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The national security law for Hong Kong: a corpus-driven comparative study of media representations between China's and Anglo-American English-language press

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The study conducts a comparative phraseological analysis of media representations associated with the National Security Law for Hong Kong between China's and Anglo-American English-language press. Based on a corpus-driven methodology, four framing functions, i.e., politics and law, protests and crime, action and future, and evaluation are identified to suggest how the legislation is addressed and understood in different press. The findings demonstrate that the Chinese press prefers to solely highlight the law's potential benefits and its favorable results, whereas the Anglo-American press is inclined to construct the law as a weapon deployed by China to threaten Hong Kong's legal system and undermine its democratic autonomy. The study discusses the newly politicized Hong Kong in different socio-political practices and geopolitical tensions between China and the West.

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Introduction

Hong Kong has been granted significant authority and a high degree of autonomy that could guarantee its capitalist system and own institutions for 50 years under a unified China since July 1, 1997 when the Joint Declaration was signed (Zeng, 2003). The handover of Hong Kong from Britain's colonial rule to China's control has brought about enhanced political awareness and involvement for the Hong Kong people (Cheng and Lam, 2013). The passage of the National Security Law (NSL hereafter) has brought about another significant change in the political psychology of the Hong Kong people and the way Hong Kong is governed (Lau, 2021). Formally gazetted for promulgation, the NSL took effect on June 30, 2020, one day before the 23rd anniversary of Hong Kong's handover to Chinese sovereignty.

The enactment of the NSL is publicly acknowledged as a result of the political unrest of massive street protests in Hong Kong in 2019 after its government proposed a law allowing the extradition of defendants to mainland China to stand trial or serve criminal sentences (Silver, 2020). The protests continued in some violent clashes between students and police though the Hong Kong government withdrew the proposal. In light of this background, the NSL is publicized with the legislative purpose to promote a safe society in Hong Kong (Silver, 2020). The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region stated that "the legislation aims to prevent, curb and punish acts of secession, subversion of state power, terrorist activities, and collusion with foreign or external forces to endanger national security" and to "maintain Hong Kong's long-term stability and prosperity" (Hao, 2020, pp. 45–48). In contrast, Critics say the NSL devastates Hong Kong's autonomy and threatens the territory's independent press and democratic opposition (Yu, 2022; Adorjan et al., 2021; Toru, 2020; Petersen, 2020; Lo, 2021).

China's enactment of the NSL in Hong Kong has amplified the limelight of the world and has made widespread news headlines through journalism. To enhance more understanding about the issue, this paper seeks to compare relevant news reports between China's and Anglo-American English-language media and to observe how Chinese geopolitical orders are playing out in Hong Kong through the NSL. This paper provides rigorous linguistic evidence to the study of new politicalized Hong Kong by contextualizing the inquiry within reference to journalism associated with the NSL. It contributes towards a wider understanding of China's NSL for Hong Kong under the background of the city's high degree of autonomy and the "One Country, Two Systems" principle.

The National Security Law

There has been burgeoning literature regarding the impact and role of the NSL, which can be disaggregated into two strands. First, it investigates wide criticism associated with controversial aspects of the NSL and how it threatens to erode Hong Kong's "One Country, Two Systems" principle. They include a threat to Hong Kong's legislative process and framework (Chan, 2021; Yu, 2022), anxieties related to Hong Kong's resinicisation (Adorjan et al., 2021), protesters' opposition demands (Kobayashi et al., 2021), widespread interference by China's central government (Toru, 2020), loss of separate legal system for Hong Kong (Petersen, 2020) and Hong Kong's truncated autonomy and controls over the society, education and the judiciary (Lo, 2021).

Second, numerous Chinese scholars have conducted extensive research on the nature, cause, characteristics, and significance of the NSL. Jiang (2020) analyzes the NSL and the Basic Law under the background of the "One Country, Two Systems" framework so as to yield positive insights for Hong Kong's future

development. Zhu (2021b) suggests that it is the best way to address issues left over from history in Hong Kong and it could safeguard the rights and interests of Hong Kong residents, and promote universal security and lasting peace in Hong Kong society. Likewise, Lau (2021) argues that the NSL helps to end protracted political turmoil in Hong Kong since 1997. Teo (2020) states that Hong Kong's security and separatist risks dropped with the enactment of the NSL. In addition, Hao (2020) explicates the characteristics of the NSL as a new legal system to maintain national security, a new principle of "One Country" while respecting the differences between "Two Systems", and a stringent measure in preventing and punishing acts endangering national security. Lam (2021) states that the NSL is not a legal island free from judicial review by referring to the rule of law. Meanwhile, Zhu (2021a) argues that the NSL aims to bridge the gap between China's Constitution and Hong Kong's legal system, and points out its implications for Hong Kong's legal system. Rudolf (2020) comments that the NSL is a way for China to gain international discourse power in legal matters and Hong Kong is a test balloon in this endeavor.

A shared characteristic between these two strands is that they concentrate on socio–political and legal impacts and roles associated with the enactment of the NSL. Besides, the studies in both strands tend to revolve around implications of the law itself rather than linguistic evidence from journalism regarding the NSL. It is noteworthy that previous studies have exposed some significant findings as regards the NSL through journalism (Peng, 2021a, 2021b). For example, in a study on the contrastive analysis between the Chinese and American newspapers, Peng (2021b) found the two newspapers tend to use eight kinds of engagement resources from their respective stances of supporting their own countries by employing the engagement system of Appraisal Theory. The present study is different because we adopt a corpus-driven phraseological analysis (Sinclair, 2004; Cheng, 2006) to critically compare how the NSL is discursively represented between China's and Anglo-American English-language press.

Analytical frameworks

The corpus-driven discourse analysis is understood as inductive, bottom-up research using raw corpus data and "aims to derive linguistic categories systematically from the recurrent patterns and frequency distributions that emerge from the language in context" (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001, pp. 84–87). The method of corpus-driven analysis of quantitative data, such as keywords, can best be used to examine the aboutness behind particular ways of representations. Keywords are words that are significantly more frequent or unique in one corpus compared with another (Baker, 2006). A close examination of the contextual uses of the keywords, which are the collocational pattern of keywords in larger phrasal units, contributes to gaining an understanding of their roles in representing socio–political and ideological underpinnings.

According to Sinclair (1996, 2004), words are co-selected to produce meaning in larger phrasal units. The meaning of a keyword depends on the environment in which it appears. Sinclair (2004, p. 121) claims that "all complete lexical items realize an element of meaning which is a function of the item in its cotext and context". Therefore, a corpus-driven phraseological analysis of keywords provides evidence to embrace the concept of the extended-unit-of-meaning model of language given that the larger phrasal unit of meaning is better understood as uncovering patterns of co-selection in the corpus.

