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Master's Thesis of International Studies

The national image of China in the
Republic of Korea during the THAAD
dispute

대한민국에 중국의 국가 이미지와 사드 배치

August 2019

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**The national image of China in the Republic of
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Abstract

The national image of China in the Republic of Korea during the THAAD dispute

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While China has invested billions of dollars in recent years to promote its national image abroad, public perceptions of China have become more negative in many parts of the world. This thesis examines this phenomenon through the recent case of the THAAD dispute between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea in order to understand how China's strategic approach undermined its own image with the Korean public. Through an analysis of elite Chinese discourse and a framing analysis of Korean media it attempts to understand why China was ineffective in persuading the Korean public of its position on the deployment of the US anti-missile system and to examine the factors that led to the downturn in China's image.

Adopting Lee and Pinker’s psycholinguistic approach to indirect communication, it argues that China used an indirect form of threat to attempt to shift itself into a more dominant position in its relations with Korea in order to pressure it to drop its commitment to THAAD. However, in doing so and by using economic levers in the dispute, its perceived trustworthiness among the Korean public fell dramatically over the course of the dispute causing an increase in negative opinions of China.

As well as highlighting flaws in the Chinese understanding of soft power and the importance of international audiences’ perceptions to its success, this represents a wider strategic failure which could have serious implications for the future of East Asia. Polling data shows that the dispute did not only sour Korean attitudes towards China, it simultaneously strengthened positive attitudes towards the US. Given that concerns about US strategic balancing was one of the main themes of Chinese discourse surrounding the THAAD dispute, this represents a serious strategic oversight as well as a potential threat should tensions between the two powers escalate. This thesis argues for a new “argumentative interaction” approach to relations between China and her neighbours to prevent similar issues in future and in order to avoid ramping up US-China tensions in the Asia Pacific region which would not be of benefit to either party.

Keywords: THAAD; China; national image; soft power; framing analysis; discourse analysis

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In recent years, prominent political and academic elites in the People's Republic of China have become increasingly interested in the concept of soft power and in the nation's ability to influence its own image abroad and, in turn, the wider realm of international politics through non-coercive or non-traditional means. The Chinese government has been investing billions of dollars in recent in various cultural and public diplomacy initiatives such as Confucius Institutes which function as centres for Chinese language and culture learning around the world as well as Premier Xi Jinping's hallmark One Belt One Road infrastructure investment programme.

However, simultaneously, there has been a drop in positive perceptions among foreign audiences with many surveys showing negative attitudes towards China in various parts of the world (Wike et al. 2018). A notable example, is one of the nation's closest neighbours, the Republic of Korea, where according to Pew Global Attitudes research, positive perceptions of China among Korean respondents fell by almost a half from 61 percent in 2015 to just 34 percent in 2017 (Pew Research Center 2018). This dramatic decline coincides with a dispute between the two nations resulting from the Korean government's decision to allow the deployment of a controversial US anti-missile system on South Korean land and the Chinese government's backlash to the decision borne out of proclaimed fears of the monitoring of military activities within

mainland China by the ROK's main military ally. It was escalated by various informal sanctions implemented by China as well nationalist protests, most notably on the Chinese side but with some Korean examples too.

This thesis will examine how this incident and the subsequent media coverage of its backlash impacted the national image of China in Korea over this time period using a three-part analysis. It will first examine Chinese national image management strategies in Korea in recent years in order to understand the Chinese approach to improving its image with citizens of one of its most economically important neighbours. Next, the elite Chinese discourse surrounding the dispute will be examined to identify key themes and motivations in the China's approach to the dispute. Finally, it will use a framing analysis to examine how public discourse in Korea shifted over the course of the dispute in order to understand how Chinese behaviour and how its framing in the Korean media impacted Koreans' opinions towards China. This research will draw from psychological perspectives in order to understand the Chinese approach to the dispute, why it had a negative impact on its national image in Korea and the wider implications this has for China's long-term national image management and security strategies.

1.2. Purpose of Research

As China rises in global influence as an economic, political and military power, it becomes increasingly important to understand its relations with other nations and how it is perceived by foreign publics. While the Chinese government has invested

significant amounts in soft power in recent years, it has not always resulted in an improvement of its image internationally and has been criticised for using an overly centralised approach focussed solely on resource management (Pan 2013).

Simultaneously, territorial, historical and military disputes in its surrounding regions have placed significant strains on relationships with surrounding nations. This is underpinned by shifts in Chinese relations with the US. As China has moved towards a “new great power relations” approach in the past few years, it has shown a change in perception of its own and its relations with the US and other important international players (Zeng and Breslin 2016).

It is important, then, to understand how China is attempting to project an increasingly powerful image internationally and how this in turn being shaped by its somewhat adversarial relationship with the US. On this front, its dispute with Korea over the dispatch of the THAAD anti-missile system provides an interesting test case. While China and Korea are key trade partners for each other, the relationship between the two nations has been prone to diplomatic strain. While it had been improving in recent years, the THAAD dispute coincided with a dramatic downturn in public perceptions of China while seeming to boost the positive image of the US. By investigating this case, more insight can be gained into how China’s changing understanding of its relations with the US and its methods for acting upon its growing desire to shape the international order may be undermining its attempts to improve its image with its neighbouring countries. It also provides useful insight into the relationship between military security and national image and the significant impacts

each can have on the other – an area which has been largely overlooked in national image and national branding research to date.

1.3. Background

In July 2016, the Republic of Korea agreed to the deployment of the US Military's Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-missile system. Even prior to deployment, the proposal had been controversial with Russia and particularly China strongly objecting to its radar capabilities which they argued could be used to monitor their military activities. Despite President Park's attempts to reassure regional neighbors that the deployment "[would] not encroach upon the security interests of any third country" (Song 2016), the dispute quickly escalated.

China responded to the decision with a number of retaliatory measures which caused significant damage to the Korean economy with the National Assembly's Budget Office estimating overall losses of 7.5 trillion Korean won (US\$6.8 billion) (Yonhap 2017). The industries targeted during the retaliation were highly selective focusing on retail, cultural and tourist industries. This has been attributed to high mutual reliance of both countries on each other in terms of trade and current moves to nurture domestic cultural industries (Kwon et al. 2017)

There was also considerable backlash to the THAAD deployment within China from citizens and businesses. Images of protests and boycotts of Korean products and companies were shared widely on social media. Korean-Japanese retail conglomerate

LOTTE, which had agreed to sell its golf course as the placement site for THAAD, faced the brunt of it closing almost all of its Chinese supermarket branches due to a protests from individuals and crackdowns from local authorities over claimed infractions of regulations (Financial Times 2018).

Scholars have characterised the Chinese approach to the dispute as a form of coercive diplomacy (Kim 2018) with China using its vital importance to South Korea as a trade partner to pressure it into accepting its demands. Eventually, it was able to elicit three concessions from the ROK related to its security concerns, referred to as the “three ‘no’s” in the media: no additional THAAD deployments; no future use of other US missile systems, and no trilateral alliance with the US and Japan (Panda 2017). Although this may be considered some kind of victory, the sharp drop in positive perception of China in South Korea over the time period presents potential negative implications for Chinese foreign policy given its increasing focus on soft power and cultural diplomacy in recent years (Cho and Jeong 2008; Ding 2011; Hayden 2012; Sun 2012; Shambaugh 2015) as well as having potential negative implications for its security strategy. Although China may have gained in assuring its security interests in the region, polling data indicates that it took a serious hit in terms of its public perceptions in the ROK – a key indicator of the success of any national image strategy. As an important economic partner and player in the region, the Republic of Korea presents an useful test case for how China’s national image may be affected by negative perceptions of its behavior by foreign publics and this impacts this may have on its security strategy.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. National image and competitive identity

Much of the scholarship in recent years examining countries' attractiveness to other nations and their publics can be attributed to two general categories: national image and soft power. The power of national image in international relations was long ago identified by Robert Jervis who noted that "[a] desired image... can often be of greater use than a significant increment of military or economic power" (Jervis 1970, 6) but the study of this phenomenon has since expanded into an interdisciplinary approach with contributions from marketing, psychology and sociology¹.

The term "soft power", coined by Joseph S. Nye refers to co-optive power based on attraction rather than coercive power using more traditional military or economic power (Nye 1990). Nye specifies soft power resources as culture, political values and foreign policies which must be leveraged through the "co-optive means of agenda-setting, persuasion, and attraction" (2011, 16). Some scholars have argued for the distinction between soft and hard power resources rather than coercive and co-optive power (Lee 2009) while others have aimed to further elucidate the concept by examining the process of power creation through a taxonomy of behaviours (Gilboa 2008).

¹ See Dell'Orto et al. 2010; Van Ham 2001; and Alexander et al. 2005 for examples

Soft power and national image have become heavily interlinked concepts but the two are distinctly separate and have emerged separately, often in different fields and with different purposes. While soft power theory focusses chiefly on the resources a country can draw upon to exert influence on the world, national image theory focusses more specifically on a nation's reputation and how it is perceived by outside actors. Drawing from social psychology, Mercer (1996) argues that national reputation is shaped by two key principles. Firstly, all reputation lies in the eye of the beholder. And secondly, that different audiences perceive the same actions differently. As such relations between countries, cultural contexts and past histories can all affect how one country will perceive another. By Mercer's account, reputation and image should not be a chief concern of a nation as it is mostly subjective and outside of its control.

Other scholars have taken a more proactive stance on national image, arguing that national image management should be a core concern of modern statecraft. Fisher argues a state can still take steps to manage its national image by emphasising its positive characteristics and de-emphasising the negative ones while Van Ham (2001) takes an even more proactive approach arguing that in a postmodern era dominated by big multinational brands, countries should also work to create their own distinctive national brands.

This thesis will primarily draw from these more constructive approaches, adopting Anholt's concept of *competitive identity* to understand the role of China's national brand in its relations with the Republic of Korea. Anholt (2007; 2010) posits

that in an increasingly globalized world, nations and even cities and regions are in constant competition with each other to attract the attention, good will and economic resources of outsiders. He argues that building a strong national image requires the input of all major stakeholders and a coordinated approach held together by the fostering of a benign nationalism which allows citizens to buy into, promote and benefit from their own national brand.

2.2. Discourse analysis

The origins of discourse analysis in international relations lie mostly within constructivism growing out of the wider ideological paradigm of post-structuralism in social science. Post-structuralists place emphasis on the role of identity in international relations viewing identity and foreign policy as mutually constitutive rather than causal. A clear unidirectional causal link cannot be found but instead “foreign policies rely upon representations of identity, but it is also through the formulation of foreign policy that identities are produced and reproduced.” (Hansen 2013, 1). However, the application and usage of discourse analysis within IR remains varied and “no common understanding has emerged in International Relations about the best way to study discourse” (Milliken 1999, 226).

In order to conduct discourse analysis, we must first ask: What is discourse? Discourse differs from simply language in that it places communication within its broader social and political context. Discourse analysis then aims not just to understand the language used but instead to understand its broader implications and the

motivations of the agents engaging in the communication or, put more simply, analysis of discourse is an analysis of “meaning in use” (Wiener 2009). As Holzscheiter argues:

“Rather than simply investigating the use of language in international politics, an exploration of discourse asks for the social and political effects that result from using a particular vocabulary on the one hand and the productive effects of particular constructions of reality on the agency and identity of individuals and groups. Any singular event of speaking or producing text, thus, is part of a larger social and political process: It is conceived of as “text in social context.”” (2014, 144)

Therefore, through the use of discourse analysis, we can understand not only the messages and ideas available in a particular discourse but also the social and political structures and contexts which influenced them. In particular relation to international relations, we can use discourse to understand the power structures that influence a particular discourse and the productive effects that power has on the kinds of messages propagated by the research. This allows for insight into elite and governance structures within a nation and how the interests of the elites within a particular nation impact the discourse prevalent within a nation in relation to a particular foreign affairs issue.

2.3. Framing analysis

Framing analysis is a widely used approach to the interpretation and analysis of various types of texts, particularly news media, which examines how a particular story or piece of information is conveyed. Goffman argued framing is an active process we all engage in, defining frames as the “schemata of interpretation” through which we are able to “locate, perceive, identify and label” the events and things around us (1974, 21). Applying this concept specifically to news media, Gitlin (1980) finds that frames are made through decisions to select, emphasise and exclude information and are directly related to the news production process as they allow journalists to efficiently relay large amounts of information to their audiences. Gamson (1992) argues that framing is the essential meaning-making activity in media production while Entman contends frames “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman 1993, 52). Pan and Kosicki (1993) examine the creation of frames and identify four aspects of framing formation: syntactical structures; thematic structures; rhetorical structures; and script structures.

While framing analysis is often used to examine the role of the news media in public life, it can also provide useful insights into the public discourse on a specific topic. Simon and Xenos (2000) argue that, as elite discourse act as the origins of public opinion and media acts as a source from which the public derives much of its political

opinion, media framing can be probed as a means through which to understand public deliberation on key political issues. Using concepts borrowed from theories of deliberative democracy,² the authors argue that media framing can be understood as a form of public deliberation where rational claims about a given subject can be tested in the public arena. Both deliberation theory and framing theory rest centrally on the concept of associations made between political issues. Each frame, then, represents a validity claim which can be put forward by different interlocutors through a mediated public space and then tested through a process of deliberation. By taking this approach, this thesis will aim to identify how public deliberation functioned in the public understanding of the THAAD dispute in South Korea and the impact that had on China's national image.

Li and Chitty (2009) argue that media framing analysis provides insight into a country's national image by analysing the public frames available to members of the foreign public which influence the private frames which each individual carries in his or her heads. Media framing guides public attitudes of various issues in the public sphere (Pan and Kosicki 1993) but it is particularly pertinent in the public's understanding of foreign affairs and its perception of other nations which tends to rely on mediated images in its understanding of foreign countries (Chitty 2007). Therefore, while framing analysis only deals with public frames present in the mass media and not the private frames formed in the minds of individuals (Lee and Chitty 2009), the

² See Ackerman 1991

oversized influence the mass media has on public understandings of foreign affairs means it provides a relatively generalizable insight into the image of a nation generally held in the minds of a particular foreign public. There are limitations to this approach, such as the potential for different audience readings of the same media texts³ but framing analysis remains a useful and productive approach in understanding the most prevalent images of a nation available to members of a particular foreign public.

2.4. Sino-Korean relations

Since the normalization of their diplomatic relations in 1992, China and the Republic of Korea have built extremely strong economic ties with China now the ROK's largest trade partner and Korea China's fourth largest export market⁴. Zhu (2009) points to strengthened economic ties following the Asian Financial Crisis which provided Korea with opportunities to prosper following the crash and have led to increasingly interdependent and complementary trade. Similarly, the early 2000s was marked by stronger diplomatic relations between the two nations, especially during their joint attempts to tackle security threats in the North East Asian region – China's leadership role in the six party talks with North Korea being of particular note. China was also keen to strengthen cultural and people-to-people ties during the time period,

³ Stuart Hall's audience reception theory describes how different individuals in an audience can take away significantly different readings of the same text. See Hall (2002).

⁴ See KITA 2018 for more precise figures

building Confucius Institutes, allowing Chinese tourists to travel to the ROK and encouraging Chinese students to study in Korea and Korean students to study in China.

However, after an initial high in the 1990s, relations between the two countries has “gradually slid into a state of mutual suspicion” (Ye 2016, 98). Despite strong economic interdependency, China and Korea have had a number of disputes over various issues leading to a characterisation of their relationship as “hot” economics and “cold” politics. Disagreements over historical events, trade issues and other specific diplomatic incidents as well as ideological differences have all put strain on the relationship. Ye (2016) shows through a number of models that Sino-Korean economic and political relations are independent of each other, explaining why declining diplomatic relations have not generally affected trade, and he contends that their relations can be better understood through examining each nations’ grand strategy and geopolitical concerns. However, he also notes that diplomatic normalization was historically required for full economic cooperation between the two parties and that lack of resolution for these recent controversies could cause irreparable damage to the relationship.

