Abstract

Title of dissertation: SEARCHING FOR MEANING: MULTI-LEVEL
                          COGNITIVE PROCESSING OF NEWS DECISION
                          MAKING AMONG U.S. AND CHINESE JOURNALISTS

                          Bu Zhong, Doctor of Philosophy, 2006

Dissertation directed by   Professor John E. Newhagen
                            Philip Merrill College of Journalism

This dissertation is an experiment exploring how journalists make news decisions. Its

theoretical framework draws upon three intellectual traditions—media effects research,

cognitive psychology and decision making theory. It investigates both U.S. and Chinese

journalists' selection processes of psychologically, culturally and ideologically salient

information. Unlike some previous studies on news creation focus on cultural or

ideological content without an explicit discussion of psychologically salient information,

this research goes directly to investigate the working of journalists' thought processes

during news decision making.

A total of 120 working journalists (60 U.S. journalists and 60 Chinese journalists)

were recruited for this experiment. They were asked to write a news story based on the

stimulus materials containing psychologically, culturally and ideologically salient news

elements. Then they filled in a Web-based survey on their news decisions. A self-

designed software program used for the survey also recorded latency data, the time spent

answering each online question. Latency is a standard measure of the mental efforts involved in making those decisions.

More similarities than differences were discovered between U.S. and Chinese journalists. Results show that both U.S. and Chinese journalists processed psychologically, culturally and ideologically salient news elements differently. Social power distance, reflecting a news sources' social status, also becomes a vital criterion for both groups of journalists when assessing the sources. Regardless of their nationalities, the journalists use more psychologically salient news elements in their stories than those at cultural or ideological level. They also spent most time in processing psychologically salient information, suggesting more mental efforts were involved.

The main effects and interactions for cognitive processing and social power distance were so pronounced that they suggest the emergence of a transcultural trend in journalism. In this view, this dissertation not only enhances the understanding of Eastern and Western journalists' cognitive processing of decision making, but also builds a transcultural model for exploring journalism practice in an age of mass media globalization.

SEARCHING FOR MEANING: MULTI-LEVEL COGNITIVE PROCESSING OF NEWS DECISION MAKING AMONG U.S. AND CHINESE JOURNALISTS

by

Bu Zhong

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Advisory Committee:

Professor John E. Newhagen, Chair
Professor Douglas Gomery
Professor Katherine C. McAdams
Professor Lee Thornton
Professor Shu Guang Zhang

To Shuwen & Skyler

with love

献给最亲爱的舒文和乔伊

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Cognitive Processing of Journalists' News Decision Making

This dissertation is an experiment that explores how journalists[1] make news

decisions in an age of mass media globalization. Its theoretical framework draws upon

three intellectual traditions—media[2] effects research, cognitive psychology and decision

making theory. It investigates both U.S. and Chinese journalists' selection processes of

psychologically, culturally or ideologically salient news elements. Psychologically salient

news elements in this study refer to the information with some generally agreed-upon

news values that are shared by most journalists. These news values, which are codified in

journalism education textbooks, include the characteristics of timeliness, proximity,

prominence, conflict, image, human interest and novelty (Green, 2002)[3]. They are termed

"psychologically salient" in this study because they relate to information all human

beings, and journalists, find functionally compelling. News values often prompt

consistent reactions among most journalists, even those from different media systems and

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[1] A *journalist,* following other studies (e.g. Donsbach, 1993; Weaver & Wilhot, 1996; Zhang, 1998), is defined as a person who makes decisions directly affecting news content. The category thus includes both reporters and editors. In other words, journalists are those who have responsibility for the preparation or transmission of print, broadcast or online news stories or other information for the general public, including all full-time reporters, editors, writers, correspondents, columnists, photojournalists, producers and news managers. In this study, however, journalists do not include the personnel who have no direct responsibility for news content, such as librarians, camera operators, or studio technicians. It could be hereafter used interchangeably with *news people*, or *news workers.*

[2] *Media* are defined in this study as online, print and broadcast news media organizations that provide daily or weekly news coverage of domestic and/or international current events for the general public, including newspapers, news magazines, online news websites, TV networks and local television stations. Books, films and other forms of mass media are not included.

[3] The style of the in-text citation and references follows the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th Ed.) with two exceptions in the references: the authors' full names are used instead of just using full last names, and first name initials. The parentheses added to the year of publication were also removed.

cultures. For instance, an earthquake that killed 100 people will be a big event for all normal persons. It also becomes big news for journalists, regardless of cultures, social and political systems. Journalists usually react quite similarly in reporting the basic facts of such an event. Simply, they respond like any normal person might. This may also indicate a transcultural trend in journalism practice.

Value-laden culturally and ideologically salient news elements reflect a higher order of information in a news story, whether explicitly or implicitly mentioned. In social psychology, culture is defined as "a relatively organized system of shared meanings" given to events (Smith & Bond, 1998, p. 39; also see Rohner, 1984). To students of journalism studies, culture is "the totality of communication practices and system of meanings," in which journalists follow meaning systems and "negotiate those systems within different cultural contexts" (Schirato &Yell, 2000, p. 1). Ideologically salient news elements are the information reflecting "perception of society and a set of societal values" (Westerståhl & Johansson, 1994, p. 75). In practice, it is not easy to draw a sharp line between cultural and ideological values because there are some overlapping areas between them (Harre & Moghaddam, 2003).

This study is particularly interested in examining how journalists select culturally and ideologically salient news elements in the context of psychologically salient information. Many previous studies on news creation focus on cultural or ideological content without an explicit discussion of psychologically salient news elements (Seth & Newhagen, 1993), and with little consideration of the cognitive processing that might mediate news decision making (Bandura, 2002; Hawkings & Pingree, 1990; Reeves, Chaffee, & Tims, 1982; Wyer, 1980). This study goes directly to the issue and

investigates the working of journalists' minds during the process of news decision making, especially, how they select news elements across psychological, cultural and ideological levels for their stories.

Traditional media effects research, such as gatekeeping (White, 1950) and agenda-setting (MaCombs & Shaw, 1972), usually focuses on what media effects have been achieved or not achieved, or how successfully news media set the public's agenda, but these studies fail to answer the question: What forces make those media effects happen, and how? Still, media effects research has raised a lot of interesting issues about the constructs of news decision making.

Media Effects Research

Denis McQuail (2005) conceives, "[T]he entire study of mass communication is based on the assumption that the media have significant effects" (p. 456). This statement has largely become a consensus among scholars of mass media.

News informs us, and in the meantime shapes our world and the way we live in it. It influences "the focus of our attention toward the world," and "our concerns about the issues of the day" (McCombs, 1994, p. 1).This may not be a new argument to scholars of journalism studies. Considerable evidence has accumulated that journalists play a key role in "shaping our pictures of the world as they go about daily task of selecting and reporting the news" (p. 2). Many scholars agree that news is a constructed social reality, and how journalists frame news could affect audience's perception of the news (Tuchman, 1978).

Stocking and Gross (1989) point out the studies in the way reality is constructed by journalists should be supplemented by studies of the same process from the viewpoint

3

of cognitive science, specifically, research on cognitive biases and errors in journalism. It is possible that "most factors" in the process of news creation "can be better explained if we look at the cognitive and emotional needs of the actors involved" (Donsbach, 2004, p. 133).

Grounded in Lippmann's (1922) notion of news media defining almost our entire world beyond immediate experience, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw investigated U.S. presidential campaigns in 1968, 1972 and 1976, and proposed the agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, 1976). Their studies discover that news media have the ability to transfer the salience of issues on their news agendas to the public agenda, and predict that if people are exposed to the same media, they will place importance on the same issues as reported by the media (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

The concept of agenda setting is best summarized by Bernard Cohen (1963), who remarked that news media "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about. The world will look different to different people depending on the map that is drawn for them by writers, editors, and publishers of the paper they read" (p. 13). Two basis assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: (1) the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it; (2) media concentration on a few issues and participants leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.

However, it is useful to remember that journalism is not simply the presentation of new or useful information, but "reveals truth" for the public (McNair, 1998, p. 9). This does not mean journalism can always reveal reality. Walter Lippmann (1922) accentuated that "news and truth are not the same thing, and must be clearly distinguished" (p. 358).

Lang and Lang (1953) might have provided one of the earliest empirical evidences for Lippmann's observation, whose now canonic comparison of first-hand observation of General Douglas McArthur's Chicago visit in 1951 and the televised coverage of the event demonstrated that a mass medium like television could distort the "real" event dramatically. Thus, the news is "not merely a neutral reflection of events or record of public debates," but "a social production" that stems from journalists' news decision making—selecting, editing, presenting news elements—under specific individual, cultural or social circumstances (Dahlgren, 1981, p. 101). To Brain McNair (1998), the news is just "a selective account of reality" (p. 77). This should be an assumption for a further discussion of news decision making.

As early as in the 1970s, Wilbur Schramm (1971) insightfully noted that our understanding of the communication process could be incomplete without an understanding of "the 'black box' of the central nervous system" (pp. 24-25). Seth Geiger and John Newhagen (1993) state that "the conceptualization and measurement of mass media effects have generally ignored message processing issues" (p. 42). How journalists process and select information during news reporting has remained as an impenetrable "black box" with unknown processes taking place inside. This dissertation is devoted to the exploration of what's happening inside journalists' minds when they make news decisions. This information processing approach, in essence, can be taken as "a departure from the way communication research (that) has traditionally focused on messages in terms of the content of the message and the program genres dictated by the media industry" (p. 43).

In summary, news is a key tool to find out what is happening in the outside world. The news does not mirror what happens "the world outside" (Lippmann, 1922), but is "a set of stories constructed by journalists about the events of the day" (McCombs, 1994, p. 4). The news helps us define and make sense of the world. Meantime, the news has "the capacity to create meaning independent of the specific events to which the stories refer" (Dahlgren, 1982, p.102). The best metaphor of news may come from Lippmann (1922), stating that it "like the beam of a searchlight that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another out of darkness into vision" (Lippmann, 1922, p. 229). This study focuses on how journalists decide to move that searchlight? This study tries to answer it, which has been "a question largely unanswered" (Bennett, 2005). The information processing approach utilizes a particular methodology, especially controlled experiments, for gathering information about the mental processes, which "contributes to inquiry into mass media effects" (Geiger & Newhagen, 1993, p. 42).

Cognitive Processing of Decision Making

The fundamental premise of this study is that the way journalists process information is instrumental to understand the nature, potential, and limitations of news decision making, even at higher levels of analysis. This study should be viewed as a journalist-centered approach, as opposed to "media-centered" or "source-centered" (see McNair, 1998, p. 143). The study has two thrusts: First, to provide journalists an instrument to better understand the cognitive processing of news decisions making, in particular, the common potential biases they may share, which are often explicitly and implicitly embedded into their daily decision making. Second, it can serve as a reminder

to news consumers that what they get in news is *both* a social and psychological construction of reality.

Since the 1950s, cognitive science has generated an impressive body of new knowledge about the process of decision making, in particular, how people select, discard, organize, retain, retrieve and interpret information (see Miller, 2003, 1963). Cognitive science thus shares with sociologists an important assumption: Reality is actively constructed. During information processing, cognitive science is concerned with constructions of reality, and thus places more emphasis on cognitive factors rather than some social factors that lead to the construction (Stocking & Gross, 1989).

The perceptual-psychological approach since the 1950s has become pervasive in various disciplines of social sciences, including foreign policy decision making, arms control, crisis management, conflict resolution, diplomatic negations, and cross-national interactions (e.g. Hopple, 1980; Little & Smith, 1988; Singer & Hudson, 1992; Wang, 2000). For instance, since the 1960s, various theoretical models have been applied to the study of the perceptions of foreign policy decision makers (Holsti, 1963; Brody, 1966; Axelrod, 1976; Walker, 1979). David Singer (1961) warned in his analysis of foreign policy decision-makers that "the omission of the cognitive and the perceptual linkage would be disastrous" (p. 76).

