

UC Berkeley

UC Berkeley Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Pressing Back: The Struggle for Control over China's Journalists

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0531q579>

Author

Hassid, Jonathan

Publication Date

2010

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

Pressing Back: The Struggle for Control Over China's Journalists

by

Jonathan Henry Hassid

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Kevin O'Brien, Chair

Professor Lowell Dittmer

Professor Thomas B. Gold

Professor Todd LaPorte

Spring 2010

Pressing Back: The Struggle for Control Over China's Journalists

© 2010

by Jonathan Henry Hassid

Abstract

Pressing Back: The Struggle for Control Over China's Journalists

by

Jonathan Henry Hassid

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Kevin O'Brien, Chair

Despite operating in one of the most tightly controlled media environments in the world, Chinese journalists sometimes take extraordinary risks in exposing wrongdoing by power holders. Based on interviews with Chinese news workers and others over 14 months of fieldwork, and a computer-assisted content analysis of nearly 19,000 Chinese newspaper articles, my research examines the causes and consequences of this journalistic risk taking. In doing so, I point to a new category of oppositional behavior situated between the poles of quiescence and outright resistance. This behavior, which I term “pushback,” takes place when actors privileged by professional or traditional standing oppose the state or its policies in ways that they perceive to be within the boundaries of the permissible. These actors’ oppositional acts, however, are made with the explicit or implicit goal of pushing long-term state policy in ways that the powerful might not currently find acceptable. Although neither necessary nor sufficient to precipitate outright resistance, pushback can – under the right circumstances – be causal and predictive of later resistive acts. Even if pushback never “progresses” to explicit resistance, it can have important, long-term political effects of its own, including shifting power out of the hands of the party/state and toward journalists.

Pushback, I argue, is spurred not by the macro-scale political and economic changes in the Chinese media, but by a type of professional orientation I term “advocacy journalism.” Advocate journalists are those who view their role as advancing the development of the Chinese nation rather than either the Chinese Communist Party or Western-style press freedoms. It is ultimately these advocate journalists, who tend to be younger and better educated than average, who push back against the Party/state’s confining strictures. Though circumstances vary, they also tend to move from pushback toward overt resistance when the Party/state effects a change that disrupts their everyday lives, when there is a clear target or targets for blame, and when there is a language of moral economy to rally around. It is ultimately these journalists who are pushing the boundaries of state power and potentially reshaping the Chinese political landscape.

Table of Contents

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Controlling the Chinese Media.....	1
A Brief History of the Chinese Media	2
Research Questions.....	3
A Preview of the Argument.....	4
Chapter Two: How the Chinese Government Controls the Media.....	7
Introduction	7
Liberalization: Economic, Not Political.....	7
How the Central Government Controls the Media: First Cuts.....	8
How Beijing Controls the Media, Revised	10
Uncertainty and Organization Theory.....	11
An Uncertain Control.....	12
A Deliberate Strategy?.....	13
Future Directions	16
Conclusion.....	17
Chapter Three: Methodology and Content Analysis Results.....	18
Introduction	18
Provocative Conclusions from the Content Analysis.....	18
Site and Case Selection.....	19
Computer-assisted content analysis	21
Newspaper Sampling Methodology.....	21
Dictionary Construction	22
Dependent Variable Construction.....	23
Results – First Cuts	25
Digging Deeper – the Independent Variables.....	26
Control Variables.....	28
Digging Deeper – Regression Results	31
Results – Management.....	33
Results – Regional and Distance Differences.....	34
Results – Administrative Level.....	35
Results – Market Factors.....	36
Results – Liberal vs. Advocacy Orientation.....	36
Results – Year Differences.....	37
Conclusions.....	37
PART TWO: PUSHBACK AND BEYOND.....	39
Chapter Four – Categorizing Chinese Newspaper Journalists.....	39
Introduction	39
“Wangkites:” The American-Style Professionals	41
American-Style Journalism with Chinese Characteristics.....	42
“Throat and Tongue:” The Communist Professionals.....	45
“Guard Against Fire, Theft, and Journalists:” The Workaday Reporters	49
Representing “The People:” The Advocate Professionals	51
Why Advocacy Journalism Resonates in China	53
Conclusion.....	54
Chapter Five – Pressing Back	55

Introduction	55
What is Pushback?	55
Pushback in Context.....	58
Causes of Pushback	61
Explaining Pushback, Take 1: The Problem with Economic Determinism	61
Explaining Pushback, Take 2: Political Opportunity Structures.....	65
Explaining Pushback Take 3: China’s Professional Journalists.....	67
Advocacy Journalism and Pushback.....	67
Where Does Advocacy Journalism Come From?	69
Factors Pushing Advocacy Journalism	70
Pushback’s Effects.....	71
Conclusion.....	72
Chapter Six – Beyond Pushback	74
Introduction	74
Case One – The <i>China Youth Daily</i> Open Letters	75
Case Two – The Strike at the <i>Beijing News</i>	80
The Theoretical Payoff.....	83
Conclusion.....	87
Chapter Seven – Conclusion	88
Uncertainty – Obstacle and Opportunity.....	88
The Utility of the Pushback Concept	89
Pushback and Social Movement Theory.....	90
Why Does the CCP Allow Pushback?.....	91
From Pushback to Resistance	93
The Importance of the Professions.....	94
Corruption’s Corrosion.....	96
Advocacy’s Short Term Consequences.....	97
Advocacy’s Longer Term Consequences	98
Future Research – The Internet	99
The Internet Should Not Be Seen in Isolation	100
The Gatekeepers.....	100
Future Research – Agenda and Hypotheses.....	101
Appendices.....	103
Appendix A – List of Chinese Newspapers Analyzed, by Province.....	103
Appendix B – Newspaper Rank-Order Lists	104
Appendix C – List of Newspaper Topics Analyzed	107
Appendix D – Category Means.....	108
References.....	118

Acknowledgements

I am profoundly grateful for the time I have spent at the University of California, Berkeley in the company of so many extraordinary scholars, colleagues and friends.

A special thanks goes to Kevin O'Brien for his time, mentorship and insight on this and other projects over the years. His help has made this dissertation significantly better. I owe a tremendous debt to the other dissertation committee members, benefitting from Lowell Dittmer's wisdom and enthusiasm, Tom Gold's insights and impressive historical perspective, and Todd LaPorte's unfailing ability to see interesting similarities and differences between China and other parts of the world.

I am also grateful for help and comments from Margaret Boittin, Jennifer Brass, Zongshi Chen, Jenny Chio, Josh Chin, Julia Chuang, Dai Lu, Mark Dallas, Greg Distelhorst, Jennifer Dixon, Ashley Esarey, Eli Friedman, Steve Goldstein, Gong Wenxiang, Sam Handlin, Amanda Hassid, Min Jiang, Allison Kaufman, Jody LaPorte, Liu Xiaobiao, Peter Lorentzen, Fen Lin, Will Lowe, Eva Mok, Dann Naseemullah, Sara Newland, Elisa Oreglia, Ray Orr, Yancey Orr, Ran Jijun, Rachel Stern, Danie Stockmann, Chris Sullivan, George Tsai, Carsten Vala, Leslie Wang, Bart Watson, Susanne Wengle, Jason Wittenberg, Jakub Wrzesniewski, Suowei Xiao, Xiao Qiang, Lu Ying, and the many Chinese citizens who provided key information but asked to remain nameless.

And finally, this project was funded in part by a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Abroad Fellowship, two Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships, the China Times Cultural Foundation, support from Berkeley's Center for Chinese Studies, and grants from the UC Berkeley Graduate Division.

Portions of Chapter Two previously appeared as "Controlling the Chinese Media: An Uncertain Business," © 2008 by The Regents of the University of California. Reprinted from *Asian Survey*, Vol. 48, No. 3, pp. 414-30, by permission of the Regents.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Chapter One: Introduction

In the summer of 2008, I was having coffee with a prominent Chinese journalist for one of the country's top papers. As we were talking, she received a phone call from her boss. The news was bad; another prominent paper had scooped their story on the corrupt activities of a high-level Chinese Communist Party (CCP) official. Worse, because the other paper's story was gaining so much attention, the Central Publicity Department (CPD), the party organization in charge of media censorship, had decreed that further stories on the topic were forbidden. Weeks of hard work were suddenly useless. Far from being angry or even surprised, my friend was simply resigned. She knew further argument was useless – editors at her paper had been imprisoned in the recent past for defying the Party – and she knew there would be other opportunities to print similar stories. Ultimately she shrugged her shoulders, and we continued drinking our coffee.

This incident exposes much about the lives of Chinese journalists and the complex relationship they have with the regime. It shows that reporters must act in the shadow of the state, always calculating the risks (often high) and rewards (mostly low) of stories that are unfavorable to power holders. But more than that, it also demonstrates that some Chinese reporters are willing to pursue stories on sensitive topics, despite the real risk that they are wasting their time, or even that publication will result in fines, demotion, firing or imprisonment. What this vignette does not tell us though, is *why*. Why do knowledgeable people used to working within the state censorship apparatus every day of their professional lives decide to begin challenging their official role as CCP mouthpieces? Answering this question is the motivating force behind my research. Although this story has a somewhat unhappy ending, I have a bit of optimism about the future. The fact that there are Chinese journalists as brave as my friend has huge consequences for China and beyond. What is more, I have found that such feisty professionals are thriving and perhaps even multiplying in China, one of the more politically forbidding places on Earth.

Controlling the Chinese Media

First, a brief introduction to the Chinese media is important. All media in China are regulated by the CPD¹ and its lower level equivalents,² and by various state agencies like the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) and the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT).³ Since there are few detailed, academic studies of the CPD itself,⁴ however, it is hard to know the extent to which power is shared among the CPD, provincial and local propaganda departments, and the GAPP. Responsibility and bargaining among different levels of the media control system remains unclear, and my work concentrates

¹ The official Chinese name is the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Propaganda Department (*Zhongguo Gongchandang Zhongyang Weiyuanhui Xuanchuanbu* 中国共产党中央委员会宣传部), but the official English name was changed in 1998 from the Central Propaganda Department to the Central Publicity Department.

² Brady (2008), p13.

³ The *Xinwen Chubans Zongshu* (新闻出版总署) and *Guojia Guangbo Dianshi Dianyong Zongju* (国家广播电视电影总局), respectively.

⁴ Indeed, only Brady (2008) has attempted a full-length analysis of the CPD's workings.

mainly on how news workers react to the control regime, not the control regime itself.⁵ This regime relies heavily on inducing a climate of uncertainty about the boundaries of acceptable coverage to encourage news workers to self-censor. Because censorship is generally post-hoc, news workers do not have clear guidelines about which stories or topic areas might land them in hot water weeks or months after publication. The arbitrariness of this control regime keeps most news workers conservative in their coverage though it does create spaces that allow a few intrepid souls – mainly those I term advocate journalists – to push at the boundaries. This “regime of uncertainty” is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

A Brief History of the Chinese Media

To understand the current Chinese media environment, it is helpful to understand the context out of which it developed. During the Mao era (1949 to 1976), the state tightly controlled all media outlets, restricting not only their numbers, but also their content, length and format.⁶ From 1949 until the mid-1990s, all news providers were funded either directly by the Party/state, indirectly through a policy of forced subscriptions that kept circulation numbers artificially high, or through “back scratching” arrangements across organizations (“We’ll subscribe to your publication if you subscribe to ours”).⁷ During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), the media were especially curtailed, and entertainment options were limited to a library of “eight plays, eight songs, and three film clips.”⁸ All told, these mechanisms meant that “the vast majority of the Chinese did not even have the ability to be suspicious of the CCP’s political system, because they didn’t know that in the outside world a different, worthier life (*geng you jiazhi de shenghuo* 更有价值的生活) even existed.”⁹ Control of information was close to total.

Many aspects of the relationship between state and press began to change with Deng Xiaoping’s reforms of the late 1970s. Commercialization was allowed for the first time in the guise of advertisements and market competition, and the number of news providers and range of acceptable content both dramatically increased. For example, newspaper titles alone have risen from 188 in 1980¹⁰ to 1938 in 2007¹¹ with the number of television stations, radio stations, satellite broadcasters, etc. also proportionally increasing. As the number of news providers has soared, so have their financial resources and day-to-day independence from the government and CCP. While Mao-era journalism relied entirely on government funding, today the Chinese news business is market-driven, with advertising revenue increasing from zero at the start of the reform era to \$18 billion in 2005, or 0.78% of China’s gross domestic product.¹² The vast majority of publications in China now rely entirely on the market for funding; even semi-official papers like *Guangming Daily* (*Guangming Ribao* 光明日报) rely on commercial advertising and

⁵ The control regime is discussed mainly in Chapter Three. For this project, all Party/state decisions unless otherwise noted, are assumed to come from the CPD itself, which is after all “the most important of all organizations in the propaganda system,” (Ibid.).

⁶ He (2000)

⁷ Ashley Esarey, personal communication, 12/17/2006.

⁸ Lynch (1999), p24.

⁹ He Qinglian (2004), p4, in Chinese. My translation.

¹⁰ Chinese Academy of Social Sciences News Research Institute [Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Xinwen Yanjiusuo] (Various years).

¹¹ Ibid. (2007 edition, p600).

¹² Wang (2007), p1, quoting from Guang Xuan (2006).

joint ventures to pay for their operations.¹³ To sum up the results of a long, complicated market transition, the Chinese media are now – with an occasional notable exception – entirely commercialized. Note, however, that although funded by market mechanisms, many of these papers are still state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and private investment into media outlets is formally forbidden.

But economic liberalization has not translated into much consequent political freedom. Beijing has made clear that it will continue to exercise tight control over the news media in the short and medium term, by banning wayward publications, jailing dissident journalists and attempting to consolidate control through huge government-run conglomerates.¹⁴ Meanwhile, repression and media crackdowns continue, often publicly.¹⁵ According to Reporters without Borders' Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index, China maintained its position as the sixth least free media environment in the world, ranking only above countries like North Korea and Burma, with at least 30 reporters in prison as of November 2009.¹⁶ In short, even after decades of reform, challenging the Chinese party/state can, at times, be an experience fraught with peril for those journalists brave enough to attempt it.

Research Questions

And attempt it they do. In August 2005, for example, several letters from top *China Youth Daily* (*Zhongguo Qingnian Bao* 中国青年报) editors excoriating their superiors and party management were “accidentally” leaked onto the Internet and generated a sensation across the media world.¹⁷ In late December of that year, a group of over 100 journalists went on strike to protest the removal of Yang Bin, the editor-in-chief, by top Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials.¹⁸ And in August 2008, months after having been forced to discipline a commentator for a controversial piece, the liberal *Southern Weekend* (*Nanfang Zhoumo* 南方周末) published a new editorial by the same author urging that “openness be the rule and secrecy the exception” in government life.¹⁹ All three of these incidents – and hundreds of similar, though less visible ones – have taken place in recent years despite the often draconian Chinese media control system laid out more fully in Chapter Three.

This dissertation concentrates both on situations similar to the contentious *Southern Weekend* editorial, which is an example of what I term pushback,²⁰ and on cases of outright resistance like the aggressive open letters and media strike. I define pushback as contention that takes place when actors privileged by professional or traditional standing oppose power holders or their policies in ways that they perceive to be within the boundaries of the permissible. Pushback, although clearly on the spectrum between quiescence and rebellion, is distinct from resistance because it is neither intended nor seen as a direct challenge to power holders. I will examine pushback in theoretical context more fully in Chapter Five, and Chapter Six examines these cases of overt resistance.

¹³ Interview HH20-2. *Guangming's* financial problems have implications that will be further discussed in Chapter Six.

¹⁴ Zhao (2000).

¹⁵ See Kristof (2005).

¹⁶ Reporters sans Frontières (2009a), accessed 11/18/09.

¹⁷ Marquand (2005).

¹⁸ Gill (2005).

¹⁹ Chang Ping (长平) (2008).

²⁰ Note that for grammatical reasons when used as a noun, I term this phenomenon “pushback,” but when used as a verb it becomes the two-word verbal phrase “pushing back.”

Given China's harsh media environment then, why *do* Chinese journalists sometimes deliberately challenge the party-state despite not only the risks involved, but also after years or decades of passive acquiescence to the Chinese media control apparatus? Will these confrontations push China toward liberalizing its censorship regime or other aspects of state policy? My research explains why the notion of pushback helps answer these and other questions.

In doing so, I rely on a mixed methodological approach that allows simultaneous examination of both large-scale structural factors and nuanced individual motivations. To examine the structural factors in Chinese society that are associated with contention, I have undertaken a large-scale computer assisted content analysis of Chinese newspaper articles, with a corpus of 15.4 million words among 18,897 articles gathered from 26 Chinese newspapers. To gauge the critical individual factors that lead Chinese journalists to resist a powerful authoritarian state, I have conducted 62 interviews with current and former reporters, editors, academics and others in four Chinese cities²¹ and the United States. Together, these data provide a comprehensive picture of contention, both obvious and subtle, in one of the most tightly controlled media systems in the world. Given this context, this research provides a highly conservative, "least likely" case on which to build theory; if journalists in China can be contentious, surely there are lessons here for scholars of other, more open political systems elsewhere in the world.

A Preview of the Argument

I begin in Chapter Two by laying out a brief history of the Chinese media and the government's current media control strategies. This chapter examines previous researchers' theories of press control in the PRC and points out lacunae in each. Complementing these theories, this chapter advances the argument that a previously overlooked form of control – something I term a "regime of uncertainty" – lies at the heart of the Chinese government's press control apparatus. Although this regime is highly effective at preventing most outright journalistic resistance and continuing the day-to-day monopoly over political communication that the CCP enjoys, it paradoxically also allows pushback from journalists that reshapes the longer-term contours of the profession. This chapter, then, is critical in illuminating the world that Chinese journalists must navigate in their daily work, and in providing the background for the rest of this project. It not only advances a theoretical argument about the structure of the Chinese press control regime, but also demonstrates why the CCP's media control strategy produces pushback and, simultaneously, precludes most resistance.

Before investigating the mechanisms that encourage pushback and overt resistance, it is important to explain this project's dual methodologies, namely the content analysis and interviews. This is one task of Chapter Three. In addition to laying out the methodologies I used, Chapter Three will also provide some of the raw data and results from the content analysis. These data are interesting in their own right, and also provide a jumping off point for future research which on other issues. For example, regional differences prove an important factor in driving changes in newspaper content, but the literature has not yet attempted to explain the extent of these differences. Most interestingly, market factors – including competition – are far less correlated with aggressive reporting than professional orientation. This finding will also be discussed in Chapter Five. In this chapter I also engage more fully the literature on political

²¹ Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing, chosen to maximize variation in the Chinese media economic and political environment.

communication and point out the gaps that my research helps fill. Chapter Three completes Part One of the dissertation.

Part Two, Pushback and Beyond, begins with Chapter Four's look at the journalists themselves, and introduces my qualitative interview data. By looking at the journalists, this chapter begins to illuminate their backgrounds, thoughts and motivations. The core of this chapter introduces a typology of Chinese journalists with four professional types, American-style, communist and advocate professionals, and workaday journalists. My work in so doing engages a recent strand of political communication research that has started to disentangle the fraught meaning of "professional" for journalists.²² Media scholars like Hugo de Burgh or Chin-Chuan Lee have noticed Chinese ideas of professionalism that differ from Western models, but in general have not advanced much beyond this recognition.²³ My four-fold typology demonstrates that only one type of journalistic professionals – the advocacy journalists – tend to engage in resistive behavior, including pushback. These advocate journalists, who I estimate comprise a small but growing proportion of Chinese news workers, are the drivers of much of the behavior profiled in this dissertation. In Chapter Four, I explain the differences between the four types and begin to explain why the advocate journalists are so critical to pushing systemic change in the Chinese news media and even in the general polity. Relying on the content analysis results, I also begin to quantify the various systemic factors that influence Chinese newspaper content, demonstrating why a focus on professional ethos is so important.

Chapter Five continues the discussion about who pushes back and why. Using both qualitative and quantitative data, I examine competing explanations of resistance, mainly centering on economic drivers. This chapter also demonstrates why a purely economic approach cannot account for individual acts of pushback or resistance, despite both liberal and critical orthodoxy that holds competition and ownership structures to be crucial drivers of press content. Instead, I find that professional orientation – and especially that of the advocate journalists introduced in the previous chapter – is the main engine of challenge to power holders. This resistive behavior, in turn, may lead to long-term changes in the power dynamic of the Chinese polity, something I will draw out here and in the concluding chapters of this dissertation.

This chapter also relies on the notion of openings in the political opportunity structure to help explain why pushback occurs when it does. Advocacy journalists, motivated to change particular policies or a general policy thrust of the Chinese government, are able to sense micro-opportunities to publish sensitive articles. They are keenly attuned to timing, for a false move might get them fired or sent to prison. And journalists who push back are not generally interested in an outright challenge to the Chinese state.

For those reporters who *are* interested in overt resistance, Chapter Six offers an explanation of why and when they choose to challenge the powerful. I answer these questions in part by turning to the two cases of overt resistance mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter: an open letter severely criticizing CCP management of *China Youth Daily*, and the brief strike at the *Beijing News (Xin Jing Bao 新京报)*, both of which took place in late 2005. The published record of these cases is supplemented by my interviews with many of the major participants in both incidents, and by other written sources and interviews with other media workers. The results demonstrate that reporters who push back are likely to turn to overt resistance when they have specific types of grievances against power holders. Specifically, the journalists in these cases moved from pushback to resistance when actions by the state (or its

²² Especially the important work of Hallin and Mancini (2004).

²³ Lee (2001), Burgh (2003).

proxies) disrupted their everyday lives – what Snow, *et al* call “disruption of the quotidian,”²⁴ – when they had a clear target or targets, strong leadership, and when they were able to draw on a language of moral outrage. Moreover, although reporters closely followed changes in the political opportunity structure (POS) when pushing back, when moving toward overt resistance their behavior was no longer governed by these changes. In other words, this chapter offers a potential way to reconcile those scholars who hold that opportunities govern protest, and those who argue that grievances are equally or more important.

Although the news workers in Chapter Six have moved beyond pushback into overt resistance, this progression demonstrates the theoretical utility of the pushback concept as a causal factor in later rebellious behavior. Although neither necessary nor sufficient to predict later resistance, pushback does seem to make outright resistance more likely. Together, Chapters Five and Six address the questions at the heart of the dissertation, and help show why some reporters challenge an authoritarian CCP – even when they might feel that the CCP is, on the whole, a good steward of the Chinese polity. Chapter Six also concludes Part Two of the dissertation, which lays out the Chinese media’s system of control and the conditions under which it is challenged.

Part Three consists of two chapters, Seven and Eight, which together conclude this project. Chapter Seven sums up the empirical and theoretical contributions offered so far in the research, with special attention to the role of pushback as a unifying theme, and a stepping stone to more aggressive behavior. Chapter Eight concentrates on future directions of research, and draws out many of the theoretical implications introduced in earlier chapters. For example, there is evidence that the “regime of uncertainty” I lay out in Chapter Three as a media control mechanism has utility in analyzing other areas of the Chinese political system as well (controlling lawyers and other public professionals as well), and perhaps even helping control public challenges in other authoritarian contexts. As this concept is ultimately built on the insights of organization theory, I will argue it has far-ranging implications for scholars of authoritarianism and state control.²⁵ Chapter Eight will also lay out a research agenda for future work on pushback and proto-resistance more generally.

And finally, I point to future directions within the Chinese media itself. I do so, in part, by tracing long-term changes in the media environment created by reporters’ pushback. This chapter also delves into the Internet, which is an increasingly critical arena of social discourse ripe for further scholarly analysis. Indeed, in China the Internet is rapidly becoming the most important of the mass media, dramatically expanding the sphere of public discourse open to ordinary Chinese citizens. I introduce some preliminary comparative research illustrating the differences between the content of blogs and of traditional media sources, and I lay out a future research agenda for this ever more important part of modern life.

²⁴ Snow, Cress, et al. (1998).

²⁵ This section draws on work I have done with Rachel E. Stern.

Chapter Two: How the Chinese Government Controls the Media²⁶

Introduction

How does the Chinese Party/state manage to control an increasingly commercialized and decentralized media? As media are critically important to any modern political system, this question goes to the heart of understanding contemporary politics in the People's Republic – and there has been no shortage of proposed answers. Indeed, over the past decade or so many scholars have proposed answers ranging from monetary controls²⁷ to outright coercion.²⁸ And while these praiseworthy efforts have gone a long way toward broadening our understanding of the CCP's media control regime, all of the previous efforts have neglected a critical aspect of this regime – uncertainty.

All Chinese media are regulated, directly or indirectly, by the CPD. Because the responsibility and bargaining among different levels remains so unclear, for the purposes of this chapter all decisions, unless otherwise noted, are assumed to come from the CPD itself. And the CPD is indeed powerful, though ironically enough, one of its few consistencies is the degree of arbitrariness with which it closes publications and fires or jails editors and journalists. With its power to determine – post hoc – what is appropriate media coverage, the CPD demarcates the boundaries of the acceptable in such a deliberately fuzzy way that news workers self-censor to a critical degree. In other words, only the CPD can decide how far media workers can push against government controls without punishment. It is the very arbitrariness of this control regime that cows most journalists into more conservative coverage, but allows a few intrepid news workers space to push the boundaries and “play edge ball” (*da cabianqiu* 打擦边球).

Illuminating the CPD's use of uncertainty as a control mechanism – something I term the “regime of uncertainty” – has at least two forms of payoff. First, and most obviously, this knowledge gives us more thorough knowledge of the Chinese print media, a critical component of contemporary Chinese politics. There are tantalizing indications that the Chinese government also uses this mechanism to restrain the Internet,²⁹ and even Western survey researchers,³⁰ but these issues are outside the scope of this chapter. And second, this awareness may prompt researchers to look for other aspects of Chinese society where this type of control strategy may exist, potentially stimulating a reexamination of the role of public professionals under authoritarianism. The apparent effectiveness and efficiency of the regime of uncertainty for print media makes it likely that its existence there is not an isolated phenomenon.

Liberalization: Economic, Not Political

The Chinese press is very different from that of twenty years ago. But despite the fact that nearly all Chinese papers rely entirely on the market for readers and finance, economic

²⁶ Portions of this chapter ©2008 by The Regents of the University of California. Reprinted from *Asian Survey*, Vol. 48, No. 3, pp. 414-30, by permission of the Regents.

²⁷ E.g. Esarey (2005).

²⁸ E.g. the testimony of Frank Smyth at the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (2005) hearing, p92.

²⁹ Indeed, the executive director of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School has testified that a “lack of transparency contributes mightily to the climate of self-censorship,” *Ibid.*, p27.

³⁰ In a talk at UC Berkeley on October 5, 2009, Pierre Landry of Yale noted that his Chinese survey colleagues were specifically barred from knowing which topics might be acceptable in advance to maintain a climate of uncertainty and conservatism among academic researchers.

liberalization has not translated into much political freedom. Beijing has made clear that it will continue to exercise very tight control over the news media in the short and medium term, by banning wayward publications, jailing dissident journalists and attempting to consolidate control under huge government-run conglomerates.³¹ Meanwhile, at this writing (2010) China remains in the throes of a very public media crackdown,³² or what one blogger calls the “thorny stretch of the path.”³³

How the Central Government Controls the Media: First Cuts

So how has Beijing managed to control the media so effectively in the face of the market juggernaut? After all, newspapers have noticed that exposé style investigative reporting draws readers – and advertising money. Adventurous papers like *Southern Weekend* saw their circulation soar in the 1990s and 2000s on the strength of investigative reporting, and the 2/3rd decline in circulation the paper took after replacement of its boldest editorial staff in 2003-2004³⁴ provides solid evidence that its readership was indeed responding to its muckraking style.

More generally, one prominent scholar has claimed that “The higher the level of marketization, the greater the degree of self-liberalization. Strong market forces [have] reduced the effectiveness of government censorship of the media by multiplying the channels of production and dissemination.”³⁵ One academic goes even further, arguing that “those media which are most exposed to market competition will become free and pluralistic most rapidly.”³⁶ But in retrospect, this argument seems premature. But why? How is it that “the party obviously feels safe enough to entrust commercialized papers with the task of getting the propaganda messages across” to the extent that it is actually encouraging further commercialization?³⁷

Proposed answers to this question series tend to fall into three broad categories: monetary, legal/structural, and coercive. Beyond arguing, as the former publisher of *Beijing Youth Daily* (*Beijing Qingnian Bao*, 北京青年报) puts it, that “marketization and political orientation of the news are not incompatible,”³⁸ the monetary control theorists go further in arguing that the state actually can use marketization to its own advantage. Media scholar Ashley Esarey writes that “the state developed market incentives to encourage media to produce news that was politically acceptable and popular with consumers.”³⁹ Critically, the top managers of most papers are appointed directly by the CPD and CCP or by the local propaganda department branch, and they are typically well compensated for their efforts.⁴⁰ Further down the ladder, reporters’ pay is often “tied to the number and length of stories that are broadcast or published,” and so “journalists who fall out of favor with their superiors, or whose work is frequently censored, find themselves quickly out of the money.”⁴¹

Because reporters’ bonuses – a substantial portion of their total compensation – are linked directly to the number of stories that get published, there is a strong monetary incentive to

³¹ Zhao (2000).

³² See Kristof (2005).

³³ Quoted in Qian Gang (2009).

³⁴ Interview with a former *Southern Weekend* reporter (2005).

³⁵ Pei (1994), p155.

³⁶ Lawson (2002), p181.

³⁷ Brendebach (2005), p42.

³⁸ Quoted in Zhao (1998), p149.

³⁹ Esarey (2005), p37.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p57.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p58.

toe the party line in order to ensure publication. And in 2005 evidence emerged from *China Youth Daily* that this strategy is entirely deliberate. Soon after being appointed editor-in-chief by the CCP, Li Erliang promulgated a new policy to link workers' bonuses directly to the reception their articles received by top Chinese officials, positive or negative. After learning of the new regulations, one furious editor, Li Datong, wrote a scathing open letter to his boss which was soon "leaked" to the internet, in which he noted that if an article "makes some official unhappy," the reporter then "needs money to pay for this – a month's salary might not be enough!"⁴² And he had no illusions as to the real authors of this plan, writing that he was "not so naïve as to think that this is a product of [the new editor-in-chief's] personal will. It goes without saying that [he is] an executor [for higher level officials]."⁴³ Although this particularly heavy-handed method of monetary control was not ultimately implemented, the incident does provide telling insight into Beijing's media control regime.

This media control regime also uses legal and structural mechanisms, argue many scholars. Among the most important of these structural constraints is the fact that all media units must be subordinated to a sponsoring government unit in their geographic area. This ensures that aside from a few illegal *samizdat* style publications, there are no officially independent media outlets. Although oversight is often hands-off, the fact that sponsoring units retain ultimate responsibility over the content published by their attached news units creates a strong incentive to set appropriate boundaries. After all, few players in the Chinese bureaucracy want to invite greater scrutiny from the center.

Equally critical is the fact that top editors of most newspapers can be appointed and removed directly by the CPD and CCP Organization Department rather than by the sponsoring government unit or the newspaper itself. This creates a natural incentive for editors to feel themselves responsible not to their individual newspaper but to Beijing and the CPD. Although these papers are "commercially oriented media, they are still under the ideological leadership of the Party."⁴⁴ Ultimately this often leads to a policy of "being critical on small issues and being supportive on major issues" (*xiaoma da bangmang* 小骂大帮忙),⁴⁵ a result encouraged by at least nine specific laws and regulations.⁴⁶

In the midst of creating these highly visible and symbolic laws, meanwhile, the Party has been forcing smaller media units to consolidate. This process helps create larger, more easily monitored media conglomerates and more direct lines of structural control. Ease of control is one of the major factors in the government's drive to media concentration,⁴⁷ and "state policy is moving unmistakably toward further media consolidation."⁴⁸ These large conglomerates are often large state-owned enterprises (SOEs) or have cozy relations with the state. Structural constraints, then, remain an important piece of the puzzle.

⁴² Li Datong (李大同) (2005). Translated by Washington Post researcher Greg Distelhorst on February 18, 2006.

⁴³ Ibid. Chapter Six explores this incident in detail.

⁴⁴ Zhao (1998), p161.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p163.

⁴⁶ He Qinglian (2004), p5. These include: "Regulations Strictly Prohibiting Obscene Products" (1985), "Notice Regarding Striking Hard Against Illegal Publications" (1987), "Rules for Managing Foreign Journalists and News Bureaus" (1990), "Regulations Governing Satellite Television Receiving Equipment" (1994), "Rules Governing Audio-Visual Products" (1994), "Regulations Governing Films" (1996), "Regulations Governing Publishing" (1997), "Regulations Governing Printing" (1997), and "Regulations Governing Broadcast Television" (1997).

⁴⁷ Zhao (2000).

⁴⁸ Lee (2003), p11.

Finally, many scholars argue coercion is the last critical component of this control regime. Unlike the former Soviet Union, the Chinese press has never extensively used pre-publication censorship as its primary media control. Instead, the CCP expects newspapers and magazines to toe the party line, and those occasional publications that go too far are subject to *post facto* suppression, sometimes involving punishment of the journalists who wrote the offending articles. Frank Smyth of the Committee to Protect Journalists, a Washington-based NGO, illustrates a typical view among Western journalists and academics: “In decades past, Chinese authorities relied on censorship⁴⁹ and legal action as the main tools to silence the press, but in today's dynamic climate, the Communist Party has increasingly resorted to jailing journalists in order to silence some of the nation's most enterprising reporters.”⁵⁰ Zhou He writes that “coercion – in such forms as imprisonment, exile, purge and unemployment – has become the main means of safeguarding the supremacy of the Chinese version of Communist ideology. This is particularly true in the media.”⁵¹

But this is only part of the story. It is true that Reporters sans Frontières, a French-based NGO, claims that China has more journalists imprisoned than any other country, and ranks 168th out of 175 rated countries on press freedom.⁵² But at the same time, the jailing of thirty journalists⁵³ out of over 173,000 registered⁵⁴ represents a vanishingly small .017% of the total. Likewise, although the Chinese control regime certainly does rely on both monetary and structural restraints on the press, none of these explanations – even in combination – tells the full story.

How Beijing Controls the Media, Revised

Self-censorship, a powerful information control strategy, refers to “a set of editorial actions ranging from omission, dilution, distortion, and change of emphasis to choice of rhetorical devices by journalists, their organizations, and even the entire media community in anticipation of currying reward and avoiding punishments from the power structure.”⁵⁵ Media scholars, contentious politics theorists and others have long recognized the power of self-censorship in the Chinese press, but few have elucidated the mechanisms that make it so pervasive. Statements like “self-censorship is the major form of media control in China”⁵⁶ are common, but few reporters or academics have explored why the self-censorship regime is so effective.⁵⁷

Perry Link's article “The Anaconda in the Chandelier” provides a notable exception, pointing the way toward the importance of the regime of uncertainty in creating the proper environment to encourage self-censorship. Link terms this uncertainty “vagueness,” and writes that it “is purposeful and has been a fundamental tool in Chinese Communist censorship for

⁴⁹ Again, this is not strictly true, as even *overt* post-publication censorship was and remains relatively rare.

⁵⁰ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (2005), p92.

⁵¹ He (2003), p208.

⁵² Reporters sans Frontières (2009b), accessed 11/19/2009.

⁵³ Ibid., at <http://www.rsf.org/en-rapport57-China.html>, accessed 11/19/2009.

⁵⁴ Data obtained from the official General Administration on Press and Publication (GAPP) website at http://press.gapp.gov.cn/tongji/type_sex.php, accessed June 20, 2009.

⁵⁵ Lee (1998), p57.

⁵⁶ Chen Yali, “Statement by Chen Yali, Research Associate, Center for Defense Information, before CECC,” (Congressional Executive Commission on China, 2003).

⁵⁷ For more on the mechanisms used to induce self-censorship, see Stern and Hassid (2010).

decades.”⁵⁸ There are four principal advantages to this “vagueness:” 1) vague accusations frighten more people into changing their behavior, 2) they pressure these people to control their behavior to a greater extent, 3) they are “useful in maximizing what can be learned during forced confessions,” and 4) they allow authorities to zero in on whomever they want.⁵⁹ Of these four, all but the third are important mechanisms of the Chinese media self-censorship regime. Link convincingly and succinctly explains many of the underlying factors that encourage self-censorship, and this chapter extends his analysis through the theoretical lens of organization theory, and should provide some new analytical traction in examining the Chinese media.

Uncertainty and Organization Theory

The CPD’s power to determine what is and what is not acceptable news coverage lies at the heart of China’s effective regime of self-censorship. The CPD alone has the authority to demarcate the boundaries of acceptable coverage, and it does so in such a vague way that even professionals with decades of experience can be caught off guard by its decisions. It is this uncertainty about how far they can push coverage without facing a harsh and arbitrary punishment that keeps many reporters and editors from being too aggressive in their coverage. In other words, the uncertainty that surrounds the CPD’s post hoc decisions on specific news topics is critical to controlling news workers.

The power of uncertainty has long been recognized in the organization theory literature. Writing in 1964, French sociologist Michel Crozier analyzed the link between predictability of behavior and bargaining power. He argues that “the power of A over B depends on A’s ability to predict B’s behavior and on the uncertainty of B about A’s behavior.” He continues, “As long as the requirements of action create situations of uncertainty, the individuals who have to face them have power over those who are affected by the results of their choice.”⁶⁰ In a footnote, Crozier clarifies that this applies to relevant uncertainty only – that is, to uncertainty about actions that actually affect other groups. In other words, those with the ability to make unpredictable decisions ultimately have the power.

The CPD has just this leverage. But this regime of uncertainty does more than just constrain media outlets’ *external* behavior. Organization theorists argue an uncertain environment changes power dynamics *within* organizations as well. Following Crozier and other theorists, Pfeffer and Salancik argue that because “the source of the most important organizational uncertainty determines power within the organization,” therefore “those subunits most able to cope with the organization’s critical problems acquire power within the organization.”⁶¹ This means that those employees most likely to reduce uncertainty over the proper boundaries of coverage should gain prominence within the media outlet. The crusading founder of China’s renowned *Caijing* (*Finance* 财经) magazine, Hu Shuli, for instance, is widely reputed to have attended school with several of China’s top leaders, giving her valuable information about upcoming policy shifts.⁶² In short, those editors who know what the CPD is likely to do are the organizational winners.

⁵⁸ Link (2002)

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Crozier (1964), p158.

⁶¹ Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), p230.

⁶² Several interviewees made clear that Hu’s ties with top leaders gave her information rather than political protection. The fact that she was forced out of her *Caijing* position in 2009 reinforces this view.

In the Chinese case, these employees are likely to be the ones with closest ties to the media control apparatus – in many cases, either the very same top officials appointed by the CPD or the publication’s own internal content monitors. While these officials already have the power inherent in their position, their internal knowledge of upcoming policy shifts makes them indispensable to their organization’s success, and thus means that they are even more difficult to challenge. Indeed, those employed as internal content monitors within publications not only tend to be “the most cautious,” but also to have critical work experience with a central or local propaganda department.⁶³ This setup potentially means that the most politically reliable members of the media receive dramatically enhanced power potential relative to journalists more hostile to the aims of the Party. From the CPD’s point of view, the end result is insidiously brilliant: media units’ responses to the government-created uncertainty shift power internally toward the very people the CPD most trusts. This fact further suggests that some reporters and editors might welcome the government’s replacement of bold but unknowledgeable editors even if they supported these editors’ goals and politics because such a change would reduce their personal uncertainty levels. In short, organization theory argues that not only does uncertainty constrain media outlets’ macro behavior, but it also changes their internal dynamics in a way most helpful to the media control apparatus.⁶⁴

An Uncertain Control

And the CPD has just this power of uncertainty. Without pre-publication censorship it is often impossible for reporters to know ahead of time what will be a safe story. It is true that the CPD sends out specific briefings outlining which current topics are unacceptable, and some topics are so clearly off-limits⁶⁵ that the media know better than to attempt them. But without clear guidelines on every single topic or story, and with subtly shifting political winds, even long-time journalists can often get in trouble for stories they and their editors thought were acceptable or that had gone unnoticed in the past. “It’s something we are all aware of, we sense it, but we can’t really express it,” one veteran reporter says about which topics are allowable day-to-day,⁶⁶ though this ad hoc approach naturally fails at times. Because the CPD uses its agenda-setting power to change its standards about acceptable topics so often, a story praised yesterday or last week might get a reporter into trouble the next time it is published.

One of the best-known examples of this phenomenon is the fallout that resulted from the Sun Zhigang case in 2003. Early that year, designer Sun Zhigang, originally from Hubei province, moved to the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou to begin working for a garment company. In April 2003, Guangzhou police detained him for not carrying his temporary residence permit. While in police custody in an internal migrant detention facility, he was beaten to death by the facility’s staff members. After the aggressive *Southern Metropolis Daily* (*Nanfang Dushi Bao* 南方都市报) reported the circumstances of Sun’s death on April 25, 2003, newspapers all over the country reprinted the article in the face of a national uproar. Ultimately the pressure on the government to act was so great that the decades-old law authorizing the use

⁶³ Ashley Esarey, personal communication, 12/17/2007.

⁶⁴ In a fascinating historical parallel, Cosimo de Medici seems to have used this very strategy to control early 15th century Florence. See Padgett and Ansell (1993), p1310.

⁶⁵ Topics like Taiwanese independence, the 1989 Tiananmen massacre, etc.

⁶⁶ Pan (2000), p82.

of such internal detention facilities was repealed in what amounted to a major victory for a watchdog press.⁶⁷

This victory was temporary, however, as just a few months later police raided the *Southern Metropolis Daily* and “detained the top editor and six other officials in what many journalists regarded as retribution for aggressive reporting”⁶⁸ on this and their earlier story reporting the government’s SARS cover-up.⁶⁹ Ultimately the managing editor and one other official were sentenced to prison time for weak evidence of alleged corruption, an outcome “many journalists knew” was the result of “local officials’ retaliation for the paper’s coverage of Sun’s case.”⁷⁰ And the chilling effect was immediate: “A former editor at another popular Guangzhou-based newspaper, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal, called the arrests ‘the most serious blow to the Chinese media in the last decade.’”⁷¹ CCP appointees have replaced the *Southern Metropolis Daily*’s top staff, and the paper has never regained its prominent pre-arrest reputation.⁷²

The example of the *Southern Metropolis Daily* demonstrates how uncertainty and coercion work together to great effect. Ultimately it is not the limited coercion itself, but the central government’s vast and deliberate amplification of its effect that makes this form of control so particularly powerful. This situation is what makes Perry Link’s “anaconda in the chandelier” metaphor so apt; everyone knows the snake might strike at any minute, and the uncertainty of how and when keeps people on their toes. For the Chinese media, uncertainty is so effective in amplifying the effects of coercion that the state is able to control newspapers even with the jailing of fewer than one in five thousand reporters.⁷³

A Deliberate Strategy?

