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Citizens' Rights and Interests in the Context of Technological Competition: A Discourse Analysis of the TikTok Ban

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Abstract: This study employs a corpus-assisted framework analysis approach to examine how mainstream media in China and the United States adopted issues and frameworks related to citizens' rights and national security when covering the TikTok ban. The research finds differences in the focus and frequency of framework usage between the two countries' media. Chinese media paid more attention to the potential negative impact of the ban on citizens' daily rights and interests, while U.S. media emphasized data security risks and impacts on national security. This reflects potential differences in the ideas and positions of the two countries' media regarding national public interests and citizens' rights and interests. The reasons for the differences may stem from contrasts in how the two countries' media define their social responsibilities and reporting strategies. This reminds that different countries and regions need to take into account multiple stakeholders when promoting global internet governance and related policy making. The study calls for effective protection of technology users' civil rights while pursuing national security.

Keywords: TikTok Ban; Technological Competition; Citizens' Rights and Interests; Framework Analysis; Corpus

1. Introduction

With the thriving development of information and communication technologies, social media has become an indispensable important part of the modern world. Representative social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram not only profoundly affect the work and life of billions of netizens, but also occupy an important position in the global economy and culture. As an emerging short video sharing platform, TikTok rapidly emerged globally with its unique algorithm mechanism and highly interactive user experience. By 2023, TikTok ranks second in global mobile app downloads. However, TikTok's Chinese background has also attracted high vigilance and scrutiny from Western countries. In

July 2020, the U.S. government imposed huge pressure on ByteDance, TikTok's parent company, on the grounds of suspected infringement of U.S. citizens' data privacy and possible leakage of state secrets, demanding that it divest and sell TikTok to a U.S. entity, otherwise, it will completely ban TikTok. Against the increasingly fierce China-U.S. tech competition, the depoliticization of technology and the protection of civil rights are important.

Human rights refer to the inalienable fundamental rights and freedoms that people are entitled to as human beings. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights explicitly stipulates a series of civil and political rights such as the right to life, liberty and security of person, which constitute the core connotations of human rights. In recent years, with the rapid development of information technology, the Internet has penetrated all aspects of human society, and emerging online platforms have also had a profound impact on civil rights. For example, the rise of social networks allows more people to exercise freedom of speech, but it may also threaten user data and speech security. Mainstream Western social platforms dominated by Twitter and Facebook are also believed to potentially undermine the right to expression of non-Western countries. Therefore, considering civil rights implications should not be neglected for banning TikTok applications with huge user bases in the context of technological competition between countries.

The purpose of this study is to examine the considerations of Chinese and American media regarding issues such as civil rights and national security in the TikTok ban through text analysis, emphasizing that civil rights also need to be reasonably maintained while pursuing national security. The significance of this study is to provide a reference for technology regulatory decision-making and urge people to pay attention to civil rights, and build an environment where technology and human rights coexist harmoniously. We firmly believe that in today's era of rapid technological development, this vision is very necessary.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Republic of China Period Infringement of Citizens' Rights and Interests by Technological Development

Currently, the protection of human rights has become a global consensus. The protection of civil rights and interests as a manifestation of human rights in the national context deserves special attention. It is undeniable that the development and progress of technology has brought tremendous convenience for the protection of civil rights and interests. However, the academic community has also realized that in the era of rapid iteration of technology, the downsides of technology are posing challenges for the protection of civil rights in various fields. The construction of digital cities that applies AI and Internet of Things technologies to urban management faces problems such as narrowing public voice channels, marginal groups being "silenced", and privacy leaks. In the field of protecting human rights and civil rights and interests, existing studies have shown that while digital technologies can be used to assist in humanitarian aid, they can also easily become surveillance tools that greatly damage citizens' privacy.

At the same time, authoritarian governments and private sectors that serve them may “monopolize” technologies to infringe on civil rights and interests.

