

# A STUDY OF SHANGHAI'S CITY IMAGE PORTRAYED BY JAPANESE MAINSTREAM MEDIA

Xiaotian H<sup>1\*</sup>, Tianqi D<sup>2</sup> and Chenzhi L<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*School of Journalism and Communication, Shanghai International Studies University, China*

<sup>2</sup>*Institute of Communication Studies, Communication University of China, China*

<sup>3</sup>*Liu Chenzhi, School of Media and Law, NingboTech University, China*

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**Abstract:** Shanghai, as a microcosm of China's urbanization development, has received much attention from international media. Previous studies, based on world systems theory, agenda-setting theory and framing theory, have explored the influencing factors in Shanghai's city image and its media representation with a focus on the U.S. or other Western countries and little mention of Asian countries. This study used data collection software and captured 196 piece of news from Google platforms with a keyword of "Shanghai" between January 1, 2018 and December 30, 2020 from five Japanese mainstream media, and used content analysis to show how five major Japanese mainstream media portray "Shanghai" and explore the frames that Japanese media used in their Shanghai coverage. The study finds that the Japanese mainstream media have a clear tendency to interpret Shanghai's political and social image negatively and confrontationally, present its cultural and scientific image understandingly and approvingly, and fill its economic image with uncertainty and oscillation. Based on these findings, this paper suggests that shared development should be used as common ground to improve how media from other countries interpret China's city image, and that Chinese media should also take the initiative to set the public agenda, respond to popular international issues timely, and shape Shanghai's city image.

**Keywords:** global city, international communication, city image, Shanghai

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## Introduction

City image is a comprehensive representation of a city's historical heritage and cultural character, as well as an invisible business card for the external communication of national image. In the context of globalization, global cities, as the geographic and spatial convergence points of human civilization, are important joints of international exchange. How a city is portrayed by the media determines its popularity and global influence. As an international metropolis, Shanghai is an important representative of China's urbanization development and make a big difference to China's overall national image.

For people from other countries, their awareness and impression of Shanghai's city image is mainly through three channels: personal experience, indirect transmission by friends and relatives, and public media reports. Because of wide coverage, low cost and high speed of media coverage, media coverage has become the main means of shaping the image of Shanghai. Due to the deep historical connection,

\*Corresponding Author's Email - [houxiaott1995@163.com](mailto:houxiaott1995@163.com)

close geographical location, close economic exchanges, and frequent cultural exchanges between Japan and Shanghai, the Japanese media has paid much attention to Shanghai and shaped the city's image in many ways in their news reports, thus influencing Japanese people's perception of Shanghai. In view of this, this study attempts to analyze the image of Shanghai as portrayed by the Japanese mainstream media, so as to propose paths and strategies to improve the city's international communication capabilities.

## **Literature Review**

The term “city image”, first introduced by Kevin Lynch, American urban planner, in his book *The Image of the City* published in 1960, refers to “the common mental pictures carried by large numbers of a city's inhabitants”. In the 1990s, China imported the concept of “city image”, which was first defined by Luo Zhiying as “public perceptions of a region or city regarding its internal strengths, external attributes and future prospects”. It has been mainly applied in the fields of urban planning (Luo, 1993; Gu, 2000; Li, 2001) and sustainable development (Hu, 2003), and regarded as an intangible asset (Zhao & Zhao, 2003).

Journalism and communication research is based on Lippman's pseudo-environment to study how media present, construct and communicate the image of a city. Scholars believe that media can not only present and shape city image, but also reproduce its “meaning” (Chen, 2009), Media coverage is the basis for audiences to perceive and form the reality of city image (He, 2010). For international audiences who do not have personal access to distant cities, international media coverage is an important method of city image awareness, so global media plays an important role in determining a city's appeal to the international community (Guo, 2018).