Sinclair (2004) adopts five categories of co-selection for analyzing extended meanings of words. The five descriptive

categories include the "core", "collocation", "colligation", "semantic preference", and "semantic prosody". The core is an obligatory category and is "invariable, and constitutes the evidence of the occurrence of the item as a whole" (Sinclair, 2004, p. 141). Collocation and colligation are optional categories and are the co-selection of words and grammatical choices with the core, respectively. Semantic preference is optional and refers to the tendency of co-occurrence of items that share a semantic feature. Semantic prosody is "the determiner of the meaning of the whole lexical item" and provides the overall functional meaning (Sinclair, 2004, p. 141).

Sinclair's five categories of co-selection as the framework is primarily introduced to the exploration of English language learning and teaching and English Chinese contrastive phraseological studies. There is very little scholarly research in the field of media discourse (Cheng and Lam, 2010, 2013; Hou, 2018). By identifying the phraseological profiles and patterns in the media corpus, Cheng and Lam (2010) found how human rights news discourses are situated in specific historical, cultural, and political settings. By applying this model as framework, this paper attempts to provide a phraseological analysis to understand the socio-political practice and ideological positions of the state's law for Hong Kong and its underlying changes for a new politicalized Hong Kong in the world.

As an extension of the keywords method at the microscopic level, macroscopic analysis of key semantic categories by collecting keywords together allows us to see trends that are invisible at the word level (Rayson, 2008). At the semantic level, the frame plays the same role by selecting certain aspects of a perceived reality and making them more noticeable in a communicating text, because frames can be detected by searching for the presence and absence of certain keywords (Entman, 1993). As such, keywords are used as entry points to direct the analyst to important concepts in a text around which the frame is constructed. The use of keywords that belong to a similar semantic category allows us to observe the prominence of framing functions.

Methodology

Data description. This study is based on two corpora: the *China Daily* corpus (CD) and the Anglo-American media corpus (AA). CD collects related news reports from *China Daily*, and AA consists of news reports from *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*.

China Daily is chosen because it represents the voice of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China with its primary function of communicating the stances of the Chinese government (Liu, 2017). *The New York Times* is one of the major internationally recognized US mainstream newspapers. It is notable for its influence on the content of other mass media and coverage of international news (Gitlin, 1980). Its daily circulation was 410,562 copies in 2020 and the readership demographics indicate that most of the paper's international readers come from other English-speaking countries like Canada and Australia (Pengue, 2021). *The Guardian*, founded in Manchester in 1821 and now published in London, has a reputation for comprehensive coverage of international affairs (Mody, 2014) and being the organ of the UK liberal and left-wing middle class (Ayerst, 1971). Statistics indicate *The Guardian* sold an average of 105,134 copies each day and has a 129 million monthly readership (Tobitt, 2021). Consequently, language used concerning the NSL in the Chinese press provides a direct comparison and contrast with that in the Anglo-American press because *China Daily* "plays a unique role in creating China's national image and in articulating the Chinese government's politics" (Li, 2010, p. 3445), while *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* are two popular news outlets

Table 1 Data description of the two corpora.

	China Daily (CD)	Anglo-American media (AA)	
		The Guardian	The New York Times
Number of texts	256	85	94
Tokens	121,123	68,886	96,561
Total	121,123	165,447	

in the US and the UK which are characterized by their liberal stance and market-driven reporting characters (McQuail, 1987).

All the news texts were collected and examined from May 22, 2020, to July 6, 2020. The period from May 22 to June 29 represents the time when there were some original hints of the establishment of the legislation, while the period from June 30 to July 6 is the peak coverage volume of news reports concerning the NSL.

The data were gathered by accessing the online archives of the LexisNexis database, using the key search word "Hong Kong National Security Law". Then the two corpora were built after some impertinent information was manually eliminated such as the copyright, load date and publisher. In accordance with analytical relevance, some news texts were also excluded in which the NSL was not the primary topic. Table 1 shows the word counts of the two corpora.

Research design. *Wmatrix* (Rayson, 2009) and *ConcGram 1.0* (Greaves, 2009) are employed to search for statistical information in CD and AA. *Wmatrix* yields quantitative information regarding the key semantic categories by applying the keyness calculation to tag keyword lists. The semantic category tags are assigned to a corpus based on the USAS tagger described in Rayson et al. (2004). The USAS system has been effectively used when the goal is to compare two texts against one another (Potts and Baker, 2012). Another Computer tool *ConcGram 1.0*, a phraseology search engine, is able to extract recurrent concgrams automatically in a text or a corpus. According to Cheng et al. (2006, p. 414), a concgram is defined as "all of the permutations of constituency variation (e.g. AB and A*B) and positional variation (e.g. AB and BA) generated by the association of two or more words". Cheng (2007) points out that concgrams can determine the phraseological profile of the language contained within a text or a corpus, which is linked to the "aboutness" of a text (Phillips, 1983, 1989).

As the first step, a key semantic category analysis was conducted to generate the most frequent key semantic categories in both corpora. Given the genre of the study corpora of the present study is news reports, the reference corpus we choose is NOW corpus (News on the Web) which is about 200 million during the time span of May 22, 2020 to July 6, 2020 when the two study corpora were built. NOW corpus grows by about 180–200 million words of data each month and is a user-friendly resource developed by Professor Mark Davies from Brigham Young University (https://corpus.byu.edu/now/). The study corpora CD and AA were compared to the reference corpus NOW corpus separately to generate frequent key semantic categories and keywords.

To ensure a level of statistical significance, individual semantic tags with frequencies greater than five and log-likelihood values higher than 10.83 (99.9th percentile; 0.1% level; $p < 0.001$) were only considered. Considering statistical significance values are not reliable and even misleading measures of keyness (Gabrielatos, 2018), key semantic categories were also generated by the effect

size metric. Thence, it provided a sounder basis for filtering the key semantic categories by combining the metrics of a log-likelihood cut-off and an effect size. It is noticeable that key semantic categories including G category (Government & Public), S category (Social Actions, States & Processes), T category (Time) and A category (General & Abstract Terms) are prominent themes in both CD and AA filtered by the two metrics. The log-likelihood values in Table 2 suggest that words in the four prominent categories have more significant relative frequencies in both CD and AA; similarly, the log-ratio values reveal that the key semantic categories occupy much space in both CD and AA.

Secondly, the prominent key semantic categories with their keywords in each corpus were examined in order to establish a frame that has mainly been employed in the representation of the NSL for Hong Kong. The process of this step was facilitated by concordance analysis of keywords which may help diagnose central ideas around which the frame is constructed. Due to the wide categorization of the keywords into semantic categories generated by *Wmatrix*, we framed keywords into four functions (see Table 3) by narrowing shared attributes-characterizing keywords as similar or related (Duguid, 2010). This is directed by the functionality of framing highlighted by the work of Entman (1993, p. 52) who posits that "to 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".