However, very little of the perceptual-psychological approach has found its way into the research of the cognitive processing of journalists' decision making. The phenomenon makes the study by Westley and McLean (1957) extraordinarily amazing, who had proposed one of the earliest communication models focusing on cognitive-psychological factors in communication process. In the pioneering study, they provided a

conceptual model of the total communication process "in the belief that such a model will prove useful in ordering existing data in mass communications research." (p. 38).

Perhaps due to the complexity of the process, an empirical theory of news decision making remains yet to be developed. Some scholars even cast doubt whether it is "theoretically possible to propose such a theory that is able to integrate all these factors" (Donsbach, 2004, p.131). Still, scholars of communication have managed to develop theories to assess the influence of individual factors in the news flow, for instance, the theory of news values (Bartow, 1952; Green, 2002), theory of social interaction (Tuchman, 1978; Gans, 1980), the theory of deviance and significance (Shoemaker, 1996), and the hypothesis theory of news research (Stocking & LaMarca, 1990). Most of them agree that journalists, like other humans, understand events through the interaction between experience and prior knowledge in memory: their uniquely individual cognitive imagery. The result, far from being the mythical mirror view of reality, can be as many different versions of the observed event or circumstance as there are people observing it.

A review of psychologists and cognitive scientists' contribution to decision making research will help understand the proposed cognitive processing levels of news decisions, which will be discussed in details in Chapter 2.

Decisions Making Theory

An understanding of decision making research necessarily involves some appreciation of what has been called the "Cognitive Revolution" in psychology. Cognition refers to the mental processes involved with acquiring, storing, and using knowledge. The processes involved with cognition include perception, memory, thinking,

and problem-solving. The cognitive revolution reflected a challenge to the prevailing behaviorist model of human functioning, which had dismissed the need to examine "interior" mental processes. The revolution that started in British and American universities in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Baars, 1986) and gained force in the 1960s and 1970s had a major effect on psychology. During the intellectual shift of emphasis toward cognition from behaviorism, psychologists proposed to redefine psychology as a behavior science, which was thus called a "counter-revolution" by George A. Miller (2003, p.141).

A broad array of disciplines contributed to the emergence of what we now call "cognitive science:" psychology, linguistics, artificial intelligence, anthropology, neuroscience, computer science, information science and philosophy were prominent in the cognitive turn (Gardner, 1985). Some highlights within the discipline historically include Frederick Bartlett's (1967/1932) early research on schemata in memory construction, and Leon Festinger's (1957) proposal that dissonance reduction serves as a primary component in cognitive functioning. Subsequently to cognitive scientists, "perception became discrimination, memory became learning, language became verbal behavior, intelligence became what intelligence tests *test*" (Miller, 2003, p. 141).

One of the greatest contributions in the first stage of cognitive science is the research of the mind in terms of central logic engine, symbolic databases and some peripheral "sensory" modules (Clark, 1997). Some key characteristics of a vision of the mind included: "memory as retrieval from a stored symbolic database, problem solving as logical inferences, cognition as centralized the environment as (just) a problem domain, and the body as input device" (p. 83). Later connectionists (those who did research of

neural networks) refined the first three of these characteristics with following ideas: "memory as pattern re-creation, problem solving as pattern completion and pattern transformation, and cognition as increasingly decentralized" (p. 83).

Nowadays cognitive scientists posit that all human decisions are made by *mind*, which is, in essence, a control system that guides the behaving organism in its complex interactions with the dynamic real world (Newell, 1990). In fact, as Allen Newell (1990) points out, the mind is simply the name for a controller that "has evolved within the organism to carry out the interactions to the benefit of that organism or, ultimately, for the survival of its species" (p. 43). In this sense, people make decisions to take certain actions as a function of the environment. When the environment is different, people can behave differently.

This brings a mixed implication to journalism practice. On one hand, journalists should act different when they practice journalism in different cultures, social settings including political and media systems. On the other hand, they may not act quite differently in those different settings due to their occupational norms, such as, being objective in reporting news for the public (Schudson, 2001). This study pays special attention to documenting when journalists act like other people, when they do not. They might not be, especially, when they select culturally or ideologically salient news elements.

Hierarchy of Influences

Journalists' news decisions are influenced by countless factors, but its basic structure must be stable. The cognitive processing of decision making, like other human actions, is built up of a system with multiple levels, which in turn are organized in such a

structure (Newell, 1990). This assumption was well supported by Herb Simon's (1962) analysis of hierarchy, concluding that a complicated system could only achieve its stability when the system is organized in a hierarchical structure. Building a complicated system requires first building stable subassemblies, "layer upon layer, then each one has a reasonable probability of being constructed out of a few parts" (Newell, 1990, p. 117). Otherwise the entire structure will simply disintegrate or collapse before the system can function.

With a hierarchical structure in hand, Newell (1990) starts his discussion of cognition at levels, and first one is the "biological band." The most basic level involves the interactions of organelles, neuron and neural circuits, to more advanced levels. Then he describes a set of higher levels of cognition, namely, "cognitive band," "rational band" and "social band" that involve deliberate acts, operations, unit tasks, and social and ideological thinking (p. 122). Newell uses the processing time at each discrete level to bind his hierarchy. More specifically, the processes at higher levels take longer time than at lower levels. For instance, in the biological band, Newell (1990) discovers that it takes 100 microseconds (1 microsecond = 10^{-6} second) to act at organelle level, and one millisecond (or 10^{-3} second) at neuron level, while within cognitive, rational or social bands, it can take from 1 second to hours, and even months (p. 122).

When this is applied to exploring journalists' cognitive processing of news decision making, a question pops up: Are journalists acting like other human beings in the sense that processing information in the context of Newell's hierarchy? Journalists often stick to a few basic rules, including the objectivity norm of "getting facts straight" when reporting the news, which will help protect them from public criticism,

11

embarrassment, or even lawsuits. One important task for this project is to see to what degree those rules reflect back on the basic human need to process compelling information. Journalism training might, for instance, be reflected in more attention being given to cultural and ideological information at the expense of psychologically salient information.

Newell (1990) suggests a true symbolic communication begins somewhere between the biological and cognitive band. The line, in essence, divides the cognitive processing into two parts. Below the line is where some biological and physiological actions take place, serving as necessary preparation for what will happen in cognitive and above bands, but meaning is yet to be formed here. Newell (1990) calls this level as biological band. In his model, he also discusses levels above culture and ideology levels, which is beyond the interest of this study.

Communication theories posit that journalism is, in essence, "a practice of meaning production" (Skinner, Gasher, & Compton, 2001, p. 343). A detailed discussion on how journalists process, select and prioritize news elements at psychological, cultural and ideological levels will be presented in Chapter 2.

Decision Making Research: Normative Models

Psychologists started a systematic examination of decision making as early as in the 1940s whose complexity and messiness had perplexed scientists for too long (Beach & Mitchell, 1998). To bring some order to the "messy" process of decision making, they first turned to two models of decision making, which are often called "normative models." The first normative model came from statistics and took Egon Brunswik's (1952) notion of people as intuitive scientists. Participants were presented with statistical

decision problems and their behavior was compared with what a statistician would do. The second model came from economics. Ward Edwards (1954) introduced psychologists to the basic concepts of microeconomics, proposing it as the appropriate model for all decision makings. The goal was to identify what was common in decisions across decision problems and decision makers, and to surmount the messiness of real-life decision making to arrive at an abstract universal theory.

Before long behavioral researchers have recognized that decision makers' behavior seldom resembles normative process or prescription (Hershey & Shoemaker, 1980; Brunsson, 2002). For instance, Henry Mintzberg (1975) observed business managers and found that most of their decisions involved only one option rather than multiple options, and the decision was whether to go with that option rather than a choice among competing options. Moreover, few decisions involved explicit balancing of costs and benefits, let alone explicit use of probability, which are the two central components of traditional decision theory.

The two models, although not working very well in various cases, have persisted in this science community for more than half a century. Some researchers insist that even if the normative models are not wholly descriptive of decision behavior, they are prescriptive, and decision makers could be trained to behave "correctly." Others defend normative models by contending that their constructs could be modified in accordance to empirical data to evolve a descriptive theory of decision making (see Beach & Mitchell, 1998).

After years of growing discontent with the normative approach to studying decision behavior, some researchers began to approach decision making as a branch of

cognitive or social psychology, who are developing descriptive theory from observations of real-life decision making (see Albelson & Levi, 1985; Beach & Mitchell, 1987, 1990). A new theory, "naturalistic decision theory," comes into being as a result. The new theory is less rooted in normative ideas and more rooted in observed decision behavior (Klein, Orasanu, Calderwood, & Zsambok, 1993).

Traditional Explanations of News Decisions

David White (1950), who pioneered the first gatekeeping study in journalism in his study of one newspaper wire news editor's selection of news, may be one of the first who studied journalists' news decisions. Although the study was not perfect because it studied only one person, a "telegraph editor," and for a limited time frame, his study has initiated the gatekeeping research that has lasted for over 50 years even since. It is worth noting that White's study also reflected a different era that one person could hold much more power in news decisions, which could rarely happen today. More scholars explored journalists' subjective news judgment (Snider, 1967; Harmon, 1989, Reese, 2001). Some also found journalists are not single individuals making decisions independently. They are influenced heavily by other factors, such as the media owners' ideology, media routines and official sources including government and corporate officials (Gieber, 1964; Epstein, 1973, Dimmick, 1974). The weakness of these models is that they managed to understand news decisions by checking journalists' selected news elements, i.e., what's news included or excluded, but failed to explore the working of their mind during news decision making. Nevertheless, none of these models so far is good enough to portray the complexity of news decisions process at a certain level of analysis.

Communication scholars tend to agree that research so far has led to three main factors that seem to influence a journalist's news decisions: "news factors," "institutional objectives," and "the subjective beliefs of journalists" (Donsbach, 2004, p. 134). News factors here can be viewed in this study as psychologically salient information, the institutional objectives can be part of culturally salient information, and the participant beliefs are part of ideologically salient information for news stories.

To Donsbach (2004), *news factors*, which were first introduced by Lippmann (1922), are some generally agreed-upon news values that are shared by journalists, even from different media systems and cultures, such as timeliness, proximity, prominence, conflict, image, human interest and novelty (Green, 2002). Since mass circulation newspapers came into existence at the beginning of the 19th century in the United States, the "rules." or canons, began to be widely accepted and used to guide journalists in deciding what information is newsworthy and how it will be presented. Donsbach states that all these were well supported by solid empirical researches (2004). For instance, David Weaver and Mei Wu (1998) found that journalists from different countries shared many news values, and even the characteristics of them are quite identical worldwide (p. 456). The work hints at the possibility that a set of transcultural journalistic norms may be emerging. Thomas Patterson (2000) also found that a considerable number of variables in the audience's selection of news could also be attributed to news factors.

Institutional objectives are the overt or covert constraints inside and outside the newsroom a journalist faces, which can be cultural, economical, political or ideological. In a totalitarian society, the constraints on media usually come from the government in the form of censorship, while in a democratic society, they are more likely "from

corporations for economic purposes than from governments for purely political purposes"
(Croteau & Hoynes, 2001, p.162). But regardless of the political system, constraints on
the journalistic process are present. There is a long list of media constraints from
economic forces that consistently influence the profession of journalism and news
content (see Gandy, 1982; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Tuchman, 1978; Shoemaker &
Reese, 1996). Among them, the influences from advertisers, direct and indirect, have
been carefully and extensively examined (Soley, 2002).

