

“Covering Panda Diplomacy”

-- Analyzing the differences between Chinese and American media coverage

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Abstract:

Recently, Hu Xijin posted on Sina Twitter: “Russia no longer hurts the United States with a slap, but the kung fu pandas raised in Russia can probably hurt it.” Created an Internet sensation. The sudden death of panda “Lele” and the suspected abuse of panda “Yaya” have attracted widespread media coverage worldwide, which also touches the hearts of the people of both countries. In this article, The New York Times uses China Daily and framing to report on panda Yaya and panda diplomacy. In this article, The New York Times uses China Daily and framing to report on panda Yaya and panda diplomacy. Firstly, I will analyze the attitudes of China Daily and the New York Times towards panda diplomacy, as well as the changes they have shown in reporting on panda diplomacy; after that I will analyze the reasons with framing.

Keywords: Panda Diplomacy;Media Report;Differences

Panda diplomacy has been a unique form of Chinese diplomacy for half a century. At present, as a national treasure of China, pandas can be seen on four continents around the world. People worldwide love pandas for their cute appearance and are a symbol of kindness and friendship, which has also brought the spiritual distance between the people of China and the United States closer. In 1972, after Nixon visited China, China presented a pair of pandas to the United States, and the Washington Post used a string of onomatopoeic words as the title for the first time - “Awwwwwww, They’re Cute.”China’s panda diplomacy aims to promote political, economic, and cultural exchanges with other countries, but some media still question panda diplomacy.

The differences in cultural values between China and the West can lead to their unique news writing and reporting characteristics. China Daily and the New York Times belong to different countries, with different news genres, positions, and degrees of subjectivity and objectivity. Therefore, their focus on reporting news is disparate.

Introduce two authoritative newspapers in China and the United States.

The New York Times, a newspaper with good credibility and authority for a long time, “the influence of agenda-setting among media generally flows from the New York Times to other media,” which greatly influences national decision-makers and social elites. China Daily, under the supervision of the Publicity Office of the CPC Central Committee, is a party newspaper and the only national English-language daily in China.

China Daily is relatively objective in reporting on panda diplomacy and does not involve a political stance. From the perspective of content, when sending panda Yaya to the United States in 2003, China Daily reported that the Memphis Zoo spent \$16 million to build a luxurious panda house that “covers an area of three acres and is decorated with Chinese style.” This report not only stated the facts but also implied people’s shock at the huge expenses of American zoos. At that time, people once believed that pandas would receive the best care, but who could have imagined that pandas who lived in luxury zoos would become dirty and thin in twenty years, and even one would die? So it is understandable that some Chinese people suspect that pandas have been abused. Still, it has to be admitted that after being taken back to China, Yaya’s condition is better, her weight is increasing, and her hair has become black and shiny. In 2018, the relationship between China and the United States was cooling down, but in 2022, China Daily published an article commemorating the 50th anniversary of China’s panda visit to the United States. “The two countries have closely cooperated in panda conservation and breeding and achieved fruitful results. Pandas are no longer endangered species. Despite the tense diplomatic relations between the two countries, many of their trades have been urgently suspended, and conflicts continue between the two sides. China Daily still objectively publishes news affirming the United States’ investment and efforts in pandas.

For many years, China and the United States have maintained good communication in conserving giant

pandas and worked together to save endangered species. From the perspective of reporting format, in 2023, China Daily objectively reported the news of the death of panda Lele, stating that the 25-year-old panda 'Lele' was found dead on the morning of February 1st local time in the United States. The Chinese side deeply regrets and regrets this. Apart from the diplomatic aspect, China adheres to its attitude towards the panda diplomacy that has lasted for nearly half a century, demonstrating China's path of peace and cooperation. China's borrowing of pandas is a practical call for international efforts to protect panda habitats and contribute to protecting endangered species together.

Contrary to the report by China Daily, the New York Times' coverage of panda diplomacy is related to the development of national relations. National politics and economy development has played a significant role in the panda race. From a content perspective 2003, China-US relations entered a new "honeymoon period" with close economic and trade relations between the two countries. The New York Times reported that after Yaya and Lele arrived at the Memphis Zoo, they caused a huge sensation. The number of visitors to the zoo increased by 46%, and over 150000 people paid an additional \$3 to see the pandas. Undoubtedly, during this period, the New York Times positively evaluated panda diplomacy, while Americans were obsessed with pandas and enjoyed the economic benefits they brought.