As well as governmental relations, an examination of people-to-people perceptions is needed to get a full picture of the challenges facing the Sino-Korean relationship in the 21st century. Although there has been considerable fluctuation, Koreans’ perceptions of China have been on a general down trend since the turn of the millennium with the number of Koreans viewing their Western neighbour favourably

decreasing from a high 66% in 2002 to just 34% in 2017 (Pew Research Center 2018). Rising tensions among ordinary people due to historical disputes have played a role in this. In particular the interpretation of the history of Goguryeo by the North East Project which was partly funded by the Chinese government, seemed to sour popular opinion and stoke nationalistic sentiments in both nations (Zhu 2009). Kim and Chung (2016) note that reactive and sometimes inaccurate reporting combined with increasingly inflammatory internet cultures and rising nationalism have exacerbated negative perceptions of the other in both nations.

More broadly this could be seen as a symptom of wider problems with cooperation in North East Asia which is considered less well developed than in other regions, especially Europe (Webber 2013). Even in terms economic relations, in which China, South Korea and Japan have all shown great interest, there has been slow development – particularly in the development of a China-Japan-Korea FTA. This has been partly attributed to the role of US “hub and spoke” military alliances in the region which prevented earlier regionalization and helped lead to a lack of the shared ideas, identities and institutions (Choo 2014).

The military role of the US in the Pacific has placed further strain on these relationships as China has tried to expand its own military power in the region. There have been increasing concerns that as China’s power and influence rises, the two nations will fall into a “Thucydides trap” and inevitably face some kind of military standoff. Proponents of power transition theory and offensive realism, in western

academia in particular, contend that if China continues to rise in its economic and military stature in the way it has done in recent decades, this will lead to “intense security competition with considerable potential for war” (Mearsheimer 2014). In order to allay these concerns, the Chinese government has pushed the idea of a “peaceful rise” and its desire for a “harmonious world” and have most recently focussed on developing a “new type of great power relations” - which President Xi Jinping proposed to President Obama in 2013 (Li and Xiu 2014) - but so far there has been a lack of clear consensus in Chinese academic circles as to what this actually means (Zeng 2016). Given the US’s strong military alliances with both South Korea and Japan and their geographical positions in the region, any kind of Sino-American military rivalry is likely to have knock on effects on the two nations.

Chapter 3. Research Design

3.1 Research Question

The aim of this research is to examine how China's national image in Korea changed over the course of the THAAD dispute in the time period from when China first raised its concerns about the deployment in 2014 until the two nations re-normalized their relations in late 2017 by examining framing of China in the Korean media. Specifically, it asks how China's actions were framed in the Korean media during the dispute in order to understand why there was such a dramatic fall in public opinion of China during this time. The research will also attempt to examine Chinese motivations in the approach it took to the dispute and why they were ineffective in convincing Koreans that they should not deploy THAAD.

I hypothesise that a number of issues frames will initially gain prominence as the dispute unfolds but over time framing which portrays China as the bully and Korea as the victim will prevail. Theoretically, this hypothesis draws from the logic of indirect speech set out by Pinker et al (2008) which contends that indirect communication can be used to attempt renegotiate a relationship. The Chinese use of indirect communication in this case, as examined in Chapter 5, could be understood as an attempt to shift the relationship from reciprocal to dominant and therefore, if China's behaviour was understood in this way by the Korean public, we could expect to see the emergence of a bully and victim narrative in the Korean media. This theory

is set out in further detail in the rest of this chapter. The hypothesis is also based on the approach laid out by Simon and Xenos (2001) which posits that certain frames will gain dominance over time as other issue claims are deliberated, considered and then gradually discarded in the public arena.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

3.2.1. Discourse analysis

This study will take what Holzsheiter refers to as a “productive” approach which focusses on discourse as “knowledge-power nexus” (2014) in which discourse functions as a form of meaning structures which are bound to produce and reproduce power inequalities. This is in comparison to a “deductive” approach which focuses on deductive rationality and examines discourse as a tool through which the better argument can win and power asymmetries can be redressed. While both approaches hold merit, as the material under scrutiny, the China Daily, receives significant oversight from the Chinese government, it seems more useful to understand its discourse as one which prioritises the meaning structures of existing elites.

As discourse analysis is the analysis of “meaning in use” (Wiener 2009) and “text in social context” (2014), it is useful for the purpose of this study in that it allows us to analyse both the messages presented by Chinese elites in a discourse which is publicly presented to a foreign public and the social and political context and power structures which influence their formation. This approach simultaneously allows for

the analysis of the messages China tried to project to the Korean public during the dispute (although the salience of these may have been limited by the tendency of the public to rely on domestic mass media to understand foreign affairs (Chitty 2007)) and the analysis of the motivations of the Chinese elites which influenced the formation of these messages. We can therefore understand both the messages themselves and the elite structures and motivations which affected the ways in which they were communicated.

3.2.2. Framing analysis

The framing analysis in this thesis adopts Simon and Xenos' conceptualisation of media framing as a type of public deliberation in which frames rise and fall in prevalence over time as certain ideas gradually come to dominate (Simon and Xenos 2001). As the authors argue, this approach has a number of benefits when trying to understand how public opinion is formed on an issue through discursive deliberation. It allows an insight into the role of deliberation in public discourse in four ways. Firstly, the presence of bivalent (in which two frames dominate) or multivalent (in which three or more frames dominate) discourse indicates a process of deliberation over time. Secondly, the rise and fall of certain frames temporally shows a process of conflict and resolution in public deliberation as certain ideas are debated and rejected. Thirdly, frames which remain over time represent unresolved conflicts. And finally, it allows for some insight into whether the forces determining the process of deliberation are

primarily internal or external – deliberation driven by external forces should follow the general progression of those courses.

Through this method we can see how the framing changed over the course of the dispute which we can extrapolate to a wider reflection of public debate on the issue. We can also see whether it was primarily affected by internal factors, such as the behaviour of domestic politicians or external factors, such as retaliatory actions by China or Chinese consumers. More broadly, the relatively limited understanding of foreign nations among the general public (Anholt 2007), a general reliance on the mass media for understanding of foreign affairs among the general public (Chitty 2007) and a lack of personal experience of foreign countries mean that the public images created in the mass media have an oversized influence on the private images in the minds of individuals (Li and Chitty 2009) and therefore this approach is useful for examining the national images of China which are most easily available to the general Korean public and most likely to influence their understanding of China more broadly.

3.2.3. Psycholinguistic approach to indirect communication

In order to understand the approach China took to communicating its objections to THAAD to the Korean public during the dispute and why this was not well received by the Korean, this thesis adopts a theory of the logic of indirect speech from social psychology put forward by Steven Pinker, James Lee and Martin Nowak (Pinker et al. 2008; Lee and Pinker, 2010). The theory examines the usage of indirect speech in interpersonal communications in order to understand why people choose to

use indirect, rather than direct, forms of communication by examining the social role of innuendo and the potential emotional costs of overt communication. It identifies three key aspects of indirect communication which make it useful in social situations: plausible deniability; relationship negotiation; and the digital nature of language.

Using game theory, the authors examine how indirect speech can lower the potential social and emotional cost of certain types of communications in some situations. Using the example of a driver pulled over by a police officer, they show how the use of an indirect offer lowers the potential costs of offering a bribe. While a direct bribe has a high potential cost if the officer is honest (in this case, potential arrest), an indirect offer significantly lowers the costs of the bribe to the same as the initial speeding ticket for an honest officer and potentially lower for a dishonest one (as demonstrated in the diagram below).

	Dishonest officer	Honest officer
Don't bribe	Traffic ticket	Traffic ticket
Bribe	Go free	Arrest for bribery
Implicate bribe	Go free	Traffic ticket

Figure 1. Indirect speech bribery payoffs (Source: Pinker et al. 2008)

The reason for the lower costs is the role of plausible deniability and the burden of proof the officer faces in a prosecution. While the officer may understand the

offer as a bribe, the indirectness of the communication makes it more difficult to prove the intentions of the driver and allows the driver the space to plausibly deny any allegations. Understood as cost functions, the potential social costs of an unsuccessful arrest for an honest officer is likely to be higher than the potential costs of taking the bribe to a corrupt officer (given the likelihood of being caught for corruption in this case is likely to be low). Therefore, the plausible deniability of indirect speech allows for an ambiguity which lowers the potential costs of offers which may break social norms or rules.

But while plausible deniability explains indirect speech usage in legal situations, it doesn't fully explain this behaviour in other situations for which the authors put forward the second part of the theory: relationship negotiation. They borrow from Politeness theory to argue that speech acts have two intended purposes: 1) to convey a proposition the literal meaning of the speech and 2) to negotiate or maintain the relationship. Indirect speech acts achieve this by operating at two levels: conveying a literal meaning which conveys the safest relationship between the two parties and implying a second meaning which necessitates some kind of negotiation of the relationship.

Using Fiske's typology of relationships which sets out three categories of relations: dominance (an overtly hierarchical relationship); communality (a familial, unconditional sharing relationship typical of family and close friends); and reciprocity (a tit-for-tat, negotiation-based, equality-matching relationship typical of business

partners), the authors argue that the type of relationship drastically affects what kind of negotiation and behaviour is acceptable. They argue that because of the fragile nature of cooperation, behaviour which violates the expected norms of the type of relationship can impose high emotional and social costs (a form of Identification Problem when the values of the other party are unknown) and therefore the use of indirect speech in this situation is a rational way to negotiate the bounds of the relationship without explicitly violating the expectations of the other if they do not accept the proposition.

But in some instances, this Identification Problem does not arise (for example, if all police in a city are known to be corrupt) and for this the authors put forward the third aspect of the theory: the digital nature of language. They argue that people interpret spoken and written language as a more direct medium of communication and something explicitly stated in direct language is understood to be certain, unlike something implied by indirect language, even if the same meaning is understood by all parties. Therefore, explicitly stated language creates certain common knowledge between two parties which implicit language merely creates uncertain shared individual knowledge which is more difficult to act upon allowing both parties to maintain the status quo of a relationship even when they believe the relationship to have changed in some way.

While this theory was developed to understand interpersonal communications, by applying the same concepts to inter-state communication, this research will hopefully provide useful new insights into China's approach to diplomacy in this

conflict and, more broadly, communication between states and foreign publics and how the directness or indirectness of diplomatic communication in the public space can affect a nation's image in the other nation. In order to transpose this theory onto international relations, certain assumptions must be made. Using the same relationship typology, reciprocal relations will be assumed to be the default relationship between states given the norms of sovereignty embedded into the current international order and legally stated through various international treaties as well as the negotiation-based nature of most diplomatic interactions. Furthermore, emotional and social costs at the interpersonal level will be assumed to translate to diplomatic costs at the inter-state level, the key relational concern of diplomatic and economic relations. Therefore, we can assume that states may employ indirect forms of communication in order to receive the potential relationship gains outlined in Pinker et al's theory (plausible deniability; relationship negotiation; digital nature of language) without suffering the potential diplomatic costs. In specific, if we apply this to this case, we can argue that, in its indirect approach to the conflict, China tried to renegotiate its relationship attempting to take a more dominant position while limiting Korea's desire or ability to respond in a way which would explicitly harm the two nation's economic and diplomatic relationship.

3.3. Methodology

Three layers of analysis are used in this study to understand China's approach to national image management and why it was ineffective in this case. Firstly, a

historical approach is taken examining previous research in order to identify the key qualities of China's national image management strategy as well as its main strengths and weaknesses. Next, a discourse analysis is undertaken of Chinese newspaper, the *China Daily*, from across the time period in order to identify key themes in the elite Chinese discourse over the course of the dispute. This allows for insight both into Chinese motivations for its objection to the THAAD and the message it was trying to communicate externally to foreign audiences, including Koreans, about its reasoning for its opposition and the actions it took as a result. Finally, a framing analysis of Korean news articles covering the dispute is undertaken to examine how it was portrayed by the media in order to understand how public discourse was shaped over the course of the dispute and how this led to a downturn in public opinion of China.

3.4. Discourse analysis

3.4.1. Sampling and coding method

As this aspect of the analysis was primarily qualitative, a purposive sampling approach was taken. The *China Daily* was chosen due to its close association with the Chinese government, being under the auspices of the Office of Foreign Propaganda. As such it is a useful resource in understanding official positions and elite discourse on the subject. It also routinely published material from Xinhua, the official state news agency, and occasionally quotes from the *Global Times*, run under the supervision of the *People's Daily*, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party, providing

a wider insight into elite discourse. All 306 articles related to THAAD within the defined time period were read closely to identify the key passages relating to the dispute with South Korea. Selected excerpts were then chosen for closer examination and analysis as a representation of broader themes present in the overall discourse.

3.5. Framing analysis

3.5.1. Sampling method

Four national Korean daily newspapers were chosen for this research on the basis of reach, influence and political leaning. As the two most read print dailies in Korea the *Chosun Ilbo* and *Joongang Ilbo* were chosen which are both considered to have a conservative political stance. In order to maintain political balance, articles from the *Hankyoreh* and the *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, Korea's two most prominent progressive-leaning newspapers were also included in the sample.⁵ Because of the dominance of this issue in Korean news media over the course of the dispute, only articles published on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month within the time period were included in the sample to maintain a manageable sample size.

Only articles which gave significant coverage to China in relation to THAAD were included in the sample. The dispute must have been mentioned within the first 5 paragraphs of the article and any articles which only mentioned THAAD in passing without expanding were also not included. Articles primarily focused on the US or

⁵ See Korea Press Foundation 2015 for more detailed circulation figures

North Korea without addressing the THAAD dispute between Korea and China were also eliminated from the sample.

3.5.2. Coding Method

Methodological approaches to framing analysis broadly fall into two categories: inductive, where the operationalization of the frames is determined by the content of all or part of the sample being analysed, and deductive, where the operationalization of the frames is determined in advance from existing materials. This study uses an inductive approach in order to analyse the frames as they are deployed by the Korean media. Following an approach established in previous studies (Menashe 1998), a random sample of 75 articles from the larger total sample was selected and then used to define a number of “working frames”. The approach taken was an inversion of Gamson’s landmark study (1992). While Gamson used an inductive approach to identify a number of broad frames surrounding the issue and then identify subframes within those, the breadth and specificity of issues related to the THAAD dispute made it difficult to identify broad themes. Instead subframes were identified first and then reorganized into a smaller number of broader to capture the breadth of the discourse. Frames were identified inductively from the sample using a smaller sample of 75 articles from which the frames were identified and then applied to the rest of the articles.

3.6. Limitations

While discourse analysis offers a useful approach for understanding the Chinese elite discourse surrounding the THAAD dispute, one obvious drawback in the use of the *China Daily* is a lack of Chinese-language sources which may allow for a deeper look into the discourse taking place within China. However, as the primary objective of this analysis is to examine the discourse that Chinese officials wished to present to foreign audiences it still remains a useful subject for analysis in the context of this study. Another challenge for discourse analysis is the qualitative and therefore subjective nature of the analysis. Trustworthiness in qualitative research can be assessed using four criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Credibility is attained in this study through the number of articles that were examined as well as the long period of time over which they were published which ensures the analysis reflects the discourse over a significant period of time and not just a snapshot of one day or one week. Dependability and confirmability are provided through a clear description of how the sample for the research was attained which allows the reader to examine all the material used in this research for themselves. Finally, transferability is provided through thick description of the context of the discourse throughout this piece of research.

