, the issue agenda of the Coalition at time 1 set the media's agenda for time 2. The results from the analysis showed that the overall tone toward the Coalition, which was measured on a three point scale (positive=3, neutral=2, negative=1), changed from 1.49 to 1.76 ($p < .002$). Therefore, the Coalition successfully set the issue agenda of the media and increased the overall tone of its images.

In a corporate sphere and in a conflicting environment, the need for companies to get their messages to the media has become increasingly important (Ohl, Pincus, Rimmer, & Harrison, 1995). Corporations actively use public relations activities to gain support from the media or from stakeholders.

The takeover battle between MBF (MAI/Basic Four) and Prime Computer provided a good opportunity to examine how the public relation departments of two competing companies persuaded audiences to sell or buy their shares through the press releases and the media (Ohl et al., 1995). The key variables for the study were length and issue salience of the news reports. Prime Computer got stories 80% longer than MBF in average. In addition, the press was more likely to convey the point of views of Prime, while MBF received more neutral coverage. The 9-month battle ended when Prime Computer signed a more favorable contract with another company. The successful defense of Prime Computer was partially because the executives of the company were willing to contact the press more often with follow-up information to explain company views, which resulted in longer and more elaborate stories.

Another study which examines first-level agenda building in a corporate sphere was done by Ragas, Kim, and Kiouisis (2011). In the 2008 Yahoo! Inc.–Carl Icahn proxy contest, the incumbent Yahoo! Inc. board of directors competed for the control of Yahoo!'s board with a billionaire investor, Carl Icahn, and his team. Using the cross-lag analysis method, the study

proved that the correlation of time 1 information subsidies with time 2 news coverage was significantly higher than the correlation of time 2 information subsidies with time 1 news coverage. The results suggested that the financial media coverage responded to the salient issues of information subsidies from candidates rather than the other way around.

Tracing the impact of public relations activities on corporate reputations, Kiouisis, Popescu, and Mitrook (2007) found that companies' increased salience in public relations materials stimulated increased object salience in news coverage. To measure corporate reputation, the 2005 Reputation Quotient by Harris Interactive was retrieved. Also, they found a positive relationship between the positive tone of public relations messages and media content. Among the substantive attributes in the PR materials, the following was found to be significantly correlated with the media's content: vision and leadership, social responsibility, emotional appeal, products/services and financial performance. However, a transfer of object and attribute salience in media messages to perceptions of corporate reputation did not occur.

As the technology jumps, in addition to looking at traditional media, scholars have explored the role of digital communications tools such as blogs, websites, YouTube and Facebook. A study by Sweeter, Golan and Wanta (2008) incorporated three types of media outlets during the 2004 Presidential Election: network television broadcast stories, campaign-produced televised advertisements and official campaign blog posts. The total sample size was 2771. They found strong correlations between the issue agendas of candidates' blogs and that of news coverage. However, the direction of influence was from the media to the candidates' blogs. The results indicated that the candidates reacted to media coverage in their blogs. The candidates may treat the blogs as a useful tool to explain in more details the issues covered by the media.

Websites have been identified as an important news source for the traditional news media (Whillock, 1997). During the 2000 Presidential Election campaign, Ku, Kaid and Pfau (2003) found reciprocal relations among the candidates' websites and the news coverage in newspapers and on television. The candidates' blog agendas at Time 1 had an impact on the traditional media agendas at Time 2 and 3. But Gore's blogs and traditional news coverage showed reciprocal relations at Time 2 and Time 3. G. W. Bush's websites had a greater impact on traditional media than Gore's. Overall, the study found agenda building evidence and revealed some complexity of the relationship between the websites and the traditional media in political campaigns.

Activist groups also utilized websites as a communications tool. MoveOn.org is one of the largest and most well-known Web-based political activist organizations in the world. During the primary period of the 2008 Presidential Election, the organization launched an ad contest, "Obama in 30 Seconds". Ragas and Kiousis (2010) analyzed three ad agendas, including Obama in 30 Seconds, MoveOn.org and Obama campaign, along with the partisan news agenda, The Nation. They found robust correlation between the issue agenda of the Obama in 30 Seconds ads and the news coverage in The Nation ($r=.93$), which is another strong support for agenda building.

Some studies focus on the second level of agenda building. They try to answer the question of how sources influence the media coverage of an object. The news coverage of a specific event, for instance, may be analyzed in respect to the sources and the transfer of attribute salience.

Examining the direct quotes in the newspaper stories about Hurricane Andrew, Salwen (1995) reported that sources directed coverage to particular topics within this context. For example, military officials and volunteers were quoted more frequently than others regarding

assistance and coordination initiatives. Sources were also likely to engage in self-praise. For example, individuals were more likely to praise fellow individuals in one group for assisting each other in time of need. The other interesting finding is that state and local government in the area of the disaster repeatedly blamed federal officials and agencies for failing to respond quickly enough to the hurricane.

During another crisis, the 2006 evacuation of Americans from war-torn Lebanon, sources played a role in shaping media coverage (Sweeter & Brown, 2008). Providing the media with access to the on-scene personnel resulted in a more positive tone in the news coverage, while telephone or video interviews with practitioners or with leadership at off-site headquarters resulted in more successfully communicating talking points or attributes of this event.

In a recent study by Kim et al. (2010), the relationship among the presidential candidates' speeches, press releases and foreign media coverage was analyzed. They collected the candidate campaign speeches and press releases from the official websites, and foreign news coverage from seven countries. The study found significant positive correlation of first-level agenda building between the public relation messages and the global media coverage. Although the results failed to support the hypothesis for the relationships between the salience of attributes and overall tone between public relations messages and media content, second-level agenda building was partially observed for the salience of affective attributes for political figures.

From this review, solid evidence for agenda building has been found. However, the results and the strength of the correlation varied. Therefore, it is important to further analyze the relationship between the information sources and the media coverage.

Framing

Although the framing theory is not the interest of the current study, it is necessary to declare the linkages among framing, agenda setting and agenda building. The relationship between agenda setting, agenda building and framing theory has been discussed for a long time in the literature. Agenda setting and agenda building researchers have argued that the terms attributes and frames can be used interchangeably (e.g. McCombs, 1994). Other scholars posit that framing is a distinguishable paradigm from which other theories can get fruitful insights. Since framing itself is quite fractured with roots in different disciplines, it is necessary to clarify the boundaries and definitions applied in the field of communication, including this study.

Entman (1993) stated a widely cited definition of framing:

“To frame is to select aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p.52).

This definition suggests the origin of framing is attribution theory and that people make causal judgments about the complex information they encounter every day. More specifically, Entman (1993) explained the meanings of the four components of framing as follows:

“define problems-determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; diagnose causes-identify the forces creating the problem; make moral judgments-evaluate causal agents and their effects; and suggest remedies-offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects” (p. 52).

Frames serve as schemas that guide communicators in organizing and conveying the messages. Entman (1993) also pointed out that one particular frame does not have to include all four functions. In other cases, omission can be as critical as inclusion.

Some psychological experiments support the powerful effects of framing by highlighting and omitting some attributes of the object in question. One famous example is the experiment conducted by Kahneman and Tversky (1984). Although the outcomes of the programs were the same, the subjects preferred the program plans which emphasized gains over those that emphasized losses. This experiment showed that framing influenced people's evaluations of the problem at hand.

The second levels of agenda setting and agenda building can be linked to framing theory. The first level of agenda setting studies the function of the mass media in influencing what people think about, while the second levels of agenda setting and framing guide people in how to think about an issue (Ghanem, 1997). For agenda building, the first level deals with information sources' selection of issues, whereas framing deals with the selection of features or elements of the issue.

Using an analogy to a framed picture, McCombs, Lopez-Escobar and Llamas (2000) distinguished frames by central themes and aspects. However, in the writing of McCombs' 2005 essay, he limited the frames by using a more narrow definition: not all attributes are frames; a frame is a special case of attributes (McCombs, 2005). To be more precise, McCombs understood a frame as a dominant attribute in a message that comprises a central theme, defining a dominant and pervasive perspective on an object. "In another words," McCombs explains, "attributes defining a central theme are frames" (McCombs, 2005, p. 547). In other words, aspects are a general category of attributes. A study by Wanta, Williams and Hu (1991) found

evidence supporting the distinction that certain frames had stronger agenda setting effects than others.

Ghanem (1997) proposed a compelling hypothesis between the first and the second level of agenda setting. Her 1996 study suggested a new hypothesis that increasing the attribute salience of an object on the media's agenda would raise the salience of the object on the public agenda. The results showed that the news coverage of a crime emphasized a frame (that the average person would feel threatened) and that this frame correlated better with the salience of the issue among the public than the total coverage of the issue for the period of time in the study.

In terms of candidates' images, Kiouisis, Bantimaroudis and Ban (1999) questioned whether salient candidate attributes would influence the perceived overall salience of the candidate. In their experiment, the attributes manipulated were educational background (candidate qualification) and corruption level (personality trait). Controlling for age, education, and race, the substantive attributes had no impact on the overall perceived salience of the candidates. However, they did find that education had a major effect on the perceived affective salience of the candidates, in that educated candidates were found to be more appealing than less educated candidates.

Kiouisis (2005) performed a time-series analysis of 7 presidential candidates' images from 1980 to 1996. Moral quality (personality traits) showed a more robust median correlation than leadership (qualification), while intellectual ability (personality traits) produced no significant results. The study demonstrated that media salience of moral quality did increase candidate salience; thus, the hypothesis was supported and the argument compelling.

As this study will examine the media images of only one president, it is not possible to further test the compelling argument hypothesis. However, this section helped to clarify the

differences between frames and attributes. This study is trying to find the central themes for the media images of the new president; the terms attribute and frame will be used interchangeably.

Mediated Public Diplomacy and Foreign News

Governments become interested and active in dealing with other countries' media. They try to use the "soft power" to "achieve desired outcomes in international affairs through attraction rather than coercion" (Nye & Owen, 1996, p.21). Public diplomacy represents "efforts by the government of one nation to influence public or elite opinion in a second nation for the purpose of turning the foreign policy of the target nation to advantage" (Manheim, 1994, p. 4). This definition shows the attempt of the foreign nations to influence foreign policy and the public opinion of the target nation.

