



Construction of International News: A Two-level Game Analysis of Libya Crisis in Chinese Newspapers

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Abstract

This study discusses the diversity of international news coverage in Chinese newspapers and the influence of foreign relations and state-media relations on the quality and role of international journalism mainly through the content analysis of two Chinese newspapers from 2011 to 2012. We seek to use the analytical propositions derived from “two-level game” framework to explain the interaction of Chinese media’s concern about foreign relations and domestic political situation. The study explores how the political preference, economic status and institutional constraints affect the media construction of international news in China.

Keywords: Chinese newspaper; International news; Content analysis; Two-level game

Received: December 09, 2015; **Accepted:** January 11, 2016; **Published:** January 21, 2016

Introduction

International news occupies a special place in Chinese journalism because of its relationship with both foreign relations and domestic politics. This unique position features a style of a “hybridized discourse” [1] that is, a “reporting both keen to control and eager to please.” In other words, it aligns with the interests of the Chinese government on the one hand and embraces the market on the other hand. The three characteristics of consensual, conflictual and instrumental functions mentioned in Guo and Huang’s research on China’s English media can also be applied to the newspapers specialized on international news. The consensual function, as they stated, “denote conformity to official ideology”. The conflictual function “enables the media to promote cosmopolitan worldviews” while the instrumental function “emphasize media’s role as an information conduit”. However, the area of “hybridized discourse” remains unclear and needs to be specified. Since Guo and Huang claim, “the mass media juxtapose foreign culture and orthodox indigenous discourse into a new framework of worldview and identity,” it is necessary to clarify not only how the new framework takes shape and how the “hybridized discourse” works in media organizations, but also how the tension between ideology and marketization can be reconciled and in a way that negotiation can happen.

Ever since Galtung and Ruge [2] analysed the factors influencing the flow of news from abroad, communication researchers

have been conducting extensive research on international news coverage [3-6]. International news production is a process of social construction which is mediated by internal factors related to newsworthiness factors such as deviance, meaningfulness and unexpectedness, as well as its external factors, such as geographical proximity, cultural similarity, trade volume, gross domestic product (GDP) and press freedom.

Although scholars have recognized the significance of national media, few studies have examined the variation of international news production within a given country, making it difficult to fully understand the nature and structure of international news flow. Since 1990s, the number of international news reports in China, in both national or regional newspapers have increased. A new genre of national newspapers specializing in international news reporting has emerged such as the *Global Times*, the *World News Journal* and the *International Herald Leader*. Almost every party and metro newspaper includes an “international news page.” In contrast to the decline of international news coverage in western media, it is necessary to find why this happens and how this is happening. International news reports are not only concerned with international relations, but also with domestic situations and reactions. It’s also striking to look at how this interactive process works and to what extent the state, market and journalistic professionalism exert influence. Thus this study borrows Robert Putnam’s concept of the “two-level game” from international relations studies which is a metaphor for domestic-international

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Citation: Yue Z, Yu H. Construction of International News: A Two-level Game Analysis of Libya Crisis in Chinese Newspapers. *Global Media Journal*. 2016, S1: 2.

interactions. In his description, “the statesmen are strategically positioned between two ‘tables’, one representing domestic politics and the other international negotiation. Diplomatic tactics and strategies are constrained simultaneously by what other states will accept and what domestic constituencies will ratify.” This implies conflicting pressures on the political leaders when dealing with international negotiations [7]. Given the importance of “win-sets” or “space for negotiation” in determining the outcomes of negotiations, Putnam identified three sets of factors that affect win-set sizes including political preferences, domestic political institutions, and the strategies of the negotiators. As international news production has to take foreign relations into consideration and make domestic ratification, the metaphor of “two-level game” provides us a new framework although it requires more detailed definition. In the context of China, it is essential to specify 1) China’s foreign relations and international context; 2) China’s domestic politics and its linkage with other countries; 3) the preferences and constraints of the news producers, and; 4) possible strategies to nullify the negative effects on domestic groups caused by the international news reports. Therefore, this study aims to examine how Chinese media play the “two-level game” in international news production by modifying the conflict discourse to minimize the adverse consequences on the domestic politics through analysis of news reports on two newspapers- *Global Times* and *Southern Metropolis News*. It is also intended to discover the underlying reasons behind the media’s construction of Al-gaddafi as “a hero against western power” and the Libya crisis as a series of events with “no connection with democracy.” In order to achieve these aims, this study employs the method of critical discourse analysis [8] as it enables a critical examination of the hidden ideological framework underpinning the discourse.