Various scholars have noted a number of limitations in different methodological approaches to framing analysis. One of the most commonly discussed

is the problem of replication and the issue of subjectivity in the definition of frames. Although many attempts have been made to further systematise the process of frame operationalisation, the inherently subjective nature of language presents a significant hurdle which is difficult to fully overcome. This thesis attempts to do so by using an approach developed by Menashe and Siegel (1998) in which frames are derived from two smaller random samples which are compared with each other in order to ensure consistency within the coding matrix.

As an attempt to understand how the national image of China is held in the minds of the Korean public, one limitation of news framing analysis as an approach is that audiences do not necessarily absorb the frames of news media wholesale but can have their own interpretation, often influenced by existing beliefs, biases and previous experiences. Hall (2002) argues audiences can take three different positions when decoding messages encoded in a media text: dominant/hegemonic (accepting the intended or preferred reading), negotiated (acknowledging but not fully accepting the dominant position) or oppositional/counter-hegemonic (taking a directly oppositional reading based on the viewer's framework of reference). Therefore, other readings are not only possible, but heterogeneity of opinion should be expected – particularly in the age of digital news in which the media landscape is increasingly pluralistic and audiences rely on multiple sources for their news.

Therefore, it is unrealistic to expect media frames to entirely reflect the sentiments of the society in which this news media is being consumed. However, given

existing survey data which shows a considerable downturn in public opinion towards China in Korea, this analysis is designed to offer some insight into how the framing of this dispute with China may have influenced public opinion. Specifically, by taking the perspective of deliberation within public discourse, this work can give insight into how the course of shaping domestic discourse through public deliberation can shape the image of a foreign nation in the minds of domestic citizens.

Chapter 4. China's National Image Management strategy

4.1. China's national image management

Promoting a positive image of China has become recognised by the Chinese government as an increasingly important task and since the late 1990s, elites and academics have discussed the role of China's image and its "soft power" as an important aspect of the country's national strategy (Cho and Jeong 2008; Shambaugh 2008). But it was under the leadership of Hu Jintao that the promotion of China's image through soft power development became a key objective with the introduction of the concept of the "Beijing Consensus" and its "peaceful rise" policies. These approaches generally focussed on offering an alternative model to liberal democracy for developing countries while not posing a threat to the prevailing international order. The increasing popularity of the "China threat theory", particularly within US academic and foreign policy circles, in particular, motivated China's leadership to promote a positive image of itself as a significant and productive but, most importantly, non-threatening member of the international community.

Under the leadership of Xi Jinping, the number of resources being dedicated to this task has vastly increased while the rhetoric, focus and methods have changed significantly. Diplomatic discourses under Xi have shifted becoming bolder and less

afraid of China taking its position as a major power – a marked departure from Deng Xiaoping’s famous foreign policy guidance: “hide your strength and bide your time”. The first of Xi’s two major new strategies, “new type of great power relations”, marks a major change in China’s approach to its relationship with the US. While the “peaceful rise” and “harmonious world” concepts attempted to negate the China threat theory, Zeng (2016) points out that this new strategy embraces a realist position, actively attempting to avoid the “Thucydides’ trap” by focussing directly on preventing conflict with the US. The second major strategy China has pursued under Xi is the “One Belt, One Road” initiative, which has drawn comparisons with the US post-war Marshall Plan, investing in and developing infrastructure in strategic partnerships with countries around the world (Zeng 2017). Although it was initially conceived of as a way to develop infrastructure in strategically useful periphery nations, particularly those in Central Asia, it has expanded all over the world. Both strategies belie China’s ambition to solidify its position as one of the great powers in an increasingly multipolar international system. At the same time, it has drawn various concerns from other nations, particularly the US and the EU, about its potential to undermine existing multilateral ties and institutions (Zeng 2016; Hart and Johnson 2019) and has been treated with some suspicion and questioning in western media (Zhang and Wu 2017).

4.2. China’s soft power discourse

China’s national image management is best understood by examining the Chinese elites’ increasing focus on soft power in recent years. Chinese officials believe

that the US's soft power played a key role in the collapse of the Soviet Union and it is therefore believed to be crucial to the survival of the PRC and CCP. As a result, understandings of its role in Chinese foreign policy discourse often takes a combative, realist tone (Shambaugh 2008).

Culture was identified early on in the Chinese Communist Party's soft power strategy as a key resource which it could use to increase its presence and positive image on an international stage and the promotion of Chinese traditional culture, language and values has become a keystone of its cultural diplomacy. Arguably the flagship of Chinese cultural diplomacy in the past 15 years has been Confucius Institutes, educational institutes promoting Chinese language learning and culture. Confucius Institutes operate as "a form of state sponsored, university-piloted cultural diplomacy" (Lo and Pan 2016, 29) being generally run as smaller academies within larger institutions, generally universities, with support from Chinese universities and overseen by the Chinese Language Council International (*Hanban* in Chinese). The Confucius Institute project was modelled on other successful cultural diplomatic institutions such as the German Goethe Institut, the French Alliance Française and the British Council. Although, while this does show an attempt to understand the cultural approaches of other nations and how to engage in intercultural collaboration, unlike these autonomous or semi-autonomous organisations, Confucius Institutes are directly funded and managed by the state. Judging solely by the number of institutes which have been established in recent years, the project has been an undeniable success.

According to the Confucius Institute Headquarters' figures, there have been 516 Confucius Institutes and 1,076 Confucius Classrooms created in 142 countries since 2004 (Xinhua 2017).

However, a number of shortcomings in the methods of practice used by Confucius Institutes and weaknesses in their promotional strategies have been identified by scholars. Under Nye's definition of soft power, it should be exerted through co-option and attraction, but the work of CIs could not be maintained without heavy financial support from the Chinese government (Pan 2013). Furthermore, the CI project is focussed primarily on resource provision, sometimes in ways which can undermine its effectiveness as a form of attractive power. The *Hanban* and related institutions have a tendency towards centralized management and control of the resources they provide which can make their interactions with partner providers and students seem more coercive and controlling than inducing and co-opting. Another criticism laid at the foot of the Confucius Institutes are related to the quality of the programs they provide. Materials often have not met the needs of students, sometimes being poorly translated, culturally irrelevant or incomprehensible and lacking in relevance to the students' experiences. Likewise, the rapid expansion in Chinese language education has led to a lack of qualified teachers exacerbated by the fact Chinese educators receive significantly less to teach overseas in a CI compared to a regular professor position meaning it is difficult to attract the best talent (Lo and Pan 2016).

Another keystone of the Chinese soft power project has been the massive expansion of the international presence of Chinese media outlets. The Chinese government has spent millions of dollars creating new and expanding existing broadcast, print and online platforms in an attempt to compete with other internationally recognised news providers and promote a positive image of China abroad. The largest of these projects is the attempt to make Xinhua into an internationally competitive global news agency and CCTV into an influential news broadcasting station. It has expanded its media presence globally with particular focus on investing in developing and emerging economies (Wu 2016). This approach is heavily resource-based, based on an assumption that simply putting powerful Chinese messages (at least by CCP measures) in front of an audience will be enough to persuade them. The role of the audience as the ultimate decision-maker on the viability of Chinese soft power is overlooked and “foreign audience reflect vulnerabilities as much as objects of opportunity for the promotion of China’s image” (Hayden 2012, 22).

4.3. China’s soft power activities in Korea

Korea and China have a complex set of relations going back thousands of years. However following the creation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the image of China in the Republic of Korea was largely negative, mostly due to strong anti-communist sentiments, the central role of the US as a military ally and the role China played as an ally to North Korea in the brutal Korean War. However after the

normalization of diplomatic relations between the two nations in 1992, Koreans' perceptions of China began to slowly improve – particularly from the late 1990s to the mid-late 2000s. China began to build its reputation as a responsible neighbour in both economic and political realms, first with its behaviour during the Asian Financial Crisis and later with its increasing role in managing the security of the region.

China was also keen to strengthen cultural and people-to-people ties during the time period. In 2016, the two nations were each other's largest source of international students with around 68 thousand Chinese students studying in Korea (ICEF 2018) and around 70 thousand Koreans studying in China (Yonhap 2016). Prior to China's unofficial tourism restrictions in reaction to the THAAD placement, over 8 million Chinese tourists visited Korea in 2016, almost 50 percent of the total number of visitors.⁶

The Confucius Institute project has been particularly successful and prolific in Korea with the first ever Confucius Institute being opened in Seoul in 2004 with 23 of the institutions operating throughout Korea by 2014 (Shin 2017). Liu (2018) points to a number of reasons why Confucius Institutes, which have often been points of political contention in western countries, have been consistently popular and relatively controversy-free in Korea. Firstly, the increasing economic reliance on China as Korea's largest trade partner has driven a huge amount of interest in Chinese language

⁶ Figures retrieved from the Korean Tourism Organisation's website. See KTO 2019.

learning among Koreans. Secondly, the author points to cultural norms as another reason for the lack of controversy, as students' concern about the teacher's comfort in the classroom mean that potential discussions about controversial political topics are "off the table". Finally, cultural norms also play a role in that the promotion of Confucianism is very familiar to Koreans and may even make them think about its potential as a vehicle for their country's own soft power.

The author notes that although there is some discomfort about the Chinese government's role in the operation of CIs, this has not led to any shutdowns as was the case at the University of Chicago. In fact, the first time there was any major political dispute about the running of CIs in South Korea was during the THAAD dispute in 2017 when a number of Chinese language teachers working at Confucius Institutes could not renew their visas (Shin 2017). Although the visa issues arose around the same time as other crackdowns on the improper usage of the same visa (Bak 2017), the timing raises questions about potential political motivations for the decision.

4.4. Potential strategic weaknesses in the Chinese approach

Despite the relatively successful public diplomacy initiatives outlined above, China's positive image in Korea has been strained by various disputes and differences of opinions over the years. The late 90s to early 2000s was a peak for positive views of China among Korea with 66 percent having a favourable opinion in 2002 (Pew Research Center 2018) but even during this generally positive period for relations, a

number of potential threats began to emerge. Firstly, rising tensions among ordinary people due to historical disputes, in particular the interpretation of the history of Goguryeo by the North East Project which was partly funded by the Chinese government, seemed to have soured popular opinion towards China in Korea and stoked nationalistic sentiments in both nations. Security and sovereignty issues were also seen as potential hurdles to relations with rising conflict in the Taiwan Strait causing uncertainty. At the same time there was increasing dissatisfaction in the ROK with the way Chinese authorities handled various incidents relating to North Korean refugees and China's dissatisfaction with the security situation and Korea's alliances (Zhu 2009). North Korea has been a continuous irritant in relations between the two nations and flared up once again in 2010 when China refused to acknowledge North Korea's responsibility for the sinking of the ROKS Cheonan and the bombing of Yeongpyeong Island or endorse South Korea's calls for a UN investigation and sanctions (Kim and Chung 2016). Following this period, Korean opinion of China significantly increased from a low of 38 percent in 2010 to 61 percent in 2015 but the dramatic drop to just 34 percent in 2017 shows how China's reactions to wider external security issues relating to North Korea and South Korea's military alliance with the US continue to negatively affect its image among the Korean public, as will be examined further in later chapters of this thesis.

The largest hurdle for China in promoting a positive national image, not just in Korea but across the world, has been a lack of perceived attractive values. Ding's

examination of Beijing's attempts at national image management in recent years finds that its successes are tempered with significant setbacks (Ding 2011). The Chinese government's attempts to manage its image through cultural diplomacy, strategic partnerships, effective usage of international broadcasting and information dissemination and stronger connections with the Chinese diaspora have had some successes, particularly in the Global South. However the author notes that weak political credibility and strengthening popular nationalism (especially in online spaces) as well as a number of foreign policy blunders have limited its progress and that without better public diplomacy and efforts towards serious political reform there is a danger that these attempts at image management will become "rhetorical propaganda that will often be misconstrued" (ibid., 305).

These weaknesses in the Chinese approach echo Anholt's survey findings on what attracts foreign publics to national brands. China consistently fails to rank within the top 10 in the Anholt-GfK Nation Brand index showing difficulties in communicating a consistently positive and memorable image to foreign audiences. While China possesses some of the resources which he notes are significant potential assets for a nation's image such as notable cultural and historical assets, the survey results show that governance and values remain a consistent weak point for China's image as respondents show a preference for certain values which have been held up as

universal such as human rights and democracy (Anholt 2007)⁷. While there has been increasing discussion of the Beijing Consensus in recent years as a potential alternative model for developing nations which seems to eschew the necessity of democracy and the other western liberal values promoted by US-backed organisations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, China seems to have been unable to communicate a consistent, attractive alternative set of values to the rest of the world.

There are also further limitations specific to China's soft power push in a region which is highly competitive and has historically been characterised by a lot of strained and difficult relations. Some scholars have noted that in this environment soft power is not always so 'soft'. Public diplomacy activism in East Asia is highly competitive as nations compete for leadership and to legitimize their own narrative of historical events as well as to undercut the positions of other nations (Sohn 2015). This competition is undercut by military coercion and economic inducement. Surveying the high levels of investment into soft power in the region, Hall and Smith (2013) argue that this in fact it can have a number of negative consequences as it can arouse suspicion that a foreign state is trying to undermine the position of the domestic government by promoting messages which conflict with its official stance. The regional rivalry between the US and China adds an additional layer of tension as many nations in the region, and particularly South Korea, find themselves caught between the

⁷ The fall of the USA to sixth place in the 2018 (it had been first two years previously) can be seen as further proof of the perceived importance of open and universalist values to the general publics in most countries given the nation's protectionist, "America First" policies under President Donald Trump. See Quilto 2018.

two most powerful nations in the world with vastly differing approaches to almost every aspect of international governance and who both want to maintain and build their influence in the region.

In many ways, then, China faces a set of serious and specific challenges to its ability to build a positive national image in South Korea because of their different ideological positions in the international community and their very different perspectives on regional stability and security. It is this second challenge that will be explored in depth in the rest of this thesis which will examine how China's efforts to limit US military influence on the Korean peninsula had a negative impact on its attempts to create a positive national image and, further, how that in turn may have longer term negative impacts on its security strategy and wider regional national image building.

Chapter 5. Chinese discourse on the THAAD

dispute

5.1. Chinese newspapers

As a country with limited press freedom and a lack of media ownership plurality, large Chinese English-language news outlets tend to function to a certain extent as propaganda tools for the Chinese Communist Party. Analysis of Chinese elite discourse surrounding the development and expansion of media outlets indicate that they are generally viewed as a vehicle through which Chinese ideas can be expressed and a positive image of China can be portrayed (Hayden 2012; Shambaugh 2008; Ding 2011; Lynch 2015). As such, they present a potentially useful insight into the perspective and preferred narrative of the Chinese government. The analysis presented in this chapter will focus primarily on articles published between 2014 and 2017 in the *China Daily*. *China Daily* is the largest English-language newspaper in China with a circulation of 200,000 (with around a third of that abroad) and also has over three and a half million followers on Twitter indicating a sizable online presence. The paper was founded in 1981 and is run under the auspices of the Chinese Communist Party's Office for Foreign Propaganda (OFP) (Brady 2015) and reports heavily on Chinese domestic affairs and international relations, quoting extensively from official Chinese government sources.

Within the analysed time period (From October 2014 to December 2017) 385 articles were published containing the keyword “THAAD” with all of these related to the deployment of the US missile system in South Korea.⁸ There was much repetition within the data set with a tendency to privilege the words of Premier Xi and other Chinese officials. Examining news articles over the time period I found four broad themes: “protecting Chinese national interests”; “US strategic balancing”; “boycott as an individual choice”; and “legitimate reasons for restrictions”. The rest of this chapter will analyse these discourses in more depth before drawing conclusions about their implications.