The way to influence the foreign media is through mediated public diplomacy. Mediated public diplomacy is "the initial step in a public diplomacy process" (Sheafer & Gabay, 2009, p. 448). Here, the media plays an important role. Scholars have realized that the public, leaders and the media of a country are interdependent (e.g. Baum & Potter, 2008).

The media serves as the primary link between leaders and the public. Public information and public relations officers consider the media as the purveyors of government information. They provide journalists with information subsidies, such as hand-outs, brochures, meeting documents and conversations (Turk & Franklin, 1988). This process involves agenda building. The public considers the media to be information providers. In their role as democratic citizens, members of the public demand to obtain information (Baum & Potter, 2008). From there, the media has power to influence the public opinion, which involves agenda setting.

Foreign nations are psychologically and physically far away in the perceptions of the people in a certain country. Although international tourism has thrived recently, most ordinary people still depend on media to get information about other nations, especially current events. In fact, news wires and big news organizations disseminate the largest part of foreign news. Larson (1982) reported that about 70 to 80 percent of network TV news on foreign affairs originates from news wires. Meyer (1989) found that the more news agencies there are stationed in a nation, the more coverage the nation receives.

It has been demonstrated by agenda setting and agenda building studies that the news powerfully influences what people think about and how they affectively perceive things. People's perceptions of the world or larger universe are rarely the results of personal and direct observation and experience (Lang & Lang, 1981). Instead, people understand the world by taking in the second-hand information from the mass media reports (Lipmann, 1922). Images of the world presented by the media can influence the "picture in our heads" (Lipmann, 1922).

Therefore, foreign news has the power to influence the perceptions of people about foreign nations. For example, Wanta, Golan and Lee (2004) examined the correlation between international news coverage and perceived importance to the U.S. of 21 foreign countries along with U.S. attitudes toward 26 foreign countries. The result showed that the more negative coverage a foreign nation received in the U.S., the more likely Americans perceived the nation negatively. However, news coverage about foreign nations in the U.S. media is predominantly negative (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Gonzenbach, Arant, & Stevenson, 1992).

The mediated diplomacy actors, foreign nations, try to use information subsidies to influence the media in other nations. The goal is to build good and positive images and to have favorable framing of one nation's policy penetrate the media of foreign countries (Entman, 2008).

One way to increase attraction is using the media to “express interest in negotiation, to build confidence, and to mobilize public support for agreement” (Gilboa, 2002, p.741). The leaders utilize the global media to build positive images in the target nations in order to further influence the elite people and the foreign policy making.

From previous review, information subsidies provided by the sources have an impact on the media content (e.g. Turk, 1985). Through speeches, press releases and public relations activities, political figures of foreign nations provide the global media with sufficient information in the hopes that the media can follow their agenda.

This process is actually mediated public diplomacy, which extends the agenda building study to the international context. During the 2008 presidential election, Kim, Xiang and Kiouisis (2011) found a positive linkage between the public relations messages of presidential candidates and the global media coverage. The salience of candidates is similar between the public relations messages and the global media coverage. The study failed to support the second-level agenda building effect.

Some scholars have noticed the important role of foreign public relations activities. Studies on the relationship between public relations activities and global media coverage generate mixed results. Kiouisis and Wu (2008) reported that public relations counsel was associated with a decrease in the amount of negative coverage and an increase in the positive coverage for the conflict and U.S. involvement frames, which means there was a more favorable and friendly tone. During the three-month public relations campaign launched by the Chinese government, there was evidence that the campaign decreased the amount of negative newspaper coverage of China in September and October more than in August (Zhang & Cameron, 2003). Similar findings were reported by other studies (Albritton & Manheim, 1983, 1985). However,

Lee and Hong (2012) discovered no relationship between the dollar amount or number of contracts with public relations agencies and the prominence or valence of the news coverage of these foreign nations.

The review above shows that public relations activities and the information subsidies of the foreign government have certain impact on the news media in the target country. China offers a good opportunity to further test agenda building in the international context and the mediated public diplomacy process. In the following section, I will explain why studying China's new president can forward agenda building research.

Mediated Political Personalization and China's New President

According to Ding (2011), a national image is "a judgment of a state's character and past behavior, which is used by others to predict its future behavior" (p. 295). National images are difficult to control in opinion holders and may vary.

Why is national image important? Finlly, Holsti and Fagen (1967) explained the following: "emotional attitudes toward various foreign countries crystallize earlier than the assimilation of even the most rudimentary factual knowledge about them ... [B]ecause friends are expected to be friendly and enemies to be hostile there is a tendency to view others' behavior in line with these expectations" (p. 26).

This explanation of certain images suggests that the perceived national images by other countries as cooperators or rivals influence their attitudes toward this country.

Why do the images of the president matter? In both local and international context, the media is increasingly focused on national leaders at the expense of other aspects of the political process (Balmas & Sheaffer, 2013a). According to Gans (1979), the rationale behind the trend is

that “national news is, by definition, about the nation, and so the most frequent actors in the news are inevitably individuals who play a role in national activities” (p. 8). The tendency of putting the news media focus on leaders of larger organizations or social movements is called *mediated political personalization* (Balmas & Sheafer, 2013a, b). To be precise, it is defined as “a change in the presentation of politics in the media, as expressed in a heightened focus on individual politicians and a diminished focus on parties, organizations, and institutions” (Balmas & Sheafer, 2013a, p.455). Since the public gets foreign news from the mass media, mediated international personalization may affect the public understanding of a foreign nation.

Balmas and Sheafer (2013a) found that the more charismatic skills a national leader has, the more news coverage he/she will get. Charismatic skills include rhetorical and speech ability, nonverbal communication ability, a flair for dramatic performance, star quality and appeal. The scores were measure on a scale of 1 to 7. However, the study is limited to six Western countries’ leaders. With this limitation, the study still provided insights into the factors that influence mediated political personalization.

In a later article, Balmas and Sheafer (2013b) proposed a lighthouse metaphor, that the leaders of faraway foreign countries can be compared to the lighthouses. The attention of the media in a pair of distant countries will be directed primarily to the other country’s leader. Proximity is the most important factor. In the study, there are four types of proximity: value proximity, political proximity, economic relatedness and geographic proximity.

According to Inglehart and Welzel (2010), social value proximity can be detected by the survival versus self-expression dimension, which reflects polarization between emphasis on economic security and conformity and emphasis on self-expression, participation, trust and quality of life concerns. Political proximity was operationalized as the level of congruence of

policy-related actions because they share strategic interests (Maoz, Kuperman, Terris, & Talmud, 2006). The more bilateral trade and the closer the distance between countries, the more economic relatedness and geographic proximity they share (Shoemaker et al., 2007).

The study offered evidence showing significant negative relationships among the four dimensions of proximity and the amount of news coverage of the leaders. The more similarities a pair of countries has, the less the focus of the media is on their leaders. The study also found a positive impact of a country's military and economic power on the mediated political personalization trend. However, because the study was, again, based on six Western countries, the generalized results are waiting to be found.

China is a distant country to the U.S. in many aspects. China has a social value of collectivism whereas the U.S. values self-expression. China is ruled by one communist party whereas the U.S. has the Senate and the House of Representatives. Although bilateral trade has increased over the years between the two countries, they are still very different. According to the lighthouse metaphor, it is possible that the media coverage of China in the U.S. media will increasingly focus on the president, especially when China has a new president.

On March 14, 2013, Mr. Xi Jinping was confirmed as the new President of China. Earlier, in November 2012, he had received the titles of Party Secretary-General and Chair of the Central Military Commission.

This timing offers a wonderful opportunity to examine international agenda building through an investigation of how China uses its media sources to influence global media coverage about its new president. One reason for this choice of Xi is because he has been in power for only two and half years at the time of writing; thus, the public in the U.S. has not yet formed a precise impression of this new president. In other words, because he has not done much in his

new role, people cannot judge him based on his past achievements or failures. All the information the world can get is from news releases of the Chinese government or from public activities. Thus, it is an ideal time to examine how the Chinese government uses the mass media to build the images of this new president.

Second, because China is geographically distant from the U.S., this particular case can be used to study whether or how the news plays a role in shaping the image of China's new president. Seldom do journalists have the chance to meet China's president in person and to conduct an in-depth interview. It has happened only three times since the establishment of the new China. Therefore, the only source to get information on China's president is the Chinese media. The only Chinese media outlet to get news of the president and public relations activities is the Xinhua News Agency.

The Xinhua News Agency enjoys the privilege of reporting international and politically-sensitive news. It takes orders directly from the State Council. All news in China's newspapers or on TV about the president is solely from the news releases of the Xinhua News Agency, without exception. Thus, the Xinhua news on President Xi is an effective case for uncovering and examining the kinds of images the Chinese government wants to present to the world.

So far, several articles have analyzed the media portrayals of China and the effects of the public relations activities. Global television news coverage of China concentrated on politics, internal order, foreign affairs, sports, and business/economy (Willnat & Luo, 2011). Between 1985 and 1993, Goodman (1999) found that among the stories in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, 24 percent of them dealt with severe crisis, 70 percent with conflict, and 32 percent with violence. Peng (2004) noticed that in *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles*

Times between 1992 and 2001, the overall tone coverage of China was negative, especially in terms of political and ideological frames.

It seems that the Chinese media and Western media take different perspectives for news reporting. In a comparative study, Wu (2006) examined and compared the news coverage of HIV/AIDS in China by the Xinhua News Agency of China with the *Associated Press* of the United States in 2004. He found that an anti-government frame was evident in *AP*'s report, whereas Xinhua's coverage had articulated a pro-government frame. *AP* took up three other evident frames: the dishonesty/oppression frame, the human rights abuser frame, and the incompetence frame. *AP* criticized the Chinese government for trying to cover the true situation of AIDS/HIV, demanded better treatment of patients affected with AIDS/HIV, and claimed they did not actively and sufficiently address this problem.

Although China makes a strong commitment to be a peaceful and responsible rising power, Ding (2011) pointed out that China lacks sufficient political credibility to become a capable manager of its national image. Some governance issues (such as widespread corruption, social injustice, unsafe toys, or contaminated food) reduce the positivity of national images. Also, the need to buttress the legitimacy of the ruling party engendered an upsurge of Chinese nationalism, which generated an anti-western attitude.