International News Studies

In the practical field of journalism, the concepts of “foreign news” and “international news” are interchangeable. In the academic field, however, these two definitions are not exactly the same. According to Hester [9], foreign news is “news reported from outside the country of broadcast.” Larson [10], on the other hand, used a more operational description of “international news” as “any news story that mentioned a country other than the United States, regardless of its thematic content or dateline.” Gonzenbach and his colleagues [11] tried to make subdivisions within Larson’s broad “international news” category, and distinguished domestic (involving only the United States), international (involving the United States and a foreign country, regardless of geographic location) and foreign (with no reference to the United States) news. Chang [12] differentiated the category by dividing it into foreign news (home country not involved) and foreign policy news (home country involved). Among the research on international news studies, the micro-level and selection perspective was featured by traditional gatekeeping analysis [6,13,14]. A body of studies has been developed [12,15-17] on the media coverage of international news interwoven with the relationship of the media system and national interests within the framework of the dominant ideology. Comparative case studies of news content, news agency organizations, and foreign correspondents are also widely seen.

The Press System in China and Two-level Games

Chinese media have undergone structural transformations since 1990s. In the pre-reform era, all Chinese media were owned by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) or by the state. The state subsidized newspapers through direct financial assistance and administrative subscription orders. Since the 1990s, the Party has gradually cut press subsidies. As a result, while still playing the tune of the Party-state, a large portion of the major Party-owned news organizations receive only minimal or no subsidies from the Party-state and must seek profits by other means to remain in business [18]. Mass consumers seek refuge from arcane ideological propaganda in consumer-oriented, mass-appeal media either for escapist gratifications or depoliticized materialistic pursuit. Mass media, seeing revenue potentials in the rising demand for parochial news, human interest, international news, and sensational coverage, respond with a vast expansion of appealing content. Severe competition for market niche ensues, riding on economic legitimacy of consumer sovereignty and the political rhetoric of “serving the people.” This reduction to popular taste on the part of media corresponds with a landmark transformation in the structure of China’s social stratification: the ascendancy of the middle-class stratum. Seen another way, media’s commitment to mass-appeal content is more than a move to curry favor from audience of consumers. Behind the façade of consumerist packaging, the media are redefining social relations, role models, mainstream cultural symbols, and power relations.

Taken together, the propaganda core, the consumerist periphery and the shell of contestation make the chief components of the media production approach. This logic entails: a) contestation with core principles of domination leads the trajectory of political discourse in society; b) sensationalism and mass appeal buffer the ideological strife by alienating segments of the public from challenges to political status quo and the received power injustice, while, paradoxically, weakening political control and resistance; and c) the interplay between alternative frames in the outer shell and the central core contracts or expands, determined largely by the changing meaning of legitimacy resulting from constant negotiations between the two. Newspapers specializing in international news began to emerge in 1993 when *Global Times* was founded as a weekly newspaper under the auspices of the official Chinese Communist Party newspaper, the *People’s Daily*. In 2006, the *Global Times* became a daily newspaper with a circulation of 1.5 million per day, making the paper one of China’s largest.

Two other national newspapers, *World News Journal* and *International Herald Leader*, also focus on international news. The former is governed by the State Administration of Radio Film and Television and published by China Radio International in 1990s twice a week. The latter is a weekly newspaper founded in 2002 by Xinhua News Agency. These newspapers, together with the Xinhua, are the major producers of foreign and foreign policy news for Chinese readers. Other newspapers have relatively extensive foreign affairs coverage, but this coverage comes mainly from the

wire services, syndicated columnists, or the Internet. Like other newspapers, these newspapers still face political and market pressure. In order to ensure distribution among readers, however, newspapers need to regenerate or repackage the old party-state ideology to cater to the market. *Global Times*, for example, was criticized by many for selling nationalism and sensationalism to consolidate power control while concealing deep social illness. In an aim to boost the domestic political reform, the international news reports are often packaged in hidden transcripts in Nanfang Newspaper Group. In 2009, the magazine "*Southern Metropolis Weekly*" launched in-depth reports concerning the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, reviewing the historic moments 1989 in Germany and indicating a call for freedom.