As a global megacity, Shanghai has been a world leader in urban economic development, and its city image has received worldwide attention, with global media coverage of Shanghai showing a steady increase since 1992 (Guo & Wu, 2016). International communication of Shanghai's city image has become a popular topic in humanities and social science research which analyzes how global media construct Shanghai's image (Wu, Guo, Chen & Wu, 2016; Pan, 2017), stereotypes of Shanghai and media's preferences (Xue & Luan, 2017), how Western fashion media presents Shanghai (Fei & Tong, 2021). Most of the researches focused on western media, such as the study of the global communication ability of Shanghai city image using the Factiva global news database dominated by European and American media (Wang Zhang & Li, 2017), the study of Shanghai image by specific New York Times and The Times (Fu & Xu, 2020), the study of Shanghai image by international mainstream media dominated by English language (Guo Chen & Du, 2018), etc., the mainstream media from Asian countries were rarely mentioned and researches on a specific country's media were lacking. Therefore, this study spotlights Japan which has complex and close ties with Shanghai, analyzing the frames Japanese media use, their attitudes towards Shanghai and public opinion about China. This study also summarizes how to improve Shanghai's image among audience from a specific country, provides some suggestions for designing communication strategies in shaping China's city or country image.

## **Methodologies**

Most of the media coverage of a certain city has certain frames, so this paper uses content analysis and case study based on framing theory proposed by American sociologist Erving Goffman in his

Frame Analysis. Framing theory focuses on how people construct reality, the limitations of reality and the rules people follow to construct a particular reality. Entman (1991) argues that framing involves selection and foregrounding by media professionals, through which media affects the audience's understanding of incidents and media frames. Pan and Kosicki (1993) argue that news frames can be analyzed in terms of the syntactical, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures of news texts.

This study combines the theoretical views of Entman, Pan and Kosicki, limits framing to five categories, i.e., theme, agenda, beat, source, and tendency, and focuses on the trends, attitudes, and characteristics shown by Japanese mainstream media in their Shanghai-related news reports.

This study used data collection software and captured 196 piece of news from Google platforms with a keyword of "Shanghai" between January 1, 2018 and December 30, 2020 from five Japanese mainstream media. There are 58 from Sankei Shimbun, 39 from Asahi Shimbun, 4 from Yomiuri Shimbun, 44 from Mainichi Shimbun, and 51 from Nihon Keizai Shimbun. After elimination of duplicates and irrelevant texts, the final corpus includes 181 relevant ones. Some on the website of Yomiuri Shimbun are slightly incomplete because they were updated after publication.

The 181 piece of news were coded based on the five categories of theme, agenda, beat, source, and tendency. In addition, the study verified the consistency of every category with the help of Cohen's kappa coefficient, and verified the consistency of the coding list by SPSS analysis software, and the results showed that the kappa values of all classification dimensions were greater than 0.75, which proved the consistency and feasibility of the classification dimensions. The analysis of specific news texts was done with the word frequency list provided by MeCab.

This study focuses on answering the following questions:

- (1) what frames Japanese mainstream media use in news about Shanghai.
- (2) why the media choose such frames.

## **Findings**

### ***An Important Economic and Financial Center in China and the World***

A large share of economic issues in both domestic and international media coverage about China are related to Shanghai, China's largest economic center and international financial hub. After coding news topics and emotional tendencies of 181 piece of news, researchers found that in this study, economic issues such as the Shanghai Stock Exchange, import and export trade, emerging industries, economic policies and market economy accounted for 37% of the total number of reports. (see picture 1). Considering 75% of the economic news are neutral and 15% positive, Shanghai's economic prosperity is so well-recognized that it with the world's largest auto market was chosen to host the International Auto Show. Alibaba, Bytedance, DiDi and other leading companies are listed in Shanghai. Kweichow Moutai, the largest stock on Shanghai's benchmark index, is one of the world's top 20 biggest company. Tesla, Disney, Toyota, Nissan and other U.S. and Japanese companies have invested in Shanghai. Shanghai as the largest investment market in China has a good investment environment.