The *subjective beliefs* of journalists are also believed to exert considerable
influence on news decisions. "There is sufficient evidence that a journalist's
predispositions toward an issue or an actor can affect his or her news decisions"
(Donsbach, 2004, p. 135). But the degree of this influence might differ between
journalists from different countries, within different news organizations and with
different professional values (Patterson & Donsbach, 1996). Some scholars argue that
during the news decision making process, journalists' personal knowledge about a
participant, their attitudes and beliefs have relatively little to contribute to the news. This
emphasis on external constraints has been of importance to understand news making
process. But it may also have led to some media scholars assume that journalists'
cognitive processing (internal influences) has little to contribute, which is quite the
contrary to cognitive scientists' assumption that individuals actively transform
information.

Weak Links of Traditional Explanations

A noticeable major weakness of the traditional explanations is that when studying
news factors, researchers did not answer the why question: why some specific news

factors are more compelling than others? Institutional objectives describe social setting rather than the process of news decision, and therefore, lack explanatory power. "When it comes to really explaining individual news decisions, they depend more or less on guesses," (Donsbach, 2004, p. 135). As a consequence, it remains unclear what factors in the news process have finally brought about a certain "impact" in story content. For instance, the Functionalist information processing to mode names real time pressure as a constraint to all human problem solving. But is journalistic pressure so intense as to alter this basic human process? This will be under study in this dissertation.

Journalists' Images and World Conflicts

News media are one of the major institutions that supply the public with readily available information about a foreign country's evolving political, economic and social events. The information from news media helps the public build up images of a foreign nation. Of course, the public's images can be greatly shaped by other forms of mass media, such as books, films, newsletters. Some other personal experiences can play a part, too, for instance, school education, personal contacts with foreigners and trips to the foreign country. But by and large, news represents the main source for such information.

Surveys show people in both China and the United States (e.g. the surveys and reports from the Washington-based Pew Research Center for the People and the Press) gain most information about a foreign nation from their news media, rather than books, movies or other forms of mass media, school education or direct contacts with foreigners (Chen & Xie, 2005). A recent survey in China confirms this observation again, discovering that 62.7% of the surveyed Chinese people gained most of information about the United States from their news media, while 20.7% from U.S. movies, only 3.7% from direct interactions

with U.S. people. Chapter 3 will show that the past, nonetheless, has witnessed numerous cases in which misperceptions between China and the United States either distorted or exaggerated the interests on which the relationship was based. One of the greatest diplomatic tragedies since World War II was the 20 years of mutual isolation and confrontation between China and the United States. Like many other international conflicts, the China – U.S. confrontation, then and now, are due in part to the mutual misconceptions of each other's goals, motivation, characteristics, powers and interests.

Because of the travel bans from Chinese and U.S. governments, the journalists could not travel between the two countries, and even worse there was virtually no direct communication channel between them from 1949 to 1972, when President Nixon visited China. In those years, there had been plenty of misreporting of each other in news media, due to U.S. and Chinese journalists' misperception and misinterpretation of the other side. Some of the reasons that cause the distorted reporting could be tracked down to journalists' distorted images.

Empirical studies have discovered, however, few journalists deliberately or systematically distort their reporting with various biases. Instead, they found that journalists, like everyone else, understand events through the interaction between experience and prior knowledge in memory: their uniquely individual cognitive maps. The result, far from being the mythical mirror view of reality, can be as many different versions of the observed event or circumstance as there are people observing it. If journalists better understood the common potential biases they share, they would probably be better equipped if not to mirror life, at least to paint it in more realistic colors.

Attributes of Journalists' Decision Making

How do journalists describe their own decision making process, and more importantly, how they process, select and prioritize news materials when reporting the news? This remains a mystery to many researchers of journalism studies. Donsbach (2004) argues, "Most of journalists' work is about perceptions, conclusions and judgments: to see reality; to infer from it to developments and relationships; and to evaluate reality" (p. 136). Without presenting evidence from the "black box" of journalists' cognitive processing of news decision making, such statements can server us no better than mere assumptions.

It is not difficult to find out that the process of journalists' decision making has some distinct attributes from other types of decision makings due to the professional characteristics of journalism. Journalists, facing a flood of information each day, are constantly in undetermined, uncertain situation when making news decisions. Donsbach (2004) proposes two "general needs involving specific psychological processes" that can illustrate news decisions: a need for social validation of perceptions and a need to preserve one's existing predispositions (p. 136). According to him, the former need rests more in the social nature of humans, the latter relates primarily to their individual cognitions, and both are intertwined.

Social psychologists have long described the function of groups in solving the uncertain or indefinite situation, in which journalists often find themselves trapped. When individuals have difficulty in making decisions, other people in the same group can eventually help them out. Leon Festinger (1954) proposed "social comparison theory," suggesting that an opinion, a belief or an attitude is "correct," "valid" and "proper" only

to the extent to which it is anchored in a group of people with similar beliefs, opinions and attitudes. He then describes three conditions under which people are most dependent on others: when external reality is ambiguous and difficult to assess, when there is a dualism between physical and social reality, and when physical reality takes precedence over social reality. Muzafer Sherif (1966) found that although it was logically impossible for a group of people to make decisions objectively, most groups finally came up with a unanimous decision.

Christopher Harding and E. Troy Higgins (1996) proposed "shared reality" theory, in which they combined the theory of symbolic interaction (Blumber, 1969) with empirical evidence on the communication process. They maintain that even basic cognitive processes are in association with the social activities in which they are manifested. Although shared reality might not necessarily yield the "truth" in every instance, social psychologists observe that it is the best the individual can get in order to validate his or her own perception of reality (Donsbach, 2004, p. 139).

Beach and Mitchell (1998) view decision making as a social act. That is, decisions seldom are made in isolation – the decision maker always must be mindful of the preferences and opinions of other people. However, in all cases he or she must make up his or her own mind and then differences with others must be resolved in some manner. Thus while groups and organizations are not themselves decision makers, they impose constraints on individuals; decisions. Moreover, they often are the context within which individuals' decisions become consolidated to form a group product.

Many other professions also face this challenge, such as judges and physicians, but journalists have several additional problems. They have to make these decisions

constantly under severe time constraints and under the pressures of competition. For many news decisions, they lack objective criteria and their decisions are put under immediate public scrutiny, which carries the risk of public failure. The lack of objective criteria does not, however, apply to all kinds and objects of reporting. It is easy to verify some factual information, such as the spelling of an interviewee's name, some key economic figures released by the government by asking the right experts or digging into the relevant databanks. On the other hand, such criteria for evaluation often do not exist or cannot be supplied under the typical constraints of the business, for instance, lack of resources or under a tight deadline. For instance, a warning made by scientists that global warming will significantly damage the arctic biogeocenose in next 10 years can hardly be verified immediately by a reporter or an editor even if he or she has received training in related areas.

Besides factual decisions, journalists have to make news decisions how to define and interpret news events in a certain context for their news consumers. "There is no discipline in applied psychology, as there is a discipline in medicine, engineering, or even law, which has authority to direct the journalist's mind when he passes from the news to the vague realm of truth…. His version of truth is always his version" (Lippmann, 1922, p. 227). Thus, journalists often find themselves in what psychologists call uncertain or undetermined situation.

News Decision Making in a Cross- Cultural Context

In this information age, the fact of an increasing amount of information being acquired, processed, archived and shared has made a profound impact on our society and even significantly changed the way we live, work, and think. One of the consequences of

information globalization is a growing sense of cultural sensitivity has emerged. As processors of information for the public, journalists become more inclusive, diverse and aware of the cultural complexity of society. In Western democracies, such as, Australia, the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands, governments, organizations, universities and news media have put discussions on the role of the media in a multicultural society at the top of their agenda for more than a decade (e.g. Van Dijk, 1991; Goodall & Jakubowicz, 1994; Cottle, 2000; Entman & Rojecki, 2000). In the United States, students in schools of journalism are being taught to be culturally sensitive in all news decisions in both newsgathering and reporting. Today's journalists must be well aware that people have different value assumptions given their unique cultures, whose differences are like those due to gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, etc. In the meantime, they must understand that people's judgments about "right or wrong" often are grounded in their cultural values and perspectives. If agreement cannot be achieved, there should be respect for "the others" in the sense of taking time to seriously understand other people's perspectives. If training at this level is truly integrated into the news production process, cultural factors should prove to be prominent in this study.

It is virtually impossible to describe and analyze journalists' news decisions without considering the cultural context they are in. In the meantime, recognition of cultural diversity should be taken as a function of multiculturalism, although the normative implications for thinking about societies consisting of a plurality of cultures vary in different parts of the world (Parekh, 2000). Denuze (2004) sees multiculturalism as "one of the foremost issues in journalism where media professionals are confronted by

their real or perceived responsibilities in contemporary society" (p. 281). This consideration is independent of whether such a society is seen as a melting pot of supposedly inherently different cultures, or as a society where culture is understood as actively and continuously negotiated over time (Baumann, 1999). Denuze (2004) categorizes issues regarding media and multiculturalism that are relevant to journalism into three central issues, namely, "journalists' knowledge of different cultures and ethnicities, issues of representation (i.e. pluriformity, diversity), and the perceived responsibilities of journalists in a democratic and multicultural society" (p. 281). To him, multiculturalism, which is referred as transcultures in this study, is "a felt reality for media professionals everywhere," whether they like it or not, admit it or oppose to it, and it thus forces them to face their ideology and to rethinking their belief systems (p. 281).

However, the cognitive processing of news decision making has not been systematically examined in this context. Simon Cottle (2000) insightfully points out that multiculturalism has an impact upon all levels of news decision making processes, and it particularly challenges a notion of journalism as operating outside society, for instance, international news reporting. Numerous journalists and scholars have acknowledged that a major challenge in international news reporting is interpretation: How to explain a nation, including its culture and social narratives, to people in another country. A comparative study of news decision making in a cross-cultural context, say those in China and the United States, will shed some light on the process of international news reporting, which plays a significant role in shaping the public's image of a foreign nation. The public's perception in turn may have connection with their government's decision

making in the areas of, among others, foreign policies and economic relations, which eventually helps provoke or resolve many international conflicts.

The reality is that international news reporting has been frequently criticized as not involving in the business of fostering international understanding as much as maintaining international stereotypes and presenting conflict. Bennett (2005) contends that the "single most important flaw in the American news style" is the "overwhelming tendency to downplay the big social, economic or political picture in favor of the human trials, tragedies and triumphs that sit at the surface of events" (p. 40). He calls this type of reporting as "news dramas," which "emphasize crisis over continuity, the present over the past or future, and the personalities at their center" (p.41). News dramas could downplay complex policy information, the workings of government institution and the bases of power behind the central characters. Lost in news drama are sustained analyses of some persistent international conflicts, such as what keeps China and the United States from forging an improving relationship? Why former U.S. President Bill Clinton called China as "a strategic partner" of the United States, but his successor George W. Bush calls it a "strategic opponent?" These questions are essential for the public to interpret the Sino-U.S. relations, but they just are not dramatic enough on a day-to-day level to make the news until they produce crises that trigger the authority-disorder narrative.

The press "like the beam of a searchlight that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another out of darkness into vision" (Lippmann, 1922, p. 229). But how do journalists move the searchlight? A model to answer this question, more specifically, to understand the cognitive processing of journalists' news decision making is being proposed in next chapter.

Chapter 2

Describing News Decision Making Within the Information Processing Model

This dissertation investigates how journalists select news elements for writing their stories within the limited-capacity information processing model (Lang, 1992; 1995; 2000; Seth & Newhagen, 1993). The model is built upon several important assumptions: First, people are intrinsic information processors, who know how to "perceive stimuli, turn them into metal representations, do mental work on those representations, and reproduce them in the same or in an altered form;" Second, a person's ability to process information is limited as she or he has "a limited (and perhaps fixed) pool of mental resources" (Lang, 2000, p. 47); Third, the information available for people to process is vast (Seth & Newhagen, 1993); Fourth, "Most decision are made under time constraints imposed by the pace of ongoing events, by explicit deadlines" (Benson & Beach, 1998, p. 51).