Literature Review Overview

Ever since Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, hundreds of studies have supported the claim that the media affects the perceptions of audiences regarding the world around them. McCombs and Shaw (1972) conducted the first study of agenda setting, focusing on the salience transfer of objects from the media's agenda to the public agenda. Later, agenda setting research was

expanded to the monitoring of salience transfer of attributes, including the substantive dimension and affective dimension (e.g. Weaver, McCombs, & Shaw, 2004).

The concept of agenda building has been established in the field of public relations. According to the review by Denham (2010), three types of agenda building studies can be identified: policy agenda building, media agenda building, and public agenda building. Among them, media agenda building is the focus of this study, which investigates how the information sources shape the media's content. Sources provide information subsidies to journalists at a low cost with an intention to pass their messages through the information subsidies onto the media's agenda.

This type of agenda building study accepts the theoretical framework of agenda setting. Thus, agenda building can be defined as the process by which sources try to use information subsidies to influence the media content in terms of the salience of objects and attributes, and what kind of tone is used to describe the attribute.

Evidence of agenda building has been accumulated over the years. Many studies examine agenda building in the political campaign context. For example, Kioussis, Kim, McDevitt and Ostrowski (2009) found that information subsidies provided by the campaign candidates influenced the issue agenda of the media. 6 out of 17 candidates successfully influenced the issue attributes of the media's content. In addition to political figures, interest groups (Huckins, 1993), corporations (Ohl, Pincus, Rimmers, & Harrison, 1995), and groups involved in a given event (Salwen, 1995) all exerted some extent of impact on the media's content.

This study tries to further test agenda building in an international context. The trend of mediated political personality in international news coverage suggests the importance of studying the political figures in foreign countries. Foreign nations and foreign political figures

are geographically and psychologically distant. The news media is the main source to know what is happening in foreign nations. Since the media can set the agenda of the public, it also has the power to influence the perceptions of the political figures and foreign nations.

On March 14, 2013, China gained a new president, Xi Jinping. This historical moment presents a good opportunity to see how China portrays its new president in news releases. Based on the only official news outlet, the Xinhua News Agency and to further examine agenda building, this study explores the transfer of issue and attribute agendas from the Xinhua News Agency to the U.S. media of the news coverage of President Xi.

Hypotheses

According to the theoretical framework of agenda building, here are three proposed hypotheses:

H1

The salience of issues about President Xi in the news of the Xinhua News Agency will be transferred to the issue agenda of the U.S. media.

H2

The salience of substantive attributes about President Xi in the news of the Xinhua News Agency will be transferred to the substantive attribute agenda of the U.S. media.

H3

The salience of affective attributes about President Xi in the news of the Xinhua News Agency will be transferred to the affective attribute agenda of the U.S. media.

CHAPTER THREE METHOD

Overview

The purpose of this study is to test for agenda building by examining the transfer of salience of issues and attributes between the government-controlled Xinhua News Agency and elite American news organizations. As argued by Entman (2008), mediated public diplomacy will result in the ability to shape or influence foreign media coverage of the nation and its leaders. Therefore, the current study will examine the ability of the Xinhua news reports to influence the US media during the selected time periods. These periods represent the time of the two most important conferences in China, the Communist Party of China National Congress and the National People's Congress from 2012 to 2014.

The content analyses conducted are seeking to determine the salient issues and attributes on the agendas of the Xinhua News Agency and the U.S. media, which includes one news agency - *The Associated Press* - and three major newspapers - *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*. By comparing media agendas from two sides, the flow of salience of issues and attributes can be monitored. By comparing the salient issues and attributes presented on the Xinhua agenda with the U.S. media agenda, it is possible to estimate whether the Chinese government succeeds in establishing intentionally designed presidential images in the foreign media.

This study is going to contribute to the theory of agenda building and mediated public diplomacy by analyzing content from the media agenda and monitoring the salience transfer between information sources and the media.

Sources

The purposive sample selected for this current study consists of one Chinese news outlet, one U.S. news wire and three elite American newspapers. News articles are from five media outlets, the Xinhua News Agency, the *Associated Press*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*. The news articles from the Xinhua News Agency consist of the issue and attribute agenda that the Chinese government shows to the world. The *Associated Press*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* represent the agenda of the U.S. media.

The choice of the five media outlets is representative. First, the Xinhua News Agency enjoys the privilege of reporting domestic and international news. It is one of the world's largest news wires and serves hundreds of domestic newspapers in China. Second, as the only source of getting information about the president, news from Xinhua News Agency is strictly controlled by the government. All the news about the important politicians is, without exception, from the Xinhua News Agency. It is the only source of international news for the domestic media. The Xinhua news has an English version that targets overseas readers. Thus, the Xinhua news about President Xi is a good source to get the clues as to what kind of image the Chinese government wants to present.

The *Associated Press*, often called the “Marine Corps of journalism”, is always the first to report history's most important moments, such as the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the bombing of Pearl Harbor (Associated Press, 2014). Created in 1846, it became one of the three global news agencies to have offices in most countries of the world. Wire services doubtless have great influence on other media (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The local media are influenced greatly by the agenda of the wire services (Whitney & Becker, 1980). Therefore, the

Associated Press can be the source of other U.S. media, which qualifies it as an important U.S. media outlet in this study.

The three newspapers are considered to be elite newspapers, widely included in the content analysis of studies of agenda setting (e.g. Roberts & McCombs, 1994). Also, these elite newspapers have influence on other forms of media, such as television network news (Reese & Danielian, 1989). *The New York Times* established its reputation gradually by reporting on many important events. For example, the *New York Times* journalist Van Anda was the first to report the sinking of the Titanic by combing through vaguely worded telegraph reports (New York Times, 2013). The paper has won over 100 Pulitzer Prizes, the annually announced awards honoring the most outstanding news reporting and journalists (The New York Times, 2013). In general, *The New York Times* is regarded as a reliable news producer and has achieved this reputation worldwide.

The Wall Street Journal has the largest circulation of any newspaper in the U.S., maintaining 2,378,827 subscribers as of March 31, 2013, (Alliance for Audited Media, 2013 April), which means it has the largest audience among the U.S. print media. This point alone can show the great influence of *The Wall Street Journal*. *The Washington Post* has a reputation similar to *The New York Times*. The most famous event in the history of *The Washington Post* is the Watergate Scandal reporting. The investigation of two *Post* journalists, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon. With a large circulation, *The Washington Post* has national influence on domestic and international issues. Compared to other media, such as *USA Today*, *The Washington Post* provides more international coverage, which offers enough news of China for analysis.

Thus, by analyzing the news articles of President Xi in the *Associated Press*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*, it is possible to get a general picture of how the U.S. media portray President Xi.

Selection of Sample

The purposive sampling of the news is retrieved from the Factiva database, using keyword “Xi Jinping” for the sampled periods. There are two sampled periods. The first sampled period is from November 7, 2012, to March 18, 2013. The era of Xi started in November 2012. On November 8, 2012, the 18th Communist Party of China National Congress was opened in Beijing. During this conference, Xi Jinping was elected as the general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, and the Chairman of Central Military Commission. On March 14, 2013, Xi was elected as the president of China and chairman of the Central Military Commission at the First Session of the Twelfth National People’s Committee. Since then, Xi became the head of the party, the nation, and the military.

The second sampled period is from November 19, 2013, to March 12, 2014. This period is a duplication of the first, bounded by two conferences. The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC National Congress happened in November 2013. This conference approved a decision on "major issues concerning comprehensively deepening reforms", which is the guideline of the reforms in the economy and other aspects. The Second Session of the Twelfth National People’s Committee was opened in the shade of the Kunming terrorist attack, which happened on the Saturday before the conference.

Previous studies had the similar reasoning for selection of key events and important periods, which have intense news coverage. Key events provided opportunities to examine the

issue and attribute agendas the information subsidies convey. For example, Zhang and Cameron (2002) monitored the news coverage during the international public relations campaigns held by the Chinese government. Many studies analyzed the news coverage during the political campaigns (e.g. Golan, Kiouisis, & McDaniel, 2007; Kiouisis, 2004; Kiouisis et al., 2013).

For 2012-2013, Factiva initially generated 88 articles for the Xinhua News Agency, 109 for *The New York Times*, 37 for *The Washington Post*, 78 for *The Wall Street Journal*, and 55 for the *Associated Press*. For 2013-2014, 95 articles were generated for the Xinhua News Agency, 109 for *The New York Times*, 24 for *The Washington Post*, 52 for *The Wall Street Journal*, and 41 for the *Associated Press*.

A review was conducted to filter out the news stories that were not qualified as news about President Xi. After the review, there were 282 stories in the sample pool – for 2012-2013, 24 stories from *The New York Times*, 14 from *The Washington Post*, 9 from *The Wall Street Journal*, 15 from the *Associated Press*, and 72 from the Xinhua News Agency; for 2013-2014, 19 stories from *The New York Times*, 15 from *The Washington Post*, 12 from *The Wall Street Journal*, 9 from the *Associated Press*, and 93 from the Xinhua News Agency. Overall, the current sample includes 165 from Xinhua and 117 from U.S. media outlets; this indicates that the Chinese media is far more interested in the agenda building of President Xi than is the U.S. media.

Key Variables

The unit of analysis for the current study is the individual article. Each article was coded for the following three components: issue, substantive attribute and affective attribute. The unit of observation is meaningful phrases that represent issues or substantive attributes.

The issues are coded as the following: crime/corruption; culture/sports/tourism; disaster; disputed territories (Taiwan/Tibet/South China Sea/Diaoyu island); domestic policy; economy/business/trade; environment; human interests/human rights; internal politics; international politics; military; science/technology; social issues (education/social welfare/health); terrorism/unrest. Each article was the coded for the (1) presence and (2) non-presence of the issues.

For example, establishment of a new organization, such as the new national security commission headed by Xi, was coded as internal politics. The following sentence was coded as culture/sport/tourism: “the two sides should take the celebration of the establishment of diplomatic ties as an opportunity to increase cultural exchanges, tourism, and student exchanges to cement the friendship between the Chinese and French people” (Liu, 2013, Dec 6).