As for the protection mechanisms for civil rights brought by digital technology itself, technological innovation can democratize human rights practices. Still, the privileges enjoyed by the creators of technologies make the protection of civil rights and interests fundamentally unequal. The private sector that dominates technology is eroding accountability mechanisms for authority, blurring the applicability of human rights law, which is also detrimental to protecting civil rights and interests. Meanwhile, technology’s improvement of human rights and civil rights may be constrained by realities such as economic development levels and familiarity with technology. Some studies have explored and discussed the expansion of civil rights in the context of technological development.

2.2 Technological Competition

Currently, with the post-Cold War globalist assumptions overturned, the rise of geopolitics has intensified competition between nations. Technological competition is a double-edged sword. While the competition between different countries (especially major countries with strong competitiveness) is conducive to technological progress and enterprise transformation as well as setting cooperation boundaries, it can also put countries with insufficient competitiveness in a dilemma of having to take sides, make businesses bear the consequences of national competition, and keep other international players vigilant at all times. Should technological competition between countries come at the expense of the rights and interests of ordinary citizens? Martin et al. discussed the impact of technological innovation in the digital sovereignty era on humanitarian assistance and showed that digital technology can indeed play a unique role in providing humanitarian aid. Still, the accompanying issues of digital dependence, sovereignty parasitism, and functional creep should not be ignored. Technological competition cannot one-sidedly pursue gains and losses at the state level while ignoring people’s rights - they often enjoy the convenience brought by technology. Using any means necessary to safeguard national interests will put competition participants in a dilemma.

3. Research Questions

As the most technologically advanced countries in the world, the United States and China are engaged in fierce technological competition across various fields. Taking TikTok as an example, this Chinese tech company quickly occupied the global market. Its advanced algorithm technology has enabled it to successfully challenge the dominance of American tech giants in the short video field, arousing the vigilance of the U.S. government, which ultimately issued a ban requiring TikTok to be acquired or sell its U.S. business. Therefore, the TikTok incident can be seen as a microcosm of the clash between the Chinese and American technology systems and regulatory concepts. In addition, due to differences in social systems and cultural traditions, the mainstream media in China and the United States also have certain tensions and biases in the direction of news and public opinion. Such differences may manifest themselves through the construction of frameworks such as citizens’ rights and national security in the coverage of the TikTok ban. Coupled with the differences between Chinese and Western civil rights theories, analyzing the discourse of mainstream media in China and the United States can

expand our understanding of global issues such as civil rights and technology governance. Therefore, this study selects reports on the TikTok ban event from mainstream media in China and the United States and determines the following research questions:

1. What are the adopted frameworks in the coverage of the TikTok ban in the two newspapers?
2. What are the differences between the two newspapers' considerations of civil rights and interests?
3. What are the reasons for the differences between the two newspapers' considerations of civil rights and interests?

4. Research Design

4.1 Framing Theory

Goffman believed that human beings understand knowledge and life experiences through “interpretive patterns” to constitute everything in society. Frames can give meaning to a series of actions. People use frames to define, evaluate, explain, and understand an issue. Framing theory is based on the idea that media activates certain psychological schemas among audiences by introducing or elevating the salience of certain ideas, encouraging them to think, feel, and decide in a particular way, thus concentrating public attention on particular events. ,

Since the early 1990s, the application of framing analysis in news research has been steadily growing, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of media interpretations of reality and potential influences on audiences. Framework analysis guided by framing theory has been widely applied in news research, affirming its usefulness in studying how news media influence audience cognition by giving salience to particular topics through framing.

4.2 Corpus-Assisted Framework Analysis

Touri and Koteyko argue that framework analysis is a dynamic process. The combination of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis and traditional framework identification can overcome the subjectivity and arbitrariness of the analysis while ensuring the comprehensiveness of framework identification. Thus, it effectively overcomes the deficiencies of deductive and inductive research methods to improve the accuracy of framework identification. They also proposed that, as a typical representative of computer assistance, corpus technology can effectively assist in identifying frames. This analysis method plays a vital role in news discourse analysis research to understand media framing and meaning construction processes in covering a particular social group or hot event. This study plans to use corpus technology to screen keyword list in texts to initially determine the critical areas covered in the texts. Through concordance analysis, it reproduces the context of keywords to identify frameworks in the content of news articles.