News creation is the process of journalists acting upon the information of certain events that they think are newsworthy, and constructing a mental representation of these events in press. During the process, some of their news decisions are based on psychologically salient information, such as some basic facts of an event, for example, the death toll and damages caused by an earthquake, others on culturally or ideologically salient news elements. Previous literature, especially from the perspectives of critical theory, raises issues about news decision making at the cultural and ideological levels (Carey, 1983), but fails to describe what really takes place during the first critical stage of that process—how journalists handle the hard facts of an event they cover. The irony of

the failure is that some critical theorists implicitly accept the idea that news stories come from some bounded body of information available while strongly object to the notion of external "truth" driven by such "facts." In this chapter, a model is proposed to examine the process of news decision making by analyzing how journalists select news elements across psychological, cultural and ideological dimensions. This model also explores how they assess the sources with varying social power distances as a way to reveal cultural and ideological differences. Geert Hofstede (1980, 2001) discusses "power distance" in terms of the amount of respect and deference between those in superior and subordinate positions in the corporate world. He borrowed the phrase from the Dutch social psychologist Mulder who conducted experiments to investigate interpersonal power dynamics in the 1960s (p. 79). The concept of *social power distance* in this study refers to a news source's social status, expertise and the distance to authorities.

A Model of News Decision Making

Based on the literature reviewed, a model of news decision making is proposed here to investigate how journalists select and process news elements. The model is best illustrated in terms of the levels of news element salience (see Figure 1), and the hierarchical structure of news decision making (see Figure 2).

News Element Salience

In Figure 1, the three levels of news elements serve as the basis of journalists' news decisions. The news elements in most news reports can be broadly categorized into three levels:

Level 1, psychologically salient news elements; They are the information about some basic facts of an event covered, such as the extent of human sufferings or damages caused by an earthquake, a health pandemic or a nuclear power plant accident.

Level 2, culturally salient news elements. They are the information laden with cultural values which may convey different meanings to the journalists, especially to those from different cultural backgrounds. The core of cultural values is about how to define the self, others and the relations between them. For example, Western journalists look for individualism and acts of heroism in their news stories by using more news element to cover personal experiences in the aftermath of an earthquake, while Eastern journalists tend to emphasize collectivism by focusing on coordination of the overall rescue efforts after an earthquake, rather than individual acts of heroism.

Level 3, ideologically salient news elements. These materials are laden with ideological values, reflecting "perception of society and a set of societal values" (Westerståhl & Johansson, 1994, p. 75). For example, journalists may use some ideologically salient information when they report the social fairness in a foreign country displayed in the rescuer efforts after an earthquake.
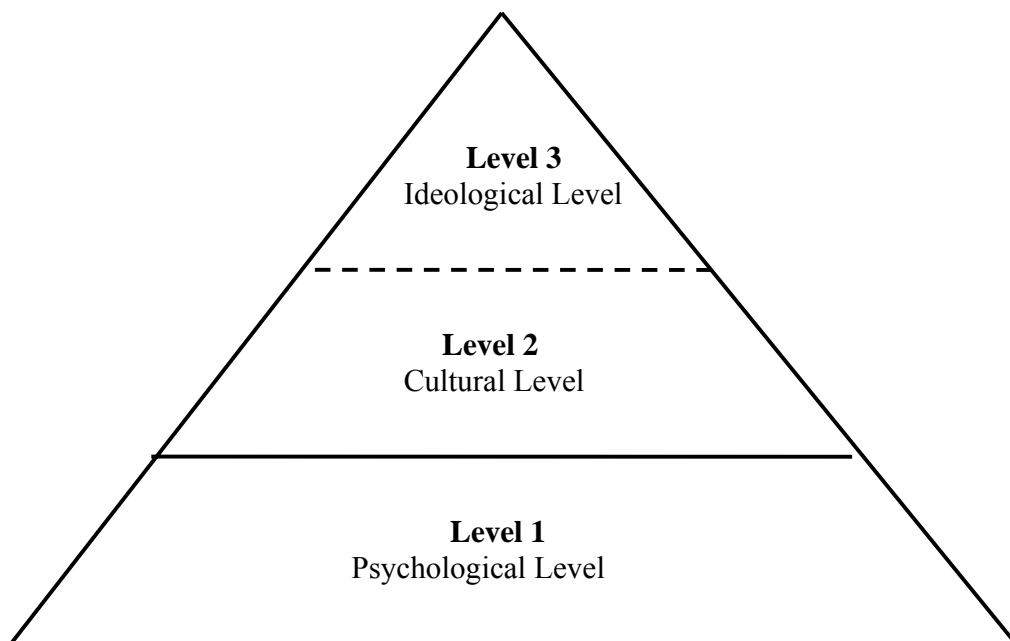
Figure 1.   Three-Level Structure of News Element Salience

The model's pyramid shape indicates that most news decisions are based on psychologically salient news elements (Level 1), rather than those at higher levels (Levels 2 and 3). Further, as the levels of news decisions go from low to high levels, the process of news decision making draws more *external* values (e.g. cultural or ideological values) than *interna*l values (e.g. some general agreed-upon news values hardwired in most journalists).

It is worth noting that the three levels should not be considered completely distinct from each other. They are often intertwined, and constantly influence each other, especially, between cultural and ideological levels. Thus a dot line, rather than a solid line, was drawn between the two levels in the diagram. This model predicts that the dividing line between psychological and cultural levels should be more distinct than that between cultural and ideological levels.

Hierarchical Structure of News Decision Making

Allen Newell (1990) posits that "intelligent systems are built up of multiple levels of systems," and more importantly, "the human architecture is built up of a hierarchy of multiple system levels and that it cannot be otherwise structured" (p. 117). An intelligent and complicated system like news decision making could only achieve its stability when the system is organized in a hierarchical structure. Herb Simon (1962) contends that a system must be hierarchical before it can be stable. Building a complicated system requires first building stable subassemblies, "layer upon layer, then each one has a reasonable probability of being constructed out of a few parts" (Newell, 1990, p. 117). Otherwise the entire structure will simply disintegrate or collapse before the system all gets put together.

In the paradigm of news decision making, the psychological level of news decision making should be taken as the basis of the decisions happened above at cultural and ideological levels. Without the news decision at psychological level, it is impossible to build up either cultural or ideological level of news decision making. The levels in the system of news decision making can be more or less stable, depending on how consistent journalists' reactions are to certain news elements, on which their news decision are based. It may assume that journalists react more consistently across cultures when processing psychologically salient news elements, but less so when operating culturally and ideologically salient news elements.

The assumption of hierarchical structure of news decisions for a story is supported by journalism practices. Journalists must first gather basic facts of an event they decide to cover it, and then make decisions what news elements about the facts should be

included. In other words they must first make some news decisions at psychological level. The information about the facts then serves as the foundation of the news story, on which some higher levels of news decision are based, i.e. cultural and ideological levels of news decisions. Without the foundation, the higher-level narratives may lack the salience and credibility needed to separate them from other narrative forms. It is not uncommon after discovering out a mistake in a news report, the reader or viewer no longer trusts any other information in the story. In that case, the credibility of the whole story simply collapses. A worse scenario is that the credibility of the supporting institution may also be comprised. In short, the hard facts of a news event often serve as the fundamental components of a series of news decisions at higher levels, and even the credibility of all the information contained in a news story.

Figure 2 shows the proposed hierarchical structure of three-level news decisions journalists usually make during writing or producing a news story. The pentagon-shape components in the diagram refer to the news elements at each level, on which related news decisions are based.

Like the news elements shown in Figure 1, the news decisions can also be categorized into three levels. As shown in Figure 2, at Level 1 (Psychological Level), journalists gather some psychologically salient news elements—some main facts—of a news event they cover. Then they make decisions which of those facts should be reported. The information of those facts forms as the basis of a news story. At Level 2 (Cultural Level), some of the basic components merge with the journalists' previous schema of similar components laden with cultural values and they become culturally salient news elements in the story. This process is news decision making at cultural level. At Level 3

(Ideological Level), following the same fashion, the culturally salient news elements

become the foundation of news decision at ideologically level. Next is a detailed

discussion of news decision making at psychological, cultural and ideological levels.
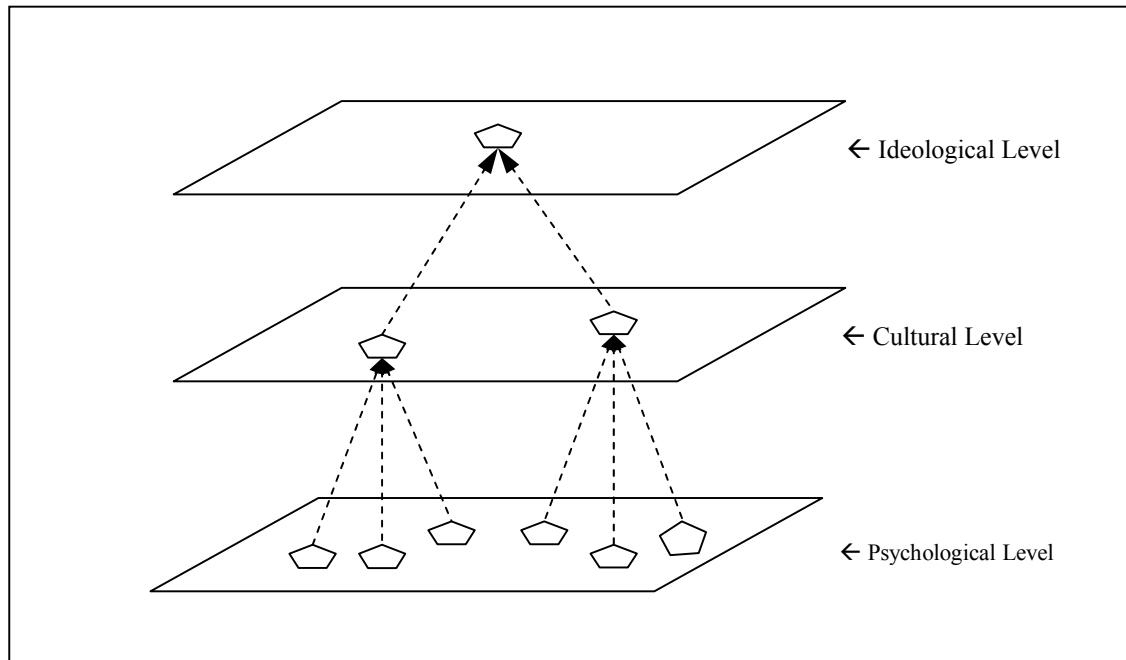
Figure 2. A Hierarchical Model of News Decision Making

Level 1: Psychological Level of News Decision Making

When journalists begin to report the news, they will have to adopt some criteria or

standards in determining which events are worthy of becoming news and which are not.

After they decide to cover an event, they will have to make decision under tight deadline

pressure on how to process the information about the event. This model proposes that the

first critical stage of the process is making news decisions at psychological level, more

specifically, making decisions on how to select news elements with some generally

agreed-upon news values. These news values include a news-event-or-issue's attributes

of importance, timeliness, proximity, prominence, conflict, human interest and novelty

31

(Galtung & Ruge, 1973; Green, 2002). Most news decisions at this level are *factual* judgments, rather than *evaluation* judgments. As note previously, they are made within the major assumptions of the information processing model (Lang, 2000; Seth & Newhagen, 1993; Benson & Beach, 2002).