One other coder helped with content analysis. The coder was a senior college student, who had previous experience in academic studies and coding. The intercoder reliability was calculated based on 10% of the sample. Scott’s pi (1955) produced an intercoder reliability of .84, which is an optimal agreement level.

Coding schemes from five previous studies contributed to the issues of the current study. One article of agenda setting provided coding schemes of the first-level issue agenda. (Roberts & McCombs, 1994). Two other articles are about agenda building (Kiouisis, Kim, McDevitt, & Ostrowski, 2009; Kiouisis, Mitrook, Wu, & Seltzer, 2010). Both of them scrutinized two levels of agenda building. The last two articles examined the impact of an international public relations campaign launched by the Chinese government in the U.S. (Zhang & Cameron, 2002), and the global TV news coverage of China. The list of their coding schemes is summarized in Table 1.

(Insert Table 1)

From the table we can see that the issue categories of the first three articles are quite similar. It is understandable that those three articles were talking about the U.S. domestic political campaigns and shared similar issue coding schemes. The issue coding schemes of the last two studies are modified for the country in question. For example, the subtopic of abortion did not appear on the China's agenda because of the domestic policy. Common issues appeared in five articles included in the current study were environment, education, economy, crime, terrorism, and science. Internal politics, disaster, international politics, social welfare and culture were extracted from the Zhang and Cameron (2002) article. Human interest, military and technology were shown up in the Willnart and Luo's 2011 article.

The second component is substantive attribute. Each article was coded for the (1) presence and (2) non-presence of substantive attributes, which were consistent with previous studies of agenda building. The substantive categories are from pre-testing and previous academic research. The current study coded for the following: ideology issue positions; commander of the country; work style; leadership; biographical information/work experience; family background; personal traits; determination to reform; peacemaker and cooperator. Scott's pi (1955) produced an intercoder reliability of .76.

For example, descriptions of personal aspects of Xi were coded as personal traits, such as the sentence "Xi Jinping personally has a sense of crisis" (Wong, 2013, November 15). "Xi realizes the imperative for reform but may be hamstrung by a Communist Party fearful of losing its power" was coded as leadership (Richburg, 2012, November 12). The work style attribute can be seen from the sentence: "Xi urged Party officials to follow a selfless work style, divide public and personal matters clearly, give priority to public matters, discreetly wield their power and lead open and honest lives" (Yu, 2014, January 14).

The substantive attributes of the current thesis were adapted from coding schemes of previous studies. In the first second-level agenda setting study of candidates' images – looking specifically at Spanish regional and municipal elections - McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey (1997) defined the substantive attribute dimension using three categories: 1). Ideology and issue positions: this category summarizes the ideological position on specific issues, such as “left-wing” or “right-wing”. 2). Qualifications and experience: this category includes information about biological details of the political figures, or their previous experience in government positions. 3). Personality: this category includes all personal traits and features of the character of the public figures. All the three categories were included into the current study.

The experiment conducted by Kiouisis, Bantimaroudis, and Ban (1999) used the three attribute categories defined by McCombs et al. (1997) and proved that the subjects were highly focused on the political figures' personality: whether the candidate is honest or corrupt. In a more recent study, Kiouisis, Mitrook, Wu and Seltzer (2010) expanded the substantive attribute categories into ideology-issue positions, biological information, perceived qualifications, personality and integrity. The last category, integrity, referred to whether the candidate is corrupt or not. Biological information was called family background in this current study.

The current study also had other categories that were not used in previous studies. Commander of the country and peacemaker were two functioning roles that President Xi took. Commander of the country would show up if the news was talking about orders or commands given by President Xi. When President Xi met with foreign officials, he would show his willingness to make peaceful relationship as a peacemaker. They were intensely covered in the Xinhua news. Determination to reform was not commonly seen in agenda building or agenda

setting studies. However, for a leader of the country, showing any will of change can be considered as a sign of reform determination.

The third variable is affective attribute, which deals with the overall portrayal of Xi, rated on a five-point Likert scale, (1=very negative, 2=somewhat negative, 3=neutral, 4=somewhat positive, 5=very positive). In the previous studies, a three-point scale, positive, neutral and negative, was often used (e.g. Kiouisis, Mitrook, Wu, & Seltzer, 2010). Adopting a Likert scale, the coding scheme in the current study wants to further differentiate the tone. Scott's pi (1955) produced an intercoder reliability of 0.74.

Very positive and somewhat positive descriptions will show the president's determination and abilities to lead the country, to advance the wellbeing of the society and to keep a good relationship with other countries. For example, one article contains mainly positive comments about Xi and no counterargument, such as "the more down-to-earth style, which is already affecting the way meetings are run, has now been codified in a set of eight new rules released Wednesday", or "he was introducing the more open, free-flowing meeting style at the behest of Xi" (Richburg, 2012 December 6). In this case, it is an article with a very positive tone.

Negative or somewhat negative descriptions will describe the president as lacking experience, as being an unreliable person or as corrupt. Negativity can also show in words that cast doubts on Xi's action. Any tone that has a sense of doubt about this president's behavior will be defined as somewhat negative, because it shows a lack of trust by the reporters toward the new president. For example, after Xi became the leader of five important institutions, some articles cited experts' opinions that Xi may or may not turn the words of reform into actions. In this situation, the affective attribute of the article was coded as somewhat negative. As another example, in the sentence, "by no means are all watchers of Chinese politics sure that Mr. Xi can

avoid misusing his expanded powers, or squandering them on broken promises that breed more social discontent” (Wong, 2013 November 15), the author shows doubts towards Xi regarding the misuse of power. This sentence serves as a sign that the article held a somewhat negative tone.

To determine the degree of very positive and very negative from somewhat positive and negative, the use of extreme words or direct negative comments was the sign. Saying that the president was the “most ambitious” was positive. Calling him a “dictator” was negative. For example, an article which held a very negative tone towards Xi ended the news with the statement, “my friends are all living in fear or exile’, said one of China's leading technology investors” (Browne, 2013 November 12).

A neutral tone reflects a piece comprised of statements of fact. Such articles maintain a neutral tone by stating facts only, and may include some neutral comments from other people. For example, one article in *The Wall Street Journal* (Page, 2013 November 13) listed several facts to support the point of view that Xi had become the most powerful man in China. It cited how Xi had quickly established his authority over the military and launched a campaign against corruption. The new state security committee gave Xi more influence on domestic security and foreign policy. These facts do not state Xi is a good leader or bad leader. The news just states the fact that Xi is now establishing his power in China.

Data Analysis Strategy

Several statistical tests were used to analyze the data and evaluate the hypotheses and research questions. Specifically, the following statistics were used: Spearman’s rho rank-order

correlations, cross-lagged correlations along with the Rozelle-Campbell baseline statistic and ANOVA.

To see the differences between the issue agenda and attribute agenda of China and the U.S. news outlets, Spearman's rho correlations were used to compare the issues and substantive attributes. This method is used in many agenda setting and agenda building studies (Kiousis, Mitrook, Wu & Seltzer, 2006; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Turk, 1985; Weaver, Graber, McCombs & Eyal, 1981). Since the issues and the substantive attributes were recorded as count data, Spearman's rho correlations, which belong to a nonparametric statistics family, are proper for identifying relationships among agendas. While correlations can establish the presence and strength of linkages among the various agendas, significant correlations alone do not prove causality.

To further determine the direction of agenda building effects, cross-lagged correlations were used in analysis. Cross-lagged correlations are an established technique for exploring the direction of agenda setting effect using time-ordered correlational data (Kiousis, Mitrook, Popescu, Shields, & Seltzer, 2006; Lopez-Escobar et al., 1998; Roberts & McCombs, 1994). In a cross-lagged design, the agendas of the issue and attribute of the Xinhua News Agency and the U.S. news outlets were measured at two points in time. The presence or absence of causation is derived by comparing the cross-lagged correlations. The Chinese media agenda at Time 1 should correlate with the agenda of the U.S. media at Time 2. This correlation should be higher than the correlation between the agenda of the Chinese media at Time 2 and the agenda of the U.S. media at Time 1. Time 1 was from November 2012 to March 2013, and Time 2 was from November 2013 to March 2014.

The data of the four U.S. news outlets was aggregated. The reason for simplifying the results is that the sample size of the U.S. news outlets is too small. For example, *The Wall Street Journal* had 9 articles in 2013 and 15 in 2014 which had the necessary criteria.

The Rozelle-Campbell (1969) baseline statistic, which is computed from the other four correlations present in two variable cross-lags, was used to determine the significance of the cross-lagged correlation results. The formula for computing the Rozelle-Campbell baseline is:

$$[(PX1Y1 + PX2Y2)/2]\{[PX1X2]^2 + (PY1Y2)^2\}/2\}^{1/2}$$

Only if the correlation values exceed the Rozell-Campbell baseline is the correlation strong enough to do a comparison with other correlations.

A one-way ANOVA test was used to determine whether there were differences between the tones of the Xinhua News Agency and the U.S. news outlets. If the F-test of ANOVA is significant, a post hoc test, Tukey's HSD (Honestly Significant Difference), is used to see the pairwise differences. Tukey's HSD controlled the alpha level across all comparisons, no matter how many comparisons are made. The current study sets the alpha level at 0.05. First, the critical value, Honestly Significant Difference, was calculated. Then the difference between each pair of means has to exceed the critical value in order to reach significance.

CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS

First-level Agenda Building Findings

Based on the data, the top three issues receiving the most attention of Xinhua are domestic policy (17.1%), international politics (15.5%) and economy (14.1%). The four U.S.

news outlets - *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *Associated Press* - paid more attention to different issues. For *The New York Times*, the top three issues receiving the most attention were internal politics (18.4%), economy (14.3%) and crime/corruption (12.2%). For *The Washington Post*, internal politics occupied 24.6% of the new coverage about President Xi. Crime/corruption (19.7%) and domestic policy (14.8%) ranked second and the third on the list. For *The Wall Street Journal*, internal politics (20.5%) again got the most attention, followed by economy (12.8%). Military (11.5%) and disputed territories (11.5%) formed a tie and both ranked in third place. For the *Associated Press*, internal politics (17.6%) consistently received the most attention, followed by economy (11.8%), crime/corruption (9.4%) and disputed territories (9.4%).

