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# Assessing progress in freedom of expression in a Chinese newspaper: a comparison of Guang Ming Daily coverage of the Tang Shan and Si Chuan earthquakes

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**Assessing progress in freedom of expression in a Chinese newspaper: a comparison of  
Guang Ming Daily coverage of the Tang Shan and Si Chuan earthquakes**

**By**

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
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## ABSTRACT

This study examines ways in which press coverage of earthquakes has changed from 1976 (Tang Shan earthquake) to 2008 (Si Chuan earthquake) in a major Party newspaper, Guan Ming Daily. The expectation was that over that period the press would become freer, with less story emphasis on government and ideology, and more emphasis on common individuals and information. A total of 118 articles were examined for each earthquake. Results show that coverage has changed in important ways. Ideological statements such as “Long live Chairman Mao,” which were a staple of coverage in 1976, had disappeared by 2008. Stories in 2008 were shorter (but much more numerous), and focused more on common individuals and less on government. Although the tone of most stories continued to be positive, the 2008 stories also contained some negative material describing suffering and damage. However, no stories in either time period ever criticized government or government officials. The international media ratings service Freedomhouse considers China’s media as being “not free.” In the sense that they do not serve as a place for public debate or criticism, this is true. However, this fact obscures the real and important changes that have occurred. In 2008, the public learned a great deal about the Si Chuan earthquake in terms of numbers killed and injured, damage, and efforts of assistance that included other countries. Much of this type of information was never printed in the newspaper in the 40 days following the Tang Shan 1976 quake.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction and Statement of the Problem

China has been undergoing rapid social transformation on many fronts since former Prime Minister Deng Xiaoping instituted “reform and open policies” in 1978. Since China’s mass media system maintains important differences between media and government than is found in Western countries, it is difficult for Western scholars to detect the improvements in the scope of newspaper freedom in China. Many westerners say that such reform policies have brought about great economic achievements, but not many changes in mass media.

While not operating with the freedom associated with Western media systems, mass media in China have become freer over the past 30 years. In part, this may be due to changes in government policy, although often these changes are not publicly acknowledged or published. Changes also may be the result of new communication technologies over the past 30 years, some of which make reporting easier, and some of which are more difficult for government to control.

Freedom of expression is accepted by most of the countries in the world as a human right nowadays, although there are different understandings of the term, and different countries have different patterns of history of it. In China, scholars, such as Wang (2007, 2008) support the idea that freedom of expression includes that right to search information, the right to advocate and the right to express and spread ideas, though they still debate some of the details.

Chen (2005) even suggested that Chinese media enjoy more freedom than Western media in social news and entertainment news. From 2002 to 2010, freedomhouse.org, a well-known non-government organization focusing on human rights and political freedom, ranked China as a country “not free”<sup>1</sup>. According to freedomhouse.com’s methodology<sup>2</sup>, each country will be evaluated by 23 questions, such as “Do the constitution or other basic laws contain provisions designed to protect freedom of the press and of expression, and are they enforced?” or “Is media coverage robust, and does it reflect a diversity of viewpoints?” These questions were divided into three subcategories: legal environment, political environment, and the economic environment, and a total score from 0 (best) to 100 (worst) is given to each country. “The degree to which each country permits the free flow of news and information determines the classification of its media as ‘Free,’ ‘Partly Free,’ or ‘Not Free.’ Countries scoring 0 to 30 are regarded as having “Free” media; 31 to 60, “Partly Free” media; and 61 to 100, ‘Not Free’ media.” A search of the website of freedomhouse did not provide the details about who will carry out the evaluation and what rules they use when they evaluate. The author also wrote an email to freedomhouse to consult about this information, but until now freedomhouse has not replied. Freedomhouse focuses more on politics than on earthquakes. In fact, political issues are much more sensitive than natural disasters like earthquakes, so it is possible that Chinese media have more freedom when reporting earthquakes than they do for political issues.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2002>, retrieved on April 1, 2011

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=350&ana\\_page=348&year=2008](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=350&ana_page=348&year=2008), retrieved on April 1, 2011



In order to understand the types of changes that have occurred over the past 30 years, this study compares coverage of two of the most memorable—and most devastating—natural calamities that buffeted the country in recent history: the Tang Shan earthquake of September 28, 1976, and the Si Chuan earthquake that occurred 32 years later on May 12, 2008. Both text reports and photo reports about the two earthquakes from *Guang Ming Daily* will be studied using content analysis.

Newspaper is one of the most important ways for people to get information. McCombs and Shaw(1972) said that mass media have great influence on what audiences think about (pp 167-178). Some governments use media as a tool of ideological manage to their countries.

Significant reform can be seen in the media industry of China since Deng Xiaoping returned to manage China. During the past 30 years more freedom has been given to media, although seldom are documents made public that can prove this change. According to McQuail (2003), “the reasons for control and thus for media governance are not usually set out in any document and may even be hidden from view” (p. 92). China government has become more democracy on govern the country after the “Open and Reform policy”.

Hazelbarth(1997) said, “Since the late 1970s, despite periodic reversals, Chinese media have frequently criticized the Party cadres and have published debates on such fundamental issues as the rule of law, freedom of the press, and universal human rights. They also have reported on a myriad of previously untouched social and lifestyle subjects. The only inviolable restrictions appear to be an unwritten ban on challenges to the Party’s right to rule and to the legitimacy and decision-making authority of top Party leaders.”(p. 2)

In China, the reasons for loosening the restrictions on freedom of the press may not be explicit. But over time, journalists and media observers have detected changes in the way

the government regulates press performance. This “loosening of the grip” is more readily seen in the way the media have been allowed greater latitude in the reporting of such news as natural disasters.

The Tang Shan earthquake shook the country in 1976, two years before the pronouncement of reform policies. The Si Chuan earthquake occurred 32 years later, marking the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “open door” policy. These two events offer a way to examine changes in freedom of the press.

Significant differences can be seen in the media coverage of these two earthquakes. For example, on September 29, 1976, the *Guang Ming Daily* first informed the Chinese audience of the devastating earthquake in Tang Shan with a headline that said, “Hebei, Tang Shan, Fengna hit by a strong earthquake; people to conquer natural calamity under Chairman Mao’s revolutionary instructions.” No more details such as casualties were given. In contrast, the *Guang Ming Daily* immediately released casualty figures resulting from the Si Chuan tremors. Statistics on casualties and injuries, the magnitude and location of the earthquake and the government’s rescue action can be seen on May 13, the first day after the Si Chuan earthquake from *Guang Ming Daily*.

Thirty years ago, moves toward greater freedom of expression understandably worried the central government that has always been anxious “about the undesirable political consequences of the free flow of information facilitated by new information and communication technologies” (Zhang & Zheng, 2009, p. 2). A journalist who reported Tang Shan earthquake recalled in a private interview that Tang Shan earthquake related statistics were treated as national secrets. Not until three years after Tang Shan earthquake did

Xinhua News Agency report the death toll, 242,000, a casualty figure that stunned the world. The reason for this is that reporting about the Tang Shan earthquake was severely restricted so as prevent “counter attacks by deviationists” (Qian, 2007, p. 198). Despite such anxieties, however, many have observed a more lax treatment of the press in its coverage of the Si Chuan earthquake. On September 25, 2008, 145 days after the major tremor, the State Council’s Information Office relief headquarters issued a report stating that “as of 12 o’clock on September 25, 2008, 69,227 people were confirmed killed, 374,643 were injured, and 17,923 were missing in the aftermath of the tremors.” According to the Si Chuan News Network, the economic losses stood at about 95.8 billion RMB (Xinhua News<sub>a</sub> Agency, May.24.2008.).

To examine whether the coverage of these two significant natural catastrophes became more objective and diverse, this study employs a content analysis using both text and photos from the *Guang Ming Daily*.

The main goal of this thesis is to test whether or not coverage of natural disasters has become freer over time in China. In addition, it is hoped that this study can challenge the idea that China’s media system has not changed.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

China, the most populous country in the world, is also the country that is probably changing the fastest. Among other changes, China is embracing economic globalization and is seeking to elevate its international status in the new world order. Its eagerness to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to sponsor the Olympic Games symbolizes that it has crossed the threshold into the elite power club. “There is nothing new in such a yearning, but it takes a new form of inclusion in the post-Cold War, neo-liberal world order” (Lee, 2003, p. 1).

Previous studies of Chinese media explained the history of Chinese media development (Mitter, 2004, Zhang, 2007), how Chinese media work (Hewitt, 2008, Hazelbarth, 1997), what their rules are and what they need to improve (Hazelbarth, 1997). Chinese media have a long history, and the scope of change of freedom of expression has occurred along with political revolution, economic development and ideology liberation. If one grades the performance of Chinese media in terms of freedom of expression, nobody will mark an A plus. But, do Chinese media still deserve a D as they did decades ago? How much have they improved? This study intends to find out what the “current grade” of Chinese media is. The study will do this by analyzing coverage of the Tang Shan earthquake and the Si Chuan earthquake that occurred 30 years apart. The objective is to examine evidence for greater freedom of expression today compared to three decades ago.

Hazelbarth (1997) did a study of the development of Chinese media. After reviewing the expansion of Chinese media, such as television, radio, newspapers and journals included, he analyzed the reasons for growing autonomy and diversity and the reason why media controls have weakened. He concluded that Chinese media are experiencing a transformation from a propaganda vehicle to one based on a profit motive managed by autonomous individuals. (p. vii) This transformation began after 1978 when Deng released the open and reform policy. Huge differences can be seen in economics, politics and ideology, and these changes have resulted in Chinese media becoming more autonomous and diverse. He believes there are five factors leading to more autonomy and diversity: (1) greater prosperity and literacy (2) ideological and political trends (3) improvements in personnel (4) technologies (5) weakening of the Party controls ( pp 3-14).

Over the past 30 years, scholars suggest that remarkable achievements in the nation's economy have spurred technical progress and promoted political reforms.

### **Greater prosperity and literacy**

Zhao (1998) said that the economic reform of Chinese media began almost at the same time as overall economic reform of China in late 1970s. Chinese media began their commercialization step by step after that. For decades, Chinese media were completely under the control of the state, but the economic reform makes it impossible for the state to continue this (pp. 52-58) .

Hazelbarth (1998) notes that “rising disposable incomes have freed many Chinese from worrying about the basics of survival and provided them the wherewithal to purchase

more television sets, newspaper and magazine subscriptions, and--more recently--satellite dishes and computers” (p.3). Indeed, China recorded an average annual growth rate of 9.8% in a little less than 30 years, an accomplishment rarely seen in many parts of the world. Gross domestic product registered at 364.5 billion RMB in 1978, and per capita gross national income rose from US \$190 to US \$2,360 from 1978 to 2007, moving the country from number 10 to fourth place in terms of national economic performance throughout the world. The state revenues, only 113.2 billion RMB in 1978, exceeded 5 trillion RMB in 2007, representing a 14.1% annual increase in less than 30 years. In 1978, China’s foreign exchange reserves were only US \$167 million, equivalent to \$0.17 per person. Based on statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics China<sup>3</sup>, by 2007, China’s foreign exchange reserves have expanded to US \$ 1.5282 trillion, ranking first in the world. The literacy rate has gone up along with the fast economic development.

As a part of Chinese industry, Chinese media shared in the benefits of economic revolution over the past 30 years. There have been three big transformations: (1) In a system once dominated by the Party paper, various media forms and channels are now available. (2) A system that was once overly dependent on government now has strong ties with industry. (3) A system that was once limited to print is now a multimedia industry. In 2008, there were 9,549 periodicals and 1,943 newspapers in circulation all over the nation (XinhuaNet, 2008<sub>a</sub>). According to de Burgh (2003), “from a sullen backwater, China has become a recognized force in world politics and the international economy, and the principal mediators reflecting these changes to the Chinese and the rest of the world, are

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.china.com.cn/economic/txt/2008-02/28/content\\_11007896.htm](http://www.china.com.cn/economic/txt/2008-02/28/content_11007896.htm), retrieved on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011

journalists” (preface page). Since many more periodicals and newspapers come to the market, the Party-controlled media are facing more international competition now.

After espousing an “open and reform policy,” China began a revolution in politics, economics and culture. In no other domain has this been more discernible—and controversial—than in the media industry. “The success of the commercial media is surely one of the biggest stories of post-Mao China” (Zha, 1995 as cited in McCormick and Liu, 2003, p. 150). In 1976, no advertisements were seen in *Guang Ming Daily*; now *Guang Ming* earns 50 million RMB (about 7.6 million USD) every year from advertising.<sup>4</sup> To increase advertisement income, a newspaper needs to enhance sales volume. Timely, objective and diverse content can attract audience.