5.2. Protecting Chinese national interests

Reports on the THAAD issue appearing in the Chinese English-language media focus heavily on China’s opposition to the deployment on the Korean peninsula. Articles tend to privilege the Chinese government’s perspective, often quoting Xi Jinping as well as other governments ministers, government spokespeople and academics who tow the party line. Particularly, early in the conflict in 2015 and 2016, when the future of the deployment was still unclear and before any kind of retaliation coverage was mostly limited to government officials reiterating official opposition to the placement of THAAD on the Korean peninsula.

⁸ All articles cited in this chapter can be found in the appendix in the order in which they appear.

“China holds a consistent and clear stance on the anti-missile issue,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said Sunday. “When pursuing its own security, one country should not impair other’s security interests.”

“The United States and its allies in the region should remember that dialogue and consultation are the only viable way to solve the conflict on the Korean Peninsula and beyond.” (ARTICLE 1)⁹

This extract is from an editorial attributed to Xinhua and published in the China Daily. Unlike the conventions of most newspapers, there is no clear demarcation between editorial and news report within the structure of the website leading to a blurring of the lines between reported fact and opinion. The use of strong imperative language “The United States and its allies in the region should remember that” is also somewhat atypical of journalistic convention and mirrors the language used by the government spokesperson in the previous paragraph. (“When pursuing its own security, one country should not impair other’s security interests.”).

5.3. US strategic balancing

Despite China’s retaliatory actions over THAAD being primarily targeted at South Korea, a common theme in discourse in China Daily is to ascribe the actions

⁹ All articles quoted in this chapter can be found in the appendix.

entirely or primarily to the US. Lexicality is one means through which the power position of the US is privileged over that of Korea.

“China will take necessary measures to safeguard its security interests, and **the U.S. and the ROK** will have to bear all the resulting consequences, the spokesperson said.” (ARTICLE 2)

“The United States **and its allies** in the region should remember that dialogue and consultation are the only viable way to solve the conflict on the Korean Peninsula and beyond.” (ARTICLE 1)

Lexically, the US is placed before the ROK in some of the articles, as demonstrated by the first example, or is even omitted entirely and is only referred to indirectly as a part of a larger group (i.e. US military allies). This indicates that, in the discourse of the China Daily at least, the US is viewed as the primary proponent of THAAD with South Korea following along with its plan as an ally. This view is made even more explicit in other articles published during the time period which more explicitly articulate Chinese anxieties about the US’s role in the region.

“China has strongly opposed the deployment of the THAAD in the ROK as it will not only undermine China's security interests but also have severe consequences on the regional strategic equilibrium and trigger an arms race on the Korean Peninsula.

On the technical level, experts have for long pointed out the limited defense THAAD provides against a missile attack from the North. The US missile shield is designed to shoot down missiles at an altitude of 40-150 km, while rockets of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fly at a lower altitude of about 20 km, making them incapable of being intercepted by the US system.

As such, it is no exaggeration to say that the deployment of the THAAD system on the Korean Peninsula is nothing but another step in the US strategic hedging against China”. (ARTICLE 3)

This extract is taken from an article with the headline “US' actions are steadily eroding bilateral trust” published six months later than the two previous excerpts in a few weeks after the South China Sea arbitration ruling which found in favour of the Philippines which brought the dispute against China’s territorial claims in the region. The editorial describes the ruling as “illegal and invalid” and accuses the US, Japan and Australia of going against the “positive signals” shared by China and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) by releasing a trilateral joint statement urging China to accept the ruling. The headline as well as the structure of the text, placing the issues one after the other, shows the author believes the two actions to be connected and part of a larger pattern of actions by the US. The second paragraph of the excerpt which emphasises the ineffectiveness of THAAD for its perceived purpose to justify the description of the system as “nothing but another step in the US strategic hedging against China” leads the reader to think the US is more concerned with using

THAAD to increase its presence in the region and balance China militarily than as a protection against the threat of North Korean missiles. This frames military actions in the region as having a central dynamic of China versus the United States implying that Korea and other nations are being pressured to take a side – a position which is made more explicit in other articles.

“The ROK's security concerns are genuine, but they would be better addressed by not estranging China, and the two working closely together to promote peace and stability on the peninsula.

The ROK should not let its fears that it is in the DPRK's cross-hairs betray its judgment. Hanging on to the coattails of the US, which has its own aims in the region, merely increases the likelihood of those fears coming true.” (ARTICLE 4)

This article from the height of the dispute in mid-2017, clearly equates the ROK working with the US to the ROK working against China. By validating Korea's concerns about North Korean threats, the article casts the ROK in a sympathetic light but by describing the country as hanging on US coattails it removes its agency implying that it is simply following American wishes.

As shown in this analysis, the predominant discourse in the China Daily regarding the United States articulates a clear anxiety about the US's military role in the region. It shows an increasingly realist understanding of relations in the Asia

Pacific where the US and China must engage in strategic balancing against each other with implications that the US is trying to maintain military dominance in the region and contain the rise of China – a position articulated by proponents of power transition theory. Furthermore, it places the Republic of Korea right in the middle of this conflict and enabling the US position as its ally. As such, the choice for the ROK, as articulated in the Chinese discourse presented by the China Daily, is not one about its security from North Korean missile threats but is rather a choice between sides – China or the US.

5.4. Boycott as individual choice

Another prevalent aspect of discourse surrounding the THAAD dispute in the China Daily is about retaliations China is claimed to have taken against the ROK in response to deployment. While ominous statements, which could potentially be perceived as threats, about negative consequences are made on several occasions, any actual negative consequences experienced by Korean businesses or the wider Korean economy are attributed to the actions of individuals.

“Actually, if the ROK deploys the system as agreed, the Chinese market for ROK TV shows will definitely shrink. Not because of any action by the Chinese government; but because Chinese audiences will boycott ROK programs of their own accord.” (ARTICLE 5)

“China has not banned the Republic of Korea's entertainment products and showbiz celebrities in response to Seoul allowing the United States to deploy the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense system on the ROK soil. Despite that, however, Chinese consumers might be avoiding pop cultural products from the ROK, because Seoul's decision has created a challenge for future China-ROK ties. (...)

It is possible that the Chinese people may vote with their feet and avoid visiting the ROK, a popular overseas destination for many Chinese tourists and students, as many of them are getting anxious about the deteriorating bilateral ties.” (ARTICLE 6)

In these extracts, the restriction of Korean cultural products and the reduction of tourism from Mainland China to Korea, two of the ROK's main accusations of retaliation, are attributed not to the Chinese authorities but to the individual choices of Chinese consumers. This is a common discourse found throughout the dispute, with one article published in early 2017, around the time Lotte agreed to do a land swap with the Korean government, even quantifying Chinese consumers' distrust by quoting a poll from the Global Times, another Chinese newspaper, saying 95.3% of people would boycott Lotte if they made the deal. The reference to the emotions of the Chinese people in response to the deployment is another frequent characteristic of articles about economic retaliation.

“The remark came after reports of access restrictions in China to television series from the Republic of Korea and amid simmering anger among Chinese citizens.” (ARTICLE 7)

“China's Ministry of Commerce spokesman Sun Jiwen made the remarks on Thursday at a news conference amid Chinese netizens' anxiety and anger, stirred up by South Korea's planned deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, whose radar was reportedly able to cover parts of China and Russia.” (ARTICLE 8)

These references to emotions serve to legitimize the assertion that this is a choice on behalf of consumers as well as highlighting popular support for China's objection to the THAAD deployment giving it further legitimacy (particularly considering the fact that the Chinese government is often criticized by foreign media of overlooking the wishes of individuals, particularly in the discourse surrounding human rights in China). In some of the articles, the opposition of Chinese citizens is placed alongside the opposition of domestic protesters in South Korea. One example is the article from which extract 5.4.2 above was taken which is illustrated with a photograph of residents of the city of Seongju protesting the placement of THAAD in their local area. By linking the two separate protests, the China Daily frames the issue as the Korean government ignoring the wishes of normal people in both Korea and China rather than as a dispute between two governments. This in turn de-centres the Chinese

government from being one of the central actors in the dispute and focusses instead on the actions of the Korean government.

As some of the previous excerpts show, while the losses in sales and tourism are attributed to the actions of individuals, there are many references to negative consequences Korea will face for deploying THAAD. This shows that in the China Daily discourse, there is a clear acknowledgement of the economic consequences of THAAD but a denial of the responsibility of Chinese authorities for the actions. As such, it is framed as an affront to the Chinese people rather than as a perceived threat to the Chinese military or government. This narrative presents the dispute as the Korean government as acting against the Chinese as a nation of people rather than a disagreement between the leadership of two nations. This discourse would seem to be directly at odds with the narrative of “Chinese retaliations” which would imply a coordinated response (perhaps organized by an authority of some kind) and seems to attempt to add some moral legitimacy to the Chinese side of the debate by framing it in terms of the wishes of the citizens of China. Referencing the will of the Chinese people is a well-worn negotiating tactic in the CCP playbook. Solomon (1999) notes that in Deng Xiaoping’s negotiations with the US he would emphasise the pressure he felt to represent “the feelings of a billion Chinese” in relation to the Taiwan issue. He argues that although this was probably to some degree a rhetorical device given China’s authoritarian governance structure, Deng’s structural reforms in the post-Mao period had given the public more opportunities than before to express its opinion. Likewise,

while the Chinese internet is heavily censored, it has still given millions of Chinese people more opportunities than they had had previously to make their feelings known and there has been a significant growth in online nationalism on popular social media platforms like Weibo in recent years. Even with the extensive internet crackdowns the Chinese government has conducted, this does give officials more incentive to pay attention to the demands of online nationalists and does lend more credibility to the notion that economic consequences of THAAD are at least partly the result of behaviours of these individuals rather than of Chinese officials.

5.5. Restrictions due to other legitimate reasons

One more minor aspect found in the discourse was the justification of action taken against Korean companies often attributed by South Korean media as being an example of THAAD retaliation as the result of other legitimate violations of laws or standards rather than as a direct response to the missile deployment.

“In all, nearly 11 tons of cosmetics imported from the Republic of Korea were found to be substandard and denied access to the Chinese market by the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine in November.

The ROK manufacturers concerned should ensure their products meet quality standards.” (ARTICLE 9)

In this editorial, there is a denial which is clearly implied of any role that retaliation against the THAAD deployment played in this decision to block cosmetics made by certain Korean manufacturers from entering the Chinese market and yet it is immediately followed by a mention of accusations that this was the motivation:

“Yet the return has prompted worries in the ROK that cosmetics exports to China might be becoming a victim of the escalating tensions between Seoul and Beijing over the former's decision to deploy the US' Terminal High Altitude Area Defense anti-ballistic missile system in the ROK.

Although there is nothing to suggest the return of the cosmetics had anything to do with the souring ties after that decision, sooner or later that diplomatic chill is bound to be felt elsewhere. It is natural for there to be spillover effects, particularly on the two peoples' mutual feelings of friendliness.” (ARTICLE 9)

By placing the topics of import ban and the diplomatic tensions consecutively and describing negative consequences as “bound to be felt elsewhere” and “natural”, the two are indirectly linked regardless of the qualifier stating “there is nothing to suggest the return of the cosmetics had anything to do with the souring ties” (China Daily, 2018). As addressed in the research design chapter, Pinker et al. (2008) note there are several functions of indirect speech in human interaction. While listeners interpret direct speech as certain, indirect speech always allows for some degree of uncertainty which allows it to play several different roles. Indirect speech allows for a form of ‘plausible deniability’ not granted by direct speech and can also function as a

type of relationship negotiation, allowing the speaker to negotiate a different type of relations from the safest form of relationship shared by the pair. Using Fiske's typology of relationships¹⁰, they argue it can allow the speaker to shift between dominance, communality and reciprocity which in turn affects what kind of behavior is expected from each party. Indirect speech can also only be interpreted as a form of shared individual knowledge rather than common knowledge meaning it is not easily used in the maintenance or nullification of a relationship, unlike direct speech which can more easily be used to understand the basis of a relationship then.

The use of indirect speech in the Chinese discourse surrounding THAAD could therefore be play several different roles. By implying a connection between the negative consequences of these import bans and worsening diplomatic relations, China could be read by Koreans to be attempting to shift and renegotiate the power dynamic from relatively equal sovereign partners to a more hierarchical dominance on China's part but the method of communication means that China maintains plausible deniability which makes it more difficult for Korea to take actions on the basis of this to shift the dynamic of the relationship – such as engaging in its own forms of retaliation. Equally, it could also use this strategy to add uncertainty to the status of the relationship between the two countries without even referring to negative consequences as can be seen in the final extract below.

¹⁰ See Fiske 1992

“Beijing on Thursday strongly urged Seoul to halt the installation of an advanced US anti-missile system, and called on involved South Korean conglomerate Lotte Group to comply with local laws when operating in China.” (ARTICLE 8)

The article in which this excerpt appears does not actually mention any laws which Lotte is breaking in China, only referring to the Chinese government’s unhappiness with the company’s land swap deal with the Korean government and some of the difficulties it has had operating in the Chinese retail environment. As such, the remark from the Ministry of Commerce functions as some kind of veiled threat, implying negative consequences for the breaking of laws which are never actually explicitly stated.

5.6. Conclusion

As shown in the rest of this chapter, a number of key themes emerged in the discourse over the THAAD dispute in the China Daily’s coverage over the three year time period in which it took place which provide useful insights into the discourse within China and the Chinese Communist Party over the time period and, given the role of English-language media like the China Daily as a key pillar of the Chinese government’s public diplomacy strategy, the narrative the CCP wanted to project internationally. This link to the government is also made clear by the editorial stances

of the China Daily which tend to directly mirror the language and talking points used by government officials.

From this discourse we see that China views its opposition to THAAD as part of its attempts to maintain its position in the North East Asian region and maintain its own security interests. This is directly related to the fact that it views THAAD primarily as a concoction of the US government with the ROK government just ‘hanging on its coattails’. This shows that China has shifted towards more explicitly realist understanding of its relationship with the United States and its understanding of itself as one of the world’s two great powers which much engage in strategic balancing with its counterpart. This is further proof of a shift in foreign policy in recent years from the past internal focus of Deng Xiaoping’s “hide and bide” strategy and the focus on positive image making of Hu Jintao’s “harmonious world” approach towards the more externally focused “new type of great power relations” strategy under Xi Jinping which is more explicit about China taking its role as one of the world’s great powers and directly negotiating with the US. However, in terms of South Korea, by focusing primarily on the US, this narrative also has the potential to appear to undermine the smaller nation’s sovereignty by presenting it as an ally there to do the US’s bidding. By putting the main focus on the US in the discourse, China minimizes both the Korean role and its autonomy to make its own decisions.

The discourse also reveals China’s approach to dealing with the THAAD placement in Korea giving important clues as to how its discursive and negotiating

style surrounding this issue may have had a negative impact on its image among the Korean public. In its discussions about boycotts and restrictions placed on Korean products following the decision to deploy THAAD, the discourse in the China Daily, as well as many of the official statements from the Chinese government reported, employ a distinctly indirect and at times emotive mode of speech. In many ways, this reflects previous research about Chinese negotiations styles with other authors noting that since the days of Deng Xiaoping, there has been a tendency to call upon the will of the Chinese people as a motivation for taking a hard line position (Solomon 1999). The use of indirect language also plays an important and complex role in Chinese discourse. As noted by Pinker et al (2008), indirect speech can function as a way for the speaker to negotiate the dynamics of a relationship while maintaining plausible deniability which can make it more difficult for the listener to take corresponding action as it generates no explicit common knowledge between the two parties but merely shared individual knowledge which is difficult to act on. As such China may have been understood to have been attempting to shift from the relative equality of two sovereign states under the rules-based international order towards a more hierarchical dominance relationship but doing so in a way which would be difficult for Korea to respond directly to. If this is the case, we could reasonably expect Korean public discourse to understand the conflict as primarily one between China the bigger bully and Korea the smaller victim. This hypothesis will be tested in the next chapter.