Research design

Central to our research are the divergent development of international discourse in China's media content and the conditional role of contestation with core party ideology. Despite the absence of any visible signs that the state will loosen its ideological grip on international news production in the foreseeable future, market reforms have induced considerable institutional space for media's daily routine operation. Specifically, constituents of radical political views begin to find channels of expressions in certain elitist media outlets that sustain publication through tactful political discourse. The transfer of dissent from intrapersonal and interpersonal communication setting to the power context of media communication provokes a tacit tug-of-war between the party's dogmatic core and deviant periphery. Though marginalized and often hidden, the presence of alternative frames of international news and discourse for the events pose a persistent social force to be reckoned with. This study used content analysis to investigate the international news reports in two Chinese newspapers from January 2011 to January 2012. One is *Global Times* which is a national newspaper under the auspices of the official Chinese Communist Party newspaper, the *People's Daily*. As its title suggests, the newspaper is mainly devoted to international news, overseas reporting, commentaries, and analyses. The other is the daily *Southern Metropolis News* in Guangdong Province, a non-Party offspring of the Southern Daily Press Conglomerate and famous for its investigative reports in China. We found four reasons for choosing the two newspapers. Firstly, the two newspapers are representative of media at different levels in geography, i.e. national vs. regional. Secondly, the two newspapers are representatives of two kinds of media in administrative management, i.e. party newspaper vs. metropolis newspaper. Thirdly, both of the newspapers are dealing with international news and subject to party control and self-censorship but with different approaches and professional treatment to deal with news and analyses. The research thus examines how two newspapers cover international events, and whether they are heading towards the same direction in international reports, or interpreting China's international relations in deferent ways. Fourthly, both the *Southern Metropolis News* and *Global Times* are a new genre of newspaper that emerged during media reform. Examination of them contributes to an understanding of the development of the Chinese metropolitan dailies, which represents the Chinese press's development after the 1980s, and the relationship between media and power. If we see the Chinese

press on a continuum with Party organs, at one end and the liberal press at the other, the *Southern Metropolis News* stands for a type of newspaper close to the liberal press side, while *Global Times* is almost in the other side of the continuum, which is a representative of the products of marketized authoritarianism.

The crisis in Libya in 2011 was selected as the case study as it was a major crisis which came in the context of wider unrest throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The surge of what looks like spontaneous pro-democracy protests had been spreading throughout a region long controlled by authoritarian regimes. Chinese authorities remain extremely cautious concerning such an events since news stories can deliver the message that rebellion activities can be justified and successful. As news is a type of discourse that is socially constructed and the discourses of the press relate to its own institutional and economic position [19], the study chose news reports from the two newspapers for content analysis between February 15, 2011 when violence broke out between Libyan government forces and the rebellions and March 19, 2011 when the first air strikes by US halted the advance of Al-gaddafi's forces on Benghazi and targeted Libya's air defenses. The news reports and editorials of these two newspapers within one year after the breakout of the violence were also examined for discourse analysis. Participant-observation within newsrooms and in real journalistic practices is also used in investigating the decision-making process of the newsmakers.

Research questions

RQ1: What are the patterns of international news coverage in Chinese national and regional newspapers?

As for the pattern, it refers to the dominant news frames about how those newspapers portray "we" and "others" in the international news. What are the most reported news topics? What are the shared criteria or nature of choosing the news items? Do China foreign policy relations with a country tend to match with the coverage and portrayals of the country in those newspapers?

RQ2: How Chinese newspapers play the "two-level game" in international news production?

The core of international news is international relations and closely related to national interests. With the involvement of the home country in some cases, moreover, international news is linked with domestic affairs as it may have implications for nation building. The "Jasmine Revolution" in the Middle East was an example which became a mine field for Chinese media.

Results

How often did they report on Libya?

The following graph shows how many times both the *Global Times* (GT) and *Southern Metropolis News* (SMS) published reports concerning Libya in the month following the beginning of the conflict on February 15 in 2011. The graph includes news reports and editorials (**Figure 1**). From the graph above, we can see that GT took an initial position to report on Libya and kept an intense pace on the issue. While SMN made endeavors to

report on Libya during the stage, but was muted after March 3, 2011 when Libya's membership in UN Human Rights Council was suspended. The next SMN report on Libya was published after 15 days on March 17 when UN Security Council approved the no fly zone over Libya. Ten council members voted in favor while five countries abstained including China, Russia, Germany, Brazil and India.