The third step consisted in utilizing *ConcGram 1.0* to generate concgrams (Table 4) in order to group related patterns into four functions of framing (Table 3) as a supplement to the keywords. Because some frequent two-word concgrams are found always in the combination of three-word concgrams after concordance examination, these two-word concgrams are written as three words. For example, the three-word concgram *national security law*, the term under discussion, is the combination of the frequent two-word concgram *national/security* and *law/security*. The two-word concgram *Hong Kong/said* is also found indicative of *Evaluation* upon concordance examination.

Finally, we traced journalistic framing of the NSL by employing Sinclair's (2004) five categories of co-selection as the framework and conducting the phraseological analysis of the keywords and concgrams, in order to deductively disclose the way in which the NSL is framed within China's and Anglo-American press. Moreover, different media representations associated with the NSL are discussed by examining the newly politicized Hong Kong in different socio-political practices and geopolitical tensions between China and the West.

Findings and discussion

This study is the first to compare the extent to which China's NSL for Hong Kong has been reported in wide divergent views in the Chinese and the Anglo-American press since it took effect in 2020. The analysis deductively disclosed the four functions of framing: politics and law, protests and crime, action and future, and evaluation.

Politics and law. This function is concerned with the extent to which political significance and legal acts are involved in the representations of China's NSL Hong Kong. The frequent shared concgram *national security law*, occurring 558 times (0.46%) in CD and 264 times (0.16%) in AA, suggests that CD is more focused on publicizing the concept of the NSL. In CD, the consistent pattern of co-selections by colligation of verbs, nouns and adjectives such as *protect/protects/protecting/protected* (21), *tailor/tailoring/tailored/tailor-made* (9), *peace/peaceful* (6), *necessary* (5)

and so on (see Fig. 1), provides evidence that CD represents the NSL as a well-tailored law that aims to facilitate Hong Kong's stability and order, with a particular emphasis on its far-reaching political significance. The sample concordances demonstrate that the NSL can safeguard national security and protect human rights by addressing the current loopholes in the city's legal system.

By contrast, AA suggests that the NSL is represented as a controversial and troublesome problem, as evidenced by its frequent collocates such as *sweeping* (11), *draconian* (5), *controversial* (5), *looming* (2) and etc. Thus, the NSL is symbolized as a formidable barrier against Hong Kong's freedom, democracy and autonomy, as Extract (1) exemplifies.

(1) *The Guardian*, July 1, 2020
That was, unquestionably, Beijing's aim in imposing the *draconian* National Security Law after a year of protests.
AA is also found to prefer such keywords as *push* (50 times, 0.03%), *move* (187 times, 0.11%) and *breach* (25 times, 0.02%). The most frequent lexical collocates of both *push* and *move* are *China's* (20), *Beijing's* (15), *Mr. Xi's* (4), *the party's* (2), suggesting that AA represents the NSL primarily in terms of China's strategic move over Hong Kong and as a further step of Beijing's growing encroachment to diminish the "One Country, Two Systems" to "One Country, One System" (van Wingerden, 2022).
AA is also noted for its preference for keyword *breach*. An examination of its contextual uses shows *breach* is in the strong collocation of "*breach of* + *objective*", in which the objective is mainly realized by *Sino-British joint declaration*, *China's international obligations* and etc. in 76% (19 out of 25) of the instances.
Based on the above analysis, we can conclude that CD frames the NSL as a beneficial law tailored to Hong Kong's stability, while AA tends to frame it as China's political scheme over Hong Kong and a breach of commitments. Their competing ways of framing this issue are in a position to corroborate the observations that the NSL will continue to be a bone of contention among all the concerned parties (Lo, 2021).
Another shared lexical keyword *government* occurs 611 times in CD and 456 times in AA. It's observed that *central government*, *Chinese government* and *Hong Kong government* are frequent shared patterns. The *central government* is used to refer to the government in the Chinese mainland, but *Chinese government* and *Hong Kong government* tend to have different referents in CD and AA, as Extract (2) and (3) indicate.

(2) *China Daily*, June 1, 2020
The implications of the NPC decision are that the Chinese government, including the central and SAR governments, will address the issues of national security in Hong Kong openly and formally.

(3) *The New York Times*, May 29, 2020
"It's the beginning of the end", said Michael Mo, a protest organizer and local official. The Chinese government's plan to impose security laws on Hong Kong that could curtail the city's civil liberties has left the freewheeling and decentralized opposition movement seeking not only a next move, but a new vision.
As Extract (2) demonstrates, *China Daily* accentuates that the Chinese government consists of the central government in the Chinese mainland and the SAR government in Hong Kong and that the enactment of the NSL is the joint decision and effort of the two sides. In this context, the undertone of sovereignty and territorial integrity is created. By contrast, *The New York Times* represents the NSL as

Table 2 Statistical information for key semantic categories.

Semantic categories	Relative frequency in CD per 100,000 words	% in CD	Relative frequency in AA per 100,000 words	% in AA	CD		AA	
					Log-likelihood	Log ratio	Log-likelihood	Log ratio
G: Government & the Public	833.04	0.83	1026.31	1.03	2121.00	3.31	3356.52	3.37
S: Social Actions, States & Processes	443.35	0.44	73.14	0.07	906.27	2.79	143.13	2.27
T: Time	373.17	0.37	478.70	0.48	153.90	1.01	410.64	1.34
A: General & Abstract Terms	181.63	0.18	15.11	0.02	654.72	4.59	57.51	3.87

Table 3 Keywords and concgrams for the identified functions in CD and AA.

		Definition: Politics and Law	Cause: Protests and Crime	Treatment: Action and Future	Evaluation
CD	keywords	government (5.04), NPC (1.23), legal (2.08), interference (0.67)	protests (0.61), protesters(0.37), extradition (0.22)	safeguard (1.40), protect (0.80), future (0.45), sanctions (0.99)	support (1.53), improve (0.43), important (0.29), necessary (0.45)
	concgrams	national security law (4.61), "One Country, Two Systems" (3.10)	N/A	N/A	Hong Kong/said (3.58)
AA	keywords	government (2.76), push (0.30), move (1.13), breach (0.15), Communist (1.26), Xi's (0.12), legal (0.71)	protests (2.55), protesters (2.20), movement (0.97), demonstrations (0.42), dissent (0.46), extradition (0.36)	help (0.29), bring (0.25), likely (0.42), future (0.53), sanctions (0.45)	criticism (0.27), concerns (0.36), condemnation (0.14), accused (0.21), denounced (0.13), sweeping (0.38)
	concgrams	national security law (1.60), "One Country, Two Systems" (0.61)	N/A	N/A	Hong Kong/said (2.48)

The numbers are the normalized frequencies (×1000).