4.3 Methodology

Entman's seminal definition of framing contains four functional features: defining the problem, identifying the problem, providing solutions, and forming public opinion. These four features describe how frameworks shape people's cognition and reflection on issues, laying the theoretical foundation for

subsequent framework analysis. Based on Entman's theory, Van Gorp proposed an inductive framing analysis procedure for analyzing media content, mainly used to study framing and meaning construction processes in media coverage. It includes three main steps: data collection, framework identification, and framework analysis.

This study employs corpus technology and uses Van Gorp's inductive framing analysis procedure to study the characteristics and differences in related reports of the TikTok ban in The New York Times and China Daily. With the help of AntConc 3.5.9's keyword list function, the study identifies keyword distributions in the two media's coverage. By adopting concordance analysis of the top 30 keywords in both lists and combining keywords' context, it identifies reporting frameworks regarding issue definition, causation, consequences, solutions, or moral judgments. The research analyzes the framing characteristics of The New York Times and China Daily's coverage of the TikTok ban and examines both media's attention to protecting civil rights in their reports.

4.4 Data Collection

This study selects reports on the TikTok ban from China Daily and The New York Times as the research corpus. The reasons for choosing these two media outlets are mainly based on their influence in their respective countries. China Daily is China's most influential English language portal, with an average of over 420 million page views per day ("China Daily," 2024). The New York Times is one of the oldest newspapers in the United States, having won 130 Pulitzer Prizes. It has long been considered a newspaper of national record. In addition, the English reports of both newspapers make them windows connecting their countries with the world. They represent the mainstream value concepts in their countries and profoundly influence the global community's framework cognition on global issues such as civil rights and technology governance. Therefore, analyzing the discourse in these two major media will help reveal the differences between Chinese and American concepts of civil rights in the technological environment.

The specific corpus sources are the website of China Daily and the Lexis Nexis database. With "Tik Tok ban" as the search term and a time span from July 6, 2020 (when the U.S. government first released signals to resist TikTok) to December 22, 2022, the unfiltered corpus quantities are 171 articles for The New York Times and 271 for China Daily. After reading the texts and excluding reports not meeting the theme requirements and other types of reports, the final number of valid texts is 161 for China Daily and 75 for The New York Times. The number of tokens for the two corpora is 120,000 and 100,000 English words, respectively.

5. Data Collection

5.1 Results and Discussion

This study will analyze the discourse framing of The New York Times and China Daily regarding the TikTok ban through keyword list and concordance analysis of each keyword, specifically in three steps.

In the first stage, using the keyword list function of the corpus software Antconc 3.5.9 and taking the BNC corpus keyword list as reference, keyword lists for both media are screened. Considering the concordance analysis, this study selected and analyzed the top 30 keywords from both media, as shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1: Keyword List of TikTok Ban Reporting of *China Daily*

No.	Keyword	Keyness	No.	Keyword	Keyness
1	tiktok	13108.47	16	percent	1250.29
2	china	10756.91	17	tech	1235.52
3	us	9351.48	18	india	1200.42
4	chinese	7697.14	19	countries	1189.98
5	app	4619.01	20	facebook	1059.1
6	bytedance	3896.92	21	users	967.34
7	trump	3669.96	22	its	933.92
8	wechat	3609.18	23	united	927.9
9	apps	2468.83	24	has	893.59
10	ban	2377.91	25	states	878.21
11	companies	2000.45	26	tencent	876.04
12	security	1750.6	27	cpc	856.45
13	administration	1424.9	28	internet	811.65
14	global	1367.87	29	pompeo	806.39
15	huawei	1359.85	30	international	799.55

Table 2: Keyword List of TikTok Ban Reporting of The New York Times

No.	Keyword	Keyness	No.	Keyword	Keyness
1	trump	6665.09	16	beijing	955.17
2	app	6367.72	17	microsoft	902.97
3	bytedance	4278.67	18	data	900.56
4	china	3547.34	19	instagram	774.09
5	wechat	3001.65	20	president	723.76
6	facebook	2281.71	21	tencent	706.18
7	internet	1602.39	22	concerns	703.48
8	american	1555.07	23	executive	646.92
9	biden	1516.1	24	huawei	624.7
10	administration	1480.87	25	walmart	615.02
11	users	1465.84	26	twitter	604.98
12	company	1271.64	27	lawmakers	560.45
13	oracle	1055	28	youtube	461.73
14	google	1054.13	29	security	1094.88
15	tech	1034.86	30	deal	921.12