Scholars of journalism studies have identified a lot of such news values. For example, James Buckalew (1969), in his study of television news editor's decisions, identified three types of editors and found an overall preference for stories with high impact, proximity, timeliness and visual availability. Hester (1971, 1974) studied news flow into the United States via the Associated Press and ranked direct involvement of U.S. interests as a key criterion of newsworthiness for international news coverage. The news values they found here are about the psychological salient information in a news story as previously discussed.

As for the news values in international news reporting, Hebert Gans (1980) identified seven most prevalent types of stories in American print and broadcast media: (1) U.S. action abroad, including major wars and presidential visits; (2) A foreign activity that affects America; (3) The relations with totalitarian countries; (4) Foreign elections and transfers of power; (5) Major wars; (6) Disasters with great loss of lives; and (7) Oppression under foreign dictators. Tsan-Kuo Chang, Pamela Shoemaker and Nancy Brendlinger (1987) found that relevance to the United States and deviance of an event are the best predictors for U.S. media's coverage of international news. Chang and Jae-Won Lee (1992) noted that threat to the U.S. and world peace, anticipated reader interest, timeliness, and U.S. involvement are important factors. They found that journalists' individual backgrounds—foreign language training, professional education, political

32

ideology, availability of news slot and wire services, and organizational constraints were also salient. Shoemaker and Stephen Reese (1996) identified some of these news values as prominence or importance, human interest, conflict or controversy, novelty, timeliness, and proximity. Hun Shik Kim (2002) found that timeliness and U.S. involvement are the most important factors when journalists selected international news stories.

A close examination of these well-received news values maps back onto the same set of psychological imperatives that drive normal people's daily life, at the same time, with little cultural or ideological values attached. The emphasis on psychologically salient information rather than culturally or ideologically salient information can be attributed to the education journalists received. At a journalism school, an essential part of formal journalism training is to teach the students about these generally agreed-upon news values as the professional norms. For example, the objectivity norm requires journalists to "separate facts from values and to report only the facts" (Schudon, 2001, p. 150).

The training is similar at the journalism schools in both the Untied States and Chinese, even more so in the United States. Brennen (2000) reviewed U.S. journalism textbooks and found that they address the practice of journalism in an identical perspective. When the graduates start working in news organizations, these news values they learned at school are further reinforced by their more seasoned colleagues and editorial routines in newsrooms. The news values, among others, "help journalism students develop a conscious understanding of the praxis of their craft and the role they play in a society in which our experience of the world is increasingly mediated by communications organizations and media professionals" (Skinner et al, 2001, p. 343).

Thus, journalists tend to build up consonance to events bearing these general news values. At psychological level, individual journalists tend to hold consistent cognitions and this is highly selective in his or her exposure to news content. If dissonance still arises, the individual is like to decrease dissonance by actively seeking consonant information. For instance, when Hurricane Katrina landed New Orleans, Louisiana on August 29, 2005 and severely damaged the city, it became top news in almost all newspapers and network newscasts in the United States because of the event's proximity and prominence to American people, while when London subway system and a double-deck bus were attacked by suicide-bombers on July 7, 2005, it became top news across the world because of its worldwide prominence.

The consonance of news values can be best exemplified in the objectivity norm most journalists uphold as a core ideal. The objectivity norm is "the chief occupational value of American journalism" (Schudson, 2001, p. 149). It also has been taken as a core professional value of journalism that is deeply rooted in Western democracies since the 19th century (Schudson, 2001; Dongsbach & Klett, 1993) because it is "a guarantee of quality control," which asks the public to believe "what is being told is valid and believable" (McNair, 1998, p. 65). This professional norm requires journalists to report "something called 'news' without commenting on it, slanting it or shaping its formulation in any way" (Schudosn, 2001, p. 149). Due to the objectivity norm, journalists may have to guard against social, cultural or ideological values from getting it into the news they report, no matter how difficult this could be. In this sense, journalists follow the same psychological equivalent—seeing is believing—as most other people do.

Therefore, journalists are believed to react quite consistently to news elements bearing the characteristics of "news values." Repeated studies have confirmed that when reporting international news, these news values are also shared by journalists from different countries, for instance, the United States (Chang & Lee, 1992; Chang, Shoemaker, & Brendlinger, 1987; Gans, 1980), Latin America (Hester, 1974), no matter in developing or developed nations (Hester, 1971).

General news values are shared by many journalists but not all of them. Certain news values are of more significance to some journalists. Others may emphasize different set of news values. It is possible that journalists belonging to a certain media system or culture share more consistency in viewing news values. Some media scholars, however, claim that recent evidence shows the "effect of the consistency motivation has been overrated" (Donsbach, 2004, p. 148). Do these news values still hold ground for journalists in this changed world? If so, it is possible that unlike what cognitive scientists often predict, both U.S. and Chinese journalists may spend more time in processing psychologically salient news elements than those at the two higher levels due to their professional norms. Still, are there any similarity and difference among journalists from different cultures when they assess news values? Thus an experiment addressing journalists' news decision on the basis of these news values become particularly necessary in the 21st century, especially, among those from different cultures and media systems, say, journalists in China and the United States.

Psychologically compelling information generated by direct sensory perception is critically important to survival. Therefore the cognitive architectures that drive attention and allocate cognitive recourses are fast, effortless, and tend to operate below conscious

awareness. Specifically, they are cognitively efficient. The information generated by journalism is called "fact," and is equally important and compelling, especially in a complex social and cultural milieu. The two systems share much in common such as the need to perform under time pressure. But decision making in journalism is, ironically, effortful and deliberate.

Both the heuristics of human cognition and the practice of journalism emphasize the life in the "real now" (see Pynchon, 1963) and work toward the common goal of generating critical life sustaining behaviors that increase the probability of survival.

Functionally, *no* energy is available in either setting for cultural or ideological work until the probability of survival is fairly high. Those higher order processes can only take place when the systems, human or institutional, are working well enough to generate sufficient intentional "surplus value" to allow discretionary use for cultural and social tasks.

Level 2: Cultural Level of News Decision Making

Besides those news values-driven decisions as discussed, there are other news decisions that are guided by cultural values. News decisions at this level are made on the basis of culturally salient news elements. These news elements are evolved from the basic information of a news event or issue after being merged with the existing cultural values journalists hold. Not all basic information of the event or issue can be merged with journalists' existing culture values because of various reasons such as time constraint or the specific properties of the information involved.

Cultural values address "shared abstract perspectives about what is good, right, and desirable in a society (Williams, 1970). Shalom Schwartz (1999) maintains that

these cultural values serve as "the bases for specific norms" that tell people and institutions "what is appropriate in various situations" (p. 24). Journalists hold the cultural values to be relevant to a higher level of cognitive processing of news decision making. Given the fact of cultural values being interpreted differently by people from different cultural backgrounds, journalists may react less consistently to culturally salient news elements than psychologically salient news elements. In this view, journalists from different cultures may approach the same news story differently in terms of processing culturally salient information. For example, journalists working in a culture that highly values individual ambition and success, which is exemplified clearly in American culture, may include more news elements into the story about the value of individualism. On the contrary, the journalists who work in a culture emphasizing group well-being, which is exemplified in Chinese culture, are likely to use more news elements displaying collectivism in the story. The cultural differences discussed here must be regarded as general tendencies that may emerge when the members of the cultures, including journalists, are considered as a whole (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In sum, the news decisions made at cultural level should be less consistent across cultures than those at previous level.

Richard Dawkins (2000) posits that cultural information such as people's cultural practices, insights, thoughts, ideas, can propagate themselves by "leaping from brain to brain" (p. 143). He coined the word "meme" for describing the cultural information one mind transmits verbally or by demonstration to another mind. He concludes, "Among animals, man is uniquely dominated by culture, by influences learned and handed down" (Dawkins, 1999, p. 3). In this view, some transcultural patterns of news decision making

might be observed between U.S. and Chinese journalists. A *transcultural* phenomenon is the one converging cultures and then being shared by cultures. It reflects the natural tendency of people from different cultures to resolve similar conflicts over time, demonstrating the forces for bringing societies together. The influence of cultural factors on news decisions could vary from one journalist to another. Still, there might be some general trends of similarity observable among the journalists in the same culture and media system, and even from different cultures and media systems.

At this cultural level, news decisions have become an outcome of a series of interactions of cultural and social determinants – those features of social life and organization which shape, influence and constrain the process and final result of decision making. While making news decisions, journalists act on and are acted on by the surrounding social and cultural environment. Ultimately, news decision here should be viewed as the settlement of a wide variety of social, cultural, political, economic and technological factors, specifically to a particular society at a particular time. Understanding the news decisions at this level requires description and analysis of the broader social and cultural context within which they are produced. Many of the aspects have been studies by critical theorists.

Level 3: Ideological Level of News Decision Making

Reese (2001) posits that the "ultimate level" of a hierarchy of influences on global journalists should be "an ideological perspective," where "media symbolic content is connected with larger social interests" (p. 183). When making news decisions at ideological level, journalists usually respond the least consistently comparing to those at lower psychological or cultural level because more subjective beliefs such as ideological

values and historical references may enter into the process. News decisions at this level are categorized as "complex" in part because the definition of ideology is a moving target. The term ideology seems so "muddied" to Philip Converse (1964) that he chose the broader term "belief system," which is "a configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence" (p. 207).

In the paradigm of journalism studies, Mark Deuze (2004) defines ideology as "a collection of values (also defined as strategies and formal codes characteristic of a profession) defining journalism and shared most widely by members of the profession" (p. 279). He views journalism itself as an "occupational ideology" (p. 278). In essence, journalists' occupational ideology is another form of news values reflecting the professional norms. Of course, they are different from the news values reflected in psychologically salient news elements. The difference between the two lies in the fact that they are not as widely accepted or agreed upon because they incorporate conflicting ideas, norms and values, and how it is articulated with the changing current societal and technological context of journalism (Hartley, 2002; Stevenson, 2002; Van Ginneken, 1998). Accordingly, news decisions at this level should be considered as *ideological choices* inherent in news values. Here journalism is practiced in larger sets of social and cultural settings.

In this study, two prominent criteria—historical reference and objectivity—are introduced to measure ideologically salient news elements and the related news decisions. Historical reference often severs as implicit background for journalists, especially when they make news decisions in international news reporting. Historical reference should be

taken as part of journalists' belief system as they often offer some major historical themes during journalists' decision making involving a foreign country. For instance, the history of U.S.-China relations in the past 60 years has been pretty much a bumpy road. In the two nations, there are diverse views and perceptions of the bilateral relations during this period, but there exist some shared understandings within each nation. These shared understandings seem to have evolved around four major historical themes: prolonged hostility (1949-1971), slow-motion normalization (1972-1988), grim setback (1989-1999), and strategic ambiguity (2000-2006), with each invariably shaping the mutual image and perception sustained in mutual news coverage. Both American and Chinese journalists are believed to refer to some historical references, especially the major themes, from time to time when selecting news about China or the United States. A detailed review of the trajectory of U.S.-China relations from 1949 to present is presented in Chapter 3.

It is worth stressing again that it is difficult to draw a sharp dividing line between the news decisions at cultural level and those at ideological level. Nor is there much consensus about what news decisions should be categorized into cultural level and what should go to ideological level.

Core Values in American and Chinese Cultures

Many would agree that China, the world's most populous nation with over 5,000 years of civilization, represents the typical Eastern culture, while the United States, the world's most powerful industrialized country, embodies the Western culture. Hence, a comparative study of the cultures in China and the United States should be considered a

comparison of typical Eastern and Western cultures. Identifying the core values in each

culture makes a comparative study of cultures possible (Pan, Chaffee, Chu, & Ju, 1994).