What topics were covered?

As the theme of news is an important indicator in content analysis, a comparison made between GT and SMN from Feb. 21 to Oct.21 as follows. The theme of news about Libya was divided into ten sections (Table 1). From the figures above, we can see that both GT and SMN devoted a large portion of their pages to "military action." For the others, reports on the Libyan government and NATO allies account for the next largest (17.9% and 17.6%) in GT. Only 1.1% of the coverage was given to the civilians who suffered the most in the conflict. The ratios in SMN differ in relation to the reporting of the death toll and injuries (17.8%) as the next largest. The Libyan civilians and the opposition were given more attention in SMN (5.6% and 7.8%) than GT (1.1% and 2.2%).

How did they Play the "Two-level" Game?

Close examination of GT's news reports and editorials indicates three underlying meanings.

Libya in a turmoil: Don't tread in the mess

The sensational words "bloody" and "cruel" were used to

describe the conflict in Libya many times in the headlines of GT. In February 21 when the conflict just began, the news reports in GT were in favor of Gaddafi, as can be seen from headlines like "Libya Army Comes Out Strongly", "The Army of Libya Loyal to Gaddafi" and "Libya Military Power cannot be belittled". In Feb. 24, the front page of GT carried the headline, "The Bloody Mess Sees No End." The story cited Radio Australia's analysis and indicated that no matter how miserable the Libyan crisis was, it was important for Chinese people to keep calm and to try not to guess the meanings behind the words.

Evacuation of Chinese from Libya: Human-centered and Highly-efficient

When China began efforts to evacuate the Chinese from Libya, the Libyan crisis became a subordinate issue. The Chinese government was depicted as "highly efficient" and "human centered" compared with other countries like the Philippines, Korea, Canada and UK. "Thirty-two thousand Chinese people have been sent back within eight days." Meanwhile, the performance of the consulate staff was praised as they were "on duty for 24 hours, protecting civilians with all their efforts". Phrases such as this indicated that in such a devastating moment, the Chinese government was not only concerned about Chinese people, but also in helping "our friends" from Bangladesh, Thailand and Nepal to leave Libya. In contrast, the Korean government was criticized for a dereliction of duty as their consulate ran away from Libya, leaving their citizens stranded in Egypt. Canada's evacuation was also lampooned as an empty aeroplane was dispatched from Tripoli with only its crew.