In the second stage, the keywords are classified into different categories that are closely related in meaning. By screening keywords, such as discarding words expressing the same meaning, 30 and 28

keywords were finally retained for each corpus, respectively. The classification results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Categories and Percentage of Keywords in the Coverage of the Two Media Outlets

<i>China Daily</i>			<i>The New York Times</i>		
Category	Subcategory	Percentage	Category	Subcategory	Percentage
Business	Company	40.0%	Business	Company	60.0%
	Software			Technology	
	User			Software	
	Data			Data	
Politics	Country	36.7%	Politics	User	26.7%
	Political party			Executive	
	Government			Country	
	Politician			Government	
COVID-19		6.7%		Politician	
				Lawmakers	
Others		16.7%	Others		13.3%

China Daily's keywords can be divided into business-related, political entity, pandemic, and other categories, while The New York Times' keywords can be divided into business-related, political entity, and other categories. Each category can be further subdivided into smaller categories according to the keyword content. Although keywords do not easily reveal frames, they lead analysts to essential concepts in the texts, which may assist in diagnosing central ideas built around frames. This step provides a general direction for identifying frameworks in the third stage.

In the third stage, concordance analysis is performed on each keyword following Van Gorp's inductive qualitative framing analysis procedure, specifically by identifying reporting frameworks from both media regarding issue definition, causation, consequences, solutions, or moral judgments based on the keyword context. Concordance analysis is done by creating a concordance list, defined as a list displaying all occurrences of a particular term searched in the corpus, presented in the context where they occurred. This visualization of the investigated terms can enable in-depth analysis of the background they are situated in. Considering the large number of keywords, the study decided to analyze 100 samples when a keyword had over 100 concordance lines and analyze all of them when fewer than 100 lines.

5.2 Framework Identification Results

The analysis shows that The New York Times and China Daily presented three reporting frameworks in related reports on the TikTok ban, as detailed in Table 4.

Table 4: The Frames in the Coverage of the TikTok Ban Event by China Daily and The New York Times

	<i>China Daily</i>			<i>The New York Times</i>		
Frame	Government responsibility	Industry competition	Risk	Government responsibility	Corporate responsibility	'Ban as politics
Definition of problem	TikTok banned by US	The ban was resisted	TikTok banned by US	TikTok was banned	TikTok business segmentation TikTok working model questioned	Trump Administration Sued
Cause	Trump issues ban	TikTok banned by US	Trump issues ban	TikTok leaked user data	TikTok has data problems Management Issues	Lack of basis for the ban
Consequence	ByteDance interests are damaged	ByteDance interests are damaged	Could trigger a "new cold war"	User privacy breach	TikTok's business is damaged	Public life is affected Industry rules compromised
	Impact on people's lives	Consumers are affected	China-US exchange blocked			
	Violation of WTO principles	Breaking the rules of industry competition	Economic slowdown			
Solution	U.S. abandons bad faith competition	None	Waiver of ban	Enforcing the ban	TikTok public data storage	None
Moral evaluation	Abuse of state political rights	Not in line with market rules	Not conducive to social stability	Contribute to the protection of national security	Lack of corporate responsibility	Criticism of politicians as showboaters
	Enhanced xenophobia	Not conducive to fair competition	Not conducive to economy	Protecting people's interests	Not conducive to U.S. national security	

Table 4 shows that both The New York Times and China Daily adopted the government responsibility framework to cover the ban event. In addition, China Daily's frameworks include the industry competition and risk frameworks, while The New York Times includes the corporate responsibility and the ban as politics frameworks, answering the first research question.

1) Government Responsibility Framework

The most prominent framework in both media's reports is the government responsibility. Although both newspapers adopted this framework, analyzing the concordance lines of their respective keywords reveals that the targets and reporting attitudes of the two media are entirely different.