Again, to my knowledge an explicit study of the inner workings of the CPD has never been attempted,⁷⁴ and without such a study it is impossible to truly assign motives to the organization and its leaders. With this caveat, however, it is important to note that both circumstantial evidence and interview data with current and former Chinese reporters suggest this regime of uncertainty is used as a deliberate media control strategy.

One of the most powerful pieces of evidence suggesting this fact comes from discussions surrounding various proposed Chinese press laws, none of which the PRC has yet implemented. Indeed, one long-time editor, himself fired for publishing a politically unacceptable story claims a “high-level official” stated that a proposed national media law should be rejected explicitly

⁶⁷ See Hand (2006) for more on this incident.

⁶⁸ Kahn (2004).

⁶⁹ It is unclear, however, whether this crackdown was initiated by the CPD itself or by local or provincial authorities. One reporter at a sister paper claims in an interview (2007) that the crackdown was initiated at the highest levels of the provincial government, though this must surely have been with the knowledge and acquiescence of the CPD. Note, again, that without a more thorough knowledge of the CPD it is difficult to disaggregate the government’s actions and this chapter does not attempt to do so.

⁷⁰ Beach (2005).

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Several interviews with current and former print journalism reporters, including Southern Metropolis Group staff (2005).

⁷³ Part of the mechanism that makes uncertainty so effective is that public professionals like journalists create “control parables” that assign meaning to seemingly random acts of state retaliation, often blaming the victims. See Stern and Hassid (2010).

⁷⁴ Brady (2008) gives a rare and useful portrait of the CPD’s organizational structure and role, but its day-to-day workings and motives remain elusive.

“because then they [news workers] would know everything” (*shenme dou zhidao*, 什么都知道), and reporters’ uncertainty would be dramatically reduced.⁷⁵ This status quo has continued, for despite extensive discussion within the CCP and media environment over the past two decades, Beijing still has not proposed a general, comprehensive media law. And a recent series of proposed small-scale press laws, although superficially helping reporters, actually do little to clarify the boundaries of the acceptable.

For example, the National People’s Congress Standing Committee announced a draft Sudden Event Response Law in late June 2006, allowing the government to fine Chinese media outlets up to RMB 100,000 (\$12,000) for reporting “sudden events” without authorization or in a way that caused “serious consequences.” “Sudden events” are defined as “natural disasters, accidental mishaps, public health incidents, and public safety incidents,” while “serious consequences” include events that are “harmful to society, with a broad impact and are either especially significant, significant, somewhat significant or ordinary (*yi ban* 一般).”⁷⁶ Naturally this definition does little to clarify the boundaries of acceptable reporting, and explicitly includes events that have merely “ordinary” importance. Thus, while a media law would actually seem to elucidate the situation for Chinese reporters, this proposed statute does just the opposite – a fact that is surely no accident.

Indeed, in early 2007 the CPD moved to further institutionalize its regime of uncertainty by instituting a new “points-based penalty system for the print media in a stepped-up effort to tighten its grip on the sector.”⁷⁷ Although the point system was only temporary through the CCP congress later in 2007, it does provide further evidence that the CPD use of uncertainty is a deliberate control mechanism. In outline, “media outlets will be allocated 12 points each and subject to closure if all their points are deducted,” and critically, “it is not known how the severity of a wrongdoing will be determined.”⁷⁸ In other words, as usual the CPD – in this case apparently helped by its approximate state equivalent, the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) – has the post-hoc power to assign punishments to publications that break arbitrary rules and standards for conduct. Unlike even the turbid June 2006 proposed media law, this point-based system provided not even the smallest fig leaf of working for the benefit of the media outlets themselves. In fact, it appeared to be an effort to institutionalize arbitrariness. If news units cannot know in advance what is acceptable reporting, or even how many points are assigned to each infraction, all they have learned is that the CPD is likely to be even less tolerant than usual toward aggressive reporting.

Evidence for uncertainty as a deliberate strategy does not stop at proposed laws and CPD regulations, however. A former editor noted in an interview that in 2004 the CPD moved to reissue press cards for active reporters – but the reporters have to reapply, “like a test.” Because no reporter can legally work without a card,⁷⁹ this allows the government to weed out undesirable workers in a relatively discreet manner. Moreover, these new cards, unlike the old ones, have no expiration date,⁸⁰ meaning the cards can now be switched at arbitrary intervals. Now, when the press as a whole gets too aggressive, the potential always exists for the CPD to

⁷⁵ Interview with the former editor of a major paper (2005).

⁷⁶ Duan Hongqing, Ye Doudou and Wang Bing (2006).

⁷⁷ Huang (2007).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* Although admittedly this might reflect reporter ignorance more than a deliberate effort at obfuscation, the fact that “senior state media executives” have reportedly “not been given details” suggests the latter possibility.

⁷⁹ Reporters can and do work illegally without the cards, a phenomenon discussed in Chapter Four.

⁸⁰ They do not have a printed expiration date, though they do eventually expire.

recall all old press cards and purge the reporters who have angered the government.⁸¹ Therefore not only can the CPD act to fire or jail reporters who go too far on individual stories, it can also simply force reporters out of the profession forever at entirely capricious times.⁸² Such a threat increases the uncertain boundaries journalists face and has the potential to impact their behavior in the long run.

Somewhat more circumstantial evidence comes not from mainland China, but from Taiwan. From the 1950s to 1980s, Taiwan had an authoritarian government exercising firm control over its own press. In this respect, Taiwan provides a parallel with the mainland, for its later (1970s onward) system of press control was very different from the uncertainty-creating mainland media control regime. Because Taiwan is part of what is historically considered cultural China, cultural explanations are less convincing and leave government policies and media structure as primary explanations. And in Taiwan, the government was very explicit about the boundaries of acceptable reporting in the late 1970s and 80s, creating, ironically, a much bolder press.⁸³ Taiwanese magazines, especially, were often not shy about criticizing the government.⁸⁴ For example, one Taiwanese publisher even “seized on a legal loophole and applied ... for three separate licenses,” so whenever one was suspended he could move publication to one of the others.⁸⁵ This sort of behavior, though potentially “legal,” would be impossible in contemporary China. The Taiwanese government’s reliance on formal legal procedures (especially in the 1970s and 1980s) meant that newspapers and journalists knew exactly how far to push the state, knowledge that allowed them to be consistently more aggressive than is possible on the mainland. In short, the Taiwan case demonstrates that it is certainly possible to regulate media with routinized procedures in cultural China, making it more likely that the mainland’s system of fuzzy media boundaries is a deliberate control strategy.

Finally, one of the major scholars of the Chinese media – writing about much freer Hong Kong – writes:

“Self-censorship, given its huge social cost, is used as a preventative defense [by journalists]. The external pressure can be real, imagined, or both. Real pressure is exerted behind the scenes, if possible, to avoid public criticism. Imagined pressure can sometimes be more intimidating because the consequences of failing to succumb to it are ambiguous. Self-censorship is directly related to the ‘imagined boundaries’ of how tolerant China will be and what it will do in the way of reward and punishment.”⁸⁶

Even in Hong Kong, the “imagined pressure” is critical in keeping reporters from being as aggressive as they would otherwise be. It is clear that the CPD – and journalists themselves – recognize the power of uncertainty, coupled with judicious use of harsh coercion, to produce a solid regime of self-censorship, and this regime is the government’s most effective weapon in its struggle to control a media reliant on market signals.

⁸¹ The CCP employed a similar strategy in the pre-revolution days to weed out undesirable members.

⁸² Moreover, in order to reapply reporters must attend dozens of hours of study sessions on Marxism, the leading role of the CCP in Chinese society and other similar topics before their press card is supplied. These sessions thus serve not only to increase the hardship inherent in the application process, but may also have an indoctrination effect as well. See Esarey (2006), pp3-4.

⁸³ Berman (1992).

⁸⁴ Leonard (1991), (unpublished masters thesis).

⁸⁵ Lee (1994), p184.

⁸⁶ Lee (2000), p315.

Uncertainty has a flip side, as well, allowing those few journalists brave enough to challenge the system space to work between the interstices of the system. Many of these journalists are advocate professionals, a category discussed more fully in Chapter Four. Ultimately although the CPD's uncertain control keeps most journalists in line, it does allow an intrepid handful plausible deniability to work on specific issues like uncovering cases of local corruption or incompetence. Given that many topics are not outright banned in the PRC, news workers with a careful feel for of timing and a bit of political cover can publish stories frowned upon by power holders. If they do not go too far, this strategy can be effective. I draw out the implications of this behavior in later chapters.

Future Directions

It is clear that uncertainty over the limit of acceptable reporting is a major factor shaping the behavior of the Chinese press. There is circumstantial evidence too, that this uncertainty is a deliberate strategy to ensure compliance among increasingly commercialized media outlets. There are, however, many unanswered questions and avenues for future research. While this chapter develops on a control metaphor, it is perhaps equally useful to think of the regime of uncertainty as a signaling game between state and press, and indeed, the state itself should probably be further disaggregated.⁸⁷ Certainly the relationship between the state and press is dynamic – even turbulent – and thinking only of “control” may obscure this interaction effect. For example, how can journalists tell when a given topic has become “safe enough” to cover? Are there group effects among the journalistic community that create bursts of coverage – and strength in numbers – in previously off-limits areas? What are the interactions among different government agencies, and can we do more than simply “black boxing” the state? Exploring signaling between state and press may well provide an analytical handle to tackle these and other issues. This chapter is just a start, and future research would do well to explore dynamic interaction effects between government – at all levels – and media.

Researchers might also examine when, why and how this control breaks down. When, in other words, does the regime of uncertainty fail? Some elements of the press have engaged in highly visible “pushback” against state restraint in recent years,⁸⁸ a situation discussed more fully in Chapter Five. Chapter Six also suggests, for example, that both grievances and disruption of normal work routines play a role in encouraging outright resistance that moves beyond pushback. The breakdown of state control strategies, then, provides another fruitful avenue for future research to explore.

Finally this study prompts some questions outside the realm of the media. For example, is the regime of uncertainty a universal control mechanism? It certainly seems to be, with evidence emerging from contemporary Egypt⁸⁹ and Azerbaijan,⁹⁰ and, more historically, in Communist Yugoslavia⁹¹ and early modern Florence.⁹² More work is clearly needed, however, to draw out distinctions between these differing regimes of uncertainty. And how does the Chinese government use this strategy in other areas of society? What separates the control mechanisms of journalists and engineers, for example? In short, knowledge of the regime of

⁸⁷ For more on this signaling game, see Lorentzen (2008).

⁸⁸ Hassid (2008a).

⁸⁹ Black (2008).

⁹⁰ Stern and Hassid (2010), p25.

⁹¹ Drakulic (1993), p81.

⁹² Padgett and Ansell (1993)

uncertainty might cue researchers to look in other areas of China and around the world where the state potentially uses this or similar methods to constrain behavior.

Conclusion

But before any future research begins, it is helpful to recap. First, it is clear that uncertainty over the limit of acceptable reporting is a major factor in control of the Chinese press. Second, although it is not yet possible to reach a definitive conclusion, this regime of uncertainty is likely to be a deliberate strategy by the CCP. And this knowledge is important not only empirically, but also because the media are such a crucial component of the Chinese political situation, from elite politics and policy analysis (“the media ... have greatly affected CCP decision-making”⁹³) to studies of collective action among the peasantry (“even publication of a single letter or report detailing a case ... can instantly nationalize and legitimize a focus for popular action”⁹⁴).

Finally, there is a conceptual payoff as well. The Chinese party/state has stumbled upon a strategy that works well in controlling large numbers of independent actors with minimal investment. Critically, though, newspaper content is easy to monitor and hard to hide, and it is possible that activities that are much harder to accurately monitor are potentially less influenced by this control strategy. It does, however, potentially represent a way for any sufficiently authoritarian government to cheaply and easily control an increasingly decentralized society, because the proliferation of societal and market organizations outside the government’s direct oversight makes other control strategies increasingly less effective. Finally, although effective in deterring the large majority of Chinese journalists from even approaching political controversy, uncertainty does allow a small core of independence-minded media professionals to carefully maneuver around hot-button issues. The next chapters will explore why.

⁹³ Yan Jiaqi (1995), p13.

⁹⁴ Li and O'Brien (1996), p48. For a more contemporary look at rightful resistance in China, see O'Brien and Li (2006).

Chapter Three: Methodology and Content Analysis Results

Introduction

To answer the questions posed in Chapter One about which forces drive resistive behavior by Chinese news workers, this project uses a mixed-methods approach. This analysis, combining qualitative and quantitative data, aims to capture both the large-scale structural factors and individual-level norms that motivate Chinese journalists day to day. In this chapter, I lay out both approaches, starting with the quantitative analysis's most provocative conclusions, and working backwards through the technical means that produced this data. Along the way, I also detail my qualitative methodology and case site selection and demonstrate why this mixed-methods approach is desirable and appropriate for my research.

Provocative Conclusions from the Content Analysis

A startling conclusion emerges from the large-scale content analysis of Chinese newspapers detailed below: market factors have little relative influence on newspaper content, at least in the short and medium term. Instead, global, domestic and individual norms and values – and a handful of systemic factors – are far more important in shaping news stories. This conclusion flies in the face of both critical and liberal press theory,⁹⁵ and suggests it is important to turn to other theoretical frameworks that explain press content. And it suggests the importance of moving outside a Western context, as some scholars have recently suggested.⁹⁶

Although considered a relative backwater until recently, studies of the politics and organization of the Chinese news media have mushroomed over the last few years. A community of young scholars has brought new perspectives and methods to what is, after all, one of the most important areas of political economy in one of the most important countries in the world. We have recently learned much about the Chinese media's organization,⁹⁷ control,⁹⁸ ethos,⁹⁹ and content,¹⁰⁰ but there have as yet been no large-scale studies that aim to investigate causal links between these aspects. This study attempts to provide these links. With statistical techniques that can both provide the “big picture” and trace micro-level differences among reporters, I hope to engage with and broaden many of the existing strands of media scholarship.

Much of the most prominent political communication research is concerned with the effects of media content on political attitudes or behavior¹⁰¹ rather than investigating how the media content is produced in the first place.¹⁰² This study aims squarely at this second strand of media research. Yet even within this strand, the news media are sometimes seen as the “fourth branch of government” by media scholar Timothy Cook and others.¹⁰³ Although Cook has acknowledged that it is important “to avoid exaggerating the degree of homogeneity or the

⁹⁵ Two opposing strands of communication theory that both fundamentally agree that the market is the driving force of press coverage. I explicate these further below.

⁹⁶ E.g. Curran and Park (2000).

⁹⁷ Zhao (1998), Lynch (1999).

⁹⁸ Esarey (2006), Hassid (2008b).

⁹⁹ Lo, Chan and Pan (2005).

¹⁰⁰ Hassid, Oreglia and Xiao Qiang (2007), Stockmann (2007).

¹⁰¹ E.g. McCombs and Shaw (1972), Zaller (1992).

¹⁰² Although works like Shoemaker and Reese (1991) and Hallin and Mancini (2004) provide important exceptions.

¹⁰³ Cook (1998).

degree of complementarity across news outlets,”¹⁰⁴ I point to the astonishing diversity of news sources – even within a country where all media are tightly monitored and controlled by the state.

As I have hinted above, it also provides some important new conclusions. The tone of coverage, for instance, is often more important than content, especially in reports on politically sensitive topics. Surprisingly, increasing distance from Beijing is actually linked with *less* negative coverage. Equally counter-intuitively, increasing market competition has no effect on the coverage of sensitive topics, and is linked with less negative coverage as well. Meanwhile, position in the state’s administrative hierarchy – whether central or provincial/municipal – has absolutely no relationship with politically sensitive coverage or tone. Ownership and geographic region do affect coverage somewhat, but the biggest influence of all comes from the professional ethos and role perception of reporters themselves.

Expanding a bit on the role of market factors in coverage, it is clear that in the longer term, media commercialization and competition are key drivers of press change in China,¹⁰⁵ but over the short-to-medium term, individual factors are more important than systemic ones in influencing newspaper content to challenge power holders. This finding is broadly in line with “empirical studies’ difficulty in finding any significance for competition” as a driver of newspaper content elsewhere,¹⁰⁶ and echoes Chappell Lawson’s findings that although market competition was a key driver of political liberalization in the Mexican media, “the emergence of a new cohort of journalists with different norms and visions can play a potent role in transforming the media (especially the print media).”¹⁰⁷

And finally these CCA results, though quantitative in nature, are consistent with qualitative data provided by 14 months of fieldwork from 2006-2008, as described below. Extensive qualitative work and data help contextualize these quantitative results, especially those analyzing the importance of different professional styles among Chinese journalists. The methodology for both types of work is presented here, starting with the qualitative data.

Site and Case Selection

Obtaining a truly representative sample of China’s 150,000 or so journalists is impossible without the cooperation of the Chinese government, and my 62 in-depth interviews can hardly represent the entire universe of Chinese journalists. To increase generalizability, however, I selected four cities in which to conduct these interviews with an eye toward maximizing structural differences in these locales. Sekhon has convincingly argued for selection on the dependent variable (here, news workers’ resistive behavior) to allow for valid causal inference, “there must be only one possible cause of the effect of interest, the relationship between cause and effect must be deterministic, and there must be no measurement error.”¹⁰⁸ Clearly few studies can meet this high bar, and this project is no exception. However, having field sites with different levels of media commercialization and state control still allows greater probabilistic generalizability, even if it still does not allow true causal inference.

To this end, I selected four field sites with differing media environments: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing. As the national capitol and headquarters of many of China’s most prominent publications, Beijing is a natural choice. Moreover, Beijing’s media

¹⁰⁴ Cook (2006), p165.

¹⁰⁵ See Zhao (1998), Lynch (1999).

¹⁰⁶ Baker (1994), p42.

¹⁰⁷ Lawson (2002), p181.

¹⁰⁸ Sekhon (2004), p282.

market is highly commercialized, and the level of political control varies from high (during major political meetings or sessions of the National People’s Congress) to relatively low (the rest of the time). Although the phenomenon of cyclical political opening and tightening is true across China,¹⁰⁹ the level of control seems to vary most in Beijing. Shanghai was selected because it represents a curious example of a city with a highly marketized media environment that simultaneously has a very high level of media control.¹¹⁰ Many journalists concur that although commercial matters can be reported relatively freely, even relatively mundane political news is often suppressed.¹¹¹ Guangzhou is a natural choice for any study of China’s media by virtue of its status as the most politically open journalistic environment in the country. Many of China’s boldest papers (especially papers of the Southern group, but including *Guangzhou Daily* (*Guangzhou Ribao* 广州日报)) are based in Guangzhou, and it is also regarded as the cradle of China’s commercialized media.¹¹² Finally, Chongqing was selected as a more “typical” Chinese city, with relatively low levels of market competition and high state media control. Choosing Chongqing also helped make the sample more indicative of China as a whole, rather than simply rich, coastal cities.

Level of State Media Control	Level of Media Commercialization	
	High	Low
	High	Shanghai Beijing (esp. sensitive times)
Low	Beijing (“normal” times) Guangzhou	---

Table 1: Fieldwork Sites

Within these cities, I relied on my network of journalistic contacts to provide a snowball sample of news workers, concentrating especially on elite journalists or those who worked at particularly influential papers. My results are thus unlikely to be representative of all Chinese journalists, but should be a fairly robust portrait of those at the top of the profession. These interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours, with a median time of one hour, usually conducted over lunch or coffee. Most were entirely in Chinese, though some were done in English or a mix of the two languages. On several occasions I was fortunate to be invited to training sessions, conferences, or dinners not included in the interview total; these sessions were all highly informative, though necessarily informal. To protect interviewees’ confidentiality, any names used are pseudonyms.

Chapter Six, which analyzes journalists’ moves beyond pushback into unequivocally forbidden territory, is based primarily on two cases of overt journalistic resistance chosen in part on the stories’ inherent drama and in part on my access to many of the key participants. The first,

¹⁰⁹ And indeed, over longer cycles as well. See Baum (1994).

¹¹⁰ Lee, Zhou He and Yu Huang (2007) discuss this phenomenon, and contend that Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou represent the three types of party-market media relations now extant in China. Although my typology is slightly different, it agrees in broad outlines with their argument.

¹¹¹ Interviews ET02-3 and ET08-2.

¹¹² The distinction of being the birthplace of the contemporary popular “metro” paper, though, falls to Chengdu, where the *Sichuan Daily* launched the popular format in 1995 (Zhao (2008), p81).

a series of scathing open letters published by staff at *China Youth Daily*, is based primarily on Li Datong's 2006 Chinese language memoir of these events.¹¹³ This book is an invaluable insider's account of the actions, factions and tensions inside the paper over the entire length of this incident, and I supplement it with interviews and other documentary sources. The second case, that of the December 2005 strike at *The Beijing News*, is primarily based on interview data with several of the strike's participants, and is supplemented by contemporaneous English language news stories. Although neither one of these incidents is intended to be representative of resistance behavior in the entire Chinese media, together they share certain features that lend credence to my theoretical analysis, as drawn out in Chapter Six.

Computer-assisted content analysis

The qualitative side of the project relies principally on a computer-assisted content analysis (CCA), supplemented by data from secondary sources. While CCA is not a new technique, it has never before been applied on this scale to the Chinese media.¹¹⁴ The tools needed to apply electronic content analysis to Chinese text have been developed only recently, and time and budget constraints limit manual coding of newspaper content to a few hundred or at most a few thousand articles. Perhaps the biggest advantage of using a computerized content analysis is its essentially unlimited scope, restrained only by processing power and data availability. In this study, the scale of the corpus – some 15.4 million words¹¹⁵ – means that inferences to the larger Chinese newspaper market are reasonable.

While at times computer-assisted content analysis lacks the nuance of a manual content analysis, the advantages outweigh this potential loss. Chinese newspaper articles are often written in a wooden, predictable form that reduces the advantage of manual coding when compared to less stylized texts. The massive expansion in the number of analyzable newspaper articles greatly increases statistical power. And unlike a human-coded content analysis, CCA does not suffer from reliability issues. Tian and Stewart write, “The process of computer-assisted text analysis can be repeated by other researchers, and, with the fixed algorithms in the computer software, the results should be the same for any researcher with the same text,” meaning problems of inter-coder reliability are completely eliminated.¹¹⁶ In sum, CCA's advantages make it uniquely suited for a study of this type.

Newspaper Sampling Methodology

The analysis involved first selecting twenty-six newspapers with an eye toward maximizing differences in circulation, geographic region, provincial income, and level of administrative oversight. Note, however that constraints on the availability of newspaper articles and data mean these papers were not randomly selected and do not represent a true random sample of the Chinese newspaper market, something difficult or impossible for even Chinese researchers to obtain. Unfortunately, many popular papers – such as most of China's evening papers – could not be included because they either were not in the database or had limited statistical data available. The corpus includes articles from the three-year period 2004, 2005 and 2006 so as to minimize short-term temporal aberrations. A full list of newspapers is provided in

¹¹³ Li Datong (李大同) (2006).

¹¹⁴ Stockmann (2007) has done an excellent, although much smaller, CCA, and is the only other example I am aware of.

¹¹⁵ The character count would be even larger, and in total the text files comprise over 550mb of data.

¹¹⁶ Tian and Stewart (2005), p292.

Appendix A, and the corpus includes: newspapers from eleven provinces and the central government; papers with central, provincial and city level administrative rank; those among China's richest (e.g. Beijing, Shanghai) and among its poorest (e.g. Yunnan, Anhui) provincial-level areas; and papers from all of China's major regions except the northeast and far west. Appendix C lists the tested categories and Appendix D includes raw results and category means for each of the categories.

From these 26 papers, 20,477 articles were ultimately downloaded, with an aim toward obtaining approximately 900 articles per paper, or 300 per paper for each of the three years under study. Selection of articles ranged from all of those posted for a particular year to a small fraction of those available. Various technical issues reduced this number to a final article count of 18,897. These articles were downloaded entirely unsorted from the Eastview online China Core Newspaper Database, a news aggregator similar to Lexis/Nexis. This technique maximized the randomness of the data, but because Eastview apparently practices some sort of newspaper selection and article pre-filtering, it is unclear if this sample is truly random.¹¹⁷ However, the large size of the corpus and the diverse range of papers minimize any bias.¹¹⁸

Dictionary Construction

After downloading was complete, the next step was to begin building “dictionaries,” or lists of terms that are relevant to a certain topical category like sports. In all, twenty categories and twelve sub-categories were selected.¹¹⁹ In essence, a thematic CCA relies on software that counts the number of relevant terms in the sample of text to be analyzed.¹²⁰ This “dictionary” is in many ways the heart of the enterprise. A dictionary that is very short runs the risk of undercounting relevant articles and serves as a potential source of bias in the results. A dictionary that is very long, however, becomes increasingly onerous to develop, and Zipf's Law notes that adding rarely used words adds little to the validity of the results.¹²¹ Happily, recent research suggests that a middle path exists which does not require dictionaries of very large size. Jin and Wong, for example, have found that for Chinese, “a dictionary consisting of only the 500 highest frequency [words] ... produced as good a retrieval result as using a more complete dictionary with over 100,000 entries.”¹²² In short, the more than 550 terms¹²³ employed here fit the criteria for comprehensiveness.

¹¹⁷ Fen Lin, personal communication, August 17, 2007.

¹¹⁸ This technique also means that some papers ultimately had more articles downloaded than others. This imbalance does not lead to bias concerns since articles were evaluated not on the absolute number of word “hits” to a keyword list, but on these hits as a proportion of total text size. Although a small sample would indeed have a smaller absolute number of targeted words than would a large sample drawn from the same source, the proportions will not significantly differ. Moreover, for regression analysis purposes, articles were weighted by their probability of selection.

¹¹⁹ See Appendix E for a full list.

¹²⁰ See Popping (2000) for a fuller description.

¹²¹ Zipf (1935). For example, a dictionary aiming to capture articles related to magicians would do well to include words like “magic” or “illusion,” but would get little additional benefit from adding “prestidigitation” or “legerdemain.” Moreover, the advent of electronic media has greatly increased the generation of neologisms, and thus even a very large dictionary runs the risk of quickly becoming inadequate.

¹²² Jin and Wong (2002), p281.

¹²³ Plus over 20,000 more for sentiment analysis, as discussed below.

These dictionaries were mainly constructed automatically, in order both to save time and to improve results by capturing hot topics and neologisms.¹²⁴ This involved using factor analysis to cluster information by a common, underlying theme. In this case, I theorized that words semantically related to one another would appear together in the same newspaper article more often than unrelated words. For example, the words “lawyer” and “courtroom” should appear together more often than “lawyer” and “basketball.” Using factor analysis to cluster words in this way is a relatively uncommon, though not unheard-of, technique in text analysis.¹²⁵ So as not to bias the results, the factor analysis dictionary clustering was based on 250 articles that were randomly selected from the larger corpus and discarded once the categories were finished, taking no further part in the content analysis calculations. Moreover, by employing factor analysis, in a certain sense the dictionary construction process was more “objective,” with the words themselves coming from a representative sample of the newspapers, not from a preconceived *a priori* list.

After some manual cleanup to remove function words and overly general terms, these twenty categories were supplemented by extremely comprehensive (>20,000 entry) term lists of positive and negative words in Chinese developed by Taiwanese researchers at the National Taiwan University.¹²⁶ These positive and negative term lists allow a gauge of overall newspaper sentiment, albeit a relatively crude one. Finally, three lists of terms deemed sensitive by the government and used in monitoring internet content¹²⁷ were also included on the assumption that if terms were sensitive online, they were likely to be so in newspaper articles as well. These sensitive terms lists allowed a further rubric for evaluating sensitive newspaper content.

After the dictionaries were built, all newspaper articles were run separately through Yoshikoder, which is a free content analysis software tool developed by Will Lowe. Thus the unit of analysis for this portion of the project is an individual article. Proportions were used rather than raw keyword counts to eliminate bias based on differing sample size, and articles were weighted by selection probability in the regressions. The percentage of corpus words that matched dictionary terms was over 20%, though half of this (~10%) resulted from hits on the enormous “positive” and “negative” lists. Category averages, aside from the positive and negative terms lists, ranged from nearly 3% for politics overall to less than .006% for the supportive politics subcategory.

Dependent Variable Construction

After the raw results were processed, the variable (*Sensitivity*) was constructed by adding together the *Politics-Combative*, *Corruption*, *Disasters*, *Mingan* (“sensitive”), *Gaoliang* (“high level”) and *Yanjin* (“strictly prohibited”) categories. The *Politics-Combative* list comprises words associated with challenging power holders, such as articles that refer to the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. The idea of “challenging” a unitary actor like “the state” is less problematic than it first appears. O’Brien and Li (2006) point out the need to disaggregate the state, and note that it “becomes difficult to neatly separate ‘challengers’ and ‘polity

¹²⁴ Jin and Wong note that “if a dictionary were to be constructed manually, it would take months, if not years, before it could be updated. Hence it would be impossible to introduce new works in a timely fashion; yet new vocabulary appears daily... on the Internet.” Jin and Wong (2002), p283.

¹²⁵ It is, for example, briefly mentioned in a footnote in Popping (2000).

¹²⁶ The list was provided for me by Ian Johnston and Will Lowe in response to a post I made on the Content Analysis News and Discussion email listserve hosted by the University of Alabama. I am grateful for their assistance.

¹²⁷ These lists were helpfully provided by Xiao Qiang, director of Berkeley’s *China Digital Times* Project.

members,”¹²⁸ – and this analysis is certainly accurate. To a great extent, however, such “unpacking” is unnecessary here. Because Chinese media outlets are not allowed to conduct original reporting on events or people above their own administrative level, almost all “challenge” is aimed squarely at their own level of government or below. And even when challenging coverage is aimed at lower tiers, media outlets have to be very careful not to alienate powerful officials who can call in favors with higher-ups to chastise the offending publication.¹²⁹ Moreover, papers can never push things too far; even if individual stories do not challenge the state, if a paper publishes too many of them, they usually get in trouble.¹³⁰ Even when central authorities tolerate or encourage stories about low-level corruption to serve as a “fire alarm” that something is wrong, publishing too many such stories will bring heat from local or provincial officials.¹³¹ In short, a hit on the *Politics-Combative* list – such as an article referring to Taiwan’s independence movement – serves as an excellent approximation of challenging the state, at whatever level.

The Corruption category was built around words that are related to corrupt activities, one of the more consistently sensitive topics in contemporary Chinese politics. As with the “challenging the state” idea, this one needs to be broken down a bit. A case detailing how corrupt officials have been brought to justice is not necessarily bold coverage, but again, the more corruption issues are covered, the unhappier China’s press control apparatus becomes. Indeed, censors specifically read papers to see if “incidents of corruption (*tanwu fubai* 贪污腐败) are being reported too much during a specific time period.”¹³² In this sense measuring the level of coverage on corruption is a good stand-in for measuring assertive coverage directly, even if some individual cases support the state line.

The Disasters category was based around man-made and natural disaster vocabulary. Although rules and regulations governing disaster coverage have varied over the years, this too has been a consistently sensitive media topic, and indeed the state has recently suggested efforts to further discourage disaster coverage.¹³³ The May 12, 2008 Sichuan earthquake may well herald a new day in the freeness of disaster coverage in the Chinese press, but the relatively open disaster coverage in 2008 (coverage which was quickly closed off again) does not mean that such coverage would have been acceptable even two years earlier. The last three categories (Mingan, Gaoliang, and Yanjin words) were derived from lists leaked from a major Chinese blog service provider of sensitive terms. In short, the following formula was used:

$$\text{Sensitivity} = \text{Politics-Combative} + \text{Corruption} + \text{Disasters} + \text{Mingan} + \text{Gaoliang} + \text{Yanjin}$$

Finally, the variable has raw proportions ranging from 0 to .20 and falls on the exponential distribution predicted by Zipf’s Law.

Next, the ratio of negative words to total sentiment (*Negativity*) was evaluated, based on the very extensive lists of negative and positive vocabulary created by researchers at National Taiwan University. This ratio allows evaluation of the general tone of articles, whether critical or

¹²⁸ Li and O’Brien (1996), p52.

¹²⁹ Author interview (HL8-4B) with current senior reporter, 2008.

¹³⁰ With the one exception of *People’s Daily*, the official party mouthpiece.

¹³¹ Peter Lorentzen models this process. See Lorentzen (2008).

¹³² He Qinglian (2004), p17, author’s translation.

¹³³ Duan Hongqing, Ye Doudou and Wang Bing (2006).

supportive.¹³⁴ A ratio of negative terms to overall sentiment was used rather than simply the raw proportion of each in an effort to control for articles that were simply highly emotional in tone, without being weighted in either a supportive or critical direction. This method captures articles that use very little sentiment but are still selectively negative. And finally, Negativity and Sensitivity are clearly distinct: a simple bivariate correlation demonstrates that the fit between the two is only 0.13, with a miniscule Cronbach's α of 0.03.

Results – First Cuts

The first result is simply a rank-order list of newspapers for both Sensitivity and Negativity. Those lists are reproduced in Appendix B. Before moving on to other results, however, it is interesting to note that *Southern Weekend*, which has long enjoyed the reputation of being one of the most feisty in China, is in fact undistinguished in its Sensitivity ranking. Indeed, it scores below *Guangzhou Daily*, the official organ of the party committee in this area.¹³⁵ This low rank is likely related to two factors: first, the chilling effect created when the government arrested several of the paper's principal editors in 2004, most likely in an effort to better control it,¹³⁶ and second, the fact that the paper's forceful coverage is often highlighted by its editorial section, not its regular news coverage.¹³⁷ It is, however, the most negative of all papers analyzed, suggesting further that its bold reputation may come more from its tone than its content. This result also reflects larger trends in the Chinese media, where papers generally considered "top rank" are often surprisingly cagey on what sensitive topics they choose to cover. Often the differences are stylistic rather than substantive, echoing prominent editor Hu Shuli's assertion that her magazine's writers "never say a word in a very emotional or casual way, like 'You lied.' We try to analyze the system and say why a good idea or a good wish cannot become reality."¹³⁸

Another point worth mentioning – and one that will be further explored below – is the relatively undistinguished reputation of the papers at the top of both lists.¹³⁹ Indeed, one prominent media scholar I spoke with had never even heard of the fifth most negative paper, *Information Daily (Xinxi Ribao 信息日报)*, and newspaper studies are his academic specialty. Although people had heard of the two Sichuan papers at the top of the Sensitivity list, neither has much reputation as a feisty journalism pioneer. The case is much the same for most of the papers near the top of both lists – including *People's Daily*, the official government mouthpiece. This paper ranks number three on the Sensitivity list, which is somewhat surprising, but likely reflects the fact that the paper has official sanction to discuss corruption and disaster topics in a way favorable to the government. Indeed, its coverage is not especially negative in tone.

¹³⁴ Yoshikoder does allow evaluation of such "sentiment" words within a five-word radius of target vocabulary terms – and thus more sophisticated analysis of tone toward individual topics – but computational requirements and time constraints meant that this facility was not used here. Even analyzing sentiment on a per article basis required hundreds of hours of computer time on a new and sophisticated computer, and therefore the use of this "concordance" function was unfortunately too difficult.

¹³⁵ It should be noted, though, that *Guangzhou Daily* also has a reputation for pioneering journalism, a reputation helped by the fact that at one point in the 1990s, their editor-in-chief was also the head of the local publicity department (Interview FX19-0).

¹³⁶ Hassid (2008b).

¹³⁷ I am grateful to David Bandurski of Hong Kong University's China Media Project for this observation.

¹³⁸ Osnos (2009)

¹³⁹ With the exception of *Southern Weekend* on the Negativity list, discussed above. I am grateful to Rachel E. Stern for inspiring this line of thought.

The observation that papers with no reputation – or even the mouthpiece of the CCP – are often bolder than some of the most famous in Chinese newspaper journalism has several potential explanations. First, the CPD might choose to concentrate on papers with larger circulation, reasoning that if few people read it, it is unlikely to make much difference. And there is evidence for this phenomenon in other aspects of the Chinese media; anecdotally, when bloggers start receiving more traffic they get more government scrutiny as well. This explanation is plausible, but as we will see below it cannot fully account for this phenomenon. Second, it is possible that the Chinese government simply doesn't pay much attention to minor papers in relatively peripheral provinces like Sichuan or Jiangxi. With limited personnel and time, the CPD may rationally choose to allocate its resources toward monitoring more prominent papers or those in large population centers. And finally, it might be a case of “the mountains are high and the emperor is far away.”¹⁴⁰ Given China's constant tendencies toward decentralization, local newspaper journalists and editors might simply be taking advantage of their relative isolation, secure in the knowledge that Beijing's sway diminishes with distance,¹⁴¹ and they have little to fear from the center. As we will see below, however, this particular explanation does not hold water, in part because these papers are strictly regulated by local authorities as well. The truth is likely a combination of the first two factors, though the second is the most plausible.

Variable Name	What Variable Represents	How Variable Is Calculated
Sensitivity	Degree to which article challenges or pushes against the state – at whatever level – by reporting on one of several sensitive topics	Adding together the proportion of words that an article has from the Politics-Combative, Corruption, Disasters, Mangan, Gaoliang and Yanjin lists
Negativity	Degree of negativity of newspaper article	The proportion of words that an article has from the Negative terms list divided by the total proportion of words than an article has from the Sentiment (positive and negative) terms list

Table 2: Dependent Variables

Digging Deeper – the Independent Variables

Next I performed an OLS regression to try to isolate those systemic factors that might predict sensitive coverage. One of the independent variables tested like this was administrative level. This was an important factor in the analysis, given the simultaneous existence of theories both that central papers get more oversight and that they get less. Testing was done by coding level of government oversight as a dummy variable with *Central* = 1 and all others 0. Although

¹⁴⁰ This is a Chinese proverb (“*Shan gao huangdi yuan* 山高皇帝远”) meaning that the capitol and its regulations have increasingly less relevance the farther one gets away.

¹⁴¹ O'Brien and Li (2006), esp. ch. 2.

papers in China actually fall in two ranks below central – provincial and city-level¹⁴² – differentiating between these in coding is problematic. For one thing, market competition statistics and the like are based on provincial level data, meaning coding some papers as city-level might be misleading given data limitations. And for another, all papers tested are located in provincial capitols, meaning oversight is generally done by both provincial and city-level authorities. These administrative level data were derived from the official managing bureau's (*zhuguan bumen* 主管部门) administrative level, information obtained from the *China News Yearbooks*.¹⁴³ Although some papers normally thought of as local or provincial (e.g. *China Management Daily* (*Zhongguo Jingying Bao* 中国经营报)) are coded as central under this rubric,¹⁴⁴ this approach seems more objective than using subjective appraisals of coverage and influence.

Because of its unique history in the modern Chinese press, Guangdong papers were also coded with a separate dummy variable. Given that the modern, commercialized Chinese press system arises mainly from Guangdong's papers (and especially from its capital, Guangzhou), this is the most important regional influence in China. Distance of the paper's main offices from Beijing (in kilometers) was also included in the regression. This variable was included to separate out the effects of the Guangdong region that are distinct from mere distance from the central government.

Another important factor, marketization, has long been regarded as a critical driver of the changing Chinese press.¹⁴⁵ It is, however, a tricky variable to operationalize, and so a variety of approaches were taken. First, papers were coded along three dummy variables as *Party Organ*, *Party Commercial* or *High Commercial* papers.¹⁴⁶ Party organ and high commercial papers are easy to imagine, but the party commercial (PC) category is perhaps somewhat trickier to explain. In brief, this includes papers financed and overseen by major party organs, while still relying on the market for cues and funding. Prominent examples include *Southern Weekend*, *China Management Daily* and *Caijing* (not included in this study because of data limitations).

Also included were 2006 provincial per-capita GDP data,¹⁴⁷ market competitiveness calculations, and circulation data. The GDP variable is self-explanatory, but the competitiveness calculations and circulation data require some exposition and caveats. Both these data were all gathered from the respective years of the *Chinese News Yearbooks* so as to minimize the bias potential that comes from picking and choosing circulation numbers from various sources. Although these data are unlikely to reflect a true picture of the Chinese media market, they at least provide a rough estimate of various newspapers' relative circulation statistics. The competition estimates, discussed further below, were occasionally extrapolated from previous years or market averages when only incomplete data were available.

And finally, it is impossible to analyze news content and ignore the reporters producing that content. To this end, the model incorporates an independent variable (IV) that attempts to take stock of the reporters' attitudes, ethos and environment. This variable is a measure of

¹⁴² County-level papers, once a prominent feature of the Chinese news scene, have all but disappeared in recent years.

¹⁴³ Chinese Academy of Social Sciences News Research Institute (中国社会科学院新闻与传播研究所) (Various Years).

¹⁴⁴ This particular paper is sponsored by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

¹⁴⁵ E.g. Zhao (1998), Lynch (1999), Zhao (2000), Esarey (2006).

¹⁴⁶ A trichotomy inspired by Esarey (2007).

¹⁴⁷ From China Data Online (2006).

“advocacy-style journalism.” Advocacy journalism has two features that make content analysis a particularly appropriate tool for analysis. First, it “tends to give substantial emphasis to commentary,”¹⁴⁸ a tendency measured among Chinese papers by calculating the proportion of self-reference (e.g. “我, I,” “我们, we,” “本人, I-formal”, etc.) in articles. Such use of first-person vocabulary is much more likely to appear in commentary than in straight news. And second, because advocacy journalism-prone countries like Greece have articles that are “often highly polemical,”¹⁴⁹ the overall degree of sentiment (positive plus negative proportions) is included in the Advocacy Journalism calculation as well. The theoretical foundation of coding and measuring advocacy journalism in this way is ultimately derived from Hallin and Mancini’s work on different national journalistic styles, which finds that countries like Greece and Italy “retain more of the ‘publicist’ role that once prevailed in political journalism – that is, an orientation toward influencing public opinion.”¹⁵⁰ Hallin and Mancini see this attitude prevalent in what they call the “Polarized Pluralist” model of the news, very similar to what I call advocacy-style Chinese journalism. Rather than assume that China has a single journalistic style, however, I argue that multiple styles can and do coexist within a single media system.