Chapter 6. Korean newspaper framing of the THAAD dispute

6.1. Framing Analysis

Framing analysis is a useful tool which allows us some insight into how meaning is produced and how certain issues are portrayed by unpacking which aspects of a given issue is given prominence by understanding the “schemata or interpretation” (Goffmann 1974). Certain approaches to this analysis also allow for wider understanding of the public discourse surrounding a particular issue, event or debate. This thesis borrows Simon and Xenos’s approach to framing analysis (2001) which uses media frames to examine the process of public deliberation over a issue. In this chapter, it will be used to try to understand how the public discourse surrounding the THAAD dispute with China changed over time in order to understand what led to such a dramatic fall in public opinion towards China. The results presented in the chapter present a clear shift in public discourse surrounding the dispute with the use of economic levers by China presenting a clear turning point in public debate.

6.2. Sample

In total, 202 articles were included in the sample from October 2014 when China first raised its opposition to the deployment to the end of 2017 after the two countries came to an agreement about Korea’s future course of action. Articles were only included in the sample if China’s response to THAAD was one of the main topics

of the article. That means that both keywords (*saad*, THAAD and *jungguk*, China) must have been mentioned in the first 5 paragraphs of the article. Any article where either THAAD or China or both were just mentioned in passing or in the last paragraph was removed. Only articles which were published both online and in print were included to ensure it was the articles with the greatest visibility to the public which were chosen.

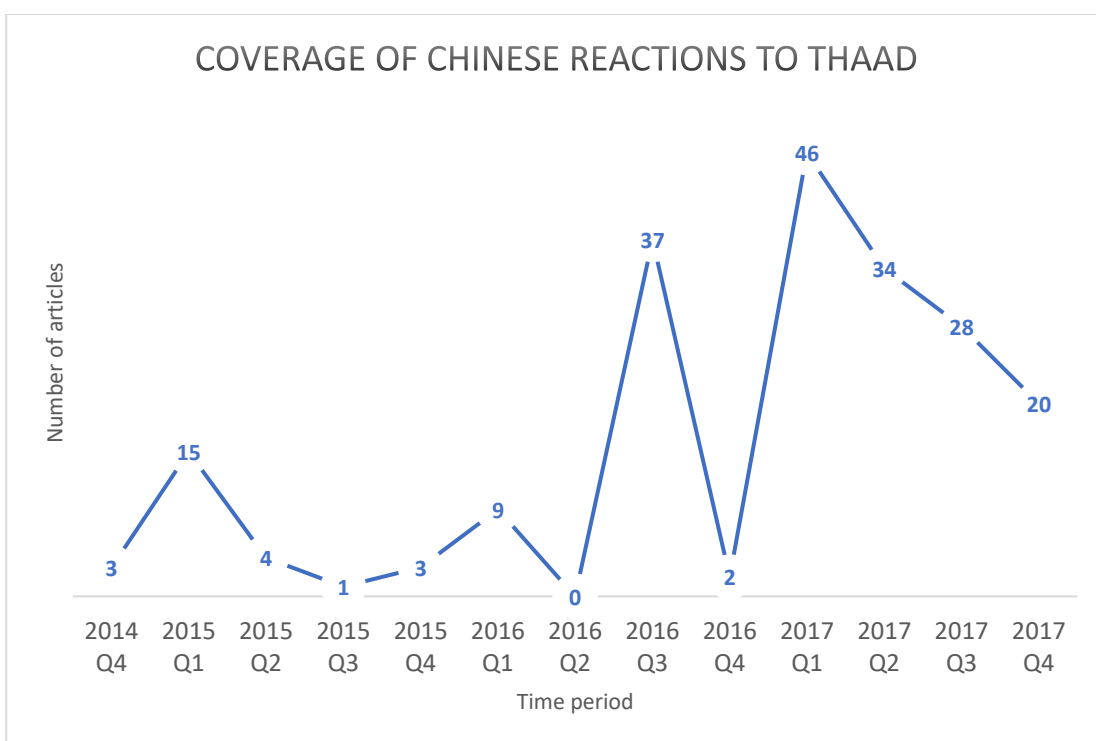


Figure 2. THAAD dispute coverage by number of articles

As can be seen from Figure 1, the amount of coverage given to China and THAAD largely follows the timeline of the dispute. A small number of articles appear

at the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015 around the time that China first followed by a relative lull until mid-2016 which is around the time the US and Korea officially agreed to deploy the system. The discussion of China and THAAD then peaked in early 2017 when the effect of Chinese retaliations against the deployment were beginning to be felt in the Korean economy before starting to tail off towards the end of 2017 as the two countries renormalized relations.

The lack of articles in the fourth quarter of 2016 can be explained by the domestic political scandal which was taking place in Korea at the time involving the then President Park Geun-hye which eventually led to her impeachment and later imprisonment. The corruption scandal engulfed Korean politics and Korean political media accounting for less focus on the THAAD dispute during that time period. The impeachment of Park also raised questions over whether THAAD would still be deployed as it was seen as her project which may also account for a lack of coverage of Chinese reactions as China waited to see whether the plans would still go ahead.

Broken down by newspaper, the largest number of articles with the relevant search terms appeared in the JoongAng Ilbo with 71 items but all four outlets gave substantial coverage to the issue. All of the different outlets generally follow a similar pattern to the overall one shown in the graph on the previous page.

Newspaper	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Chosun Ilbo	0	5	12	32	49
Joongang Ilbo	2	6	16	47	71
Hankyoreh	1	7	10	21	39
Kyunghyang Shinmun	0	5	10	28	43
All	3	23	48	128	202

Table 1. THAAD dispute coverage by newspaper

Over the first two years of the dispute, none of the newspapers gave it much coverage with the number of articles starting to increase in 2016 but really dominating in the following year. We can see that in 2017 when the discussion of China's THAAD retaliation really started to become prevalent it was given a higher amount of coverage by the more conservative leaning Chosun Ilbo and Joongang Ilbo, with 32 and 47 items respectively, than by the more progressive leaning Hankyoreh and the Kyunghyang Shinmun, 21 and 28 articles, but all four papers gave the issue a significant amount of coverage.

Type of article	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
News	1	12	34	96	143
Editorial	1	7	3	16	27
Opinion	1	4	11	16	32

Table 2. THAAD dispute coverage by article type

Around 70% of the articles included in the sample were coded as “News” meaning they followed the conventions of news reports or longer form news feature pieces usually attempting to maintain a neutral voice. The remaining articles were Editorial and Opinion meaning they express the opinions and perspective of the editorial staff of the paper or the individual writing the article. As such it would be reasonable to expect most of the articles to use mostly neutral language.

6.3. Findings

In total 29 individual frames were identified each dealing with different issues or perspectives and were categorized in terms of the actors on which they focused and the positive, neutral or negative nature of the language. These frames (which I will refer to as subframes) were then categorized into 11 broader thematic frames in order to make it easier to see how the discourse changed over the course of the dispute.

Before the frames were identified, the articles were first coded for their subject area. There is a clear trend that emerges in terms of the subject matter of the articles. Prior to 2017, when unofficial Chinese economic sanctions began to affect certain Korean industries, the THAAD dispute is presented almost entirely as a political issue with no economics-related articles in 2014 and 2015 and only 4 appearing in 2016. More than 90% of articles which cover the dispute from an economic perspective were published in 2017, where it suddenly goes from a very minor focus to a strong second to politics (53 and 68 respectively).

Subject	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Politics	3	23	34	68	128
Economics	0	0	4	53	57
Society	0	0	4	4	8
Culture	0	0	1	2	3
Entertainment	0	0	5	1	6

Table 3. THAAD dispute coverage by topic

This indicates that the economic impact of the disagreement was not initially a major aspect of the discourse in the Korean media but became one over the course of the dispute. This would seem to reflect the changing nature of the dispute over time as China began to act on what had initially been a purely diplomatic dispute through means which impacted on the Korean economy. This indicates that Chinese restrictions on industries like tourism and retail did play a prominent role in the public deliberation over the effects of the dispute domestically in Korea and, as such, may also have had an impact on public opinion towards China.

This focus on politics and economics is reflected in the most common frames among the sample with the most common six all related to diplomacy, domestic politics or economic issues. Of the eleven major frames, five relate to international relations, two relate to domestic politics, two relate to economic issues, one relates to Chinese society and one is non-ideological. “Tough diplomatic choices” is the most common international relations frame which portrays Korea as stuck between China

and the US, often focusing on strained relations between China and Korea. Other international frames are “Unfair Chinese behavior” which focusses on unfair practices by the Chinese government against Korea or Korean businesses; “Normal political dispute” which reports the dispute neutrally as a normal diplomatic misunderstanding between nations; “Cooperation” which focusses on potential for or examples of cooperation between the two nations despite the dispute; and “New cold war” which focusses on the dispute between the US and China and raises the prospect of a new cold war or arms race in North East Asia. The “Domestic political issue” frame presents the dispute as something to be solved by Korean politicians focusing on their incompetence or as something to be considered primarily in terms of domestic security or inter-Korean issues while “Korean backlash” is about actions taken by the government or other domestic actors against China. “Economic consequences” was by far the most common economic frame present in the discourse which focusses on the negative economic impact of China’s retaliation of Korea as a whole or specific Korean companies. Another less prevalent economic frame was the more positive “Minimal damage” which presents the economic threat as overblown or presents it as an opportunity to diversify into new markets. “Chinese negative reactions” is the only frame which focusses on the reaction of the Chinese public and civil society presenting the negative reactions of Chinese citizens or the Chinese media. “Other” is a frame without any clear ideological component or policy implications.¹¹

¹¹ An in-detail description of each frame and its subframes is available in the appendix

Frame	Total
Tough diplomatic choices	47
Economic consequences	47
Chinese negative reactions	5
Minimal damage	17
Unfair Chinese behaviour	26
Domestic political issue	22
Normal political dispute	19
Cooperation	7
Korean backlash	2
New cold war	9
Other	1

Table 4: List of frames by total incidence

Examining the above table, two frames clearly emerge as the most common. Both “Tough diplomatic choices” and “Economic consequences” have 47 instances, accounting for nearly half of the total sample over the 3 year and 3 month time period. This seems to give some initial support to the hypothesis that Korea is framed as the victim and China as the bully, especially given that one of the key themes of the “Tough diplomatic choices” frame is the image of Korea as the weak partner stuck between China and the US both politically and geographically, “a shrimp among whales”. However, in order to understand how the opinion of China changed so rapidly in Korea over the course of the dispute, we have to understand how the course of

public discourse shifted over the time period by taking a chronological approach to see how different frames came to dominate the discourse over time. Simon and Xenos argue that “the media can be the locus for genuine public deliberation” (2001, 383) and therefore by examining media framing over a period of time, we can understand the deliberative process through which society’s understanding of an issue is formed.

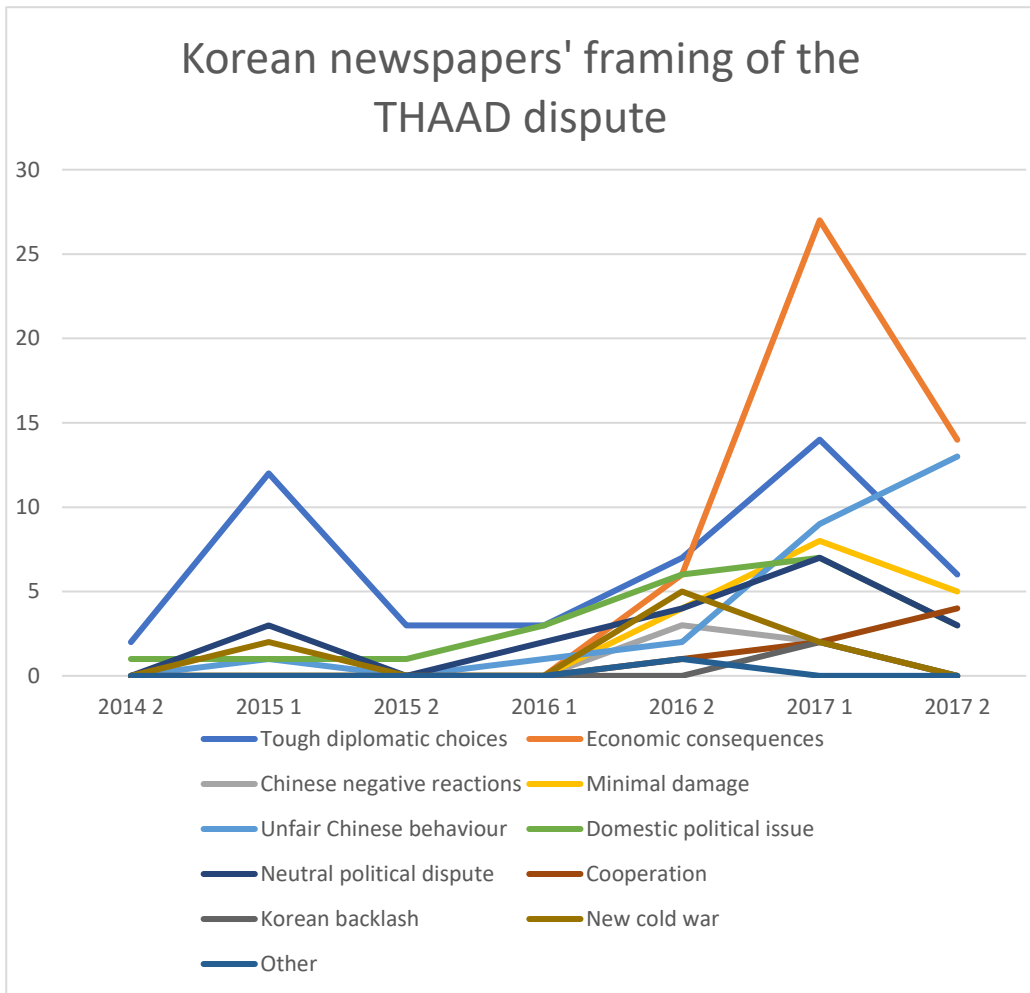


Figure 3. THAAD dispute framing over time

Several clear trends emerge in this graph which provide insight into public deliberation on this issue throughout the course of the dispute but, first, a couple of discrepancies should be taken note of and explained. Using Simon and Xenos' deliberative approach to framing produces somewhat mixed results. As the authors find in their own study, each of the claims did not peak in succession with many peaking around the same time period in the second half of 2016 and the first half of 2017. Likewise, some of the frames have two significant peaks such as "Tough diplomatic choices" and "Neutral political dispute" which both peaked once in early 2015 and again in early 2017. This indicates that the discourse around the THAAD dispute was not only affected by validity claims within the country but was, unsurprisingly, shifted by external developments as well, namely the actions of China. This is also clear from the pattern of the "Economic consequences" frame which emerges suddenly in late 2016-early 2017 in response to Chinese retaliations which began to take effect during that time period. This shows that the external actions of China had a significant impact on the Korean domestic discussion of the dispute shifting it from a discussion primarily about Korean international and domestic political decision-making to one about negative economic consequences imposed on Korea. There is also evidence to indicate that this influenced which validity claims began to gain salience in regards to China. While initially the "Minimal damage" frame gained some prominence as the economic retaliation picked up momentum, it reduced and became less relevant as the dispute came to a close. Conversely, despite the fact that the coverage of the dispute as economically damaging began to reduce in the second half of 2017, the "Unfair

Chinese behaviour” frame continues to rise at the same time even though this is the time period in which the dispute is largely resolved. Simon and Xenos argue that frames which remain in the discourse over time represent unresolved validity claims. The consistent presence of the “Tough diplomatic choices” frame over time then would seem to indicate an underlying tension within the discourse which is not resolved. Although frames which more explicitly show China in a negative light emerge the anxiety of being “a shrimp among whales” caught in a difficult geopolitical situation between two great powers remains a constant in the discourse never being fully disputed or confirmed.