In China Daily's reports, the Trump administration is the primary target of condemnation. In August 2020, Trump said he planned to issue an order banning TikTok's operations in the U.S. This move resulted in a series of consequences. China Daily believes this ban directly affects ByteDance's normal operations in the U.S. and is an abuse of state political power by the Trump administration, extremely likely to lead to xenophobia and uncertainty in China-U.S. relations. This condemnation of the U.S. government can be verified through the concordance analysis of the keyword "trump." Analysis of 100 lines for this keyword found that 34% of the texts condemned the unreasonableness of the Trump administration's ban, specifically including: violation of industry competition rules, violation of WTO principles, detriment to China-U.S. economic development, etc. 7% of the texts contain speculation

about the reasons for this ban, such as the U.S. government's fear of China's rise and protection of domestic industry competitors.

The government responsibility framework in The New York Times reports manifests itself in two aspects: high affirmation of the U.S. government and accusations against the Chinese government, with the former accounting for a much higher proportion than the latter. Under the government responsibility framework, The New York Times' image shaping of the U.S. government is mainly by amplifying TikTok's data security issues and emphasizing the importance of protecting national security and user privacy, thereby highlighting the vital role the government plays in this incident.

(1) The United States has for decades embraced an open, largely unregulated vision of the internet. But in recent years, concerns about national security and geopolitics have led officials to bar Chinese technology from the networks, and now smartphones, used by Americans. (The New York Times, September 19, 2020)

In example (1) above, The New York Times attributes the U.S. government's crackdown on Chinese technology to considerations of "national security" and "geopolitics" while emphasizing that despite this, the U.S. government has consistently taken an open and inclusive attitude towards the Internet. The ultimate moral judgment under the government responsibility frame is mostly that the U.S. government's consideration for citizens' privacy deserves praise.

In shaping the image of the Chinese government in reports, The New York Times mainly highlights the Chinese government's excessive collection of user data. By insinuating the covert collusion between ByteDance and the Chinese government and data sharing, it ends up advocating banning Chinese software, including WeChat and TikTok.

2) Industry Competition Framework

The industry competition framework is unique to China Daily's reports. Under the industry competition frame, the U.S. government and U.S. companies are the objects of accusation. China Daily reports that Trump's TikTok ban was criticized by groups including the Chinese American community and the U.S. Department of Commerce. U.S. companies headed by Google are considered direct beneficiaries of this ban, while the U.S. government is seen as the primary promoter of unfair competition within the industry.

(2) The loss of TikTok, WeChat, and probably other potential competitors in the US markets is a big blow to American consumers and a big win for the Google-Facebook-Amazon oligopoly. (China Daily, October 12, 2020)

In the above example, noted economist David Blair wrote that stopping the operations of TikTok and WeChat would bring tremendous losses to U.S. consumers while consolidating the monopoly status of domestic U.S. companies. Under the industry competition framework, China Daily believes that the U.S. government's ban on TikTok violates the WTO's principles of openness, transparency and non-discrimination. It neither conforms to market rules and interests nor directly infringes on the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies, making it highly undesirable.

3) Risk Framework

Although the risk frame is not as prominent in China Daily as the government responsibility and industry competition frameworks, the variety of actors involved in this frame is far higher than China Daily's other two frames. While the above government responsibility and industry competition frames focus on finding the causes of the TikTok ban incident, the risk frame focuses on discussing the adverse effects of the ban issued by the Trump administration on various fields in both countries. The ultimate moral judgment also focuses on national politics, economy, social stability, people's livelihood, and other aspects. Corresponding solutions include advising the U.S. to stop losses in time and rein in on the brink of the precipice.