The end result provides an independent variable that accounts for how much an article falls along the news ethos continuum from “American-style” (low self-reference and sentiment) to “Advocacy Journalism” (high-self reference and sentiment) news outlook. This IV therefore allows for a rank order of the degree to which newspapers follow either model, a list that is included in Appendix B. It is critical to note that this variable is measuring not the *content* but the *style* of journalism, and presumably of the journalists themselves.¹⁵¹ There is no *a priori* reason why either the liberal or the advocacy style should have more challenging coverage than the other, making this variable truly independent. This measure is therefore theoretically and statistically distinct from Negativity, with a very small correlation of only 0.0077, and a miniscule Cronbach’s α of 0.0054, far below the generally accepted 0.7 threshold for demonstrating that two variables are measuring the same underlying concept. Regrettably, measuring the other two types of journalism directly from newspaper content proved an intractable problem, and they are not included in the analysis.

Finally, market competitiveness was calculated with a variant of the Herfindahl-Hirshman Index (HHI) used by the U.S. Justice Department’s Antitrust Division for calculating market concentration (Amanda Hassid, former employee, personal communication). In this case, the reciprocal of the HHI, multiplied by 100, was used so that unlike the original formulation, here higher numbers mean a more competitive market. Because of data limitations, some of the HHI calculations involved estimates, and all numbers reflect provincial rather than potentially more accurate city-based market competitiveness calculations. Ultimately, the fact that market competition level is not statistically significant is itself a significant finding, and will be discussed further below.

Control Variables

Three independent variables were not statistically significant but were included in various iterations of the model as controls. The full tables with these controls are not included because

¹⁴⁸ Hallin and Mancini (2004), p98.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p28.

¹⁵¹ If two articles are talking about the same event, their “content” will be coded similarly by the computer. If their use of emotional language differs substantially, however, this will be coded as a difference in “tone.”

of space constraints, but are available from the author. The first is a dummy control for Southern provinces except Guangdong (Anhui, Fujian, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, and Shanghai).¹⁵² This was done to isolate geographic effects, and also because Southern papers have a reputation for being more assertive.

Second, a standardized measure of the number of reporters per capita was tested in an effort to gauge the networking potential of working journalists. Journalists often evaluate their work not by its commercial impact but upon the response it generates inside the professional media community.¹⁵³ “Not only do reporters tend to cover the same people and stories, but they rely on each other for ideas and confirmation of their respective news judgments,” write two influential media scholars.¹⁵⁴ If Chinese journalists are developing into a real professional community, it is likely that they tailor their stories – and indeed their whole media approach – based on the feedback they receive from other reporters. In theory, the more journalists exist per capita, the greater the potential for such professional networking.

And third, a related variable is the percentage of journalists with a professional or academic degree (M.A. or Ph.D.), with figures available from the GAPP. This variable was tested to see if more years of schooling translated into measurable differences in content. As formal training is a strong source of socialization, theoretically more journalists with higher levels of training might have produced more professional journalism.

¹⁵² Southwestern provinces like Sichuan and Yunnan were not included, as they are not traditionally thought of as “Southern” Chinese. Shanghai is a bit of a unique case, as it is widely acknowledged among Chinese journalists as having a particularly tightly-controlled media market despite its high level of commercialization.

¹⁵³ Curry (1990).

¹⁵⁴ Shoemaker and Reese (1991), p102

Variable Name	What Variable Represents	How Variable Is Calculated
Central (dummy)	Whether paper has central-level administrative rank	Data collected from the <i>China News Yearbooks</i>
Party Commercial (dummy)	Whether paper is a party paper with commercial tendencies	Talks with journalists and author's judgment
High Commercial (dummy)	Whether paper is highly commercialized	Talks with journalists and author's judgment
Guangdong (dummy)	Whether paper is based in Guangdong province	Data collected from the <i>China News Yearbooks</i>
Newspaper Circulation	Average daily circulation of newspaper	Data collected from the <i>China News Yearbooks</i> , standardized
Per-Capita GDP	2006 per-capita GDP of province where paper is based	Data collected from <i>China Data Online</i> (2006)
Distance from Beijing	Distance of paper's headquarters from Beijing	Distance of paper's headquarters from Beijing, in kilometers, standardized
Advocacy-Style Journalism (ASJ)	Whether individual article represents the mix of personal appeal and highly sentimental language common to advocacy journalism	Proportion of self-reference words + proportion of sentiment words (positive and negative) in article
Market Competitiveness	Estimated degree of newspaper market competition province wide, standardized	Reciprocal of the HHI index of market competition, data compiled from various Chinese government sources
Southern (dummy, control)	Whether newspaper is in the historically more liberal South China region	Newspaper is based in Anhui, Fujian, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, or Shanghai
Percentage of reporters with MA/PhD	Proportion of journalists in region with higher degree	Figures available from the GAPP
Reporters Per Capita (control)	Number of reporters per capita in province, standardized	An compilation of data from various Chinese government sources

Table 3: Independent and Control Variables

Digging Deeper – Regression Results

What then are all these variables used for? How can we begin to answer the questions about the factors that push Chinese journalists to activism? In other words, what are some of the systemic factors that can predict sensitive or negative newspaper coverage, and what is the effect of marketization? To answer these questions, it is helpful to turn to the OLS regression results:

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables OLS Coefficients (ESE)	
	Sensitive Words ^a	Negativity ^b
Intercept	-.0095 (.0021)***	.4762 (.0320) ***
Central [0]	-.0002 (.0003)	-.0073 (.0040)
Party-Commercial [0]	.0010 (.0003)**	-.0391 (.0050)***
High-Commercial [0]	.0014 (.0003)***	-.0026 (.0039)
Guangdong [0]	.0005 (.0003)	-.0630 (.0050)***
Newspaper Circulation (Log ₁₀ of total yearly distribution) ¹⁵⁵	.0014 (.0003)***	-.0174 (.0047)***
Per-Capita Provincial GDP (unit = 1000 RMB)	-.00003 (.000008)***	.0011 (.0001)***
Market Competition Level (modified HHI, unit = 0-1 scale)	.0045 (.0027)	-.1536 (.0001)***
Distance from Beijing (unit = 1000 km)	-.0004 (.0003)	-.0268 (.005)***
Advocacy journalism (unit = proportion of relevant terms in article, 0-1 scale)	.0773 (.0025)***	-.0166 (.0379)
R²	0.072***	0.036***

a: Estimated coefficients for change in proportion of sensitive words
b: Estimated coefficients for change in ratio of negative words to total sentiment words
* means p<.05, ** means p<.01 *** means p<.001

Table 4: Regression Results (n=18,897)

¹⁵⁵ Although these data are all from the *Chinese News Yearbooks*, like most statistics in China there is a good deal of evidence they are not entirely reliable. Regrettably, however, this is the best source of information currently available to media researchers. The difference between the highest (*People's Daily*, average circulation 1.8 million) and lowest circulation papers (*Unity Times (Lianhe Shibao, 联合时报)*, average circulation 22,000) is around two orders of magnitude, making the log approach desirable (2003 figures).

Here is a more concrete chart demonstrating these results with standardized coefficients, to make the results more commensurable:

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables <i>Standardized OLS Regression Coefficients</i>	
	Sensitive Words	Negativity
Central	-.041	-.073
Party-Commercial	.043**	-.134***
High-Commercial	.046***	-.009
Guangdong	.022*	-.112***
Newspaper Circulation	.116***	-.057***
Per-Capita Provincial GDP	-.048***	.099***
Market Competition Level	.009	-.062***
Distance from Beijing	-.023	-.093***
Advocacy Journalism	.211***	-.003

* means $p < .05$, ** means $p < .01$ *** means $p < .001$
Table 5: Standardized Regression Coefficients (n=18,897)

These results are interesting for a number of reasons, but it should first be noted that although the R^2 measure of fit on both models is quite low, both are nevertheless highly significant ($p < 0.0001$). Indeed, all variables within each model are highly significant with two exceptions. Part of the explanation for the low p-values is due to the regression's large sample size and high statistical power, though most of the results are substantively as well as statistically significant. It is also worth noting that measure-of-fit will likely be low on any model that predicts coverage in individual newspaper articles based on structural factors. Although these forces are clearly significant in determining the general trend of news, many elements that influence the topic and vocabulary of any one news article are potentially far too subtle (e.g. developments in a reporter's personal life) to be measured systematically. The approach in this project therefore takes inspiration from Bourdieu's field theory, which "explicitly rejects the Chomsky-style notion that the news media's behavior can be explained solely by reference to their capitalist ownership and control."¹⁵⁶ In short, no macro-level study is likely to ever produce a model with a high measure of fit, and the low R^2 here does not present a problem.

Results – Management

One of the most obvious phenomena of note is the difference between party and non-party papers. Because of the nature of dummy variables, all three categories (party, party commercial and high commercial) could not be tested simultaneously in the model; as the largest category, party ownership was excluded. Therefore comparisons with pure party papers are

¹⁵⁶ Benson and Neveu (2005), p10. The implications of this article for field theory are discussed further in the conclusion.

indirect, but the statistics are nonetheless illuminating. Most surprisingly, both party commercial and high commercial papers have less sensitive coverage than their party counterparts. Indeed, high commercial papers (like Shanghai's *Wenhui Daily* (*Wenhui Bao*, 文汇报) fare the worst in this category, predicted to have around 0.28% fewer sensitive words than their non-high commercial counterparts, *ceteris paribus*. This translates into a concrete difference of around 2.3 fewer sensitive words per article of average length (815 words). There is no statistically significant difference between high commercial papers and others on the negativity of their coverage

Party commercial (PC) papers (like *Southern Weekend*), too, are less sensitive than their non-party commercial counterparts. This difference, about 0.2% (or ~1.6 words per average-length article), is less than that of high commercial papers, but is still both substantively and statistically significant. Interestingly, PC papers have more Negativity (0.078) than their non-PC counterparts. In other words, party commercial papers are less sensitive but more negative than other paper types, holding other factors constant.

Therefore Party papers, the excluded baseline, have the most sensitive coverage of all. But respected media scholars like Yuezhi Zhao and Daniel Lynch have convincingly argued that marketization of the Chinese press is one of the greatest pressures toward its liberalization.¹⁵⁷ What explains this paradox? Most generally, although marketization and competition have clearly led to huge changes in the Chinese media on a national scale, within a single paper or even a single market the influences are far from clear. The fact that the control variable measuring market competition level has no statistical impact on sensitive newspaper coverage provides further evidence for this argument. Indeed, this result supports recent work by Daniella Stockmann, who has found that “even strongly reformed media sources tend to publish stories close to the government line.”¹⁵⁸ She did find a difference in tone, however, with a PC paper like *Beijing Youth Daily*¹⁵⁹ “on average, negative when it came to politics,” while “the tone of *People's Daily*,” the official central government mouthpiece, “tended to be slightly positive.”¹⁶⁰

Stockmann convincingly argues this phenomenon results from a convergence of Chinese newspaper readers' desires and official policy on many issues. In such an environment, marketized papers will naturally publish articles similar to official coverage even in the absence of state pressure. There is likely an additional factor at work, however. Official papers, and especially *People's Daily*, almost definitionally cannot produce coverage that challenges official policy.¹⁶¹ So although they may publish more articles on corruption or disasters than non-party papers (hence giving them a higher “Sensitivity” rating), their coverage is not actually more forceful. This official coverage does, however, tend to have a more positive tone; this difference has been captured here. These results, then, are not so paradoxical after all.

Results – Regional and Distance Differences

Regional difference is one of the more consistent factors that scholars and professionals point to as a major media influence, and to a certain extent these results confirm that belief. Although the control variable for southern papers (excluding Guangdong) had no statistical

¹⁵⁷ Zhao (1998), Lynch (1999).

¹⁵⁸ Stockmann (2007), p8.

¹⁵⁹ Not tested in this study.

¹⁶⁰ Stockmann (2007), p122.

¹⁶¹ At least under normal circumstances. During the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, *People's Daily* reporters did aggressively challenge the state. See Jernow and Thurston (1993).

effect, the Guangdong dummy did. Guangdong is the cradle of the modern Chinese media system, with its TV stations, radio broadcasters and newspapers still among the most influential in China. Scholars and interviewees have argued that because of its proximity to Hong Kong, distance from Beijing, and a generally permissive political and economic environment, Guangdong media are able to be more assertive than those in the rest of the country.¹⁶² Indeed, in 2003 the Guangdong-based Southern Press Group broke both the SARS cover-up and a separate, hugely influential report on police maltreatment of a suspected migrant worker.¹⁶³

The regression analysis, however, presents a more nuanced view. While Guangdong papers were indeed significantly more negative (.126) than those from outside the province, their coverage was not statistically more sensitive than the rest of the country. The reason for this disparity in part may lie in the study's timing, coming as it does after the provincial government's 2003-4 crackdown on papers like *Southern Weekend* in the wake of overly challenging stories. This disparity also reflects Stockmann's findings that much of the difference between Chinese newspapers is a matter of style over substance, with influential Guangdong papers like *Southern Weekend* presenting similar facts as other papers, but with a harsher rhetorical tone. The tone indeed is substantially more critical, with Guangdong papers having a predicted eight more negative words per average-length article, and one of the largest regression coefficients in the entire model. It is well to take the Sensitivity and Negativity variables together, for Guangdong-style journalism may well say more with its tone than with its overt subject matter.

The results for the "distance from Beijing" variable further corroborate these regional results.¹⁶⁴ The inclusion of distance from Beijing as a separate variable demonstrates the power of regional effects quite separate from these regions' geographic positions. But the distance variable is also independently interesting. While it has no statistically significant effect on Sensitivity, it does have thought-provoking, though mild, influence on Negativity. Instead of greater space for critical coverage when the "mountains are high and the emperor is far away," the opposite appears to be true. Local coverage actually becomes very mildly less negative (-0.0268) per 1000 km distance from Beijing. In other words, newspapers might be "taking advantage" of their isolation by actually producing coverage slightly *more* favorable in tone to the regime.

It is likely this response – or non-response – to distance arises out of the effective media control regime built by the CPD, a regime built on institutionalizing uncertainty. Pfeffer and Salancik note that the reduction of environmental uncertainty is a critical organizational task¹⁶⁵ but newspapers in China's periphery simply may not have the same resources as more centrally located papers either to divine the intentions of the CPD, or even to produce investigative journalism.

Results – Administrative Level

While geographic region has a relatively strong effect, a newspaper's administrative level, surprisingly, has no statistically significant effect on either Sensitivity or Negativity. This weak outcome may result from the media's changing legal environment. In September 2004, the CPD

¹⁶² E.g. Burgh (2003), esp. ch. 3.

¹⁶³ Liebman (2005).

¹⁶⁴ As discussed above, papers are also regulated by provincial and local authorities. In this case, all papers are located in the provincial capitol and so a distance measure to it is useless.

¹⁶⁵ Pfeffer and Salancik (1978),

passed regulations designed to curb media outlets' coverage outside their geographic area or above their administrative level.¹⁶⁶ These restrictions were designed to curb so-called “*yidi jiandu* 异地监督,” whereby a newspaper that was prevented by powerful local interests from running investigative reports in its own area would go to a different county or province and do so there. One prominent academic has argued that provincial and local publicity departments are even more restrictive than the CPD, further hampering local and provincial news coverage.¹⁶⁷ The evidence here points toward the efficacy of these *yidi jiandu* restrictions.

Results – Market Factors

One of the most interesting and provocative of the CCA findings is that market factors – represented here by measures of circulation, per-capita GDP and estimated market competition level – have a distinctly muted effect on newspaper content, at least over the studied span of 2004-2006. The estimated level of market competition has no statistical effect on Sensitivity, and, paradoxically, increased competition is linked to *decreased* Negativity in newspaper coverage. These findings will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five, but suffice it to say that they fly in the face of most traditional theories of press content. Instead, these results emphasize the importance of professional orientation, rather than market structure, as the driving force of politically aggressive media content in China.

These findings about the limited effect of market factors seem to contradict earlier conclusions that the type of paper management, whether party, party commercial or high commercial, has a dramatic effect on coverage. After all, the major difference among these three types seems at first blush to be PC and HC papers' reliance on market signals and party organs' reliance on the state to determine content and emphasis. In fact, however, these findings are reconcilable. The difference between a PC and a party paper might not lie mainly in the degree of marketization, but in more intangible identitive differences between the two employee groups. Amitai Etzioni argued in 1965 that such identitive or normative mechanisms are a far more effective means of control than money tends to be¹⁶⁸ and indeed, evidence in other contexts has already suggested the importance of such ideological differences between assertive and placid news outlets.¹⁶⁹ In short, this seeming paradox may point the way toward the importance of leadership and professionalism in determining “the tune” of Chinese news content, in contrast to earlier emphases about who was “paying the piper.”

Results – Liberal vs. Advocacy Orientation

The clear finding that professional orientation, especially an advocate orientation, has substantial statistical linkage with Sensitive newspaper content is confirmed by extensive qualitative interview data. These results will be discussed in detail in Chapters Four and Five. For now it is sufficient to say that advocate journalists – some of them among the most prominent and famous reporters in China – are the driving force for much of the systematic change in the Chinese media. The rise of these advocate journalists coincides with the increasing marketization of the Chinese press, and ultimately they are responsible for many of the longer-term systemic changes that scholars and other often ascribe to market competition or other factors.

¹⁶⁶ Interview GX11-2.

¹⁶⁷ Interview nterview EL28-0. This argument does seem accurate, if overstated.

¹⁶⁸ Etzioni (1965),

¹⁶⁹ Hassid (2008a).

Results – Year Differences

The temporal variation across the three years of the study is also worth a brief comment. Many scholars and commentators have argued that there have been increasing signs of a media crackdown in China since approximately 2003.¹⁷⁰ Some scholars go further: “Freedom to criticize political authorities and to publish conflicting viewpoints appears more limited since 1980,” writes Ashley Esarey.¹⁷¹ And the data here bear out this argument. An ANOVA demonstrates that there were statistically significant differences in Sensitivity ($p < .05$) and Negativity ($p < .001$) between 2004 and 2006. Further comparison using the Tukey-HSD procedure demonstrates that the difference in Sensitivity between 2005 (mean = 0.0081) and 2006 (mean = 0.0075) is a significant difference ($p < .05$), and amounts to about 0.5 fewer predicted sensitive words per average length article. For the Negativity variable, the difference is significant between 2004 (mean = 0.300) and both 2005 (mean = 0.274) and 2006 (mean = .266). In short, from 2004 to 2006, these results demonstrate that Chinese newspapers became both less sensitive and less negative to a statistically demonstrable extent. Although these differences are relatively small, they do point away from the inevitability of an ever freer, market-driven press that some seem to have imagined.¹⁷²

Conclusions

In addition to demonstrating the usefulness of computer-assisted content analysis in a Chinese context, this study provides intriguing substantive results. Most of these results confirm the claims of other scholars, a fact which adds credence to the accuracy of a content analysis approach to the Chinese media. Some of the results, however, suggest that it is time to rethink old models about the nature of the Chinese news industry. The underwhelming effect that a newspaper’s administrative level has on its coverage, for example, points away from formal structural mechanisms – and toward identitive aspects like professional orientation – as controlling influences on Chinese newspapers. This result, and the far from straightforward nature of market competition on Chinese coverage, both lend credence to theories that emphasize the importance of an informal “regime of uncertainty,”¹⁷³ in controlling the activities of the Chinese media.¹⁷⁴

This paper also has implications for theories of the market and press. The fact that market competition has no statistically significant effect on sensitive newspaper content implies that in the Chinese context, at least, scholars would do well to turn away from theories that imply a direct causality between content and market conditions and towards more nuanced approaches. One of these, sociology’s field theory, “provides a potential way out of the no man’s land between the trenches of liberal theory’s ‘theme of journalism as a countervailing force, a critical tool,’ and critical theory’s ‘opposing vision which sees journalism as a relay of the structure of oppression.’”¹⁷⁵ It does this in part by recognizing that journalism results not only from state and

¹⁷⁰ e.g. Kristof (2005), Pan (2006b), Hassid (2008a).

¹⁷¹ Esarey (2007), p35.

¹⁷² Though others like Brendebach (2005) have noted that the CCP has often encouraged further commercialization, something they would assuredly not do if it were a worrisome trend.

¹⁷³ Hassid (2008b), p3.

¹⁷⁴ The level of uncertainty no doubt varies by region and how well-connected editors are. For example, numerous interviewees told me that Hu Shuli, founder of the well-regarded *Caijing*, had exceptionally good access to top leaders who would let her know of policy shifts in advance. It is, however, difficult to say in a systematic way how uncertainty varies across papers.

¹⁷⁵ Hassid (2008a), p15 quoting Bourdieu (2005 [1995]), p42.

market pressures, but also from a constant struggle for autonomy carried forward by journalists themselves. “This struggle is inevitable,” as “the history of journalism could well be in large part the story of an impossible autonomy – or, to put it in the least pessimistic way, the unending story of an autonomy that must always be re-won because it is always threatened,” one scholar writes.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, field theory explicitly “incorporate[s] influences arising from characteristics of journalists as individuals (social and educational background) and as a corporate group defending (and struggling to define) a professional identity.”¹⁷⁷ In short, field theory recognizes that news articles do not merely reflect political and economic circumstances, but social ones as well. These social circumstances – including professional “type” – can only be partly revealed by this relatively macro-level procedure, but are drawn out further with qualitative data presented in the next chapter. Ultimately, though, the economic variables presented here demonstrate that any relationship between press and market is more fraught than either liberal or critical theory acknowledges.

This study, then, demonstrates the validity both of such a context-sensitive approach and of computer content analysis’ place within this approach. As such, this chapter should alert scholars of the Chinese media and of communication more generally to an avenue of new approaches, and away from an over-reliance on structural determinants of press coverage.

¹⁷⁶ Champagne (2005), p50.

¹⁷⁷ Benson and Neveu *Ibid.*, p7.

PART TWO: PUSHBACK AND BEYOND

Chapter Four – Categorizing Chinese Newspaper Journalists

Introduction

The late Walter Cronkite, iconic news anchor, symbolized for a generation of Americans what it meant to be a journalist. Often called “the most trusted man in America,” he was known for his neutral, analytical treatment of national news. His influence extends even to China, where journalists and scholars invoke Cronkite (or 克朗凯特) as an exemplar of broadcast journalism and a model for Chinese reporters.¹⁷⁸ His perceived attributes have influenced Western scholars as well, some of whom seem to believe that Chinese media “professionalization” is an inevitable – and desirable – process that will produce a Chinese press stuffed with objective, balanced Cronkite analogs.

Hopes aside, such “Wangkites” or “American-style professionals”¹⁷⁹ represent only a small proportion of Chinese journalists. However, while the view that such reporters will engulf and transform the Chinese media is too optimistic, it is equally erroneous to see contemporary news workers as they were during Maoist era, the “throat and tongue” (*houshe* 喉舌) of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). While many Chinese reporters are indeed still “communist professionals,” scholarly focus on these and the American-style news workers alone elides the importance of two additional – and more numerous – groups: “advocate journalists,” who wear their opinions on their sleeves and aim to push policy change, and “workaday journalists,” who care for little but money or steady employment.

Why does it matter that there are four strands of professional Chinese journalist rather than only one or two? The answer comes in part from the increasing relevance of journalists in China’s political and social life. Problematizing the notion that there is only one proper type of professional Chinese journalist not only allows a finer-grained, more accurate picture of Chinese journalism, but also allows closer identification of the type of news worker most likely to spark social or political change in the People’s Republic. As drawn out below, it is mostly the advocate journalists who fill this role, though members of the other categories publish aggressive articles from time to time.

Making Professional Chinese Journalists¹⁸⁰

Before separating Chinese journalists into their respective categories, it is helpful to first discuss commonalities. Although their backgrounds differ, the vast majority (86% in one survey sample¹⁸¹) of Chinese journalists have a college degree, compared with around 2.2% of the

¹⁷⁸ Pan and Lu (2003), p227.

¹⁷⁹ The term is adapted from Hallin and Mancini (2004) who refer to such journalists as belonging to the “North Atlantic” or “Liberal” model of journalism.

¹⁸⁰ Chinese journalists are formally professionals – as opposed to simply members of craft – by virtue of having formal and informal professional associations, general ethical norms, and universalizing service ideal among most practitioners. For a classic discussion of the common features of a profession, see Wilensky (1964). For an overview of the debate about whether journalists are professional, see Tumber and Prentoulis (2005) and Weaver (2005).

¹⁸¹ Chen, Zhu and Wu (1998), p21.

general population.¹⁸² All legally employed journalists in China must have a press card issued by the state's General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) (*Xinwen Chubanshu* 新闻出版总署).¹⁸³ To obtain this press card, reporters are "required to take a training program in official ideology, media policies and regulations, journalism ethics, communication theory, and related topics."¹⁸⁴ Indeed, it is not enough that the GAPP forces journalists to attend these training sessions; to actually receive a press card, they must also pass a test that includes Marxist-Leninist press theory.¹⁸⁵

In training reporters, the CCP emphasizes the importance of the "party principle" (*dangxing yuanze* 党性原则), which is the idea that the party/state should dominate the media. Media scholar Yuezhi Zhao writes:

A typical journalism textbook describes it as comprising three basic components: that the news media must accept the Party's guiding ideology as its own; that they must propagate the Party's programs, policies and directives; and that they must accept the Party's leadership and stick to the Party's organizational principles and press policies.¹⁸⁶

This system is a holdover from Maoist times, when the party/state enjoyed absolute dominance over Chinese mass communication. Although the situation has clearly changed since that era,¹⁸⁷ the Chinese party/state's journalist training curricula still officially advance the idea that the press should be the CCP's voice.

Chinese journalists also are guided by an ethos of public service put forward by their official professional association, the All-China Journalists' Association (ACJA) (*Zhonghua Quanguo Xinwen Gongzuozhe Xiehui* 中华全国新闻工作者协会). All Chinese journalists are required to belong to the ACJA, a theoretically autonomous social organization that is actually run by the CCP's Central Publicity Department as part of the party/state's media control apparatus.¹⁸⁸ Although described by one interviewee – quite typically – as an organization that "doesn't train, doesn't help and doesn't protect journalists,"¹⁸⁹ the ACJA does promulgate a code of professional conduct and, at least in theory, advocates for the profession. The code requires that journalists report the truth and not take bribes or blackmail sources, and the GAPP even posts the names of fifteen journalists at a time who have committed such professional misconduct.¹⁹⁰ The ACJA also puts moralizing stories and exhortations on its website, with a typical example arguing "fake news confuses public opinion and throws it into disorder (*raoluan yulun* 扰乱舆论), becoming a harmful and malignant cancer (*duliu* 毒瘤) on society."¹⁹¹ Journalists, then, are officially required to be truthful and honest in their reporting. Although the ACJA has always been thoroughly co-opted by the CCP, its existence as a formal journalistic

¹⁸² Based on statistics taken around the same time as the journalism survey, and measuring three or more years of college attendance. See Rong and Shi (2001), p113.

¹⁸³ Hassid (2008b), p427.

¹⁸⁴ Zhao (2008), p29.

¹⁸⁵ Interview ET02-3.

¹⁸⁶ Zhao (1998), p19.

¹⁸⁷ See, for example, Hassid (2008a).

¹⁸⁸ Brady (2008), p10. For more on media control in China, see Hassid (2008b).

¹⁸⁹ Interview GM14-2B.

¹⁹⁰ http://press.gapp.gov.cn/gongzhong/chachu_more2.php, accessed 6/5/2009.

¹⁹¹ http://news.xinhuanet.com/zgjx/2009-03/18/content_11028741.htm, accessed 6/5/2009.

professional organization promulgating a code of conduct and norm of public service means that official Chinese journalists are all, formally at least, “professionals.”

“Wangkites:” The American-Style Professionals

Contrary to the assumption of many media researchers, however, journalistic professionalism is not a monopoly of the Anglo-American West. When scholars like Yuezhi Zhao speak of “China’s nascent culture of independent professional journalism,”¹⁹² they refer to “journalists’ growing sense of the liberal watchdog model.”¹⁹³ In one of the few large-scale surveys of Chinese journalists, Chen *et al* conclude, “Chinese journalists are in the midst of professionalization.”¹⁹⁴ But this characterization is not confined to recent work; as early as 1993, Allison Liu Jernow was able to see “a new generation of journalists at work,” who “emphasized professionalism, not propaganda.”¹⁹⁵

Yet Chinese academics and reporters sometimes make the assumption that only one model of professional journalism exists, and “use exemplars from the West to define ‘professional standards,’” invoking “Walter Cronkite and Mike Wallace as models of broadcasting journalists.”¹⁹⁶ In *Watchdog Journalism and Global Democracy*, liberal scholar Zhan Jiang writes about the relationship between professional journalists and ethical codes, explicitly saying that “in the U.S. such [a model] is often called ‘news professionalism.’”¹⁹⁷ And in interviews, journalists often conflate “professionalism” with “American-style professionalism.” One reporter, for example thinks that younger reporters are more professional than older ones because they have more formal training in college and journalism school and are “more influenced by America.”¹⁹⁸ Another claims that the journalists at the *Beijing News* are professional because they cover stories with objectivity.¹⁹⁹ A common theme is an admiration for the perceived American system of the press as a neutral fourth estate. Many more reporters admire the ethical codes at American papers and linked professionalism with ethics. These journalists often specifically draw the comparison with Chinese journalists, who they feel are corrupt. In general, journalists and academics in China and elsewhere think that “professionalism” means emulating the U.S., and state that it is desirable to do so.²⁰⁰

Of course American journalism is hardly monolithic. In many countries, and certainly in China, American journalism is often idealized and simplified, regardless of the realities of its day-to-day practice in the United States.²⁰¹ American-style reporters are “more likely to see

¹⁹² Zhao (2008), p268.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p253.

¹⁹⁴ Chen, Zhu and Wu (1998), p29.

¹⁹⁵ Jernow and Thurston (1993), p27.

¹⁹⁶ Pan and Lu (2003), p227.

¹⁹⁷ Zhan Jiang (展江) (2007), p37, my translation.

¹⁹⁸ Interview HH05-2A.

¹⁹⁹ Interview HE24-2.

²⁰⁰ Chin-Chuan Lee is an exception to this trend, differentiating three models of Chinese journalism, but he does not further develop his model for causal inference or note that many Chinese journalists are unprofessional. Lee’s models are Confucian liberalism, Maoism, and Communist capitalism, mainly divided by time period. Although the Maoist model (1949-present) and the Communist capitalist model (after the 1980s, esp. after 1992) have some temporal overlap, the thrust of Lee’s argument is that the Chinese press has moved in stages between these three models, which have both differences and commonalities. His analysis is insightful and intuitive, but it does not fully capture the present complexities of Chinese journalists’ role. See Lee (2005).

²⁰¹ See Hallin and Mancini (2004), for a discussion of this phenomenon.

themselves as providers of neutral information or entertainment”²⁰² than other types of journalists, and this orientation is what Americans often believe is the only truly “professional” news value system. This idea is so normatively powerful that even journalists who do not practice this journalistic style often claim to uphold it.²⁰³

Despite these caveats, there is certainly a small core of journalists who “really look up to” – and practice – an idealized American model of the press, which many have studied in school.²⁰⁴ These professionals tend to work at the better known or more respected periodicals in China, publications like *Southern Weekend*, *Beijing News*, and *Caijing*, though these publications are also heavily staffed with advocate professionals. The reality, however, is that most Chinese journalists are not Cronkite-like American-style media professionals. One editor even stated that “if the media are too professionalized, it is a problem,” because he finds professional journalists to be boring and overly objective.²⁰⁵ This quote is telling, as it came near the end of an interview in which the editor first claimed that reporters should be neutral information providers. Over the course of the interview, he revealed a common pattern: many Chinese journalists initially claim to be objective, American-style professionals, but when pressed, espouse values incompatible with normative American journalistic standards. Many, in short, are professional journalists but not *American-style* professional journalists.

At the beginning of an interview, for example, reporter Zhu Hongxu²⁰⁶ argued that the press should serve as a neutral fourth estate and “supervisor of the party/state” (*dangzheng jian du* 党政监督), and that his paper specifically looked to the *New York Times* for inspiration. When pressed further, however, he also told me that he believed the press should influence government policy directly, agreeing with prominent former editor Li Datong that “news should influence today.”²⁰⁷ Another reporter at one of China’s most influential papers claimed that a professional reporter is one who objectively reports the facts while also serving as a mediator between the people and the government.²⁰⁸ A different interviewee argued that a professional journalist, while serving as the objective writer of the “manuscript of history” (*lishi de digao* 历史的底稿) should also be a *jiduzhe* (济度者), a Buddhist term meaning “one who provides salvation to the masses.”²⁰⁹ It is hard to imagine a scenario where both roles are simultaneously possible, but this is a typical attitude among Chinese news workers.

American-Style Journalism with Chinese Characteristics

The normative appeal of the American-style strand mainly comes from abroad, where the ideal of neutrality and objectivity has often displaced rival journalistic standards.²¹⁰ This model seems to disseminate among Chinese journalists in at least four ways.

First, formal training in journalism schools often emphasizes Western models of the press, and many journalism professors have familiarity and admiration for Western, and especially American, journalism. Journalism textbooks often emphasize the American system or American

²⁰² Ibid., pp 28-9.

²⁰³ As Hallin and Mancini have influentially argued, even within the West journalists from different countries or regions have different traditions and differing ideas of journalists’ roles in society. See Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Interview GX31-2.

²⁰⁵ Interview HL9-4.

²⁰⁶ Interview GM08-2. The names given for my interview subjects are pseudonyms.

²⁰⁷ The Li Datong quote is from the title of Li Datong (李大同) (2006).

²⁰⁸ Interview GX31-2.

²⁰⁹ Interview HH5-2A.

²¹⁰ Hallin and Mancini (2004), esp. chapter eight.

academic communication research. Chinese communications textbooks, for instance, spend a great deal of time on the American press system and generally cite far more Western than Chinese authors. One far from unusual page in the section “Defining Attitudes” from a typical undergraduate example cites no fewer than eight Western – but no Chinese – scholarly works.²¹¹ Another typical academic book, co-edited by prominent journalism professor Zhan Jiang, spends an entire chapter on the American press system and even discusses the free press guarantees of the American Constitution.²¹² The prominence of the American example in Chinese journalism education is apparent from the results of an informal online survey I conducted in 2008 (n=24). Nearly half (43%) of those respondents with formal journalism training had “very much” or “quite a bit” of exposure to the American press system, and no respondent reported no exposure. By contrast no journalists at all reported “very much” or “quite a bit” of exposure to European press models. Some educators, like Dean of the Tsinghua University school of journalism Li Xiguang, more explicitly push an advocate orientation through a determination to “use ‘great journalists’ to push ‘China's social progress,’” though they are still directly influenced by the journalism of the United States.²¹³ Given that nearly one third (32%) of those journalists with a college education majored in journalism in the mid-1990s,²¹⁴ formal training represents a substantial source of knowledge about Western, and especially American, educational practices.

Second, a number of high-level Chinese reporters have studied in the West, especially in the United States. For example, the University of California, Berkeley alone hosts several visiting Chinese journalists every year as visiting scholars attached to the Graduate School of Journalism. At the same time, a number of foreign journalists and academics have taught in Chinese universities, often in English. For example, the first professional training program in China in the early 1980s was taught by American faculty including reporters who had worked with Bob Woodward of the *Washington Post*.²¹⁵ Today, Tsinghua University has sponsored a program to teach a generation of Chinese and foreign journalists in the same program, with instruction done in English.²¹⁶ Meanwhile, even at official organizations like state news agency Xinhua, Chinese journalists have daily contact with their Western equivalents, who often work as English polishers and who have helped set up an international training center.²¹⁷ The personal and often daily contact that many Chinese journalists have with Western news workers serves as a potent source for dissemination of media practice abroad.

Third, there are several informal professional organizations in China dedicated to journalistic training. Beijing has at least three such groups, representing legal, environmental and cultural reporters, and they regularly meet and have scheduled educational speakers and the like. During the course of fieldwork, I was fortunate to be able to attend sessions of both the legal and environmental groups, and the latter are organized enough that they distribute and sell a book on their activities.²¹⁸ Guangzhou has a similar group, which despite being occasionally labeled “illegal” (*feifa* 非法) by state authorities, continues as a place where Chinese news workers discuss ideas and hone their craft.²¹⁹ These group training sessions, often explicitly

²¹¹ Xu Jing [许静] (2007), p224.

²¹² Zhan Jiang (展江) (2007), ch. 3.

²¹³ Lee (2009).

²¹⁴ Chen, Zhu and Wu (1998), p21.

²¹⁵ Lee (2009).

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ David (1992).

²¹⁸ Wang Yongchen (汪永辰) and Xiong Zhihong (熊志红) (2005).

²¹⁹ Interview HL8-4AZ.

aimed at “professionalizing” reporters, represent a nexus that spreads professional norms through the field.

And fourth, the “soft support”²²⁰ and training sessions of foreign NGOs like Internews, a journalist advocacy and training group whose Chinese activities are primarily funded by the US State Department.²²¹ Internews aims to train and professionalize Chinese reporters, bringing them in from all over China for lengthy sessions on media practice and theory.²²² Such groups also translate and disseminate Western media texts, the results of which Li Datong describes:

Starting in the 1980s, books of Western news media theories, principles and techniques started to be translated. ... And the result was that we started to see ourselves as members of the world news community, in the same profession as people in other countries. ... We started to share the same standards for making news. And we started to realize that we were all in complete agreement: news is not the lackey of authority, but is instead the critic and arbiter of that authority.²²³

In other words, Li and like-minded journalists look specifically toward the West for models of professional journalism, a process helped along by groups like Internews.

But again, for many news workers in China, this “Americanization” is often a thin veneer overlaying a completely different core of news practice. For example, Zhang Nan,²²⁴ an editor for a government-circulation²²⁵ legal paper, feels so strongly that reporters should have enough technical knowledge to report news accurately that she helped found an informal organization for training legal reporters. This group avoids sensitive topics and concentrates on imparting basic skills to legal journalists so that they do not, for example, misreport laws or incorrectly write the name of the Supreme People’s Court. Although this and similar informal organizations serve as a nexus of journalistic independence and an important way for norms and practices to spread through the profession, she herself feels that professional journalists should not push their own views in articles. An American-style professional ethos leads her and others to avoid confrontation. Thus, those few reporters who are indeed practicing American-style professionals have little appetite for pushback or outright resistance.

Even in the West, objectivity has long been seen as a “strategic ritual” and a way for reporters to avoid writing confrontational or controversial articles.²²⁶ A recent study of the Hong Kong media has found that sometimes objectivity actually encourages self-censorship among news workers,²²⁷ a situation that is even more pressing in mainland China. Rather than serving as a spur to bold reporting, a true American-style orientation at times results in a less confrontational and robust Chinese media environment. These journalists can hide behind procedure and high-mindedness, while avoiding pushing an aggressive agenda. For example, a

²²⁰ I borrow the concept from Stern (2009).

²²¹ Interview EU30-3. For more on the complex relationship between NGOs and the state, see the work of Jennifer N. Brass.

²²² Interview GM09-2A.

²²³ Li Datong (李大同) (2006), p1, my translation.

²²⁴ Interview GM14-2B.

²²⁵ I.e., their content is mostly, though not entirely, for internal government reference (*neibu*) only and not for general circulation.

²²⁶ Tuchman (1972).

²²⁷ Lee (2007).

story on the planning of transport capacity during the Chinese New Year discusses the issue of rural labor mobility, a mildly sensitive issue in China,²²⁸ but does so without commentary:

This paper has learned from the provincial Labor and Society Protection Office that in order to ensure the orderly flow and transport of peasant labor (*mingong* 民工) during the busy Spring Festival period, the province [Jiangsu] has implemented an employment and labor mobility information forecasting system. The first areas selected will be Suzhou, Wuxi, Xuzhou, and Huai'an chu prefectures.²²⁹

Although it is impossible to know whether this story's reporters are in fact American-style professionals without interviewing them, such writing is a hallmark of the work that "Wangkites" tend to produce. Unlike many Chinese language stories, for example, this piece avoids either emotional language or commentary on an issue that is ripe for both. Such attributes are common among the stories that American-style professionals aspire to write.

Ultimately, though, China presents a very different news environment than the United States. Those journalists who wish to work toward an idealized, American-style press find many institutional roadblocks and little encouragement. The practice of a true American-style reporter involves little more than producing objective reports and avoiding corruption, and Chinese reporters can do so without challenging the powers that be. Resistive behavior is ultimately riskier than producing neutral stories on approved topics, and therefore often requires a larger sense of commitment to simply hewing to professional norms. As one reporter said, in the long run Chinese journalism should move toward the American model, but the current Chinese news environment is better suited to more aggressive journalism.²³⁰ In short, many Chinese reporters claim to be American-style professionals; many fewer actually are, and even those few tend toward political passivity.

"Throat and Tongue:" The Communist Professionals

Communist professionals represent the other class of Chinese journalist most often discussed in Western academic and media circles. When stories refer to "China's official media" as "ignoring or twisting" the words of Western leaders,²³¹ or when scholars call CCP mouthpiece *People's Daily* (*Renmin Ribao* 人民日报) the paper that "sets the tone for all other media in China,"²³² they reinforce the sense that most Chinese journalists are still communist professionals. Often seen as an anachronistic relic of Maoist times when all journalists were state employees enforcing rigidly standardized propaganda, communist professionals have been shrinking in numbers and stature since the start of the reform era in 1978. Although many such journalists still ply their trade, they hardly merit their occasional position as *the* stereotypical representatives of the contemporary Chinese news media.

²²⁸ Strictly speaking, one must have a residence permit to reside in Chinese cities, and vast majority of peasant laborers lack this permit, called a *hukou*. For more on the *hukou* system, see Mallee (2003).

²²⁹ Huang Hongfang [黄红芳] and Yang Yong [杨涌] (2004).

²³⁰ Interview HL6-4.

²³¹ York (2008).

²³² Yin (2007), p35.

More than half (54%) of all reporters are party members²³³ compared to about 5% of the general public,²³⁴ but party membership is neither necessary nor sufficient to create communist professionals, who specifically aim to serve as the CCP's mouthpiece, a role consistent with the Marxist-Leninist view of the press as a transmission belt between leaders above and people below.²³⁵ In addition to their positive feeling toward the CCP, communist professionals are also typically older, male, and work at papers that are still government-run or non-commercialized. Although the three other types of journalists also work at papers like *People's Daily*, *Peasant Daily* (*Nongmin Ribao* 农民日报), the various papers of the provincial party committees (e.g. *Sichuan Daily* (*Sichuan Ribao* 四川日报)), and others, such newspapers tend to be staffed mostly by communist professionals.