Table 4 The top 10 most frequently occurring two-word concgrams in CD and AA.

CD			AA		
No.	**Concgrams**	**Frequency**	**No.**	**Concgrams**	**Frequency**
1	national/security	1869	1	national/security	798
2	law/security	843	2	Hong Kong/law	587
3	law/national	838	3	law/security	527
4	Hong Kong/security	762	4	Hong Kong/security	502
5	Hong Kong/law	747	5	China/Hong Kong	464
6	Hong Kong/national	747	6	Hong Kong/said	410
7	Hong Kong/said	434	7	law/national	335
8	Basic/law	356	8	Hong Kong/national	317
9	legislation/security	356	9	as/Hong Kong	314
10	legislation/national	351	10	law/new	299

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1    asizing national security and strictly enacting a national security law are ultimately to better protect human rights," he
2    have independent sovereignty, are protected by a national security law. Among them, the US has the most complicated and c
3    tand the uproar, given that most countries have a national security law. It's designed to protect the country and its citi
4    to the NPC, who is also a lawyer, said enacting a national security law in the city would finally close the loophole. Chan
5    nable" to address current loopholes in the city's national security law. This weak link in national security has plunged H
6    ommittee, on Thursday discussed the newly enacted national security law in Hong Kong, which is aimed at plugging a loophole
7     security and territorial integrity by enacting a national security law according to Article 23 of the Basic Law. Yet more
8     we need to put so much effort into formulating a national security law tailor-made for Hong Kong?" And as he said, it als
9    ong's freedom and autonomy as it moved to enact a national security law for the special administrative region. "Pretty muc
10    ted on the mainland, we chose not to. Tailoring a national security law for Hong Kong is the most moderate and fundamental
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Fig. 1 Sample concordance lines for *national security law* in CD.

imposed solely by the Chinese government, more specifically referring to the central government.

Another shared frequent lexical keyword is *legal*. In CD, the most frequent lexical collocates of *legal* (252 times, 0.21%) are *system/systems* (98), *loophole/loopholes* (28), *framework* (12), *rights* (7) and so on, while in AA, *legal* (118 times, 0.07%) is frequently followed by *system* (26), *experts* (22), *framework* (5), *maneuver* (4), etc. Therefore, the cumulative effect of the above-mentioned lexical patterns produces a strong semantic preference of "legal system" in both CD and AA. CD is noted for framing the NSL as a legitimate tool to close legal loopholes highlighted by a spate of violent protests that quickly scaled up into an anti-government movement; AA emphasizes that the NSL would pose a grave threat to the basis of Hong Kong's legal system, independent judiciary and the rule of law.

Another frequent pattern under the politics and law function is the constitutional principle "One Country, Two Systems" with 375 occurrences (0.31%) in CD and 101 occurrences (0.06%) in AA. Given its strategic importance, it's under extensive discussion in both corpora. However, CD and AA differ significantly in interpreting this guideline under the specific legal framework of the NSL. In other words, the two corpora have competing representations over whether the NSL would strengthen or weaken the "One Country, Two Systems" principle. Two telling examples are as follows.

(4) *China Daily*, May 23, 2020

…ongoing national legislative session's deliberations on Hong Kong are "an imperative move" to fix the legal loopholes in Hong Kong concerning national security. A spokesperson for the office said in a statement that the deliberations are fundamental to *safeguarding* the "one country, two systems" principle.

(5) *The Guardian*, June 30, 2020

Lord Patten, the last British governor of Hong Kong, said: "This decision, which rides roughshod over Hong Kong's elected legislature, marks the *end* of 'one country, two systems'…".

As Extract (4) and (5) suggest, CD contends that the NSL will strengthen the implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" principle while AA condemns the Chinese mainland for promulgating the NSL and views it as the end of this principle.

It is also noteworthy that both media evince interest in the concerned parties in the formulation procedure of the NSL, with CD focusing on *NPC* (149 times, 0.12%), the abbreviation of National People's Congress, China's top legislature, and AA on *Communist* (208 times, 0.13%) and *Xi's* (19 times, 0.01%). A further reading of the concordance lines of *NPC* found that *NPC* often exists within the context of the NSL as a supportive top legislature which is noted for collocates of *safeguard* (3), *necessary* (3), *support/supporting* (3), *resolution* (2), *endorse/endorsement* (2), *close loophole* (2), etc. Furthermore, special emphasis is also placed on the legislative procedure, as evidenced by expressions including *draft/drafts/drafting/drafted* (16), *deliberate/deliberation/deliberations* (6), *submitted* (5), *review* (5), *formulate/formulated* (3), *advance* (1), *finalized* (1) and so on. In this regard, both of the aforementioned consistent patterns of co-selection of *NPC* serve to construct the semantic prosody of NPC's role to the NSL as "responsible, capable and widely recognized", as the following extract indicates.

(6) *China Daily*, June 9, 2020

…more than 130 suggestions from Hong Kong's NPC deputies and CPPCC National Committee members had been submitted to the central government's liaison office in the special administrative region. The office said all the proposals will be submitted to the NPC Standing Committee for reference when drafting the legislation.

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 1    estions about China's authoritarian regime."   A Communist Party meeting in October floated a vague proposal ↵
 2    upport the aggressive expansionism of the Chinese Communist party," the letter added. The letter stressed that↵
 3    "escape the dictatorial rule of the CCP [Chinese Communist party]" when she was 15. "The Communist party is n↵
 4    s - to describe their sentiment. "As the Chinese Communist party bulldozes 'one country, two systems' to impo↵
 5    feel glad that we finally forced the CCP [Chinese Communist party] to unveil its true evil side" - Fung, 25,pr↵
 6    with our allies and partners against the Chinese Communist party's coercive bullying tactics," Pompeo said in↵
 7    ce officers, hoisted signs denouncing the Chinese Communist Party and sang "Glory to Hongkong," the unoffici↵
 8    ismissed by most Hongkong people. Yet the Chinese Communist Party's propaganda machine rolls on, offering a f↵
 9    ve by Beijing has prompted fears that the Chinese Communist Party is willing to overstep freedoms that were pr↵
10    United Nations and European Union to condemn the Communist Party. Many protesters welcomed the United States ↵
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Fig. 2 Sample concordance lines for *Communist* in AA.