Given that many issues peak within in the same period and on multiple occasions, it is difficult to categorise this public discourse as one of pure discursive deliberation. While there is some evidence of validity claims being tested over time such as the peaks in the “New cold war” and “Minimal damage” frames, framing seems to be more heavily influenced by the perceived behaviours indicating a more reactive and less considered process of deliberation. This indicates that the discourse was primarily affected by external factors, in specific the actions of China, during the dispute.

Frame	Subframe	Total
Tough diplomatic choices	Tough diplomatic choices	35
	Strained relations	12
Economic consequences	Economic damage	38
	China blocks Hallyu	5
	Lotte's dilemma	3
	Chinese consumer reactions	1
Unfair Chinese behaviour	China's threat	4
	Threat to free trade system	4
	Unfair political treatment	6
	China can't be trusted	12
Domestic political issue	Political incompetence	17
	National interest	4
	Stand up to China	1

Table 5. Most common THAAD dispute frames with subframes

Examining the breakdown of the most prominent frames into their constituent subframes, some interesting points can be observed. Firstly, the “Tough diplomatic choices” frame was heavily dominated by discussions of Korea’s position stuck between two great powers rather than just its strained relationship with China. Secondly, the focus of coverage of the economic retaliation focused predominantly on how the Korean economy was affected and not on Chinese consumer behavior. And thirdly, in terms of negative coverage of China, it was the perceived unfair treatment of Chinese authorities towards Korean companies which gained the most salience in media discourse.

6.4. Conclusion

This analysis provides some support for the claims put forward in the hypothesis. While the public discourse as represented through media framing was initially fairly neutral focusing on the diplomatic challenges being caught between the US and China posed to Korea and other domestic political concerns, the introduction of a negative economic actions through China's retaliatory actions caused a significant shift in the framing of the dispute. Following these actions, Korean media discourse came to be dominated by stories highlighting the economic damage Korea was facing as a result which in coincided with more explicitly negative framing of China as a country which cannot be trusted to behave fairly and enforce the rule of law in a way which does not discriminate between local and international companies – a frame which had not been prevalent prior to the economic retaliation. The predominant framing of the dispute as Korea stuck between two major powers suffering economic damage does seem to provide evidence for a “Korea as victim” narrative as put forward by the hypothesis. The emergence of the “Unfair Chinese behaviour” towards the end of the dispute does provide some evidence for a “China as bully” narrative as hypothesized, especially when analysed through a lens of public deliberation in which frames which emerge towards the end of the time period represent agreed claims, but the generally relatively neutral frames outside of this one indicate that that framing was not as prevalent as the victimization framing. Therefore it seems that the perceived

victimization of Korea (rather than negative framing of China) had the strongest impact on China's public image in Korea.

By drawing comparisons with the Chinese discourse analysed in Chapter 5, it is clear that Chinese elite discourse had relatively minor salience within the Korean media discourse. While the Chinese discourse presents the economic response to the THAAD deployment as the result of the individual actions of Chinese consumers in an emotional response to the deployment the Korean media did not frame it in this way. The primary frame in relation to this issue, "Economic consequences", focusses primarily on the damage caused to the Korean economy framing it in broad terms as a result of "Chinese retaliation" with focus on China as a whole or the Chinese authorities. Likewise, there is very little coverage of the behavior of the Chinese public with only 5 instances of the "Chinese negative reactions" and the majority of these articles focusing on the state-run media rather than individuals.

To a certain extent, the Chinese framing of the US role as the dominant actor in the dispute is reflected in Korean framing with the high incidence of the "Tough diplomatic choices" seeming to reflect an anxiety in Korea about its position between the US and China and the position it was being pushed into by both sides. However, the shift in framing following the beginning of the economic retaliation indicates that this framing did not serve to present a more sympathetic image of China but may even have helped prompt a more explicitly negative framing of China following the introduction of an economic element to the dispute. Likewise, while neutral framing of

the issue as a normal political or diplomatic dispute did maintain throughout the period, it was dwarfed by framing which focused more on explicitly negative aspects of the dispute towards the end.

This framing analysis indicates failings on the part of China to express its concerns and convince Korea to take its preferred path through a means which would not negatively impact its image. It is clear that the way in which it communicated its concerns was not accepted in Korean public discourse and that the use of economic levers to influence political and security issues had a negative impact on the portrayal of China in the Korean media. The implications of this and further analysis of the effect of this media framing will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 7. Findings and Implications

7.1. Effect on Korean public opinion

In order to assess how China's behavior during the THAAD dispute impacted on China's national image in Korea we must first look at how public opinion changed over that time. Several opinion surveys show a significant drop in positive views of China between the start of the dispute in 2015 and the end of the dispute in 2017-18. Pew Research Center survey data shows positive views of China fell by almost half from 60 percent in 2015 to 38 percent in 2017 with no signs of recovery in 2018 at 37 percent¹². Other polling data from the Asan Institute also shows a significant drop in China's favorability ratings with Koreans over the same period. On a scale of 0 to 10, Koreans' favourability towards China fell from a high of around 5.5 in late 2015 to below 4 by 2018 and has since fallen even further (Asan Institute 2019). But the negative feelings towards China extend even further beyond general sentiment into more specific areas related to economics and security. In particular, the THAAD incident seems to have shaken the confidence of many Koreans in China as an economic partner. While 55.1 percent of Koreans named China their nation's most important economic partner in 2015, by 2018 that number had dropped to just 32.3 percent (ibid.). Interestingly, many of the respondents seem to have shifted their preferences towards the US which saw its economic favourability increase from 34.3

¹² See Pew Research Center 2018

percent in 2015 to 52.6 percent in 2018. Another important thing to note which can see in the figure below is that the drop in Chinese economic favourability does not seem to take place at the beginning of the THAAD dispute, in fact it actually grew 1 percent between 2015 and 2016 but instead it falls between 2016 and 2018 indicating that it was the economic retaliation between late 2016 and later 2017 which caused the drop.

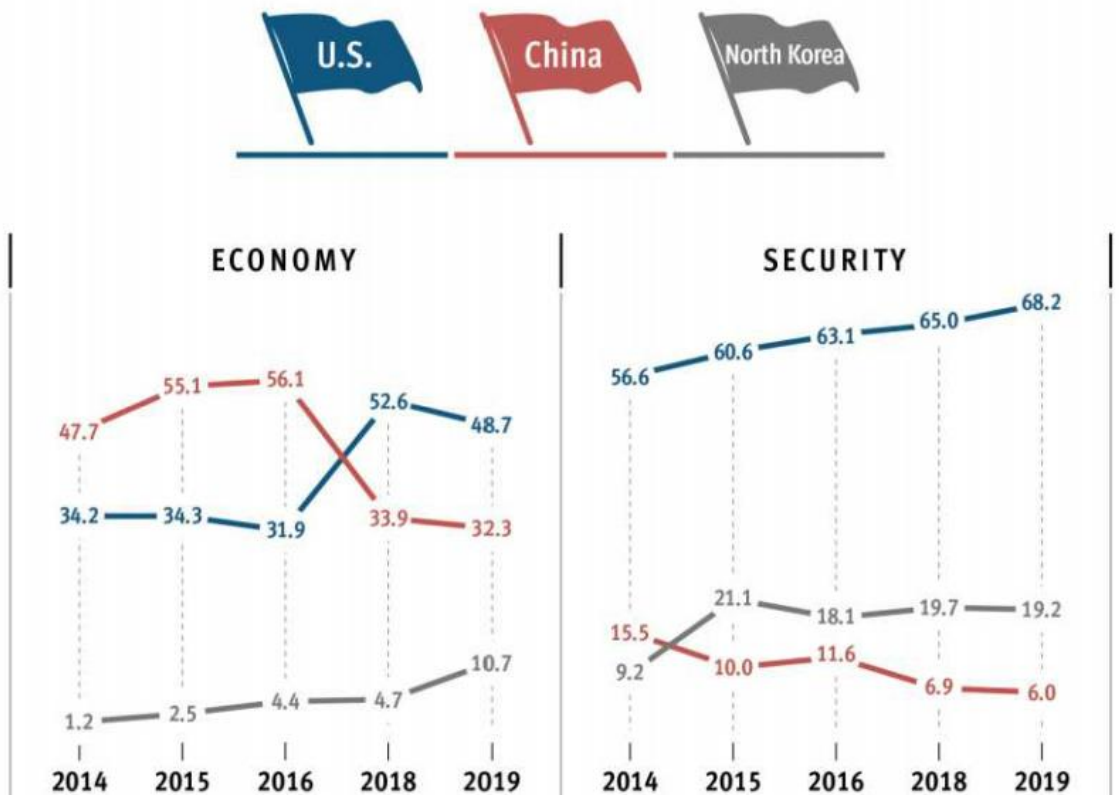


Figure 4. “Which country is most important for South Korea’s economy/security?” from Asan Institute’s South Korea and their neighbours 2019

What this graph shows which is potentially even more concerning for the Chinese is the impact the dispute seems to have had on Koreans' opinions when it comes to regional security. While the US and its role as the ROK's main military has always had fairly strong support, this further increased over the course of the dispute from 60.6 percent in 2015 to 65 percent in 2018. While this increase is likely at least partly attributable to a raised perceived threat from North Korea as a result of a number of missile test launches, it is interesting to note that the percentage of South Koreans identifying China as their primary security partner also dropped over the same time period. Data from other surveys even more concerning trends which indicate an increasing number of Koreans not only do not see China as a security partner but view their neighbor as a potential security *threat*.

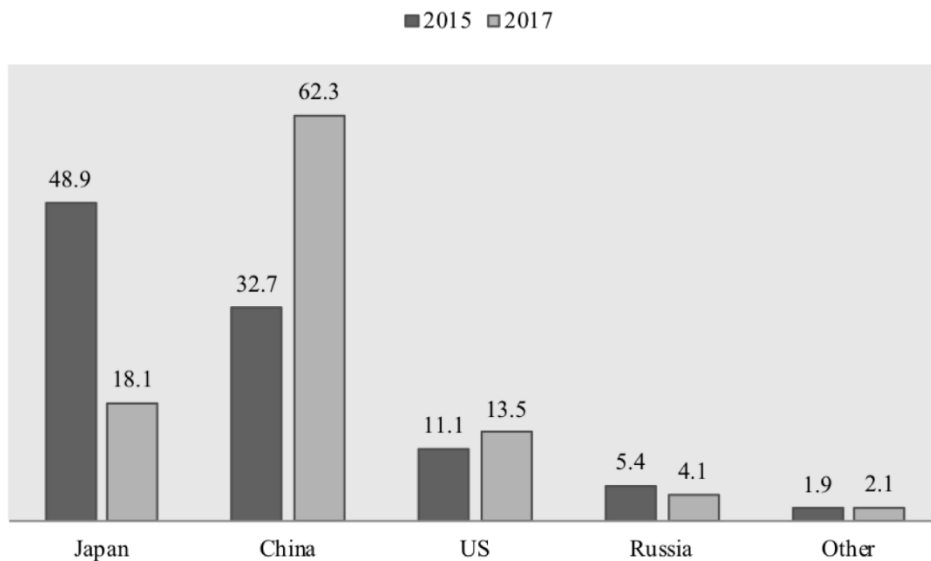


Figure 5. “The most threatening country after unification” From South Korean public opinion by Asan Forum

As can be seen from the figure above, the percentage of Koreans who identified China as the primary threatening neighbor following Korean unification increased by almost double from 32.7 percent in 2015 to 62.2 percent (Kim 2018). While these results might partly reflect an improving image of Japan in South Korea (having dropped from 48.9 percent to 18.1 in just two years), the lukewarm to negative views of Japan which is still present in many data sets,¹³ indicate that this reaction is primarily one against China.

It is clear from the data examined in this section that there was a significant downturn in Korean public opinion towards China over the course of the THAAD dispute which intensified in 2017 coinciding with China's unofficial economic retaliations. Survey data indicates that trust in China over the time period decreased – a trend which extended into the areas of economics, politics and security. Over the same time period, Korean opinions of the US became more positive (Asan Institute 2019; The Genron NPO 2019) indicating that Chinese behavior in relation to THAAD not only turned Koreans against China but also turned them towards the US. The implications of this for Chinese strategy, both in terms of national image and security strategy and will be explored further in the rest of this chapter.

¹³ While opinions of Japan have improved in Korea in recent years, only 28.3 percent of Koreans said they had a good or somewhat good impression of the country in 2018. See The Genron NPO 2018 for full details of the annual joint Japan-South Korea opinion poll.

7.2. Technical misunderstandings and strategic differences

At the centre of the dispute between China, Korea and the US over THAAD is a series of differences over the strategic nature and technical capability of the anti-missile system. As Zhao (2018) notes, there is a “deep perceptual gap”. While Chinese officials and elites believe THAAD possesses technical capabilities, in particular its X-band radar, which threaten key Chinese security interests, US and Korean policymakers view it primarily as a defense against North Korean threats. The author argues that both sides have focused on the potential strategic implications of the system with little regard for the actual technical capability. A significant number of Chinese experts believe THAAD deployment is primarily or solely a US attempt to spy on and contain China in the region while, on the other side, US and Korean experts have argued that China is acting in bad faith and trying to leverage its influence in the region. As such, neither side has really worked to build an in-depth discussion surrounding the real technical capabilities of the system and its ability to undermine China’s nuclear deterrent, China’s primary concern. Zhao argues that until a genuine attempt is made to address these misunderstandings, a full resolution is unlikely to be found.

It is clear from the Chinese discourse that the role of the US in the North East Asian region and the potential for THAAD to act as a form of strategic balancing for the US military was a major concern of Chinese officials and academics but Korean news media framing on the issue indicates that China was ineffective in its attempts to

communicate its concerns to the Korean. This is likely due to a lack of compelling and easy to understand arguments which would bring the Korean public on side with their reasoning for opposing THAAD in the first place. Adopting Keck and Sikkink's notion of causal chains (1998), the arguments China used for its opposition to THAAD are too contrived and lack the accessibility necessary to gain understanding from the Korean public. The notion of strategic balancing is technical, complex and academic and much less emotionally available to Koreans than the simple and immediate threat to their national and personal security of North Korean missiles. Furthermore, the framing findings presented in this thesis show some evidence that by introducing an economic element to the dispute, it may have undermined its own ability to present its argument. While frames which presented China's concern existed throughout the course of the conflict,¹⁴ the discourse was dominated in the early stages by frames which reflect Korean anxieties about being caught between two major powers and in the later stages by the negative consequences of Chinese economic retaliation over the issue. This shows that China was not effective in communicating its concerns. But more importantly than that, the uncertainty created in Korea surrounding THAAD as a result of the geopolitical situation of being caught between its much larger main military ally and its much larger main economic partner and a perception of being victimized by China economically created an environment which made it much more difficult to make the Korean public sympathetic to China's concerns.