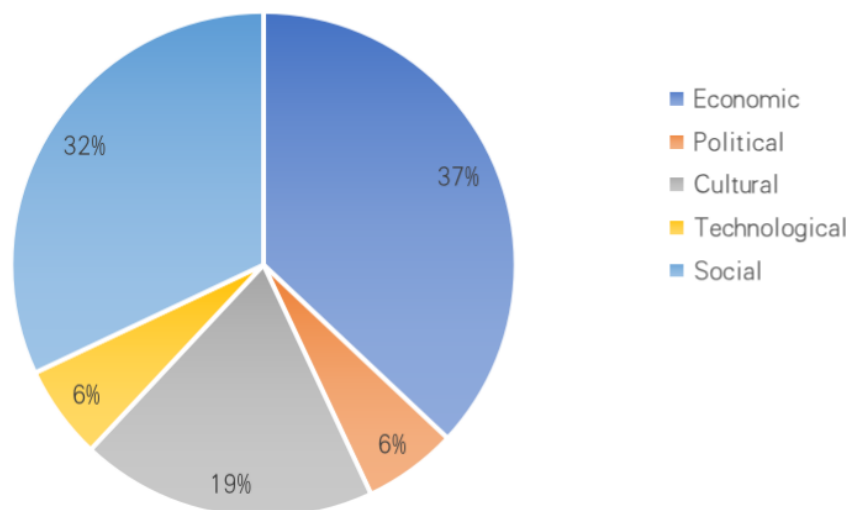


Figure 1: The percentage of every beat covered by Japanese mainstream media

Japanese mainstream media seeing Shanghai as an economic and financial center is closely linked to the changing Japanese society's perception of China and the increase of Sino-Japanese trade. In the 21st century, as China surpassed Japan as the leading Asian economy and world's second largest economy. China's rapid economic development has benefited Japanese society and helped Japan recover economically, the new image of "a rising and strong China" is commonly held by the majority in Japanese society, as proven by the editorial of *Thank China*. Shanghai has close economic ties with Japan, and according to China Business Industry Research Institute in 2019, there were more than 5,300 enterprises with Japanese investors passing the annual financial review in Shanghai, and Japan's great reliance on Shanghai's economy, to a certain extent, contributed to the recognition of Shanghai's economic and financial status by the Japanese media.

However, some reports about Shanghai's economy are negative, with nearly 10% of the negative reports describing Shanghai's economy as very volatile full of risks and opportunities. For example, *Beijing Overtakes Shanghai in 'the Three Kingdoms' of Modern China's Economy* suggests that Shanghai's economic status has recently been threatened by Beijing, China's political center. A report headlined *China Halted Ant's IPO, Authorities Met with Jack Ma* criticized excessive government intervention in the company's development and concludes that blocking companies' development opportunities may lead to a shrinking China's economy in the long term. In addition, some reports also falsely attribute the withdrawal of Japanese companies to Shanghai's economic downturn, anti-Japanese demonstrations in Shanghai and stagnant consumption in China. The real cause was their own business failures or adjustments in business strategies.

On the one hand, Japanese mainstream media presents Shanghai as a popular destination for investment and consumption and a vibrant national and global economic and financial center. On the other hand, they play up the crisis of Shanghai's economy and bet against its economic future. This ambivalent attitude origins from the regional economic competition between China and Japan and the strategic competition between China and the U.S. China has replaced Japan as the engine of the Asian economy and even the global economy so Japan realizes that it can benefit from close economic cooperation with China and share its prosperity but worries that China is too strong a rival. Although

Japan has supported the US for a long time, it does not want to get involved in the strategic competition between China and the U.S. Japan longs to be set free from the influence and control of the U.S. In short, Japan's dilemma causes the attitudinal ambivalence of news reports about Shanghai.

### ***A Political Threat to Other Countries***

Shanghai is a microphone through which China communicates its political policies with the world. Although political topics are relatively ignored in Shanghai-related news, accounting for 6% of the total. After analyzing the topics of political news reports related to Shanghai, it is found that the news reports are mainly about the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, internal affairs of the local government and the Belt and Road Initiative. Nearly 56% are negative, with a clear tendency to voice opposition from the perspective of the China Threat Theory to tarnish Shanghai's political image.