Old Chen,²³⁶ an editor at *Workers' Daily* (*Gongren Ribao* 工人日报) clearly thought of himself as representing the CCP and seemed pleased with the status quo. Although Old Chen vaguely claimed to "represent the people," when pressed he equated their interests with that of the CCP. Although he is typical of this group, there is also a smattering of younger journalists with a similar role conception. For example, Li Lei,²³⁷ a 20-something female reporter for a paper sponsored by the official Xinhua News Agency, is avowedly quite "conservative" (*baoshou* 保守) and thinks that it is not for individual journalists to decide their own role. Rather, she believes, the state should decide such questions, especially since both she and the state share the goal of developing Chinese society. Although unhappy with what she sees as the CCP's overly heavy-handed control of the press, she is nonetheless comfortable with its overall role in the media. Li Fang,²³⁸ a young radio reporter, explicitly considers himself the "throat" (*houlong* 喉咙) of the government but not its "tool" (*gongju* 工具). Unlike a "tool," a "throat" has two dimensions: when the government wants to speak, it uses the throat, but the rest of the time the throat can and should speak on its own. Such a statement does not undermine the characterization of Li as a communist professional, and is consistent with early survey work suggesting that regardless of their orientation "Chinese journalists' job satisfaction has less to do with material rewards ... than with their perceptions of job autonomy."²³⁹

Communist professionals, then, are neither a distant relic of the Maoist past nor the most numerous and powerful representatives of the Chinese media. On the whole, they are a contented group who have little wish to rock the boat. For example, here is an excerpt from a front-page story on October 21, 2009 in *People's Daily*, a paper that by all accounts is heavily staffed by communist professionals:

The Dalai Lama has always shielded himself with the 'democracy' sign to cater to westerners. ... However on September 9, Jamyang Norbu, a radical Tibetan separatist, published a long article on a 'pro-Tibet independence' website ... which pitilessly

²³³ According to survey work done by Chen, Zhu and Wu (1998). Note, however, that these data are based on a survey taken around 1994, and based on my own observations, the percentage of party members seems to have declined since then.

²³⁴ According to *The Economist* at <http://www.economist.com/countries/China/profile.cfm?folder=Profile-Political%20Forces>, accessed 8/5/09.

²³⁵ Dittmer (1994).

²³⁶ Interview HY20-5B.

²³⁷ Interview GM05-2.

²³⁸ Interview ET09-2B.

²³⁹ Chen, Zhu and Wu (1998), p25.

exposed the Dalai Lama's 'democracy myth' and again helped people see through the true autocratic features of the Dalai Lama clique.²⁴⁰

Stories like this are entirely non-controversial (within China) and highly unlikely to cause trouble for anyone. Any irony about a CCP functionary criticizing the Dalai Lama as "autocratic" is unremarked – and unintended. Similarly, stories on diplomatic visits to China often use recycled boilerplate like "'building stronger bilateral ties' to describe, with never a variation, the purpose of meetings between national VIPs."²⁴¹ Such reporting is a hallmark of the communist professionals.

But exclusive scholarly focus on American-style and communist professionals ultimately ignores the other two more numerous and arguably more important ideal-type groups detailed in the chart below and sections following.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ People's Daily Staff (2009).

²⁴¹ David (1992), p19.

²⁴² Note that these categories are derived primarily from interviews and research on Chinese periodicals, and their application to radio, TV, or Internet journalists is somewhat speculative. Without a sample from a representative survey, I cannot provide reliable frequency estimates.

Reporter Type	Role Conception	Other Characteristics	Effect on Stories and Behavior	Normative Self-Assessment
Workaday Journalists	No professional ethos. Reporters are out to make money or have a steady job.	This is a diverse group without clear characteristics or tendencies.	This diverse group tends to avoid political controversy, preferring to stay under the radar.	Muddled. Either American-style or Advocacy Professionals.
Communist Professional	Mouthpiece, or “throat and tongue” of the CCP.	Usually (though not exclusively) work for the old-line CCP papers, like <i>People’s Daily</i> .	Very unlikely to engage in combative political behavior	Muddled, but often Communist Professionals.
American-style Professional	Neutral, objective information provider. They aim to represent all sides in an evenhanded way. Some see themselves as a check on state power, though this view is limited by the needs of objectivity.	Tendency to write in unemotional terms, leaving out self-reference in columns. Emphasis on separation of editorial and journalistic content. Tend to be explicitly influenced by, and admiring of, the U.S. media system.	Often use objectivity as a shield from controversy, meaning little (though non-zero) political pushback.	American-style Professionals.
Advocacy Professional	Representing “the people,” “vulnerable social groups” (<i>ruoshi qunti</i> 弱势群体) or others against the predations of society or the state.	Tendency to think of themselves as educators and problem-solvers driven by nationalism.	Contentious political behavior tends to come from this group. They often write with emotionally charged language and use much self-reference in stories.	American-style Professionals.

Table 6: A Typology of Chinese Journalists

“Guard Against Fire, Theft, and Journalists”²⁴³:” The Workaday Reporters

As discussed above, all legal Chinese journalists are formal professionals. There is, however, a large and perhaps growing cadre of “illegal” Chinese journalists. These unofficial reporters fall into two broad categories: (1) those employed as news workers by legitimate media outlets, an increasing number of blogs,²⁴⁴ and a few *samizdat* publications, and (2) those who are self-promoters, information traders, or outright hucksters. Because “any person who does not hold a reporter identification issued by the [GAPP] is a fake reporter, [and] it is an illegal activity for fake reporters to gather news,”²⁴⁵ both groups are officially illegal, but it is important to distinguish between them.

The first group generally consists of legitimate reporters who do not have a press card or legal employment, and who are usually referred to as “freelance writers” (*ziyou zhuan’gaoren* 自由撰稿人) or “part-time journalists” (*mingong jizhe* 民工记者). The reasons for this situation vary, but it commonly occurs when publications do not want the hassle and inflexibility of formal employment. Functionally, however, these reporters are represented in all four categories and perform their jobs much as “real” reporters do, despite GAPP head Li Binjie’s claim that such reporters have “acted against the public interest ... and must be ‘rooted out and punished.’”²⁴⁶

The second group of illegal reporters, the hucksters, generally pass themselves off as legitimate reporters to blackmail or extort members of the business community by demanding payment to not publicize real, or even invented, negative information.²⁴⁷ These fictitious news workers often congregate at the scene of industrial or mining accidents, awaiting payment.²⁴⁸ And such scenes are “very, very frequent,” according to an editor whose paper “exposed an instance of extravagant corruption in central Henan province in 2005” that attracted “480 reporters and others pretending to be reporters who asked for ‘shut-up fees’ to keep news of a mine flood out of the public eye.”²⁴⁹

“There really is a problem with fake reporting and reporters,” Li Datong writes,²⁵⁰ a plague that exists for two principal reasons: first, it is often cheaper for business owners to bribe journalists than to make necessary safety improvements, and second, businesspeople often have no way of distinguishing real reporters from fake ones. This second reason is especially poignant because many “real” reporters themselves take bribes or “car fare.” In such situations, the business owners often pay off “real” and “fake” alike. In comparing workaday but legal journalists with their illegal counterparts, the major difference is often simply that the former

²⁴³ A common saying, according to Polumbaum and Xiong (2008), p44.

²⁴⁴ Under Chinese law, Internet sites are barred from doing original reporting, and can only “relay news from Xinhua or news units directly under the control of provincial governments” (Brady (2008), p129). Some sites do original reporting anyway, however.

²⁴⁵ Tan Renwei (2007), from http://www.zonaeuropa.com/20070116_1.htm, as translated by Roland Soong at the EastSouthWestNorth blog.

²⁴⁶ Redl and Simons (2008), p70.

²⁴⁷ Unfortunately, I was not able to interview any of this type, and so this section relies mainly on secondary sources.

²⁴⁸ See Dai Xiaojun (戴晓军) (2008), for a rare example of a Chinese press exposé of such behavior.

²⁴⁹ Cody (2007), emphasis added.

²⁵⁰ Quoted in Reuters Staff (2009).

have press cards and the latter do not. Indeed, one popular saying urges listeners to “guard against fire, theft and journalists.”²⁵¹

But journalists do not have to be “fake” to be unprofessional. As with the “fake” journalists, money is the workaday journalists’ lodestar, and such reporters probably make up more than half of all Chinese journalists. However, like every official, legally employed, journalist in China, workaday reporters must undergo state training and be certified by the GAPP. Strictly by this measure, every legally employed Chinese reporter is a professional news worker. What distinguishes workaday reporters from other types is professionalization’s other component – a normative commitment to public service. Workaday journalists, who will “do anything for money,”²⁵² lack this normative commitment and therefore cannot be considered fully professionalized.

Although such reporters probably represent the outright majority of Chinese reporters, in general they are so politically and socially quiescent²⁵³ that rather little needs to be said about them in discussions of media resistance. These journalists are simply interested in money or steady employment, and as such do not invoke the professional public service ethos. Because they follow money and employment, they are probably mixed in various ratios in most or all Chinese newspapers, though interview data and personal observation suggest that they are less common at the most influential publications (*Southern Weekend*, *Caijing*, *China Youth Daily*, etc) and more common at smaller or less politicized ones. Over time, some convert into one of the other types of news worker, but this on-the-job professionalization seems relatively infrequent.

Corruption, running the gamut from taking “car fare” (*chemafei* 车马费), to outright bribes, market manipulation or blackmail, is rampant Chinese journalists, but seems especially serious among workaday reporters. Providing “car fare,” usually envelopes stuffed with between 200 and 500 RMB (~ \$30-70), is an exceptionally common way for companies and even government bureaus to encourage journalistic attendance at news events. Most journalists readily and openly admit to taking it, and one even told me that press conferences “must” offer such envelopes (*chemafei shi yinggai de* 车马费是应该的).²⁵⁴ Even otherwise professional advocacy journalists take such fees, for at news conferences all reporters take the envelopes “without exception.”²⁵⁵ Indeed, “the payoffs have become so accepted that a reporter who showed up” for one company’s news conference “complained loudly and walked out when he discovered he would be given only a bottle of mineral water, according to other reporters present.”²⁵⁶

One media scholar writes that corruption has become an “institutional and occupational phenomenon involving the majority of journalists and the majority of media organizations.”²⁵⁷ In a rare exposé of such behavior, for example, *China Youth Daily* published a report entitled “Real and Fake Reporters Line Up for ‘Gag Fees.’” on reporters lining up after a mining disaster in Shanxi province.²⁵⁸ Although such events are commonplace, reporting on them is

²⁵¹ Polunbaum and Xiong (2008), p44.

²⁵² Interview HL2-2.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Interview GM10-2B.

²⁵⁵ Interview ET04-3.

²⁵⁶ Cody (2007).

²⁵⁷ Zhao (1998), p72.

²⁵⁸ Dai Xiaojun (戴晓军) (2008).

quite uncommon. The end result is a culture of impunity allowing workaday journalists to continue in a role orientation that allows no higher purpose than lining their own pockets.

Because the regime now emphasizes the importance of the rule of law, it is often important for the CPD or other party/state actors to have a pretext on which to discipline unruly journalists. If a reporter is engaging in illegal or corrupt practices – as most Chinese journalists seem to be – it is easier for the party/state to silence the offender. In such cases, a journalist's corruption only serves as an excuse to fire or imprison her; the punishment actually reflects the CCP's displeasure over political matters.²⁵⁹ There is even anecdotal evidence that the CPD encourages corruption. One professor told me about a conference that he organized at which the CPD encouraged him to offer “car fare” to journalists. When he demurred, officials forced him to make such financial inducements available.

Ultimately such endemic corruption serves as a strong deterrent to greater professionalization among Chinese news workers, many of whom condemn such behavior.²⁶⁰ Reporters commonly complain that their colleagues have no ethics (*daode* 道德), and that the problem is “uncontrollable” (*kongzhi bu liao* 控制不了).²⁶¹ They grouse that when reporters do things like planting evidence of dirty manufacturing practices in a Häagen-Dazs plant in a failed attempt to blackmail the company,²⁶² they taint public perception of their field and make it more difficult for other Chinese reporters to be taken seriously. This mistrust, in turn, encourages more corrupt behavior by news workers who feel they have little reputation left to lose. In short, systemic corruption among Chinese journalists simultaneously encourages an “every woman for herself” attitude and discourages efforts to impose an effective ethical code. Those relatively few news workers who have become professional journalists of the three other types have done so despite the obstacles thrown up by both the party/state and their own organizational culture. Indeed, it is not surprising how few Chinese journalists are true professionals, but how many.

Representing “The People:” The Advocate Professionals

Rather than writing for money, the CCP, or even objectivity, advocate journalists aim to push a specific, social, ideological or economic viewpoint in their stories. Often, such news workers claim to represent “vulnerable social groups” (*ruoshi qunti* 弱势群体) in an attempt to better their plight, but advocate journalists can agitate for a range of causes. For example, a 2005 story in *Southern Weekend* with the poetic title “Venus: The Price Inside the Wall for the Floating Fragrance Outside the Wall,”²⁶³ pushes for more support and sympathy for China's artistic community:

Reporter: In 2000, after leaving the Beijing Modern Dance Troupe, Venus moved to Shanghai to make a fresh start and open the wholly owned Venus Modern Dance Troupe, China's only private modern dance group. ...

²⁵⁹ One of the more prominent examples of this involves the aftermath of the Sun Zhigang case. See Hand (2006).

²⁶⁰ I am not aiming to impose a normative standard on Chinese journalists. Rather, they themselves usually condemn such behavior in principle, if not in practice. See Lo, Chan and Pan (2005) for an interesting and important comparative survey of journalists' ethical attitudes.

²⁶¹ Interview HE24-2.

²⁶² Interview HL9-4.

²⁶³ This type of flowery language is very common in advocate journalists' writing. In this case, the title refers to the price that must be paid inside the artistic community, and the psychic wounds on the artists themselves, for the refinements they demonstrate to the world.

Venus: “In China, the significance of opening a modern dance company is enormous. It far exceeds just opening another one in Europe, because my theatrical company represents the very existence of modern dance in China.”

Reporter: “Is it easy to set up a dance company domestically?”

Venus: “It is not easy. Actually, many students especially want to come dance with me, because with me they are able to find truth and freedom.”²⁶⁴

The writers’ sympathy toward the notion that the arts, and modern dance in particular, should receive more social support is apparent in this section and throughout the article. These reporters, as advocate professionals do, wear their hearts on their sleeves.²⁶⁵

A striking number of advocate journalists see their role as essentially nationalistic. For them, being a reporter means solving social problems and engaging in the national project of pushing forward China’s development. Sometimes this advocacy means publicizing weighty concerns like justice for pollution victims or the prevalence of local corruption, and other times it might mean pushing less sensitive topics like greater arts funding. The common thread in all three of these examples, though, involves journalists with an eye toward building a better China mobilizing public opinion and pushing CCP policy in a way that it might not otherwise go.

Lin Mei,²⁶⁶ an editor at *China Youth Daily*, is one such journalist. She likes the job because she can serve the country and see the direct results of her endeavors every day. She has relatives who are businesspeople, and although their jobs help improve the country’s GDP, her gratification is much more direct. As a journalist, she can do more than just “supervise” the state – she can also impact policy in an effort to make China great.

Many reporters say they consider their role as representing “the people,” rather than the party/state. One former reporter for *Southern Weekend* went further, claiming that “about half of reporters want to criticize and change the government.”²⁶⁷ These advocacy journalists have “an increasing tendency to distinguish between state and citizenry and to see themselves on the side of the latter.”²⁶⁸ For example, Zhang Yongchun,²⁶⁹ a mid-30’s journalist of 11 years, works for a national opinion magazine and is avowedly “leftist,” believing that the media should help the people and Chinese society rather than the state. Although Zhang is a bit more outspoken than most, his claim that journalists should explicitly side with the forces of “labor” and critique the forces of “capitalism” would not be out of place among other advocate journalists. Quoting – in English – the idea that “journalists shift our perceptions of the world,” he thinks that the role of

²⁶⁴ Zhang Ying [张英] and Wu Yi [吴恽] (2005).

²⁶⁵ Such a role orientation is hardly exclusive to China. Hallin and Mancini discuss European reporters who “retain more of the ‘publicist’ role that once prevailed in political journalism – that is, an orientation toward influencing public opinion.” They see this attitude prevalent in what they call the “Polarized Pluralist” model of the news, a model similar to that practice by China’s advocate journalists. Such reporters aim to push a specific agenda in their writing and influence public opinion through overt persuasion. Hallin and Mancini (2004), p28.

²⁶⁶ Interview HB20-2.

²⁶⁷ Interview EL30-0.

²⁶⁸ Burgh (2003), p193.

²⁶⁹ Interview GX20-2.

journalists is more educational and nuanced than offering straightforward political commentary. In other words, journalists should represent the people by “representing the world to the people.”

Why Advocacy Journalism Resonates in China

Chinese advocacy journalism is hardly new. Such a role orientation has a long tradition, beginning with late 19th century reformist Liang Qichao’s efforts to establish newspapers that were “factional organs (*dangbao*)” and even “protopolitical opposition parties.”²⁷⁰ These early journalists still have relevance today, and several interviewees spoke explicitly of late Qing dynasty or early Republican-era media history.²⁷¹ The view that journalists are essentially educators or intellectuals with a specific viewpoint and a desire to help “the people” and shape public opinion (*yulun* 舆论) goes back even further. “*Yulun*, the character compound [that early 20th century journalists] used for public opinion, dated back at least to the third century and had been used throughout Chinese history to describe elite opinion within the bureaucracy,” historian Joan Judge writes.²⁷² Intellectuals have long had a privileged place in Chinese society to simultaneously critique the government by representing “the people” and, in turn, to educate the people as to what – the intellectuals thought – the people should think and believe.²⁷³

Chinese journalists, who still consider themselves intellectuals, have long been “committed not only to represent and inform but also mobilize their compatriots,”²⁷⁴ an attitude that continues today for the advocacy journalists. This education of the people, is sometimes overt – telling them that “one plus one equals two,” for example.²⁷⁵ Or it can be subtle, as when Xiao Guangxu,²⁷⁶ an editor for *Southern Weekend*, discussed a Chinese husband and wife team who live in the U.S. and report on their experiences abroad. For Xiao, this sort of careful triangulation lets people know the situation in other countries without a direct, politically aggressive comparison. Readers can then “make the comparison themselves” and see the problems in China indirectly through the column. Sometimes the idea that journalists should educate the people blurs into contempt. Bai Xinguo,²⁷⁷ for example, told me his magazine does not particularly care if readers are interested in a story, because he and his colleagues do not write for the readers’ pleasure but for their benefit. He thinks that media outlets that too closely rely on pandering to readers put out a low quality product. In the end, though, his desire to educate the populace and build a better China is at the heart of advocacy journalism.

Many of China’s top papers, including *Southern Weekend*, *Beijing News*, *China Youth Daily*, and magazines like *Caijing*, not coincidentally are full of advocate journalists pushing their views with firmness and subtlety. *Southern Weekend* journalist Liu Jianqiang gives a telling example from when he was considering a job at the paper. In the wake of the CCP’s 2003 removal of top staff for over-zealous reporting, Liu was worried that the new editor would reverse course and control the paper too tightly. The deputy editor, though, told him “the paper

²⁷⁰ Judge (1996), p25.

²⁷¹ Indeed, media scholar Sun Xupei quoted Liang directly in his 1980s essays arguing for more press freedom (Sun and Michel (2001), p27).

²⁷² Judge (1996), p68.

²⁷³ See Kluver (1999) for a discussion of this traditional role.

²⁷⁴ Judge (1996), p10.

²⁷⁵ Interview HE24-2.

²⁷⁶ Interview HL6-4.

²⁷⁷ Interview GX30-2.

won't change that easily – rather, we hope the we can change the new editor.”²⁷⁸ This determination is emblematic of the advocate journalists, who are ultimately some of the key drivers of policy change in China, not, as many assume, the American-style professionals. This point will be drawn out further in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Scholars often speak of the increasing American-style professionalism of Chinese journalists with a barely concealed normative approval that often elides important empirical and theoretical differences among a heterogeneous group of journalists. At the same time, however, few Chinese journalists maintain their role as the “throat and tongue” of the Party. Indeed, both orientations are rare and neither have the prescriptive power or practical effects to warrant their monopoly on scholarly attention. In the past, communist professionals dominated the Chinese press, and one day Wangkites will perhaps dominate, but both days are a long way off. Perhaps part of the scarcity of American-style journalists in China rests on the fact that the Chinese press has almost always treated its audience as objects, rather than subjects. That is to say, the press has mainly treated society as a realm to be lectured, educated, and ultimately corrected, rather than an equal participant in the public sphere.²⁷⁹ This orientation has its roots in the Confucian tradition that a public intellectual's role is to teach the people and serve as a role model for others. The Maoist view of the press as a potent force for education, propaganda and mobilization piggybacked on this older tradition. I certainly do not aim to denigrate the Chinese tradition or lionize the American one, but simply to note that in practice, the American journalistic ideal has been a poor fit in the Chinese context.

In addition to problematizing the very notion of a “professional” Chinese journalist, I hope to focus attention away from the monopolizing, but often inaccurate, notion that only a true American-style journalist is capable of independent political action. Indeed, the biggest drivers of political change in the Chinese news environment are not these “American-style” journalists or even market pressure, but the advocate professionals. The sense of struggle that such news workers carry against power holders may even help them maintain professional identity and autonomy, echoing Bourdieu's argument that reporters who have “positive incitements to resistance or even open struggle against those in power’ will be more likely to maintain continuity in their professional practices over time.”²⁸⁰ It is time to step back from the procrustean bed of a Western media theory that refuses to see advocates as anything other than “unbalanced” polemicists and engage with the empirical realities faced by actual – not idealized – Chinese reporters. Ultimately it is the advocate professionals who have the most congruity with Chinese intellectual and media tradition, and we should not be surprised to find them at the vanguard of sensitive coverage, and of policy and media change in China.

²⁷⁸ Liu Jianqiang interview in Polunbaum and Xiong (2008), p83.

²⁷⁹ Lee (2005), p108-109.

²⁸⁰ Quoted in Benson (2005), p99.

Chapter Five – Pressing Back

Introduction

In August 2008, months after having been forced to discipline commentator Chang Ping for a controversial piece, the liberal *Southern Weekend* published a new editorial by him urging that “openness be the rule and secrecy the exception” in government life.²⁸¹ Just a few months later, in December, the equally feisty *Beijing News* published a story about petitioners to the central government allegedly being detained by police in psychiatric hospitals and “treated” to prevent their complaints from reaching higher-ups.²⁸²

Three years earlier, in 2005, several letters from top *China Youth Daily* editors excoriating their superiors and party management were “accidentally” leaked onto the Internet and generated a sensation across the media world.²⁸³ In late December of that year, a group of over 100 journalists went on strike to protest the removal of Yang Bin, the editor-in-chief, by top Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials.²⁸⁴

This chapter will concentrate on situations similar to the first two contentious episodes, which are examples of pushback. I aim in this chapter to explain why the first two incidents should be conceptually separated from the last two, and why this distinction is important. Incidents like the last two – the open letters and strike – move beyond pushback into outright resistance and are the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter One defined pushback as a form of proto-resistance that takes place when actors privileged by professional or traditional standing oppose power holders or policies in ways that they perceive to be within the boundaries of the permissible, but I did not explain why Chinese journalists might push back. This chapter further refines the concept and lays out its causes and effects.

What is Pushback?

The notion of “privileged non-state actors” is key. While many previous studies have examined resistance behavior among Chinese peasants²⁸⁵ or among the working class,²⁸⁶ few have done so from the perspective of those who have a great deal of cultural capital and at least a modicum of political influence.²⁸⁷ Given the professional mores of many Chinese journalists and the traditional position of intellectuals in Chinese society – both discussed in Chapter Four – this study represents a new contribution. For journalists, the most obvious way to push back involves writing articles that “play edge ball” (*da cabianqiu* 打擦边球), a ping-pong term that refers to pushing a ball to the very edge of the table. These reporters try not to put the ball out of

²⁸¹ Chang Ping (长平) (2008).

²⁸² Hogg (2008) sums up the story in English. The original Chinese language story has been pulled from the Chinese Internet, and is no longer available (attempted access, 2/17/2009).

²⁸³ Marquand (2005).

²⁸⁴ Gill (2005).

²⁸⁵ See, *inter alia*, Kelliher (1992), O'Brien (1996), Yang (1996), Zhou (1996), O'Brien and Li (1999), Perry (2002), O'Brien and Li (2006).

²⁸⁶ Hurst and O'Brien (2002).

²⁸⁷ Though recent scholarship on homeowners' protests might fall into this category as well. See Cai (2005).

bounds, and so represent a kind of intra-systemic critique of Chinese political life, reminiscent of the acts of Meyerson and Scully's "tempered radicals,"²⁸⁸ or what O'Leary has referred to as "guerilla government."²⁸⁹ But pushback can take other forms as well, as when Polish journalists under communism angered by a proposed policy that would allow the government more latitude to jail opposition figures "sought out specialists to speak against the law by using their positions and expertise in criminology, management, or psychology."²⁹⁰ Chinese journalists, too, speak through "neutral" experts to get controversial opinions in print or get around specific state restrictions. One young reporter in Beijing, for instance, got around a CPD requirement not to refer to China's national stadium by its colloquial sobriquet "the bird's nest" by quoting the building's architect using the term.²⁹¹

When journalists publish a sensitive investigative report, quote a controversial but ostensibly neutral expert, or write consistently negative stories – all discouraged by China's state media control apparatus – they are likely engaging in pushback. For example, a reporter at the *Southern Metropolis News*, a paper that aims explicitly to be the "best in China," published a story despite the demands of a provincial government bureau to get permission before publication. When the paper went ahead with the publication anyway, nothing came of the matter, demonstrating the paper's ability to carefully triangulate risks.²⁹² This type of publication-linked pushback is most visible, though there are myriad varieties, as when Chinese reporters leak stories to the foreign press or lawyers press forward with sensitive lawsuits that may upset governing authorities.²⁹³ Indeed, lawyers under a thawing authoritarianism may be particularly prone to resistive behavior, echoing Tocqueville's argument that for societies "in which men of law cannot take a position in the world of politics, ... one can be sure ... lawyers will be very active agents of revolution."²⁹⁴

But what makes the two stories mentioned in the first paragraph pushback, and not simply resistance? Critically, there were no direct repercussions from the two editorials, while the other two cases – the open letters and the strike – ultimately resulted in reporters being fired. But pushback should not be seen as purely from an ad hoc, potentially tautological perspective. In the case of the first aggressive editorial, it is highly probable that Chang Ping and his editors (correctly) anticipated no state reaction before publication. This conclusion is likely for two reasons: first, although Chang Ping is certainly a controversial media figure, those close to him say he avoids outright challenges to the state²⁹⁵ and second, under the editor responsibility system, his editors bear responsibility for what is published, and would have also have been sanctioned, fired, or even jailed if Chang's editorial went too far. The second contentious editorial, about abuses of the psychiatric system, has a similar logic. Ultimately no one at either paper was disciplined for these articles.

In the case of the strike or the open letter, participants clearly saw both actions as out of bounds before undertaking them, giving them a strongly resistive intent. Strikes, for example,

²⁸⁸ Meyerson and Scully (1995).

²⁸⁹ O'Leary (2006).

²⁹⁰ Curry (1990), p190.

²⁹¹ Interview HB24-2.

²⁹² Interview HL8-4B.

²⁹³ Rachel E. Stern's work concentrates on situations like these.

²⁹⁴ Quoted in Bell (1997), p66.

²⁹⁵ Interview HL8-4AZ.

are not legal under Chinese law.²⁹⁶ Aware of this fact, the would-be strikers locked themselves in a karaoke bar the night before the strike was to take place and refused to allow anyone to leave or make contact with outsiders, to prevent advance knowledge from reaching the CPD and Chinese security apparatus.²⁹⁷ The open letter, written by *China Youth Daily* editor Lu Yuegang, rhetorically asked if his editor-in-chief thought that ordinary reporters grew up eating “shit” (*shi 屎*), denounced his management style, and opined that “politicians like you ... can cause great damage to the nation.”²⁹⁸ Even more dangerously for Lu, he recognized that the editor was not acting alone, and explicitly criticized the CCP officials who installed and backed the chief editor, telling them to “strengthen [your] studies” of Communist ideology.²⁹⁹ Such a scathing attack is clearly outside the boundaries of the acceptable, and Lu must have had few illusions about this basic fact when writing it. Indeed, he and his direct superior, Li Datong, were ultimately forced from their positions within the paper.

The idea of “playing edge ball” comes up often, and many reporters clearly see their everyday relationship with the state strategically, as a sporting match or a kind of dance of “an old married couple,” in which both sides are “neither obsequious nor supercilious” (*bu bei bu kang 不卑不亢*).³⁰⁰ To carry the ping-pong analogy further, the two editorials are a clear example of pushback; although the authors hit the ball right to the edge of the table, they did not go out of bounds, nor did they intend to do so. In the case of the strike or the open letters, by contrast, both balls were *deliberately* played far beyond the table, and both cases had serious repercussions for participants.

Pushback also differs in the nature of the claims that participants make. While most claims in China – among the rural population at least – “remain fundamentally reactive” and “hardly ever tak[e] proactive initiatives,”³⁰¹ the claims of many Chinese journalists are indeed proactive. By appropriating the ability to supervise the party/state by virtue of their own professional standing, these journalists are in fact implicitly claiming one of the fundamental monopolies of an authoritarian state, that of passing judgment. Although taken individually, sensitive articles by bold Chinese journalists might be trivial and contained, taken together they press a proactive claim on the Chinese state. Even more subversively, this claim is based on international (and pre-communist Chinese) norms of the proper role of a Chinese journalist, not the norms put forth by the CCP. Indeed, one of the theoretical consequences of this research is to advance the notion that while most journalists are unabashedly pro-China, they are not necessarily pro-CCP. Hugo de Burgh has similarly argued that “journalists can now distinguish service to the country from service to the state,”³⁰² but to date, mainstream scholarship on

²⁹⁶ The legality of strikes is tricky under Chinese labor law, as they are neither legal nor illegal. The 1982 constitution explicitly removed the right to that existed strike in earlier versions (Weng (1982), p504). In any case, even if strikes are *de jure* legal, they are certainly not allowed in practice. I am grateful for Eli D. Friedman for this analysis (personal communication, 6/24/2009).

²⁹⁷ Interview HB24-2.

²⁹⁸ Lu Yuegang (卢跃刚) (2004), translated and available at http://www.zonaeuropa.com/20040725_1.htm, last accessed 3/10/09.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Interview HL8-4B.

³⁰¹ Bianco (1999), p60.

³⁰² Burgh (2003), p84.

nationalism in the People's Republic has overlooked this important distinction, despite the fact that it has existed in some form at least since the 1980s.³⁰³

Pushback in Context

Because pushback is on a continuum between quiescence and resistance, it has features of both. With quiescence, pushback shares the notion of non-challenge to elites, even when the relatively powerless are unhappy with their situation. Many journalists fundamentally agree with the very media control regime that extends their subordination, a situation that might be seen by Gaventa, one of the pioneering scholars of quiescence, as strong evidence of reporters' hegemonic domination by the powerful.³⁰⁴ And yet, unlike Gaventa's thoroughly dominated Appalachian coal miners, Chinese journalists can and do act out to push at the edges of the regime that controls them – often publicly.

Pushback also shares similarities with resistance. While journalists almost never openly challenge the media control apparatus as a whole, they often ignore or chafe at specific restrictions or directives. The editorial mentioned in the opening section, calling as it does for “openness” in government life, is a careful, if not particularly subtle, dig at the information restrictions Chinese journalists face every day. But although this act has superficial similarities with “resistance,” its distinctions set it apart, as detailed below.

For clarity, it is important to first define “resistance.” Hollander and Einwohner have created a useful seven-part typology, with types of resistance varying by whether the acts were intended as resistance and whether targets and/or observers recognized them as such.³⁰⁵ Pushback problematizes this dimension, however, since reporters almost always publish sensitive articles with the assumption that the consequences will be minimal, or at least mild enough to bear. In other words, pushback is not overt resistance, or “behavior that is visible and readily recognized by both targets and observers as resistance and, further, is intended to be recognized as such.”³⁰⁶ Pushback is likely to precipitate overt resistance (like publishing a letter critical of the CCP or going on strike) under circumstances discussed in Chapter Six, but because pushback has both ambiguous intent on the side of the journalists and uncertain, *post hoc* reaction on the side of the targets, it cannot be seen as overt resistance. This ambiguity also means that pushback is not covert resistance, defined as “acts that are intentional yet go unnoticed (and, therefore, unpunished) by their targets, although they are recognized as resistance by other, culturally aware observers.”³⁰⁷

Pushback also differs from some of the most restrictive categories of resistance, strengthening the argument that it is a separate concept. McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly's notion of contained contention has similarities with pushback because reporters' actions and claims do not usually provoke punishment from state authorities. But there is a critical difference, because not “all parties are previously established actors employing well established means of claim

³⁰³ Noted media expert and activist Sun Xupei, for example, points out that Hu Jiwei, head of *People's Daily* from the late 1970s through the mid 1980s, argued that “Chinese journalists must hold fast to a new principle – while keeping Party leadership of the people our prime consideration, we should honor the people's needs as well” (Sun and Michel (2001), p1).

³⁰⁴ Gaventa might term this an example of what he calls the third type of power. See Gaventa (1980).

³⁰⁵ Hollander and Einwohner (2004).

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p545.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

making.”³⁰⁸ Although the political standing of Chinese journalists has certainly improved over the years, the 30 reporters currently languishing in prison³⁰⁹ put lie to the argument that reporters’ claim making abilities are “well established.” Ultimately, as long as the CCP refuses to quietly relinquish its monopoly on the right to publicly “supervise” or comment on political acts, the media are precluded from contained contention – for now.

Pushback also shares elements of O’Brien and Li’s rightful resistance, in particular, by “operating near the boundary of authorized channels” and relying on “mobilizing support from the wider public.” However, it differs from rightful resistance in that it does not employ “the rhetoric and commitments of the powerful to curb the exercise of power.”³¹⁰ Far from relying, as does rightful resistance, on the state’s own guarantees and commitments to force corrective action, pushback involves making claims based on professional or traditional norms separate from and not sanctioned by the state.³¹¹ Finally, pushback should not be confused with Scott’s romantic notion that covert resistance among peasants creates the reef on which, perhaps, “the ship of state runs aground.”³¹² Some of these actions, including many of the ones detailed below, have easily identifiable, direct consequences on state policy or control.

In short, pushback operates between an enforced quiescence and various types of overt resistance, distinctions the chart below helps draw out:³¹³

³⁰⁸ McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001), p7.

³⁰⁹ Reporters sans Frontières (2009a).

³¹⁰ O’Brien and Li (2006), p2.

³¹¹ Though of course they may be sanctioned retrospectively.

³¹² Scott (1989), p20.

³¹³ Adapted from Hollander and Einwohner (2004).

	Name	Basis of Claim?	Resistive Intent?	Perceived by Target as Resistance?	Perceived by Observer as Resistance?	Are Claims Usually Proactive, Competitive or Reactive?	Works within Existing Claim-Making System?
Increasingly Rebellious and Resistive →	Hegemonic Quiescence	No claims	No				
	Coerced Quiescence	No public claims	Perhaps, but stifled				
	Pushback	Professional and traditional standing and/or cultural capital	No	Usually Not	Ambiguous	Proactive	No
	Weapons of the Weak	Moral economy, social code, or class-based claim	Yes	No	Yes	Reactive or Competitive	No
	Contained Contention (e.g. protests in the democratic West)	Grievances	Yes	Yes, but allowed	Yes	Varies	Yes
	Rightful Resistance	Previous promises by the state	Yes	Yes	Yes	Reactive	Spans the boundaries of contained (allowed) and transgressive (not allowed)
	Rebellion	Varies, usually grievances	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varies	No

Table 7: Pushback in Context

Causes of Pushback

What causes pushback? Traditional political communication theory, whether liberal or critical, often emphasizes the role of market competition in shaping aggressive media action.³¹⁴ The cross-disciplinary social movement literature, meanwhile, has focused on openings in what it terms the political opportunity structure (POS) as occasions for resistive behavior.³¹⁵ Both answers are partly correct, but the answer is much more nuanced. Although macro-economic changes in the Chinese economy and society have clearly created the structural conditions necessary for pushback to emerge,³¹⁶ marketization cannot be seen as proximate cause of pushback.³¹⁷ Likewise, while some journalists certainly take advantage of shifting micro-changes in the POS in deciding which sensitive articles to pursue and publish, such changes allow – but do not directly cause – pushback.

Explaining Pushback, Take 1: The Problem with Economic Determinism

This project's two methodological parts allow detailed exploration of the micro- and macro-foundations of pushback. The computer content analysis (CCA), in measuring an individual article's *sensitivity* and *negativity*, can determine which structural factors are linked with pushback. An article that is both negative and sensitive – an investigative report of official corruption, for example – almost certainly represents pushback. Because Chinese press outlets must carefully monitor the political climate before deciding what to publish, publication of a sensitive piece is done consciously and deliberately. By measuring and correlating these sensitive stories to specific structural and individual factors, the CCA allows a macro-level analysis of pushback. Interview data round out the picture by providing the micro-foundations of individual journalists' behavior. Together, this evidence drives the conclusion that although economic competition is undoubtedly one of the main drivers of the changes in the Chinese news media in the long run, in the short run there is no simple linear relationship between the two. Indeed, increasing market competition has no statistical effect on sensitive coverage and actually predicts *decreases* in negative coverage.

Traditional liberal theories of the press emphasize the importance of competition in creating a free, aggressive press corps. Hallin and Mancini write that “The traditional interpretation ... is the view that ‘the increasing value of newspapers as advertising mediums allow[ed] them gradually to shake off government or party control and to become independent voices of public sentiment.’”³¹⁸ This view has hardly disappeared. Lawson, for instance, in research on the Mexican media, argues that “those media which are most exposed to market competition will become free and pluralistic most rapidly.”³¹⁹ And this view is common among China scholars, too. For example, media scholar Anne-Marie Brady, in a 2008 book, directly links sensitive reporting with commercialization:

³¹⁴ See Shoemaker and Reese (1991), esp. ch. 9 for an overview of these theories.

³¹⁵ For defining works in this vein, see McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996) or Tarrow (1998).

³¹⁶ See Zhao (1998), Lynch (1999), Zhao (2000), Borton (2004), Liebman (2005), *inter alia*.

³¹⁷ This is in part, no doubt, because it is difficult to know how a single story, even a juicy exposé, is affecting readership – a situation especially true in the pre-Internet era.

³¹⁸ Hallin and Mancini (2004), p203, quoting Altick (1957), p322.

³¹⁹ Lawson (2002), p181.

A small number of Chinese journalists continue to challenge the mouthpiece/lapdog role, ‘playing line balls’ (*ca bianqiu*) by pushing the boundaries of what is politically acceptable to publish. Investigative journalism attracts readers/viewers, and in a commercialized cultural economy all newspapers and television stations are competing for advertising dollars and subscriptions/audiences to pay for the cost of production and maintaining well-qualified staff.³²⁰

This view is hardly uncommon. Another scholar has argued that that “the higher the level of marketization, the greater the degree of self-liberalization. Strong market forces [have] reduced the effectiveness of government censorship of the media by multiplying the channels of production and dissemination.”³²¹ In short, it is a common view that market competition drives aggressive journalism – and pushback.

Not all hold to this view, of course. But many critics of this “traditional” model of press commercialization still believe that such marketization influences media content. Indeed, critical or Marxist theories of the press argue that that far from creating journalistic independence, marketization simply transfers control of the press to society’s moneyed interests. For example, Herman and Chomsky “start from the assumption that media serve the dominant elite,” and argue that “this is just as true ... when the media are privately owned without formal censorship as when they are directly controlled by the state.”³²² This tradition is similar to the Gramscian notion that “media institutions serve a hegemonic function by continually producing a cohesive ideology ... that serves to reproduce and legitimate the social structure,” and ultimately the moneyed interests in society.³²³ Ben Bagdikian has argued that commercial media owners work against the public interest,³²⁴ while China scholar Chin-Chuan Lee claims that “the wealthier journalists become, the less politically engaged they are.”³²⁵ Some media scholars do not go quite as far, but many still find that “largely as a consequence of advertising, papers became increasingly homogenous.”³²⁶

For critical media theorists the end result is a press “captured” by bourgeois market interests. This end point is very different from liberal scholars’ notion of a news media inspired by competition to critique power holders; however, both groups share a common teleology. For both liberal and critical media theorists, the economic foundation of the press determines its content. Although commercialization of the Chinese newspaper industry is a long-term driver of media change, over shorter periods of time the causality is far from clear.

Working between the extremes of liberal and critical theory, several scholars of the Chinese press have proposed more nuanced relationships between the state, the market and newspaper content. Yuezhi Zhao, for example, argues that the CCP is now effectively using financial incentives to shape political and economic outcomes for the press, and the results do not necessarily mean that marketized papers will act against the state.³²⁷ “I do not equate

³²⁰ Brady (2008), p81.

³²¹ Pei (1994), p155.

³²² Shoemaker and Reese (1991), p193.

³²³ Ibid., p194, see also Gramsci (1999 [1936]).

³²⁴ Bagdikian (1992).

³²⁵ Lee (2005), p120.

³²⁶ Baker (1994), p41. He does, however, acknowledge two sentences later that “empirical studies [have] difficulty in finding any significance to competition.”