China has also expanded its engagement with the world. Recently, the Chinese government has displayed great enthusiasm in joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) despite its concerns over foreign direct investments in telecommunications and other industrial sectors. Politically, China has preferred to join a multilateral forum like the WTO to iron out potential disputes with trade partners rather than adopting a bilateral negotiation approach, as it sees the latter as particularly vulnerable to political intervention (Xu & Pitt, 2002). This engagement means Chinese media need to compete with foreign media to win audience. To win in this game, Chinese media need to provide news that audiences like, such as news that is more objective and diverse.

### **Ideological and Political Trends**

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.soubaoad.com/purchase/recommend/29868.shtml>, retrieved on March 12, 2011

Ideological awakening of a nation is a long process. China is still undergoing this long-term process, but significant differences can be seen in patterns of coverage of events such as the two earthquakes, both for people and governments. Thirty-two years ago, in the aftermath of the Tang Shan earthquake, the then ruling “Gang of Four” was known to have callously said that “losing a million people in a nation of 800 million means nothing.” Outside the makeshift sheds pitched for earthquake victims, the slogan “Criticizing Deng Xiaoping will not bring about succor” could be seen everywhere. Most Chinese did not hear about the earthquake until two days after the fact (Tang, 2008).

In contrast, immediately after the Si Chuan earthquake, the government took action to manage the national crisis. Xinhuanet (2008, May.13) reported that Premier Wen Jiabao arrived in the province two hours after the quake. The Si Chuan provincial government and the News Office of the State Council held a press conference every day, warning of aftershocks and updating the domestic and foreign press on the progress of relief operations and the number of casualties and injuries. Local and international reporters were allowed into the disaster-stricken areas without restrictions, ensuring unprecedented transparency. Media got more chances to dig out news with more newsworthiness.

Back in 1976, people were portrayed as soldiers of class struggle, and they were portrayed as soldiers of a natural disaster in Tang Shan earthquake news reports. For example, in the first report of Tang Shan earthquake, *Guang Ming* said: “Chairman Mao released the important instruction to ask the Party members, league members, and revolution cadres, workers, the poor and lower-middle peasants and soldiers to take class struggle as the key link, carry out the criticism Deng Xiaoping’s counterrevolutional



bourgeois revisionism in a deep-going way, and draw together to struggle with natural disaster. To make up their minds, fear not death, to conquer all obstacles and to endeavor to triumph. After the Cultural Revolution, government, people and media talk less and less about political struggle.

The Chinese government refused international help after the Tang Shan earthquake. In contrast, according to Sohu.net (2008), Japanese rescue teams arrived in Si Chuan on May 15, three days after the main quake. They were followed by rescue teams from Russia, Korea and Singapore (Xin Hua News, May 16, 2008). Also on May 15, the first batch of foreign journalists arrived on the scene (Renmin.net, 2008), enabling the outpouring of support and humanitarian aid from all over the world. According to the Bureau of Civil Administration statistics, by May 22, the Chinese government had accepted monetary donations of 21.4 billion RMB from international sources.

Compared to 32 years ago, current media also enjoy more space to report earthquake stories. First, newspapers have more pages than 32 years ago, and they can add special pages and even an earthquake special issue if necessary. Whereas interviews with the quake victims were not allowed at Tang Shan, interviews were liberally granted in Si Chuan. Based on observations by Huang (2008), for Tang Shan, there were more reports about officials and less reports about people; there also were more reports about groups and less reports about individuals. After the Si Chuan earthquake, the media reports were faster, more open, and more transparent. CCTV news covered the event live 24 hours a day. After the tremors, immediate acknowledgments of the earthquake from the Xinhua News Agency, CCTV, and Renmin newspaper allayed people's fears; the media showed greater concern

for human life and dignity. A story published by the *Southern Daily* on May 18 that showed the body of a mother protectively covering a sleeping baby moved millions. Before she died, she left her son a message on her cell phone: “Baby, if you live, please always remember that I love you.” To attract more audience, newspapers report more individual stories now.

The first victim rescued after the Tang Shan earthquake raised his arm and shouted, “Long live Chairman Mao!” A victim of the Si Chuan earthquake rescued from the rubble by a Russian team asked, “Has the earthquake shaken me to Russia?” Such spontaneous comments suggest that people are starting to abandon the idea of “personal sacrifice for the revolution” in favor of the notion that “people should be first and foremost.” As China faces the challenges inherent in being an economic powerhouse, and as its people clamor for their own brand of democracy, the Chinese media constantly shift to accommodate the demands.

### **Improvement in Personnel**

Hazelbarth (1998) stated that journalists were better educated, and these more competent people is one reason for growing antimony and diversity (p.10). With these talented reporters, media performance has been enhanced. The Cultural Revolution disturbed journalism education in China. National college entrance examinations were reinstated in 1977, and education by journalism colleges and universities was reinstated. By 2008, there were 326 colleges or universities with Journalism and Mass Communication departments.<sup>5</sup> Some universities even provide education in specific majors, such as finance journalism or sport journalism.<sup>6</sup> Getting systematic education in journalism and

<sup>5</sup> [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_628372840100i629.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_628372840100i629.html), retrieved on March 6, 2011

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.kuakao.com/html/12/n-7412.html?action/site/type/link>, retrieved on March 6, 2011

communication, both traditional Chinese journalism thoughts and western journalism theories, graduates use what they studied in their work.

The press has been a channel of communication for political and social activists. In addition, the press tries to meet the economic and cultural demands of media owners and different clients, including publicists and prospective audiences. This is true irrespective of the relative predominance of material or idealistic goals. From this perspective, the basic tasks of journalism in a democracy can be classified under three main headings: “(1) observing and informing, primarily as a service to the public; (2) participating in public life as an independent actor by way of critical comment, advice, advocacy and expression of opinion; and (3) providing a channel, forum, or platform for extra-media voices or sources to reach a self-chosen public” (Christians, Classer, McQuail, Nordenstreng, & White, 2009, p. 116).

Economic, political and ideological development can be reflected in news coverage. When a society is in an economic revolution, a political transformation, and ideological development, media will perform differently because media are inseparably interconnected with these aspects.

A national or international crisis tests the ability of the media to keep a society together:

“The media, in the popular view, should play a healing role in times of national crisis. But there is a lack of clarity, leave alone unanimity, about that role. Different sections of the community usually have differing expectations, and these may be at variance with those of the political leadership. The journalist is often in a quandary, torn between his professional duty to provide a true and complete account of development or events and exhortations to temper candor with caution lest his reporting should inflame rather than cool them” (Vijay, 1993, p. vii).

In no other area and times are these basic tasks more critical than in periods of crisis and disaster. Drennan & McConnell (2007) define a crisis as “a situation or episode in which different actors and groups seek to attribute meaning to a particular set of circumstances which pose extraordinary threats to an individual, institution and/or society” (p. 2).

National disasters like the Tang Shan and the Si Chuan earthquakes affect millions of people and they attract international attention. For most people who did not get the chance to go to the actual scene, media are the main channel they use to receive and update information. These unusual natural disasters are extraordinary events, so newspapers, TV stations, radio stations, internet, and other media try their best to report during the crisis.

Disaster reporting is different from regular reporting. It requires more skill, planning and experience. Killenberg (1992) explains that journalists report disasters based on the following five stages. These stages involve: (1) determining the dimensions of the disaster; (2) providing the public with safety information and advice; (3) alerting the public to current and potential dangers; (4) calming the public by emphasizing courage and soliciting support from others; and (5) assessing the situation as to causes and, if complications that contribute negatively to the crisis arise, determining who is responsible for those complications. According to Wills and Okunade (1997), disaster stories represent a serious challenge for risk communicators. They are different from the traditional crisis story because a crisis develops in a relatively predictable fashion and can be described as a decisive turning point in a condition or state of affairs (Brody, 1991). “This condition is often gradual and allows journalists time to acclimate themselves to the story as it unfolds.

A disaster, on the other hand, is often an unpredicted, breaking event that triggers a crisis” (p. 95).

The erosion of trust following the outbreak of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic in China in 2003 offered an abject lesson in how to deal with crisis situations. In spring of 2003, SARS first broke out in Southern China, especially in Guang Dong and Hong Kong. Local government suppressed media coverage while the disease spread to the whole country and the world, killing thousands of people. People questioned why government did not release the information in a timely manner, and thought government should take the responsibility. Zhang Wenkang, the ex- minister of health was deposed, and many local officials were deposed because of their dereliction of duty during SARS. After that, China began to disclose information to the public in a more timely manner. To media managers, government policy makers and reporters, Michael Regester recommends the “3T principle” in risk and disaster management. These are: (1) tell your own tale, (2) tell it fast, and (3) tell it all (as cited in Luo, 2008). The 3T principle requires the government to seek the cooperation of the mass media, the chief information carriers in crisis situations.

It is not easy for the Chinese media to make up for their shortcomings. Doing so takes time. It is fortunate, however, that the Chinese media have had some experience and have scored some progress in crisis reporting. In 1976, under strict government control, the media did not enjoy enough freedom to effectively report on risk events. Observers say that the restrictions have relaxed over time so that today, Huang (2008) submits that the media are capable of fast action, providing early information to calm down a fearful and anxious

audience and thus avert panic and chaos, and offer some solace to disaster victims and their relatives.

Christians et al. (2009) suggest that journalists should “provide surveillance of the social environment, help people form opinions, set the agenda of public discussions, act as “watchdogs” of those with political and/or economic power, act as public informants, and be active participants in social life” (p. 119). In short, the four key roles of journalism are monitorial, radical, collaborative, and facilitative (pp. 125-126). Journalists are also expected to be ethical, especially when dealing with crisis events. Ethics is often defined as “the branch of philosophy that deals with questions of right and wrong, good and evil” (p. 14). Under no circumstances should journalists fake the news.

“First, truth must be objective or discoverable. Truth is able to outshine falsity in debate or discussion only if truth is there to be seen. Second, the classic theory does and must assume that people are basically rational. People must possess the capacity correctly to perceive truth or reality... In addition, for the rational assumption to hold, people’s rational facilities must enable them to sort through the form and frequency of message presentation to evaluate the core truth in the messages. Otherwise, the marketplace of ideas would only promote acceptance of those perspectives that were most effectively packaged and promoted” (Baker, 1989, pp. 6-7).

The Hutchins Commission (cited by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm, 1956) identified five responsibilities of the media the fulfillment of which could serve as a measure of press performance. The press should:

“(1) provide a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day’s events in a context which gives them meaning, a commitment evidenced in part by objective reporting; (2) be a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism, meaning in part that papers should be common carriers of public discussion at least in the limited sense of carrying views contrary to their own; (3) project a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society; (4) present and clarify the goals and values of society; and (5) provide full access to the day’s intelligence, thereby serving the public’s right to be informed” (as cited in Baker, 1989, p. 349).

These responsibilities coincide with McQuail’s (2006) admonition that “the media should be free from control of government or other powerful interests sufficient to allow

them to report and express freely, and independent enough to meet the needs of their audience (p. 166).

Zhao (1998) said, “ the current intertwining of Party control and market forces is highly problematic, but complete commercialization and the replacement of Party control by market control alone will not lead to a democratized system of media communication either.” (p.186) In this situation, more work is needed to find a way for Chinese media to enjoy more freedom and do a better job in a national crisis.

One test of whether Chinese media are making progress would be evidence of improvement of objective and diverse coverage of the two earthquakes.

### **Technologies**

With the advent of new communication technologies, the Chinese people now have more opportunities to look at and get information from the outside world so that they are better able to understand foreign cultures as well as foreign economic and political systems. During the Si Chuan earthquake, websites were buzzing with comments about shoddy building construction, the reason why schools collapsed but government buildings did not. While the Internet operates freely in the West, China has kept a tight grip on cyber-discussions on sensitive topics involving comments about government performance. After the SARS crisis in 2003, China’s government realized that it is impossible suppress the spread of information, and it is important and necessary to release official information to the public to hold back rumors. A broader scope of cyber-discussion was allowed in recent years, and this was even more significant during the Si Chuan earthquake. In blogs, people decried the “unusually high prices” of tents compared to those sold in the local markets, and

asked the Red Cross to make public its accounts to inform people about how donations were being allocated. After media reported those questions from the Internet on May 20, government officials held an online exchange with the public about why so many schools collapsed during the Si Chuan earthquake while this was extremely rare during the previous earthquake. To the extent that these critiques and exchange of opinions were allowed online, the country did demonstrate wider latitudes for freedom of expression.

Changes in media performance may also be due to available resources and communication technology. During the Tang Shan earthquake, media reports were based mostly on first-hand accounts of government officials. During the Si Chuan earthquake, journalists were given the use of helicopters to survey affected areas and to conduct interviews where the highways were damaged. In 2008, new modes of communicating with each other (e.g., the Internet and cell phones) were already widely used for reporting purposes. As Graham and Marvin (1996) concluded, “To a significant extent, the development of communications and information technologies is central to [social and political] transformations” (pp. 2-4).