¹⁴ See the "Neutral political dispute" frame and in particular its "China's request" subframe in the appendix for more details

7.3. The dangers of bringing economics to a diplomacy fight

The findings from the framing analysis in Chapter 6 show that it was the choice to introduce an economic element to China's opposition to the THAAD dispatch that significantly shifted the shape of discourse in the Korean media and led to a more explicitly negative framing of China from one which had been largely neutral and often primarily focused on the actions of domestic politicians. This also coincides with a drop in public opinion across a number of different sets of survey data which show a significant negative turn in public opinion towards China not at the beginning of the dispute which would indicate it was China's opposition itself to the missile system which caused the but rather in 2017 and 2018 which would be after the economic retaliations had begun. While it may be self-evident to a certain extent that this kind of economic retaliation would result in negative reactions in the nation being retaliated against, it is significant in the context of a relationship which has been surprisingly resilient in the face of other significant differences and disagreements. Despite tensions in regards to trade (including major disputes over garlic and kimchi), two major financial crises, disputes over history and the perennial irritants of North Korea and South Korea's military alliance with the US, the diplomatic relationship between the two nations has moved in a general trend of strengthening since the normalization of relations in 1992 (from "friendly cooperative relationship" in 1992, to "cooperative partnership" in 1998, to "comprehensive cooperative partnership" in 2003, and then to "strategic cooperative partnership" in 2008). Other symbolic gestures

on the part of national leaders have signified even further strengthening ties in recent years with President Xi choosing to visit South Korea ahead of North Korea and President Park choosing to visit China on her second international visit (after the US) instead of Japan, both breaking generally established conventions in order to demonstrate their priorities towards each other. However, despite these attempts, relations between the two nations have been rocky at best with North Korea in particular causing rifts in the relationships and exposing clear differences in strategic approach to their mutual neighbor. But despite these issues, economic relations have only strengthened since normalization and have been generally unaffected by changes in diplomatic relations or public opinions in either nation due to a tendency in both parties to separate the two concerns (Ye 2016).

The use of economic levers in this dispute shifted this dynamic and had a negative impact on public opinion in Korea. It is clear from the framing analysis in Chapter 6 and data from various public opinion polls that the economic retaliation aspect of the dispute was a significant cause of the downturn in public opinion of China. Prior to the economic retaliation, the framing of the issue focused predominantly on political and diplomatic frames which were largely neutral but more negative frames began to appear towards the end of the dispute gaining the most prominence after the dispute officially ended.

7.4. Communication problems

As can be seen from the chapter on discourse analysis, Chinese communication methods over the course of these disputes were generally indirect. The Chinese government maintained it played no role in economic consequences experienced by Korean companies during the THAAD dispute while also warning that Korea would experience economic consequences for its decision. Examining psychological theories for indirect speech, a plausible explanation would be that Chinese officials wanted to shift from a reciprocal relationship (the expected default under the current liberal international order and the position assumed by the official “strategic partnership” diplomatic relations between the two nations) to exert a more dominant position over Korea while maintaining plausible deniability that that indeed was its intended actions. Lee and Pinker (2010) argue that, in interpersonal relations, indirect requests are used to negotiate the space between cooperation and conflict and as a way to circumvent the emotional costs of a breach of the current relational model through plausible deniability. The reason this is effectual is because we interpret language more directly than we interpret other forms of communication and therefore if a party is unwilling to openly challenge the other’s behaviour, indirect speech allows it to do so.

Projected onto international relations, rather than a way to prevent emotional costs between individuals, the use of indirect communication can be understood as a method to avoid diplomatic (and to a certain extent, economic) costs between states. China correctly understood that Korea would be unwilling to openly rebuff Chinese

actions because of the two countries' high level of economic independence. But just as an individual may be annoyed or angered by an indirect proposition even if they have no easy way to the blame directly on the person who made it, this method of international relations could conceivably cause a negative reaction from the public of the state, as demonstrated in this case. Therefore, although China may have succeeded in pressuring Korea through these tactics the negative outcome was a significant decline in Korean public opinion towards China as we have seen in both the media framing of the issue and in public opinion polls.

7.5. Flaws in national image management approach

There has been a significant amount of scholarship pointing out flaws in China's approach to national image management, soft power and public diplomacy but much of it has remained theoretical and without concrete examples to illustrate how this could pose problems for China's foreign policy approach in practice. Through this case study we can see how a lack of consideration for how the perception of China's behavior in other arenas could impact on its national image in Korea led to a downturn in public opinion.

Previous scholarship has pointed to a lack of attractive values as a major hurdle for China's national image strategy but previous research shows the interpretation of shared historical events as a bigger barrier to building a more positive image in Korea (Liu 2018; Zhu 2009). From the framing analysis, we can see that it was not a difference in ideology which caused a shift of opinion but the use of

economic levers to try to convince Korea of its preferred approach which turned public opinion against China. Therefore to the extent to which a lack of attractive values played a role in damaging China's image in the dispute, it was not so much the lack of universalistic, liberal values as a whole that hurt its image so much as a lack of the shared values which allow Korea to maintain a strong relationship with China without fear of threat. To the extent that a lack of values in China appeared in the framing of the issue in Korea, it was primarily values related to rule of law and the protection of the rights of nations and corporations which were the focus.¹⁵ Economic retaliation in this case represented for Koreans not a lack of values that meant Koreans did not wish to aspire to China but, much more fundamentally, a lack of certain values which caused some Koreans to feel that they couldn't trust China. While it may seem obvious, this is a potentially crucial lesson for China in moving forward positively in its relations not just with Korea but other regional neighbours. Without trust it is difficult to build any kind of strong relations.

If this is the primary cause of damage to China's image in Korea, as both the polling and the framing analysis tend to indicate, then it shows that a nation's behavior towards one nation is fundamental in building its image in that nation. This lends some credence to Nye's argument that China's soft power is limited by its own behavior which makes it less attractive to other nations. This points to a deeper issue in the

¹⁵ In particular the "Unfair Chinese behaviour" frame which grows in prominence towards the end of the dispute and focusses on diplomatic behaviour and regulatory behaviour targeting Korea and Korean companies.

Chinese understanding of national image management and the role of soft power and public diplomacy within it. China's resource management centred approach based primarily on spreading public diplomacy resources as widely across the globe as possible has already been shown not to be effective in improving global public opinion of China (Hall and Smith 2013) but this case provides further evidence. While it is impossible to examine the counterfactual and see what the change in public opinion would have been like had China not invested significant public diplomacy resources in South Korea, the 23 Confucius Institutes which were operating in Korea over the course of the dispute do not seem to have been effective in preventing a drop off in public opinion towards China during the THAAD dispute.

Hayden (2012) argues that the Chinese government tends towards a public diplomacy approach which takes the strength of its own messages for granted and underestimates the critical capacities of the audience to question them and aims not for the universalistic values proposed by Nye's conception of soft power but instead for "the shifting boundaries of norms, values and the markers of legitimacy for a rising global power" which can only be achieved through the strategic mix of hard and soft power. In fact, in Chinese elite discourse, foreign publics are often discussed more in terms of vulnerabilities than opportunities. But, as the framing analysis in Chapter 6 indicates, while the Korean public was fairly skeptical towards China, it is China's behavior which was perceived as causing direct damage to Korea which significantly damaged China's image in Korea. Therefore, in order to build stronger regional relations, China should reexamine its approach to national image, particularly with its

regional neighbours and work towards a more consistent, rules-based approach which will help to rebuild its neighbours' trust.

7.6. Impact of security concerns about the US on regional relations

The THAAD dispute took place in the midst of increasingly tensions in the relationship between China and the US both in terms of regional security and economic trade which clearly had an impact on Chinese actions during the dispute, as evidenced by Chinese discourse on the matter. As polling data shows, if China's long term strategy in the region is to reduce US dominance and build stronger presence for itself in the region, the approach it took in the case of the THAAD dispute seems to have backfired. Although it may have achieved certain relatively small short term goals in getting Korea to agree to certain conditions to limit further development of similar missile systems, it simultaneously worked to undermine its long term goal by increasing public support in Korea for the US military alliance as well as for further economic cooperation between the two nations. The increasingly realist understanding of relations between China and the US which has gained prominence with academics and policy-makers in both nations in recent years presents a significant challenge to China's national image management capabilities with its regional neighbours. Given that most of them have strong military alliances with the US, and especially given that the US allies have a very real threat outside of China in the form of North Korea to consider, if China takes too aggressive an approach towards countries like Korea and

Japan, as shown by this analysis, it is likely only to push public opinion away from China and further towards the US. Instead, China should work with Korea to build stronger and more constructive relations.

7.7. Policy recommendation

There are a number of ways in which China can attempt to overcome its negative image in Korea and build stronger relations but this thesis will focus on one specific recommendation. One of the issues identified in this research is the ineffective use of indirect patterns of communication in this dispute. Although both Chinese and Korean cultures are often characterized by indirect high-context communication, in order to overcome these difficulties and misunderstandings a more direct approach may be needed. One option is a process of argumentative interaction¹⁶ as put forward by Kim and Chung (2013). They characterize it as “social process that seeks mutual understanding through deliberative, persuasive, and noncoercive action” (ibid. 281) which allows state actors to reach a level of mutual understanding by decreasing negative perceptions of one another. The authors note that in previous cases it was a combination of uncertainty and conscious effort on the part of both parties which has led to previous breakthroughs in relations. In this case, the rise of China and its tensions with the US will continue to create uncertainty in its relationship with the ROK and therefore, according to this framework, if the actors are willing to put in

¹⁶ See Risse 2000; Checkel 2001; Manea 2009 for examples

effort into a process of argumentative discourse, it will potentially allow them to improve their relations in the long term. Given the lack of shared understanding of the issue in this case (Zhao 2018), the conflict could be more effectively resolved if the two nations worked in good faith to create a shared common knowledge about the technological capabilities of the THAAD system. More broadly, in order to prevent further long term conflict and distrust, the countries should attempt to overcome long standing issues regarding historical disputes and ideological differences through a process of argumentation and social learning which will allow the two nations to see each other as partners and understand each other better. The perils of indirect communication and lack of shared initiative to resolve a problem are clear from the negative impact the THAAD dispute had on China's national image and it is only through open, direct and constructive communication that the two countries can overcome these issues. Ideally, this should also engage the publics of both nations whether that be through media forums as have been previously organized or public diplomacy initiatives. If the public diplomacy route is taken, it is crucial for China in particular to attempt to understand the perspective of the Korean public through open argumentation and not try to simply sell an idealized image of China. While overcoming the strains in the relationship, may not be easy to achieve, given, as Anholt (2010) posits, that it is often much easier to create a negative national image than a positive one, it may be necessary in order to improve Korean perceptions of China and would also help to improve Chinese perceptions of Korea making it a useful exercise for both nations.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

While China's public diplomacy campaigns have been relatively successful in the Republic of Korea - at least in terms of participation numbers - since the mid-2000s, the THAAD dispute between the two countries caused a massive downturn in Korean public opinion towards China, which Chinese national image management activities were ineffective in preventing. This highlights significant weaknesses both in the Chinese understanding of soft power and national image management and in the specific strategy which it took in this dispute to convince Korea not to deploy the anti-missile defence system. Use of an ineffective style of indirect communication, a lack of mutual understanding and an inability to effectively communicate Chinese concerns to the Korean public all played a role in creating the conditions which led to the dramatic decline in public opinion about China in South Korea.

Analysis of Chinese elite discourse over the time period of the dispute sheds light on both some of the Chinese government's motivation for its opposition to the deployment of the anti-missile system and its approach to communication over the course of the dispute. China's opposition was led by a desire to protect Chinese security interests, in particular, from the actions of the US which it felt was attempting to contain and strategically balance against China. While its opposition was targeted primarily at Korea, it is clear from the discourse that its primary concern was in fact the role of the US in the deployment as a part of larger concerns about American intentions towards China and the US's wider role in the Asia-Pacific region. In terms

of communication style, the discourse was dominated by an indirect cautions and threats aimed at Korea. While the Chinese government denied taking economic action against Korea, it simultaneously warned that economic consequences would be inevitable in the event of the deployment going ahead. There are also several emotional appeals to consider the feelings of the Chinese people – a Chinese negotiating tactic documented to go back until at least the time of Deng Xiaoping.

Use of indirect language here can be understood by projecting psychological theories of interpersonal relations onto international relations. Lee and Pinker (2010) argue that indirect propositions can be used as a means to shift the type of relations (such as from reciprocity to dominance) while maintaining plausible deniability and avoiding potential emotional costs should the other party take offense. If we apply this theory to international relations, we could argue that nations can employ indirect communications in their interactions with other states in order to shift their relations while maintaining plausible deniability and avoid potential diplomatic costs. In this specific case by being indirect and unofficial with its communications and actions in its opposition to the deployment of THAAD, China was able to strongly oppose Korea's actions in a way which it was deeply affected by but, by avoiding the creation of explicit common knowledge through avoiding direct speech acts confirming the retaliation, made it difficult for Korea to react in an official manner.

But while this approach may have been effective in preventing any significant counterretaliation, that does not mean there were no consequences. Through framing

analysis of Korean media coverage of the dispute, we can see that it was the use of economic retaliation which represented a major turning point in the coverage and led to more negative framing of China in Korean newspapers. The damage suffered by the Korean economy became the central focus of news coverage of the dispute and, simultaneously, a more negative narrative emerged questioning the trustworthiness of China. This shift in framing coincides with the drop in public opinion of China which began to fall, not with the beginning of the dispute in 2015 but shortly after the start of the economic retaliation in 2017 and 2018. If the success of a country's national image management is measured by how positively it is perceived by a foreign public, this outcome is clearly a failure. While China has invested significant public and cultural diplomacy resources in Korea in the past 15 years, it was not effective in preventing this dramatic downturn in positive perceptions from 60 percent in 2015 to just 38 percent in 2017 (Pew Research Center 2018).

Chinese soft power strategies have previously been criticized for demonstrating a lack of understanding of the role and importance of foreign audiences and too much focus on the centralised deployment and management of cultural resources and a similar problem can be identified in this conflict. Despite significant investment in soft power initiatives in Korea, it was China's behaviour and the way it was perceived which created a negative image which previous resource deployments seems to have been unable to offset. However, while previous research focussed on the importance of universalistic values such as democracy and human rights in national image management, this research points to a more basic and pragmatic understanding

of values which caused a problem for China's image in this case. The negative coverage of China in the THAAD dispute centred not on China's human rights record nor its authoritarian political system but instead on questions about its willingness to play by the rules. This offers some evidence that the perceived lack of values which are considered to constitute the fundamentals of the current international order such as rule of law represent a much more fundamental threat to a nation's image than loftier and more explicitly ideological, and contested, values. This is potentially explained by the close proximity of Korea to China both geographically and economically which would lead Koreans to prioritise values which ensure that it is not under threat in terms of its security, either military or economic, and be somewhat less concerned about more ideological values as the two nations must interact regardless. Given the relationship between the countries as neighbours and trade partners, this presents further scope for research into how geographical proximity, cultural proximity and economic inter-reliance might affect which perceived values have an impact on a nation's image among a foreign audience.

While some scholars have previously argued that a nation should not be overly concerned about its reputation (Mercer 1996), the larger geopolitical context of this dispute and, particularly, the US's military role in the region, presents a compelling reason as to why this does present a potential serious issue for China's wider foreign and security policy. While Chinese discourse indicates that China's actions were motivated about concerns over US strategic balancing, polling data examined in this thesis indicates that not only did China's retaliation have a negative impact on its

national image in Korea, it simultaneously led to an improvement of the US's image in Korea and increased support for the US-ROK military alliance. Therefore, while China may have achieved some of its short-term security objectives through this retaliation, it potentially undermined its long-term strategy by pushing Koreans towards the US.

Given that the US has a number of military alliances in the region which it is unlikely to want to get rid of in the coming years, if China continues to take these kinds of actions towards neighbours in the region it is likely to serve to further polarise relations and increase tension between China and the US. This is particularly the case if both Chinese and American policymakers continue to interpret relations through the realist lens of power transition theory. Instead this thesis argues that China should consider the notion of "argumentative deliberation" as put forward by Kim and Chung (2013) with Korea and other neighbours in the region in order to help overcome some of the tensions. While this may be difficult and even seem counterintuitive in the context of current Chinese foreign policy, given the outcomes of a more coercive approach that have been observed in this thesis, this kind of open process towards mutual understanding may help to reduce tensions between the two nations which in turn may lead to less tension between China and the US in the long term due to the sheer number of close US military alliances in the Asia Pacific region.