³²⁷ Zhao (2000).

democracy with the market,” she writes.³²⁸ Ashley Esarey makes a similar argument, pointing out that the CCP now uses financial incentives – the very financial incentives enhanced by marketizing reforms – as one among its arsenal of tools designed to keep reporters in line.³²⁹

Regression results from the computer content analysis, reproduced from Chapter Two, uphold Zhao and Esarey’s middle ground by refuting both the liberal and critical orthodoxies:

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables OLS Coefficients (ESE)	
	Sensitive Words ^a	Negativity ^b
Intercept	-.0095 (.0021)***	.4762 (.0320) ***
Central [0]	-.0002 (.0003)	-.0073 (.0040)
Party-Commercial [0]	.0010 (.0003)**	-.0391 (.0050)***
High-Commercial [0]	.0014 (.0003)***	-.0026 (.0039)
Guangdong [0]	.0005 (.0003)	-.0630 (.0050)***
Newspaper Circulation (Log ₁₀ of total yearly distribution) ³³⁰	.0014 (.0003)***	-.0174 (.0047)***
Per-Capita Provincial GDP (unit = 1000 RMB)	-.00003 (.000008)***	.0011 (.0001)***
Market Competition Level (modified HHI, unit = 0-1 scale)	.0045 (.0027)	-.1536 (.0001)***
Distance from Beijing (unit = 1000 km)	-.0004 (.0003)	-.0268 (.005)***
Advocacy Journalism (unit = proportion of relevant terms in article, 0-1 scale)	.0773 (.0025)***	-.0166 (.0379)
R²	0.072***	0.036***

a: Estimated coefficients for change in proportion of sensitive words

b: Estimated coefficients for change in ratio of negative words to total sentiment words

* means p<.05, ** means p<.01 *** means p<.001

Table 8: Regression Results (n=18,897)

³²⁸ Zhao (1998), p10.

³²⁹ Esarey (2005).

³³⁰ Although these data are all from the *Chinese News Yearbooks*, like most statistics in China there is a good deal of evidence they are not entirely reliable. Regrettably, however, this is the best source of information currently available to media researchers. The difference between the highest and lowest circulation papers is several orders of magnitude, making the log approach desirable.

Here is a more concrete chart demonstrating these results with standardized coefficients, to make the results more commensurable:

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables <i>Standardized OLS Regression Coefficients</i>	
	Sensitive Words	Negativity
Central	-.041	-.073
Party-Commercial	.043**	-.134***
High-Commercial	.046***	-.009
Guangdong	.022*	-.112***
Newspaper Circulation	.116***	-.057***
Per-Capita Provincial GDP	-.048***	.099***
Market Competition Level	.009	-.062***
Distance from Beijing	-.023	-.093***
Advocacy Journalism	.211***	-.003

* means $p < .05$, ** means $p < .01$ *** means $p < .001$
Table 9: Standardized Regression Coefficients (n=18,897)

Far from demonstrating a clear link between market factors and press content, these results demonstrate that a more nuanced approach is preferable. Holding other factors constant, an increase of 1000 RMB (~\$140) in per-capita GDP leads to a very moderate decrease in Sensitivity (-0.00003, or 0.024 words per mean-length article) but an increase in the negative to positive words ratio (0.0011). Richer provinces, then, are associated with less sensitive content but more negative tone. Circulation has a similarly paradoxical effect. It has a moderate statistical impact on Sensitivity (0.0014, or 1.1 words/article) but has a much larger negative correlation with Negativity (-0.0174). In other words, as papers gain higher circulation, their content gets more sensitive but their tone less so.

These findings about the relationship between market conditions and press content are strange enough that they deserve an explanation. The most plausible explanation relies on the unique dynamic between state and market in the Chinese news business.³³¹ The most competitive markets have greater visibility and invite greater state scrutiny, decreasing opportunities for newspapers to slip between the cracks. The state is likely to pay more attention to those media markets that, like Shanghai or Beijing, are larger and more important than others. To reiterate a point from earlier, the CPD simply may not have the time, energy or inclination to spend much time on newspapers in smaller cities like Hefei or Datong.³³²

This complex dynamic between politics and markets is captured well by a December 2005 telephone survey of Beijing residents conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social

³³¹ Although Rawnsley (2007)'s critiques about the problems of overly state-centric media studies are legitimate, it is clearly too soon to cast the state aside entirely in analyzing the Chinese media sphere.

³³² To complicate matters a bit, however, it is worth noting that all newspapers everywhere in China are read by at least a few retired or semi-retired party officials who in turn report to higher authorities when they think a transgression has occurred. See He Qinglian (2004), pp 16-18.

Sciences (CASS) and published in the official 2007 *China Journalism Yearbook*. For example, a whopping 64.2% of survey respondents (n=554) agreed that news outlets “report only the good and hold back the bad,” (*baoxi bu baoyou* 报喜不报忧); 59.4% think that “news reports far too rarely reflect the views of vulnerable social groups” (*ruoshi qunti* 弱势群体); 58.6% agree that news reports are far too often full of “empty or boastful rhetoric” (*konghua taohua dahua* 空话套话大话); 56.8% find that some news reports “conceal the truth” (*yangai shishi zhenxiang* 掩盖事实真相); 54.5% think news reports are too “one-sided” (*pianmianxing* 片面性); and 53.7% find that the foreign media cover stories the domestic media will not.³³³ Although market pressures on the consumer side are clearly in favor of more aggressive, truthful and balanced coverage, political pressures ensure that these demands result in a muted response in the short and medium term.

Explaining Pushback, Take 2: Political Opportunity Structures

These results demonstrate the utility of an emphasis on political opportunity structures (POS) to evaluate pushback, for when pushing back – especially when writing sensitive stories – journalists clearly take heed of the political openings available to them. In interviews, reporters often claimed that they were highly attuned to timing and to micro changes in opportunity for publishing sensitive articles. During the yearly meeting of the National People’s Congress (NPC), for example, reporters often hold back on publishing risky articles because they are aware that the media is scrutinized even more closely during these periods.³³⁴

The reporters and editors at *Caijing* magazine, widely recognized as China’s top business publication and one of the country’s boldest political news outlets, are also very careful to time the release of articles with an opportunity to do so safely. Top editors and reporters there claim that the paper has an excellent innate sense of timing, though it seems to help that the founder, and then editor Hu Shuli, went to school with many top CCP leaders.³³⁵ By this account, she is able to get a better sense of micro-openings in the political opportunity structure and publish sensitive pieces at a time when others are unable to do so. The fact that *Caijing* reporters – and those from no other paper – beat the CPD’s ban on reporting about the existence of avian influenza in China is evidence of this careful timing.³³⁶

Occasionally news workers make mistakes about the openings available to them, but even in these cases they act according to *perceived* openings in the POS.³³⁷ For example, *Beijing News* editor-in-chief Yang Bin was ordered removed after allowing reporting on two corruption cases, including one in Hebei province that highlighted problems with the CCP’s “twin regulation” (*shuanggui* 双规) policy of detention for suspected corrupt party members.³³⁸

³³³ Chinese Academy of Social Sciences News Research Institute (中国社会科学院新闻与传播研究所) (2008), p477.

³³⁴ Interviews FU17-2 and FY22-0A.

³³⁵ Interview GX30-2.

³³⁶ Interview HH31-2CZ.

³³⁷ For more on the role of perceptions and how they interact with opportunity structures, see O’Brien and Li (2006), esp. chapter 2, or Koopmans (2005).

³³⁸ This policy refers to investigators designating both a time and place for suspects to appear for questioning. As a result of this article, it has become slightly less sensitive to talk about this policy, something one interviewee notes as “progress” (*jinbu* 进步). At one point there was even a website that allowed readers to track officials targeted by corruption investigations, though that website (<http://digest.icxo.com/sp/shuanggui.htm>, last accessed 11/13/2008) has now been converted into a far less controversial celebrity entertainment site.

This article followed the case of an official under investigation who was beaten to death by authorities while undergoing “twin regulation” questioning. According to a former employee at the paper, Yang Bin knew the story was sensitive but the paper ran it because they thought there was space for such a story. Because the “twin regulation” policy was already under debate by the CCP, Yang Bin and his subordinates thought this “was an opportunity too good to miss.”³³⁹ Furthermore, the reporter and editors involved protected themselves by just reporting the facts and avoiding commentary. Even though this pushback was interpreted by the CCP as resistance behavior and even though Yang Bin was ultimately fired, the publication of the sensitive article was inspired by a sense of political opportunity.

As described in other chapters, many Chinese journalists explicitly aim to “play edge ball.” One told me “of course I have deliberately challenged the government! If you don’t, you don’t have any readers!” though he has worked within the openings available.³⁴⁰ The regime of uncertainty discussed in Chapter Two means that the boundaries are always changing, but again, Chinese publications look for small-scale openings in the POS before deciding whether to publish a sensitive article. An emphasis on political opportunity structures, while certainly having limitations (discussed in the next chapter), is therefore quite useful in predicting the timing of pushback among Chinese journalists.

Indeed, the very regime of uncertainty that the CPD uses to keep most journalists in line fails as a means of control for many of the bravest advocate journalists. Because these advocates are driven by a sense of mission and a calling to help China’s development – with or without the approval of the CCP – they are often willing to push back against specific policies or state bureaucracies in ways that other journalists would not dare to attempt. As Chapter Two has described, pervasive surveillance and uncertainty about where the constantly shifting boundaries of the acceptable might currently lie keeps most journalists well back from these boundaries by encouraging a climate of self-censorship. For the bravest advocate journalists, however, the fact that the CPD or other media control organ has not explicitly banned reporting on a topic sometimes offers an opportunity.

Through a careful sense of timing and a survey of the political opportunities open to them, such journalists push through stories as sensitive as when *Caijing* founder Hu Shuli complained in an editorial about the poor media coverage of avian influenza on the Chinese mainland in late 2005.³⁴¹ Even though the Chinese government has been quite touchy about reporting the existence of acute communicable diseases ever since the SARS outbreak in 2003, *Caijing* was able to write the editorial because the editors judged the timing with extreme care. In fact, immediately after they broke the news of media cover-ups, the CPD came out with regulations against any further such articles, and any further reporting of avian influenza was essentially closed in the domestic press. What is key, however, is that *Caijing*’s reporters and editors were able to correctly sense a micro opportunity that opened and closed very quickly.³⁴² In a sense, such reporters are engaged in a game of chicken with the state media control apparatus. Occasionally they guess poorly and lose, but far more frequently they time stories well and push their agenda without negative repercussions to themselves. The very vagueness of the control that is so successful at keeping most journalists well back from the lines is ironically helpful to

³³⁹ Interview GM08-2. This interviewee has personal knowledge of the events in question.

³⁴⁰ Interview HL9-4.

³⁴¹ Hu Shuli (2005).

³⁴² Interview FY22-0B.

advocate journalists who wish to write on a controversial story. In a world where uncertainty and “control parables” create the conditions that induce most journalists to self-censor,³⁴³ those few who do not follow the crowd have a small but significantly greater degree of latitude in pursuing aggressive coverage. Unless these advocates terribly misjudge their timing or the sensitivity of their story, they can plausibly claim that no CPD circular or specific state policy bans reporting on a sensitive topic, leaving them free to report.

Explaining Pushback Take 3: China’s Professional Journalists

But why do Chinese journalists engage in pushback at all? Why would someone risk “playing edge ball” when “the costs of breaking the rules can be high ... [but] in contrast, the rewards for breaking the rules are relatively slight?”³⁴⁴ The answer comes in part from the surprising professionalization of many Chinese journalists, many of whom, as we have seen in Chapter Four, have transformed from obedient lapdogs of the CCP into journalists recognizable as such by Western observers. Ultimately, though, it is the advocate journalists who engage in pushback and create the systematic changes so easily visible in the Chinese media.

Advocacy Journalism and Pushback

As discussed in the previous chapter, advocacy journalism has a long tradition in China, and continues to resonate today. Li Datong, whose *Using News to Influence Today – The Freezing Point Chronicle*³⁴⁵ has inspired a good deal of discussion and agreement in Chinese media circles, represents this pole most prominently. Li himself specifically points out that reporting on sensitive topics can widen the boundaries of acceptable coverage, writing that “this type of reporting also has another function, which is to gradually increase the sensitivity threshold of those officials who control (*guan zhi* 管制) the media ... If they unceasingly see reports that migrate to the edge of what is acceptable, their threshold for sensitivity (*mingan yu* 敏感阈) will gradually increase.”³⁴⁶ Journalists inside the *Beijing News*, one of China’s top papers, have discussed this book extensively,³⁴⁷ and many other reporters have formed their own opinions. Even an editor who said, “If the media are too professionalized, it is a problem” agrees explicitly that the news should influence policies,³⁴⁸ and this view is far from uncommon.

Results from the content analysis back up interview data in suggesting that an advocacy orientation is critical for determining the content of news articles and of challenge to power holders. An increase from no advocacy journalism to perfect advocate journalism – that is, if an article were composed entirely of self-reference and sentiment – predicts an increase in Sensitivity from zero to nearly 8% of an article’s vocabulary but has no statistically significant relationship with Negativity. In more real world terms, an increase from the observed minimum advocacy journalism (0) to the maximum (0.271, for a 2006 article in *Liberation Army Daily* (*Jiefangjun Bao* 解放军报) predicts an incredible 1042% increase in Sensitivity from 0.002 to 0.023, *ceteris paribus*.³⁴⁹ This dramatic increase, with a standardized estimator nearly twice as large as any other estimator for either dependent variable, showcases the power of the advocate

³⁴³ For more on control parables, see Stern and Hassid (2010).

³⁴⁴ Brady (2008), p81.

³⁴⁵ Li Datong (李大同) (2006).

³⁴⁶ Ibid., p12.

³⁴⁷ Interview GM08-2.

³⁴⁸ Interview HL9-4.

³⁴⁹ Holding dummies at zero and continuous factors at their means.

journalist orientation to influence sensitive stories.

The results are equally telling on Negativity, where journalistic orientation has no statistically significant effect. As argued earlier, the CPD is unlikely to care as much about small, unimportant media outlets and markets as they do about major, influential ones. But another compelling explanation relies on the fact that when writing about sensitive issues, even advocate journalists take care to appear unemotional, for fear of angering power holders. Hu Shuli, the founder and former editor of *Caijing*, one of China's boldest publications, sums up this careful approach in a 2009 *New Yorker* profile, saying "we never say a word in a very emotional or casual way, like 'You lied.' We try to analyze the system and say why a good idea or a good wish cannot become reality."³⁵⁰ This avoidance of negative coverage is common in the Chinese press, especially during sensitive times like the annual meeting of the national legislature. During the leadership transition from Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao, for instance, "editors had been strictly instructed to report only positive stories."³⁵¹ Ironically, then, negative coverage of "ordinary" issues is often more sensitive than neutral coverage of even "sensitive" issues!

To reprise an earlier argument, many reporters claim to work from and admire liberal news professionalism. When pressed, however, most hold more closely with the idea that newspapers should have a distinct viewpoint and should aim to influence policy and politics, hallmarks of advocacy journalism. This attitude accords with long Chinese tradition, as when the editor of the most prominent paper of late imperial China claimed that "reporters must always write objectively, not on the basis of their personal opinions,"³⁵² while simultaneously "seeking to fulfill [the] two objectives of national reform and social justice,"³⁵³ and pushing strong viewpoints. This façade of objectivity also echoes Hallin and Mancini's findings that while the "official" consensus view in countries like Italy is that reporters should aim for neutrality, their coverage belies this attitude.³⁵⁴

In the United States there is a sense that neutral, objective and information-centered journalists make up the "fourth estate" and serve as the best check on the government. In China, however, reporters who wear their opinions on their sleeve take up this role – admittedly a much diminished one, but a real role nonetheless. This somewhat surprising finding is in line with Francis L.F. Lee's argument that in Hong Kong, objectivity "can be a defense for professional news reporting against political pressure, but its practice can also inadvertently lead to the avoidance of responsibilities and even the masking of self-censorship."³⁵⁵ Lee draws on Tuchman's research of the 1970s that found objectivity can be a "strategic ritual" designed to buffer against internal and external organizational pressures on reporters.³⁵⁶ Far from creating bold challengers to the state, liberal news professionalism in China seems to lead reporters toward self-censorship, or at least away from controversy. Professional style clearly matters in the Chinese context, but those news workers who write bold reports – who push back – do so from the advocacy tradition of polemical writing, not from the American paradigm of objectivity.

In short, newspaper articles that follow the advocate professional model of reporter as commentator are far bolder than those that employ the neutrality of American-style journalism.

³⁵⁰ Evan Osnos, "Letter from China: The Forbidden Zone," *The New Yorker*, July 20, 2009, p55.

³⁵¹ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, p96.

³⁵² Judge (1996), p100.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, p121.

³⁵⁴ Hallin and Mancini (2004), esp. ch. 5.

³⁵⁵ Lee (2007), p435

³⁵⁶ Tuchman (1972).

Indeed, the effect on sensitive coverage is significantly higher than for any other variable in the study, demonstrating the importance of the advocacy professional ethos for spurring resistive behavior.

These advocacy journalists find a key distinction between serving “the people” and serving the state, and it is this distinction that lies at the heart of the reason they push back. Prominent former editor Li Datong has been one of the most outspoken news workers in this regard, writing, “The ‘spirit of the party’ will always trample upon the ‘spirit of the people,’ but news itself at the most fundamental level requires [paying attention to] the ‘spirit of the people’ . We cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering, hopes and needs of the people.”³⁵⁷ Many are not quite as open or explicit as Li, but this viewpoint seems to be common among China’s top journalists.

Although much of the literature on Chinese nationalism has not yet differentiated between love of China and love of the CCP, many AJ reporters do make this distinction. For example, Xu Yihua,³⁵⁸ a reporter at a prominent paper, believes part of her journalistic role is to make China a better place, and often this means “supervising” the government. She is strongly engaged in the national project of making China better, and often this requires playing off different levels of government against each other, or cultivating relationships with some government bureaus and not others. She and many of her colleagues do so in an effort to expand the political space for reporting and explicitly to help make China a better place. This effort has become easier over the years, in part because pushback from her and colleagues like her has forced the government to respect the media more than it used to. Now, she says, the relationship between the two is almost like “a dance between equals.”

For news workers like Xu and Li, the state is often seen as a hindrance toward solving some of China’s problems. Even advocate journalists who respect the government and ultimately think the CCP is doing a reasonably good job sometimes feel the need to point out areas of improvement, even – or especially – in areas that might be sensitive for the party/state. Many advocate journalists have thus managed to disentangle patriotism and uncritical acceptance of the CCP, and in so doing have managed to break the party/state’s closely guarded monopoly on the right to comment on political affairs. This change represents a real, long term shift in power relations inside China, all made possible by advocate journalists who believe it is both their right and duty to point out problems in China’s development, even when those problems are the result of sensitive state policies.

Where Does Advocacy Journalism Come From?

The view that journalists are essentially educators or intellectuals with a specific viewpoint and a desire to help “the people” and shape public opinion dates back to imperial times. Centuries before the birth of journalism, Chinese intellectuals claimed a privileged place in to simultaneously critique the government by representing “the people” and, in turn, to educate the people as to what – the intellectuals thought – the people should think and believe.³⁵⁹ Chinese journalists, who even today consider themselves intellectuals, have long been “committed not only to represent and inform by also mobilize their compatriots,”³⁶⁰ and this

³⁵⁷ Li Datong (李大同) (2006), p1, my translation.

³⁵⁸ Interview HL8-4B.

³⁵⁹ See Kluver (1999) for a discussion of this traditional role.

³⁶⁰ Judge (1996), p10.

attitude continues today for the advocacy journalists. This education of “the people,” is sometimes overt – “one plus one equals two,” says one journalist.³⁶¹ Or it can be subtle, as when Xiao Guangxu,³⁶² an editor for *Southern Weekend*, discussed a Chinese husband and wife team who live in the U.S. and report on their experiences abroad. For Xiao, this is the sort of careful pushback that lets people know the situation in other countries without a direct, politically aggressive comparison. The readers can then “make the comparison themselves” and see the problems in China indirectly through the column. Sometimes the idea that journalists should educate the people even blurs into a more general contempt of them. Bai Xinguo,³⁶³ for example, told me his magazine does not particularly care if readers are interested in a story, because he and his colleagues do not write for the readers’ pleasure but for their benefit. Indeed, he thinks that media outlets that too closely rely on pandering to readers put out a low quality product. In the end, though, this desire to educate the populace and build a better China is at the heart of advocacy journalism.

Interviews like these demonstrate a long line of continuity to China’s first early 20th century journalists. When Judge writes that “the political dynamic in the late Qing middle realm was thus less one of the ruled in opposition to the ruler and more one of the ruled becoming complicit in the construction of the state in order to alter the principle of power,”³⁶⁴ these lines hold equally true today for China’s advocate journalists.

Factors Pushing Advocacy Journalism

Maoism temporarily destroyed this ideal of journalists and other intellectuals as a semi-independent power source. So how, then, did this idea (re)emerge in the reform era and gain currency among journalists? Two factors are key to the expansion of AJ orientation in contemporary China: first, the transnational spread of journalistic norms, mainly from the West; and second, the power of informal networks among the journalists themselves. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to describe the international spread of Western, especially liberal American, journalistic norms. Suffice it to say the idea of liberal journalism is powerfully normative, as the example of advocate journalists claiming to be neutral news observers illustrates. Hallin and Mancini write that “The Liberal Model has clearly become increasingly dominant across Europe ... – as it has, no doubt, across much of the world – its structures, practices and values displacing, to a substantial degree, those of ... other media systems.”³⁶⁵

But the second factor – the power of informal networks within China – is both empirically interesting and theoretically fruitful. Journalists in China, as in most countries, are connected by a dense network of personal and institutional ties. For example, in an informal online survey I conducted in late 2008, all journalists met with other Chinese journalists outside of work at least a few times a month, with the outright majority (54%) meeting at least a few times a week. These informal, domestic networks are likely to be a much more efficient spread of norms than transnational ones; indeed, 80% of surveyed journalists met with foreign colleagues a few times a year or less. Such infrequent visits and the inability of even most highly educated reporters to speak English limit journalists’ exposure to international norms, at

³⁶¹ Interview HE24-2.

³⁶² Interview HL6-4.

³⁶³ Interview GX30-2.

³⁶⁴ Judge (1996), p11.

³⁶⁵ Hallin and Mancini (2004), p251.

least in the shorter term. Much more important are the “relationship web” (*guanxi wang* 关系网) that reporters develop in person and on the Internet.³⁶⁶

In particular, blogging is gaining currency among news workers as a way to spread information and to network. The concluding chapters of this project will discuss the Internet’s impact more fully, but now it is important to mention that most interviewees have had a blog at one time or another, as have nearly three quarters of the respondents of an informal, online survey. Reporters often post on their blogs stories that were too sensitive for formal publication, and this is a way for many of them to get around the CCP’s restrictions on information.³⁶⁷ Because most journalists are avid blog readers, even stories too sensitive for publication ultimately become common knowledge – at least among news workers. Because journalists often tend to write for other journalists,³⁶⁸ this system ultimately seems to encourage bolder reporting, and ultimately, more advocacy style journalism. Blogs are also now driving stories that journalists would otherwise miss. When China experienced the worst snowstorm in 50 years in early 2008, for example, one interviewee got firsthand information from local bloggers that contradicted official reporters, in part because the official reports were under huge pressure to only produce positive stories.³⁶⁹ Blogs thus serve as an excellent way for journalists to trade information, often sensitive information, and are an important component of reporters’ informal networking behavior.

Some journalistic networks are even semi-formalized, despite a general climate of government disapproval. Beijing has at least three journalists’ organizations: one each for legal, environmental and entertainment journalists.³⁷⁰ Guangzhou, too, has a more general professional group, though at times it has been deemed “illegal (*feifa*)” according to one editor.³⁷¹ Having personally attended meetings of both the Beijing-based legal and environmental groups, I can attest that they are very much attuned to encouraging advocacy journalism in their respective topic areas. For example, during a meal after a meeting of environmental journalists, I witnessed a discussion between news workers over how best to push environmental awareness. A discussion of the Nu (Salween) River dam project, for example, was ruled out because the CPD has already restricted coverage. Ultimately, these reporters decided to produce a report labeled as a diary of a local farmer affected by environmental issues. By doing so, these journalists and editors hoped to increase environmental awareness among readers and ultimately change policy. This group also discussed issues related explicitly to the profession, like the need for separation between editorial and business sides of newspapers and even a long-stalled potential national press law. In short, these groups act as “think tanks” that act to set agendas and professional norms across the journalistic field.

Pushback’s Effects

Although journalists’ individual acts of pushback – reporting about the corruption case of the former top party official in Shanghai, for example³⁷² – are based on the ephemeral events that make up the news, pushback has longer-term effects as well. Most obviously, publication of a

³⁶⁶ Interview GX16-2.

³⁶⁷ Interviews GX31-2, GM14-2B, HH05-2A, HE24-2.

³⁶⁸ See Shoemaker and Reese (1991), esp. pp 161-64.

³⁶⁹ Interview HH05-2A.

³⁷⁰ Interviewee GX30-2 informed me of the entertainment reporters’ group.

³⁷¹ Interview HL8-4AZ.

³⁷² As *Caijing* did in March, 2008.

sensitive article can at times lead to direct changes in specific party/state policy. One of the most famous cases concerns the 2003 case of Sun Zhigang, a young college graduate in Guangzhou who was beaten to death while in police custody apparently because he was not carrying his identification when stopped on the street. When the *Southern Metropolitan News* (*Nanfang Dushi Bao*) broke the case, a national uproar ensued that ultimately led to the end of the national system for detention of migrant workers.³⁷³ Likewise, when Henan TV reported on May 19, 2007 that hundreds of kidnapped children were being held as slaves in brick factories in Shanxi Province, the resulting national outrage prompted investigations and imprisonments of several government officials.³⁷⁴

However, these short-term policy changes – momentous though they may be – represent only part of the importance of pushback incidents. Since even before the foundation of the People’s Republic in 1949, the CCP has endeavored to retain its monopoly on the right to comment publicly on political acts and to ensure that the press remain in the role of a subservient “throat and tongue.” Although Mao’s statement that “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun” is well known, the party also emphasized the power of the barrel of the pen. Lin Biao, described officially at the time as Mao’s successor, claimed, “the gun and the pen (*qiangganzi biganzi*) are the two things to rely on in making revolution,”³⁷⁵ and certainly before the reform era the CCP made every effort to monopolize the control of both resources. Even today, structural and extra-legal impediments the party/state has imposed mean “all journalists are virtually state employees.”³⁷⁶ By pushing their own viewpoint, however, advocacy journalists are able to slowly widen the circle of acceptable discourse and (re)assume their place as intelligentsia with the right and responsibility to comment on public affairs. Even if these journalists “play edge ball” for patriotic motives – indeed, *because* they do so – they are still able to slowly nudge sections of the party in directions it wouldn’t otherwise want to be taken.

One has to look no further than the case of Zhu Wenna, a reporter who produced an investigative report critical of a local county secretary, to see that journalists have clawed out at least some privileges to comment on or criticize state actions. When the county secretary attempted to have Zhu arrested in Beijing, the press fought back with national media coverage, thundering in editorials that included lines like “The reporter may choose temporarily to hide away from this wild arrest order. In the long run, however, journalists stand in the sunlight. Public opinion cannot lose, and public opinion will not lose.”³⁷⁷

Conclusion

Based on well over a century of Chinese tradition that holds journalists as intellectuals and intellectuals, in turn, as duty-bound to supervise the state, advocacy journalists slowly and carefully challenge the CCP’s monopoly on political communication. While Maoism never

³⁷³ See Hand (2006) and especially Liebman (2005) for further details on this case and its repercussions. Overall, this is a clear example of misguided pushback that went too far and was seen as resistance; the top editor at the paper was arrested and his deputies fired soon after in a move that was widely seen as government payback for reporting this and other sensitive cases (Hassid (2008a)). However, the paper’s editorial staff did want to push for policy change (Interview GX30-2), but certainly had no intention of infuriating state authorities enough to result in firings and imprisonment (Interviews ET07-2Z, EU30-3).

³⁷⁴ See http://www.zonaeuropa.com/20070706_1.htm for an overview.

³⁷⁵ He (2001), p305.

³⁷⁶ Lee (2005), p117.

³⁷⁷ A *Southern Metropolis Daily* editorial, as quoted and reported by the China Media Project’s David Bandurski (2008a).

allowed journalists to serve this role,³⁷⁸ advocacy journalists – based on a professional orientation spread through formal schooling and journalists’ networks – have slowly been seizing it in the reform era, pushing back when they can. Prominent news worker Li Datong explicitly argues that pushback leads to longer-term changes in the Chinese polity:

This type of [sensitive] reporting also has another function, which is to gradually increase the sensitivity threshold of those officials who mind the media. These sorts of officials are also people, people who received a reasonably good education, and the first time they see a report that ‘breaks the rules’ (*fan gui* 犯规) they may jump up, but the second time, or the third time If they unceasingly see reports that migrate to the edge of what is acceptable (*zai jinqu bianyuan youzou de baodao* 在禁区边缘游走的报道), their threshold for sensitivity will gradually increase. As the saying goes, if you’re used to seeing something, its no wonder it turns out that way. Under our current system, the scope of news reporting can only “push back” (*tui chulai* 推出来) one step, one article at a time.³⁷⁹

For Li, then, the constant efforts of reporters to stay just inside the limits of the acceptable ultimately expand those very limits. Pushback, then, is ultimately proactive.

And it is this proactive, and simultaneously contained, nature that makes pushback especially interesting. Much attention has been focused on “macro-resistance” patterns – insurgency movements, terrorism groups or revolution – and on “micro-resistance” weapons of the weak. But there has been little illumination of behavior that, has clear, long-term influence on the distribution of power within an authoritarian polity while still remaining politically acceptable to power holders. Pushback fills this lacuna. Moreover, as detailed in the next chapter, under the right circumstances those who push back become those who resist outright. In short, although neither necessary nor sufficient for later resistive acts, pushback affects both long-term, large-scale social change and shorter-term, smaller-scale acts of collective defiance.

³⁷⁸ With the disastrous exception of the 1956-7 Hundred Flowers Campaign and occasionally in the Cultural Revolution (1966-76).

³⁷⁹ Li Datong (李大同) (2006), p12, my translation, ellipsis in original.

Chapter Six – Beyond Pushback³⁸⁰

Introduction

Previous chapters have demonstrated how and why journalists would choose to push back, but occasionally Chinese media workers enter the realm of outright resistance. When journalists ignore repeated warnings to tone down coverage,³⁸¹ go on strike,³⁸² or publish extremely aggressive open letters criticizing their direct bosses and the CCP,³⁸³ they have deliberately moved beyond the boundaries of the acceptable and into the “red zone” of behavior unacceptable to China’s censorship apparatus. In so doing, such journalists are leaving the relative safety of pushback and are directly – and intentionally – challenging parts of the Chinese party state. Naturally, such behavior has consequences. Most journalists who resist the state outright quickly find themselves thrown out of a job, kicked from the profession entirely, or even imprisoned.

Why would journalists brave such punishments when the odds of success are low and other, safer means of changing policy are available? Why, in other words, might reporters decide that pushback is inadequate, and that more direct measures are called for? In this chapter I point toward the importance of reactive challenge centered on explicit grievances as key toward sparking outright resistance, rather than pushback’s proactive challenge based on a general professional orientation. Specifically, the evidence presented here from general interviews and two case studies suggests that grievances can inspire action when they are 1) related to interference with everyday routines (what Snow, *et al* call “disruption of the quotidian”³⁸⁴), 2) have a specific, visible target or targets, 3) can be easily framed as a moral rights claim to maximize external support, and 4) when actors are already engaged in pushback. When power holders engage in behavior that fits these conditions, outright resistance is more likely.

This chapter relies mainly on case studies of two events, the *Beijing News* strike in late 2005 and the open letters penned in 2004 and 2005 by *China Youth Daily* editors Lu Yuegang and Li Datong. Data about these cases come from published news stories in China and the West, more detailed accounts published in Hong Kong and elsewhere, and interviews with many of the major participants. Together with more general interview data, these case studies allow an in-depth look at what happens inside progressive Chinese news organizations when many of the employees are angered. In presenting these cases, I engage with contentious politics and organization studies literature to examine the forces that push journalists and others into the dangerous waters of resistance.

³⁸⁰ Sections of this chapter are adapted from Hassid (2008a).

³⁸¹ As apparently happened with Chen Jieren, the former editor of *The Public Interest Times* (*Gongyi Shibao* 公益时报), who was eventually fired for ignoring warnings about sensitive reporting for some time. Interview FH21-0 and http://zoniaeuropa.com/20060210_2.htm.

³⁸² As with the *Beijing News* (*Xin Jing Bao*) in late 2005. See Gill (2005).

³⁸³ Something Lu Yuegang and Li Datong, both formerly of *China Youth Daily* did. See Marquand (2005), Li Datong (李大同) and Lu Yuegang (卢跃刚) (2006).

³⁸⁴ Snow, Cress, et al. (1998).

Case One – The *China Youth Daily* Open Letters³⁸⁵

Background

Founded in 1951, *China Youth Daily* (CYD) is the official mouthpiece paper of the Communist Youth League, the CCP's equivalent for young people.³⁸⁶ Since then, but especially since the reform era began, the paper has had a reputation for pushback through interesting and aggressive reporting, especially when compared to other official papers. One of the CYD's most popular sections has been the weekly *Freezing Point* (*Bingdian Zhoukan* 冰点周刊) supplement, which has published a number of sensitive articles over the years. These included: the first major domestic press story on AIDS villages in Hebei province; an article on Lin Zhao, an early communist who was unfairly branded a rightist by the party and killed during the Cultural Revolution; and one that criticized China's textbooks for slanted coverage of World War II at around the same time the Chinese foreign ministry was criticizing Japan for similar behavior. Although this latter piece ultimately precipitated the CPD's decision to temporarily shutter the supplement for "viciously attacking the socialist system"³⁸⁷ an internal, informal market survey in 2004 revealed that similar instances of pushback had already made the brand new *Freezing Point* the "nucleus of the paper's competitiveness."³⁸⁸

This competitiveness resulted largely from the paper's culture of relative independence from the party and a tradition of internal hires for the top editorial positions. This situation changed in 1998 when, for the first time in the 47-year history of the paper, Li Xueqian was made top editor despite having had no experience running a newspaper.³⁸⁹ Indeed, the fact that the CCP moved him from the leadership ranks of the CPD into the editor-in-chief role suggests that party leaders wanted *China Youth Daily* under more direct political control. Ultimately the appointment of Li Xueqian represented the first salvo in a fight between the CPD and the paper's editorial staff.

The Fight Begins

Throughout this period, CYD – and many other party papers in China – were losing circulation and money to the extent that "mainstream papers were marginalized and marginal papers had become mainstream."³⁹⁰ Although appointed by the CCP as an outsider, Li Xueqian moved to strengthen the financial position of the paper by announcing a joint venture with the Jade Bird Group (*Beida Qingniao Jituan* 北大青鸟集团)³⁹¹ that would allow the paper to combat declining margins and become a top national political and economic newspaper. In return for its huge 100 million RMB (\$14 million) investment, Jade Bird would take over the CYD's circulation, advertising and day-to-day management.³⁹² Although the paper's staff members were enthusiastic about the plan, the CCP was not, and was instead worried rather than speaking for the Communist Youth League (and CCP) the paper would instead "speak for

³⁸⁵ Unless otherwise noted, details about this case are taken from Li Datong (李大同) (2006). Li was the head of the paper's *Freezing Point* (*Bingdian Zhoukan*) supplement and had worked at the paper for years as a journalist and editor, and much of his 2006 book is concerned with this incident. Translations are entirely mine.

³⁸⁶ http://www.cyol.net/2001/50baoqing/gb/baoqing/2000-12/26/node_799.htm, accessed 4/16/09.

³⁸⁷ Pan (2006b).

³⁸⁸ Li Datong (李大同) (2006), p8.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p3.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p3.

³⁹¹ This is a large corporation affiliated with and apparently spun off from China's prestigious Peking University.

³⁹² Li Datong (李大同) (2006), p2.

capital” (*wei ziben shuohua* 为资本说话).³⁹³

To combat this potential loss of control, Secretary of the Youth League Zhao Yong gave a May 24, 2004 speech at CYD headquarters telling the reporters and staff members that they are a party organ (*jiguan bao* 机关报) responsible only to the Youth League and CCP, not the market. Using Mao-era rhetoric, he claimed that, along with the military’s “gun barrel” (*qiang ganzi* 枪杆子), the paper served as part of the “pen barrel” (*bi ganzi* 笔杆子) of party support, acting as if little had changed from the paper’s founding in 1951. Even more risibly from the reporters’ viewpoint, Zhao then pointed to recent resignation of Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee as an example of what happens when the government fails to properly “guide public opinion” (*yulun daoxiang* 舆论导向) apparently not realizing that India is a democratic country without press censorship.³⁹⁴

Far from consolidating control over *China Youth Daily*, Zhao’s speech was seen as so out-of-touch that it alienated many of the news workers forced to attend. In response to what he saw as hectoring interference in the paper’s internal affairs, Lu Yuegang, the vice-editor of the *Freezing Point* section, decided to privately confront Zhao by writing him an angry letter and “severely scold this little bureaucrat.”³⁹⁵ Lu wrote his letter several weeks after the Zhao speech and posted it on CYD’s internal website, though he did not himself release it publicly.

Lu Yuegang’s “An Open Letter to Zhao Yong, Secretary of the Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League,”³⁹⁶ was originally written for an audience inside the paper only, and as such does not demonstrate as much tact or civility as might be expected in a public statement. In a remarkably harsh tone, Lu not only attacks his speech but also Zhao Yong personally:

You [Zhao Yong] said before you finished talking that you definitely wanted to have a “heart-to-heart talk” (*tan xin* 谈心) with everyone. We also want to have a heart-to-heart talk with you. But what kind of talk will this be? Do you think those of us listening to you grew up eating shit (*shi* 屎)? Do you secretly think that the intellect of your audience is so low that we cannot distinguish between a “heart-to-heart talk” and a “reprimand?” You represented the Youth League Secretariat when you demanded that the leadership ranks of the *China Youth Daily* “strengthen [their] studies [of Communist ideology],” but it is the Youth League Secretariat, and you especially, who need to “strengthen [your] studies” even more.³⁹⁷

Although intended to be more or less private, the letter was quickly leaked by colleagues inside the paper who were sympathetic to Lu’s agenda. After the mentions in several international press stories, Lu himself became a bit of a cause célèbre and a poster-child for what appeared to many foreign journalists as an example of China’s loosening press strictures.³⁹⁸

³⁹³ Ibid., p3.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., p5-6.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., p6.

³⁹⁶ Lu Yuegang (卢跃刚) (2004).

³⁹⁷ Ibid., my translation.

³⁹⁸ Marquand (2005) mentions it, for example, although this article was written more than a year later. Coverage at the time was provided by prominent blogger Roland Soong at EastSouthWestNorth, with the full text of the letter available at http://www.zonaeuropa.com/20040725_1.htm.

The Party Responds

Although it took a week for Youth League officials to respond, on July 15, 2004 Zhao Yong's office sent a "response and verdict" (*dingxing jielun* 定兴结论) to the paper calling the open letter a "serious political error," that touched on "sensitive topics" and was a "typical case of [bourgeois] liberalization" that has "been exploited by hostile outside powers" (*jingwai didui shili* 境外敌对势力). Ultimately this "response and verdict" called on Lu Yuegang to "bear responsibility" for the "negative influence and consequences" that the letter supposedly produced, but did not otherwise clarify what would happen to Lu.³⁹⁹ According to Lu's editor and friend Li Datong, the Youth League did not initially press for Lu's dismissal or any further immediate consequences for at least three reasons. First, the matter had already attracted international press attention and League officials were worried that dismissing Lu would make the story even bigger. Second, Lu had an ally inside the League, head of the Political Bureau Wang Zhaoguo, who pressed for a weaker punishment for Lu in a memo to others inside the League. And third, Lu had too many other allies inside the paper and out, and the CCP and Youth League were apparently worried that his removal would touch off further embarrassing difficulties in maintaining press control.⁴⁰⁰ In addition to shedding light on the empirics of this case, these reasons also have theoretical interest as well, demonstrating both the sensitivity of Chinese power holders to international press coverage and the importance of having elite allies.⁴⁰¹

As a true advocate journalist, however, Lu was not satisfied with simply escaping further punishment. Indeed, the "response and verdict" handed down by Zhao Yong and the Youth League secretariat infuriated him further, in part because Lu (by his own reckoning) had not violated any law or CCP regulation. And so, "boiling with rage" (*nubuke'e* 怒不可遏), Lu drafted a further 11,000 character response to the League's "response and verdict," delivered it personally to League officials, and gave copies to friends at the paper.⁴⁰² Lu did offer a note of conciliation, however, promising that if the League did not retaliate further, he would neither give further interviews to the foreign press nor defend his original open letter. At the same time, however, Lu told his friends that if any "accident" (*buce* 不测) were to befall him, his friends were to publicize his second letter. There was no further response from the League or CCP for six weeks, and the matter seemed at an end.

Battle is Joined

The Youth League Secretariat, however, was biding its time. Rather than strike at Lu individually, a response that might cause the matter to escalate further, the League decided to simultaneously take on the paper's entire editorial staff by coming up with a policy that would affect them all. And so, on September 1, 2004, the internal website of the paper posted a new policy requiring that all editors have their names removed from the paper, making editorial contributions anonymous. No reason for the policy was offered. Although this tactic would serve to slowly reduce the profile – and thus the safety – of rebellious editors like Lu, it backfired as a low publicity way to retaliate.

Rather than ensuring a quiet and eventual removal of Lu and his supporters, this move

³⁹⁹ The full text of this response is posted on page 7 of Li Datong (李大同) (2006).

⁴⁰⁰ Author interview with a source close to Lu, interviewee ET09-2A.

⁴⁰¹ Of course, neither of these points is new, but they do confirm the "boomerang" theory of international press coverage put forth by Keck and Sikkink (1998) and validate importance of elite allies emphasized by O'Brien and Li (2006).