Summing all four U.S. media up, the top three salient issues followed the same pattern as *The New York Times*: internal politics (19.7%), economy (12.9%) and crime/corruption (12.1%). In comparison, only economy remained on the top three salient issues list across the Xinhua issue agenda and the U.S. agenda.

Human rights (0.5%) received the least attention on the agenda of the Xinhua News Agency. The same issue (11.5%), together with economy (11.5%), ranked the fourth on *The Washington Post* agenda. *The Washington Post* did not mention international politics, science/technology, disaster or terrorism/unrest. Disaster was, in fact, ignored by all the U.S. news outlets. *The Wall Street Journal* covered 10 issues out of 15, ignoring culture/sports, science/technology, environment, disaster and terrorism/unrest.

Table 2 reports the salience of the issues for Xinhua News Agency and of the four U.S. news outlets.

(Insert Table 2)

H1 predicted a positive relationship between the salient issues of the Xinhua News Agency's news and of the news coverage of four U.S. media outlets about Chinese President Xi Jinping. The data provided partial support for the hypothesis. Table 3 reports that the salience of issues of the Xinhua News Agency was positively correlated with that of *The New York Times* ($r=.559, p=.030$).

(Insert Table 3)

Looking closely at the data, although only *The New York Times*' issue agenda was closely associated with the Xinhua agenda, the U.S. media organizations' issue agendas had high inter-correlation among themselves. *The New York Times*' issue agenda had statistically significant correlations with *The Washington Post* ($r=.666, p=.007$), *The Wall Street Journal* ($r=.852, p<.000$) and the *Associated Press* ($r=.968, p<.000$). A high correlation existed between *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Associated Press* ($r=.886, p<.000$) as well.

Coming to the cross-lagged comparison, the data shows evidence to answer the first part of RQ 3, demonstrating that the first-level agenda building effect direction is from the Xinhua to the US news media. There was a strong correlation ($r=.847, p<.01$) between the Xinhua issue agenda at Time 1 and the U.S. issue agenda at Time 2. The reverse correlation was close to zero ($r=-.011$). The Rozelle-Campbell baseline is .393. The data proved that the Xinhua News Agency issue agenda influenced the US news outlets issue agenda. Strong correlation ($r=.655, p<.01$) existed between the Xinhua issue agenda at Time 1 and at Time 2, which suggested consistent issue agenda. The same went for the U.S. media issue agenda at Time 1 and Time 2 ($r=.856, p<.01$). Figure 1 showed the cross-lagged results. High correlations indicated intermedia agenda setting among the U.S. media.

(Insert Figure 1)

Second-level Agenda Building Findings

Moving to the second-level of agenda building, the top three substantive attributes on the Xinhua agenda were commander of the country (24.1%), peacemaker and cooperator (20.1%) and determination to reform (17.8%). While determination to reform (22.8%) remained in the top three of *The New York Times* agenda, leadership (15.8%) and work style (14.9%) were the other two most mentioned substantive attributes. *The Washington Post* agenda had determination to reform (23.5%), commander of the country (19.6%) and leadership (15.7%) as the top three substantive attributes. For *The Wall Street Journal*, determination to reform (26.5%) and leadership (26.5%) received the most attention. Ideology-issue positions (10.2%) was in the third place of *The Wall Street Journal* agenda. For the *Associated Press*, the work style (19.4%) received the most attention, followed by determination to reform (16.1%) and leadership (16.1%).

The aggregated counts of the U.S. media shared the same top three substantive attributes: determination to reform (22.1%), leadership (17.8%) and work style (13.8%). Across the four U.S. news outlets, determination to reform and leadership received the prevalent attention. Across all the news outlets, the data showed that determination to reform received great attention from both the Xinhua News Agency and the U.S. media. Experience ranked the lowest across the U.S. agenda, while the family background received the least attention from the Xinhua. Table 4 reports the salience of the substantive attributes for Xinhua News Agency and of the four U.S. news outlets.

(Insert Table 4)

H2 predicted a positive correlation between the salience of substantive attribute of the Xinhua News Agency agenda and that of the U.S. news outlets. Table 5 shows that no significant correlation coefficient was found for H2.

(Insert Table 5)

Despite the insignificant correlation coefficient between the Xinhua and U.S. media agenda, *The New York Times* had high, statistically significant correlations with *The Wall Street Journal* ($r=.889$, $p=.001$) and the *Associated Press* ($r=.775$, $p=.014$). *The Wall Street Journal* was associated with the *Associated Press* as well ($r=.725$, $p=.027$).

To answer the second part of RQ 3, the cross-lagged correlation results showed that there was a medium correlation ($r=.247$) between the Xinhua substantive attribute agenda at Time 1 and the U.S. substantive attribute agenda at Time 2. The reverse correlation was in a negative direction ($r=-.160$). The Rozelle-Campbell baseline is .095. Although both correlations were not significant, the data still provided evidence that the Xinhua substantive attribute agenda influenced the U.S. news outlet substantive attribute agenda. The relationship between Time 1 and Time 2 of the Xinhua agenda was very robust ($r=.958$, $p<.01$). The relationship between Time 1 and Time 2 of the U.S. media agenda was also strong ($r=.698$, $p<.05$). The high correlation scores showed that both Xinhua and the U.S. media had consistent substantive attribute agenda, which implied intermedia agenda setting. Figure 2 showed the cross-lagged results.

(Insert Figure 2)

Shifting to H3 with regards to affective attributes, the overall mean value of the Xinhua News Agency was 4.18 on a scale of 5-point measurement. This suggests that the Xinhua held a positive to very positive tone toward President Xi. The *Associated Press* had a mean of 3.46, a

more positive tone than the other three U.S. news outlets. *The Wall Street Journal* followed closely behind with a mean of 3.23. Whereas the *Associated Press* and *The Wall Street Journal* showed a slightly positive tone, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* tended to use negative tone. *The New York Times* had a mean of 2.78, lower than neutral tone. *The Washington Post* had the lowest mean, 2.62, among all the five news outlets.

The F-test indicated significant differences among the groups ($F=69.862$, $p<.000$). According to Tukey's HSD test, all comparison between the Xinhua and the U.S. affective attribute turned out to be significant at .01 level. *The New York Times* was statistically significantly different from the *Associated Press* in terms of the affective attribute ($p=.002$). The affective attribute mean of *The Washington Post* differed significantly from the affective attribute mean of the *Associated Press* ($p=.001$) and *The Wall Street Journal* ($p=.048$). The results showed that *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* had the same tone whereas the *Associated Press* and *The Wall Street Journal* were about the same in tone. Table 6 demonstrated the ANOVA results of the differences of the affective attribute between the Xinhua News Agency and the four U.S. news outlets.

(Insert Table 6)

CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION

This study analyzed the first- and second-level agenda building relationship in the context of mediated public diplomacy by comparing news coverage of President Xi Jinping from the Chinese government controlled news agency and from U.S. news organizations. Specifically,

this study tested for the transfer of issue and attribute salience between the Xinhua News Agency and four U.S. news outlets, which included *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Associated Press*. The sample in this study covered two periods, from November 2012 to March 2013 and from November 2013 to March 2014. These two periods covered the two important annual conferences of the Chinese government and the interim time.

The first- and second-level of agenda setting hypotheses deal with the transfer of salience of issues and attributes from the media to the public. Media coverage has the potential to influence perceived salience of issues and attributes of an object in public opinion. An object can be an event, a person or a fact. Consistent with agenda setting, the first- and second-level of agenda building hypotheses deal with the transfer of salience of issues from public relations information subsidies to media coverage. The second-level of agenda building consists of substantive and affective attributes. Information subsidies, such as news releases, have the potential to influence salience of substantive and affective attributes in media coverage.

Mediated public diplomacy puts the media in the center role of international public diplomacy activities. Media is an intermediary between organizations and the public. Foreign countries, such as China, make many public relations efforts to influence U.S. media coverage with the intention of influencing public opinions about them. One of their efforts is to send out information subsidies with the hope that the foreign journalist can take the information and report on it.

The images of foreign leaders are important to influencing the agenda of international news coverage. As a distant country to the U.S., news coverage of China by the U.S. media has a tendency to focus on the leader of the country at the expense of other aspects of the political

process. This phenomenon is called mediated political personalization (Balmas & Sheaffer, 2013a, b).

To build positive images of the leaders, China has to transfer their agenda to the media agenda of another nation, especially when China has a new leader. President Xi came to power in November 2012, less than two years before the time this thesis was written. It offered a great opportunity to examine whether China is able to transfer their agenda to the US media.

Agenda Building Effects

Overall, the study found some evidence to support H1 about the first-level of agenda building. A significant correlation was only found between the issue agenda of the Xinhua News Agency and *The New York Times*. The result suggested that Xinhua only managed to transfer the salient issue agenda to *The New York Times*. The cross-lagged correlation results determined the direction of agenda building effects. The correlation between the Xinhua issue agenda at Time 1 and the U.S. issue agenda at Time 2 was much higher than the Xinhua issue agenda at Time 2 and the U.S. issue agenda at Time 1.

Coming to H2, the study found no significant correlation between the Xinhua agenda and the agendas of the U.S. news organizations in terms of the substantive attributes. Looking at the data closely, one substantive attribute, determination to reform, captured the attention of the US news outlets. It ranked third in the Xinhua agenda, first in *The New York Times* agenda, *The Washington Post* agenda and *The Wall Street Journal* agenda, and second in the Associated Press agenda. The Xinhua's substantive attribute agenda focuses on depicting President Xi as a commander and a peacemaker. The two roles are both functional roles; one for internal affairs, another for international politics. The U.S. news outlets put their attention on more people-

related characteristics, such as work style and leadership. The cross-lagged results suggested the direction of the influence was from the Xinhua substantive attribute agenda at Time 1 to the substantive attribute agenda of the US news organizations at Time 2, despite the weak correlation between the two.