New technology can help media in the following ways: (1) Time is saved for media to get to the scene; (2) recording tools, such as digital cameras, digital voice recorders and telecameras can record more first-scene information with details; (3) Internet and satellites increase the speed of information transmission; (4) electronic printing and e-newspaper technology shorten the time to delivery; (5) with help from cars, ships and helicopters, reporters can travel to many isolated areas.



In sum, the Tang Shan coverage lagged behind the actual events, and news reports worried more about preserving national unity than the welfare of the victims. For the Si Chuan earthquake, more media channels were reporting almost in real time, and the content was diverse and more objective.

### **Weakening of Party Controls**

More than 160 years after the enactment of the U.S First Amendment, China promulgated the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, with clauses also aimed at protecting freedom of expression. Article 35 proclaims that citizens enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration. Article 51 provides that the citizens' exercise of their rights may not infringe upon the interests of the state, of society and of the collective, or upon the lawful freedoms and rights of other citizens.

Though in different language, the basic idea is the same: they give people the right to express their ideas. Alexander (2005) suggests that there are principles that determine the scope of freedom of expression. To him, freedom of expression is implicated whenever: (1) "expressive conduct" is suppressed or penalized, (2) conduct that is intended to communicate a message is suppressed or penalized, (3) an audience is prevented from receiving a message, (4) conduct intended to communicate a message is suppressed or penalized with the result that an audience is prevented from receiving the message, (5) an activity is suppressed or penalized for the purpose of preventing a message from being received" (p. 9). Though some of the rules and policies are unwritten or banned from viewing by public, one can still detect the loosening of media control. If media coverage

provides more diverse viewpoints concerning the same issue, or coverage shows more negative information, these would be indications of more freedom of expression.

Two institutions manage media activity in China—the General Administration of Press and Publications (GAPP) and the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT).

GAPP is also known as the National Copyright Bureau, whose main function is to draft and implement copyright laws, administrative rules and regulations. It oversees the Chinese Music Copyright Association and the Chinese Copyright Proxy Corporation, which is responsible for foreign copyright issues. The Bureau awards licenses to publish, censors content, or sanctions the dissemination of certain content.

SARFT studies and draws up the policies for and supervises broadcasting and films. It decides what television programs to import, and issues broadcasting licenses. It also reviews radio and television broadcasts and movies, and releases permits for TV and radio products and their distribution.

For years, scholars have claimed that Chinese media are under the hard control of government and are politically motivated.

“The Chinese government, like Western governments, always thinks it is capable of handling the situation if left alone and resents criticism from the outside, while the Chinese people, again like all people in the world, persist in thinking the government of the time the worst one they could have. The government always claims: it is thinking of the people, but does not quite like to hear what the people think of itself” (Lin, 1936, p. 3).

Many contend that the Chinese press system falls in between Siebert, Peterson and Schramm’s (1956) proposed authoritarian theory of the press “in which the government has the power to control the press either by censorship or punishment after publication” and the

Soviet communist theory “in which the government controls community opinion, consumer action and media ethics; that is to say, it both controls and produces the news” (p. 7).

The categories, however, fail to capture the nuances of the system as it now operates. As Bennett (1988) wrote, in China, “most newspapers were either funded by, or otherwise sympathetic to, particular political parties, interested organizations, or ideologies. Reporting involves the political interpretation of events. People bought a newspaper knowing what its political perspective was and knowing that political events would be filtered through that perspective. In many respects, this is a sensible way to approach the news. If one knows the biases of a reporter, it is possible to control for them in interpreting the account of events. Moreover, if reporting is explicitly politically oriented, it becomes possible for different reporters to look at the same event from different points of view” (p. 123).

Open government information is necessary to win support inside China and to highlight the image of a responsible big country. Government needs media to make people know the information they want people to know and the information people have to know. Governmental press conferences make government information more accessible to media. From May 15 to August 31, the People’s Government of Si Chuan province held 44 press conferences in total<sup>7</sup>. Both Chinese and foreign reporters were welcomed, and information that people cared about most and information government wanted to send out most was spread from these conferences.

With the positive attitude of improving people’s *right to know*, several new laws and policies about information disclosure were released during the last decade. An example is

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.sc.gov.cn/jrsc/200808/t20080831\\_310186.shtml](http://www.sc.gov.cn/jrsc/200808/t20080831_310186.shtml)

the following law that mandates the disclosure of accurate and timely information from *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Open Government Information*<sup>8</sup>:

Article 35. If an administrative agency violates the provisions of these Regulations and has engaged in any one of the following behaviors, the supervision agency or the administrative agency at the next higher level shall order that administrative agency to correct the situation. If the circumstances are serious, administrative penalties shall be imposed in accordance with the law on person(s) directly in charge of the administrative agency, as well as other persons who are directly responsible. If the behavior constitutes a crime, criminal responsibility shall be pursued in accordance with the law:

- (1) Failure to fulfill, in accordance with the law, open government information obligations;
- (2) Failure to timely update the contents of government information that has been disclosed, the guide to open government information and the catalogue of open government information;
- (3) Collecting fees in violation of provisions;
- (4) Providing government information as a paid service through other organizations or individuals;
- (5) Disclosing government information that should not be disclosed; and
- (6) Other actions that violate the provisions of these Regulations.

Is it true that government control and motives have not changed? If the policy were changed or even revised slightly, would media get more freedom when they report? In China, the Party principle and mouthpiece rule are constantly being reinforced as the Party struggles to maintain control of the media (Zhao, 1998). But from the perspective of the 21st century, the modern Chinese press experienced an extraordinary and as yet unfinished developmental process. “Though it played a pivotal role in China’s transition from a traditional to a modern society, it consistently failed to establish its political independence from state control—something seen in democratic societies as perhaps the key to the media’s existence as a sustainable autonomous institution” (Zhang, 2007, p. 150). However, according to McCormick and Liu (2003), “the flow of media content across China’s borders

<sup>8</sup> Base on translation of Yale Law School, [http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Intellectual\\_Life/Ch\\_OGI\\_Regualtions\\_Eng\\_Final\\_051607.pdf](http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Intellectual_Life/Ch_OGI_Regualtions_Eng_Final_051607.pdf)

is significant, but more because it offers Chinese audiences more resources for constructing arguments and identities than because of seductive “Western values” woven into imported media” (p. 139). Indeed, it can be said that the China media industry is in a transition period, both at the institutional level and at the theoretical level. In a meeting, Chinese president Hu first advanced the idea that the media should be the mouthpiece not only of the Party but also of the people. With this suggestion from the Party, media got ideological support to be braver when reporting. Even if the policy change is slight, it gives media more freedom to release reports. Even if sometimes the policy change is unwritten, professional media workers can detect it can try to report some thing different.

### **Visual Communication**

Kenney (2009) defined visual communication as “ a social process in which people exchange messages that include visuals” (p.1) Photos can give people a direct feeling about a news event. Comparing photo reports about the two earthquakes can provide more evidence to show the scope of freedom about news reports in a different perspective.

In this study, it was hypothesized that content of a photo will also reflect the change of freedom of expression. Stuart Hall observed that (1986, as cited by Yao, 2008), visual images are capable of producing documentary evidence to support the commonsensical claims of ideology, and in turn to use the very appearance of nature to subtly camouflage the constructed, historical, and social roots of ideology (p. 21-42). Working rules are diverse from medium to medium, and attitudes and preferences differ from photographer to photographer. These make photos about the same event (even the same scene) quite different. Yao (2008) said that “pictures and photos will fairly represent journalists’

attitudes in news reporting.” (p.12) Since photographers need to follow control from media or government, their photos can also represent the scope of freedom of expression they have when they publish these photos.

Chinese media were completely under the control of government and the Party when the Tang Shan earthquake happened. During the following 32 years, China experienced economic revolution and ideological revolution, and permitted more and more communication with the outside world. All these led to changes in media policy. With more freedom, Chinese media performed better for the Si Chuan earthquake.

### **Hypotheses and Expectations:**

Wills and Okunade (1997) say that disaster reports must, at a minimum, contain information about the number of people who died and those who were injured, the total number of people affected or in danger, the cause of the disaster, eyewitness accounts, property losses, rescue and relief operations (including evacuations and search operations), and acts of heroism. Human-interest stories associated with disasters discuss acts of looting and rioting, warnings issued by officials from agencies like the police, fire and health departments and public utilities, uninsured losses, and lawsuits relating to the disaster. Because of the political and technological changes described earlier, it would be expected that this information would be reported more quickly for the Si Chuan earthquake than the Tang Shan earthquake.

There are many reasons why media reports now would be more timely. Political reasons might include less need of approval by different levels of government; less time

spent on intra-media censorship; less self-censorship caused by worry about future consequences. Technological reasons might include that new technology, such as GPS can help locate earthquakes much faster than in 1976. Other new technologies such as cell phones, digital cameras, internet and even helicopters, can save journalists time in reporting and transmitting stories. Satellite transmission can also speed printing and distribution.

This study will analyze media publication of key events and facts by time. Since *Guang Ming Daily* now has better technologies and less control from government and party, it is expected that earthquake reports will appear at least as quickly or more quickly than they did for the Tang Shan earthquake for such things as: (1)publication time of earthquake; (2)Epicenter; (3)Affected area; (4)Death; (5)Injuries; (6) Property lost; (7)Rescue; (8) Evacuation of Victims; (9) State fund; (10)Eyewitness accounts and (11)Relocation.

Policy improvements and technology updates are two main reasons for change in media performance. Based on the previous literature review, the following hypotheses will be tested in this study:

### **Hypothesis of Timeliness**

1. Si Chuan earthquake reports in *Guang Ming* will appear at least as quickly as or more quickly than they did for the Tang Shan earthquake.

Since *Guang Ming* has weakened Party control, new technologies and better educated employees, it should takes less time for *Guang Ming* to reports events.

### **Hypotheses of General Content Analysis**

2. Coverage ( text and captions of photos) of the Si Chuan earthquake will contain fewer ideological statements.

As the mouthpiece of Party, media always talk about class struggle, Marxism and Chairman Mao's Theory. Some themes during the Tang Shan earthquake articles include class struggle or criticizing Deng Xiaoping during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Heavy political propaganda was used to support the basic Party line, policy and principles of Chairman Mao, the government and the Party. After the Cultural Revolution, media used ideological terms much less.

3. Coverage (text and photos) of the Si Chuan earthquake will, as a percentage, focus more attention on common people, and especially pay more attention to common individuals who were affected by the earthquake or have observations about it.

Because of policy changes, the Si Chuan earthquake coverage is expected to be more focused on what common people did, said and thought during or after the earthquake. When they are mentioned and quoted, their names also will appear in the coverage, just like government officials' names. The percentage of common people portrayed should rise in the Si Chuan earthquake coverage. If a newspaper can talk about common individuals (not group of common people) feelings and their quotes, this newspaper must have fewer censors.

4. Coverage (text and photos) of the Si Chuan earthquake will, as a percentage, will include fewer stories and photos focused on governmental decisions, policies and plans, and activities. The coverage will also contain fewer quotes of them. If most of the coverage of a newspaper is about government, it is a tool of ideology control and it is under heavy political control.

5. Coverage of the Si Chuan earthquake, as a percentage, will include more information from experts.



Interviews with experts or expert quotes might include statistical data, and earthquake related scientific knowledge. Statistical data should be numbers or descriptions which can make audience understand the scope of the earthquake, such as “half of the buildings in this city were damaged in this earthquake.” Experts also might discuss psychic trauma and previous earthquake information to make people to build up a rational understanding of earthquake and what they should do after it.

6. The rank order percentage of different types of dominant themes will be different between the Tang Shan and Si Chuan earthquake articles ( both text stories and photos).

There will be fewer articles with a dominant theme of government action, decision, or official’s activity and more articles with a dominant theme common people’s activity, viewpoints or their stories.

7. Coverage (text and photos) of the Si Chuan earthquake will, as a percentage, include more negative information, both about the scope of destruction, and about government action to deal with it.

Because of concerns about preventing “counter attacks by deviationists” (Qian, 2007, p,198), Tang Shan earthquake coverage seldom mentioned negative events, such as the rush to purchase supplies, riots, disease, casualties and homeless people, social disorder, governmental negligence etc. The percentage of negative event coverage should be higher in the Si Chuan Earthquake coverage.

8. Coverage (text and photos) of the Si Chuan earthquake will, as a percentage, include more information about Taiwan and capitalist countries.

Since basic differences in ideology existed, Chinese media minimized mention of governments or governing parties of capitalist countries. Chinese media did not mention

Taiwan and Tibet because of the debates over sovereignty issues. The open and reform policy and the warming of cross-straits ties made these sensitive elements less sensitive. It is expected that there will be more coverage using these terms in the Si Chuan earthquake coverage.

9. Photos of the Si Chuan earthquake will, as a percentage, include more scenes from the earthquake area and people in that area.