The friendly and peaceful Shanghai Cooperation Organization is interpreted as a confrontational and threatening organization initiated and organized by China, causing Shanghai itself to have a negative political connotation. For example, a report headlined *China, Russia Dominating SCO Summit* portrays SCO as China's and Russia's tool to confront developed countries and take advantage of countries, such as India and Iran, to expand their international influence, and specifically emphasizes the alliance of 3.1 billion people, about 40% of the world's population as a danger to the world. It is mentioned that most of the SCO countries are rich in energy resources and half of them possess nuclear weapons, indicating that the SCO has expansionist intentions detrimental to world peace.

The negative frame of the China Threat Theory is also applied to the threat posed by Shanghai to specific countries. For example, *Many CPP Members Working in Shanghai Consulates* points out that a large number of CPP members are working in the U.S., U.K. and Australian consulates in Shanghai, and that at least 10 consulates, such as Germany, Switzerland, India, and New Zealand hire CPP members as political professionals, economic advisors, administrators, etc., replete with malicious statements from Australian experts. Due to exaggerated security risks from having CPP members working in foreign consulates, Shanghai is treated as a threat to other countries and their political autonomy.

This negative interpretation of Shanghai's political image is closely related to Japan's political attitude toward China, which, in addition to historical political issues, has important implications for today's Sino-Japanese political relations. Japan views China with modern schools of political thoughts highly influenced by Western hegemony of discourse and Othering. The Japanese mainstream media strongly exaggerate the China Threat Theory and places China's rise in the context of the changing international order, gauges China's political influence in a multilateral framework and creates the illusion that China is challenging the existing order and disturbing regional peace. In addition, their selective reporting forces China to be trapped with the stigma of a threat to world order and peace. The China Threat Theory also frames the image of Shanghai which is portrayed negatively by the Japanese media as threatening global stability.

### ***A Highly Dynamic Cultural Hub***

Shanghai is famous for its cultural heritage, artistic atmosphere and domestically and internationally influential cultural enterprises. Cultural reporting on Shanghai takes up a high proportion of nearly

19%, mainly neutral (97%) and positive (3%). Japanese mainstream media has an updated and appreciative understanding of Shanghai's culture, mainly focusing on Shanghai's diverse cultural industries such as film and television, performing arts and entertainment, literature and art, etc. Thus, Shanghai's cultural image is a vibrant center of China's cultural enterprises.

Japanese mainstream media notice the development of Shanghai's film and television industry, the continuous innovation, the fine cultural products for the international market and Shanghai's ability to produce and air films and television shows on international platforms. For example, *Shanghai's Second Wave of Animation* applauds many animations produced by a Chinese company, Haoliners Animation League that were aired in Japan. Reports about the opening ceremony of the annual Japan Film Week in Shanghai talk about how Japanese movies makers promoted their works with the help of the event, which proves that Shanghai plays an important role in the international movie industry.

In the news report headlined *Japanese Film Director Hirokazu Koreeda Attends a Fan Meeting to Promote the New Movie "Shoplifters"* during the 21st Shanghai International Film Festival, his movie was screened on the festival and he interacted with Shanghainese fans in person, recognizing the importance of Shanghai to his movie promotion.

Moreover, Shanghai's performing arts and entertainment market bursts with vitality and actively seeks integration with international performing arts and entertainment industry. Many foreign performers contribute to cultural exchanges with China, for example, *Yoshimoto to Open Entertainment School in Shanghai* and *Yoshimoto Operates in China and Cooperates with Shanghai Media Group in Theater*. Reports about investment in China from Japanese entertainment companies also talk about CMC Inc. and Shanghai Media Group in praise of Shanghai's performing arts and entertainment enterprises from the perspective of the win-win cooperation between the two countries. The frame of win-win cooperation leads to approval of Shanghai entertainment companies. The report headlined *From Nogizaka 46 to Radwimps: Why Japanese artists Are Performing in Shanghai* clearly shows Japan approves of cultural exchanged with Shanghai and appreciates the great vitality of the Shanghai performing arts and entertainment market.