The corpus texts show that although the ban targets the Chinese company ByteDance, it does cause actual damage to China's economy and enterprises. Still, China Daily's reports highlight the blow suffered by various U.S. sectors, tending to portray the U.S. as the biggest loser, such as the discussion of the "new Cold War" in the reports. The "new Cold War" refers to renewed economic, political and military tensions between geopolitical groups in the post-Cold War era. It has different interpretations depending on the context, such as "China-U.S. Cold War" and "Russia-U.S. Cold War." In the current event, the two sides of the "new Cold War" are China and the United States. China Daily's report on August 12, 2020 discusses the dangers of the "new Cold War" in detail. U.S. economist Jeffrey Sachs pointed out that the "new Cold War" is very dangerous and will lead to a "dreadful mistake." This ban will cause the Sino-U.S. technology cold war to expand rapidly. At the same time, the United States cannot detach itself from China on some common human problems such as climate change and global pandemics.

4) Corporate Responsibility Framework

The corporate responsibility framework is unique to The New York Times reports and is second only to the government responsibility frame in proportion. Under this reporting framework, ByteDance, TikTok's parent company, is the focus. The discussion involves aspects of the company, such as its work atmosphere and user data storage issues. Notably, unlike the above frameworks, the discussion under this frame tries to exclude the government's role as much as possible and focuses on exploring TikTok's problems. The reporting entry points are often ByteDance-related incidents, such as employees being attacked, ByteDance firing employees who privately stored data, violating labor laws with the "996" work schedule, and the split transfer of TikTok's U.S. business. The ultimate moral judgment of these reports presents ByteDance's image lacking corporate responsibility, disregarding user privacy and market rules and not deserving support from the U.S. government. The solutions to the problems show clear resistance to ByteDance, such as requiring ByteDance to publicize data storage methods, change the company's organizational structure, fire employees privately storing data, and accelerate the split and acquisition of its U.S. business.

Through reporting on various problems existing in ByteDance itself, The New York Times' reports successfully shape an irresponsible corporate image, thus providing a realistic basis for Trump's ban on TikTok.

5) Ban as Politics Framework

The ban as politics is The New York Times' last framework. Different from the corporate responsibility frame, reports under this frame target the U.S. government, accusing it of using the TikTok ban for political show and canvassing. This framework identifies problems such as the Trump administration being sued and the Biden administration's ambiguous attitude towards TikTok. The causes are mostly speculation about government actions, such as the U.S. government's abuse of executive power, the government's difficulty in prioritizing political competition over public interests, and exploiting "national security" as an excuse.

(3) On paper at least, internet policy in the United States is creeping a little closer to what happens in countries like Russia and India: The government makes draconian rules about what technology its citizens are allowed to use. And it can be hard for people to know if those rules are based on legitimate national security concerns or expressions of nationalism. (The New York Times, September 4, 2020)

In the above example (3), The New York Times takes a critical attitude towards the Trump administration's actions, believing that the United States is gradually moving closer to other countries. For unclear purposes, it limits citizens' use of specific technologies, and the public cannot judge whether these rules stem from legitimate concerns about national security or expressions of nationalism.

Concordance analysis of the keyword "trump" in The New York Times found that about 13% of reports question the legality of the Trump administration's implementation of the TikTok ban. Reasons include maliciously suppressing Chinese companies, canvassing for the general election, fearing the rise of China's technological power, etc. In each case, the reports show us how the ban is used as a political tool to help politicians achieve their goals. It can be concluded that politicians' use of the ban as a political tool is considered one of the reasons TikTok was resisted. As a result, people's normal life and learning are affected, Sino-U.S. diplomatic relations are damaged, and economic cooperation suffers a blow.

5.3 Differences in Citizens' Rights Reporting Between the Two Media

Although the two media outlets adopted inconsistent reporting frameworks, the differences between the two newspapers in considering civil rights can still be seen from these frames, mainly in the following two aspects: 1) There is a significant difference in the reporting frequency of protecting citizens' rights between the two newspapers, with China Daily paying more attention than The New York Times; 2) The two newspapers focus on different aspects when considering citizens' rights. China Daily emphasizes the adverse effects of the ban on all aspects of people's lives, while The New York Times focuses on public privacy leaks and security risks.