Since transportation technologies are better than 32 years ago, journalists can get to the scene more easily and faster. Party control was weakened, so journalists can release on-scene photos (some of them might have negative tone about the damage scene and homeless people) to the public with fewer levels of censorship.

### **Hypotheses for the Qualitative Study**

10. Coverage of the Si Chuan earthquake will include fewer statements praising the importance of government and officials in the earthquake.

When the Cultural Revolution ended, the period of deifying Chairman Mao and the Party ended, too. In the Si Chuan earthquake articles, media would be expected to report about government, but more about what government and officials do, not just praising them.

11. The Si Chuan earthquake articles will portray common people more like human beings, not like fearless fighters in Tang Shan articles.

Tang Shan earthquake articles portray people as soldiers of class struggle and soldiers who fight with natural disaster and the Si Chuan earthquake coverage is expected to portray people who might be sad, weak, and helpless.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

The objective of the study is to measure changes in reports that have occurred in a Chinese newspaper, *Guang Ming Daily* concerning two earthquakes, Tang Shan earthquake and the Si Chuan earthquake. The method selected is content analysis. Content analysis is used to learn the underlying attitudes and view points and media bias about news coverage (Rubin, Rubin & Piele, 1986). Berelson (1952) stated: “Content analysis is a research technique for objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (p.18). Singletary (1994) elaborated: “We read between lines. We test the consistency of the information” (p. 180-281).

#### The study design

Generally, this study examines how coverage of the Si Chuan earthquake differed from coverage of the Tang Shan earthquake. Since the Tang Shan earthquake happened in 1976, prior to internet and the popularity of TV, this study compares newspaper coverage of the two earthquakes. Because the study focus is on change due to government policy, *Guang Ming Daily*, one of the most influential national Party newspapers in China, was selected as the target publication.

The *Guang Ming Daily* is an influential comprehensive newspaper in China established in 1949 by the China Democratic League, and it is under the control of the Communist Party of China Central Committee. With an audience of well educated people, *Guang Ming Daily* has a high reputation in China.

This study has three parts: (1) Timeliness study: a special content analysis for speed of coverage (hypothesis 1), (2) General content analysis: content analysis to quantitatively test hypotheses (2-9), (3) Two small qualitative case studies to examine several hypotheses( 10-11).

## **Sampling**

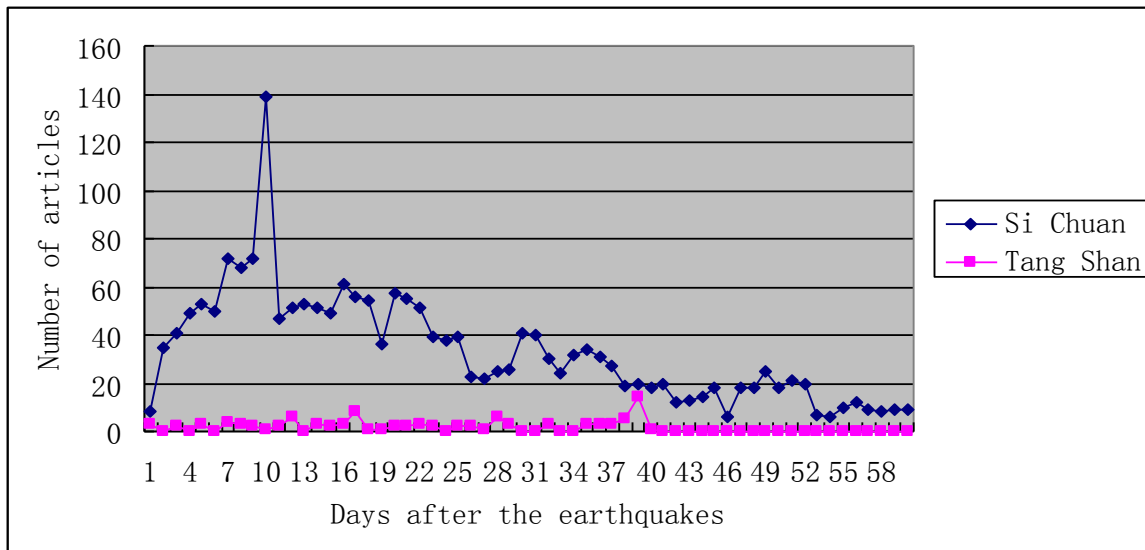
### **Timeliness**

For the Timeliness portion of the study, all articles published in *Guang Ming Daily* concerning the two earthquakes will be selected. Each article will be examined to see when key facts about each earthquake were first printed in the newspaper. The delay in time between the date of the earthquake and when the information was published will be measured for each type of news. Using the time delay as a variable, a comparison of speed of coverage can then be made between the two earthquakes.

### **Content analysis**

The sample for the general content analysis will include all articles published about the Tang Shan earthquake in the first 40 days.

**Figure 1 Comparison of Number of Articles Each Day for the Two Earthquakes**



**Figure 2 Comparison of Number of Photos Each Day for the Two earthquakes**

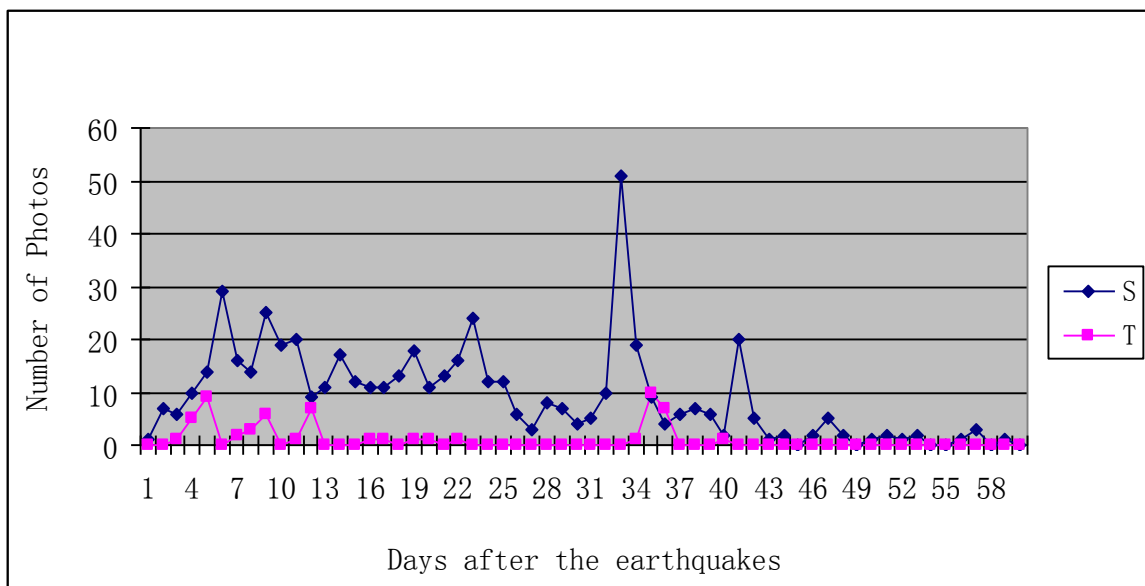


Figure 1 shows the number of articles per day that were published about each earthquake. In total, 118 articles were published about the Tang Shan earthquake, and 1,748 articles were published about the Si Chuan earthquake. Coverage about Si Chuan increased sharply in the first several days, and then gradually declined. In contrast, Tang Shan coverage was relatively uniform over the first 40 days, and it become 0 after the 41<sup>st</sup> day.

The reason for this was because Chairman Mao Zedong died 40 days after the Tang Shan earthquake, and Chinese media shifted to coverage of his death. For this reason, analysis in this part of the study was limited to the first 40 days. Variables to test hypotheses 2-10 with the general content analysis will be discussed later. About the 35<sup>th</sup> day after the earthquake, there was a peak in photo coverage because the government held a conference to celebrate its success in fighting the earthquake, and *Guang Ming* released 10 photos about heroes who gave speeches at the conference. Like text stories, after Mao Zedong died no more photos were published. The curve of the Si Chuan earthquake photo coverage was similar to the curve of the Si Chuan earthquake text report but it was flatter. Photo reports increased for the first several days after the earthquake and then decreased gradually. Photo reports of the Si Chuan earthquake also peaked around the 35<sup>th</sup> day, like Tang Shan photo reports. The reason is government held several “hero deeds” conferences, and *Guang Ming* released 49 photos about the heroes.

Figure 2 shows the number of photos per day that were published about the two earthquakes. A total of 60 photos were published about the Tang Shan earthquake, and 502 photos were published about the Si Chuan earthquake. *Guang Ming* promoted a vote for “Hero Teenager” in Earthquake, and it posted a photo for 43 candidates each, so the number of that day reached the peak of 51. Photo reports about Tang Shan increased in the first several days, and then became a flat line after that.

For the content analysis, because many more articles were published about the Si Chuan earthquake, a random sample of 118 articles was drawn equal in number to the Tang Shan earthquake articles.

### **Qualitative Study:**

The goal of the qualitative studies is to detect differences in news content which can reflect the scope of freedom of expression, yet can not be seen from a general quantitative analysis.

For the qualitative analysis, randomly selected subsets of articles will be selected to examine issues not easily measured by the quantitative analysis. For example, Hypothesis 10 suggests that articles about the Tang Shan earthquake will be more likely to praise government officials and government achievements. To examine this, a subset of 10 randomly selected articles from each earthquake that mention government will be selected. The specific terms used to describe officials and government will then be examined, listed, and compared. This analysis will include frequently used terms for praising officials, as well as the degree of praise used for them.

Hypothesis 11 suggests that articles about the Si Chuan earthquake articles portray common people more like human beings, not fearless fighters. To examine this, a subset of 10 randomly selected articles from each earthquake that mention common people or common individuals which focus on activities, feelings and thoughts will be selected. The specific terms use to describe situations of common people or common individuals, specific terms use to describe their activities, feelings and thoughts will then be examined, and compared (Hypothesis 11).

### **Operational Definition of Variables of Text Reports for General Content Analysis**

Variables measured include: (1) ideological statements, (2) people who were mentioned in an article, (3) common people or individuals mentioned or quoted, (4) dominant theme of an article, (5) tone(s) the coverage, (6) dominant tone of article, (7) length of the coverage; (8) whether statistics data appeared; (9) foreign elements; (10)

Taiwan elements, (11) whether quotes appear, (12) whether the content of articles focuses on the earthquake.

### **Ideological Statements**

Terms such as class struggle, Marxism, Chairman Mao's Theory, criticize Deng Xiaoping, basic line, policy or principles are ideological statements. This variable measures whether any of these statements appears in the articles.

### **People Mentioned**

Separate variables will be used to measure whether each of the following types of information appear in the articles: (1) Government-related information, which can be a story of a government official, a governmental action or decision. Here, government means Chinese governments at all levels and the Communist Party of China (CPC). (2) Common people (as a group), which can be a story of a group of common people or activity of a group of people, (3) Common individuals, which can be a story of a common individual or an interview with a common individual or description of a common individual's situation.

### **Name of Mentioned People and Quotes**

This variable measured whether articles provide the name or not when mentioning people or quoting them. Quotes reflect whether media provide an equal chance for government officials and common people to express their views.

### **Information**

Information might be statistical data, earthquake-related scientific knowledge or previous earthquake history. Experts might mention scientific information. This variable tests whether scientific information and knowledge appeared more frequently in earthquake reports.



### **Dominant Theme**

Most news has one theme--the most important thing news wants people to pay attention to. Basically, there are five kinds of themes: (1) government related, (2) common people theme, (3) common individual, (4) Scientific knowledge and history, (5) no dominant theme

### **Tone and Dominant Tone**

Three types of tone will be coded: positive, negative and criticizing of government. Positive reports means a positive outcome about the rescue, or the release of information aimed to give audiences a positive feeling, such as hope and thanks. An example is that People's Daily reported that a 3-year-old girl was rescued under her parents' dead bodies 40 hours after the earthquake happened.

Whether there is at least one person smiling in the photo will be coded. This is one way a positive tone might appear in a photo report.

Negative tone is the coverage about suffering people, unpleasant things or events, or media questioning some activities of individuals, or organizations. Also, the negative report can be criticism about some inadequate behavior, nonfeasance, delinquency or immoral behavior.

Criticism of government is one kind of negative tone. Since criticism of government was impossible during the Great Cultural Revolution(1966-1976) , it is expected that there will be no criticism about government in coverage about the Tang Shan earthquake. If criticism of government can be found in coverage about the Si Chuan earthquake, this would be a good indication of the enhancement of objectivity and diversity of Chinese newspaper coverage. Here, criticism of institutions, organizations and groups under

government control (even some NGOs, such as Red Cross of China) should be treated as government because they were not allowed to be criticized in 1976. An example of a criticism report would be: People's Daily reported that "the Ministry of Education responds to questions about why most of the teaching buildings were damaged during the Si Chuan earthquake."