Looking at affective attribute, it was not surprising to get a positive tone from the Xinhua news coverage of President Xi. But it was interesting to see that *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Associated Press* held a neutral to positive tone toward the new president. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* had a more critical and negative tone.

Another contribution of the current study is that the results demonstrate the effects of inter-media agenda setting. Interestingly, the correlations among issue agendas of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Associated Press* were all significant and strong. What's more, high inter-correlations were also found among substantive attribute agendas of the four U.S. news outlets. The cross-lagged correlations showed that the issue agenda and substantive attribute agenda of the U.S. news organizations combined were highly significant between Time 1 and Time 2. Similar relationship was found for the Xinhua's issue agenda.

Derived from the news diffusion theory of Breed (1955), inter-media agenda setting explores the interaction among the news organizations and the influence of mass media agendas on each other (Lopez-Escobar et al., 1998). In a review by McCombs (2006), it is pointed out that journalists routinely observe the work of elite news organizations such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Also, journalists follow certain news factors to determine the news worthiness of nations or international events. Factors include normative deviance of an event, relevance to the United States, potential for social change, geographical distance,

magnitude of economic interaction and availability of news sources (Chang, Shoemaker, and Brendlinger, 1987; Wu, 2000). Chang et al. (2012) found the values of U.S. editors in foreign news reporting did not change in the last two decades.

The current study provided evidence to support the existence of an intermedia agenda setting effect. All four U.S. media outlets had highly correlated issue agendas and substantive attribute agendas. The results showed that U.S. news media get salience from each other. The findings were consistent with other studies regarding international news coverage. For example, Golan (2006) argued that the international news agenda of the morning edition of an elite newspaper (*The New York Times*) had highly significant correlation with the international news agendas of the ABC, CBS and NBC evening news broadcasts. Goodrum, Godo, and Hayter (2011) reported the issue rankings of news coverage about China for four Canadian news outlets. By using their data, Spearman's rho correlation showed significant relationship among the issue agendas of the four Canadian news media. The correlation results were not reported in their original article. Other studies had reported inter-media agenda setting in local news reporting. For example, Roberts and McCombs (1994) found the political candidates' television advertisements had an impact on the newspaper and television news agenda.

McCombs (2006) pointed out that most of the research documenting homogeneity is based on issue agendas. He called for more research of homogeneous attribute agendas. The current study has proved that the homogeneity existed among substantive attribute agendas of the elite news organizations.

In addition, the current study had proved that the U.S. media tend to have similar agenda regarding foreign news reporting. By comparing the news coverage of the Arab Spring of the *International Herald Tribune* and the European edition of *The Wall Street Journal*, Golan (2013)

found that elite American newspapers held similar perspectives regarding salient international events. An earlier paper written by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) found similarity between the television news coverage and the print media news coverage of the Amsterdam meetings of European heads of state in 1997. Significant differences were found between sensationalist vs. serious types of news outlets. The results indicated that elite media in Europe also shared the similar agendas regarding news coverage of international events. In a more current study about the news coverage of the EU election across the European media (De Vreese, Banducci, Semetko, & Boomgaarden, 2006), consistent with the previous one, the television news and the print media news held a positive tone, whereas the tabloids held a negative tone.

Theoretical implications

Overall, this study is meaningful in several ways. First, this study offers evidence supporting the conceptualization of agenda building. The cross-lagged results further determine the direction of the agenda building effects is from the information subsidy providers to the media. Previous studies have seen reciprocal agenda building relationship. For example, Wanta, Stephenson, Turk, and McCombs (1989) found that issue agenda of the Union address of President Carter in 1978 correlated more highly with issue agenda of the pre-address press coverage than the post-address coverage. His speech was a reaction to the issues covered by the media. The results showed that the relationship between the media issue agenda and the president issue agenda was reciprocal. The current study has proved that the agenda building effect is a one-way effect in the context of international communications.

Second, this is one of the first agenda building studies to incorporate the impact of a foreign nation's leader and the government controlled news agency into the process of salience

formation. It further extends the body of agenda building knowledge by examining the effects within the context of international news reporting. Many agenda setting and agenda building studies had put their attention on the political campaign candidates (e.g. Roberts & McCombs, 1994). The study conducted by Kim et al. (2010) examined the foreign news coverage of the political campaign news releases. Wanta, Golan, and Lee (2004) used the foreign nations as agenda setting objects. Few studies have offered empirical evidence showing the influence of a foreign political figure and an explicitly government controlled media.

Besides that, this study adds knowledge of the role of mediated public diplomacy in helping to shape media agendas. Specifically, the current study can serve as a case study of international broadcasting studies. International broadcasting refers to the use of radio, television, and the Internet by one nation to shape the opinions of the people and leaders of another (Price, Haas, & Margolin, 2008). Examined from the perspective of international broadcasting, the Xinhua News Agency is a government controlled international broadcaster.

In the past several years, the Chinese government has put forth many efforts to build a good national image. The efforts of the Chinese government in international broadcasting include the establishment of overseas CCTV Channels, China Daily, China Radio International, etc. The Xinhua News Agency opened a branch in the U.S. and moved the offices to the top floor of the 44-story skyscraper at 1540 Broadway, New York City, in 2010 (Troianovski, 2010 June 30). This new U.S. branch is part of the effort by China's government to enhance its "soft power" abroad.

From the data, the Chinese government did not do a good job of influencing the U.S. news coverage of President Xi. Only *The New York Times* had followed the issue agenda of the Xinhua. But *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* reported the issues and attributes in

a negative tone. The Xinhua's propaganda style is characterized as one-way communication, non-reflexively explaining the government's policies to foreign audiences (Youmans & Powers, 2012). As Youmans and Powers (2012) pointed out, audiences in foreign countries can easily dismiss messages from a broadcaster that do not satisfy their media preferences. Lack of political credibility is always an obstacle for the Chinese government to gaining mutual understanding from the West (Ding, 2011). The weak points include corruption, food security, environmental hazard and tightening control of freedom of speech. The weaknesses of China cannot be changed by more assertive propaganda.

What should the Chinese government do to improve the image of President Xi? Being a communist country and a competitor to the U.S., if China wants to increase the positive coverage of the president, the news reports should focus more on the president himself, not on his political roles as a commander and a diplomat. Notice that The Xinhua News Agency did successfully establish an image of President Xi as a reformer, especially in the economic field. Accordingly, economy remained high on the issue agenda of the U.S. news outlets. President Xi's campaign against corruption and open attitude towards the reform in the economic area suggested some potential changes in the future. More reformative actions are expected from him in order to change the problematic image, which lacks political credibility.

Together with the reformer image, the U.S. media prefer to talk about President Xi's leadership and work style. This suggests that the news reporting trait of the U.S. media is to tell stories about President Xi and his actions as a president. The Xinhua News Agency should stop being simply "the party's throat and tongue", but increasingly become a transparent news organization. At least, the Xinhua News Agency should not just translate the political news for

internal reading from Chinese to English; it has to have its own news reporting style for the English version, putting more attention on President Xi.

Other tactics can be used to build a preferable agenda. Advertorials and op-eds could be useful. Golan and Viatchaninova (2013) examined how Russia used the advertorials as a broadcasting tool in the form of a freestanding insert magazine in the elite U.S. and Indian newspapers. They found different agendas were applied on the advertorials of two countries. Public relations campaign would help as well. According to Zhang and Cameron (2003), significant changes in the negative coverage of China took place during the public relations campaigns, organized by the Chinese government. The China's President Jiang Zemin paid a state visit during the campaign and made an interview on *60 Minutes*. The drop of the negative coverage corresponded to this time period. To learn from the findings, President Xi can visit the States every one or two years to deepen the mutual understanding of the two countries.

Future Research and Limitations

In terms of limitations, the present study is based on the use of one type of information subsidy (news) from two types of news outlets (three newspapers and one news wire) in a period of eight months in total. Future research should widen the sample selection period. A longitudinal design should be considered. Thus, comparison could be made between different agendas of different leaders. The differences between the agenda of President Xi and of the former president Hu Jintao were noticed by the US journalists. In one news report, Christopher Bodeen (2012, November 15) wrote "Xi has an ease and affability that have been lacking from China's leader of the last 10 years, Hu Jintao".

In addition to the time, more types of information subsidies can be included in future research. Other sources of information subsidies have been proved to have an impact on public opinion, such as social media (e.g. Wooley, Limperos & Olover, 2010). One source worth noting is the Xinhua's posts on Weibo, the Chinese version of Twitter. Although Twitter is blocked in China, the Xinhua News Agency does have a Twitter account. It would be interesting to see the relationship between the Xinhua news releases and the Xinhua Twitter posts about President Xi.

More forms of news outlet can be included. The television news agenda is worth studying. With the development of the Internet, it is important to monitor online news. For example, CNN is a long established cable news channel. It has launched its own news website and mobile app. With the limited media attention span of the television news, it would be interesting to see whether the news published online is influenced by the information sources.

News releases from Chinese government press conferences are also a good information subsidy source. Since August 2011, regular press conferences are held five times a week, attended by journalists from all over the world. The content of the news conferences is available in English on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the section titled "Spokesperson's Remarks." The Chinese government tries to open a window for foreign journalists to get information. Although some journalists complain about the standard boring answers from the spokespeople, the routine press conference contents are still worth digging.

Replications can explore agenda building effects in a broader international public diplomacy context. According to the lighthouse metaphor of mediated political personalization (Balmas and Sheaffer, 2013a, b), news coverage of distant foreign countries tends to focus on their leaders. Thus, more foreign country leaders can be the objects of agenda building research.

For example, the objects can be the U.S. candidates or leaders as portrayed in the Xinhua news reports.

Agenda setting has been proved to be a solid hypothesis. Future research should build on the results of this study and explore the U.S. public opinion about President Xi. The results of such studies are the real measures of evaluating the effects of the Xinhua news releases. Inter-media agenda setting should also been studied more in the aspect of attribute agendas in the international news coverage among native media organizations. Another area is the online world news. Few studies explored the inter-media agenda setting effect of the international news coverage between online and traditional newspapers or other news organizations.