⁴⁰² Li Datong (李大同) (2006), p9.

immediately collectivized the dispute. At a stroke the CYD's entire editorial staff was dragged into the dispute as the paper attempted to take away the "right," given years earlier, of having their contributions acknowledged. As such, the League was attempting to change the day-to-day work habits of the paper's editorial staff in what amounted to a "disruption of the quotidian."⁴⁰³ Previous scholarship has indicated that such a disruption is likely to cause collective action and unrest.⁴⁰⁴

Unrest ensued. In addition to numerous comments on the paper's internal website questioning the reason for this policy change, the proposal also rallied many of the editors around the points expressed in Lu's original letter. In other words, far from isolating Lu, the League's new policy had encouraged the other editors to offer support to his original incendiary claims and rhetoric. Li Datong writes that Lu "was not acting for himself, but for *China Youth Daily* and the rights of the whole Chinese news community. Now the retaliation on him became a retaliation on our whole group, and we had no choice but to fight off this frontal assault."⁴⁰⁵

One of the most interesting challenges to this policy came from Li Datong, who posted a response on the paper's internal website entitled "Isn't the Right to Sign One's Name Fundamental to Those Working in the News Industry?" (*Shumingquan Shibushi Chuanmei Congyerenyuan de Yixiang Jiben Quanli? 署名权是不是传媒从业人员的一向基本权利?*). This posting relies on seven principal arguments: 1) a claim that not publicly naming editors is not in the government's interest because otherwise it will be more difficult to figure out who is responsible for political and other mistakes; 2) reporters' professional ethics and procedures create the right to be named; 3) the current system is the only way for editors to get recognition and fame; 4) this right has existed since the mid-80s, and other government-run press outlets like China Central TV (CCTV) identify their editors; 5) getting rid of the naming system doesn't make economic sense, since famous reporters and editors are the paper's major resource; 6) a *reductio ad absurdum* argument – if Lu Yuegang were a reporter, would the state now be abolishing this right for all reporters as well?; 7) Li raises the question about whether the Youth League even has the right to eliminate the editor naming system, and if so, under what authority and according to what reasons? Although Li presents this multi-pronged challenge to the new policy, he is careful not to question the press control in general or to attack Zhao Yong personally. And some of these arguments are more theoretically interesting than others. In the analysis section of this chapter, below, I will concentrate on numbers two, three and seven.

After other editors posted their own letters of support for Li and Lu, the paper's editor, Li Xueqian, withdrew the policy. The reporters had won. By banding together, they had not only beaten back a challenge to their authority, but also saved one of their colleagues from further retaliation. Li Datong writes that he had never heard of a victory like this inside this or any paper, and it prepared him for the possibility of future changes and victories as well. Social science literature suggests that when subordinates collectively win against power holders, they are emboldened by the victory and more likely to attempt such action again.⁴⁰⁶ The change in consciousness this first victory produced meant that the editors were beginning to discover their strength, something that made future confrontation more likely, not less.

Round Two

The leadership of the Youth League was apparently – and understandably – quite

⁴⁰³ Snow, Cress, et al. (1998).

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, Chen (2000).

⁴⁰⁵ Li Datong (李大同) (2006), p9.

⁴⁰⁶ See McAdam (1989) for one of the definitive studies on this issue.

unhappy with this outcome, ordering the replacement of editor-in-chief Li Xueqian shortly thereafter. In his place, the League and party appointed Li Erliang (no relation), someone widely seen as more closely representing the interests of the CCP and Youth League.⁴⁰⁷ And the new editor Li acted quickly, proposing a policy in mid-2005 that would tie employees' compensation to how favorably senior officials viewed their articles. This policy would determine bonus payments to reporters and editors based mainly on whether their articles were praised or criticized by higher officials. For example, if an article appeared as one of the top three most popular in each month's readers' survey, it received 50 points, but if it was praised by higher party/state officials it would receive from 80 to 300 points, and lose as much if criticized.⁴⁰⁸ Because bonus payments are often the bulk of reporters and editors' salaries,⁴⁰⁹ this proposal would for the first time tie news workers' pay directly to the official reception their stories received. In short, this was a bold and transparent attempt to control the writers and editors at CYD through their pocketbook.

Unsurprisingly, this plan did not sit well with CYD news workers. Li Datong again spoiled for a fight, posting a long and scathing letter on the paper's internal website claiming that the plan would "enslave and emasculate and vulgarize the China Youth Daily," though Li was "not so naïve as to think that this is a product of [the editor's] personal will. It goes without saying that [the editor] is an executor." Although Li wrote the letter alone, it was quickly leaked to others in a form of collective action. "We had to move quickly, before they [the CPD] started blocking it," recalled one senior editor⁴¹⁰ who was among those responsible for publicizing the letter.

In an echo of the similar Lu Yuegang letter of a year earlier, the uproar at the paper and online ultimately doomed the "points for pay" plan. Despite the harshness of their comments, however, neither editor was thrown in jail or removed from his job. Li Datong and Lu Yuegang's own prominence and the paper's high profile were important reasons that the CCP moved slowly and deliberately in chastising the two men. Initially the two were not disciplined because of a threat by other journalists to strike if the CPD did so, thus turning this protest into collective action, albeit briefly.⁴¹¹ The two journalists' aggressive behavior did not end there, however. When *Freezing Point*, the section Li edited, published an article by a controversial historian challenging the official interpretation of the Chinese Civil War, the CPD decided it was finally time to strike back. In February 2006, party officials demoted both Li and Lu to a backroom "research" section of the paper and temporarily shuttered *Freezing Point*. When it relaunched five weeks later, it did so without either Li or Lu, its crusading editors.⁴¹² Even with a prominent public stature and the backing of colleagues, then, journalists can only push the government so far before facing serious consequences. Nonetheless, the case of the *China Youth Daily* open letters has interesting theoretical implications that are drawn out in the analysis section of this chapter, below.

⁴⁰⁷ Li Datong (李大同) (2006)

⁴⁰⁸ Li Datong (李大同) (2005).

⁴⁰⁹ Esarey (2005).

⁴¹⁰ Pan (2006b).

⁴¹¹ Interview ET09-2A. However, this is not to imply that everyone at CYD agreed with Li and Lu's handling of this situation. One senior editor told me that she thought they had both gone too far and did not support their actions (Interview HB20-2).

⁴¹² Spencer (2006).

Case Two – The Strike at the *Beijing News*⁴¹³

Background

The *Beijing News* was founded in 2003 as a joint venture between the staid, central government-run *Guangming Daily* and the commercially successful Southern Newspaper Group (*Nanfang Baoye Jituan* 南方报业集团), publisher of well-regarded papers like the feisty *Southern Weekend*.⁴¹⁴ On paper the match benefitted both companies. *Guangming Daily* (“*Guangming*”) has a valuable central-level administrative rank but as China’s poorest major publisher is chronically short of cash,⁴¹⁵ and the Southern Newspaper Group (“Southern”) has plenty of money but China’s newspaper administration rules make it difficult for it to obtain a publication number⁴¹⁶ or expand outside of its base in Guangdong province.⁴¹⁷ *Guangming* thus gained a potentially lucrative source of revenue and Southern a high-profile presence in Beijing. Although Southern initially contributed most of the staff and investment, *Guangming* received 51% of the new paper’s shares, giving it ultimate voting control.⁴¹⁸

Southern staff initially dominated the day-to-day running of the paper⁴¹⁹ and quickly turned the *Beijing News* into one of the most influential papers in Beijing.⁴²⁰ Coming from the generally more open and aggressive Guangdong newspaper market, the Southern editors and staff ran the *Beijing News* very differently from the way *Guangming* was run. At the paper’s helm was Yang Bin, a former Southern employee who encouraged a number of sensitive and controversial stories. These included a report on official corruption in early 2005,⁴²¹ a story on demonstrations in Hebei province by landless farmers, and a piece on pollution in Northeast China’s Songhua River.⁴²² Although these stories sold papers and at times even influenced national policy, they did not sit well with either CPD officials or *Guangming* executives, who were used to a much more politically pliant newsgathering operation. Ultimately, the different risk tolerance and work styles of the Southern and *Guangming* staff created chronic tension in the newsroom, on at least one occasion even leading to a fistfight between rival reporters.⁴²³ In short, although the paper was beginning to be commercially successful, this success masked deep structural problems within the company.

An Editor Goes Too Far

Throughout Yang Bin’s tenure as editor-in-chief, *Guangming* and CPD officials grew increasingly dissatisfied with the *Beijing News*’ aggressive coverage and over time it became clear that they would be unable to control Yang.⁴²⁴ The final straw was when Yang allowed reporting on two corruption cases, including a story by veteran reporter Luo Changping that

⁴¹³ Details of this case come from published news reports and author interviews with some of the participants, who understandably wish to remain anonymous.

⁴¹⁴ Interview GM08-2.

⁴¹⁵ Interview HH20-2.

⁴¹⁶ Publication numbers (*kanhao* 刊号) are parceled out twice a year by the GAPP and are difficult to obtain. All legal publications must have one. See Redl and Simons (2008), p62.

⁴¹⁷ Interview GX31-2.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ For example, Southern contributed most of the senior and middle management staff (Ibid.).

⁴²⁰ Media scholar Anne-Marie Brady (2008) call the *Beijing News* a paper that “people actually like to read,” and even the CPD recognizes its influence (p75).

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² Reporters sans Frontières (2006).

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Interview GM08-2.

highlighted problems with the CCP's "twin regulation" (*shuanggui* 双规) policy of detention for suspected corrupt party members in Hebei province.⁴²⁵ This piece followed the case of an official under investigation who was beaten to death by authorities while undergoing "twin regulation" questioning. According to a former employee at the paper, Yang Bin knew the story was sensitive but ran it anyway because he and Luo thought there was enough political space for such a story. Because the policy was already under debate by the CCP, Yang and his subordinates thought this "was an opportunity too good to miss."⁴²⁶ Furthermore, the reporter and editors involved protected themselves by just reporting the facts and avoiding commentary. And the article has had a real policy impact, making public discussion of the "twin regulation" policy less sensitive, an effect one interviewee notes is "progress" (*jinbu* 进步).⁴²⁷ Indeed, there is now even a "twin regulation" website that allows readers to track officials targeted by corruption investigations.⁴²⁸

The Strike

In spite of – or perhaps because of – this policy success, power holders were not amused, and in late December 2005, they acted. Soon after the article on the "twin regulation" policy appeared, the CPD and *Guangming* ordered Yang Bin and several of his deputy editors, all originally from Southern, removed and replaced by *Guangming* employees.⁴²⁹ The removal of editorial staff is fairly common at Chinese papers, which normally carry on business as usual after such an event. However, what happened next at the *Beijing News* was unprecedented: "Reporters stopped filing articles ... after Mr. Yang was moved aside, employees told Associated Press. Some reports suggested that up to a quarter of the paper's 400 editorial staff walked out."⁴³⁰ One unnamed reporter quoted in the foreign media talked about the first moments after the dismissals:

The announcement of [deputy editor] Sun Xuedong's dismissal caused a great deal of turmoil among the staff. Seven of my colleagues spontaneously downed tools in protest and left the office. Others meanwhile thought it was the end of the newspaper and tried to rescue copies. Sun asked all the journalists to go back to work at once. One of the strikers replied: 'It's out of the question. That would be like being a traitor.'⁴³¹

News workers at the paper tell a dramatic tale in which over 100 people, mostly staff originally from Southern, hugged each other and cried in the newsroom before meeting at a karaoke parlor to discuss the events.⁴³² Ultimately, they decided to go on strike to protest the decision, an action which is not legal under Chinese labor law.⁴³³ Worried that if CPD officials got wind of the planned strike they would try to stop it in advance, or that some of the participants would back out before it began, the meeting participants decided to lock themselves inside the karaoke parlor and prevent each other from leaving.⁴³⁴ Ultimately, about 70% of the editorial staff struck

⁴²⁵ This policy refers to investigators regulating both a time and place for suspects to appear for questioning.

⁴²⁶ Interview GM08-2. This interviewee has personal knowledge of the events in question.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ See <http://digest.icxo.com/sp/shuanggui.htm>, last accessed 6/19/2009.

⁴²⁹ Soong (2005).

⁴³⁰ Gill (2005).

⁴³¹ Reporters sans Frontières (2006).

⁴³² Interview HB24-2.

⁴³³ See footnote 292, *supra*.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

(despite the newspaper report above claiming only 25%), divided into 50% who were die-hard Yang Bin supporters and 20% who could have gone either way, but were persuaded – or forced – to go along.⁴³⁵

Perhaps because of the secrecy measures the participants implemented, the strike apparently took the CPD by surprise, but foreign media had thorough coverage, including interviews with several of the participants. Foreign and Chinese journalists found out about the strike either through a posting on influential blogger Anti's website or through their own personal networks.⁴³⁶ Many of the reporters who went on strike are advocacy journalists, an orientation that has given them experience with pushing the boundaries of the acceptable, and one that likely makes them more willing to directly challenge the state. For example one *Beijing News* journalist said to an Associated Press reporter about Yang Bin, "He asked us to be responsible, accurate, and true. He is a model for me, and a man with high standards. I would hope that some day I could be like him." One reporter went further: "'We were happy with our paper and the idea we had. But now the editor is leaving and the idea will leave with him. I am very sad,' said a journalist who spoke with foreign reporters despite the presence of security officials and a warning that she could lose her job."⁴³⁷ Even some *Beijing News* journalists not on strike gave sympathetic support to the strikers. For example, a picture widely interpreted as showing support for the strikers appeared in the paper on the strike's second day. The picture, apparently taken from the newspaper offices, shows a flock of birds with poetic caption reading "the lead bird guides its flock through the upper air, and although the sky is neither clear nor sunny, the birds still fly toward the distant objective they carry in their hearts."⁴³⁸ Such coverage strongly implies the presence of advocate professionals willing to challenge state actors on an issue they feel strongly about.

Although the strike only lasted two days, both sides agreed to a face-saving measure whereby Yang Bin was still removed from his post but the deputy editors retained their jobs and *Guangming Daily* received less control than originally announced. The strikers had thus obtained a partial victory, an impressive result under China's draconian media control apparatus. The strikers' victory, however, proved temporary. Rather than attempting to remove the strikers *en masse*, the CPD and *Guangming* simply slowly replaced them over time with *Guangming* officials, who now dominate the day-to-day affairs of the paper.⁴³⁹ As a result, the *Beijing News* has lost some of its previous influence and reputation as a crusading newspaper,⁴⁴⁰ and ironically is not a large source of revenue for cash-poor *Guangming*.⁴⁴¹

Despite its ultimately disappointing outcome, the strike was a watershed for many of the advocate professional participants, who have since met at the same karaoke bar every year to reminisce and relive the dramatic events.⁴⁴² And finally, the walkout of senior staff indicates a strong level of commitment to their editor and their journalistic ideals. It is certainly no accident that by all accounts the paper was full of advocate professionals, or that many of them chose to go on strike when their grievances reached fever pitch. As one anonymous *Beijing News* journalist wrote after the strike, "We are not against society. ... We only want to say and do

⁴³⁵ Interview GM08-2.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ Marquand (2006).

⁴³⁸ Kang Yafeng (康亚风) (2005), my translation.

⁴³⁹ Interview GX31-2.

⁴⁴⁰ Interview HB24-2.

⁴⁴¹ Interview HH20-2.

⁴⁴² Interview HB24-2.

right on each and every concrete issue. To change things one bit at a time. ... Now that we are living in this dispiriting darkness, we realize we cannot just work for that bit of salary. Ideals are where self-respect lies.”⁴⁴³

The Theoretical Payoff

But why does this matter theoretically? Does the fact that some individual Chinese journalists or papers get rambunctious from time to time merely add another wrinkle to previous theories of contentious politics? Other than recognizing that media groups do not always act at the behest of the state, what can this behavior tell us about contentious politics more generally? How is this all related to pushback? In answering these questions, China’s contentious journalists can help shed fresh light on venerable theories and provide some new testable propositions at the same time.

First, this behavior suggests that the recent effort by the most prominent theorists of political process theory (PPT) to revise its micro-foundations by moving away from overly structural arguments is laudable. In its earlier incarnations, PPT relied on “the conviction that most political movements and revolutions are set in motion by social changes that render the established political order more vulnerable or receptive to challenge” or in other words, changes in the “political opportunity structure” (POS).⁴⁴⁴ Elements of the POS have included: “1. The relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system; 2. The stability of that broad set of elite arguments that typically undergird a polity; 3. The presence of elite allies, and 4. The state’s capacity and propensity for repression.”⁴⁴⁵

Realizing that purely structural approaches to PPT can approach tautology – evidence for changes in the POS are usually determined *post hoc* after an effective social movement – these scholars have moved toward recognizing the importance of perceptions that mediate actors’ interactions with the POS. “Rather than look[ing] upon ‘opportunities and threats’ as objective structural factors,” McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly increasingly “see them as subject to attribution.”⁴⁴⁶ Indeed, this chapter’s emphasis on individual acts of journalistic resistance itself falls into the “analysis of smaller-scale causal mechanisms” that these scholars have recently turned toward.⁴⁴⁷ And although grievances are not specifically mentioned, these PPT scholars have hinted at their importance when they recognize the need to both “explain how people who at a given point in time are not making contentious claims start doing so” and indeed “to explain what sorts of actors engage in contention.”⁴⁴⁸

The cases presented here do indeed support the efforts of PPT scholars to move away from a purely structuralist approach.⁴⁴⁹ The strike of most of the *Beijing News*’ senior staff, for example, does not fit neatly into the original, unmodified POS explanation. On none of McAdam, *et al*’s (1996) four factors were any objective changes evident that might encourage the emergence of a new, brief social movement. For example, even by strict Chinese standards, the political system at the time of the strike was not particularly open – especially for journalists. In addition, building on McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly’s (2001) enhanced allowance for the role of

⁴⁴³ Anonymous (2006), as quoted and translated by Roland Soong on his EastSouthWestNorth blog.

⁴⁴⁴ McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996), p8.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., p10.

⁴⁴⁶ McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001), p43.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., p24.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., p34.

⁴⁴⁹ Though naturally these cases neither represent nor are intended to represent the same sort of thoroughgoing quantitative review that characterizes most of the early PPT scholarship.

perception, it is clear that at least in the case of the letter writers Li and Lu, the principal actors involved did not perceive an “objective” opening in the opportunity structure, and seem to have been motivated more by exasperation than any sense of an enhanced possibility of success.⁴⁵⁰ These news workers’ perceptions, and the ultimate state reaction against them, make clear that this was not a case of pushback, but of outright resistance. And during cases of outright resistance, journalists often throw caution to the winds and aim to move beyond the boundaries of the acceptable.

It would be a stretch to claim any sort of “objective” opening at all in the Chinese media, which is currently experiencing of a well-publicized crackdown on wayward newspapers,⁴⁵¹ especially those that concentrate on political reporting.⁴⁵² Indeed, seventy-nine newspapers were closed by the central government in 2005, with the CPD announcing an ongoing effort to “severely crack down on illegal publications.”⁴⁵³ In other words, during the very time of both the *Beijing News* strike and open letters at *China Youth Daily*, the CPD was visibly and publicly cracking down on wayward elements of the Chinese press. Such a scenario makes it very unlikely that the participants in both events saw objective political openings.

But the current media tightening extends beyond these arguably informal measures, as Beijing has also pursued increasingly onerous legal restrictions. Regulations issued by the GAPP⁴⁵⁴ in late 2005, for example, require that a newspaper’s Publication Permit be revoked if “the newspaper publication quality fail[s] to reach the prescribed standard over a long period of time,” or if it “fails to improve after being investigated and penalized.”⁴⁵⁵ Neither the “prescribed standards” nor the “long period of time” are further specified, and the vague wording of these new regulations is no accident. Again, these regulations came in effect around the time of the open letters, and *before* the *Beijing News* strike. In short, these examples demonstrate that even in such inauspicious circumstances, resistance is possible – a conclusion that reinforces the importance of PPT scholars’ recent moves away from a purely structural explanation of contention and protest.

Towards a synthetic theory of grievances?

The key questions, then, are what motivated journalists to engage in contentious, collective action despite the lack of an obvious political opening? And why did their protests take the form they did? Why not simply push back, and stay (relatively) safe? For preliminary answers, the literature on grievances and repertoires is helpful. The empirical evidence from these cases within the Chinese news media implies that grievances alone can often be enough to spark contentious action, though probably only when other criteria are also met. Evidence from the media and elsewhere in Chinese public life suggests that grievances can inspire action when they are 1) related to “disruption of the quotidian,”⁴⁵⁶ 2) have a clear personal target or targets, 3) potential actors can seize the moral or symbolic high ground, and 4) actors are already involved in pushback.

Kahneman and Tversky discovered over thirty years ago that in general people are much more sensitive to potential losses than to potential gains, and this loss aversion is a key insight of

⁴⁵⁰ Interview ET09-2A. This interviewee has personal knowledge of the events in question.

⁴⁵¹ See Pan (2006a) and Kristof (2005)

⁴⁵² Interviews ER29-0, FY01-0, and GL09-0.

⁴⁵³ South China Morning Post Staff (2006)

⁴⁵⁴ Chapter IV, Article 53, paragraphs (2) and (1), respectively, of the *Regulations for the Administration of Newspaper Publication* promulgated by the GAPP on September 30, 2005 as Decree No.32.

⁴⁵⁵ Chang, Wan and Qu (2006), p459.

⁴⁵⁶ Snow, Cress, et al. (1998).

what they term prospect theory.⁴⁵⁷ While people are indeed motivated to action by the possibility of gains, in general they are more highly motivated to avoid losing what they already have, an insight Snow, *et al* build upon with their theory of how social movements begin. “The kind of breakdown most likely to be associated with movement emergence,” they argue, “is that which penetrates and disrupts, or threatens to disrupt, taken-for-granted, everyday routines and expectancies.”⁴⁵⁸ While journalists face constant oppression and challenges from superiors and the central government, low pay and social prestige, danger from irate targets of investigative stories, and an overwhelming desire to change jobs,⁴⁵⁹ this sort of “everyday” pressure only rarely turns into contentious social action.

Even when journalists are threatened *en masse*, as with the public media crackdown of 2005, they tend to merely grumble about it,⁴⁶⁰ but when reporters at individual papers are threatened with a disruption of their everyday routine – as in the cases above – they are much more likely to react against power holders. In the case of Li Datong and Lu Yuegang’s *China Youth Daily* open letters, both rebelled against changes in the day-to-day running of the paper. Those journalists and editors at the *Beijing News* who went on strike did so to protest removal of their editor and sudden, heavy-handed interference by the CPD and their *Guangming* colleagues and bosses. Snow, *et al* argue “it is not exploitation or deprivation per se that is unsettling to the peasant, but actual or threatened disruptions of the peasants’ subsistence routines,”⁴⁶¹ and the evidence from the media suggests this analysis can be extended to “public professionals” as well.⁴⁶²

This disruption of the quotidian is, however, necessary but not usually sufficient to produce collective action. Feng Chen, in an analysis of labor strikes at failing state owned enterprises (SOEs), argues that the bankruptcy of an SOE was not by itself enough to induce worker ire in most cases: “The motivation [to strike] increases if they believe that their economic plight is exacerbated by managerial corruption at the workplace.”⁴⁶³ In other words, the workers need a visible target. And Snow, *et al* agree, claiming that accidents tend to encourage collective action when they “can be attributed to human negligence and or error rather than to natural forces or ‘acts of God.’”⁴⁶⁴

Evidence from the Chinese news media further supports this conclusion. Despite the fact that seventy-nine newspapers were closed in 2005,⁴⁶⁵ collective action by the reporters involved remains rare. In the specific incidents described above, there was always a specific target or targets that mobilized collective action. Both Li Datong and Lu Yuegang, for instance, wrote letters directly to the CCP-appointed editor-in-chief in protest of policy changes. The *Beijing News* strike is a little more general, but Southern workers had the easy, visible target of the *Guangming* editors called in to replace them. One reporter quoted in the foreign press said “All day, Mr. Chao, a very conservative envoy from *Guangming Ribao*, tried to restore order among

⁴⁵⁷ Kahneman and Tversky (1979).

⁴⁵⁸ Snow, Cress, et al. (1998), p2.

⁴⁵⁹ Wang (2005).

⁴⁶⁰ One interviewee, for example, asserts that the large majority of Chinese journalists “hate [*hen*]” the Hu Jintao administration (Interview ER29-0), though few actually publicly act.

⁴⁶¹ Snow, Cress, et al. (1998), p10.

⁴⁶² The term is taken from Stern and Hassid (2010).

⁴⁶³ Chen (2000), p42.

⁴⁶⁴ Snow, Cress, et al. (1998), p7

⁴⁶⁵ South China Morning Post Staff (2006)

us in the name of the Chinese Communist Party. Without success.”⁴⁶⁶ Indeed, the strikers specifically targeted *Guangming* when “a petition denouncing Mr. Yang's dismissal and the handover of control to more conservative editors was circulated among staff.”⁴⁶⁷ While liberal editors are replaced all the time in the Chinese press, they are not usually replaced by representatives of the very organization that ordered their replacement in the first place. Thus having a general “disruption of the quotidian” or threatened subsistence routines are necessary but not usually sufficient – there often must be a concrete and easily visible target for collective action.

Next, contentious collective action is also encouraged by the easy employment of moral symbolism to frame and legitimate the nascent movement. Hurst and O'Brien (2002)⁴⁶⁸ point to examples of protest without an obvious individual target, but their work highlights the importance of a moral element to inspiring collective action. In their study, pensioners, raised in the Maoist context of proletarian dictatorship and the “iron rice-bowl,” believe their moral rights are violated when their pensions are not paid. The “radiant past” of the Mao years, both imagined and real, and the government’s own rhetoric both give them an easily employable symbolic weapon they can use to legitimate their protests.

Similarly, collective action by the media is often made in reference to a moral compass defined by the official views of the ruling CCP and international journalistic practice. In response to *China Youth Daily* editor-in-chief Li Erliang’s announcement that reporter pay was to be tied to the political reception of their articles, Li Datong wrote:

The core of these regulations is that the standards for appraising the performance of the newspapers will not be on the basis of the media role according to Marxism. It is not based upon the basic principles of the Chinese Communist Party. It is not based upon the spirit of President Hu Jintao about how power, rights and sentiments should be tied to the people. It is not based upon whether the masses of readers will be satisfied. Instead, the appraisal standard will depend upon whether a small number of senior organizations or officials like it or not.⁴⁶⁹

Here, Mr. Li is criticizing the plan on the basis that it is opposed to Marxism and “the basic principles of the Chinese Communist Party,” or in other words, is immoral even in reference to the CCP’s own standards.

Interestingly, and unlike O'Brien and Li’s rightful resistance, journalists also base their claims on international press standards, not just the CCP’s own rhetoric. Li Datong writes “The public letter was written as criticism from one individual to another, but the responsibility of an editor is to the public as a whole according to professional standards. Therefore canceling the rights of editors to have their names on articles must also be done according to reasons governed by professional standards.”⁴⁷⁰ “Similarly, “The freedom of the press should be guaranteed as before. Pressure is unacceptable,” one reporter in the *Beijing News* strike was quoted as saying,⁴⁷¹ despite the obvious fact that in practice, freedom of the press has never been

⁴⁶⁶ Reporters sans Frontières (2006).

⁴⁶⁷ Gill (2005).

⁴⁶⁸ Hurst and O'Brien (2002)

⁴⁶⁹ Li Datong (李大同) (2005).

⁴⁷⁰ Li Datong (李大同) (2006), p8.

⁴⁷¹ Yahoo! News, via Kodo News at <http://asia.news.yahoo.com/051229/kyodo/d8eq4a6g4.html>, accessed 3/2006.

“guaranteed” in China at all. Employing this type of language may indeed be merely tactical, but is not necessarily deployable in every circumstance. While “retirees’ protests in China display elements of moral economic resistance,”⁴⁷² these moral claims are not restricted to an urban underclass, and indeed seem to be a common feature of many Chinese collective action incidents, arguably related to what Tilly and Tarrow call “standing claims.”⁴⁷³

And finally, outright contention seems more likely when actors have already been involved in pushback. It is certainly no accident that both papers have high concentrations of advocate journalists, including “authority baiting” *Beijing News* editor Yang Bin.⁴⁷⁴ Moreover, McAdam’s work on the consequences of activism suggests that it can leave participants “attitudinally more disposed and structurally more available for subsequent activism.”⁴⁷⁵ Although pushback is certainly far from comparable to the intense activism that characterized the subjects of McAdam’s research, it does seem likely that journalists who spend their days trying to advance policy, often against the interests of important power holders, will be predisposed to challenge the state more directly when they feel such action warranted. One of the more common phrases I heard from these journalists was “those on top have policies, and those on the bottom have countermeasures” (*shang you zhengce, xia you duice* 上有政策，下游对策). The implication is that advocate journalists spend much of their normal working time trying to wiggle around various state policies, and this orientation almost certainly makes further activism more likely when grievances reach a breaking point.

Echoing scholarship arguing past activism makes future activism more likely, news workers who push back seem predisposed to moving toward outright resistance when sufficiently aggrieved. This conclusion is in contrast with the “conservative perspective” suggesting “subordinates’ ‘ritual rebellion’ and satirizing of authority constitutes a ‘safety valve’ for their frustrations and tensions.”⁴⁷⁶ Instead, empirical work in a Brazilian telecom company, for example, has suggested that by sensitizing subordinate classes to the possibilities of resistance, such borderline unacceptable behavior seems to make employees more rebellious.⁴⁷⁷

Conclusion

Not only has previous scholarship on social movements in China overlooked the media’s relationship with the emergence or development of such movements, this scholarship has also downplayed the extent to which journalists are sometimes contentious actors themselves. This revelation has both an empirical and theoretical payoff, shedding light not only on the phenomenon of China’s surprisingly aggressive reporters, but also providing evidence for the renewed importance of grievances in contentious behavior. Results from the press and elsewhere suggest that collective action is most likely to arise when groups are faced with subsistence crises or “disruptions of the quotidian,” have a specific target or targets to blame, are able to call upon a moral or symbolic claim as a legitimating factor, and are already engaged in resistive behavior.

⁴⁷² Hurst and O'Brien (2002), p360.

⁴⁷³ Tilly and Tarrow (2007), p82. These are claims that “say the actor belongs to an established category within the regime and therefore deserves the rights and respect that members of that category receive,” (Tilly and Tarrow, p190).

⁴⁷⁴ Gill (2005).

⁴⁷⁵ McAdam (1989), p758.

⁴⁷⁶ Rodrigues and Collinson (1995), p743.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

Chapter Seven – Conclusion

This project aims to survey the landscape of activism by Chinese journalists, examining how, when and why professional news workers decide to enter the treacherous political fray. Activism by journalists is hardly new, but it does seem to be entering a new phase of importance in the People's Republic. Although a pervasive climate of uncertainty and other structural mechanisms keep most journalists' behavior in check, a few intrepid souls manage to nudge CCP policy in unexpected directions – though even their failures can be consequential.

These journalists share a common understanding of their place in Chinese political life, one based heavily on the mores and outlook of their profession. Professions – whether public (e.g. journalism and law) or non-public (e.g. medicine and engineering) – play an increasingly important role in the Chinese polity. Professionals do not face a smooth road to political importance, however, and must overcome institutional and behavioral roadblocks. Pervasive corruption is among the most important of these obstacles, creating public outrage and preventing professional unity. When, despite all the obstacles, professionals do push back, they aim to advance the boundaries of acceptable political action from the inside, achieving maximum leverage with minimum risk. Sometimes, though, power holders push journalists too far, and when these news workers feel their livelihoods are threatened, the bolder among them tend to move from the relative safety of pushback into the maelstrom of outright resistance to Chinese power holders.

In the sections below I will recap each of these arguments in turn, situating them in the social science literature while drawing out implications for China and elsewhere. Next, I present extended discussion of the Internet, which is daily growing in importance in China and elsewhere. In contrast to those analysts who see the newspaper business in a death spiral of irrelevance, I argue that “traditional” and “emerging” media have a symbiotic relationship that is likely to persist for some time. Finally, I advance an agenda for future research, drawing out specific hypotheses that follow from my conclusions.

Uncertainty – Obstacle and Opportunity

Although long a topic in international relations,⁴⁷⁸ the study of uncertainty is still in its early stages for most comparativists. Works like Lisa Wedeen's 1999 *Ambiguities of Domination* have pointed to uncertainty as a critical element in some authoritarian governments' efforts to manage their citizens. In highlighting the importance of uncertainty in controlling the Chinese media, I hope to move the study of Chinese repression beyond simply calculating the number of cracked skulls or imprisoned journalists. As in other countries,⁴⁷⁹ the Chinese government hopes to induce *internal* control – having people control their own behavior – rather than relying on expensive and inefficient *external* control. This desire for internal control may well be universal among modern governments,⁴⁸⁰ but too little previous work in comparative political science has taken it seriously as an effective, cheap and ubiquitous control mechanism.

⁴⁷⁸ E.g. Downs and Rocke (1995), Powell (1996), Fearon (1997).

⁴⁷⁹ Such as Communist Yugoslavia. See Drakulic (1993).

⁴⁸⁰ Foucault (1977) certainly argues that it is, claiming that modern governments have moved from external control to internal control, creating populations that govern themselves. Etzioni (1965) makes a similar argument about the relative effectiveness of internal vs. external control. At a minimum it is a very old strategy, as Padgett and Ansell (1993) demonstrate in their study of the rise of the Medici in 15th century Florence.

Even if not deliberate,⁴⁸¹ the use of uncertainty to control the behavior of journalists and other public professionals fits with the CCP's general pattern of policy experimentation and pragmatism. The central party's penchant for results rather than dogmatism and China's decentralized policy implementation together mean that the country does not have one media policy but dozens or even hundreds. Because each level of administration has its own local propaganda department with varying levels of tolerance,⁴⁸² and because actual monitoring of press content is often done non-systematically by retirees or pensioners,⁴⁸³ the press environment changes from place to place, region to region, and even seasonally. The dynamic and mercurial nature of this press control system makes it difficult for news workers to anticipate changes in policy and discourages most from pushing the boundaries of the acceptable.

But this system has positive effects for news workers as well. Nearly every local press market in China is a potential laboratory for political or economic innovation, so changes often spread quickly when they are seen to work. The rise of the "metro" paper – one more attuned to the cultural and political sensitivities of its urban audience than its less nimble party competitor – is a direct result of the experimentation allowed by this local laboratory culture. In what David Bandurski from the University of Hong Kong's China Media Project has dubbed "Control 2.0," China's censorship organs seem to be shifting from reacting to breaking news toward agenda setting and proactively framing events.⁴⁸⁴ Like many market innovations, this new, less invasive form of control seems to have bubbled up from below, with local propaganda departments in southern China employing "hitmen" to write stories lauding local officials rather than simply suppressing negative news.⁴⁸⁵

Finally, this regime of uncertainty means that those journalists brave enough to risk sanctions can take advantage of the shifting political space for publication to work on aggressive or sensitive pieces. Those who push back are aware of micro-variations in political timing, and can seize on power holders' statements or actions as an excuse to spur publication of stories that just days earlier would have been unacceptably aggressive. Reporters at *Caijing*, for example, sat on a story about the outbreak of avian influenza in China until they felt the timing was auspicious. Immediately after the story broke, the CPD restricted any further news reports on the subject, but *Caijing* escaped unscathed.⁴⁸⁶ Sometimes even the most seasoned news workers misjudge timing, but for those brave enough to attempt gaming China's shifting political winds, the regime of uncertainty can offer opportunities as well as limitations.

The Utility of the Pushback Concept

Although pushback is relatively common in China, and perhaps elsewhere as well, theoretical treatment of it and similar kinds of behavior is rare. Analyzing how reporters "play edge ball" is difficult given the ambiguous and ever-changing environment in which they work. More generally, scholarly treatment of similar kinds of behavior in China and elsewhere is "a highly complex task" given the necessarily "disguised and subterranean nature of many of these

⁴⁸¹ And again, evidence seems to indicate that it is.

⁴⁸² For example, Lee, Zhou He and Yu Huang (2007) discuss some differences between Shanghai's media environment and that of other cities.

⁴⁸³ He Qinglian (2004), p14-16.

⁴⁸⁴ Bandurski (2008b).

⁴⁸⁵ These "hitmen" seem to be freelancers who do not disclose their relationship with local governments. See Zhang Yanlong (2008).

⁴⁸⁶ Interview FY22-0B.

resistance practices.”⁴⁸⁷ The notion of pushback avoids some of these problems by recognizing the highly contingent nature of resistive activities. By focusing both on the *intent* of Chinese journalists skirting the line and on how their actions are *perceived*, I hope to avoid a “one size fits all” approach based entirely on one factor or the other.

Concentrating on news workers’ intent alone is a tricky business; memories are fallible, and those caught making trouble often profess – or, indeed, believe – in their own purity of mind. Likewise, relying exclusively on the *post hoc* perceptions of pushback targets or third parties runs dangerously close to tautology. Such a definition, classifying an act as either pushback or resistance based entirely on power holders’ reaction, is equally unsatisfactory. By combining the two elements, however, I hope to advance a definition that is both mindful of actions’ individual context and robust enough to be applied outside a Chinese media context.

In arguing for increased attention to acts that are between quiescence and resistance, I am answering Zoller and Fairhurst’s call for “views of behavior that can simultaneously be reproductive and resistance,” that evaluate “both overt and covert forms of resistance, including the politics of ambiguity,” and that provide a “view of how emotion and reason intertwine.”⁴⁸⁸ The concept of pushback fills this gap by concentrating on acts that are intended to change the policies or behavior of power holders without challenging the foundations of the Chinese political system. Indeed, those professionals engaging in pushback often seek to support or even strengthen the CCP’s rule in China, but feel that the party/state sometimes needs a nudge in the right direction. In providing this nudge, most of these public professionals are deliberately seeking non-challenge to the regime’s power structure. Although the aims of those pushing back are non-revolutionary or even status quo preserving, the long-term effects of this behavior have a potentially transformative effect on the Chinese political system, a point I will expand upon below.

Pushback and Social Movement Theory

Despite significant differences between pushback and social movements, the dearth of literature on similarly ambiguous behavior has encouraged reliance on the social movements literature for theoretical foundations. Definitions of social movements vary, but Burstein, *et al* provide a typical one: “organized, collective efforts to achieve social change that use noninstitutionalized tactics at least part of the time.” By “noninstitutionalized,” they mean “activities that (1) are not part of the formal political process and (2) are intended to be disruptive (whether they are legal or illegal).”⁴⁸⁹ Although many of the resistive actions discussed in other chapters are clearly noninstitutionalized, Chinese news workers who push back generally lack formal organization and at times have contradictory goals or strategies. Collective action, too, is rare.

Given these key differences, the increasing phenomenon of pushback by Chinese news workers is best thought of not as a social movement itself but as a potential spawning ground for future social movements. Like a nebula that makes future star formation more likely, the spread of non-communist, and especially advocate, professional ethos is likely to increase pushback – and potentially outright resistance – around the Chinese media. Although conventional social movement literature has some utility in this context, it is helpful not to overstate the similarities between this literature and the Chinese case. Critically, the majority of social movement studies

⁴⁸⁷ Rodrigues and Collinson (1995), p740.

⁴⁸⁸ Zoller and Fairhurst (2007), p1341.

⁴⁸⁹ Burstein, Einwohner and Hollander (1995), p278.

and much of the theorizing concern Western, and especially American, contexts. Many of the early, influential studies were based on the American Civil Rights Movement,⁴⁹⁰ but even seminal work like Tarrow (1989) and Tilly (1995), although outside the American case (contemporary Italy and early modern Great Britain, respectively), still assume an open, democratic political system generally tolerant to popular challenge.

The relatively closed, authoritarian Chinese regime complicates earlier notions of “insider” and “outsider” challenge. The existence of pushback in a nether region between “contained” and “transgressive” contention suggests that reliance on these terms is unhelpful toward advancing truly comparative – not merely Western – social science. Although pushback indeed “operates near the boundary of authorized channels,” it differs from O’Brien’s concept of “boundary-spanning contention”⁴⁹¹ in that those pushing back generally do not employ “the rhetoric and commitments of the powerful,” relying instead on traditional standing and professional mores to justify action. The dynamics of the Chinese media and studies of other public professionals⁴⁹² suggest that a strict dichotomy between those legally allowed to engage in political activity and those banned from the political sphere serves as a blinder to other forms of liminal political action. Such a view glosses over the important realm of activists who stand outside the formal political system while still socially or culturally empowered to comment on and engage with political forces.

Why Does the CCP Allow Pushback?

Why does the CCP risk allowing bold reporters to push back and publish sensitive stories that might embarrass various levels of Chinese officialdom? Why not simply implement a Soviet-style pre-publication censorship apparatus, especially as the Chinese copied the Soviet media system wholesale in the years after 1949? There are at least four likely reasons: 1) the regime of uncertainty is cost-effective; 2) it increases the credibility of Chinese news at home and abroad; 3) allowing minimal media freedom can help the central government monitor problems in the periphery; and in a related point, 4) the relatively decentralized Chinese state has overlapping and conflicting lines of authority that allow bold reporters to work between the interstices of the system, exploiting gaps and playing power holders against one another. I will expand each of these arguments in turn.

As an alternate model to China’s current system, the Soviet Union’s press control apparatus relied on pre-publication censorship and approval by *Glavlit*, the main press control organ. Interestingly, the head of *Glavlit* claimed that this pre-approval system was a “more efficient and less ‘painful’ method” than was *post-hoc* censorship, which he claimed was “‘essentially punitive’ and ‘totally inapplicable’ to newspapers, television and radio broadcasts, [and] he decidedly did not favor confiscating, destroying or altering publications that had already been typeset.”⁴⁹³ Where *Glavlit* was a huge organization, employing 70,000 censors and with “an elaborate internal structure”⁴⁹⁴ the Chinese CPD is less than 1/200th the size,⁴⁹⁵ more nimble, and due to dramatically lower personnel costs, almost certainly cheaper to operate.

Lower expenses aside, the relative nimbleness of the Chinese system also has other distinct advantages. Compared with the USSR’s onerous system of pre-publication censorship,

⁴⁹⁰ Eyerman (1989), p532.

⁴⁹¹ O’Brien (2003), p53.

⁴⁹² For example, Rachel Stern’s work on Chinese environmental lawyers. See Stern (2009).

⁴⁹³ Murray (1994), p59.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., p58.

⁴⁹⁵ Having only about 300 staff, according to Brady (2008), p20.

the Chinese censorship apparatus allows much quicker media response to changing events. After the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, for example, the Chinese press was on the scene and reporting live very soon thereafter, and this quick response dramatically increased the Chinese media's domestic credibility, at least initially.⁴⁹⁶ The gulf between China's disaster coverage, especially over the past few years, and the glacial response of the Soviet press to the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident, for example, is huge. By allowing relatively free on-the-spot reporting from disaster sites, the CCP ensures that the domestic media superficially resembles respected international media, potentially keeping fewer Chinese from taking the trouble to circumvent restrictions on access to foreign news while simultaneously increasing China's soft power abroad. Given that journalists in contemporary China still self-censor, the CPD has hit upon a strategy that is simultaneously more responsive and more effective than the Soviet model, especially in the era of the 24-hour news cycle.