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Appendix 1. List of articles from discourse analysis

chapter

Article 1 - Xinhua. 2016. "Deploying THAAD To Korean Peninsula Does More Harm Than Good". *China Daily*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2016-02/09/content_23436440.htm.

Article 2 - Xinhua. 2017. "China Voices Resolute Opposition To THAAD Deployment In ROK - China - Chinadaily.Com.Cn". *China Daily*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2017-02/27/content_28366518.htm.

Article 3 - Wang, Hui. 2016. "US' Actions Are Steadily Eroding Bilateral Trust". *China Daily*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2016-08/03/content_26322838_2.htm.

Article 4 - Chinadaily.com.cn. 2017. "ROK Can Revive Ties By Reversing THAAD Decision". *China Daily*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/2017-08/23/content_31015510.htm.

Article 5 - China Daily. 2016. "Missile System 'Hits' TV Shows". *China Daily*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2016-08/05/content_26351975.htm.

Article 6 – Wang, Junsheng. 2016. "THAAD Will Not Bring Seoul Security". *China Daily*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2016-08/23/content_26564290.htm.

Article 7 – Liu, Xiaokun. 2017. " THAAD decision starts to hurt ROK". *China Daily*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/kindle/2017-03/02/content_28409102.htm

Article 8 - Jing, Shuiyu and Zhong, Nan. 2017. "Lotte takes flak over THAAD links". *China Daily*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2017-03/03/content_28416769.htm

Article 9 – China Daily. 2017. " ROK should reflect rather than playing blame game". *China Daily*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2017-01/12/content_27930888.htm

Appendix 2. Description of frames

Frames

Frame 1 – Tough diplomatic choices

Subframes: 1 - Tough diplomatic choices, 13 - Strained relations

Content: This frame focusing on the difficult position Korea is in diplomatically. Focusses on the position Korea is stuck in between two great powers or the difficult relationship between Korea and China resulting from the THAAD dispute. Uses imagery like “a shrimp among whales” or focusses on the strains in the relationship between politicians giving descriptions of awkward interactions.

Frame 2 – Economic consequences

Subframes – 2 – Economic damage, 7 – China blocks Hallyu, 20 – Lotte’s Dilemma, 25 – Chinese negative perceptions

Content: This frame presents the dispute as a primarily economic problem causing damage to the Korean economy or to specific Korean industries or companies. May present a primarily quantitative description of the damage or present it more emotively by focusing on the experiences of individuals.

Frame 3 – Chinese negative reactions

Subframes: 3 – Chinese nationalism frenzy, 6 – Chinese media attack

Content: This frame focusses on the negative response to the THAAD deployment in China from either individual Chinese people or the Chinese media. Tends to focus on the rise of nationalism in China and may frame certain groups of Chinese people (such as social media users) as irrational.

Frame 4 – Minimal damage

Subframes: 4 – Koreans overcoming THAAD, 9 – New market opportunities, 21 – No serious economic damage, 24 – Pragmatic Chinese, 26 – China needs Korea, 28 – Economic situation improving

Content: This frame presents Chinese retaliation to THAAD as having minimal impact on the Korean economy. It either focusses on economic mutual reliance between the two nations as a reason why the damage of retaliation will be limited or presents the conflict as an opportunity for Korean companies to expand into new national markets.

Frame 5 – Unfair Chinese behavior

Subframes: 8 – China’s threat, 14 – Threat to free trade system, 15 – Unfair political treatment, 22 – China can’t be trusted

Content: This is the frame which presents China in the most explicitly negative light. It portrays China as behaving in a way which is threatening and unfair and often accuses Chinese officials of not playing by the rules.

Frame 6 - Domestic political issue

Subframes: 18 - Political incompetence, 19 - National interest, 29 - Stand up to China

Content: This frame focusses on the role of domestic political actors in the dispute. It tends to portray the Korean president and Korean politicians in a negative light and criticize them for not standing up to China in order to safeguard Korean national interests.

Frame 7 – Normal political dispute

Subframes: 5 - China’s request, 11 – Productive dialogue

Content: This is a neutral frame which focusses on the dispute purely in procedural diplomatic terms. Articles using this frame focus on presenting the demands of each party neutrally and may also contain descriptions of meetings and diplomatic procedure.

Frame 8 – Cooperation

Subframes – Cooperation

Content: This frame focusses on the potential for or evidence of growing cooperation between China and Korea. It may describe new projects being undertaken between the two countries after or despite the conflict or official visits between the two nations indicating warming relations.

Frame 9 – Korean backlash

Subframes: 10 – Citizens fight back, 27 – Korean government backlash

Content: This frame focusses on actions Koreans have taken, either as individuals or at a governmental level to get some kind of revenge on China. May frame the issue from a nationalist perspective or express the nationalist views of the individuals as ‘sticking up for their own country’s companies’.

Frame 10 – New cold war

Subframes: 16 – Arms race, 17 – US-ROK United Front

Content: This frame focusses on increasing polarization between the China and Russia on one side and the US and the ROK on the other. It may focus on the strong relationship between the US and Korea or use words like “New cold war” to describe growing tensions in the region.

Frame 11 - Other

Subframes: 12 – Chinese news coverage

Content: Other frames covering minor aspects of the dispute without any clear ideological assertions.

Subframes

Frame 1 – Tough diplomatic choices – This frame focusses on the dispute over THAAD as something which puts Korea in a difficult position between two (or sometimes three) great powers. It argues that Korea must look out for its own national interest and balance the different powers. May use imagery such as “a shrimp among whales” to emphasise the difficult position Korea is in.

Frame 2 – Economic damage - This frame focusses on the damage caused by THAAD to either specific industries such as tourism and the auto industry or to the wider economy as a whole.

Frame 3 – Chinese online nationalism frenzy – This frame focusses on the growth of nationalist reactions to diplomatic disputes including THAAD. Frames Chinese social media users as irrational (comparisons to pragmatic Chinese consumers who just want to buy the best products). Discussions of Korea/US/Japan boycotts. Often mentions Chinese government being unable to control this extreme public sentiment.

Frame 4 – Koreans overcoming THAAD – Focusses on individuals or companies who are continuing to do well in China despite others’ hardship. Highlights the skill, popularity or innovation of the individuals while noting the difficult situation others face. Imagery such as being “stronger than THAAD” or “no such thing as giving up” highlight the strength of the individual while also emphasizing the size of the economic challenge posed by THAAD.

Frame 5 – China’s request - This frame presents China’s opposition to THAAD in a neutral fashion. It focusses on China expressing its “worries” with no discussion of retaliation, force or other negatively coded language.

Frame 6 – Chinese media attack – This frame examines negative coverage of the THAAD dispute in Chinese media. Uses descriptions like “propaganda” and “mouthpiece” to describe Chinese news outlets and emphasizes their connection with the Chinese Communist Party. Focusses on direct criticism and threats such as telling Lotte to leave China.

Frame 7 – China blocks Hallyu – This frame examines the negative effect of the THAAD dispute on the entertainment and culture industries. Dramas being dropped from TV, books not being published, singers not being allowed on television. Emphasises lack of clear information, last minute changes. Korean entertainers and producers anxious and being left in the dark.

Frame 8 – China’s threat - This is one of the most overtly negative frames when it comes to China. It portrays the Chinese government’s behavior in terms of a direct or indirect threat. Headlines sometimes use imperative quotes such as “Do not take the wrong path” and words like “strong” and “fiercely” are used to describe the way Chinese officials speak. Articles also tend to recall economic damage and/or nationalist protests which have already taken place.

Frame 9 – New market opportunities - This frame also examines the economic consequences of the THAAD dispute but views them through a lens of opportunity – Korean companies can use this time to diversify and find new markets and investment opportunities. Describes developing markets such as Vietnam and India as “the new China” or looks at the expansion into developed markets like Europe and the US in industries which have traditionally been successful in Asia such as beauty and cosmetics. Characterises Chinese market as uncertain and argues Korean economy is too reliant on it.

Frame 10 – Citizens fight back – This frame looks at individuals who are undertaking some kind of civilian action to support Korean companies. May frame from a nationalist perspective or express the nationalist views of the individuals as ‘sticking up for the own country’s companies’.

Frame 11 – Productive dialogue - This frame focusses on diplomatic progress between ROK and China on the THAAD issue. There is emphasis on discussion of cooperation

and may gesture to potential problems being avoided using imagery such as “potential collision averted”.

Frame 12 – Chinese news coverage - Fairly neutral frame covering Chinese coverage of THAAD. Describes the coverage although may add in some elements that imply bad or manipulative intentions such as “spending a whole hour” on something or mentioning it was dropped from the main bulletin.

Frame 13 – Strained relations – This frame focuses on the difficulties in the diplomatic relationship between Korea and China. Points to lack of mutual understanding and difficulties in communication. Tends to focus on body language and perceived relations between the officials to emphasise the tensions between officials and the domestic pressures they face.

Frame 14 – Threat to free trade system - This frame asserts that China does not follow the rules and norms of the international order when it comes to trade. It focusses on China’s use of economic retaliation in political disputes or on Chinese policies which favour domestic companies by exploiting foreign ones. Imagery includes “using trade as a weapon” and “removing the meat and taking the bones”.

Frame 15 – Unfair political treatment – Focus on unfair or unreasonable treatment of Korea by China. Especially breaking protocol. Emphasis on words not matching with actions and Korea’s requests being ignored by China.

Frame 16 – Arms Race – The deployment of THAAD in Korea will lead to an arms race between US-Russia-China. May use terms like “new cold war” to describe the potential of the situation to escalate to conflict.

Frame 17 – US-ROK United Front - Positive framing US-ROK alliance. Portrays US and ROK as working together while China threatens Korea. Emphasises strain in US-China and ROK-China relations.

Frame 18 – Political incompetence – This frame focusses on the Korean handling of the THAAD dispute criticizing the government and especially the president for incoherent and/or incompetent diplomatic strategy.

Frame 19 – National Interest – This frame focusses on the THAAD dispute as primarily involving the national interests of Korea, specifically focusing on inter-Korean relations. Argues that politicians should focus on the North Korea issue and may accuse China of not taking it seriously enough.

Frame 20 - Lotte's dilemma – This frame focusses on Lotte's position as the owner of the land designated for the deployment of THAAD. It frames the issue as an economic and political problem for the firm as a Korean company doing business in China.

Frame 21 – No serious economic harm – This frame argues that economic damage caused by THAAD has been minimal or not significantly damaging. It points to continued interest in the Korean economy as a whole or in specific sectors. They may point to other factors as being more damaging such as high rental fees in the duty free sector.

Frame 22 – China can't be trusted – This frame examines China's behavior focusing on aspects which seem to be untrustworthy from a Korean perspective. Often talks about "tricks" or unilateral behavior. Many articles also focus on China's attempts to encroach on the sovereignty of Korea and other neighbours such as Taiwan and South East Asian nations involved in the South China Sea dispute.

Frame 23 – Cooperation - This frame focusses on the potential for or evidence of growing cooperation between China and Korea. It may describe new projects being undertaken between the two countries after or despite the conflict or official visits between the two nations indicating warming relations.

Frame 24 – Pragmatic Chinese – This frame portrays Chinese consumers in a fairly positive light – describing them as pragmatic and more focused on buying the best product than on nationalistic concerns such as boycotting Korean companies because of THAAD.

Frame 25 – Chinese consumers reactions – This frame focusses on the negative reaction of Chinese consumers to the THAAD dispute presenting this as a potential threat to Korean companies.

Frame 26 – China needs Korea – This frame presents the economic aspect of the dispute as overblown focusing on the mutual economic dependence of the two nations and in particular focusing on specific industries which rely on Korean suppliers and Korean parts.

Frame 27 – Korean government backlash – This frame presents potentially unrelated actions by Korean officials as a form of backlash against China. This would be actions such as not extending visas or enforcing other rules specifically on Chinese individuals or companies.

Frame 28 – Economic situation improving - This frame presents the negative economic situation in Korea caused by the Chinese reaction to THAAD as improving. It may focus on more Chinese tourists going to Korea or Korean companies finding it easier to operate in China. Often focuses on the unofficial nature of the retaliation, presenting the improvements as sudden or somewhat mysterious.

Frame 29 – Stand up to China – This frame argues for the Korean government to stand up against China for its own political interests. It argues that Korea hasn't been strong enough in opposing China's actions and may propose taking action in other multilateral fora such as the UN or the WTO.

Appendix 3. Frame analysis results tables

Table 1. Complete results for each frame

Frame	2014 Q4	2015 Q1	2015 Q2	2015 Q3	2015 Q4	2016 Q1	2016 Q2	2016 Q3	2016 Q4	2017 Q1	2017 Q2	2017 Q3	2017 Q4	Total
1	2	9	3	1	2	3	0	6	1	9	5	4	2	47
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	16	11	10	4	47
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	5
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	6	3	2	17
5	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	4	5	7	6	26
6	1	0	1	0	1	3	0	6	0	7	0	0	3	22
7	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	2	5	2	1	19
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	7
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
10	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	1	0	0	9
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Table 2. Complete results for each subframe

Frame	2014		2015		2015		2015		2015		2016		2016		2016		2017		Total
	Q4	Q1	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
1	2	8	3	1	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	8	4	3	1	35
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	11	11	10	4	38
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
5	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	5
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	4
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	5
8	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	5
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	5	1	1	14
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
13	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	1	1	1	1	1	12
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	4
15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	2	6
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
17	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	5
18	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	4	0	0	2	17
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	4
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	4	3	12
23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	2	2	7
24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

국문 초록

중국이 최근 해외에서의 국가 이미지 제고를 위해 수억 달러를 투자했음에도 불구하고, 중국에 대한 인상은 오히려 악화됐다. 극단적인 예로 한반도 내 고고도미사일방어 체계 (THAAD) 배치에 대한 중국의 대응을 들 수 있다. 이러한 미국의 체제에 대한 항의의 일환으로 중국은 한국을 대상으로 비공식적 경제 보복을 감행했다. 상황의 개선을 위해 한국 정부는 여러 측면에서 뒤로 물러섰으며 그 결과, 한국 대중의 중국에 대한 여론은 심각하게 나빠졌다. 본 논문은 중국일보(China Daily)의 THAAD 에 대한 권력자 차원의 담론 및 한국 일간지의 중국의 행동에 대한 프레이밍(framing) 분석을 통해 한국 내 중국의 이미지에 부정적인 영향을 미친 요인을 살펴보았다.

심리학 차원의 분석은 중국은 한국이 THAAD 를 포기하도록 압박하기 위해 간접적 위협을 가했다고 주장한다. 하지만 그렇게 함으로써, 중국에 대한 한국 대중의 신뢰가 감소하였고 부정적인 의견이 증가되었다. 이러한 대응은 결국 중국의 소프트 파워와 국가 이미지 관리 전략에 허점이 있음을 드러나게 했을 뿐 아니라, 향후 동북아시아의 국제관계에 있어 부정적 영향을 미칠 수도 있음에 따라 안보 전략의 실패로 볼 수 있다. 한국 대중은 중국에 대해 부정적인 이미지를, 미국에 대해서는 긍정적인 이미지를 갖게 됐다. 담론 분석 결과, 미국의 “전략적 균형(strategic balancing)”이 중국에 있어 가장 중요한 사안임에 따라, 미-중 간 긴장이 고조될수록 한국 대중의 중국에 대한 부정적 이미지는 심각한 문제가 될 수 있다. 이에 따라, 본 논문은 한-중 간 관계 개선을 위해서는 양국 간 새로운 “논쟁적 상호작용 (argumentative interaction)” 접근이 필요함을 주장한다.

주제어: 사드; 국가 이미지; 소프트파워; 프레이밍 분석; 담화 분석