In sum, this study has proved the first-level of agenda building effect on U.S news outlets by a foreign news agency, the Xinhua News Agency. It also proved the direction of agenda building effects is from the information sources to the news outlets. More longitudinal and in-depth research is needed to further the body of agenda building knowledge. The study also demonstrated the inter-media agenda setting among the U.S. news organizations in the aspects of issue and substantive attribute agenda.

Appendix

A Code Sheet

Read each article and code for the following variables. On the Excel file, record the corresponding numerical codes under each variable column.

Title :

Date:

News Source:

- 1 – *The New York Times*
- 2 – *The Washington Post*
- 3 – *The Wall Street Journal*
- 4 – *The Associated Press*
- 5 – *The Xinhua News Agency*

Article Type:

- 1 - News
- 2 – Editorial
- 3 – Op-ed

Issues

What is the article talking about? Put in 1 if one issue presents in the article, put in 0 if one issue is not mentioned in the article.

- 1- Internal Politics
- 2- Domestic
- 3- Economy/Business/Trade

- 4- International Politics/Foreign Relations
- 5- China-US Relations
- 6- Crime/Corruption
- 7- Disputed Territories (e.g. Taiwan/Tibet/South China Sea/Diaoyu Island)
- 8- Human Interests/Human Rights
- 9- Environment
- 10- Social Issues (Education/Social Welfare/Health)
- 11- Science/Technology
- 12- Terrorism/Unrest
- 13- Disaster
- 14- Culture/Sports/Tourism
- 15- Other

Substantive Attributes

What attributes the article use to describe President Xi? Put in 1 if one issue presents in the article, put in 0 if one issue is not mentioned in the article.

- 1- Ideology-issue positions
- 2- Commander of the country
- 3- Work Style
- 4- Leadership
- 5- Biographical information/work experiences
- 6- Family background

- 7- Personal traits
- 8- Determination to reform
- 9- Peacemaker and cooperator
- 10- None
- 11- Other

Affective Attributes

- 1- Very negative
- 2- Somewhat negative
- 3- Neutral
- 4- Somewhat Positive
- 5- Very positive

B Code Book

Title:

Record the title of the news article, including subtitle.

Date:

Record the date of the article. The format is mm/dd/yyyy. No spaces.

News Source:

Choose one source among the four, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Associated Press*, and the *Xinhua News Agency*.

Issues:

- 1- Internal Politics: political conflicts within the communist party or the Chinese government; establishment of a new organization or committee.

Example:

- *A national security commission will be established to improve systems and strategies for national security, according to a major decision by the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee.*

- *Instead, he has moved quickly to reshape many policies and consolidate his control of the party's levers of power: the military forces, ideology and propaganda, the domestic security apparatus and anticorruption agency — and now economic policy making.*

- 2- Domestic policies: theories, principles and policies to govern the country, such as the “mass line campaign”.

Examples:

- The more down-to-earth style, which is already affecting the way meetings are run, has now been codified in a set of eight new rules released Wednesday. "Official meetings should be shorter and to the point," reads one of the new rules, "with no empty rhetoric and rigmarole."

- Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday told local officials of the Communist Party of China (CPC) to seriously implement the "mass line" campaign and boost ties with the people.

- 3- Economy/Business/Trade: this category includes news contents related with both domestic and international economics.

Example:

- The decisions were among the first reported by state media at the end of the closed-door leadership meeting, which President Xi Jinping had billed as a defining event in his efforts to bring China into a new stage of economic growth.

- 4- International Politics/Foreign Relations: foreign relations between China and other countries. It does not include disputed territory issues. Does not include China-U.S. relations.

Example:

-China will remain on a path of peaceful development and take a more active posture in international affairs, said Xi Jinping.

- Meanwhile, the president stressed that he will continue to work with Zuma to further consolidate and develop the China-South Africa comprehensive strategic partnership, so as to carry forward the bilateral friendship.

5- China-US Relations: This category focuses on China and the U.S. relationship.

Example:

- Mr. Lew. As Mr. Obama's special representative, the secretary was the first foreign official Mr. Xi met after becoming China's president in March, and now is one of the highest ranking international diplomats to visit Beijing immediately after the plenum.

6- Military: Military related news, such as military movements or improvement of the military weapons.

Example:

-Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Tuesday stressed the stability of the armed police and its absolute loyalty to the Communist Party of China (CPC).

- he paid several high-profile visits to military sites and ordered the armed forces to prepare to "fight and win" wars.

7- Crime/Corruption: criminal events or corruption scandals. It also includes the anti-corruption efforts, and calls for simplified work style.

Example:

-Chinese leader Xi Jinping's latest resolution on fighting corruption has triggered heated discussion among experts and the public.

- "The large number of facts tells us that if the problem of corruption becomes increasingly severe, it will lead to the ruin of the party and the country!" Xinhua quoted Xi as saying in a speech that can be read as an indication of the priorities of the incoming administration.

- 8- Disputed Territories (e.g. Taiwan/Tibet/South China Sea/Diaoyu Island): disputed lands and conflicts. Articles have to include the names of the disputed territories. Otherwise, it should be coded as International politics.

Example:

- Bilateral relations soured amid Japan's move to "purchase" part of the Diaoyu Islands last year.

- 9- Human Interests/Human Rights: human rights issues, e.g. freedom of speech and press.

Example:

- When facing questions about China's human rights situation, he said there is "no best, only better." Xi said every country's condition is different and path is different.

- If the Chinese government can end the policies of Uighur cultural genocide, such as the elimination of the Uighur language in schools, unchecked Han Chinese migration into East Turkestan and the criminalization of Islam, I would also seize my opportunity to find a permanent and peaceful solution to the East Turkestan issue to the satisfaction of both sides.

10- Environment: this category includes news content related with environmental issues, such as air pollution.

Example:

- Zhejiang had realized the development targets one by one during Xi's tenure there. The province had the highest rating in ecology and the environment among all provincial-level regions in 2005.

11- Social Issues: pension issues or education equality; social problems and social inequality, such as education, health, poverty of rural areas, gender inequality, ill treatment of labor workers, discrimination of minorities, and other.

Example:

- He (Xi) and the prime minister, Li Keqiang, have vowed to wean China's economy from its dependence on highly polluting industries, state-driven construction and the seizure of land with little compensation for farmers, while sharing the benefits of urban prosperity more fully with rural migrant workers.

- break down barriers excluding millions of rural migrants from access to schools, welfare and housing in urban society.

12- Science/Technology: new technological inventions, or international scientific cooperations.

Example:

- Xi proposed that China and France make use of their special advantages and boost cooperation in nuclear energy, aeronautics, astronautics, agriculture, food security,

medicine, telecommunications, the automobile industry, and financial services to improve economic growth and increase job opportunities.

13- Terrorism/Unrest: this category includes both domestic and international terrorist issues.

Example:

- Chinese president Xi Jinping has urged the law enforcement to investigate and solve the case of Kunming terrorist attack with all-out efforts and punish the terrorists in accordance with the law.

14- Disaster: disasters, such as big earthquakes or tsunami.

15- Culture/Sports/Tourism: cultural and sport events, such as cultural festivals; people exchange between countries; development of tourism.

Example:

- The two sides should take the celebration of the establishment of diplomatic ties as an opportunity to increase cultural exchanges, tourism, and student exchanges to cement the friendship between the Chinese and French people, said the Chinese president.

16- Other: If the coder decides this article is about issues other than the listed ones here, please specify the issue category under the “other” category.

Attribute:

1- Ideology-issue positions: It describes President Xi's ideology, whether he is the supporter of communism.

Example:

-Xi reiterates adherence to socialism with Chinese characteristics

-"He has adopted Leninist ideology not to return to the old Leninist path, but to suppress an explosion in political participation, and create a healthy, stable political environment for reform," said Professor Xiao, the proponent of neo-authoritarianism.

2- Commander of the country: It has the contents such that Xi is giving commands to the party members or Xi is delivering a speech of some political decisions. The key words are Xi "urges", "commands", "stressed", or other active words.

Example:

- Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday encouraged young people to promote volunteerism and praised the progress of one university's voluntary service.

3- Work style: the ways Xi does his work or his working status.

Examples:

- Xi's pragmatic work style defined his political approach before he rose to the top leadership.

- In addition, as a result of long years of experience as local governor, he has also cultivated a down-to-earth work style.

- 4- Leadership: the president's leadership skills and ability to govern the big country, especially his ability to establish his power within the party.

Example:

-By establishing the leadership group, Mr. Xi has wagered his credibility on his ability to push through changes that are likely to face resistance from government ministries, local governments and big state firms.

- Xi realizes the imperative for reform but may be hamstrung by a Communist Party fearful of losing its power.

- 5- Biographical information/work experiences: Xi's previous work experiences.

Example:

- Mr. Xi spent part of his career as a county official, becoming familiar with the countryside.

- 6- Family background: it refers to the relations with his family and family background.

Example:

-Although a son of Xi Zhongxun, a Communist revolutionary and former vice premier, Xi Jinping grew up with a frugal lifestyle.

- 7- Personal Traits: personal characteristics, like whether this person is friendly, humorous, compassionate, or aggressive; hobbies.

Examples:

-The newly-released photos also show Xi's humane side as a loving and caring son, husband and father.

-Xi is a man of action and believes that "the devil is in the details."

- During a U.S. tour in February, when he was vice president, Xi appeared tieless at a Los Angeles Lakers basketball game and included an advertising jingle and a line from a pop song in speeches.

- 8- Determination to reform: Does the article discuss anything about this new president and reform of China? Does he show the determination to implement political reform?

Example:

-The Party should actively respond to the people's outcries and expectations for deepening reform, build social consensus on reform policies and promote various reform measures in all aspects, Xi added.

- "Compared to Hu Jintao," the outgoing president, "Xi is more like a reformer," said Mao Yushi, an economist, offering one commonly heard sentiment.

- 9- Peacemaker and cooperator: willingness to establish friendship with other countries and to deepen strategic cooperation.

Example:

- Chinese President Xi Jinping met with French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault in Beijing on Friday and pledged to strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.

- "The world, as a whole, is not tranquil," Mr. Xi said. "To strengthen cooperation and dialogue is the only right choice facing both our countries."

10- None

11- Other: If the article does not mention any attribute above, please specify under the category of "other".