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 1    all appearances, has done little to moderate Mr. Xi's actions. It may even have emboldened them, as Chin↵
 2    or even greater tensions in the months ahead. Mr. Xi's attempts to rein in dissent in Hong Kong have only↵
 3    people of Hong Kong that is at stake here. If Mr. Xi's calculus is borne out and he weathers the outcry o↵
 4    ai, or expressing one's position -- to uphold Mr. Xi's decisions to sideline political opponents and to t↵
 5    administration and other governments, showing Mr. Xi's determination to remake the territory on his autho↵
 6    itimacy. Chinese government propaganda, under Mr. Xi's direct control, has increasingly indicated the cha↵
 7    n speech.   The move on Hong Kong aligns with Mr. Xi's forceful vision of a ''great rejuvenation of the C↵
 8    Trump administration officials also denounced Mr. Xi's gambit, warning that they could reconsider the ter↵
 9    ying to the cause of democracy and condemning Mr. Xi's increasingly authoritarian impulses.   ''The USA c↵
10    n officials of having a Cold War mentality.   Mr. Xi's move against Hong Kong has nonviolent echoes of Pr↵
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Fig. 3 Sample concordance lines for *Xi's* in AA.

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 1    Chan said that due to continued chaos and violent protests in Hong Kong, it is "important, necessary, legitim↵
 2    was hard battered by months-long anti-government protests, businesses and people in the city suffered. "The ↵
 3    central authorities in light of the often-violent protests that have hit Hong Kong for almost a year. Chief E↵
 4    loopholes were highlighted by a spate of violent protests since June that quickly morphed into an anti-gover↵
 5    egal gaps were highlighted by a series of violent protests since June that quickly turned into an anti-govern↵
 6    this as the break of dawn. The incessant violent protests have taken a heavy toll on the city, pushing the c↵
 7    fter the city endured prolonged and often-violent protests since June, which soon morphed into an anti-govern↵
 8    future of the region. Wang pointed to the violent protests organized by "Hong Kong independence" elements sin↵
 9    y have strongly condemned violence during illegal protests Sunday. Police Commissioner Chris Tang Ping-keung ↵
10    nd five seizures of firearms and ammunition since protests began in June last year. The draft legislation "wi↵
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Fig. 4 Sample concordance lines for *protests* in CD.

CD tends to accentuate that suggestions of Hong Kong's NPC deputies had been collected and would be taken into careful consideration when drafting the legislation. This emphasis is in high consistency with the aforementioned argument that the NSL is enacted through joint efforts and thorough discussion of both the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong.

By contrast, the most frequent lexical collocates of *Communist* in AA are *propaganda* (3), *authoritarian* (3), *criticism* (3), *undermining the freedoms* (2), *undermine the civil liberties* (2) and so on in 39.90% (83 out of 208) of the instances, suggesting that AA provides solid evidence on the authoritarian Communist Party's decision to introduce the NSL which is internationally criticized (see Fig. 2).

Another keyword associated with the formulation procedures in AA is *Xi's* (19 times, 0.01%), which is found to collocate to the right at $N+1$ or $N+2$ or $N+3$ with *attempts*, *actions*, *decisions*, *regime*, etc. in 73.68% (14 out of 19) of the instances (see Fig. 3). In this regard, the enactment of the NSL is constructed as Xi's decision. This is congruent with what Lampton (2015) observes that Xi has the drive to consolidate his personal power over both internal and external issues.

CD is also noted for its preference for keyword *interference*. Among the 81 cases examined, frequent collocates of *interference* include *external* (22), *foreign* (25), and so on at $N-1$ in 71.60% (58 out of 81) of the instances. Since the escalating separatism in Hong Kong is partly seen as a result of overt collusion with external forces, it is observed that CD aims to condemn and denounce external intervention in China's internal affairs by implementing the NSL. This is also consistent with what Zeng and Zhang (2020) note that Hong Kong's social unrest in 2019 is a riot instigated by both local separatists and foreign forces.

To briefly sum up, CD represents the NSL as a necessary legal tool to fix the existent loopholes so as to refine Hong Kong's legal framework and strengthen the "One Country, Two Systems" principle; special focus is also placed on rejecting and denouncing foreign interference. By contrast, AA defines the NSL as a political move by the Chinese government, more specifically, by the Communist Party and the Chinese president, and a threat to Hong Kong's legal system and democracy.

Protests and crime. This function is identified by the extent to which protests and criminal activities are involved in the media representations of the NSL. Since the enactment of the NSL is a response to the 2019 governance crisis in Hong Kong (Zhu, 2021a), i.e. the anti-government protests that were unprecedented

in terms of both scale and fierceness (Wang and Ma, 2021), we deem it necessary and worthwhile to examine the use of *protests* and *protesters* in CD and AA as cause function. Figure 4 shows some sample concordance lines for *protests* in CD.

With 74 occurrences, *protests* (74 times, 0.06%) in CD highlight the unprecedented level of violence of the 2019 protests. This is due to its consistent pattern of co-selections such as *violent/violence* (38), *unrest* (4), *suffered* (3), *subverted* (3), *chaos* (3), *blatant* (2), *threat/threats* (2), *brutality/brutally* (2) and so on in 82.4% (61 out of 74) of the instances, which carries a strong negative meaning of "disastrous and unlawful".

For the keyword *protesters* with 45 occurrences (0.04%), it has a strong tendency to collocate with *N*−1 to form patterns such as *radical protesters*, *violent protesters,* and *anti-government protesters* 21 times (46.7%). It is also noteworthy that CD places a particular emphasis on the protesters' illegal activities such as vandalism, smashing shops, starting fires, and so on, as the following extract suggests.

(7) *China Daily*, May 25, 2020
This reflects the widespread concern among most Hong Kong people who are disgusted by violence, separatism and foreign intervention over the past year, said Lam. Since last June, Hong Kong has suffered extensive violence and vandalism caused by *anti-government protesters*.

AA is noted for its strong preference for the keywords *protests* (422 times, 0.26%) and *protesters* (364 times, 0.22%), suggesting that AA assigns more priority in the crime and protest function than CD. It is found that 31.8% (134 out of 422) of the cases of *protests* indicate that the protests are oppressed and restricted because they are often colligationally preceded or followed by verbs such as *arrest/arrests/arrested/arresting* (16), *quash/quashed/quashing* (11), *stop/stopping/stopped* (8), *suppress/suppressed/suppressing* (6), etc. In this context, AA constructs that the Chinese mainland is no more patient with the month-long protests so it decides to deploy the NSL as a weapon to suppress this pro-democracy movement, as the following extract demonstrates.

(8) *The New York Times*, July 1, 2020
When the demonstrations returned to the streets this month, the police appeared more determined than last year to *quash* the *protests* and better equipped to do so.