In addition, Shanghai's preferences for intellectual and artistic activities are also noted. Shanghai benefits from a rich literary heritage and its people are highly receptive to international artworks. It is an important city for international intellectual and artistic exchanges. Japanese mainstream media talked about a wide range of art and cultural exhibitions held in Shanghai, such as a Yayoi Kusama exhibition, WORLD TOUR "Shanghai" (Tamashii Nations 10th Anniversary), and a Kaiti Higashiyama mural exhibition, as well as cultural exchanges between schools and between international students. In *Team Lab Opens Art Museum in Shanghai, China*, an expert is quoted as saying that "Shanghai is one of the most powerful cities in the world in terms of culture."

The positive attitude of Japanese mainstream media towards Shanghai's cultural development may be related to the fact that Sino-Japanese cultural exchanges have a long history, as the ancient Japanese regarded China as the center of civilization and actively learned from Chinese culture. Although after its highs and lows, Japanese culture has reemerged as a powerful influence on the world in recent years, Japanese people still have respect for Chinese culture. There is close cooperation of various cultural activities between Japan and Shanghai. While Japan has pride for its own cultural industry, it is not opposed to reporting cultural exchanges with Shanghai in a favorable light.

**An Outdated Image of Shanghai's Society Based on Habitual Consciousness**

Japanese media tend to be confrontational and biased when it comes to Shanghai's local news. About 32% of the reports were negative. This study finds that frequently used keywords, such as accident, infection, coronavirus indicate that Chinese society is rife with uncertainty. Train, cruise ship, and Wuhan followed by inherently negative keywords, such as conflict and death are strongly associated with negative reports(see Table 1).. According to the baseless imagination of Japanese mainstream media, Shanghai is full of conflict and uncertainty.

Table 1 : Top 24 keywords in Japanese media coverage of Shanghai

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Rank	Keyword	Frequency
1	China	457	13	Wuhan	18
2	Shanghai	299	14	DiDi	17
3	Japan	93	15	Disney	17
4	Electric car	53	16	Japanese	14
5	Accident	47	17	Joint venture	14
6	Infection	46	18	Alibaba	12
7	Coronavirus	44	19	Summit	10
8	U.S.	27	20	Japanese goods	9
9	Student	25	21	Conflict	9
10	Train	24	22	Death	8
11	Taiwan	22	23	Quarantine	8
12	Cruise ship	19	24	MUJI	7

Moreover, Japanese media are not shy from repetitively reporting some unfortunate accidents, especially those that could damage Shanghai's image. For example, the Mainichi Shimbun, the Sankei Shimbun, the Asahi Shimbun, and the Nihon Keizai Shimbun continuously reported the 1988 Shanghai-Hangzhou external train collision accident in a negative way from 2018 to 2020, reinforcing the impression that Shanghai is not safe. For example, Inside Shanghai Train Accident, 29 Years Later, Thirty Years after Shanghai Train Accident: Grief Will Not Disappear, Unforgotten dignity: 30 Years of Prayer for Shanghai Train Accident, Time won't forget: Condolence Ceremony 31 years after Shanghai Train Accident, etc. The Asahi Shimbun and the Sankei Shimbun also reported repeatedly on the ship collision in the East China Sea, such as Oil Tanker Collides with Cargo Ship off Shanghai, Oil Leak from Cruise Ship Leads to Fire, Burning Cruise Ship in Shanghai Waters Flows into Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone, Conflict in Shanghai Waters: Burning Cruise Ship Drifts into East China Sea, Cruise Ship Explodes in East China sea, 32 People Missing, and Cruise Ship in Shanghai Waters Sinks in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone, etc. Apparently, Japanese mainstream media blames Shanghai for the safety hazard to Japan. The contrast between 30 Iranians and two Bangladeshis missing and 21 Chinese crew members unharmed shows that Shanghai wasn't dealt a blow in the international incident even though it should have taken the blame and suffered the consequences.