A third reason the CPD likely allows some pushback is to help the central state monitor conditions and compliance at the local level. It is well known that local Chinese authorities often conceal negative information from superiors or subvert central directives, strong evidence that Beijing is not always aware of what happens locally.⁴⁹⁷ Reporters are well aware of this phenomenon, too, and the center encourages media to root out local corruption – up to a point.⁴⁹⁸ Sometimes even diligent reporters have trouble investigating local conditions. One environmental journalist, for instance, has noted the tendency of officials to be “mute” (*kouya* 口哑) when he investigates local problems, even when sent by his central-level paper.

In the 1980s, media scholar Sun Xupei used the same argument to urge for greater press freedom, writing that “The existing structure of China's bureaucratic system does not provide the right to combat misguided policies ... Consequently, the Chinese media can do serious harm.”⁴⁹⁹ Peter Lorentzen has argued that local protests can serve as a “fire alarm” to higher-ups to alert them to local problems, and central level authorities are unlikely to know about such events without reasonably accurate and timely media reports. Beijing, he argues, allows “incomplete censorship” to simultaneously provide this vital information while not allowing so much negative news that it might cause instability.⁵⁰⁰ Egorov, *et al* advance a somewhat similar argument, though their evidence from China is somewhat problematic. This sloppiness aside, their macro conclusion that “resource-poor dictators” allow freer media in an effort to control lower level bureaucrats does seem plausible in China as well.⁵⁰¹ This system works especially well because reporters for agencies like Xinhua often write sensitive stories for “internal reference” only. This means such stories can alert higher-level authorities to problems without the knowledge of the general public.⁵⁰²

And finally, pushback happens in China in part because the party/state apparatus is so vast and fragmented that a total crackdown on aggressive media reporting is nearly impossible to

⁴⁹⁶ See, for example, <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2008/06/zhang-qi-will-the-earthquake-transform-china/>.

⁴⁹⁷ O'Brien and Li (1999).

⁴⁹⁸ Interview ET02-3.

⁴⁹⁹ Sun and Michel (2001), p4.

⁵⁰⁰ Lorentzen (2008).

⁵⁰¹ For example, they argue that during the 2002-3 outbreak of sudden acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), “in the absence of free media, incentives for lower-tier bureaucrats to provide sufficient effort and transmit necessary information to higher levels proved inadequate.” They then contend that orders banning coverage on SARS originated from the Central Publicity Department, apparently not realizing that the CPD is a *central*, not local level agency. See Egorov, Guriev and Sonin (2009), p646.

⁵⁰² Wang Jun, a reporter for *Outlook Weekly*, discusses this system in Polumbaum and Xiong (2008), p24.

implement. Unlike the centralized Soviet system, policy implementation in Communist China – even under Mao – has always been relatively decentralized.⁵⁰³ Although the state has enacted regulations making aggressive reporting more difficult – including forcing journalists to exclusively write about their own local geographic area⁵⁰⁴ and at their paper’s administrative rank or below – such restrictions are often ignored in practice with few consequences.⁵⁰⁵ The multiplicity of party/state agencies at all levels of the bureaucratic hierarchy means that journalists can often play off different levels of administration against one another. For example, one reporter from a Guangzhou-based paper ignored the request from a provincial-level government bureau to get advance approval on a story she was running because she had backing from an even more important bureau. When her paper ran the story without further consultation, she was mildly reprimanded but otherwise unaffected, even after disobeying a direct state request.⁵⁰⁶ Sometimes reporters can go even further in directly taking advantage of their place in the party/state hierarchy. One editor claimed that the Chinese press actually has more “power” (*quanli* 权利) than the American press because in a sense most Chinese reporters, as official government employees, represent the party/state. When journalists from a paper like *People’s Daily* or even *Southern Daily* talks to someone like a “county head” (*xianzhang* 县长), they can claim with some justification to represent a higher administrative level and sometimes even tell local state officials what to do.⁵⁰⁷ Given the fragmented state of the administrative hierarchy and the positive benefits that Beijing gets from an imperfectly controlled press, the central state is likely to conclude that a total crackdown on reporters’ pushback is both impractical and counterproductive.⁵⁰⁸ And pushback continues.

From Pushback to Resistance

In the move from pushback to outright resistance, news workers travel beyond the pale of acceptable political action into a realm explicitly forbidden by the powerful. Resisting journalists have few illusions about how activities such as strikes or aggressive open letters will be received by their targets, and are often resigned to punishment before beginning the offending acts. Such workers, then, are decidedly *not* taking advantage of openings in the political opportunity structure for their activism. Instead, they are goaded beyond endurance to act out their frustrations despite nearly certain punishment. While a reliance on political opportunity structures is useful in explaining the timing of pushback, in cases of outright resistance a turn toward examining grievances is more theoretically fruitful.

The cases of the *China Youth Daily* open letters and *Beijing News* strike detailed in the previous chapter suggest that grievances are likely to inspire political action when potential actors’ everyday lives, and especially their economic livelihood, are disrupted, when targets are clear, and when the language of a moral cause is easily deployable. Note that I am not arguing that these three conditions are either necessary or sufficient to cause resistance behavior –

⁵⁰³ For contemporary legacies of Maoist-era policy decentralization, see Hurst (2004).

⁵⁰⁴ Restricting a practice known as “foreign supervision” (*yidi jiandu* 异地监督).

⁵⁰⁵ Interview HL8-4B.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Interview HL8-4AZ.

⁵⁰⁸ This situation is by no means unique to China. Poland’s journalists similarly exploited cracks in the elite power structure to publish bold articles during various thaws in the communist censorship apparatus. See Curry (1990), p153-9.

leadership and conscious framing clearly play a role as well⁵⁰⁹ – but these three elements certainly seem to make resistance more likely. Although developed in a Chinese context, evidence from abroad also suggests the utility of this formulation.

For example, when Soviet officials objected to the 1981 vice-presidency – specifically required by statute – of activist journalist Stefan Bratkowski at the Moscow meeting of the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ) and invited a rival group of Polish journalists instead, it created a battle between Polish journalism and state officials. Curry notes, “This displacement was an issue worth fighting about for them even though the IOJ, as a Soviet based organization, offered little concrete gain and no real prestige in Poland itself or in the West.” They engaged in the battle, instead, because their “defiance was a reflection of their desire to play their professional roles of communication and orientation.”⁵¹⁰ In other words, the actions of Polish and Soviet officials: 1) disrupted the set routines of Polish journalism by barring the attendance of activist journalists at the conference, 2) created the easily visible targets of specific Polish and Soviet officials, and 3) allowed the deployment of moral language targeted at professional rights, and together inspired dramatic solidarity among most Polish journalists and against state power holders. This and other defiance against the state ultimately left the journalists’ union “one of the few organizations explicitly attacked for ‘threatening the interest of the security of the state.’”⁵¹¹

Evidence also exists outside the authoritarian regimes of the last 30 years. For example, the Boston Tea Party, one of the iconic incidents of early American history, also fits the pattern. In May 1773 the British government passed the Tea Act in an effort to shore up the flagging finances of the state-sponsored British East India Company, increase state revenue and “confirm Parliament’s right to tax the colonies.”⁵¹² The Tea Act directly threatened American merchants’ illegal and lucrative smuggling of Dutch tea and outraged colonists already angered by previous taxation efforts.⁵¹³ There was a highly visible target, too; Massachusetts governor Thomas Hutchinson had refused to allow untaxed tea to be returned to Britain and had written letters arguing that colonists’ liberties should be further curtailed. Claiming that the British crown was infringing on their liberties, hundreds of colonists threw 90,000 pounds of tea into Boston Harbor and further inflamed both British and American public opinion.⁵¹⁴ Especially coming after years of previous pushback, often in the form of contentious lawsuits, by radical American colonists like Samuel Adams, the attack on the economic livelihood of (illegal) tea smugglers, ease of deploying moral language and a highly visible target made the Boston Tea Party a clear case of resistance spurred by specific grievances.

The Importance of the Professions

Although not an element of late 18th century American resistance, in contemporary China and around the world the professions – especially public professions like law and journalism – have become critical in shaping political action. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has written that “political subversion presupposes cognitive subversion, a conversion of the vision of the

⁵⁰⁹ On the role of leadership in China and elsewhere, see Boin (2001), Zoller and Fairhurst (2007), Li and O'Brien (2008). On framing, see Zald (1996), Tarrow (1998), Blecher (2002), Stern (2005).

⁵¹⁰ Curry (1990), p231.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., p236.

⁵¹² Knight (2003), p132.

⁵¹³ Labaree (1964), p102.

⁵¹⁴ Knight (2003), p132.

world,”⁵¹⁵ and powerful professions ultimately provide this “cognitive subversion.” Although I have argued that Chinese journalism is hardly monolithic, groups of news workers within the four professional orientations I describe share Peter Haas’s criteria for belonging to an “epistemic community.” Many advocate journalists, in particular, have “a shared belief or faith in the verity and the applicability of particular forms of knowledge or specific truths.”⁵¹⁶ In the case of some advocates, these shared truths are relatively simple. First, they tend to believe in taking up the traditional mantle of a Chinese intellectual, a view that entitles them to critique and comment on affairs of state and to educate the public at large about “correct” policies and opinions. Many also further hold that their job is to “supervise” the party/state, especially in terms of protecting the interests of “the people” in general or vulnerable social groups (*ruoshi qunti* 弱势群体) in particular.

As members of an epistemic community, such advocate journalists have the potential, increasingly realized, to be a powerful force in Chinese public life. Peter Haas notes that as the world becomes increasingly complex, the state’s need for information and advice increases accordingly. In general, “epistemic communities are one possible provider of this sort of information and advice,”⁵¹⁷ a trend further strengthened by the fact that the very nature of the news profession is to gather and disseminate information and analysis. As the Chinese government looks toward the media to provide ever more information and interpretation, the role of the advocates, especially those organized in institutionalized and semi-formal networks, is likely to increase proportionally. Even – or perhaps especially – under authoritarianism, the central state must turn to a professionalized media to provide it with information about the actions of local authorities. To ensure that this information is reliable, it is in Beijing’s interest to encourage an accurate, professional, and politically neutral media. Given the resonance that the traditional role of Chinese intellectuals has for many contemporary journalists, the Chinese government is likely to get the first half of its wish – greater professionalization – while being unable to avoid an increasingly networked, organized and activist media. It is ultimately the nature of the Chinese news media as an epistemic community and as a profession that makes such a fate likely, especially in the Internet age, as I will expand upon below.

Lawyers, like journalists, are *public* professionals, or “those whose jobs offer a platform (courts for lawyers, the media for journalists) to attract public attention and broadcast opinions.”⁵¹⁸ But what about the *non-public* professionals? What of those doctors, engineers, veterinarians, accountants, and architects who are members of a well-defined profession but whose job does not entail public action? These professions have also gained prominence in recent years, especially as China has turned to technocratic solutions for many social, economic and political problems. Indeed, although the percentage of technocrats at the pinnacle of CCP leadership has declined in recent years, all current members of the Politburo Standing Committee, China’s highest governing body, are engineers by training.⁵¹⁹ As the professions gain prominence and coherence in China – a process helped along by foreign exposure, training and direct influence – even the non-public professions are likely to be more assertive on areas that affect them directly. In turn, this makes it likely that state-employed professionals will act according to their own training and code of conduct rather than in the interests of their party/state

⁵¹⁵ Bourdieu and Thompson (1991), 127-8.

⁵¹⁶ Haas (1992), p3.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., p4.

⁵¹⁸ Stern and Hassid (2010), p5.

⁵¹⁹ Cheng (2009), p18.

employers.⁵²⁰ In other words, increasing pushback might come from other professions as well, though it will likely be less public and more narrowly targeted at areas of specific technical competence compared with journalists' rather broadly resistive behavior.

Corruption's Corrosion

This rise of increasingly politically mobilized professions is not inevitable, however. Perhaps the greatest institutional obstacle to a professional, united and activist news media is corruption. And the corruption of the Chinese news world is often epic. Hundreds of journalists routinely line up to receive "gag fees" (*fengkoufei* 封口费) after industrial or mining accidents, sometimes representing the most trusted names in Chinese news. Indeed, journalists from central level radio, television and newspapers are even more likely to be corrupt because they can take advantage of their position in the administrative hierarchy and the greater negative publicity a story by their employer would generate.⁵²¹ For some industrialists, even paying hundreds of reporters hundreds of dollars apiece is cheaper than making basic safety upgrades or improving worker training. Business reporters routinely play the stock market while writing stories to promote the stocks they own and make a quick profit, to the point of collectively organizing across papers to increase the positive "bump" on a stock from news stories.⁵²² Others try to blackmail companies with negative information, asking for as much as 300,000 RMB (~\$50,000) at a time.⁵²³ Journalists and editors hire their friends or relatives to be reporters without any training or aptitude, further encouraging cronyist behavior.⁵²⁴ Such corruption even extends into the media control apparatus, with some companies or powerful individuals having officials from the local propaganda department call a paper to kill a story rather than pay the journalists off. For this reason, "mine owners often get chummy with propaganda department officials, and then when a problem happens, tap this resource to unilaterally shut things down, regardless of official policy."⁵²⁵

One veteran reporter sums up the effect that corruption has on the media as an institution saying, "It's like if you have heart disease, you can't complain about your leg," meaning that he sees corruption as a more serious problem than state censorship.⁵²⁶ Interestingly, with growing competition in the Chinese economy, some reporters think that corruption is increasing. In part this is because there is simply more money to go around, but more importantly, as new companies are started they often pay reporters to promote positive stories about them in an effort to get noticed.⁵²⁷ This blurring of the lines between news media and public relations is very common. But although news workers agree that such behavior is problematic and that taking bribes is wrong, "the vast majority do it anyway while aspiring for a system in which it isn't necessary."⁵²⁸

Reporters' corruption – especially when they know better – therefore serves as a systemic block to further professionalization of the news media. The central state, for its part, seems to be

⁵²⁰ Thomas (2003) discusses this phenomenon in the U.S. among ecologists working in different bureaucracies who still coordinate action.

⁵²¹ Interview HH12-2.

⁵²² Interview GX30-2.

⁵²³ Interview GM05-2.

⁵²⁴ Interview HL9-4.

⁵²⁵ Interview GM08-2.

⁵²⁶ Interview GM14-2A.

⁵²⁷ Interview ET08-2.

⁵²⁸ Interview HL6-4.

of two minds about media corruption. On the one hand, state organs like the GAPP and co-opted ones like the ACFJ exhort against corrupt activities and shame journalists publicly caught breaking the rules. On the other hand, however, the state seems to encourage further corrupt actions because it makes the job of policing and controlling the media somewhat easier. When news workers cross a political line, charging them with corruption is an easy and believable way to ensure their silence.⁵²⁹ This policy works even better if the accused journalists are actually guilty of corrupt behavior; the media's systemic corruption means that such charges are often true.

When the CPD forces an unwilling professor to offer bribes to journalists attending his press conference,⁵³⁰ at a minimum controlling corrupt journalistic behavior is not at the top of its agenda. Moreover, some of its directives strongly imply that the CPD itself is corrupt, or at least in collusion with those who are. The fact that papers are not allowed to report on corruption in their local areas too regularly is evidence of this conclusion, as is the fact that one interviewee provided me with a CPD directive banning coverage of poor mobile phone service. A sudden increase in dropped calls hardly seems like a political issue, and it is reasonable to conclude that the (state-controlled) mobile phone companies bribed or otherwise pressured CPD officials to ban coverage for purely economic reasons. In the end, the systemic corruption of Chinese media workers makes professionalization – of all types – less likely and keeps the media pliant. Writing about Mexico, Susan Eckstein argues, “The regime, in particular, thrives on corruption. For decades such everyday defiance of the law enhanced the regime’s stability; all groups had some stake in noncompliance with rational-bureaucratic rules.”⁵³¹ Activists who stick to their principles and rock the boat are a threat to everyone; those at the top of the pile fear for their position and those at the bottom resent and mistrust colleagues who will not “play by the rules.” A similar dynamic is at work in China.

Advocacy’s Short Term Consequences

Whether working online or in print, all Chinese journalists face significant political, economic, organizational and behavioral barriers to advocacy. What is surprising, then, is not that China has so few advocates but so many. Even this powerful handful can promote immediate, dramatic political and social consequences. The most famous remains the Sun Zhigang incident, discussed more fully in Chapter Two, where pressure from a report by advocate journalists spread online and forced Beijing to ditch its decades-old system of detention for internal migrant laborers. Equally dramatic, however, was the 2007 exposure by a local television reporter of hundreds of kidnapped children being used as slaves in Shanxi brick factories.⁵³² This Dickensian “black kiln” incident galvanized online opinion and ultimately led to the disciplining of 95 mostly lower-level officials even as the local scion of a CCP official in charge of one of the kilns received only a nine-year sentence.⁵³³ Despite this leniency and charges that many of the officials disciplined were scapegoats, having 95 party/state officials punished was a major victory for public opinion, and the outrage led to hundreds of children being freed.

⁵²⁹ By all accounts, this is how the CCP controlled papers in the Southern Group when they were becoming a political liability. See Kahn (2004), Esarey (2005).

⁵³⁰ Interview HH23-2.

⁵³¹ Eckstein (1989), p42-3.

⁵³² For the initial, official English language news story, see Zhu Zhe (2007).

⁵³³ Ni (2007).

In another prominent example, Huang Yuhao, a reporter from the *Beijing News*, reported on local officials in Shandong and elsewhere forcibly committing petitioners for government redress to psychiatric institutions.⁵³⁴ Reports like this, republished in other papers and spread online, have increased pressure to end this practice. Although there has been no change in official policy, exposing the abuse of the psychiatric detention system to public scrutiny represents a step forward. Advocate journalists, especially when they push back with sensitive stories about corruption or misconduct, can instigate real policy change in the PRC, even under a government often systematically unresponsive to public opinion.

Advocacy's Longer Term Consequences

The longer-term implications of the rise of the advocates are perhaps more consequential. These journalists have strong parallels to Meyerson and Scully's "tempered radicals," individuals within American organizations "who identify with and are committed to their organizations, and are also committed to a cause, community, or ideology that is fundamentally different from, and possibly at odds with the dominant culture of their organization."⁵³⁵ Many of these reporters feel a tension between their belief in moving China forward and the everyday restrictions the CCP and their own news organizations place on their work. Being committed to working within the system while simultaneously trying to change it has consequences for reporters and the media system as a whole. One former *Southern Weekend* reporter sums up this attitude, claiming that "being a reporter is impossible in China," in part because press restrictions make it difficult for reporters to push policy changes.⁵³⁶ Ultimately, such tempered radicals "experience tensions between the status quo and alternatives, which can fuel organizational transformation."⁵³⁷ This is because "change often comes from the margins of an organization, borne by those who do not fit well."⁵³⁸

In the Chinese media, advocate journalists assume this role. As patriots with an interest in China's development, they are likely to be at the vanguard of many of the structural changes in Chinese communication now and in the future. People like Hu Shuli, founder and former head of *Caijing* are slowly changing the balance of political power in China. Advocates like her are simultaneously (re)assuming the complementary roles of being "professional" journalists and traditional Chinese public intellectuals. Both roles allow them to discuss and critique the party/state in ways never before allowed. These advocates, then, are slowly crumbling the CCP's jealously-held monopoly to comment on, and ultimately criticize, public affairs. As this monopoly disappears, China is likely to become a more pluralist, open society. This pluralism is necessarily limited to the elite – neither advocate journalists nor state officials tend to believe that "the public" should enter debates directly – but it is a step forward, and certainly moves beyond the CCP's recent, highly vaunted claims that it is expanding "intra-party democracy."⁵³⁹ The fact that those who push back tend to do so nationalistically makes it even more difficult for the CCP – an organization at pains to burnish its nationalist credentials – to fight their rise. It is the advocate journalists and other public professionals carefully prodding the party/state forward that will likely lead to slow but steady, and, in time, dramatic changes in the Chinese political landscape.

⁵³⁴ Canaves (2008), original Chinese story no longer available.

⁵³⁵ Meyerson and Scully (1995), p586.

⁵³⁶ Interview ET02-3.

⁵³⁷ Meyerson and Scully (1995), p586.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ See for example Lin (2004).

Future Research – The Internet

Although this project has concentrated on the newspaper industry, the Internet is clearly moving to a position of increasing prominence in Chinese public life. Indeed, the Internet allows the very first “public sphere” in Mainland China, where nearly all citizens can (virtually) meet, discuss opinions, and even organize collectively. Although the demographics of Internet users tend to skew male, highly educated and urban,⁵⁴⁰ never before in Chinese history has such a high percentage of the population had the ability to *publicly* comment on, critique or satire events and people. Because the relative openness of the Internet is new for many, online activities seem to have “made a more substantial political impact than in some democratic countries. For example, in China, nearly 80 percent of people think that by using the Internet they can better understand politics, compared with 43 percent in the United States, 31 percent in Japan and 48 percent in South Korea.”⁵⁴¹ Given that Chinese have had only limited ability in the past to engage in public political discussion,⁵⁴² it is hardly surprising that Internet access, even heavily censored, has had a transformative impact on Chinese political life.

Two of the major recent scholarly books on the Chinese Internet – Zheng (2008) and Yang (2009) – recite a litany of cases in which online public activism has encouraged the Chinese party/state to change law or policy. Although the Sun Zhigang case, discussed in Chapter Two, is perhaps the most famous, it is by no means unique. For example, when organized crime boss Liu Yong had his execution set aside by Liaoning province’s highest court, there was a “massive public response, decrying the higher court’s reprieve.”⁵⁴³ Ultimately in 2003 the Supreme People’s Court heard its very first criminal appeal, upholding Liu’s original death sentence in a victory for online public opinion. In another case, student Liu Di (writing under the pseudonym “stainless steel mouse” (*buxiugang laoshu* 不锈钢老鼠)), who was imprisoned for her online activism and held on charges of “being detrimental to state security,” was freed without trial after an online and international uproar.⁵⁴⁴

Online activism can affect local officials too. For example, when Shaanxi farmer Zhou Zhonglong claimed in late 2007 to have a photo of the endangered South China tiger, a picture that was “allegedly authenticated by a team of experts commissioned by the local government,” netizens quickly discovered the photo was from a traditional Chinese New Year painting.⁵⁴⁵ With comments like, “This is such a huge lie. A big country like this cannot authenticate a photograph,” and “The public demands the truth of the matter,” online opinion quickly swung against local Shaanxi officials who had helped perpetrate the hoax.⁵⁴⁶ As a result of online uproar, the officials were fired, a rare punishment for local government. What these examples demonstrate is that the Chinese party/state, at all levels, is much more susceptible to public pressure than many observers realize. Given that practically the only possible source of legal public pressure in contemporary China is Internet opinion, we should not be surprised to learn

⁵⁴⁰ 57% of Internet users are male, about 50% are 30 years old or younger, and these are heavily biased to university students, according to the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) (2008), p16-17.

⁵⁴¹ Zheng (2008), p118.

⁵⁴² Perhaps the only quasi-legal way for Chinese citizens in the past to do so has been through posting “big character posters” (*da zi bao* 大字报), which have played a critical role in Chinese politics at various points in the past. Their legality varies by time period, however, and although in 1978 the right to post them was enshrined in the Chinese Constitution, this right was removed in 1980.

⁵⁴³ Zheng (2008), p124.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p126.

⁵⁴⁵ Yang (2009), p115-6.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p117.

how effective netizens (online citizens, or *wangmin* 网民) when organized around a hot-button issue, can be in shaping Chinese law or policy.

The Internet Should Not Be Seen in Isolation

These dramatic examples obscure the fact that the Internet should not be seen in isolation from other Chinese media. Many of the most influential cases of online activism that scholars point to either had their origins in the traditional media, or were “discovered” by mainstream journalists. In the Liu Yong gangster death penalty case, Zheng acknowledges that “local state media did report angry popular sentiments” that were amplified online.⁵⁴⁷ The case of the “paper tiger,” similarly, was discussed in the traditional media, most notably by *Southern Metropolis Daily* reporter Tan Renwei.⁵⁴⁸ Even the most celebrated cases of Chinese Internet activism, like the Sun Zhigang incident discussed in earlier chapters, often began in the traditional media. Although the Internet ultimately provided the public pressure forcing Beijing to eliminate the internal detention system, reporters from *Southern Metropolis News* broke the story initially in a brave effort that later led to the jailing of senior editors.⁵⁴⁹ “The Internet amplified and expanded the dissemination and public discussion of the Sun Zhigang incident,” one scholar writes.⁵⁵⁰

The traditional media, then, helped shape nearly all of the most prominent examples of Chinese online activism. In many cases, the Internet distributed and magnified a story that appeared in print or on television. To date, however, scholars have tended to look at the Internet in isolation from other media. Rather than conceiving of online opinion as *sui generis*, however, I argue that the “emerging” and “traditional” media should be seen as a complex feedback system, where developments in one often affect the other. China has over 300 million Internet users,⁵⁵¹ but this still represents a fraction of the country’s more than 1300 million people. Most Chinese, then, do not get their news online, and unlike in the United States, Chinese newspapers continue to do well financially.⁵⁵² When the traditional media break or amplify a story, especially if the news outlet has national reach, the information potentially reaches millions of non-Internet users. This fact alone means that scholarly concentration on the unrepresentative Internet population to the exclusion of the traditional media is missing at least half the story.

The Gatekeepers

Traditional news outlets also have another important role to play for netizens – that of gatekeeper. With literally millions of potential news stories, comments, and discussions on the Internet, it is difficult for people to know what information to trust. When a traditional news outlet verifies⁵⁵³ and publishes an online story, the reputation of the news outlet attaches to the story, giving much more credence to its claims. Traditional news outlets serve as gatekeepers, providing at least a modicum of assurance that stories with their imprimatur are genuine and

⁵⁴⁷ Zheng (2008), p124.

⁵⁴⁸ Yang (2009), p116, fn 53.

⁵⁴⁹ Hand (2006), p185.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., p137.

⁵⁵¹ Wei (2009).

⁵⁵² In 2006, for example, nine of the top twenty media outlets by advertising revenue were newspapers, and in 2007 the top ten newspapers had an increase in advertising revenue averaging 13%, according to Redl and Simons (2008), pp159-164.

⁵⁵³ Though given the corruption of Chinese journalists, information is sometimes published completely unverified, or plagiarized directly from websites.

news worthy. China's major Internet portal sites – Sina, Sohu, Netease and others (collectively the *menhu* 门户) – also play this role in China, anecdotally to a much greater extent than in the United States. However, portals are legally barred from having their own newsgathering operation, and must instead reprint stories that have already been published elsewhere.⁵⁵⁴ In short, the newspapers often serve to verify and guarantee the authenticity of online news.

Outside of their employers, journalists also serve another gatekeeping function, directly posting stories to their blogs and trading information with each other and with other netizens. Although evidence here is limited to data from a small-scale (n=24), informal survey I conducted in 2008, interview data and personal observations, journalists seem highly wired and have an active Internet presence. Of the fifteen respondents who answered the question, for example, eleven, or nearly $\frac{3}{4}$, have their own blog. This is dramatically higher than the population at large.⁵⁵⁵ More substantively, about half post at least several times a week, most often (re)posting news reports or news commentary. Although the small size of the survey makes it difficult to draw substantive conclusions, the evidence is supplemented by interview data. One of my interviewees, for instance, became a reporter because he started reading the blogs of famous reporters while he was still in school, and now has one of his own.⁵⁵⁶ Another reporter has two separate blogs, one which is open to family and friends where she posts personal information, and the other a work blog where she posts stories her paper does not allow her to publish because they are too sensitive.⁵⁵⁷ This latter arrangement seems particularly common among Chinese journalists, especially advocate professionals. And these reporters do use them; during China's 2008 severe winter storms, for instance, many news workers turned to the blogs of local reporters and citizens to learn about the true situation on the ground rather than relying on official reports.⁵⁵⁸ Indeed, so many Chinese news workers blog that Xinhua, the state news agency, has specifically disallowed its employees from having one.⁵⁵⁹ Clearly more research should be done in this area, but preliminary evidence and impressions point to the fact that many of the online gatekeepers are current or former news workers, further strengthening the argument that the Internet should be seen as working in concert with the other media, not as a separate and unique political realm.

Future Research – Agenda and Hypotheses

I have pointed to the need for research that sees the Internet and traditional media as an interrelated system, but this is far from the only area that deserves more scholarly attention. An explicit investigation of how public issues originate and propagate online would tell us a great deal about the functioning of China's public sphere. Journalists likely have a key role to play in this process, with most working informally or unofficially – not on behalf of their employers – to spread knowledge through their personal networks. Mapping the flow of information in these networks and in the Chinese news environment as a whole would provide tremendous insight into the day-to-day functioning of the Chinese polity.

⁵⁵⁴ Interview FU27-02.

⁵⁵⁵ Of the 25% of the Chinese population who access the Internet, only about 23.5% have a blog, according to China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) (2008), p40.

⁵⁵⁶ Interview HH05-2A.

⁵⁵⁷ Interview GM14-2B.

⁵⁵⁸ Interview HH05-2A.

⁵⁵⁹ Interview HE24-2.

The professions, too, are an understudied area in China. Although some research exists on the role of the legal and journalistic professions,⁵⁶⁰ little work has examined the potentially changing role of the non-public professions in shaping Chinese policy. How, when and why do engineers, architects, city planners, or dentists engage with the political realm – if they do so at all? If these professionals remain quiescent, why? Based on both the increasing role professional mores play in shaping journalists’ actions and on the rise of the “knowledge economy,” I expect that non-public professions are increasingly likely to enter the political fray, if only to quietly defend their own interests. Even quiet defense, however, is a long way from political quiescence, and the rise of the Chinese professionals is likely to profoundly, if slowly, shift the Chinese power structure toward increasing (elite) pluralism.

Corruption remains a thorny area of the social sciences. Although numerous definitions exist,⁵⁶¹ most boil down to a variant of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s famous “I know it when I see it” dictum. But while hundreds of studies tally corruption’s systemic causes⁵⁶² or effects,⁵⁶³ argue over whether a certain level of corrupt activity is helpful for development,⁵⁶⁴ or discuss the best ways to stamp it out,⁵⁶⁵ few scholars have tackled the corrosive effects of corruption on the corrupt themselves. Corruption, like censorship, has a very real political effect on news workers. China’s epic corruption may actually provide greater political stability by creating a class of professionals whose supplemental income from illegal or unprofessional activities gives them a vested interest in preserving the status quo. Future research is needed to flesh out the understudied political implications of corruption for elites in China and elsewhere, both on the systemic and individual level.

Finally, I have highlighted uncertainty as a key element in China’s media control regime, but its use is hardly restricted to Chinese journalists. There is evidence, for instance, that the CCP uses it to control lawyers as well.⁵⁶⁶ I predict, however, that its use as a cheap and effective control mechanism extends beyond Chinese professionals into other social groups and countries. Uncertainty has a flip side as well, providing pushback opportunities for those willing to nudge the envelope of acceptability. I encourage others to look at actions by “tempered radicals”⁵⁶⁷ who have loyalty to the system but want to change it from the inside. I hope to complicate the distinction between political “insiders” and “outsiders,” by focusing on groups simultaneously committed to the system and to reform. Often these relatively elite groups can achieve greater change than those who resist outright, and it is quite possible that – once scholars take a look – pushback will emerge as a common feature of many polities.

⁵⁶⁰ For research looking at the role lawyers play in supporting state legal education campaigns, for instance, see Michelson (2008).

⁵⁶¹ They tend to concentrate on “misuse” of public power or funds, but this misuse tends to be in the eye of the beholder. See Rose-Ackerman (1999) for a full discussion.

⁵⁶² To name two, Shleifer and Vishny (1993), Lü (2000).

⁵⁶³ E.g. Rose-Ackerman (1999)

⁵⁶⁴ E.g. Mauro (1995).

⁵⁶⁵ Behn (2001).

⁵⁶⁶ Stern and Hassid (2010)

⁵⁶⁷ A term borrowed from Meyerson and Scully (1995).

Appendices

Appendix A – List of Chinese Newspapers Analyzed, by Province

Newspaper	Province
Anhui Qingnian Bao	Anhui
Anhui Ribao	Anhui
Anhui Shangbao	Anhui
Huaxia Shibao	Beijing
Jiefangjun Bao	Beijing
Renmin Ribao	Beijing
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	Beijing
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	Beijing
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	Beijing
Chongqing Ribao	Chongqing
Fujian Ribao	Fujian
Haixia Daobao	Fujian
Guangzhou Ribao	Guangdong
Nanfang Zhoumo	Guangdong
Yangcheng Wanbao	Guangdong
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	Jiangsu
Xinhua Ribao	Jiangsu
Xinxi Ribao	Jiangxi
Jiefang Ribao	Shanghai
Laodong Bao	Shanghai
Lianhe Shibao	Shanghai
Wenhui Bao	Shanghai
Shanxi Ribao	Shanxi
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	Sichuan
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	Sichuan
Yunnan Ribao	Yunnan

Appendix B – Newspaper Rank-Order Lists

Newspaper	Mean	Std. Error	Rank Order
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	0.600	0.039	1
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	0.289	0.037	2
Renmin Ribao	0.285	0.031	3
Chongqing Ribao	0.220	0.040	4
Anhui Ribao	0.171	0.036	5
Shanxi Ribao	0.115	0.039	6
Jiefangjun Bao	0.110	0.038	7
Lianhe Shibao	0.085	0.037	8
Xinhua Ribao	0.070	0.032	9
Yunnan Ribao	0.066	0.037	10
Fujian Ribao	0.038	0.030	11
Guangzhou Ribao	-0.004	0.036	12
Anhui Shangbao	-0.005	0.052	13
Nanfang Zhoumo	-0.008	0.034	14
Laodong Bao	-0.075	0.059	15
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	-0.082	0.029	16
Yangcheng Wanbao	-0.083	0.042	17
Jiefang Ribao	-0.085	0.038	18
Anhui Qingnian Bao	-0.158	0.036	19
Haixia Daobao	-0.169	0.033	20
Wenhui Bao	-0.195	0.039	21
Xinxi Ribao	-0.198	0.044	22
Huaxia Shibao	-0.215	0.033	23
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	-0.243	0.034	24
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	-0.252	0.033	25
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	-0.294	0.043	26
Newspaper Sensitivity Rank Order List (ANOVA, p<.0001)			

Newspaper	Mean	Std. Error	Rank Order
Nanfang Zhoumo	0.674	0.033	1
Anhui Shangbao	0.380	0.051	2
Jiefangjun Bao	0.338	0.037	3
Huaxia Shibao	0.334	0.032	4
Xinxi Ribao	0.222	0.043	5
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	0.214	0.034	6
Yangcheng Wanbao	0.211	0.041	7
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	0.150	0.043	8
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	0.136	0.028	9
Laodong Bao	0.127	0.058	10
Renmin Ribao	0.078	0.030	11
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	0.068	0.039	12
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	0.029	0.032	13
Anhui Qingnian Bao	0.012	0.035	14
Guangzhou Ribao	-0.023	0.035	15
Wenhui Bao	-0.059	0.038	16
Jiefang Ribao	-0.065	0.037	17
Haixia Daobao	-0.077	0.032	18
Xinhua Ribao	-0.113	0.032	19
Shanxi Ribao	-0.242	0.039	20
Chongqing Ribao	-0.266	0.039	21
Anhui Ribao	-0.304	0.035	22
Fujian Ribao	-0.321	0.030	23
Lianhe Shibao	-0.362	0.036	24
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	-0.432	0.036	25
Yunnan Ribao	-0.466	0.036	26
Newspaper Negative/Positive Words Rank Order List (ANOVA, p<.0001)			

Newspaper	Mean	Std. Error	Rank Order
Chongqing Ribao	0.699	0.040	1
Nanfang Zhoumo	0.460	0.033	2
Jiefangjun Bao	0.420	0.037	3
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	0.247	0.036	4
Anhui Qingnian Bao	0.226	0.036	5
Renmin Ribao	0.207	0.031	6
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	0.033	0.028	7
Lianhe Shibao	0.024	0.037	8
Huaxia Shibao	-0.007	0.033	9
Wenhui Bao	-0.010	0.038	10
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	-0.014	0.034	11
Laodong Bao	-0.044	0.058	12
Anhui Ribao	-0.044	0.035	13
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	-0.045	0.039	14
Yunnan Ribao	-0.074	0.036	15
Xinhua Ribao	-0.074	0.032	16
Shanxi Ribao	-0.081	0.039	17
Jiefang Ribao	-0.102	0.037	18
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	-0.155	0.033	19
Fujian Ribao	-0.160	0.030	20
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	-0.174	0.043	21
Xinxi Ribao	-0.198	0.044	22
Yangcheng Wanbao	-0.199	0.042	23
Anhui Shangbao	-0.290	0.051	24
Guangzhou Ribao	-0.317	0.035	25
Haixia Daobao	-0.465	0.032	26
Newspaper “Advocacy Journalism” Rank Order List (Higher numbers mean more AJ, lower numbers mean more “liberal” reporting) (ANOVA, p<.0001)			

Appendix C – List of Newspaper Topics Analyzed

Category	Sub-Category (if any)
Agriculture	
Arts	
Blog Sensitive Lists	(3): Mingan Ci, Gaoliang Ci and Yanjin Ci
Business/Finance	
Construction/Real Estate	
Corruption	
Disasters	
Education	
Energy	
Environment	
Family	
Food/Consumable Goods	
Legal	
Media	
Military	
Politics	(4): Combative, Foreign, Supportive and Unclear
Science/Medicine	
Sentiment	(2): Negative and Positive
Sports	(3): General Sports, Blog-Derived Sports Terms, and Sports Terms from Other Sources
Transport	

Appendix D – Category Means

Newspaper	Agriculture	Arts	Business/ Finance
Anhui Qingnian Bao	0.001203	0.002320	0.003796
Anhui Ribao	0.006698	0.003154	0.006382
Anhui Shangbao	0.000883	0.000913	0.008550
Chongqing Ribao	0.004303	0.001714	0.005729
Fujian Ribao	0.005480	0.002855	0.006243
Guangzhou Ribao	0.001667	0.001878	0.007116
Haixia Daobao	0.000965	0.001679	0.006978
Huaxia Shibao	0.000919	0.001662	0.007674
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	0.003965	0.001104	0.011583
Jiefang Ribao	0.001377	0.002922	0.008390
Jiefangjun Bao	0.000391	0.001322	0.001019
Laodong Bao	0.000748	0.000566	0.008457
Lianhe Shibao	0.001567	0.003093	0.005445
Nanfang Zhoumo	0.001649	0.001795	0.006674
Renmin Ribao	0.003060	0.002974	0.005282
Shanxi Ribao	0.005569	0.002540	0.006782
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	0.005073	0.001057	0.005530
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	0.007077	0.001329	0.005375
Wenhui Bao	0.001016	0.002763	0.008788
Xinhua Ribao	0.004058	0.002131	0.007646
Xinxi Ribao	0.002243	0.000848	0.006813
Yangcheng Wanbao	0.001338	0.002537	0.007302
Yunnan Ribao	0.007456	0.003695	0.006457
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	0.002379	0.001148	0.013471
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	0.000817	0.001495	0.009164
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	0.001289	0.001334	0.010727
Category Mean	0.002968	0.002018	0.007285

Newspaper	Construction/ Real Estate	Corruption	Disasters
Anhui Qingnian Bao	0.001910	0.001428	0.001087
Anhui Ribao	0.002496	0.002779	0.002355
Anhui Shangbao	0.002976	0.002313	0.001932
Chongqing Ribao	0.003614	0.002070	0.002215
Fujian Ribao	0.002317	0.001687	0.001777
Guangzhou Ribao	0.003423	0.002025	0.001405
Haixia Daobao	0.005020	0.001118	0.001139
Huaxia Shibao	0.003152	0.001147	0.000928
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	0.002647	0.002508	0.000859
Jiefang Ribao	0.002376	0.001532	0.000878
Jiefangjun Bao	0.001141	0.003598	0.000842
Laodong Bao	0.003592	0.001608	0.000897
Lianhe Shibao	0.002149	0.000953	0.000510
Nanfang Zhoumo	0.001585	0.001841	0.000820
Renmin Ribao	0.001307	0.002091	0.001955
Shanxi Ribao	0.003111	0.002491	0.002251
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	0.002177	0.002911	0.003190
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	0.002308	0.001733	0.000961
Wenhui Bao	0.003070	0.001017	0.000749
Xinhua Ribao	0.004782	0.002156	0.001437
Xinxi Ribao	0.004920	0.001170	0.001252
Yangcheng Wanbao	0.002430	0.001592	0.001018
Yunnan Ribao	0.002720	0.001920	0.002193
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	0.002188	0.001090	0.000649
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	0.001806	0.001082	0.000349
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	0.002354	0.001086	0.000718
Category Mean	0.002718	0.001810	0.001312

Newspaper	Education	Energy	Environment
Anhui Qingnian Bao	0.032208	0.000136	0.000833
Anhui Ribao	0.002330	0.000582	0.001245
Anhui Shangbao	0.004019	0.000702	0.000386
Chongqing Ribao	0.003620	0.000477	0.001041
Fujian Ribao	0.003046	0.000462	0.000886
Guangzhou Ribao	0.003529	0.001020	0.000794
Haixia Daobao	0.003947	0.000830	0.000816
Huaxia Shibao	0.002827	0.000674	0.000746
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	0.000999	0.000544	0.001072
Jiefang Ribao	0.003721	0.000643	0.001121
Jiefangjun Bao	0.003954	0.000283	0.000874
Laodong Bao	0.002070	0.000169	0.000562
Lianhe Shibao	0.003591	0.000211	0.000973
Nanfang Zhoumo	0.003530	0.000643	0.000406
Renmin Ribao	0.002055	0.000550	0.000911
Shanxi Ribao	0.002472	0.000748	0.001601
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	0.002439	0.000643	0.000574
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	0.003636	0.000250	0.001760
Wenhui Bao	0.006168	0.001293	0.001232
Xinhua Ribao	0.004327	0.000606	0.001037
Xinxi Ribao	0.004347	0.000617	0.000821
Yangcheng Wanbao	0.003895	0.000567	0.000668
Yunnan Ribao	0.002727	0.000591	0.001585
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	0.000650	0.001384	0.000998
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	0.000360	0.000523	0.000653
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	0.000818	0.001596	0.000987
Category Mean	0.004063	0.000662	0.000966