In AA, *movement* (160 times, 0.10%) and *demonstrations* (70 times, 0.04%) are another two naming strategies for the 2019 protests in Hong Kong. *Movement* tends to collocate with *protest* (56), *pro-democracy* (36), *Umbrella* (18), *democracy* (13), and so on in 83.75% (134 out of 160) of the instances; *demonstrations* are preceded by *pro-democracy* (8), *anti-government* (4) and so on in 44.29% (31 out of 70) of the instances. This finding reconfirms what has been discussed for *protests*. It's also noteworthy that the Umbrella movement, a social movement calling for "real universal suffrage" in Hong Kong in 2014, is mentioned here as a predecessor of the 2019 protests, as suggested in the following extract.

(9) *The Guardian*, June 9, 2020
In retrospect, it was the moment when many Hong Kongers started to believe that polite protest would not work. For people like Jay, the umbrella movement has been a useful example of what not to do…Those had charismatic leaders; these are leaderless and decentralized…Those were committed to polite civil disobedience; these are more radical, and at times violent. Above all, the umbrella movement fractured quickly, while this time—despite all the government's efforts to split the movement—people have stayed unified.

Extract (9) makes a comparison between the Umbrella movement and the 2019 protests and concludes that the latter is more resilient and resistant to the government's crackdown for its unprecedented scale and fierceness. However, AA is not condemning this movement for being violent. Instead, it is only interpreting why the government finds it more difficult to suppress 2019 protests.

Furthermore, regarding the 364 instances of *protesters* examined in AA, 97.8% (356 out of 364) of them are represented as "political dissidents" who disagree with the government, call for "Hong Kong independence" and thus are arrested under the NSL. One telling example is shown in Extract (10).

(10) *The Guardian*, June 9, 2020
In August, protesters paralyzed the airport, forcing thousands of flights to be canceled as police began to use live rounds. On 1 October, China's national day, a police officer shot a 21-year-old student in the chest, while across town, a middle-aged man arguing with protesters was set on fire.

AA is noted for not denouncing or condemning the protesters. Instead, it tends to construct the protesters as pro-democracy fighters despite sometimes being radical, which is congruent with the above-mentioned Umbrella movement-related analysis. The 2019 protests in Hong Kong discussed above were evoked by a proposal of amendments to extradition laws aimed at establishing a system for case-to-case fugitive transfers between Hong Kong and regions with which it had not already had agreements including the Chinese mainland (Ku, 2020). In this sense, the extradition law is likely to be seen as a catalyst for the NSL as well.

With 27 occurrences in CD and 60 occurrences in AA, the keyword *extradition* collocates with *triggered by* (7), *unrest* (6) and so on in 74.07% (20 out of 27) of the instances in CD, and with *protest* (10), *sparkled by* (4), etc. in 41.67% (25 out of 60) of the instances in AA, suggesting that the protests were evoked by the extradition law. However, they differ remarkably in their respective ways of interpreting it as a catalyst for the NSL, as demonstrated in the following two excerpts.

(11) *China Daily*, June 18, 2020
…the mayhem committed by the violent demonstrators since the middle of last year (2019), due to the opposition camp's hostility toward the now withdrawn amendment to the SAR's extradition law, have exposed Hong Kong's administrative and statutory drawbacks.

(12) *The Guardian*, June 9, 2020

Even after these ominous moves, the news of the national security law was shattering. "If the extradition bill was a rifle aimed at our rights, the national security legislation is a machine gun," Lai wrote.

The two telling examples above clearly suggest the disparity in the two media's representations. While CD suggests the extradition law incident strongly reveals some existing loopholes of Hong Kong's administration, AA uses rifles and machine guns as two metaphors to accentuate the potential risks and serious repercussions of the NSL.

Based on the analysis of *protests*, *protesters* and *extradition*, it is found that the AA tends to emphasize that in the face of the NSL, pro-democracy protests are suppressed and free speech is cracked down while CD underscores the unlawfulness of the protests and protesters to justify and rationalize the NSL.

Another salient keyword under the protests and crime function in AA is *dissent* with 76 occurrences (0.05%). The most frequent

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1    caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong caused shares to fall in Asia and in
2    ons used in mainland China to suppress and punish dissent will be applied in Hong Kong, where authorities ul
3    sing a draconian law which can be used to silence dissent in Hong Kong and infringe on freedoms" said France
4    ommunist Party's record of abuses when faced with dissent from its rule, such as the Tiananmen Square massac
5    ving authorities sweeping powers to crack down on dissent and allowing China new levels of control over Hong
6    rs believe the law will be used broadly to stifle dissent. "The passing of the national security law is a pa
7    s the security law could be used to crack down on dissent in Hong Kong. More than 370 people were arrested i
8    vaguely defined offences routinely used to punish dissent on the mainland. The intent of the law was made cl
9    up for life, for peacefully expressing political dissent. It appears to apply to anyone, whether or not the
10   test sign of a more aggressive effort to suppress dissent. Xu Zhangrun, who has been under house arrest, was
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Fig. 5 Sample concordance lines for *dissent* in AA.

collocates of *dissent* are *crackdown on/crack down on* (13), *silence* (2), and *punish* (2), *suppress* (1), *stifle* (1), suggesting that AA emphasizes the crackdown of dissent as a result of implementing the NSL (see Fig. 5).

Based on what has been discussed above, it can be seen that CD and AA have different or even competing representations under the protests and crime function. CD tends to accentuate the unlawfulness of the protests and the protesters, while AA suggests that protesters are leveraging their lawful rights to voice political opinions despite sometimes being radical, and underscores the NSL's daunting function of silencing dissent.

Action and future. This aspect is induced based on the expected future benefits and/or ramifications of the NSL to Hong Kong and beyond. As Table 3 demonstrates, CD and AA share the use of two keywords *future* (55 times, 0.05% in CD; 88 times, 0.05% in AA) and *sanctions* (120 times, 0.10% in CD; 74 times, 0.04% in AA) under the action and future function.

In both CD and AA, the keyword *future* tends to be preceded by a possessive form including *Hong Kong's* (10), *city's* (4), etc. in 38.18% (21 out of 55) of the instances, creating the same semantic preference of "Hong Kong's future under the NSL". However, their respective ways of constructing this "future" differ remarkably. In CD, *future* collocates with *confidence/confident* (9), *optimistic/optimism* (3), *prosperous/prosperity* (2), so on and so forth in 61.82% (34 out of 55) of the instances; while *future* in AA tends to co-occur with expressions including *question/questions/questioning* (8), *worries/worried* (4), *bleak* (3), etc. in 60.23% (53 out of 88) of the instances. Therefore, CD suggests that the NSL is bound to ease social unrest and riots and restore stability and prosperity, thereby creating a more enabling environment for economic development, whereas AA contends that the NSL would make it harder for Hong Kong people to defend their future in such an increasingly bleak situation.

In view of the shared keyword *sanctions*, it is more indicative of the differences from the following two extracts.