Dominant tone might be positive, negative, criticism of government, or neutral.

### **Length of Article**

The length of an article will be counted by words, and the average length of articles about the two earthquakes will be compared.

### **Foreign Element**

To analyze whether the reports contain foreign elements is to access the freedom to report foreign related content in media reports. All coverage containing any foreign elements such as foreign help or foreigners' behavior during the earthquake can be coded as foreign coverage. An example is the Premier of Japan interviewed a teenage victim of the Si Chuan earthquake.

### **Taiwan Element**

To analyze whether the reports contain a Taiwan element is to test the freedom to report foreign related content in media reports because media did not have the freedom to talk about Taiwan for political reasons. All coverage mentioning Taiwan, such as donations from Taiwan, sympathy and solicitude from Taiwan government officials or common people can be treated as Taiwan-related coverage.

### **Operational Definition of Variables of Photo Reports**

Photo analysis will use the content of the photo and the caption, and this study will analyze the following aspects of photo coverage: (1) how many photos an article has, (2) what appears in this photo (3) the theme of the photo, (4) theme of the caption, (5) tone(s) appearing in the photos, (6) foreign elements; (7) Taiwan element; (8) On-Scene photo. Captions will be used to identify the content of a photo.

### **What Appears in the Photo**

(1) Common people, people without governmental background; (2) government official; (3) no people appear but earthquake effects are shown; (4) no people appear and no earthquake effects are shown; (5) other.

### **The Theme of the photo**

There are three kinds of themes: (1) common people (include common people as a group and common individual) focus; (2) government focus; (3) view without people; (4) other. Common people (including common people as a group and common individuals) theme coverage is the reports that mainly portray or comment on activities of common people or non-government groups, and their experience during the earthquake. As shown in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Two victims of the Si Chuan earthquake are crying beside the damaged apartment buildings. People's Daily, May 15



Government theme reports portray activities of different levels of government, officials and military activities. As shown in Figure 4:

Figure 4: Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council, visited Si Chuan after the earthquake and thanked doctors in the hospital. People's Daily, May 17.



**Tone(s) of Photos**

Two types of tones will be coded: positive and negative. Positive reports means the photo shows positive outcome about the rescue, or the photo gives an audience a positive feeling, such as hope and thanks. As shown in Figure 5:

Figure 5: A new born baby in Si Chuan hospital. People's Daily, May 13



Negative photos show coverage of unpleasant people, things or events, or media represent people questioning some activities of some individual or organization. A negative report also can portray some inadequate behavior, nonfeasance, delinquency or immorality behavior. As shown in Figure 6:



Figure 6 : Damaged buildings after Si Chuan earthquake. People's Daily, May 13



Photos will be coded both positive and negative if they contain both elements. Figure 7 contain both positive and negative tones.

Figure 7: Victims of the Si Chuan earthquake are talking. People's Daily, May 20



### Size of photo

The size of photo will be counted by the space a photo occupied, and the average size of photos about the two earthquakes will be compared.

### Intercoder Reliability

Intercoder reliability is very important for content analysis. To test the reliability of this study, two graduate students, including the author, coded the variables. First, all reports about each earthquake were given a unique number. Then a random sample (sample size is 118, equal to number the Tang Shan earthquake articles) was selected by <http://www.randomizer.org/form.htm> from the Si Chuan earthquake articles.

Cohen's Kappa formula was used by computer to assess the *intercoder reliability*, and the formula is:

$$\text{Kappa} = \frac{\text{percentage observed agreement} - \text{percentage expected agreement}}{N \times \text{number of coder} - \text{percentage expected agreement}}$$

The minimum expected agreement level is .7, and all variables meet the .7 level.

**Table 1 Intercoders Reliability**

Variable	Intercoder Reliability (Cohen's Kappa)	Degree of Similar
Ideological statements	1.000	
Mention Chairman	1.000	
Mention common people as group	.891	
Mention common individual	.899	
Provide name of common people when mention	.901	
Quote common individual	.882	
Provide name of common people when quoted	.882	
Mention government	.894	

<b>Provide name of official when mention</b>	<b>.883</b>	
<b>Quote government</b>	<b>.844</b>	
<b>Provide name of government when quoted</b>	<b>.899</b>	
<b>Quote experts</b>	<b>1.000</b>	
<b>Provide name of experts when mention</b>	<b>1.000</b>	
<b>Dominant theme</b>	<b>.792</b>	
<b>Appear of positive tone</b>	<b>.783</b>	
<b>Appear of negative tone</b>	<b>.911</b>	
<b>Appear of criticism of government</b>		<b>98.31%</b>
<b>Dominant tone</b>	<b>.879</b>	
<b>Mention foreign element</b>	<b>.879</b>	
<b>Quote foreigner or official</b>	<b>.792</b>	
<b>Provide name of foreigner when mention</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Mention Taiwan element</b>	<b>.792</b>	
<b>Quote Taiwan people</b>	<b>1.000</b>	
<b>Provide name of Taiwan people when mention</b>	<b>1.000</b>	
<b>Length of Text</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Appear of statistics data</b>	<b>.814</b>	
<b>Appear of Ideological statements in caption</b>	<b>1.000</b>	
<b>On Scene photo or not</b>	<b>.828</b>	
<b>Appear of common people</b>	<b>.828</b>	
<b>Appear of official</b>	<b>.762</b>	
<b>Theme of photo</b>		<b>99.15%</b>
<b>Appear of positive tone in photo</b>	<b>1.000</b>	
<b>Appear of smiling people</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Appear of negative tone</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Appear of suffering people</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Dominant tone of photo</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Appear of foreign people in photo</b>		<b>100%</b>



<b>Appear of Taiwan people in photo</b>	<b>1.000</b>	
<b>Size of photo</b>	<b>1.000</b>	
<b>Appear of damage scene</b>	<b>1.000</b>	

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Since some variable's Kappa or Pearson Correlation value cannot be computed, they are measured instead by the degree of similarity.

### **Data Analysis**

To examine the difference in freedom of reporting, frequency distribution data and descriptive statistics will be used; to test whether the difference is significant, chi-square test will be used.

## Chapter 4

### Results and Discussion

This study tested whether or not coverage of natural disasters has become more diverse and objective in China. In total, 11 hypotheses were tested about changes in patterns of *Guang Ming* newspaper articles about the Tang Shan and Si Chuan earthquakes. There are three parts: (1) A timeliness study examining the speed with which information was provided; (2) a general content analysis testing quantitative variables; (3) a small qualitative analysis to examine specific patterns of coverage that changed over time.

#### Timeliness

Hypothesis 1 predicts: The Si Chuan earthquake reports in *Guang Ming* will appear at least as quickly as or more quickly than they did for the Tang Shan earthquake.

Results in Table 2 show that in two cases out of 13, the Si Chuan earthquake reports of specific information occurred more quickly than they did for Tang Shan. For example, the first eyewitness account of the Tang Shan earthquake did not occur until five days after the event, while for Si Chuan it was the day after the event. In another four cases, reports of specific information were not different between the two earthquakes. The most striking finding from the table is the fact that for seven out of the 13 types of information, the newspaper never published any information for the Tang Shan earthquake during the first 40 days, while for the Si Chuan earthquake, all 13 types of information were published. Thus, the main change is that information was being published during the Si Chuan earthquake while it was not published for Tang Shan. Hypothesis 1 receives only limited support.

**Table2 Time Delay (in days) Between the Earthquake and Publication of Key Types of Information**

Type of Information	Tang Shan (Time delay in days)	Si Chuan (Time delay in days)
Publication time of the Earthquake	1	1
Epicenter of the Earthquake	1	1
Affected Area of the earthquake	1	1
First Report about Official Rescue	1	1
First Report about Eyewitness accounts	5	1
First Report about Recovery of Transportation	12	4
Number of Death	Never reported	7
Number of Injuries	Never reported	7
Property losses from the earthquake	Never reported	7
First Report about Evacuation of Victims	Never reported	1
First Report about State Fund allocation	Never reported	1
First Report about Relocation of	Never reported	2

**victims**

<b>First Information about Aftershocks</b>	<b>Never reported</b>	<b>3</b>
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**General Content Analysis**

A total of 118 articles for each earthquake were selected for analysis. For the Tang Shan earthquake, 36 of the 118 turned out to have only photos, leaving 81 text articles, 1 song and 60 overall photos. For the Si Chuan earthquake, 20 of the 118 articles were only photos, leaving 98 text articles and 36 photos.

**Hypothesis 2**

Hypothesis 2 predicted that coverage (text and captions of photos) of the Si Chuan earthquake will contain fewer ideological statements. Ideological statements include information such as class struggle, Marxism, Chairman Mao's Theory, class struggle, and criticisms of Deng Xiaoping.

The following show the difference in use of ideological statements about the two earthquakes.

**Table 3** Number and Percent of Ideological Statements for Each Earthquake

Variable	Tang Shan		Si Chuan		$\chi^2$
	Number	%	Number	%	
	Text				
Mention Ideological statements	73	90.1	0	0	p=.000<.01
	Photo				
Mention Ideological statements in Caption	27	45.0	0	0	p=.000<.01

Results (Table 3) shows that 90.1% of text stories and 45% of photos from the Tang Shan earthquake included ideological statements, while no text story or photo from the Si Chuan earthquake reports mentioned ideological statements (Text:  $\chi^2=148.957a$ ,  $df=1$ ,

$p < .001$ ; Photo:  $\chi^2 = 29.368a$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ) indicating a significant difference between the two earthquakes. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

In 1976, it was the duty of media to support Marxism and Chairman Mao's Theory because the whole country was working on class struggle during the Cultural Revolution. After 1978, Deng Xiaoping announced a change to an Open and Reform policy with economic development as the most important thing for China. Media began to use ideological statements much less.

### Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 predicted that coverage (text and photos) of the Si Chuan earthquake will, as a percentage, focus more attention on common people, and especially pay more attention to common individuals who were affected by the earthquake or have observations about it.

Table 4 shows the difference in reporting common people (as a group or individual).

**Table 4 Differences in Reporting Common People (as group or individual)**

Variable	Tang Shan		Si Chuan		$\chi^2$
	Number	%	Number	%	
Text					
Mention Common People as a group	49	60.5	39	39.8	$p = .010 < .05$
Mention Common individual	24	29.6	48	49.0	$p = .006 < .01$
Provide name of common individual when mention them	20	24.7 of all 83.3 of 24	41	41.8 of all 85.4 of 48	$p = .640 > .05$
Quote common individual	9	11.1	36	36.7	$p = .000 < .001$
Provide name of common individual when quoting them	8	9.8 of all 88.8 of 9	33	33.7 of all 91.6 of 36	$p = .605 > .05$
Photo					
Common people (individual or in group) appear in photo	47	78.3	33	91.7	$p = .170 > .05$

The table shows that contrary to the predictions, the percentage of stories mentioning common people decreased from 60.5% for the Tang Shan earthquake to 38.8% for Si Chuan. However, the percentage of articles that mention common individuals, name them or quote them increased significantly. There was a shift from showing common people as a group, to a journalistic style that focused on individuals and named them.

Since most of photos have more than one person in them, it is hard to decide whether a photo is focusing on one individual or a group of common people. For this reason, the variables “mention common people as a group” and “mention common individual” were merged for the photo analysis.

Compared to the Tang Shan earthquake, the Si Chuan earthquake articles mention common people as a group significantly less, and mention common individuals significantly more. Results for photos show an increase from 78.3% for Tang Shan photos to 91.7% Si Chuan photos which include common people (including common individuals or common people as a group), but the increase was not significant. Both Tang Shan and Si Chuan articles paid a lot attention to common people (including common individuals or common people as a group), but no significant quantitative difference was found between the two.

Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is partially supported.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

Hypothesis 4 predicts that coverage (text and photos) of the Si Chuan earthquake will, as a percentage, include fewer stories and photos focused on governmental decisions, policies and plans, and activities. Table 5 shows the difference in reporting government.

**Table 5** **Differences in Reporting Government**

Variable	Tang Shan		Si Chuan		$\chi^2$
	Number	%	Number	%	
	Text				
Mention chairman	64	79.0	8	8.2	p=.000<.01
Mention government	59	72.8	49	50.0	p=.002<.01
Provide name of government officials when mention them	58	71.6 of all 98.3 of 59	41	41.8 of all 83.7 of 49	p=.377>.05
Quote government official	38	46.9	29	29.6	p=.014<.05
Provide name of official when quote them	37	45.7 of all 97.4 of 38	29	29.6 of all 100 of 29	p=.561>.05
	Photo				
Government official appear in photo	26	43.3	6	16.7	p=.000<.01

Results show that as predicted, the percentage of stories mentioning chairmen decreased from 79.0% for Tang Shan to 8.2% for Si Chuan, and the percentage of articles that mention government officials or quote them decreased significantly, but the results are not significant for naming officials when mentioning or quoting them. Almost every article mentioning or quoting officials provided their names. The percentage of photos that include government officials decreased significantly from 43.3% for Tang Shan to 16.7% for Si Chuan. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

### Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 predicts that coverage of the Si Chuan earthquake, as a percentage, will include more expert information and scientific knowledge, such as first aid knowledge and historical earthquakes.