Reports about unexpected disasters are highly noticeable, such as fan brawl, billboard collapse, violence in UNIQLO, Tesla explosion, coronavirus outbreak, building collapse during renovation, accounting for 59% of the local news. These reports leave an impression that Shanghai suffers from all sorts of crises, and public safety and health are compromised. Among others, most attention was given to the coronavirus outbreak. 39% of the total reports and 32% of the negative reports are about the COVID-19. Japanese media blame the government's indecision about the outbreak for Shanghainese suffering from an ongoing supply chain crisis. Moreover, in the form of international trade and flights, negatively affected foreign companies in Shanghai spread the crisis to other countries.

The reason why Japanese mainstream media shed a negative light on Shanghai is that Japan fears China's rise. A joint report by Japanese and U.S. think tanks sees China as more and more powerful and aggressive towards the outside world. China's next steps may pose one of the biggest threats to the peace of the Asia-Pacific area before 2030. In addition, the pandemic has intensified the strategic competition between China and the U.S. Usually under the influence of U.S., Japan seeks to play the role of a coordinator and maintain the balance of power between China and the U.S. for the sake of its own development. Torn between following the US and self-development, Japanese media is bound to have conflicting feelings about Shanghai. The habitual frame of conflict is applied to reporting local and political news about Shanghai. Shanghai society seems to be full of dangers.

### ***A Modern Smart City in the East with Complete Infrastructure***

On June 12, 2017, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun published a news report headlined *Global Technology Enters the Era of Two Powerhouses*. The two powerhouses are China and the U.S. who are technologically supported by scientific papers. China and the U.S. not only lead in terms of economic volume, but are also two major forces in developing new technologies. This positive attitude toward China's science and technology is also reflected in Japanese media coverage of Shanghai's science and technology. Reports about Shanghai's science and technology are not many, but mainly positive (54.5%) and neutral (45.4%). Attention to skyscrapers, maglev, self-driving car, contactless commerce, etc. shapes Shanghai into a smart city in the East with complete infrastructure.

In terms of infrastructure, roads and buildings are the focus, especially advanced technology, fast infrastructure development, good construction quality and abundant investment. For example, *New Maglev Rail from Shanghai to Ningbo* mentions despite the existing high-speed railway, a new maglev railway will be added to the network, which is expected to reach a world-leading speed of 600km/h. In *China's Tallest Building Partially in Business*, it was reported that the lower part of the conference center and the underground exhibition hall of Shanghai Tower in Shanghai's Financial District opened on the same day. The 632-metre-high Shanghai Tower is the world's second-tallest and China's tallest building by height.

In terms of science and technology, Japanese media focused on Shanghai's artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things, showing how innovative and revolutionary new technologies have improved daily life and productivity, adding smartness to Shanghai's image. For example, *Shanghai Uses AI to Promote Unmanned banks and Unmanned Stores* affirms that AI and information technology have saved manpower and alleviated labor shortages. In *Self-driving Cabs on Shanghai Roads*, it was reported that DiDi's driverless cars eased through traffic, freeing up manpower as well as meeting the



COVID-19 guidelines. In addition, the Japanese mainstream media reported on electronic payment in Shanghai, which intelligently facilitates consumption in Shanghai.

The reason why reports about Shanghai's science and technology are consistently positive is that Japanese government applauds China's science and technology. According to the statistics from Japan Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology about how advanced countries are in terms of science and technology, China's science and technology input and output are already the second in the world and still developing rapidly, while Japan's share in the world's research output is declining. In response, the Japanese government is keen to study China's cutting-edge services, experts in related fields have expressed enthusiasm about new technological developments in China, and government and economic officials are interested in introducing them to Japan. Shanghai is at the forefront of China's scientific and technological innovation, such as unmanned store, block-chain, which is of great importance to the Japanese government. The government's favorable view about Shanghai's scientific image, to a certain extent, determines Japanese mainstream media show less hostility to Shanghai in their science coverage.