(13) *The Guardian*, June 27, 2020
The US senate has passed the Hong Kong Autonomy Act, which would impose sanctions on people or companies that back efforts to restrict Hong Kong's freedoms.

(14) *China Daily*, June 8, 2020
"As for foreign sanctions against Hong Kong, I can only blame that on double standards, especially compared to how the local authorities in the United States deal with riots in their own backyards," Lam added.
The former Trump administration passed the Hong Kong Autonomy Act, which is one of the major international actions against China's enactment of the NSL, as demonstrated in Extract (13). Extract (14) demonstrates China's official response to this act, with particular attention paid to "double standards", indicating that the US is not in a

position to interfere in China's internal affairs considering its incapability to respond to its domestic social riots.

In addition, *help* (47 times, 0.03%) in AA is another keyword which is also a countermeasure to help Hong Kong people after the NSL, as the following extract shows.

(15) *The Guardian*, May 28, 2020
The move, which appears in outline to stop short of giving the BN(O)s a right of abode, is a response to growing Conservative backbench pressure on the Foreign Office to do more to help Hong Kong citizens fearful that China is about to extinguish their independence and political freedoms.
In this context, AA tends to voice support and offer help for Hong Kong citizens whose legitimate rights are trampled by the NSL. Contrast to AA's focus on countermeasures against the NSL, CD lays emphasis on its possible future benefits.
The keyword *safeguard* in CD with 175 occurrences (0.14%) is found in the strong pattern of *to safeguard national security law* (147) and co-occurs with *enforcement mechanism/enforcement mechanisms* (22), *right/rights* (15), *duty* (10), *determination/determined* (9), *legal system* (8), *responsibility/responsibilities* (4), *effort/efforts* (4) and so on in 44.57% (78 out of 175) of the cases. Thus, CD accentuates that China has the fundamental right and responsibility to safeguard national security and protect every corner of its territory by enacting the NSL and that the international community must respect its sovereignty and territorial integrity.
Likewise, CD is also noted for its preference for such keywords as *protect* with 97 occurrences (0.08%), which indicates that the NSL is bound to protect national security and restore stability, as evidenced by its collocations including *protect national security* (15), *protect Hong Kong/Hong Kong's* (13), etc.
In AA, two more lexical words associated with action and future frame are *bring* (45 times, 0.03%) and *likely* (69 times, 0.04%). A reading of the concordance lines of *bring* demonstrates that *bring* tends to collocate with *change/changes* (3), *Hong Kong* (3), *catastrophe* (2) and so on, which produce a semantic preference of "political changes". It is worthwhile to note that AA tends to construct Hong Kong protesters' pursuits of political changes and demands for democracy as results of the aggressive moves of a growing authoritarian Beijing.
Likewise, the collocates of the keyword *likely*, including *end* (6), *curtail* (3), *anger* (2), *intensify* (2), *worsen* (2), etc. across 66.67% (46 out of 69) of the instances, suggests the semantic prosody of "escalating and worsening", as Extract (16) exemplifies.

(16) *The New York Times*, May 24, 2020

The new national security laws, outlined at the annual session of China's legislature on Friday, will likely *curtail* some of the civil

liberties that differentiate Hong Kong from the rest of the country.

Therefore, we come to the conclusion that CD and AA have different focuses on the NSL's future effects and their corresponding actions. CD suggests that the NSL can steer Hong Kong to a better future with greater stability, security, harmony and prosperity, whereas AA represents the bleak future of Hong Kong under the NSL. Thus, it strives to offer support to help Hong Kong people escape the grave situation.

Evaluation. This function is concerned with how moral judgments are made on the NSL. As demonstrated in Table 3, in both CD and AA, the evaluation of the NSL is undertaken either through quotation-related remarks, or direct evaluations.

The quotation-related concgram *Hong Kong/said* is indicative of the different or even competing evaluation of the NSL in CD and AA. A reading of the concordances of *Hong Kong/said* (434 times, 0.36%) in CD proves that the concgram mainly concerns "Hong Kong's potential change brought by the NSL". Among those quotation-related cases, 23.04% (100 out of 434) of the instances are uttered by Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor (45), spokesperson/spokesman (28), Zhang Xiaoming (14), John Lee Ka-chiu (7), etc. Carrie Lam is the 5th Hong Kong Chief Executive, Zhang is a deputy director of the State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, the spokesperson and spokesman mainly include government officials from the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, China's Foreign Ministry, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry and etc., and John Lee Ka-chiu is the former Secretary for Security in Hong Kong and also the 6th Hong Kong Chief Executive. Therefore, moral evaluation of the NSL is delivered by quoting the above-mentioned authorities' utterances.

Regarding the semantic prosody, the consistent patterns of co-selections of *Hong Kong/said* in CD mainly include *stable/stability* (7), *rights* (6), *safeguard* (5), *freedom/freedoms* (5), *prosperous/prosperity* (3) and so on in 45.00% (45 out of 100) of the instances. Thus, a positive image of the NSL is constructed.

In AA, addressers concerning *Hong Kong/said* (410 times, 0.25%) mainly include Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor (16), pro-democracy activists/legislators (14), Mike Pompeo (10), etc. The Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam is the most frequently occurring figure associated with *Hong Kong/said* in both corpora, but its role in AA differs notably from that in CD. In AA, Carrie Lam is solely constructed as a go-between that passes on the instructions and orders of the Chinese central government, as evidenced by Extract (17).

(17) *The New York Times*, July 1, 2020
      "The law will not affect Hong Kong's renowned judicial independence," Carrie Lam, the chief executive of Hong Kong, who serves with Beijing's blessing, said in a video speech to the United Nations Human Rights Council on

Tuesday. "It will not affect legitimate rights and freedoms of individuals".

Among those quotation-related utterances in AA, *Hong Kong/said* is also in association with pro-democracy activists and the former American Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, as the following extract indicates.

(18) *The Guardian*, July 1, 2020
      "The CCP promised Hong Kong 50 years of freedom to the Hong Kong people, and gave them only 23," said US secretary of state Mike Pompeo. Echoing the rhetoric of Beijing voiced earlier this year, Pompeo said the US would "not stand idly by while China swallows Hong Kong into its authoritarian maw".
      Pompeo deemed the NSL as a flagrant breach of China's obligations that guarantee Hong Kong's 50 years of freedom, and he contended that the US will not "stand idly by", which serves to prove that the NSL tends to exacerbate China-US tensions.
      Among the 185 cases of *support* (0.15%) in CD, 146 of them are used as nouns to form frequent lexical patterns including *voice/voices/voiced support* (14), *strong/stronger support* (10), *full support* (10), *public support* (5) and so on in 99.32% (145 out of 146) of the instances. Interestingly, CD tends to emphasize that the NSL has received understanding and support from many foreign countries, in particular, member states of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) or developing countries in the third world, as the following excerpt suggests.