First of all, according to the comparative analysis in this study, 21.1% of the reports (34 reports) in China Daily focused on discussing the issue of protecting civil rights, with significantly more

expressions and topic distributions of this framework than the 10.6% (8 reports) in The New York Times. The civil rights-related words with the highest frequency in China Daily are “people’s rights,” “lifestyle choices,” and “personal information autonomy,” appearing 215 times. Similar words appeared only 92 times in The New York Times. This shows that Chinese media pays more attention to the issue of protecting civil rights than American media, reflecting potential differences in the orientations of balancing national security supervision and civil rights between the two countries to some extent.

Secondly, the two newspapers have different focuses in their concerns about civil rights. China Daily’s reports focus on citizens’ daily lives being affected. For example, 64% of the reports focus on the possibilities of rights such as job opportunities and lifestyle choices being deprived. These reports contain expressions of public sentiment and protests, such as “trampling on citizens’ lives” and “defending the right to choose.” The New York Times’ 45% of related reports focus on public information security risks and privacy leaks. Vocabulary such as “information theft” and “public safety threats” are more common in these reports.

5.4 Potential Reasons for Differences in Citizens’ Rights Reporting

For the above differences between the two media in reporting on protecting civil rights, this study believes there may be the following reasons. Firstly, there are some differences in how mainstream media in China and the U.S position their social responsibilities. As we all know, under the Chinese government’s encouragement, Chinese news media consciously undertake the function of guiding public opinion. As a result, Chinese media pays more attention to the public perspective in technology regulation coverage and tends to conduct in-depth analysis from the perspective of citizens’ daily life rights and interests. In contrast, American commercial media emphasizes objective reporting of facts. When setting news frameworks, it first considers accommodating different political positions. Therefore, American media coverage focuses on analyzing different subjects of the incident itself, with relatively little correlation to broader perspectives like civil rights. The differences in the social responsibilities of Chinese and American media are also evidenced by the differences in framework emphases in the TikTok ban reports.

In addition, the reasons for the differences in reporting frameworks may lie in the contrasting reporting strategies between China and the U.S. In the TikTok ban event involved in this study, the parent company ByteDance of the company is from China, while the U.S. government formulated and implemented the ban. Under this objectively confronting situation, Chinese and American media are very likely to show opposing biases in reporting strategies. Chinese media tends to generate sympathy through frameworks emphasizing civil rights, while American media tends to explain and justify the reasons and necessity of the government’s ban. On the surface, this manifests itself as potential differences in the reporting framework focuses of the two countries’ media. Nevertheless, research needs to make clear that such differences in reporting strategies are more the result of subjective positions and should not make further cultural or value inferences.

6. Conclusion

This study employs a corpus-assisted framework analysis method to study the discursive framing of the TikTok ban by the mainstream Chinese and American media China Daily and The New York Times. The research finds that China Daily's reports show government responsibility, industry competition and risk frameworks. In comparison, The New York Times' reporting frameworks include government responsibility, corporate responsibility and ban as a politics. There are significant differences between the two countries' media in the emphasis and frequency of using topics involving citizens' rights and national security. Specifically, Chinese media pays more attention to condemning the potential consequences of this move in infringing on citizens' lifestyle choices and daily rights and interests, while U.S. media focuses more on data security risks and impacts on national security.

The above differences clearly reflect the tense relationship and debate focal points between technological competition between countries against the backdrop of rising geopolitics and protecting civil rights. Our research findings indicate different attitudes and concepts between Chinese and American mainstream discourses regarding balancing public and private interests. This may stem from differences in the two countries' media positioning of their social responsibilities and reporting strategies. This study provides empirical evidence demonstrating how media discourses from different societies reflect and amplify national differences on civil rights issues in the context of globalization. It reminds people that when engaging in future dialogues and policy exchanges on the global Internet governance framework, while pursuing national security, the rights and interests of ordinary people using science and technology must not be ignored. In addition to the security threats and risk governance inherent in technological advances, social media and algorithm applications, effectively upholding citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms should also be a matter of urgency.

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Author Contributions

Zhiqiang Zhao was responsible for the writing of the manuscript. Prof. Jirong Guo provided guidance and supervision throughout the research and writing process. Qian Zhang contributed by refining the manuscript and offering valuable feedback on revisions.

Availability of Data and Materials

None.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to report regarding the present study.

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