Affective Attributes

1- Very negative

2- Somewhat negative

3- Neutral

4- Somewhat Positive

5- Very positive

Note:

- Somewhat positive descriptions have positive comments about Xi. For example, the article will show the president's determination and abilities to lead the country, to advance the wellbeing of the society, and to keep a good relationship with other countries. If President Xi shows friendly attitude towards the U.S., it will be coded as somewhat positive.

-Somewhat negative descriptions will describe the president as lack of experience, not a reliable person, or corrupted. If the articles are from the U.S. media, then any attributes of President Xi show adversary attitudes towards the west world would be negative. Any tone that

has a sense of doubts of this president' behaviors will be defined as somewhat negative, because it shows a lack of trust of the reporters toward the new president.

-To determine the degree of the positivity or negativity, the use of extreme words will be the signs. Saying that the president with the "most" ambition will be positive. Calling him a "dictator" will be negative.

-Neutral tone will comprise of statements of facts. Or the articles will show opinions from two sides without drawing any conclusion. Although Xinhua's news tends to depict Xi in a positive image, if there is no evident sign that this news has positive comments, it counts as a neutral one.

C List of Tables

Table 1 List of Issue Coding Schemes

Roberts & McCombs, 1994	Kiouisis, Mitrook, Wu, & Seltzer, 2010	Kiouisis, Kim, McDevitt, & Ostrowski, 2009	Zhang & Cameron, 2002	Willnart & Luo, 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Abortion -Crime -Drug Abuses -Environment -Insurance -Personal Background -Public Education -State Taxes -The State's Economy -The State Budget -Women's Issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Children's Issues -Crime -Economy -Education -Elderly Problems -Environment -Health Care -International Problems -Terrorism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Children's Issues -Crime -Economy -Education -Environment -Foreign Policy -Health Care -Immigration -International /Military Problems -Iraq -Problems of the Elderly -Social Issues -Social Security -Taxes -Terrorism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Culture -Defense /Nuclear Weapons/War Crisis -Disasters /Unrest /Terrorism -Domestic Economics -International Economy -International Politics -Law/Crimes /Corruption -Population -PRC Domestic Politics -Religion -Science /Ecology /Technology -Social Service, Welfare, Education -Sports -Taiwan Straits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Business -Ceremonies -Commerce -Communication -Culture -Disasters -Economy -Education -Energy -Environment -Fashion -Health/Welfare -Housing -Human Interest -Internal Order -Internal Politics -International Politics -Labor/Industry -Military/Defense -Population -Religion -Science /Technology -Social Relations -Sports -Transportation -Weather

Table 2 Issue Frequency and Percentage between News Outlets

Issues	Xinhua		NYT		WP		WSJ		AP		US Media	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Domestic Policy	63	17.1%	11	7.5%	9	14.8%	7	9.0%	6	7.1%	33	8.9%
International Politics	57	15.5%	14	9.5%	0	0.0%	7	9.0%	6	7.1%	27	7.3%
Economy	52	14.1%	21	14.3%	7	11.5%	10	12.8%	10	11.8%	48	12.9%
Social Issues	43	11.7%	10	6.8%	4	6.6%	2	2.6%	6	7.1%	22	5.9%
Internal Politics	32	8.7%	27	18.4%	15	24.6%	16	20.5%	15	17.6%	73	19.7%
Culture/Sports	30	8.2%	4	2.7%	1	1.6%	0	0.0%	4	4.7%	9	2.4%
Crime/Corruption	16	4.3%	18	12.2%	12	19.7%	7	9.0%	8	9.4%	45	12.1%
Science/Technology	15	4.1%	2	1.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.2%	3	0.8%
Military	14	3.8%	10	6.8%	1	1.6%	9	11.5%	7	8.2%	27	7.3%
Environment	14	3.8%	5	3.4%	1	1.6%	0	0.0%	3	3.5%	9	2.4%
China-US Relations	11	3.0%	7	4.8%	3	4.9%	8	10.3%	6	7.1%	24	6.5%
Disaster	7	1.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Disputed Territories	6	1.6%	12	8.2%	1	1.6%	9	11.5%	8	9.4%	30	8.1%
Terrorism/Unrest	6	1.6%	1	0.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	3.5%	4	1.1%
Human Rights	2	0.5%	5	3.4%	7	11.5%	3	3.8%	2	2.4%	17	4.6%

Table 3 Spearman's Rho Correlations of Issue Salience between News Outlets

	Xinhua (p-value)	NYT (p-value)	WP (p-value)	WSJ (p-value)	AP (p-value)	US Media (p-value)
Xinhua	1.000					
NYT	.559* (.030)	1.000				
WP	.325 (.238)	.666** (.007)	1.000			
WSJ	.251 (.367)	.852** (.000)	.577* (.024)	1.000		
AP	.422 (.117)	.920** (.000)	.620* (.014)	.886** (.000)	1.000	
US Media	.495 (.061)	.968** (.000)	.749** (.001)	.896** (.000)	.939** (.000)	1.000

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

Figure 1 Cross-Lagged Correlation Results of Issue Agenda

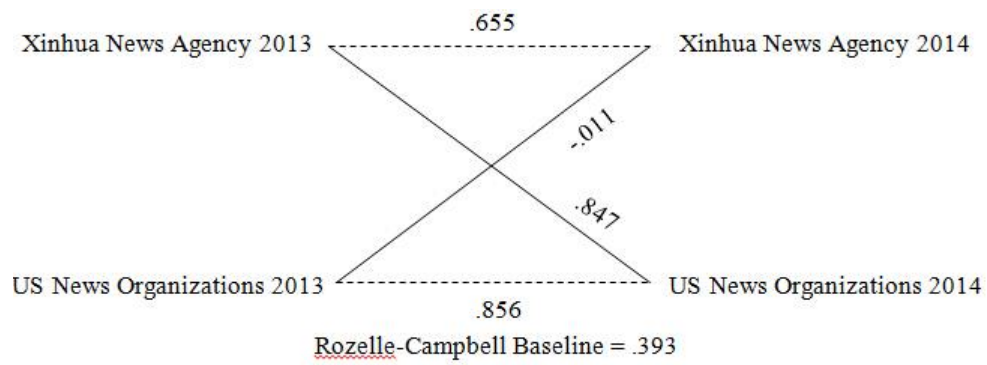


Table 4 Substantive Attribute Frequency and Percentage between News Outlets

Substantive Attributes	Xinhua		NYT		WP		WSJ		AP		US Media	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Commander of the country	84	24.1%	7	6.1%	10	19.6%	3	6.1%	7	11.3%	27	9.8%
Peacemaker and cooperator	70	20.1%	6	5.3%	0	0.0%	3	6.1%	4	6.5%	13	4.7%
Determination to reform	62	17.8%	26	22.8%	12	23.5%	13	26.5%	10	16.1%	61	22.1%
Ideology-issue positions	36	10.3%	16	14.0%	3	5.9%	5	10.2%	4	6.5%	28	10.1%
Leadership	36	10.3%	18	15.8%	8	15.7%	13	26.5%	10	16.1%	49	17.8%
Experience	21	6.0%	4	3.5%	1	2.0%	1	2.0%	3	4.8%	9	3.3%
Personal traits	19	5.5%	7	6.1%	5	9.8%	4	8.2%	6	9.7%	22	8.0%
Work style	15	4.3%	17	14.9%	5	9.8%	4	8.2%	12	19.4%	38	13.8%
Family background	5	1.4%	13	11.4%	7	13.7%	3	6.1%	6	9.7%	29	10.5%

Table 5 Spearman’s Rho Correlations of Substantive Attribute Salience between News Outlets

	Xinhua	NYT	WP	WSJ	AP	US Media
Xinhua	1.000					
NYT	-.067	1.000				
	.864					
WP	.160	.660	1.000			
	.682	.053				
WSJ	.090	.889**	.489	1.000		
	.818	.001	.181			
AP	-.059	.775*	.725*	.593	1.000	
	.879	.014	.027	.092		
US Media	-.092	.979**	.736*	.795*	.819**	1.000
	.814	.000	.024	.010	.007	

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

Figure 2 Cross-Lagged Correlation Results of Substantive Attribute Agenda

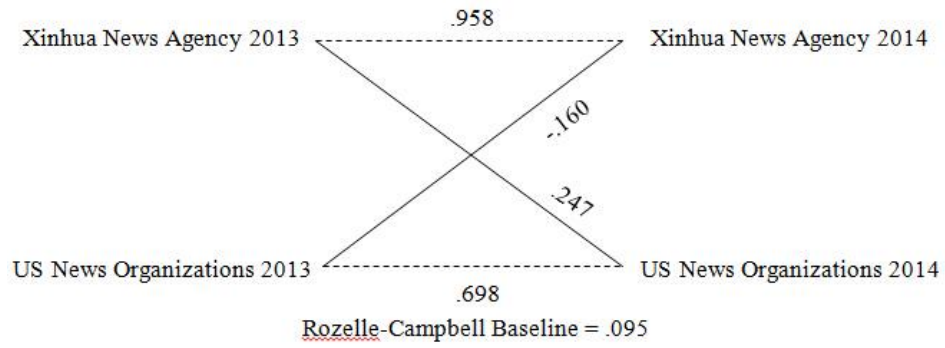


Table 6 ANOVA and Tukey's HSD Post Hoc Test Results for Affective Attribute between News Outlets

	News Source				
	Xinhua	NYT	WP	WSJ	AP
Affective Attributes Means	4.18	2.78	2.62	3.23	3.46

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	114.307	4	28.577	69.862	.000
Within Groups	123.940	303	.409		
Total	238.247	307			

	News Source	Mean Difference	Std. Error	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Xinhua	NYT	1.406	.106	.000	1.12	1.70
	WP	1.565	.147	.000	1.16	1.97
	WSJ	.956	.144	.000	.56	1.35
	AP	.725	.138	.000	.35	1.10
NYT	WP	.159	.169	.881	-.31	.62
	WSJ	-.449	.166	.056	-.91	.01
	AP	-.681	.162	.000	-1.12	-.24
WP	WSJ	-.608	.195	.017	-1.14	.07
	AP	-.839	.191	.000	-1.36	-.31
WSJ	AP	-.231	.189	.737	-.75	.29

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