Lancelot Forster (1936) may be the first scholar who pioneered such a

comparative study, in which he had envisioned boldly that the change in China's culture

would eventually lead toward homogeneity with Western civilization. To him, American

culture emphasized "originality, initiative, and defiance of accepted standards," while the

traditional Chinese culture is its Confusion doctrine, underscoring the respect for the old,

the aged, and the past, and family harmony and children's fulfilling duties to their parents

(Forster, 1936, p. 86).

Many scholars locate that individualism, freedom and equality of opportunity are

core values in American culture (see Williams 1970; Hsu, 1981). The core values in

traditional Chinese culture are widely considered to be built upon Confucianism.

Confucianism has shown its elasticity though interpretations over the past 2000 years

(Tu, 1985). Still, all schools of Confucianism agree that its core value is filial piety, a

principle that governs the father-son relationship. However, it entails unquestioned

obedience of the son to the authority of his father (Tu, 1985; Liang, 1987). The basic

dominance-obedience relationship characterized in filial piety is generalized to that of

emperor-participants, treating the person's relationship with authorities as a natural

extension of his relationship with his father in terms of dominance and obedience. A

government official, by occupying his position and fulfilling his role, acquires obligations

to obey his superior and to obey, ultimately, the emperor with complete devotion and

self-sacrifice. In theory this obedience extends to criticism of one's superior and even the

emperor. Criticizing a superior through official channels, even in fear for one's life, is considered a supreme expression of loyalty to the emperor (Tu 1985).

In general, American culture emphasizes "individualism," whereas Chinese culture "collectivism." American culture is characterized by an open view of the world, emphasizing change and movement, where as traditional Chinese culture was typified by a close world view, seeking for stability and harmony. American culture rests on equality in personal relations, Chinese culture on obedience to authority, which may indicate the public service function of the press is not stressed among Chinese journalists. Next chapter will review the major themes of U.S.-China relations from 1949 to present, demonstrating the origins of the fundamental cultural and ideological differences between the two countries.

Research Questions

Based on the literature reviewed above, this study reflects on answers to three major questions that have not been systematically examined in journalism studies:

RQ₁. How do journalists process, select, prioritize psychologically, culturally, and ideologically salient news elements in news story creation?

RQ₂ How do journalists assess news sources with different social power distances?

RQ₃. What, if any, are the differences and similarities between U.S. and Chinese journalists when they make news decisions?

RQ₄ What, if any, are the differences and similarities between journalists with different journalistic beats, such as those working at home and abroad, when they make news decisions?

RQ₅. How do the journalists evaluate the utility, trustworthiness and
qualification of the news sources when selecting psychologically,
culturally and ideologically salient news elements for their news stories?

Chapter 3

Mutual Perceptions and Misperceptions in

the Evolving U.S.-China Relations

Since this study is to explore news decision making in the context of U.S. and

Chinese cultures and societies, a revisit to those identifiable U.S.-China mutual

perceptions and misperceptions that have sustained since the founding of the People's

Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 should assist in understanding not only the trajectory of

how they evolved within the contexts of the Cold War, economic globalization, and the

war on terror, but also and more importantly in answering the why question: why they

make news decisions like that? Among both Chinese and American peoples, there are

diverse views and perceptions of the bilateral relations during this period. Meantime,

there exist some shared understandings within each nation. These shared beliefs seem to

have evolved around four major historical themes: Prolonged Hostility (1949-1971),

Slow-motion Normalization (1972-1988), Grim Setback (1989-1999), and Strategic

Ambiguity (2000-2006), with each invariably shaping the mutual image and perception

of the journalists from the two countries, which sustained, in one way or anther, in mutual

news coverage.

American news media's reporting of China tends to be "governed at any given

time by a single story, image or concept" (Mann, 1999, p. 103). For instance, in the 1950s

and 1960s, the image of China was "little blue ants or automatons," in the 1970s the

image was of the "virtuous (entertaining, cute) Chinese," in the 1980s "good capitalists,"

and in the 1990s "a repressive China" (p. 103). During the same time spans, the image of

the United States in Chinese news media was associated predominantly with corrupt capitalism, the enemy of worldwide proletarians, imperialism, hegemony, and later a high-tech trailblazer.

These mutual understandings are of great importance and relevance to journalists' image systems in which they often serve them as historical references during international news reporting. These national understandings are "reflected in the discourse of citizens and the behaviors of leaders, and that are conveyed to citizens and leaders via mass media" (Lampton, 2001, p.250). The analyses of these generally agreed-on understandings should provide a historical context, in which the journalists' images have evolved within each nation.

Theme I: Prolonged Hostility (1949-1971)

From 1949 to 1971, the mutual image between China and the United States had been quite consistent: A black-and-white "enemy" image. The phenomenon could be explained partially by the years of open hostilities and prolonged isolation between the two countries. Since the end of World War II, international relations had been characteristic of the two superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union – rivalry, or the "two camps" struggle. The scenario remained largely unchanged until the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern European communist bloc in 1991, which also marks the ending of the Cold War. China in those Cold War years had frequently found itself trapped in a strait circumstance as "the only major country that stood at the intersection of the two superpower camps, a target of influence and enmity for both" (Nathan & Ross, 1997, p.13).

To Americans, a central lessen of both World War I and World War II is the so-called "Munich Syndrome." When U.S. national interests were under assault in an international conflict, Lampton (2001) contends, it is better for the United States to intervene in the conflict early "rather than to be drawn into a large-scale conflict later, under more disadvantageous circumstances" (p. 250). This lessen explains a lot why Americans portrayed the Soviet Union and other communist countries, including "Red China," as a dangerously expansionist power that "must be thwarted by firm demonstrations of force and the willingness to use it" (Tedlock, 1986, p.1566). Any failure to contain Soviet advances in one area would only encourage further encroachments of a free western world led by the United States (Osgood, 1981; Wildavsky, 1983; Gaddis, 1999). Thus during China's civil war, U.S. President Harry Truman and his advisers engaged China by committing to a policy of containing the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and supporting Chiang Kai-shek's[4] nationalist government (Cohen, 2000;).

The U.S. administration had done everything in its power to save the moribund Chiang regime; it has lavished about $6 billion of aid, primarily military, in its efforts to prop up the Guomindang (GMD, Kuomintang). The CCP's victory of Chinese civil war and establishment of the PRC were then regarded by the United States as the "loss" of China, which also meant the failure of U.S. China policy. As the Cold War well on the

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[4] Chinese names of persons, places and terms, following other China studies (Cohen, 2000; Li & Li, 1998; Rodzinski, 1988), are romanized with pinyin system. Chinese names throughout are given in Chinese order, in which the surname precedes the given name. Some popular names will have traditional Wade-Giles spellings appearing in parentheses after the first use of the pinyin. The Wade-Giles system is also employed for names still commonly used, for instance, "Chiang Kai-shek" instead of "Jiang Jieshi" in pinyin. Spellings for some widely known places like Taipei are remained unchanged.

way, with the fanatic McCarthyism gaining currency, and given the growing pressure

from the pro-Chiang lobbyists, the Truman administration hesitated in making any

fundamental change in the China policy. In effect Washington's China policy appeared to

have become "anti-Chinese," giving rise to "an unprecedented campaign of opposition to

the development of a strong, modern China" (Lampton, 2000, p. 180). Washington's

hostility toward the Chinese revolution and the communist regime convinced Mao and

his comrades that the U.S. was "the principal enemy". Largely with this perceived

"American threat" in mind, Mao decided to "lean toward" Russia. (Zhang, 1994; Chen,

2001).

Contrary to the U.S. policy of containing China from all fronts, the Soviet Union

recognized the PRC within a few months of its establishment. High-level talks were

imitated between the two governments. Mao Zedong traveled to Moscow on December

16, 1949 for his first official meeting with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin (Rodzinski, 1988;

Zhang, 2001). On February 18, 1950, a 30-year Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship,

Alliance and Mutual Assistance was signed. More economic talks between the two sides

led to the Soviet granting to China of credits worth $300 million (Zhang, 2001). To

Americans, the formation of the Sino-Soviet alliance indicated a notable increase in the

strength of the socialist camp, and ultimately a growing threat to the "free world." Thus, a

stage for a confrontational relationship between China and the United States has set

almost since the first day of the PRC's establishment.

Diplomatic historians and China specialists have been debating on if there was a

chance to have avoided U.S.-China conflict in the post-WWII period. Although some

argue that Americans' pro-GMD policy sufficiently explained the origins of the CCP-U.S.

confrontation, others voice considerable skepticism. Chen Jian (2001), for example, provides a twofold explanation. First, during 1949-1950, the political beliefs of Mao and his comrades defied the values and behaviors of the United States, which were regarded as the "U.S. imperialism." Mao and his followers believed U.S. imperialism belonged to the "old world," which the CCP was determined to destroy. Secondly, while defining the "American threat," Mao and his fellow CCP leaders "never limited their vision merely to the possibility of direct American military intervention in China; they emphasized long-range American hostility toward the victorious Chinese revolution, especially the U.S. imperialist attempt to isolate the revolution from without and sabotage it from within" (Chen, 2001, pp. 47-48). Relying on newly available records from China, Chen believes that there had never existed any chance for an otherwise benign alternative. During 1949-1950, CCP leaders repeatedly emphasized that the party would go all out to pursue strategic cooperation with the Soviet Union, but "the idea of establishing diplomatic relations with the United States or other Western countries was simply not a priority" (Chen, 2001, p. 41). The mutually perceived threat would soon drag the two countries into an open armed conflict but on foreign soil: Korea.

The Korean War

The Korean War (1950-1953), which broke out just eight months after the CCP took power in China, further escalated the tension between China and the United States. Numerous studies devoted to exploring the origins of the conflict have contended that the new government in Beijing hesitated to confront Americans face-to-face in Korea, at least in the beginning (Zhang, 1992; Shen, 1998; Rodzinski 1988). Rodzinski (1988) points out, whatever the origins of the conflict between China and the United States in the

Korean peninsula, "the one thing that can be ascertained with complete certainty is that the Chinese communists did not initiated it" (p. 28). Moreover, he asserts, in view of CCP's immense and complex domestic tasks, Mao and his associates were "not at all eager to participate in it" (p. 29).

The Chinese leadership eventually decided for intervention by sending 400,000 so-called "Chinese People's Volunteers" across the Yalu River in Ocotber 1950, and soon engaged in a series of offensives with the U.S. forces. Several prominent factors had induced the Chinese intervention. After MacArthur's successful Inchon landing, Mao thought China's security would be under direct threat if American forces advanced to the Yalu, a river dividing China and Korea. Mao was concerned that with U.S. armed forces approaching the long Sino-Korea border area, it was quite possible the U.S. would attack China any time (Zhang, 1992). Thus, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai repeatedly warned Washington that US/UN crossing the 38th parellel would be interpreted as an imminent danger to Northeast China and Beijing would have to intervene. Rodzinski (1998) argues that General Douglas MacArthur, who commanded the American-led coalition of United Nations forces in Korea, contemptuously dismissed these warnings from China. Another move the U.S. undertook in the wake of the Korean conflict firmed up Mao's determination to fight with Americans in Korea. On July 27, 1951, Truman ordered U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet into action to "neutralize" the Taiwan Straits, which was perceived by the Chinese leadership as "a distinct possibility that the American might assist the Guomindang in renewing civil war on the mainland" (p. 29).

The Korean War was precisely a military showdown between communist China and the United States. Having fought the Americans to a standstill, the Chinese agreed in

July 1951 to begin negotiations, which finally concluded two years later with the signing of an armistice. The conflict brought about far-reaching consequences to both China and the United States. Among others, the black-and-white enemy image was rooted even more deeply between the two nations. Chinese intervention in Korea hardened American opposition to "Chinese aggression" in Asia and widened the circle of Americans who sought Chiang's return to power – or at very least sought to exploit his aims for American ends. Once again Chiang became America's long-term ally.