**Table 6 Differences in Use of Experts as Sources**

Variable	Tang Shan		Si Chuan		$\chi^2$
	Number	%	Number	%	

	Text			
Quote experts	0	0	12	12.2
Provide name of experts when quoting them.	0	0	9	9.2 of all 75 of 12

None of Tang Shan text articles or photos contained experts, while about one in 10 stories and photos of Si Chuan include experts. Although the percentage of experts is still relatively rare, it now does occur. Since there were no instances of experts for Tang Shan, a chi-square test was not possible. However, there is a small increase in the direction predicted by Hypothesis 5. Perhaps most important is that there was no use of experts at all in Tang Shan, which suggests that it might not have been permitted. Therefore, hypothesis 5 was partially supported.

### Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 predicts: The percentage rank order of different types of dominant themes will be different between the Tang Shan and Si Chuan earthquake articles (both text stories and photos).

Table 7 shows the differences in dominant theme.

**Table 7 Differences in Dominant Theme**

Dominant Theme	Tang Shan		Si Chuan		$\chi^2$
	Number	%	Number	%	
Text					
Government	19	23.5	20	20.4	p=.000<.001
Common People( as a group or individual)	20	24.7	34	34.7	
Information	3	3.7	33	33.7	
Other	10	12.3	11	11.2	
Ideological statements	29	35.8	0	0	
Photo					
Government	26	43.3	6	16.2	p=.000<.001
Common People	29	48.3	26	70.3	
View and Other	5	8.4	5	13.5	



Table 7 shows that 23.5% of the Tang Shan earthquake text stories and 20.4% of the Si Chuan earthquake text stories have a dominant theme of government, government action, decision or an official's activities; 24.7% of the Tang Shan earthquake text stories and 34.7% of the Si Chuan earthquake text stories have a dominant theme of common people (as a group or as individuals); 3.7% of the Tang Shan earthquake text stories and 33.7% the Si Chuan earthquake text stories have a dominant theme in information releasing; 12.3% of the Tang Shan earthquake text stories and 11.2% of the Si Chuan earthquake text stories have a dominant theme of other (this might be an article that reports activities of a foreign officials or government activities after the earthquake); 35.8% of the Tang Shan earthquake text stories and 0 the Si Chuan earthquake text stories have a dominant theme of ideological statements.

The ranks of dominant themes of the two earthquakes are as follows.

**Table 8**      **Difference of Rank Order of Dominant Themes**

Rank Order	Tang Shan Earthquake	Si Chuan Earthquake
<b>Text</b>		
1	Ideological statements	Common People( as a group or individual)
2	Common People( as a group or individual)	Information
3	Government	Government
4	Other	Other
5	Information	Ideological statements
<b>Photo</b>		
1	Common People	Common People
2	Government	Government
3	Views and Other	Views and Other

As shown in Table 8, the rank order of text stories changed. A Spearman's Rank Order correlation was run to determine the relationship between the rank orders among 5 types of dominant themes of the earthquake reports. The correlation was not statistically significant

( $rs(8) = -.300, P = .624$ ), indicating the ranking are different. That supported Hypothesis 6—that rank order is different between two earthquakes. As shown in Table 8, rank of ideological statements dropped from 1 for Tang Shan to 5 for Si Chuan. This is because ideological statements disappeared completely in the Si Chuan earthquake articles (information about change of ideological statements can be seen in Table 5).

The rank order of photo dominant themes remained the same. Common people ( group and individual) rank first in both Tang Shan and Si Chuan earthquake reports. Hypothesis 6 was supported for articles, but not for photos.

### Hypothesis 7

Hypothesis 7 predicts that coverage (text and photos) of the Si Chuan earthquake will, as a percentage, include more negative information, both about the scope of destruction, and about government action to deal with it.

**Table 9** Differences in Tone

Variable	Tang Shan		Si Chuan		$\chi^2$
	Number	%	Number	%	
Text					
Contain positive tone	80	98.8	84	85.7	$p=.001<.001$
Contain negative tone	14	17.3	50	51.0	$p=.001<.001$
Contain criticism of government	0	0	0	0	
Contain both positive and negative tone	14	17.3	43	43.9	
Contain only positive tone	66	81.5	41	41.8	
Contain only negative tone	0	0	7	7.1	
Only neutral tone	1	1.2	7	7.1	
Photo					
Contain positive tone	59	98.3	34	94.4	$p=.001<.01$
Smiling people appear	26	43.3	7	19.4	$p=.007<.01$
Contain negative tone	0	0	13	36.1	$p=.001<.01$
Suffering people appear	0	0	4	11.1	
Contain damage scene	0	0	10	27.8	$p=.000<.001$

Only positive tone	59	98.3	23	67.6
Only negative tone	0	0	1	2.9
Contain both positive and negative tone	0	0	11	32.4
Only neutral tone	1	1.7	0	0

Negative information includes: reports of death or injury, property lost, push purchase, etc. Criticism of government officials will be a separate variable.

As predicted, results in table 9 show that the percentage of stories that contain negative tone, increased significantly. There was only one article that was only negative. But it is clear that negative tone increased. The percentage of photos which contain negative tone, suffering people, damage scenes, only negative tone, and both negative and positive tone increased. Though there are too few cases for a Chi-Square test, it is striking that only positive material (and one neutral case) appears for the first earthquake, while some negative material appeared for the Si Chuan earthquake. It should be noticed that even though the percentage of negative tone increased, the great majority of articles and photos are still positive in tone for the Si Chuan earthquake.

**Table 10** Difference in Dominant Tone

		Tang Shan Earthquake		Si Chuan Earthquake		$\chi^2$	
		Text					
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent		
Valid	Positive	79	97.5	66	67.3	p= .<.001	
	Negative	0	0	10	10.2		
	Neutral	2	2.5	22	22.4		
	N/A	0	0	0	0		
Total		81	100.0	98	100.0		
		Photo					
Valid	Positive	59	98.3	27	75.0	p= .<.001	
	Negative & neutral	1	1.7	9	25.0		
Total		60	100.0	36	100.0		

Table 10 shows that the dominant tone of 79 (97.5%) of the Tang Shan earthquake text stories and 66 (67.3%) of the Si Chuan earthquake text stories are positive; 0 of the Tang

Shan earthquake text stories and 10 (10.2%) of the Si Chuan earthquake text stories are negative; 2 (2.5%) of the Tang Shan earthquake text stories and 22 (22.4%) of the Si Chuan earthquake text stories are neutral and none of the Tang Shan earthquake text stories or the Si Chuan earthquake text stories are unclear in tone. The difference is significant ( $\chi^2=33.189a$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=.<.001$ ).

The dominant tone of 59 (98.35%) of the Tang Shan earthquake photos and 27 (75.0%) of the Si Chuan earthquake photos is positive; 1 (1.7) of the Tang Shan earthquake stories and 9 (25.0%) of the Si Chuan earthquake photos are negative or neutral. Results are significant ( $\chi^2=15.777a$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=.<.001$ ).

The main change over time in stories is that coverage of the Si Chuan earthquake contained more material coded as negative--information about the scope of the destruction--than the Tang Shan earthquake. This supports Hypothesis 7. More than half the Si Chuan stories contained at least some information that could be regarded as negative, compared to 17% of stories for the Tang Shan earthquake. Yet not one article for either time period includes any information that would be coded as critical of performance of government or government officials in responding to the earthquakes. Thus, it is clear that despite the fact that there were concerns about the quality of school building construction (since a number collapsed) and other matters, this material was not part of the press coverage. Overall, as the dominant tone indicates, there was decline in dominant positive tone over time, but two-thirds of the Si Chuan articles still were coded as positive. The overall tendency continues to be to focus on positive aspects such as rescues.

### **Hypothesis 8**

Hypothesis 8 indicates that coverage (text and photos) of the Si Chuan earthquake will, as a percentage, include more information about Taiwan and capitalist countries.

**Table 11 Differences in Mention Foreign and Taiwan elements**

Variable	Tang Shan		Si Chuan		$\chi^2$
	Number	%	Number	%	
Text					
Mention Foreign element	10	12.3	11	11.2	$p=.474 > .05$
Quote foreigner	5	6.2	6	6.1	$p=.597 > .05$
Provide name of foreigner when quote them	2	2.5 of all 40 of 5	6	6.1 of all 100 of 6	
Mention Taiwan element	0	0	8	8.2	
Quote people from Taiwan	0	0	4	1	
Provide name of people from Taiwan when quote them	0	0	1	1.0 of all 25 of 4	
Photo					
Foreign people appear	0	0	4	11.1	
People from Taiwan appear	0	0	1	2.8	

Results in Table 11 show that contrary to the hypothesis, there was no difference in mentions of or quotes from foreign elements for the two earthquakes. However, for the specific case of Taiwan, no mentions were ever made during the Tang Shan earthquake, while Taiwan was mentioned in 8.2% of the Si Chuan earthquake stories. For photos, few photos in either time period showed foreign elements, but the number remained low (only 4) in Si Chuan photos. Overall articles and photos did not mention foreign elements much in both time periods.

### Hypothesis 9

Hypothesis 9 predicts that photos of the Si Chuan earthquake will, as a percentage, include more scenes from the earthquake area and people in that area.

**Table 12**                      **Difference in On-Scene Photos**

Variable	Tang Shan		Si Chuan		$\chi^2$
	Number	%	Number	%	
Text					
Whether the photo was on-scene photo	39	65.0	24	66.7	$p=.587 > .05$

Table12 shows that almost the same percentage of on-scene earthquake photos was used in the two earthquakes. Since the difference was not significant, Hypothesis 9 was not supported. Although not coded, it appeared that most of the Tang Shan on-scene photos focus on people, and readers cannot see other things. In Si Chuan, on-scene photos include not only people but also their living environment and damage views.

#### Additional Variable Tests

**Table 13**                      **Difference in Statistical Data appearing in Articles**

Variable	Tang Shan		Si Chuan		$\chi^2$
	Number	%	Number	%	
Text					
Statistics data appear	8	9.9	66	67.3	$p=.000 < .001$

Table13 shows that 8 (9.9%) of the Tang Shan earthquake text stories and 66 (67.3%) of the Si Chuan earthquake text stories contain statistical data about the earthquake, a significant difference ( $\chi^2=62.155a$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This might be due to the better statistical technologies, less policy control, or better educated journalists who might like to include statistical data to make their reports more objective and precise.

**Table 14**                      **Comparison of Length of Reports for the Two earthquakes**

		Tang Shan	Si Chuan	T-test
Text Stories	Total Count	139451	94028	$p=.007 < .01$
	Count of items	81	98	
	Average length	1721.62	959.47	
Photo	Total Count	33840	25703	$p=.028 < .05$
	Count of items	60	35	
	Average length	564	734.37	

Table14 shows the average length of the Tang Shan earthquake stories is significantly longer than the Si Chuan earthquake stories. Also, the average size of the Tang Shan

earthquake photos on average is smaller than the Si Chuan photos. T-test results (  $T=3.658$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p = .007$ ) indicate a significant difference in the length of articles. A second T-test result ( $T=-2.233$ ,  $df=94$ ,  $p=.028$ ) indicates the difference between photo sizes is significant, too.

Though the average length of articles becomes shorter from Tang Shan to Si Chuan, the total words for each earthquake increased about 7 times from Tang Shan to Si Chuan (  $1721 * 118 = 203,078$ ,  $959 * 1748 = 1,676,332$ ). This indicates that *Guang Ming* reported much more information about the Si Chuan earthquake than they did about the Tang Shan earthquake.

### Qualitative analysis result

#### Hypothesis 10

Hypothesis 10 predicts that coverage of the Si Chuan earthquake will include fewer stories aimed at praising the achievements, thoughts and decisions of government and officials. Ten articles that included themes in government, government action, government decision and officials' activities from each earthquake were selected randomly. They are :T1, T13, T17, T18, T21, T22, T33, T39, T73, T75, S308, S386, S393, S455, S459, S629, S788, S1151, S1305, S1659.

T1 was the first article *Guang Ming* released after the Tang Shan earthquake, and it was the first article on page 1 of July 29, the first day after the earthquake. The headline was “Great Chairman Mao sent solicitude letter to victims in earthquake affected area.” The article said Great Chairman Mao cares about victims very much, and the Party called for victims to arm themselves with Marxism and the Chairman Mao's Theory, and follow the

lead and control of government, the Party and army at different levels to win the battle with the earthquake. This article emphasized two things which can make people get through the earthquake--Marxism, and Chairman Mao's Theory and the lead of the Communist Party.