Comparison of GT & SMN

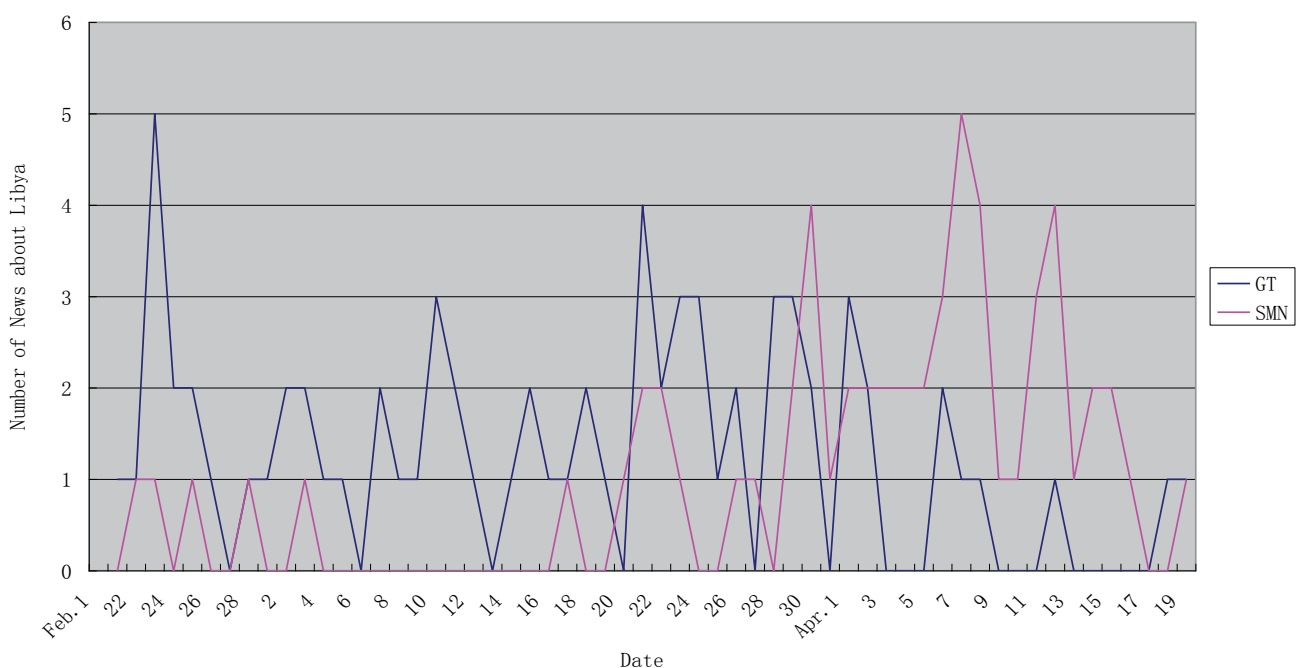


Figure 1 Comparison of GT and SMN on Libya Crisis Reports.

Gaddafi: A hero against Western power

Modality plays a significant role in critical discourse analysis as it can “informally be regarded as ‘comment’ or ‘attitude’ and show the “linguistic stance taken by the speaker/writer.” The desirability, as one type of comment in modality, is “explicit in a range of evaluative adjectives and adverbs”. Therefore, it is useful to note what kind of words were used to describe Gaddafi. From the beginning of the Libyan crisis, the words “tough” and “strong” were used many times in GT’s headline such as “Al-gaddafi talks tough to the world claiming to shed the last drop of blood” “Gaddafi’s frequent appearance shows his strong will”, “Gaddafi responds to rumors using strong words”. Even after one month of air strikes by western allies, Gaddafi was described as a hero with “the spirit of rebellion” in GT’s editorials. “Libya is a typical representative of a small country against western power.” The same connotation can be found in reports on Gaddafi’s death. “Al-gaddafi has ruled Libya for 42 years in the Middle East as a political strongman who has repeatedly declared that he will ‘succeed or to be killed’. He has fulfilled his promise, and become the first political star that died in the war of Middle East revolution” (Table 2). By comparing the original news report with the published news report on Mar. 9, 2011, we can see clearly that GT has lauded Al-gaddafi as a “mysterious hero in Arabian World” and believed that he may not lose the battle as he is “fond of shocking the world unexpectedly.” In contrast, western allies were described as meddlers in Libya’s domestic affairs. Priority coverage was given to the damage caused by the air strikes and the possible messy result after the bombing. The headlines “Air raid is a declaration of the west to dominate the world”, “Too much interference by the west aroused doubt” are examples of this. Fowler has suggested that it is through careful selection of

particular verbs and phrases, recurrent patterns may “provide a set of stylistic ‘templates’ and homogenize the discourse”. One predominant characteristic of reporting western allies in GT was the frequent use of negative verbs such as “hesitate”, “miss the right time”, “abuse the revolution”, “interfere too much”, “show off”, creating an image of a meddlesome and greedy West. On the other hand, *vowed*, *sustained* and other more positive verbs were used frequently to describe the determination of Gaddafi.

Implication of Libya Crisis: No connection with “democracy”

According to a commentary “The chaos in Middle East is not the fourth wave of democracy” by Zhao Kejing [20] “the recent protest movement in Middle East looks like a movement of democracy against autocratic regime. Without a stable political environment, however, pursuit of democracy is likely to evolve into anarchism turbulence which will bring damage to the people's welfare.”