(19) *China Daily*, July 4, 2020

Following support for the legislation stated on Tuesday by a representative of Cuba on behalf of 53 countries, another 20 countries have spoken at the UNHRC session to express their support for the law…A Laos representative said the country welcomes China's efforts to safeguard national security by establishing and improving national security legislation…representatives from Myanmar and Cambodia also said that passing national security legislation is within a nation's sovereign authority.

The differences in evaluation between the two corpora are also visible when conducting a colligational analysis of *criticism* (45 times, 0.03%) in AA. It is found that *criticism* is frequently in colligations including *criticism of* (20) and *criticism from* (10) in 75% (30 out of 45) of the cases, providing solid evidence that AA highlights the criticism of the NSL from both the local community and the wider world, as Fig. 6 indicates.

In addition to *criticism*, *concerns* (59 times, 0.04%) and *condemnation* (23 times, 0.02%) also suggest that the NSL has prompted profound concerns among local demonstrators and that Beijing strongly resists the so-called "foreign encroachment" on its national security irrespective of the potential international condemnation.

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1     of city's autonomy  Around this time last year, criticism was mounting in Hong Kong over a proposed bill that
2     The national security legislation drew immediate criticism from the United States. Secretary of State Mike Po
3     ol on the city. European Union governments echoed criticism of the law by Australia, Canada, the UK and US on
4     e significant operations in Hong Kong – have faced criticism from politicians including the UK foreign secretary
5     e dissidents, journalists and residents who voice criticism against their government or otherwise are accused
6     ith other nations: though the foreign secretary's criticism was muted, making it in a joint statement with his
7     hina Morning Post. The proposed law has attracted criticism from across the world. The US secretary of state,
8     from the United States and other Western powers. Criticism from the United States came instantly.  Secretary
9     pressure on both banks, which faced a barrage of criticism on social media from both Tory and Labour politici
10    he Chinese mainland," the letter stated. It drew criticism from Morgan Ortagus, the State Department spokeswo
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Fig. 6 Sample concordance lines for *criticism* in AA.

While CD fully expresses supportive attitude towards the NSL by using commendatory words such as *improve* (52 times, 0.04%), *important* (35 times, 0.03%), and *necessary* (54 times, 0.04%), the wordage in AA can suggest the opposite semantic meaning by using derogatory words like *accused* (34 times, 0.02%), *denounced* (21 times, 0.01%) and *sweeping* (62 times, 0.04%).

In conclusion, both quotation-related remarks and direct evaluations concerning the NSL in CD and AA can illustrate the differences in their evaluation. CD is noted for its preference to win the support of foreign nations, in particular, developing countries or BRI member states; AA, however, tends to highlight the condemnation from the US-led western world.

Discussion

Different media representations between the Chinese and Anglo-American press confirmed the frequent dichotomy between positive self-government support to promote NSL for Hong Kong and negative-other politicized crisis to erode Hong Kong (van Dijk, 2004). The Chinese press mainly focuses on communicating the positive impact of enacting NSL in order to strengthen the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, close legal loopholes, end violent protests, restore law and order, safeguard national security, and create a brighter future for Hong Kong. By contrast, the Anglo-American press criticizes the political move by the Chinese government to implement NSL so as to end the "One Country, Two Systems" as a breach of commitments, threaten Hong Kong's legal system, suppress pro-democracy movements, crack down on dissents, risk international condemnation, and sow fear for Hong Kong's future.

The significance of socio-political contexts cannot be over-emphasized in terms of understanding the different media representations of the NSL in both media. As suggested by Zhang and Fleming (2005), the Chinese government exerts great control over its media content. It's thus understandable that the Chinese media has hardly mentioned any dissenting voice against NSL. Nevertheless, the Anglo-American media's negative attitude towards NSL is also unsurprising given its consistency with the "anti-Chinese" ideology that has long been ingrained in their news reports (Stone and Xiao, 2007).

More to the point, Hong Kong has been serving as the frontline in the geopolitical "new cold war" situation between China and the Western countries represented by the US and UK (Toru, 2020). To this extent, China's geopolitical vision for Hong Kong through the NSL is a political strategy to speed up the process of Hong Kong's incorporation into China. However, the Western international community has assessed the NSL for Hong Kong as an illegitimate and potentially damaging act to the geopolitical balance in the Asia-Pacific region (Kwok and Donkervoort, 2021). The competing media representations associated with the NSL reveal the geopolitical tensions between China and the West.

The impact of the NSL on Hong Kong's constitutional framework of "One Country, Two Systems" principle is substantial in the new politicized Hong Kong. Critics of the NSL see it as a threat to Hong Kong's legislative framework and democratic autonomy (Yu, 2022; Lo, 2021), and even an irreversible shift from "One Country, Two Systems" toward "One Country, One System" (van Wingerden, 2022). Thus, it is perhaps more indicative of the differences between the significance of "intensifying the One Country principle" by enacting NSL to exert sovereign control and safeguard national security in the Chinese media and the risk of "blurring the boundaries of Two Systems" to threaten Hong Kong's legal system in the Anglo-American media (Yuen and Cheng, 2020, p. 131).

This study also provides divergent evaluations between the Chinese media and the Anglo-American media on the NSL which can further reflect China–US tensions in the realms of ideology, regional security, etc. Amid the context of the US-led liberal international order, the US became increasingly wary of China's potential challenge to the existent global governance architecture (Wang and Hu, 2019), especially as Beijing launched the BRI, which is designed to erode the dominance, supremacy, and hegemony of the US (Cavanna, 2019). In light of this background, the NSL is perceived as a new grave challenge by the US which tends to add fuel to the long-term and full-scale confrontation between the two nations.

Conclusion

Utilizing a corpus-driven approach to describing lexical items (Sinclair, 2004) across news texts provides an opportunity to compare different media representations between the Chinese and Anglo-American press and thus sheds light on their entrenched ideologies. This study has suggested that the two media while remaining the boundaries of truth, tend to have different focuses towards the same issue and further demonstrate ideological differences and geopolitical tensions behind the discourse.

The present study not only reflects different media representations in different aspects of this issue but also explores the entrenched positive-self presentation and negative-other presentation strategy, the socio-political factors, geopolitical implications as well as the nature of the NSL as a vehicle to influence "One Country, Two Systems" principle in Hong Kong and a new challenge to escalate China-US geopolitical tensions. The methodology of media representations associated with the NSL through a comparative corpus-driven phraseological analysis in this study provides implications for the study of linguistic turn of social issues.

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This study did not involve human participants and no informed consent was required.

Additional information

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