On the Chinese mainland, the "Resist the United States, Aid Korea Movement" which begun in November 1950, had elevated the "anti-American" sentiment to a new height. The Chinese government terminated the remnant cultural interaction between the American and Chinese peoples almost overnight. For instance, the Chinese doctors and nurses who worked at the Rockefeller Foundation-supported Peking Union Medical College (PUMC) and its hospital had to stay away from their American colleagues to whom they received medical training and were once so close. In January 1951, the regime also confiscated various American-sponsored academic institutions. Viewed as an instrument of cultural imperialism and bourgeois ideology, these schools could no longer be tolerated. Higher education in China had to get rid of American influence. The American missionaries, foundations and universities seeking to work in a Chinese cultural context were driven out of the mainland. The PUMC Hospital was renamed as Anti-Imperialist Hospital in 1966. Simultaneously for a generation of Chinese students, Russian supplanted English as the foreign language of choice. The image of the United States thus turned very negative in the 1950s and 1960s.

Confrontation Expanded

After the Korean War, which "greatly strengthened" China's position in the world (Rodzinski, 1988, p. 38), the young republic became increasingly active in international affairs. As a result, its confrontations with the United States further expanded. In the spring and summer of 1954, Zhou Enlai-led Chinese delegation participated in two conferences in Geneva, devoting to the Korean issue (April 26-June 15), and Indochinese question (May 8-July 21), respectively. Although no significant result was achieved at the Geneva conferences, Zhou displayed the world his remarkable diplomatic talents as a seasoned diplomatist. During the second Geneva conference, Zhou's skillful advocacy of a moderate China policy impressed the world, in particular, "when contrasted with the icy, rigid hostility displayed by the Americans, in particular John Foster Dulles," President Dwight Eisenhower's secretary of state. (p. 39). When Zhou walked into the conference, he held out his hand to Dulles, who arrogantly refused to take it and turned away. The Geneva conference of 1954 was the first international summit conference following Stalin's death, and the first conference to include representatives from the People's Republic of China. It offered the United States a unique opportunity to experiment with a polycentric negotiating strategy to "contain" the Soviet Union and China (Immerman, 1990). Instead, Dulles arrived in Geneva prepared to confront the twin demons of world communism. His petty seating rearrangements, and his refusal to shake Zhou Enlai's hand, convinced the Chinese delegation of "vile and arrogant" United States intentions, while his futile attempt to organize an anti-communist "United Front" was rejected by virtually all the major European participants (Pemberton, 1982). Not only did the United States fail to exercise constructive leadership, its refusal to endorse the treaty and

armistice sent a signal to communist adversaries and the Third World that the United States would not submit to diplomatic negotiations and international law, but preferred to use unilateral and covert military force (Martin, 1996).

The first Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1954 further expanded U.S.-China confrontations. On September 3, Chinese People's Liberation Army began shelling the small Nationalist-held offshore island of Jinmen (Quemoy) in the Taiwan Strait, and the Nationalists returned fire. The next day, Dulles ordered the US 7th Fleet back to the Strait. Four days later, the Nationalists begin large-scale air strikes against the Chinese mainland. On September 8, the United States joined seven other countries in signing a regional defense treaty, establishing the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). On December 2, the United States entered into a mutual defense treaty with Taiwan, pledging their common determination to defend themselves against external armed attack, so that no potential aggressor could be under the illusion that either of them stands alone in the West Pacific Area. The Defense Treaty was not abrogated until 1979 when the United States recognized the government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China.

In the spring of 1955, president Eisenhower sent a mission to persuade Chiang Kai-shek to withdraw from Jinmen and Mazhu (Matsu) because these island were exposed militarily to mainland invasion. Chiang Kai-shek refused to withdraw. Subsequently Eisenhower provided the Nationalists with air-to-air missiles that provided Taiwan with air superiority over the Taiwan Straits, and sent to Jinmen and Mazhu 8-inch howitzers capable of firing nuclear shells. The resulting military situation in the Strait began to look more favorable for the Republic of China (ROC) in 1956 and 1957 with the

1957 decision to place Matador missiles on Taiwan. These surface-to-surface weapons were capable of carrying conventional or nuclear warheads up to 600 miles.

Such developments, when combined with the U.S. reduction of its representation to the US-China Geneva talks from ambassador to charge d'affaires in early 1958, led China to believe that the situation in the strait was menacing. The black-and-white enemy imagery between the two countries had invariably been reflected not only in their propaganda, but also in news coverage, domestic and overseas alike.

Vietnam as a New Battleground

After John F. Kennedy took office in 1961, he was determined to reduce the tensions of the Cold War. Despite some progress in "building bridges" toward Eastern Europe, the Kennedy administration's "only initiatives regarding China were further efforts to isolate Mao's regime and an intensification of the American military role on China's southern flank in Indochina" (Cohen, 2000, pp. 187-188). Compared to the Soviet Union, Kennedy and his Secretary of State Dean Rusk concluded that China had become more dangerous – "not to the security of the United States, but to the peace of the world" (p. 188). Warren Cohen (2000) concludes that American people and their leaders were "blinded by fear of communism and forgot the sound geopolitical, economic and ethical basis of their historic desire for China's well-being," thus "the great aberration in American policy began in 1950" (p. 180).

President Lyndon Johnson inherited Kennedy's irreconciliable policy toward China. A staunch Cold War warrior himself, Johnson and his advisors were so concerned about what Beijing and Moscow might gain in Southeast Asia that they commited the United States to a tragic war in Vietnam. Although China did not send troops to fight

Americans in the battlefield, it did send considerable war materials to support the Vietcong, during which the U.S.-China relations dropped to new low (see Zhai, 2000).

By the outbreak of China's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the official PRC position to the United States remained unchanged: "U.S. imperialism had consistently followed a policy of hostility towards China, and throughout these years it has never stopped its aggression and threats against this country." (Rodzinski, 1988, pp. 159-160). But by the end of the 1960s, Mao Zedong's assessment of the United States might do not change much on the surface, his attacks on Soviet policy had risen to a new pitch. To Mao, the Soviet Union was an "out and out enemy." In Mao's words, the Soviet "social imperialists" had become "accomplices of U.S. imperialism in its opposition to the revolutionary people of Asia, Africa and Latin American and to the revolutionary people all over the world" (p.159).

When a series of incidents fueled by the Sino-Soviet mutual enmity and an unceasing barrage of hostile propaganda practically broke Sino-Soviet diplomatic relations in the late 1960s, an opportunity of rapprochement between China and the United States suddenly emerged down the corner.

Theme II: Slow-motion Normalization (1972-1988)

As a Chinese proverb goes, things usually develop in the opposite direction when they become extreme (物极必反). After a prolonged mutual hostility, China and the United States eventually were ready for rapprochement against the backdrop of a changed domestic situation within each nation. In China, by the end of the 1960s, the civil chaos as a result of the Cultural Revolution had expanded so pervasively that the whole country was pushed on brink of collapse, politically and economically. Meanwhile, the tensions

with the Soviet Union hit new high because Moscow had increased its military

capabilities in East and Central Asia. In 1969, the Moscow-Beijing dispute eventually

erupted in two bloody border incidents over Zhenbao Island in the Ussuri River, resulting

in heavy causalities. Facing the danger from Russians on the borders, China was forced to

review its relations with the United States.

In the United States, there was a "changed mood of the American people and their

conciliatory attitude toward China," which had caught the attention of the newly elected

U.S. President Richard Nixon (Cohen, 2000, p 196). Slowly, cautiously, at no risk to the

security of the United States, the Nixon administration signaled its desire to improve

relations with China. In July 1969, Washington removed part of the travel ban first and

then some trade restrictions, both of which had been in place since the Korean War.

Pingpong Diplomacy

The 1970s started on a note of hope for those who were concerned with the U.S.-

China relations, and peace in Asia. The great breakthrough of the relations came in 1971.

In February, Nixon told the American people in his "State of the World" speech that the

United States needed to establish a dialogue with Beijing. He even called for a place for

the PRC in the United Nations, of course, in the conditions of not sacrificing the position

of the Republic of China (Taiwan). In March, the U.S. government eliminated its last

restrictions on travel to China, and kicked off some initial trade relations with China for

the first time in more than 20 years. (p. 198). When reporting Nixon's departure for his

China visit in 1972, CBS News Correspondent Bernard Kalb told his viewers on air that

he found "the President began formally to refer to China as 'the People's Republic of

China'" since February 25, 1971 (Leiser, 1972). He observed that American officials

were "very careful to call it the People's Republic of China. No more 'Red China.' Hardly these days, do you ever hear Communist China" (CBS News transcript, 1972, p. 8).

These benign gestures were well received by Beijing. Chinese leaders repaid them in their own way, which was called later as "Pingpong Diplomacy." A few weeks after Nixon removed the travel ban to China, an American pingpong team playing in Japan suddenly received an invitation to play in China – the first American group of any kind to be invited to the People's Republic. On June 10, 1971, the American team went to Beijing and was received as state guests by Premier Zhou himself at the Great Hall of the People, where Nixon was later treated. Zhou took the chance of meeting the American pingpong players to tell the world publicly that China and the United States were on the eve of a new relationship. Zhou also agreed to send a Chinese pingpong team to visit the United States. Nixon further responded by announcing the lift of a host of remaining trade restrictions and signaling his interest in going to China himself. As Zhou promised, a Chinese pingpong team visited the United States on April 18, 1972. Nixon met with the Chinese team and treated them in the White House.

Nixon's Visit to China

Along with the pingpong diplomacy, various channels of communication were set up between Beijing and Washington. More good news for the U.S.-China relations flew from every post. On July 15, 1971, Nixon announced that his National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger had met with Zhou, and more surprisingly, he himself had accepted an invitation to visit China next year. On February 21, 1972, Nixon kicked off an epoch-making visit to China, in his own words, a "journey of peace." According to Harding

(1992), what brought the two countries together was their shared "apprehension about the Soviet Union" that had undertaken "a sustained expansion of its military power, conventional and nuclear" (p.4).

When Nixon visited China, the anti-communist theme was at its peak in Western world, and the Cold War ideology still dominated the world. Since the "Red China" was established in 1949, the United States on the one hand refused to formally acknowledge its existence, on the other, embargoed all trade with it, and had worked persistently to exclude it from the United Nations. Technologically, the two countries were still at war before Nixon's trip. American troops were stationed in Taiwan, helping protect its Nationalist government from a potential assault from the Chinese mainland. At Panmunjom, Chinese and American military officers still met for issues about the war the two nations had fought on the Korean Peninsula 20 years before. Now all these negative images were ready to fade out into history.

In this context, Nixon's visit to China produced more than a symbolic change in U.S.-China relationship. For the first time since 1949, the two countries began to move their relationship from all-out confrontation towards normalization. As the historic moment finally unfolded when Nixon walked out of his Air Force One and held hands with a welcoming Zhou at the Beijing airport, the days of the aberration between the two great nations were running out. The one-week visit, which Nixon later rightly referred as "the week that changed the world" (Nixon, 1978, p.580), had initiated not only the normalization of U.S.-China relations, but also the thaw of Cold War ideology.