A different model

SMN mainly relies on Xinhua as its source for the international news page. However, the editors may revise the content and decide on the sequence of news to be published. They can also send journalists out to report on site when necessary. SMN gave a more detailed and specific accounts of the events of the Libya crisis which can be seen from their headlines. And it seems that the priority was given to how Al-gaddafi’s regime was overthrown by the opposition and the west. The report of the Libyan crisis in SMN on May 25, 2011 shows us a model different from GT. The original report by Xinhua has the headline of “Tripoli Has the Most Violent Air Attack.” SMN revised it to “NATO Launches the Most Violent Air Attack in the Capital of Libya” which reinforced the subject of the air attack. The original Xinhua report also mentioned that US senators supported the attack with the headline of “Big Men in US Senate Supports Attack”. As for the purpose of Libya’s oil minister fleeing away from their country, the original report provided an explanation that it’s urged by the west. SMN didn’t choose the statement. Instead, they used another explanation from Reuters which claimed that the minister was on a secret mission for Al-gaddafi. The balanced reports made the news more complete demonstrating their desire of journalistic professionalism. SMN’s editorials present more evidence of their different stance from GT. In an article of “Bombing on Libya: Moral or for Oil?”, SMN quoted Wang Shuo, who claims that the reason US launched the attack on Libya was not for oil directly, but for a long term strategy. In another article of “Libya

Table 1 Numbers of news reports on GT and SMN.

	GT	SMN
Military Action	122	74
International Response	69	32
Death Toll and Injuries	61	57
Libyan Government	98	38
The Opposition	12	25
NATO Allies	96	33
Response of Libyan Civilians	6	18
Interview of Major Figures	38	23
Others	54	21
Total	546	321

Table 2 The original news report vs. the published news report on Mar.9, 2011.

In the chaos of Libya, some of the gambling cards have been presented. But the Al-gaddafi’s card is hard to read. A South Korean who “has met him for 30 times” of South Korea said, Al-gaddafi was a person who is persistent on the thing he has decided.	In the chaos of Libya, some of the gambling cards have been presented. But the Al-gaddafi’s card is hard to read. Although Al-gaddafi’s proposal to step down without being punished and sent to international tribunal was regarded "naive", Al-gaddafi has long been the most mysterious hero in Arabian world who is fond of shocking the world unexpectedly.
Turmoil in Libya gamble, the table has a lot of cards, Gaddafi playing the door which is getting people to understand. "Created to meet him 30 times Mythology" Korea asserts that Gaddafi decided to adhere to in the end is that once people.	Turmoil in Libya gamble, the table has a lot of cards, after the ouster of Gaddafi asked not to be held accountable, not on the requirements of the International Tribunal was a lot of people think that " naive ", but Gaddafi It has been the most elusive of dignity in the Arab world, often for the sake of shock the world by surprise.

in a new era: another Afghanistan?”, the newspaper predicted the possible results of Al-gaddafi and concluded that the fallout of Tripoli was the inevitable consequence of Al-gaddafi’s political failure as well as economic and military measures. The editorial on that day concluded that, a country should not be entrusted to a single man no matter how powerful he is and that only people should be the leading force in history. In order to get more first-hand information, SMN sent four journalists, Zhou Yongjin, Ye Biao, Tan Weishan and Wu Junsong, to Libya in April and another on October 2011. The articles they sent back appeared in the section “In Depth Report” on April 13, 2011. The article included the general view of Libya, the rebel sketch and an interview of a Professor at Kairo University. In the interview, they focused on Libya before the military conflict, how the conflict happened and the future of Libya without Al-gaddafi. Another series of reports came out six months later with such headlines as “Witness Libya”, “Multi Faces of Benghazi”, “Secret Battles in Tripoli” and “The Scars in Misurata” Detailed description was given to a Libya rebel fighter whose picture was printed on posters with the slogan “All we want is freedom,” and a Libyan poet who established a newspaper after Gaddafi’s regime was overthrown. After Al-gaddafi was shot dead, SMN had a series of reports using headlines like “An Ending of an Era of Autocratic Rule” and “Mad Colonel in Middle East: From Arab Hero to Prisoner of War.”

Findings: implication of the “said” and “unsaid”

By examining the news reports on Libya crisis in GT and SMN, we can find big differences in journalistic practices. In order to meet the appeal of different interest groups, the two newspapers used two sets of discourse to report on the same event. The evolution of their frame can be illustrated as follows: The Evolution of the dichotomy of GT’s reports (**Figure 2**) GT ran scant coverage on how Al-gaddafi suppressed their civilians but focused on the damages caused by the conflict in which the west is to blame. Being aware of the restriction, SMN had to follow the main stream and maintain political correctness to the party by self-censorship. However, the “improvisation” of the journalists [21] exists not only in domestic news but also in international news. The first tactic is packaging the news in the name of journalistic objectivity. Since objectivity is a “strategic ritual” in western journalism [22], it is used in Chinese journalism as a tool not to avoid public complaints, but to counter the authorities. The evidence can be found in SMN’s international news coverage. The topics covered were not centered on the military action of Libya and Al-gaddafi. Instead, SMN provided more detailed description of the opposition and the background of the two sides from the source of foreign media. This coverage seems more objective in the terms of journalistic practices. Although they were forbidden to make large revisions of the original report from Xinhua, gatekeeping was one of the tactics to hide the underlying meanings. The second tactic was waiting for the right time to pounce. The “In Depth Report” was an important platform to suggest specific viewpoints through interviews. The series of stories came out only twice a year. This allowed a specific viewpoint to be woven into the discourse [23].