Newspaper	Family	Food/ Consumables	Gaoliang Ci
Anhui Qingnian Bao	0.000628	0.000421	0.001127
Anhui Ribao	0.000319	0.001433	0.001450
Anhui Shangbao	0.002057	0.001851	0.000581
Chongqing Ribao	0.000274	0.001061	0.001626
Fujian Ribao	0.000540	0.000991	0.001515
Guangzhou Ribao	0.000338	0.001454	0.001417
Haixia Daobao	0.000426	0.001835	0.000711
Huaxia Shibao	0.000267	0.001869	0.000933
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	0.000274	0.002281	0.000767
Jiefang Ribao	0.000412	0.001280	0.001945
Jiefangjun Bao	0.000132	0.000174	0.001930
Laodong Bao	0.000403	0.001190	0.001203
Lianhe Shibao	0.000494	0.000955	0.002874
Nanfang Zhoumo	0.000361	0.000632	0.001720
Renmin Ribao	0.000312	0.000869	0.003482
Shanxi Ribao	0.000269	0.001290	0.001278
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	0.000788	0.000585	0.003076
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	0.000280	0.000696	0.002852
Wenhui Bao	0.000225	0.001465	0.001218
Xinhua Ribao	0.000582	0.001630	0.001833
Xinxi Ribao	0.001066	0.001892	0.000433
Yangcheng Wanbao	0.000402	0.001950	0.001505
Yunnan Ribao	0.000236	0.001087	0.001479
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	0.000116	0.001068	0.000711
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	0.000129	0.001630	0.000506
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	0.000156	0.001825	0.000681
Category Mean	0.000401	0.001293	0.00152481

Newspaper	Legal	Media	Military
Anhui Qingnian Bao	0.002077	0.000952	0.000560
Anhui Ribao	0.003552	0.001192	0.000490
Anhui Shangbao	0.005817	0.000644	0.000325
Chongqing Ribao	0.002938	0.001376	0.000528
Fujian Ribao	0.002799	0.000769	0.000847
Guangzhou Ribao	0.003408	0.000716	0.000475
Haixia Daobao	0.002143	0.001533	0.000388
Huaxia Shibao	0.002056	0.001571	0.000617
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	0.008349	0.000525	0.000324
Jiefang Ribao	0.002496	0.001333	0.000608
Jiefangjun Bao	0.002505	0.000501	0.014930
Laodong Bao	0.007375	0.000684	0.000250
Lianhe Shibao	0.002307	0.001356	0.000485
Nanfang Zhoumo	0.003608	0.001494	0.001015
Renmin Ribao	0.002386	0.002494	0.001900
Shanxi Ribao	0.002699	0.001070	0.000675
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	0.006866	0.000847	0.000537
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	0.002259	0.001132	0.000797
Wenhui Bao	0.002096	0.001627	0.000484
Xinhua Ribao	0.003190	0.001033	0.000514
Xinxi Ribao	0.002337	0.000669	0.000377
Yangcheng Wanbao	0.002916	0.000977	0.000433
Yunnan Ribao	0.002090	0.001314	0.000623
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	0.002146	0.001030	0.000628
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	0.001524	0.000949	0.000597
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	0.002016	0.000996	0.000650
Category Mean	0.003179	0.001141	0.001149

Newspaper	Mingan Ci	Negative Words	Politics (all)
Anhui Qingnian Bao	0.000033	0.026351	0.021326
Anhui Ribao	0.000140	0.020158	0.036998
Anhui Shangbao	0.000007	0.032993	0.015371
Chongqing Ribao	0.000158	0.020714	0.033055
Fujian Ribao	0.000075	0.019673	0.033305
Guangzhou Ribao	0.000066	0.025328	0.026403
Haixia Daobao	0.000128	0.024159	0.018054
Huaxia Shibao	0.000019	0.032424	0.014995
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	0.000036	0.028702	0.025516
Jiefang Ribao	0.000022	0.024671	0.025190
Jiefangjun Bao	0.000103	0.033274	0.039937
Laodong Bao	0.000037	0.028359	0.019025
Lianhe Shibao	0.000038	0.019088	0.048818
Nanfang Zhoumo	0.000178	0.039035	0.024491
Renmin Ribao	0.000292	0.027703	0.036039
Shanxi Ribao	0.000123	0.021360	0.033299
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	0.000072	0.027212	0.031375
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	0.000106	0.017878	0.063368
Wenhui Bao	0.000083	0.024882	0.022769
Xinhua Ribao	0.000061	0.023789	0.031718
Xinxi Ribao	0.000014	0.030064	0.013105
Yangcheng Wanbao	0.000057	0.029892	0.019834
Yunnan Ribao	0.000056	0.016970	0.034540
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	0.000020	0.030262	0.022103
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	0.000077	0.028837	0.013792
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	0.000100	0.026504	0.019764
Category Mean	0.000086	0.025996	0.028490

Newspaper	Politics> Combative	Politics> Foreign	Politics> Supportive
Anhui Qingnian Bao	0.001134	0.000054	0.000036
Anhui Ribao	0.001713	0.000012	0.000080
Anhui Shangbao	0.001661	0.000015	0.000022
Chongqing Ribao	0.002668	0.000133	0.000087
Fujian Ribao	0.001893	0.000089	0.000042
Guangzhou Ribao	0.001518	0.000113	0.000050
Haixia Daobao	0.001591	0.000252	0.000039
Huaxia Shibao	0.001157	0.000538	0.000030
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	0.001477	0.000036	0.000042
Jiefang Ribao	0.001240	0.000521	0.000061
Jiefangjun Bao	0.001278	0.000070	0.000102
Laodong Bao	0.001968	0.000059	0.000005
Lianhe Shibao	0.003103	0.000050	0.000028
Nanfang Zhoumo	0.001863	0.000604	0.000037
Renmin Ribao	0.001785	0.000846	0.000100
Shanxi Ribao	0.001663	0.000032	0.000082
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	0.003891	0.000058	0.000067
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	0.004057	0.000054	0.000078
Wenhui Bao	0.001321	0.000250	0.000058
Xinhua Ribao	0.001815	0.000061	0.000120
Xinxi Ribao	0.001496	0.000062	0.000010
Yangcheng Wanbao	0.001452	0.000048	0.000051
Yunnan Ribao	0.001613	0.000014	0.000059
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	0.001346	0.000148	0.000027
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	0.001295	0.000134	0.000025
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	0.001169	0.000411	0.000028
Category Mean	0.001790	0.000201	0.000055

Newspaper	Politics> Unclear	Positive Words	Science/ Medicine
Anhui Qingnian Bao	0.020102	0.068577	0.001766
Anhui Ribao	0.035193	0.069918	0.002113
Anhui Shangbao	0.013672	0.044673	0.002094
Chongqing Ribao	0.030167	0.061239	0.002476
Fujian Ribao	0.031281	0.065386	0.002507
Guangzhou Ribao	0.024722	0.051917	0.002223
Haixia Daobao	0.016173	0.045452	0.001947
Huaxia Shibao	0.013270	0.051743	0.002021
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	0.023962	0.064264	0.002030
Jiefang Ribao	0.023368	0.060893	0.003687
Jiefangjun Bao	0.038487	0.078539	0.002698
Laodong Bao	0.016992	0.055450	0.002102
Lianhe Shibao	0.045637	0.073519	0.002666
Nanfang Zhoumo	0.021986	0.049705	0.002008
Renmin Ribao	0.033309	0.069391	0.002085
Shanxi Ribao	0.031521	0.067363	0.002723
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	0.027359	0.060127	0.002772
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	0.059180	0.085786	0.002233
Wenhui Bao	0.021140	0.062941	0.002863
Xinhua Ribao	0.029723	0.065441	0.002976
Xinxi Ribao	0.011537	0.048852	0.002326
Yangcheng Wanbao	0.018283	0.049596	0.002475
Yunnan Ribao	0.032855	0.074014	0.002316
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	0.020581	0.060466	0.002415
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	0.012338	0.054017	0.001888
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	0.018155	0.059204	0.002327
Category Mean	0.026444	0.062168	0.002366

Newspaper	Sentiment (all)	Sports	Transport
Anhui Qingnian Bao	0.094928	0.001066	0.000661
Anhui Ribao	0.090076	0.001073	0.001524
Anhui Shangbao	0.077666	0.002828	0.002928
Chongqing Ribao	0.081953	0.001673	0.003051
Fujian Ribao	0.085059	0.001334	0.001571
Guangzhou Ribao	0.077245	0.001717	0.003693
Haixia Daobao	0.069611	0.001703	0.003556
Huaxia Shibao	0.084166	0.001512	0.003073
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	0.092966	0.001877	0.001526
Jiefang Ribao	0.085564	0.001236	0.002678
Jiefangjun Bao	0.111813	0.002180	0.000407
Laodong Bao	0.083808	0.001116	0.000843
Lianhe Shibao	0.092607	0.001269	0.001515
Nanfang Zhoumo	0.088740	0.001082	0.001193
Renmin Ribao	0.097093	0.001236	0.000883
Shanxi Ribao	0.088722	0.001520	0.001284
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	0.087339	0.001436	0.001658
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	0.103664	0.001086	0.000788
Wenhui Bao	0.087823	0.001323	0.002308
Xinhua Ribao	0.089229	0.001134	0.001730
Xinxi Ribao	0.078916	0.001968	0.001844
Yangcheng Wanbao	0.079489	0.001589	0.002103
Yunnan Ribao	0.090984	0.001507	0.001414
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	0.090728	0.001111	0.002046
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	0.082854	0.001747	0.001580
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	0.085708	0.001226	0.001301
Category Mean	0.088164	0.001448	0.001806

Newspaper	Yanjin Ci
Anhui Qingnian Bao	0.000004
Anhui Ribao	0.000000
Anhui Shangbao	0.000000
Chongqing Ribao	0.000234
Fujian Ribao	0.000022
Guangzhou Ribao	0.000080
Haixia Daobao	0.000001
Huaxia Shibao	0.000007
Jiangsu Jingji Bao	0.000006
Jiefang Ribao	0.000004
Jiefangjun Bao	0.000012
Laodong Bao	0.000009
Lianhe Shibao	0.000003
Nanfang Zhoumo	0.000045
Renmin Ribao	0.000078
Shanxi Ribao	0.000014
Sichuan Gongren Ribao	0.000011
Sichuan Zhengxie Bao	0.000021
Wenhui Bao	0.000020
Xinhua Ribao	0.000017
Xinxi Ribao	0.000010
Yangcheng Wanbao	0.000009
Yunnan Ribao	0.000021
Zhongguo Jingji Shibao	0.000058
Zhongguo Jingying Bao	0.000010
Zhonghua Gongshang Shibao	0.000021
Category Mean	0.000028

References

- Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader; a Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*. ([Chicago]: University of Chicago Press, 1957).
- Anonymous, *Eastsouthwestnorth: From inside Beijing News -- Part 1*. (2006).
http://www.zonaeuropa.com/20051230_2.htm
- Ben H. Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).
- C. Edwin Baker, *Advertising and a Democratic Press*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).
- David Bandurski, "'Public Opinion Will Not Lose': Chinese Media Heat up over the Attempted Arrest of a Reporter in Beijing." (2008a). Accessed 3/25/2008.
<http://cmp.hku.hk/2008/01/08/811/>
- , "Taxi Strikes in China Highlight Changing Press Controls." (2008b). Accessed 12/15/2009.
<http://cmp.hku.hk/2008/11/12/1344/>
- Richard Baum, *Burying Mao : Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).
- Sophie Beach, "The Rise of Rights?" *Dangerous Assignments*. (Spring/Summer, 2005), 31-33.
http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/2005/DA_spring05/DA_spring_05.pdf
- Robert D. Behn, *Rethinking Democratic Accountability*. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001).
- David A. Bell, "Barristers, Politics and the Failure of Civil Society in Old Regime France," in *Lawyers and the Rise of Western Political Liberalism : Europe and North America from the Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries*, T. C. Halliday and L. Karpik, eds. (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1997), 379 p.
- Rodney Dean Benson, "Mapping Field Variation: Journalism in France and the United States," in *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, R. D. Benson and E. Neveu, eds. (Cambridge ; Malden, MA: Polity, 2005), 85-112.
- Rodney Dean Benson and Erik Neveu, "Introduction: Field Theory as a Work in Progress," in *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, R. D. Benson and E. Neveu, eds. (Cambridge ; Malden, MA: Polity, 2005), 1-25.
- Daniel K. Berman, *Words Like Colored Glass : The Role of the Press in Taiwan's Democratization Process*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).

Lucien Bianco, "Peasant Revolts from the Pre-1949 Days to the Present." *China Perspectives*. Vol. 24, (July-August, 1999), 56-63.

Jeffrey Black, "Egypt's Press: More Free, Still Fettered." *Arab Media and Society*. No. 4, (Winter, 2008).

Mark Blecher, "Hegemony and Workers' Politics in China." *The China Quarterly*. Vol. 170, (Jun., 2002).

Arjen Boin, *Crafting Public Institutions : Leadership in Two Prison Systems*. (Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 2001).

James Borton, "Free Market Generates (Some) Media Freedom." *Asia Times Online*. July 21, 2004.

<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/FG21Ad01.html>

Pierre Bourdieu, "The Political Field, the Social Science Field, and the Journalistic Field," in *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, R. D. Benson and E. Neveu, eds. (Cambridge ; Malden, MA: Polity, 2005 [1995]), 29-47.

Pierre Bourdieu and John B. Thompson, *Language and Symbolic Power*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship : Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

Martin Brendebach, "Public Opinion -- a New Factor Influencing the PRC Press." *Asien, Deutsche Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur*. No. 96, (Jul., 2005), 29-45.

Hugo de Burgh, *The Chinese Journalist : Mediating Information in the World's Most Populous Country*. (London ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2003).

Paul Burstein, Rachel L. Einwohner and Jocelyn A. Hollander, "The Success of Political Movements: A Bargaining Perspective," in *The Politics of Social Protest : Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements*, J. C. Jenkins and B. Klandermans, eds. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 275-95.

Yongshun Cai, "China's Moderate Middle Class: The Case of Homeowners' Resistance." *Asian Survey*. Vol. 45, No. 5, (2005), 777-99.

Sky Canaves, "A Bold Media Move on the Psychiatric Detention of Complaining Citizens." *The Wall Street Journal: China Journal [Online]*. Dec. 9, 2008, China Journal.

http://blogs.wsj.com/chinajournal/2008/12/09/a-bold-media-move-on-the-psychiatric-detention-of-complaining-citizens/?mod=rss_WSJBlog

Patrick Champagne, "The 'Double Dependency': The Journalistic Field between Politics and Markets," in *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, R. D. Benson and E. Neveu, eds. (Cambridge ; Malden, MA: Polity, 2005), 48-63.

Jesse T.H. Chang, Isabelle I.H. Wan and Philip Qu, eds., *China's Media and Entertainment Law*. (Hong Kong: TransAsia, 2006).

Chang Ping (长平), "The Public Should Be Public, the Private Should Be Private (公开该公开的, 保密该保密的)." *Southern Weekend (南方周末)*. Aug. 27, 2008, Online, available from and translated by the China Media Project--.
<http://cmp.hku.hk/2008/08/28/1208/>

Chongshan Chen, Jian-Hua Zhu and Wei Wu, "The Chinese Journalist," in *The Global Journalist : News People around the World*, D. H. Weaver and W. Wu, eds. (Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press, 1998), 9-30.

Feng Chen, "Subsistence Crises, Managerial Corruption and Labour Protests in China." *China Journal*. No. 44, (Jul., 2000), 4-63.

Li Cheng, "The Chinese Communist Party: Recruiting and Controlling the New Elites." *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*. Vol. 38, No. 3, (2009), 13-33.

China Data Online. (2006).
<http://141.211.142.26/eng/default.asp>

China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), *Statistical Survey Report on the Internet Development in China*. (CNNIC, 2008).
<http://www.cnnic.net.cn/uploadfiles/pdf/2008/2/29/104126.pdf>

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences News Research Institute (中国社会科学院新闻与传播研究所), *China Journalism Yearbook (中国新闻年鉴)*. (Beijing: China Journalism Yearbook Publishers (中国新闻年鉴社), 2008).

---, *China Journalism Yearbook (中国新闻年鉴)*. (Beijing: China Journalism Yearbook Publishers (中国新闻年鉴社), Various Years).

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences News Research Institute [Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Xinwen Yanjiusuo], *China Journalism Yearbook [Zhongguo Xin Wen Nian Jian]*. (Beijing: China Journalism Yearbook Publishing [Zhongguo Xin Wen Nian Jian She], Various years): v.

Edward Cody, "Blackmailing by Journalists in China Seen as 'Frequent'." *The Washington Post*. Jan. 25, 2007, A, 1.

Timothy E. Cook, *Governing with the News : The News Media as a Political Institution*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

---, "The News Media as a Political Institution: Looking Backward and Looking Forward." *Political Communication*. Vol. 23, No. 2, (July, 2006), 159-71.

Michel Crozier, *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

James Curran and Myung-Jin Park, "Beyond Globalization Theory," in *De-Westernizing Media Studies*, J. Curran and M.-J. Park, eds. (London: Routledge, 2000), Ch. 3.

Jane Leftwich Curry, *Poland's Journalists : Professionalism and Politics*. (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Dai Xiaojun (戴晓军), "Real and Fake Journalists Line up to Receive 'Gag Fees' (真假记者排队领‘封口费’)." *China Youth Daily (中国青年报)*. Oct. 27, 2008, A7.

John David, "Pioneering Xinhua's International Journalism Training Centre," in *Reporting the News from China*, R. Porter, ed. (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1992).

Lowell Dittmer, "The Politics of Publicity in Reform China," in *China's Media, Media's China*, C.-C. Lee, ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), 89-112.

George W. Downs and David M. Roake, *Optimal Imperfection? : Domestic Uncertainty and Institutions in International Relations*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995).

Slavenka Drakulic, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*. (New York: HarperPerennial, 1993).

Duan Hongqing, Ye Doudou and Wang Bing, "Tufa Shijian Yingdui Fa Cao'an "Tufa Zhengyi" [Sudden Events Response Law Draft Causes Sudden Controversy]." *Caijing [Finance and Economics]*. (Jun. 28, 2006).
<http://caijing.hexun.com/text.aspx?lm=2550&id=1706210>

Susan Eckstein, "Power and Popular Protest in Latin America," in *Power and Popular Protest : Latin American Social Movements*, S. Eckstein and M. A. Garretón Merino, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 1-60.

Georgy Egorov, Sergei Guriev and Konstantin Sonin, "Why Resource-Poor Dictators Allow Freer Media: A Theory and Evidence from Panel Data." *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 103, No. 4, (Nov., 2009), 645-68.

Ashley Esarey, "Cornering the Market: State Strategies for Controlling China's Commercial Media." *Asian Perspective*. Vol. 29, No. 4, (2005), 37-83.

---, *Speak No Evil: Mass Media Control in Contemporary China*. (Freedom House, 2006), 12.
<http://freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=70&release=329>

---, "Liberalization without Freedom? An Empirical Analysis of China's Newspapers 1980-2003." (2007), unpublished work.

Amitai Etzioni, "Organizational Control Structure," in *Handbook of Organizations*, J. G. March, ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), Ch. 15.

Ron Eyerman, "Social Movements: Between History and Sociology." *Theory and Society*. Vol. 18, No. 4, (Jul., 1989), 531-45.

James D. Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands Versus Sinking Costs." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol. 41, No. 1, (Feb., 1997), 68-90.

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977).

John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness : Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980).

Chris Gill, "Beijing Paper's Staff Strike after Editor's Removal " *The Guardian*. Dec. 31, 2005, Online--.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,1675736,00.html>

Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci (Edited and Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith)*. (New York: International Publishers, 1999 [1936]).

Guang Xuan, "2005 Statistics Report on China's Advertising Industry [2005 年中国广告业统计数据报告] ." *Modern Advertising [现代广告]*. No. 4, (2006), 38-39.

Peter M. Haas, "Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination." *International Organization*. Vol. 46, No. 1, Knowledge, Power and International Policy, (Winter, 1992), 1-35.

Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems : Three Models of Media and Politics*. (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Keith J. Hand, "Using Law for a Righteous Purpose: The Sun Zhigang Incident and Evolving Forms of Citizen Action in the People's Republic of China." *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*. Vol. 45, No. 1, (2006), 114-95.

Jonathan Hassid, "China's Contentious Journalists: Reconceptualizing the Media." *Problems of Post-Communism*. Vol. 55, No. 4, (July/August, 2008a), 52-61.

---, "Controlling the Chinese Media: An Uncertain Business." *Asian Survey*. Vol. 48, No. 3, (May/June, 2008b), 414-30.

Jonathan Hassid, Elisa Oreglia and Xiao Qiang, *Don't Let Sleeping Blogs Lie: A Computer-Assisted Content Analysis of Chinese Blogs*. Presented at the Conference on Public Diplomacy, Counterpublics and the Asia Pacific. (University of San Francisco: Spring, 2007).

Henry Yuhuai He, *Dictionary of the Political Thought of the People's Republic of China*. (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2001).

He Qinglian, *Media Control in China [Zhongguo Zhengfu Ruhe Kongzhi Meiti]*. Human Rights in China, 2004).

Zhou He, "Chinese Communist Party Press in a Tug of War: A Political-Economy Analysis of the Shenzhen Special Zone Daily," in *Power, Money, and Media : Communication Patterns and Bureaucratic Control in Cultural China*, C.-C. Lee, ed. (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 112-51.

---, "How Do the Chinese Media Reduce Organizational Incongruence? : Bureaucratic Capitalism in the Name of Communism," in *Chinese Media, Global Contexts*, C.-C. Lee, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), Ch. 10.

Chris Hogg, "Locked up for Complaining in China." *BBC News [Online]*. Dec. 10, 2008, Asia/Pacific.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7775662.stm>

Jocelyn A. Hollander and Rachel L. Einwohner, "Conceptualizing Resistance." *Sociological Forum*. Vol. 19, No. 4, (Dec., 2004), 533-54.

Hu Shuli, "Why Must Chinese Press Take a Detour for Virus Info?" *Caijing*. No. 145, (Oct., 2005).

<http://caijing.hexun.com/english/detail.aspx?issue=145&sl=2483&id=1385804>

Cary Huang, "Beijing Tightens Media Grip with Penalty Points System." *South China Morning Post*. Feb. 9, 2007, Online--.

<http://www.asiamedia.ucla.edu/article-eastasia.asp?parentid=63416>

Huang Hongfang [黄红芳] and Yang Yong [杨涌], "Information on the Provincial Labor Mobility Forecast [我省预报流动就业信息]." *New China Daily [新华日报]* Jan. 13, 2004.

William Hurst, "Understanding Contentious Collective Action by Chinese Laid-Off Workers: The Importance of Regional Political Economy." *Studies in Comparative International Development*. Vol. 39, No. 2, (Summer, 2004), 94-120.

William Hurst and Kevin O'Brien, "China's Contentious Pensioners." *China Quarterly*. No. 170, (Jun., 2002), 345-60.

Allison Liu Jernow and Anne F. Thurston, *"Don't Force Us to Lie" : The Struggle of Chinese Journalists in the Reform Era.* ([New York, N.Y.]: Committee to Protect Journalists, 1993).

Honglan Jin and Kam-Fai Wong, "A Chinese Dictionary Construction Algorithm for Information Retrieval." *ACM Transactions on Asian Language Information Processing.* Vol. 1, No. 4, (Dec., 2002), 281-96.

Joan Judge, *Print and Politics : 'Shibao' and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China.* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996).

Joseph Kahn, "Police Raid Chinese Newspaper That Reported New Sars Case." *The New York Times.* Jan. 8, 2004, Online--.
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?sec=health&res=9D05E6DC1131F93BA35752C0A9629C8B63>

Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk." *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society.* Vol. 47, No. 2, (Mar., 1979), 263-92.

Kang Yafeng (康亚风), "Time: Yesterday. Place: Yong'an Road Number 106 (时间: 昨日。地点: 永安路 106 号)." *Beijing News (新京报).* Dec. 30, 2005.
http://www.zonaeuropa.com/20051230_2.htm

Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders : Advocacy Networks in International Politics.* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998).

Daniel Roy Kelliher, *Peasant Power in China : The Era of Rural Reform, 1979-1989.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

Randy Kluver, "Elite-Based Discourse in Chinese Civil Society," in *Civic Discourse, Civil Society, and Chinese Communities*, R. Kluver and J. H. Powers, eds. (Stamford, Conn.: Ablex Pub. Corp., 1999), xii, 296 p.

Peter Knight, *Conspiracy Theories in American History : An Encyclopedia.* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2003).

Ruud Koopmans, "The Missing Link between Structure and Agency: Outline of an Evolutionary Approach to Social Movements." *Mobilization.* Vol. 10, No. 1, (Feb., 2005), 19-33.

Nicholas Kristof, "A Clampdown in China." *The New York Times.* May 17, 2005, Online-- Editorial/Op-Ed.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/17/opinion/17kristoff.html?hp>

Benjamin Woods Labaree, *The Boston Tea Party.* (New York,: Oxford University Press, 1964).

Chappell H. Lawson, *Building the Fourth Estate : Democratization and the Rise of a Free Press in Mexico.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

Chin-Chuan Lee, "Sparking a Fire: The Press and the Ferment of Democratic Change in Taiwan," in *China's Media, Media's China*, C.-C. Lee, ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), 163-201

---, "Press Self-Censorship and Political Transition in Hong Kong." *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*. Vol. 3, No. 2, (1998), 55-73.

---, "The Paradox of Political Economy: Media Structure, Press Freedom and Regime Change in Hong Kong," in *Power, Money, and Media : Communication Patterns and Bureaucratic Control in Cultural China*, C.-C. Lee, ed. (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 288-336.

---, "Servants of the State or the Market?," in *Media Occupations and Professions : A Reader*, J. Tunstall, ed. (Oxford [England] ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), Ch. 27.

---, "The Global and the National of the Chinese Media: Discourses, Market, Technology and Ideology," in *Chinese Media, Global Contexts*, C.-C. Lee, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 1-31.

---, "The Conception of Chinese Journalists: Ideological Convergence and Contestation," in *Making Journalists : Diverse Models, Global Issues*, H. d. Burgh, ed. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005), 107-26.

Chin-Chuan Lee, Zhou He and Yu Huang, "Party-Market Corporatism, Clientalism and Media in Shanghai." *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*. Vol. 12, No. 3, (2007), 21-42.

Francis L.F. Lee, "Hong Kong Citizens' Belief in Media Neutrality and Perceptions of Press Freedom: Objectivity as Self-Censorship?" *Asian Survey*. Vol. 47, No. 3, (May/June, 2007), 434-54.

Sunny Lee, "China Grooms New Breed of Journalists." *Asia Times*. Sep. 4, 2009, Online--.
<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/KI04Ad01.html>

Andrew Leonard, *Freedom to Be Irresponsible: Taiwan Independence and the Post-Martial Law Taiwan Press*. Masters Dissertation (University of California, Berkeley, 1991).

Li Datong (李大同), *A Letter to China Youth Daily's New Editor-in-Chief Li Erliang on the New Methods for Evaluation at China Youth Daily* (就中国青年报新的考评办法致李而亮总编辑的信). (China Youth Daily (中国青年报), 2005).
http://www.zonaeuropa.com/20050817_2.htm

---, *Using News to Influence Today -- the Freezing Point Chronicle* [用新闻影响今天 —— 《冰点》周刊纪事]. Hong Kong Peaceful and Virtuous Age Publishing Company [香港泰德时代出版有限公司], 2006).

Li Datong (李大同) and Lu Yuegang (卢跃刚), *Joint Statement of Li Datong and Lu Yuegang toward the Developing State of Affairs on the Stopped Publication of Freezing Point* [李大同、卢跃刚对《冰点》停刊事态发展的联合声明]. (2006).

http://www.zonaeuropa.com/20060218_2.htm

Lianjiang Li and Kevin O'Brien, "Villagers and Popular Resistance in Contemporary China." *Modern China*. Vol. 22, No. 1, (Jan., 1996), 28-61.

---, "Protest Leadership in Rural China." *China Quarterly*. Vol. 192, (2008), 1-23.

Benjamin L. Liebman, "Watchdog or Demagogue? The Media in the Chinese Legal System." *Columbia Law Review*. Vol. 105, No. 1, (Jan., 2005), 1-157.

Gang Lin, "Leadership Transition, Intra-Party Democracy and Institution Building in China." *Asian Survey*. Vol. 44, No. 2, (Mar/Apr., 2004), 255-75.

Perry Link, "The Anaconda in the Chandelier: Chinese Censorship Today." *The New York Review of Books*. Vol. 49, No. 6, (Apr. 11, 2002).

Ven-hwei Lo, Joseph M. Chan and Zhongdang Pan, "Ethical Attitudes and Perceived Practice: A Comparative Study of Journalists in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan." *Asian Journal of Communication*. Vol. 15, No. 2, (July, 2005), 154-72.

Peter L. Lorentzen, *The Value of Incomplete Censorship to an Authoritarian State*. Presented at the UC Berkeley Comparative Politics Colloquium. (UC Berkeley: Sept. 24, 2008).

Xiaobo Lü, *Cadres and Corruption : The Organizational Involution of the Chinese Communist Party*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000).

Lu Yuegang (卢跃刚), *An Open Letter to Zhao Yong, Secretary of the Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League* (致中国共产主义青年团中央书记处常务书记赵勇的公开信). (China Youth Daily (中国青年报), 2004).

http://www.zonaeuropa.com/20040725_1.htm

Daniel C. Lynch, *After the Propaganda State : Media, Politics, And "Thought Work" In Reformed China*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

Hein Mallee, "Migration, *Hukou*, and Resistance in Reform China," in *Chinese Society, 2nd Edition : Change, Conflict and Resistance*, E. J. Perry and M. Selden, eds. (London ; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 136-57.

Robert Marquand, "Chinese Media Resisting Party Control." *Christian Science Monitor*. Aug. 26, 2005, Online-- Asia Pacific.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0826/p01s04-woap.html>

---, "China Ratchets up Control on Expression." *Christian Science Monitor*. Jan. 3, 2006, Online-- World - Asia/Pacific.
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0103/p06s01-woap.html>

Paolo Mauro, "Corruption and Growth." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Vol. 110, No. 3, (Aug., 1995), 681-712.

Doug McAdam, "The Biographical Consequences of Activism." *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 54, No. 5, (Oct., 1989), 744-60.

Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes -- toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements," in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements : Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy and M. N. Zald, eds. (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-20.

Doug McAdam, Sidney G. Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*. (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*. Vol. 36, No. 2, (Summer, 1972), 176-87.

Debra E. Meyerson and Maureen A. Scully, "Tempered Radicalism and the Politics of Ambivalence and Change." *Organization Science*. Vol. 6, No. 5, (Sep.-Oct., 1995), 585-600.

Ethan Michelson, "Dear Lawyer Bao: Everyday Problems, Legal Advice, and State Power in China." *Social Problems*. Vol. 55, No. 1, (2008), 43-71.

John Murray, *The Russian Press from Brezhnev to Yeltsin : Behind the Paper Curtain*. (Aldershot, Hants, England ; Brookfield, Vt., USA: E. Elgar, 1994).

Ching-Ching Ni, "China Slavery Verdicts Anger Victims' Families." *Los Angeles Times*. Jul. 19, 2007, Online-- The World.
<http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jul/19/world/fg-china19>

Kevin O'Brien, "Rightful Resistance." *World Politics*. Vol. 49, No. 1, (Oct., 1996), 31-55.

---, "Neither Transgressive nor Contained: Boundary-Spanning Contention in China." *Mobilization*. Vol. 8, No. 1, (2003), 51-64.

Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Kevin O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, "Selective Policy Implementation in Rural China." *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 31, No. 2, (1999), 167-86.

Rosemary O'Leary, *The Ethics of Dissent : Managing Guerrilla Government*. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2006).

Evan Osnos, "The Forbidden Zone." *The New Yorker*. (Jul. 20, 2009), 54-61.

John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434." *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 98, No. 6, (May, 1993), 1259-319.

Philip P. Pan, "Leading Publication Shut Down in China: Party's Move Is Part of Wider Crackdown." *The Washington Post*. Jan. 25, 2006a, Online-- A, 15.

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/24/AR2006012401003.html?referrer=emailarticle)

[dyn/content/article/2006/01/24/AR2006012401003.html?referrer=emailarticle](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/24/AR2006012401003.html?referrer=emailarticle)

---, "Leading Publication Shut Down in China: Party's Move Is Part of Wider Crackdown." *The Washington Post*. Jan. 25, 2006b, Online-- A15.

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/24/AR2006012401003.html?referrer=emailarticle)

[dyn/content/article/2006/01/24/AR2006012401003.html?referrer=emailarticle](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/24/AR2006012401003.html?referrer=emailarticle)

Zhongdang Pan, "Improvising Reform Activities: The Changing Reality of Journalistic Practice in China," in *Power, Money, and Media : Communication Patterns and Bureaucratic Control in Cultural China*, C.-C. Lee, ed. (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 68-111.

Zhongdang Pan and Ye Lu, "Localizing Professionalism: Discursive Practices in China's Media Reforms," in *Chinese Media, Global Contexts*, C.-C. Lee, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 215-36.

Minxin Pei, *From Reform to Revolution : The Demise of Communism in China and the Soviet Union*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994).

People's Daily Staff, "Tibetan Separatist Exposes Dalai Lama's 'Democracy Myth.'" *People's Daily English Edition*. Oct. 21, 2009.

<http://chinatibet.people.com.cn/6789022.html>.

Elizabeth Perry, *Challenging the Mandate of Heaven : Social Protest and State Power in China*. (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2002).

Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik, *The External Control of Organizations : A Resource Dependence Perspective*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

Judy Polumbaum and Lei Xiong, *China Ink : The Changing Face of Chinese Journalism*. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

Roel Popping, *Computer-Assisted Text Analysis*. (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2000).

Robert Powell, "Uncertainty, Shifting Power, and Appeasement." *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 90, No. 4, (Dec., 1996), 749-64.

Qian Gang, *How Should We Face Hu Shuli's Departure from Caijing?* (2009).
<http://cmp.hku.hk/2009/11/13/3068/>

Gary D. Rawnsley, "The Media and Democracy in China and Taiwan." *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 3, No. 1, (2007), 63-78.

Anke Redl and Rowan Simons, eds., *2008 China Media Yearbook and Directory*. (Hong Kong: CMM Intelligence (HK) Ltd., 2008).

Reporters sans Frontières, "Restless Journalists at Beijing News Kept under Close Surveillance." (2006). Accessed 6/24/2009.
<http://www.rsf.org/Restless-journalists-at-Beijing.html>

---, *Press Freedom Day by Day*. (2009a).
http://arabia.reporters-sans-frontieres.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=116

---, *Worldwide Press Freedom Index*. (2009b).
<http://www.rsf.org/en-classement1003-2009.html>

Reuters Staff, "Beijing to Introduce Journalist 'Blacklist'." *Reuters*. Feb. 13, 2009.

Suzana B. Rodrigues and David L. Collinson, "Having Fun? : Humor as Resistance in Brazil." *Organization Studies*. Vol. 16, (1995), 739-68.

Xue Lan Rong and Tianjin Shi, "Inequality in Chinese Education." *Journal of Contemporary China*. Vol. 10, No. 26, (2001), 107-24.

Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government : Causes, Consequences, and Reform*. (London ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

James C. Scott, "Everyday Forms of Resistance," in *Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, F. D. Colburn, ed. (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), 3-33.

Jasjeet S. Sekhon, "Quality Meets Quantity: Case Studies, Conditional Probability, and Counterfactuals." *Perspectives on Politics*. Vol. 2, No. 2, (2004), 281-93.

Andrei Shleifer and Robert W. Vishny, "Corruption." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Vol. 108, No. 3, (Aug., 1993), 599-617.

Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, *Mediating the Message : Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*. (New York: Longman, 1991).

David A. Snow, Daniel M. Cress, et al., "Disrupting the 'Quotidian': Reconceptualizing the Relationship between Breakdown and the Emergence of Collective Action." *Mobilization*. Vol. 3, No. 1, (1998), 1-22.

Roland Soong, *Eastsouthwestnorth*. (2005).
<http://www.zonaeuropa.com/200512brief.htm>

South China Morning Post Staff, "79 Newspapers Fall Victim to Cultural Crackdown." *South China Morning Post*. Jan. 19, 2006.
<http://www.asiamedia.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=37371>

Richard Spencer, "Protest Editor Sent to 'Research Room'." *The Telegraph*. Feb. 27, 2006, Online--.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/02/27/wchina27.xml&sSheet=/portal/2006/02/27/ixportal.html>

Rachel E. Stern, "Unpacking Adaptation: The Female Inheritance Movement in Hong Kong." *Mobilization*. Vol. 10, No. 3, (Oct., 2005), 421-39.

---, *In Safety's Shadow: Suing Polluters in China*. Ph.D. Dissertation (University of California, Berkeley, 2009).

Rachel E. Stern and Jonathan Hassid, "Amplifying Silence: Uncertainty and Control Parables in Contemporary China." (2010), unpublished work.

Daniela Stockmann, *Propaganda for Sale: The Impact of Newspaper Commercialization on News Content and Public Opinion in China*. Ph.D. Dissertation (University of Michigan, 2007).

Xupe Sun and Elizabeth C. Michel, *An Orchestra of Voices : Making the Argument for Greater Speech and Press Freedom in the People's Republic of China*. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001).

Tan Renwei, "A Shanxi Incident: A Reporter Gets Beaten Violently to Death at a Coal Mine." *Southern Metropolis Daily [Nanfang Dushi Bao]*. Jan. 16, 2007.
http://www.zonaeuropa.com/20070116_1.htm

Sidney G. Tarrow, *Democracy and Disorder : Protest and Politics in Italy, 1965-1975*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

---, *Power in Movement : Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Craig W. Thomas, *Bureaucratic Landscapes : Interagency Cooperation and the Preservation of Biodiversity*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003).

Yan Tian and Concetta M. Stewart, "Framing the Sars Crisis: A Computer-Assisted Text Analysis of Cnn and Bbc Online News Reports of Sars." *Asian Journal of Communication*. Vol. 15, No. 3, (2005), 289-301.

Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

Charles Tilly and Sidney G. Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*. (Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers, 2007).

Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity." *The American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 77, No. 4, (1972), 660-79.

Howard Tumber and Marina Prentoulis, "Journalism and the Making of a Profession," in *Making Journalists : Diverse Models, Global Issues*, H. d. Burgh, ed. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005), 58-74.

U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China's State Control Methods and Mechanisms, April 14, 2005*. (U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005).

Jing Wang, *Brand New China : Advertising, Media, and Commercial Culture*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).

Wang Yongchen (汪永辰) and Xiong Zhihong (熊志红), eds., *Green Journalists' Salon (绿色记者沙龙)*. (Beijing: China Environmental Science Publishers (中国环境科学出版社), 2005).

Zhuoqiong Wang, "Four in Five Reporters Want to Change Jobs." *China Daily*. Nov. 8, 2005, Online--.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-11/08/content_492251.htm

David H. Weaver, "Who Are Journalists?," in *Making Journalists : Diverse Models, Global Issues*, H. d. Burgh, ed. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005), 44-57.

Michael Wei, "China Internet Users Soar to 298 Million." *Reuters*. Jan. 14, 2009.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE50B40F20090114>

Byron Weng, "Some Key Aspects of the 1982 Draft Constitution of the People's Republic of China." *The China Quarterly*. No. 91, (Sep., 1982), 492-506.

Harold L. Wilensky, "The Professionalization of Everyone?" *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 70, No. 2, (Sep., 1964), 137-58.

Xu Jing [许静], *Introduction to Communications [传播学概论]*. (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2007).

Yan Jiaqi, "The Nature of Chinese Authoritarianism," in *Decision-Making in Deng's China : Perspectives from Insiders*, C. L. Hamrin and S. Zhao, eds. (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 1-14.

Dali L. Yang, *Calamity and Reform in China : State, Rural Society, and Institutional Change since the Great Leap Famine*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996).

Guobin Yang, *The Power of the Internet in China : Citizen Activism Online*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

Jing Yin, "The Narrative Function of News: A Comparative Study of Media Representation and Audience Interpretation of China-U.S. Trade Relationship." *China Media Research*. Vol. 3, No. 3, (Apr., 2007), 33-42.

Geoffrey York, "China Twisting Harper's Message; State-Controlled Media Have Either Ignored Pm's Advice on Human Rights or Reported His Opposition to a Boycott." *The Globe and Mail*. Apr. 10, 2008, A14.

Mayer N. Zald, "Culture, Ideology and Strategic Framing," in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements : Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy and M. N. Zald, eds. (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 261-74.

John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Zhan Jiang (展江), "General Introduction: Watchdog Journalism and Civilized Governance (总论: 新闻舆论监督与政治文明)," in *Watchdog Journalism and Global Democracy (新闻舆论监督与全球政治文明)*, Zhan Jiang (展江) and Zhang Jinxi (张金玺), eds. (Beijing: Social Science Document Publishers (社会科学文献出版社), 2007).

Zhang Yanlong, "Confessions of a Propaganda Hitman." *The Economic Observer Online*. Oct. 10, 2008, Issue 387-388-- Nation, pp 9.
http://www.eeo.com.cn/ens/biz_commentary/2008/10/10/115737.html

Zhang Ying [张英] and Wu Yi [吴怿], "Venus: The Price inside the Wall for the Floating Fragrance Outside the Wall [金星 : 墙外飘香的墙内价值]." *Southern Weekend [南方周末]*. Jul. 28, 2005, D28.

Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

---, "From Commercialization to Conglomeration: The Transformation of the Chinese Press within the Orbit of the Party State." *Journal of Communication*. Vol. 50, No. 2, (Jun. 1, 2000), 3-26.

---, *Communication in China : Political Economy, Power, and Conflict*. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

Yongnian Zheng, *Technological Empowerment : The Internet, State, and Society in China*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008).

Kate Xiao Zhou, *How the Farmers Changed China : Power of the People*. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996).

Zhu Zhe, "More Than 460 Rescued from Brick Kiln Slavery." *China Daily*. Jun. 15, 2007, Online--.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-06/15/content_894802.htm

George Kingsley Zipf, *The Psycho-Biology of Language; an Introduction to Dynamic Philology*. (Boston,: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1935).

Heather M. Zoller and Gail T. Fairhurst, "Resistance Leadership: The Overlooked Potential in Critical Organization and Leadership Studies." *Human Relations*. Vol. 60, No. 9, (2007), 1331-60.