2018 the trade war broke out, and the relationship between China and the United States fell to a freezing point. US President Trump claimed to cut off the relationship between China and the United States. In addition, the New York Times publicly questioned panda diplomacy in 2022, claiming that China used funds to cover|wants to cover|bonds to cover|tends to cover|hands to cover|band to cover|banks to cover|panels to cover|bandage to cover|plants to cover up human rights issues and engage in cultural colonization. Republican lawmakers have even initiated a proposal in Congress that "pandas born in the United States should stay in the United States. It is not difficult to see the influence of politics from here. Analyzing the reporting form, the New York Times has a serious political bias in its coverage of China. The anti-China forces in the United States have already placed all conceivable issues related to China in the prism of geopolitics. CNN also reports how pandas in the United States inspire nationalist sentiment in China - bringing Yaya home. Analyzing the timing of reporting, there is no regular pattern for China Daily to analyze. In contrast, the reporting pattern of the New York Times is consistent with the changes in the relationship between China and the United States.

From the perspective of protecting wildlife, pandas should not become political chips. Panda breeding should be based on science rather than using it as a leverage tool. (Scheck, 2022) Regardless of the evaluation, the popularity of pandas is unquestionable, and the love of pandas by people worldwide has already exceeded our expectations. In an interview with The New York Times, Japanese banker stated that the charm of pandas is unstoppable, surpassing that of American Disney and Soviet Moscow Ballet. Media reports from China and the United States have reached a consensus on how people worldwide love pandas.

What causes the two countries' media to have completely different reports on the same news? There is no conclusive evidence for the news that Panda Yaya is suspected of being abused, and animal abuse is a serious crime in the United States. Furthermore, Yaya's skin disease is related to her family genetics. Therefore, it cannot be directly said that the Memphis Zoo has mistreated Yaya. In addition, the fundamental reason for panda diplomacy is that the media emphasizes ideology and political stance when reporting international news, using frameworks to change how news is expressed and creating a favorable public opinion environment for themselves. Regardless of the changes and political factors, both China and the United States are immersed in the adorability of pandas and will actively promote the protection and breeding of endangered animals such as pandas. Simultaneously protecting the ecological environment and maintaining biodiversity.

Pandas are China's national treasures and symbols of peace. Whether in terms of animal protection or diplomacy, China will actively report on panda diplomacy, thereby promoting the protection and breeding of pandas. The New York Times has always taken a clear stance in its reports, using pandas as a breakthrough to create opposition and tension between the two peoples. It is precisely due to the malicious hype of some American politicians and media that many Americans who are obsessed with pandas are worried that they will not be able to see them in American zoos in the future. They may even have to go to Europe to see them.

Literature References

"Framing" is the spiritual principle and subjective process of organizing events. (Goffman, 1974) The media has always used a dominant perspective to emphasize certain aspects of complex issues (Nelson, Clawson & Oxley,1997). The application of frames in the news is that news media selectively deal with news facts according to certain principles, including media stance, editorial policy, and interest in news events. It is based on the assumption that the characteristics of an issue in a news report

may affect the audience's understanding of it. (Pan & Kosicki,1993) "Framing" by presenting and emphasizing specific content " to highlight issue-specific definitions, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment opinions" (Entman,1993). This is likely to change the trend of public opinion.(Chong & Druckman, 2007) For example, during the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, the New York Times published a news report titled "How the Virus Spread," focusing on the first known cases instead of how the US should manage the epidemic in its own country, in an attempt to "divert the trouble from the east." By reporting "China is the birthplace of the novel coronavirus," it diverted the conflict, instilled its political stance and intention to the world's people, and formed a framing.

Conclusion

As is well known, panda diplomacy has a long history. The malicious hype of American politicians is also one of the reasons for the different expressions of panda diplomacy in the media of China and the United States today. In summary, both The New York Times and China Daily use a framework to amplify the dominant role of the media, and both sides report on panda diplomacy based on

political positions and interests.

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