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

This study finds that Japanese mainstream media tend to be selective in their coverage of Shanghai, showing attitudinal differences in different aspects of the city image. The political and social image of Shanghai are criticism-, confrontation-prone. The threat of Shanghai to other countries and the existing world order as well as the safety hazards and crises of uncertainty in Shanghai's society are exaggerated. The cultural and scientific image of Shanghai are framed in a more positive way, proven by an overall friendly attitude shown by the Japanese media who introduce Shanghai's prosperous and dynamic cultural industries, as well as its advanced science and technology. The economic image of Shanghai is full of contradictions. On the one hand, the boom of Shanghai's consumption and investment is well-recognized. On the other hand, the future of Shanghai's economy is described as "bleak". These conflicting frames are influenced by the political, economic, and cultural relations between China, Japan, and the U.S., so Shanghai's image portrayed by the Japanese media changes accordingly. It is easy to conclude that behind how media frame the image of cities in other countries lies intricate dynamics of national interests.

As close allies, Japan and the US act in their own self-interest. Under the pretense of cooperation, they are actually unequal in status. Deeply influenced by the US, Japan sees China as a threat, but it is not completely in line with the US, so it becomes friendly and cooperative when China is beneficial to its development. In general, the relationship between China and Japan is more complex than the close relationship between Japan and the U.S. who belong to the same pro-freedom team. With a complex iteration of antagonism, dialogue, competition, collaboration, and cooperation, Japan has mixed feelings about China, such as contempt, fear, awe and affinity<sup>15</sup>. The combination of America First, Sino-U.S. strategic competition, and the COVID-19 pandemic propels Japan to adopt a pragmatic approach to China so it's natural that Shanghai's image portrayed by Japanese mainstream media is full of contradictions and uncertainties. The frames media use will to some extent affect the perceptions and opinions about Shanghai the Japanese public or people from other countries have, further determining Shanghai's international influence and international competitiveness.

As one of the most famous Chinese cities, Shanghai is under the spotlight of international media. In light of selective reporting and biased interpretation of Shanghai's image exhibited by the international media, such as the Japanese mainstream media, it is extremely important to emphasize the friendship and cooperation between countries. With shared development in mind, we should show it's not a dream to achieve win-win outcomes for China and other countries. Shanghai's development brings opportunities to the world, instead of threats. Globally responsible Shanghai will actively participate in international affairs and spare no effort to maintain world peace and development. Help other countries to understand they have common interests with China who is a responsible global actor will improve their attitudes towards China. In turn, their media will show an objective image of Chinese cities, contributing to understanding and further leading to dialogues.

More importantly, Chinese media should also take the initiative to enhance their ability to get international attention, actively introduce Shanghai to the world to turn the tables on hostile foreign media. Chinese media who are only passively responding to doubts from other countries should explore valuable issues regarding all aspects of Shanghai, increase thematic diversity, strive for a three-dimensional representation of Shanghai, and come up with different media frames. In response to major emergencies such as the pandemic, the media should actively participate in agenda setting, disclose timely, objective, accurate and adequate information, emphasize Shanghai's commitment to people's welfare, and effectively prevent Western media from misinformation and misreporting.

On the basis of following the hot issues in the international community, clarifying unintentional misunderstandings in a timely manner, counteracting intentional misinterpretations forcefully, grasping the discourse power of shaping self-image, we should tell vivid stories with touching details to the world, help others understand Shanghai's city image and culture. Shanghai is a peephole through which the world can get to see the value systems and daily life of contemporary Chinese people.

### **Advantages and limitations**

In studying the international media's shaping of Shanghai's city image, this study selects the Japanese media as the analyzing material where Shanghai is often widely discussed, but it was almost neglected by previous research. This study uses the framework theory to analyze the reports of Japanese mainstream media as a whole, and on the basis of the tendency of Japanese mainstream media to report on Shanghai, it can extend the interpretation of political, economic and cultural perspectives, so that the city image of Shanghai can be examined in a broader perspective.

However, this study is a country-specific study mainly focusing on Japan. It can only show the frame of the mainstream Japanese media's coverage of Shanghai's city image to a certain extent, and cannot be used as a general rule to infer the attitudes and tendencies of other countries' media's reporting on Shanghai's city image. In addition, the research mainly focuses on the reports of the mainstream media, but does not pay enough attention to other media platforms like social media, which also plays an important role in the process of international dissemination of the city image.

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