Conclusion

Chinese media institution have been transforming from a Party’s

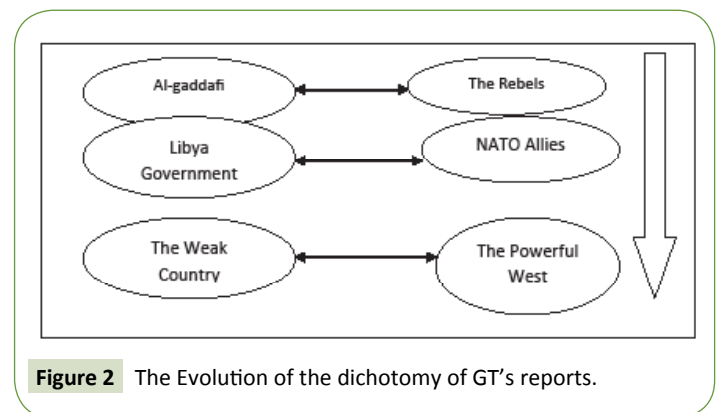


Figure 2 The Evolution of the dichotomy of GT’s reports.

mouthpiece to a Party’s agent, a centrifugal movement that largely accounts for further changes and consolidation. The main difference between the two is that the mouthpiece is a subject with interests of its own, but an agent with its own interests to pursue and empowered by the Party since 1980s. Notwithstanding, the surrogate/servant of the Party, the agent plays the crucial intermediate (also trade-off and paradoxical) role between the Party and the market, thus, setting a dynamic condition for the emergence of the Party-market corporatism. In this centrifugal process, the agent/Party Public Inc. often displays self-interest opportunist behavior, and increased importance to stakeholder/interests group in the formation of media discourse. With such an arrangement, the agent can, at least for the foreseeable future, ensure the controlled exchange of the political and economic interests in order. Thus the new pattern of Chinese media communication under the Party-market corporatism is at work. In this regard, the study shows the complexity of international news coverage in China. Despite of the rapid economic development, Chinese newspapers are still subject to the political control of the Communist Party. Because of the state’s political consideration over the national security and foreign policy, the international news in China does not enjoy as much leeway as that of other sections of media content. However, the degree of “party-press parallelism” [24] varies at different levels. Media organizations are affecting the creation of news contents by representing their own economic interests and performing the public functions imposed by the state.

As a result, the newspapers has gradually adapted to the complexity of dynamics by developing their own ways of journalistic practice. The *GlobalTimes*, has adopted a new approach by packaging the official discourse as popular nationalism that readers are more prone to be attracted to while still serving for ideology purposes. Its international news report, therefore, seems to serve as the tool to legitimize the existing political institution and promote the implementation of China’s foreign policy. Southern Metropolis News has been striving for autonomy by pushing the boundary of official discourse. The negotiating activities between journalistic professionalism and the party such as “improvisation” [25] exist in the international news reports which illustrate a unique pattern of social change. Therefore, the patterns of international news coverage in China are largely decided by national interests. Media type, degree of market orientation, and organizational constraints also exert influences on the international news production [26].

As international news coverage takes a subordinated position compared with domestic news, much room is left for market oriented media to play the “two-level game” and make innovations to practice journalistic professionalism. While for some others like *GlobalTimes*, the upsurging nationalistic sentiment provides a great opportunity to take a ride on. The media practice of the “two-level” game in international news production provides

evidence that Chinese newspapers are transforming to the “party-market corporatism”. Compared with the mainstream practice, the counterforce is still weak and somewhat suppressed, thus the dynamics in the international news production does not necessarily lead to Chinese media freedom and warrant a more democratic society.

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