The headline of T2 was “Earthquake affected people united together to fight the earthquake under the lead of Great Chairman Mao and the Party.” This article said that different levels of the Party organizations of He Bei Province, Tian Jin and Beijing have taken action to fight the earthquake, and officials are on their way to earthquake affected areas. Victims have made their decision to fight the earthquake under lead of Great Chairman Mao, and they will continue to criticize Deng Xiaoping during the earthquake crisis. Like T1, T2 emphasized the importance of Mao Zedong, the government and the Party. No information about common people appeared in the articles the first day after the earthquake.

T13, T17 and T18 mainly talked about the visiting of the Central Party solicitude group led by Hua Guofeng, the premier of China in 1976. The headline of T13 was “Conveying the great solicitude from Central Party and great Chairman Mao, solicitude group led by Premier Hua arrived in earthquake affected area.” The articles listed the names of officials who greeted the solicitude group in the airport. The article quotes victims’ words without specific names, saying they said with tears in their eyes, “Long live Great Chairman Mao!”, “Long live the Communist Party of China!”, “Thanks for the solicitude from Chairman Mao and the Central Party!” The articles included three photos: (1) one focused on Hua, who was talking happily with victims; (2) one focused on a crowd of people who were holding a big picture of Mao Zedong, and raising their arms. The caption explained that they are shouting loudly “Thank you, Great Chairman Mao!” and “Long live



Chairman Mao!"; (3) one focused on a crowd of people who were raising arms and crying. The caption said they are saying "Thank you, Chairman Mao!" T17 is very similar to T13. The articles said victims were moved by Great Chairman Mao, and called for people to be united together and be worthy of the solicitude from Great Chairman Mao and the Party. There were five photos portraying officials visiting victims and telling them the Chairman cares about them. Four of the five photos were close enough to see people's faces, and they are smiling happily. T18 wrote about victims thanking Mao Zedong and the Party, and the headline of the article is "Warm solicitude, Great encouragement". In this article, the solicitude from Mao and the Party is the reason why victims can continue their happy lives after the earthquake and the reason why they can conquer the natural disaster.

The headline of T22 is "A miracle". The article stated that "Under the management of Great Chairman Mao and the Party, under the guidance of the proletariat revolution route, the working class, people and the People's Liberation Army can conquer all difficulties and create miracles.

The headline of T23 is "Use the revolution route of Chairman to educate people, arm people and protect people's profits- -The People's Liberation Army makes a big contribution in fighting with earthquake". This article quoted common people's words "Every soldier educated by the Chairman likes Lei Feng. With such a great army, we can be ever-victorious."

T39 and T75 introduced several stories of government officials from Feng Nan County. In these stories, these officials were portrayed as selfless heroes who saved people's lives and property. The reason why they can be so selfless was they were educated by government and they insisted on Chairman Mao's revolution route.

The headline of T73 was “Chairman Mao’s solicitude gave Tang Shan victims strengthened confidence.

The quantitative analysis showed the Si Chuan earthquake articles did not include ideological statements and mentioned government and officials much less than the Tang Shan earthquake articles. Si Chuan articles said Chairman Hu Jintao and the Party care about victims and hope victims can be strong to get through the earthquake, but no articles state that the care can heal people’s pain or encourage them to give the energy to conquer the earthquake. No articles emphasize the importance of Marxism, Chairman’s thought or the revolutionary route. Most of the articles with themes in government, government action, and government decisions recorded what officials did and said about how to solve problems to rescue people and recover the loss caused by earthquake.

S308 focuses on government officials taking part in national mourning activities on May 19, 2008. This article just listed the names of state officials who joined the activity, and the fact that government flags were lowered to half-mast all over the country on that day. Seven ( S386, S393, S455, S 4599, S629, S788, S1151) of the government theme articles are about officials visiting earthquake-affected areas or their speeches at earthquake-related meetings. These articles mention the leading role of the Party members or call for different government departments to work together in good order to get through the earthquake. But they did not include ideological statements. For example, S386 is about Guo Boxiong’s (a member of the political bureau of the central committee of the Communist Party of China) speech about earthquake relief work. His speech was mainly about how to make sure people continue their daily lives after the earthquake. The Si Chuan earthquake articles include positive tone information about

government, the Party and officials, but these articles were based on officials' activities. News just recorded these activities. Many Tang Shan earthquake articles praise officials without reporting any activities of officials.

Therefore, Hypothesis 10 was supported.

### **Hypothesis 11**

Hypothesis 11 predicted that Si Chuan earthquake articles would portray common people more like human beings, not fearless fighters. Ten articles with a theme of common people or individuals from each earthquake were selected randomly. They are: T9, T14, T29, T31, T33, T38, T40, T63, T79, T94, S183, S727, S956, S1018, S1174, S1293, S1460, S1585, S1620, S1734.

The headline of T9 was “ Under the lead of Great Chairman Mao and the Party, Tian Jin people united together and fight with the earthquake bravely and full of courage.” In this article, *Guang Ming* said, “Wherever trouble is, people will fight with it.” “Man can conquer nature.” T14 said that people full of political passion in He Bei province and Liao Ning province are criticizing Deng Xiaopeng. They exerted the utmost effort to back up earthquake victims in Tang Shan to fight the natural disaster. People are described as “extremely combative.” Tang Shan articles tend to treat rescue activity as fighting with the earthquake. T31 mentions a doctor, He Decai who rescues others after the earthquake, and this was described as “he threw himself into the battle with rescue”. T33 said, “under the lead of the Party, railway workers stay calm and fight with the earthquake”. The headline of T38 was “ Heroes- -the soldiers who fight the earthquake in Tang Shan and Feng Nan area. ” This article introduces several soldiers' stories, and concludes “Once they finish the

task, they went back to the battle with the earthquake.” T63 said “People work together to make them fight with the earthquake better.”

Statements, such as “fight”, “battle”, “conquer the earthquake/difficulties” appear frequently in the Tang Shan earthquake articles, but these seldom appear in the Si Chuan earthquake articles. Si Chuan articles paid more attention to basic necessities of life--food, clothing, shelter and means of traveling. S183 mentioned the supply of gas, electricity and water in the earthquake area. S1174 describes a daily dinner of a victim’s family and their conversation.

S727 was a hero story of Yu Zhijun, a common individual who led 18 people through various difficulties and went back to his home. In this story, people were not portrayed as fearless soldiers who fight with disaster. “One injured person said ‘Leave me here and go. I will die but the rest of you can survive.’” S1018 was stories about doctors and nurses in a hospital near Bei Chuan County. The article mentioned the collapse of the hospital building and a nurse fainting after 50 hours of back-to-back surgeries. S1293 is about experts who gave psychotherapy to kid victims. S1734 recorded how a high school student, Zhang Bo takes care of the daily life of his classmates during the earthquake time. They lost the classroom and stopped taking classes after the earthquake, but Zhang Bo and his classmates searched for water and firewood, and cooked and cleaned their tents. He is not an earthquake fighter, but just a 19 year-old-boy who stayed calm and continued his daily life after the natural disaster.

In sum, in the Si Chuan earthquake articles, people feel sad, depressed and even hopeless, like other human beings. They survived because they wanted to live and tried

their best to survive, not because of the lead of the Party or the education of Marxism and Chairman Mao's thought. They are not soldiers, but common people.

Therefore, Hypothesis 11 was supported.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

#### Conclusion

The objective of the study was to measure whether reports concerning the Tang Shan earthquake of 1976 and the Si Chuan earthquake of 2008 demonstrate that China's press system has made progress toward becoming more timely, diverse and objective. The study examined 118 articles about each earthquake published in a major Party newspaper, *Guang Ming Daily* during 40 days following each earthquake.

Results indicate that while recent coverage still does not measure up to the standards of Freedomhouse and other monitoring agencies, there have been significant changes over time. Freedomhouse envisions a press patterned on a model that permits open debate—a free “marketplace of ideas” in the mass media—with readers then able to sift through competing claims to discover the truth. It also envisions a press that operates independently of government, and as a watchdog on government activities. In contrast, the newspaper chosen for this study is a Party newspaper owned and operated by the government, and not one instance of criticism or debate about the performance of government or government officials for either earthquake was found in the newspaper for this study. This finding would seem to support the conclusion of Freedomhouse that at least China's Party newspaper system is “not free.”

However, such a conclusion would miss some of the important changes that have occurred. These include:

- Much more information about the Si Chuan earthquake was provided in the newspaper. While articles about Tang Shan were carefully metered (about the same number each day), coverage of Si Chuan followed a pattern noted in the West, with a notable peak in the number of articles immediately following the quake and then a gradual decline over time. In all, there were 17 times as many articles about Si Chuan as there were about Tang Shan. Even when taking into account the fact that the average Si Chuan article was much shorter, the total text coverage was still many times greater than it was for Tang Shan. There also were many more photos. The increase is due in part to the fact that the newspaper itself now has more pages, and more space for articles. But that is only a partial explanation. One characteristic of coverage of the first 40 days of the Tang Shan earthquake was that information one would expect such as the number of deaths, injuries, etc. was completely absent. The information was provided for Si Chuan. In fact, one of the dominant themes of articles about Si Chuan was “information.” No experts were cited in the Tang Shan articles. But for Si Chuan, they were mentioned in about one in 10 articles. Thus, the public is now learning much more about a natural disaster in the Party newspaper than it did before.
- For the more recent Si Chuan earthquake, government officials and actions are relatively less dominant, and common people (as individuals) are more frequently included. This suggests relatively less focus on what the government is doing, and more attention to victims. When common people were portrayed in photos for Tang Shan, they were often part of group photos

showing them smiling. In stories, common people were portrayed as “fighters” responding to a rallying cry from government. The smiles were less frequent for Si Chuan, suggesting a less posed and more realistic type of coverage. And the focus on “fighters” had also disappeared.

- Ideological statements such as “Long live chairman Mao” were a regular part of most of the Tang Shan earthquake stories, and in many cases were the dominant part. The earthquake was simply an opportunity for government to present its political dogmas to national audiences. In contrast, no ideological statements of this type were found in the Si Chuan earthquake coverage.
- Although the great majority of coverage of both earthquakes was positive in tone, the Si Chuan coverage also began to include some “negative” coverage, especially descriptions of destruction and suffering caused by the earthquake. Importantly, this did not include criticisms of performance of government or government officials.

China’s failure to have its mass media rated as “free” can be explained in part by its culture and history. China has experienced more than 2,000 years of influence by Confucianism, and this philosophical system emphasizes propriety and the differences between those of lower and higher rank. Though feudalism has ended in China, Chinese people still do not criticize others publicly. Social ranking makes Chinese people and media less willing to criticize government than is the case in America. The “Open and reform” policy opened China to the outside world, and let Chinese people know more about Western culture. Some of them have been



influenced by Western thought and culture, and their behaviors have begun to shift to a semi-Western model. During the Cultural Revolution, even husbands and wives did not criticize government in their own apartments because they might be sent into the jail for this. Now, people criticize government privately and they post their criticism onto the internet. Maybe in the future, Chinese Party newspapers will find it more acceptable to criticize government. Or perhaps, due to cultural differences relating to public criticism, a different standard for press freedom might be needed in China and other Asian countries with a similar cultural history.

To account for differences in the use of ideological statements, one needs to understand what happened in the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution was a revolution of ideology and thoughts. After more than 100 years of wars, the People's Republic of China was launched in 1949. People finally were able to live a better life. By the mid-1960s, Mao Zedong thought people were too relaxed and that there was a threat to the country, so he started the Cultural Revolution to reunite the people. That is the reason why ideological statements were everywhere during 1966-1976. Mao died 40 days following the Tang Shan earthquake. After his death, government officials placed less emphasis on ideological statements, and more emphasis on economic development of the country.

During the Cultural Revolution, people were described as a tiny part of the whole country without any characters of their own. Nobody cared about individuals' names, ideas, needs and rights. By 2008, ideological and political trends changed; people and

media cared about individuals. They were reported more, and their ideas, their needs and rights got much more attention in news reports.

While the overall tone of news reports was positive for both earthquakes, there were some important differences. Although not coded, the author observed a considerable portion of the Si Chuan earthquake articles with positive tone are not about government but about the earthquake itself. If the positive information was divided into “positive information about the earthquake” and “praise for government,” the result would probably show that many Tang Shan articles are “positive” because they praised government or officials, while many Si Chuan articles are “positive” because government took positive action about the earthquake.

In a content analysis, it is not possible to know with any certainty what caused these changes. It was probably due to a combination of factors, including political, technological, and journalistic practice. For this study, it was not possible to interview the journalists who covered these two earthquakes, or to assess what editors might have done to direct the flow of stories or delete material. That remains for future studies. The present study does show that media coverage patterns are now different.

### **Limitations**

The first limitation of this study is the source of media reports. Besides newspapers, TV, internet, radio, cell phones, mobile media and even social networks are very popular nowadays. Since some of these media were not common in China in 1976, it is impossible to compare reports of all these media even though they are now important channels for people to access information.

The second limitation is generalizability. This study only compared the content of two earthquakes from one Chinese newspaper, *Guang Ming Daily*. One Party newspaper, *Guang Ming*, cannot represent the whole media industry in China. There were no commercial media in China before the “open and reform” policy, so they could not be compared any commercial media between the two time periods.

Third, the main part of this study is content analysis. Though the results support the idea of progress in freedom of expression in *Guang Ming*, further differences in wording and phrasing could not be detected by quantitative analysis. Quantitative analysis can only examine whether a feature exists or not, but can not tell the difference in degree between two pieces of information. For example, a piece of news might quote a common person, saying “Chairman Hu visited a victim’s family and consulted about their daily support” is different from another news item that might quote a common person, saying “Thanks Chairman Mao gave me a second life after the earthquake.” For the quantitative study, both the two are classified as positive information, and both mention the Chairman. Only qualitative analysis can show the difference in wording and different degree of praising the Chairman.

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## APPENDIX I

**Time Delay (in days) Between the Earthquake and Publication of Key Types of Information**

**Unit of analysis: each one coverage from *Guang Ming Daily***

	Tang Shan (Time delay in days)	Si Chuan (Time delay in days)
<b>Type of Information</b>		
<b>Publication time of the Earthquake</b>		
<b>Epicenter of the Earthquake</b>		
<b>Affected Area of the earthquake</b>		
<b>First Report about Official Rescue</b>		
<b>First Report about Eyewitness accounts</b>		
<b>First Report about Recovery of Transportation</b>		
<b>Number of Death</b>		
<b>Number of Injuries</b>		
<b>Property losses from the earthquake</b>		
<b>First Report about Evacuation of Victims</b>		
<b>First Report about State Fund allocation</b>		

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**First Report about  
Relocation of  
victims**

**First Information  
about Aftershocks**

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## APPENDIX II

**Coding Instructions to Determine Message Characteristics of text report  
Unit of analysis: coverage from *Guang Ming Daily***

**If the coverage contains text content, please fill part I**

- 1. Coder Id**
  - a. Ruiqi Wang
  - b. Xin Liu
- 2. Article ID:** \_\_\_\_\_ eg. yy/mm/dd
- 3. Date of Publication:** \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Does ideological statements appear in this article?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

Information such as class struggle, the Marxism, the Chairman Mao's Theory, class struggle, criticize Deng Xiaoping, basic line, policy or principles are highly repeated ideological statements.

- 5. Does this article mention the chairman ( Mao Zadong for the Tang Shan earthquake articles or Hu Jintao for the Si Chuan earthquake articles)**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 6. Does the coverage mentioned common people ( as group ) or their activity after earthquake?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

Common people include victims who were affected by the earthquake who live in earthquake area when it happened and common people outside earthquake area. Institution, organization or groups, such as universities, companies or volunteer groups will be included in common people.

If the article names one specific person ( no matter whether provide all the people mentioned), it should be yes.

- 7. Does the coverage mentioned common individual or their activity after earthquake?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 8. Does the article provide names of these common people when it mentions them?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

If the article names at least of one common individual ( no matter whether provide all the people mentioned), it code yes.

**9. Does this coverage mention or quote ideas/viewpoints of common individual?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**10. Does this article give out name of the common individual be quoted?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

If the article a name of one common individual ( no matter whether provide all the people mentioned), it should be yes.

**11. Does the coverage mention a government official or a governmental action/decision/ official's activity after the earthquake?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

Governmental activity include activity of Chinese government of different level, official, army and other state owned institutions and groups, such as public hospital and police. Government activity means duty base on one's job. People's volunteer action without duty base on their job will be treated as individual activity.

If the article a name of one government official ( no matter whether provide all the people mentioned), it should be yes.

**12. Does the article provide a name of the government official when mention them?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

If the article a name of one government officials ( no matter whether provide all the people mentioned), it should be yes.

**13. Does this coverage mention or quote any ideas/decision or viewpoints of an official?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**14. Does this article give out name of the official being quoted?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

If the article a name of one government official ( no matter whether provide all the people mentioned), it should be yes.

**15. Does this coverage mention or quote ideas/viewpoints of experts?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**16. Does this article give out name of the experts be quoted?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

If the article a name of one expert ( no matter whether provide all the people mentioned), it should be yes.

**17. In general, which is the dominant theme of this coverage?**

- a. Government action, decision, or official's activity
- b. Common people's/common individual's activity, viewpoint or their story
- c. Pure information release
- d. No dominant theme

Pure information might be (1) statistic data (with number or unclear data like "many" and "a lot of " ), (2) earthquake related scientific knowledge, (3)previous earthquake history. This information might be quotations from experts.

**18. Does a positive tone appeared in this coverage?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

Positive tone means the authors support the activity mentioned in the coverage or he/she think that it is good the story in the coverage happened. Also, positive tone coverage maybe about good outcome about the rescue, or the information aims at giving the audience a good feeling, such as hope and thanks. An example is that People's Daily reported that a 3-years-old girl was rescued under her parents' dead bodies 40 hours after the earthquake happened. Moving rescue story, donation and return to work and regular life are all positive attitude coverage

**19. Does a negative tone appear in this coverage?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

The negative reports are the coverage about suffering people, unpleasant things or events, or media represent people to questioning some activities of some individual, organization. Also, the negative report can be criticism about some inadequate behavior, nonfeasance, delinquency or immorality behavior, such as rush purchase and riot.

**20. Does criticism about government, an official or the Party appear in this article?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

A criticism of government is one kind of negative tone. Critical coverage mean that some people criticize or assail governmental action or decision no matter the coverage criticize or assail directly, or release a fed back of them. Here, criticize of institutions, organizations and group under government control (even some NGO, such as Red Cross of China) should be treated as government because they were not allowed to be criticize in 1976. An example of negative report is as followed: People's Daily reported an article "the Ministry of Education responds to questions about why most of the school buildings were damaged during the Si Chuan earthquake.

**21. What is the dominant tone of this coverage?**

- a. Positive
- b. Negative
- c. Both positive and negative
- d. No tone appear

The neutral coverage is these report take neither positive nor negative attitude or take both of them. *Guang Ming Daily* once reported a historical coverage: 8.0 Ms earthquake in Qing Dynasty. This coverage just narrated the time and casualty the affected area of several s big earthquake happened in Qing Dynasty, did not give any comment.

**22. Does the coverage contain any foreign element?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

If a piece of coverage mentioned anything, such as governmental or un-governmental action, common people, group from other county, or involved any foreign government, foreign institution or organization or foreign people, coder should mark yes here.

**23. Does this coverage mention or quote ideas/viewpoints of foreign people or official?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**24. Does this article provide name of the foreign people or official with quote?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

If the article a name of one foreign people ( no matter whether provide all the people mentioned), it should be yes.

**25. Does the coverage contain any element about Taiwan elements?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

If a piece of coverage mentioned anything, such as governmental or un-governmental action, common people, group from Taiwan, or involved any Tan Wan government, Taiwan institution or organization or Taiwan people, coder should mark yes here. All coverage mention Taiwan, such as donate from Taiwan, sympathy and solicitude from Taiwan government official or common people can be treated as a Taiwan related coverage.

**26. Does this coverage mention or quote ideas/viewpoints of Taiwan people or official?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**27. Does this article give out name of the Taiwan people or official?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

If the article a name of one foreign people ( no matter whether provide all the people mentioned), it should be yes.

**28. What is the length of the reports?**

\_\_\_\_\_ words

**29. Does this article contain statistics ( with numbers) data that explain earthquake related issues to make the information more clear?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**If the coverage has photo(s), please fill part II**

**Coding Instructions to Determine Message Characteristics for photo report**

**1. Are there any ideological statements in the caption?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**2 Do common people appear in this photo?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**3. Do government officials appear in this photo?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

Earthquake area are Sichuan province, Gansu province and Shanxi Province.

**4. What is the theme the photo?**

- a. Common
- b. Government
- c. View without people or people are not focused in the photo
- d. Other

**5. Does this photo contains a positive tone?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**6. Is there any people smile in this photo?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. No people

**7. Does this photo contain a Negative tone?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**8. Are there any people suffering in this photo?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. No people

**9. What is the tone of this picture in general?**

- a. Positive
- b. Negative
- c. Neutral

**10 .Does this photo contain foreign elements?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**11. Does this photo contain Taiwan elements?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**12. Is this photo portraying people, event or view from earthquake area?**

- a. Yes



- b. No
- c. Not sure

**13. What is the size of this photo?**

**Occupied space equals to \_\_\_\_\_ words.**

## APPENDIX III

**Codebook to Determine Message Characteristics of text report  
Unit of analysis: coverage from *Guang Ming Daily***

## Part 1

Variable name	Variable label	Values	Code
id	id number of article		
coder	coder's name	1= Wang 2= Liu	
date	When the article was published	Date of publication. Enter as mm/dd/yy	
Ideo	Is there any ideological control appear in this article?	1=Yes 0= No	
MenChair	Does this article mention chairman of China?	1=Yes 0= No	
MenCGr	Does the coverage mention common people (group) and their activity after the earthquake?	1=Yes 0= No	
MenCIn	Does the coverage mention common individual and their activity after the earthquake?	1=Yes 0= No	
MenNaCIn	Does this article provide names of these common people when mention them?	1=Yes 0= No	
QuoCIn	Does this coverage mention or quote ideas/viewpoints of common individual?	1=Yes 0= No	
QuoNaCIn	Does this article give out name of the common individual be quoted?	1=Yes 0= No	
MenG	Does the coverage mentioned government, government action, decision or official's activity after earthquake?	1=Yes 0= No	
MenNaG	Does the article provide name of the government official when mention them?	1=Yes 0= No	
QuoG	Does this coverage mention or quoted any ideas/decision or viewpoints of official?	1=Yes 0= No	
QuoNaG	Does this article give out name of the official be quoted?	1=Yes 0= No	

QuoEx	Does this coverage mention or quote ideas/viewpoints of experts?	1=Yes 0= No	
QuoNaEx	Does this article give out name of the experts be quoted?	1=Yes 0= No	
DomThe	In general, which is the dominant theme of this coverage?	1.government action, decision, or official's activity 2.common people's activity, viewpoint or their story 3. Common individual's activity, viewpoint or story 4.Pure information release 5. other	
PoTon	Does positive tone appear in this article?	1=Yes 0= No	
NegTon	Does negative tone appear in this article?	1=Yes 0= No	
Criticize	Does criticize of government or the Party appear in this article?	1=Yes 0= No	
GenTone	In general, what is the tone of this coverage?	1=Positive 2=Negative 3=Criticize 4=N/A	
MenFor	Does the coverage contain any foreign element?	1=Yes 0= No	
QuoFor	Does this coverage mention or quote ideas/viewpoints of foreign people or official?	1=Yes 0= No	
QuoNaFor	Does this article provide name of the foreign people or official with quote?	1=Yes 0= No	
MenTai	Does the coverage contain any Taiwan element?	1=Yes 0= No	
QuoTai	Does this coverage mention or quote ideas/viewpoints of Taiwan people or leader?	1=Yes 0= No	
QuoNaTai	Does this article provide name of the Taiwan people or leader with quote?	1=Yes 0= No	

Length	length of story in number of words		99
Stat	Does this article contain clear statistics data when explain the earthquake related issues to make the information more clear?	1=Yes 0=No	

## Part 2

Variable name	Variable label	Values	Code
idno	id number of article		
coder	coder's name	1= Wang 2= Liu	
date	When the article was published	Date of publication. Enter as mm/dd/yy	
PoIdeo	Is there any ideological statements appear in the caption?	1=Yes 0=No	
On-Scene	Is this photo portraying people, event or view from earthquake area?	1=Yes 0=No	
AppCo	Do common people appear in this people?	1=Yes 0= No	
AppGo	Do government official appear in this photo?	1=Yes 0= No	
PoThe	What is the theme the photo portrait?	1. Common 2. Government 3. View without people or people are not focused in the photo 4. Other	
PPoTon	Is positive tone appears in this article?	1=Yes 0= No	
Smile	Is there any people smile in this photo?	1=Yes 0=No	
PNeTon	Is negative tone appears in this article?	1=Yes 0= No	

Surf	Is there any people suffering in this photo?	1=Yes 0= No	
PGeTon	In general, what is the tone of the photo?	a. Positive b. Negative c. Neutral d. N/A	
PForei	Does this photo contain foreign element?	1=Yes 0= No	
PTaiw	Does this photo contain Taiwan element?	1=Yes 2= No	
PSize	What is the size of this photo?		

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