In the United States, normalization with China was deflected, however, by the Watergate crisis and the domestic political maneuvering that followed. Nixon was forced

to resign from office in August 1972. Although his successor Gerald Ford relied even more heavily on Kissinger, who was committed to normalization (Cohen, 2000, p. 199), Ford, like Nixon, needed the support from his party's right wing, in particular, when he sought election to the presidency in 1976. On the other side of the Pacific, the Cultural Revolution had plunged China into the worst chaotic years since 1949. After the sudden death of Lin Bao, the constitutional successor to Mao, Chinese leaders were caught deeply in the whirlpool of endless domestic chaos. Factional disputes and struggles between radicals such as the so-called "Gang of Four" led by Mao's wife Jiang Qing, and moderates such as Zhou and Deng Xiaoping, became pervasive in the hierarchy of Chinese leadership. In 1976, Zhou died in January, and Mao in September (for a review of these factional disputes see Jin, 1999; Huang, 2000).

When Deng Xiaoping eventually was at the helm, it was clear that the Chinese government was in the hands of people who committed to an improvement of relations with the West in general, and the United States in particular. In June 1978, U.S. President Jimmy Carter instructed Leonard Woodcock, director of the U.S. liaison office in Beijing, to present American terms for normalization. After arduous negotiations, Deng and Woodcock reached agreement on December 13. Two days later, Carter announced his intent to recognize the CCP regime in Beijing as the government of China and terminate diplomatic relations with the Guomindang regime in Taiwan. Perhaps due to an improved image of China, American public responded favorably to Carter's announcement. Although some were unhappy about the "abandonment" of Taiwan, most Republicans as well as Democrats in Congress also welcomed the new arrangement and were enthusiastic to lead missions to Beijing (Lampton, 2001).

Deng's Visit to the United States

The U.S.-China normalization was finally materialized when Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping visited the United States from January 28 to February 4, 1979, for the first time for a Chinese leader since the founding of the PRC. Deng's whirlwind tour across the Untied States was "an enormous public relations success" (Cohen, 2000, p. 202), including magnificent receptions at the White House, the National Gallery of Art, and visits to several American cities. While in Houston, Deng delivered Americans a very powerful media image of a new-style Chinese leader by posing under a ten-gallon hat before journalists' cameras. U.S. news media reported that millions of Americans watched delightful Deng on TV with enthusiasm. On March 1, 1979, normalization finally came as the United States extended diplomatic recognition to the government of the People's Republic of China after almost 30 years of hostility since its establishment.

The U.S.-China relationship since then still experienced some rocky phases. Taiwan stood out as a chief road-block, for example, the Taiwan Relations Act. Meanwhile, however, both sides have committed to the "steady strengthening" of their relations (p. 206). What followed were increasing exchanges in culture, education, technology and trade. Ties between the two countries multiplied during the second Regan administration. Tens of thousands of Chinese students and scholars went to the Untied States for further study. The two countries had signed a wide range of agreements for cultural, scientific and technological, naval exchanges, nuclear cooperation and trade. Trade grew rapidly in the mid-1980s and the United States quickly emerged as the leading foreign investor in China. In China, the image of the United States was more often associated with a leader in technology rather than with some ideological labels such

as hegemonism. The foundation for an enduring stable relationship seemed to have been created.

The image of China and its people in the United States improved even more greatly in the 1980s. American officials and news media were very careful to call China the People's Republic, and no more "Red China." After returning from a China trip in 1984, Reagan declared that the Chinese were "good Communists" and the Soviets were bad Communists (Lee, 2003, p. 77). The following description from Marc Blecher (1986) indicates Americans' changed attitude to China in those years. Many of the positive words used here, which are in itilitics, had seldom been applied to China before.

By the mid-1980s, China's foreign policy reached "a new threshold of maturity, complexity and balance." … China has become "an increasingly respected and congenial member of the East Asian community of nations. Its foreign trade and diplomacy have grown worldwide." … This is "a major achievement" with consideration of China achieved these in a relative short period of time…. China in the 1970s and 1980s has at least begun to show itself "as a great nation which at last is confident enough to learn to deal with other nations large and small, great and not so great, in ways that promise to benefit all of them" (p. 209).

Theme III: A Grim Setback (1989-2000)

The unfortunate consequences of the 1989 Tiananmen democratic movement had sent the world a chilling reminder of an iron-fisted Communist regime during the Cold War. The bloody and violent images of the PLA soldiers gunning through toward the Tiananmen Square were replayed on TV and reprinted in newspapers in the West, though they were not available to the people on the Chinese mainland. Those negative images

had switched the U.S.-China relations from further growing in the last years of the 20th century, and cast a long shadow in the hearts of American people.

The Tiananmen Pro-Democracy Movement

When Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev visited China in May 1989, news media from all around the world, including the crews from all three U.S. TV networks – ABC, CBS, and NBC – flooded to China to cover the story. But Gorbachev was upstaged by thousands of Chinese demonstrators in Beijing, who, chanting his name, mostly on Tiananmen Square, demanded political reforms from their leaders. The events on Tiananmen began with the death of Hu Yaobang, former secretary general of the CCP, on April 15, 1989. Mourners by the thousands to fill the huge Tiananmen Square, and in a few days tens of thousands of Chinese, first students, and later people from all walks including journalists from tightly controlled Chinese media outlets, assembled there, protesting corruption, inflation, and the arbitrary exercise of state power, and demanding democracy, freedom and political reforms (Cohen, 2000).

The Chinese government, with unusually impressive restraint, allowed the growing mass of demonstrators to control the square through Hu's funeral, through the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the May Fourth Movement, and through Gorbachev's visit. Increasingly, evidence of disagreement within the Chinese leadership became obvious, especially between Deng and Zhao Ziyang, the prominent economic reformer and one-time premier who had replaced Hu as party secretary in 1987. Deng, Li Peng, now premier, and some other veterans belonging to the "gerontocracy" were angered by student demands that threatened both their power and their vision of a socialist China. Deng felt particularly concerned with the support of industrial workers

were giving to the students because he was fearful that a reprise of the 1980s student-worker uprising in Poland could be repeated in China. Thus Deng and his followers wanted the Tiananmen Squared cleared, the democracy movement crushed, and its leaders arrested. Zhao Ziyang, however, resisted Deng's call for use of force. By the end of May, Zhao Ziyang lost the struggle for power but the demonstrators were now demanding the retirement of Deng and the ouster of Li Peng. Deng could no longer tolerate the movement any more. He flew to Wuhan, a major industrial hub in Central China, where he rallied military support (p. 217).

On the night of June 3 and the early morning of June 4, 1989, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) launched an assault on the protesters on the Tiananmen Square, mostly students. Accompanied by tanks, the troops shot their way into Tiananmen Square. Perhaps no one knows exactly how many people were killed by the PLA that night, some say a few hundreds, and others believe the death toll was over one thousand, and thousands more were wounded (Crowell, 2004, Cohen, 2000, p. 217). In the following weeks, the Chinese government, brushing aside foreign criticism, begun the systematic arrest of demonstration leaders nationwide, and thousands more were jailed, some of them tortured and summarily executed. Many journalists, scholars and even officials lost their jobs because they supported the democratic movement. (Cohen, 2000)

In the weeks and days leading up to the night of June 3, 1989, Chinese students and other citizens were giving television interviews with reporters from around the world. Those foreign journalists who intended to cover Gorbachev's visit now beamed to the world a large part of what happened on the Tiananmen Square, especially the events on the night of June 3 when the repression started. The protesters' aspirations for freedom

and democracy were immediately tangible to the world. Lots of powerful images that were provided during the period leading up to the repression, the crackdown itself and the manhunt for dissenters thereafter did more than create a sense of human identification between those in Tiananmen Square and viewers around the world. Many of the images were so powerful and so memorable that they are still used repeatedly as lead-in footage to news and documentary broadcasts more than a decade after the events themselves. One of the most memorable images is an unidentified, solitary white-shirted man suddenly jumped to the center of the Chang'an Avenue and stood firmly in front of a row of moving tanks towards the Tiananmen Square. At that moment, there was no traffic but roaring tanks on the busiest street in Beijing. Under the watch of thousands of people who were on the sidewalk, the young man blocked the tanks with waving hands. Most of these images were negative to the American people. No less important than the images, however, was the amount of time that the networks news program devoted to coverage of the events and the number of persons exposed to those images. One study of network news coverage during the Tiananmen Square Incident found that China received just 64 minutes of airtime in 1988, but in 1989 news on China totaled 881 minutes (Lawson, 1998).

Such negative images changed the American popular perception of and attitude toward the PRC overnight. A 1999 Gallup poll found that 72% polled Americans felt "favorable" toward China in February 1989, 58% of them were "unfavorable" six months later (Newport, 1999), adding that American public opinion remained negative towards China on the 10th anniversary of the Chinese military crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square. Various studies of news media show that such powerful

negative media images often persist "until an equally powerful set of images displaces them" (Lampton, 2001, p. 267)

The Bush Administration's Reactions

U.S. President George H. W. Bush had watched development in China with apprehension, expressing sympathy for the goals of the students. When the shooting began, the Bush administration was so horrified that it quickly denounced it, which was followed by many European countries. Japan and the Soviet Union also condemned the violence in Beijing, only with more careful wording. In Washington, Bush suspended sales of weapons to Beijing and broke off contacts with the PLA. Many Americans demanded the Bush team to take even stronger actions to punish "Butchers of Beijing" (Cohen, 2000, p. 218). U.S.-China relations entered into the most difficult period since Kissinger and Nixon reopened the dialogues with the People's Republic in the early 1970s.

Despite mounting U.S. public hostility toward China and Congressional pressures for punitive action, the Bush team was determined to keep the lines of communication between Washington and Beijing open, to preserve some of the gains of the 1970s and 1980s. Still fighting the Cold War, they feared driving the Chinese back into Soviet arms (Cohen, 2001, p. 219). Three weeks after the bloody crackdown on the Tiananmen Square, George Bush sent a secret mission to Beijing, which soon became a controversy in itself. Publicly, the Bush administration had declared that it would have no high-level contact with China. Privately, Brent Scowcroft, national security adviser to President Bush, and the deputy secretary of state were sent to meet with Deng in Beijing, indicating that the public furor over Tiananmen massacre had forced Bush to impose sanction, but

there would be lifted as soon as possible (p. 219). The Democratic-controlled Congress was much tougher with China. In the spring of 1991, the Senate voted and passed its bill for conditional renewal of China's Most Favored Nation status.

During his bid for reelection in 1992, Bush's sensitivity to Beijing was under intense fire from his challenger, Democratic nominee Bill Clinton. Clinton called the 1992 renewal "unconscionable" and spoke critically of Bush's efforts to work with Chinese leaders who continued to crush efforts for political reform, were irresponsible in exporting missile and nuclear technology, supported the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and brutalized the people of Tibet. To Clinton, Bush's policy of being soft on China was "coddling dictators" (Cohen, 2000, p. 227). When the American people discarded pro-Deng George Bush and chose Clinton as their president, China and the United States seemed headed toward confrontation in both political and economic affairs.

Clinton's "Con-gagement" Policy

As soon as Clinton was in the White House, the new president was faced with a paradox. With reviving the U.S. economy as his top priority, he understood, a continued confrontation with China at political level would precipitate a trade war between the two countries. The Clinton administration then began to adopt a "constructive engagement" policy toward China, which meant engaging rather than isolating China. Clinton argued, "Seeking to isolate China is clearly unworkable," and this would not make the world safer (Clinton, 1998). For decades, China, on the other side, has worked hard to demonstrate the world that it "could not be successfully isolated" (Harding, 1992, p. 237).

Clinton's mild China policy disappointed those who were concerned about China's human rights violations such as pervasive political persecutions, forced abortions,

exploitation of prison labor, but won support from American business people who wanted to take advantage of China's economic reforms that provided enormous opportunities to sell and to invest in China. The Chinese economy had grown very rapidly as it recovered after the initial post-Tiananmen stumble. U.S. military also supported Clinton's China policy because they suspected that North Koreas might develop nuclear weapons and China might be the only country that could have some influence on North Koreans' decisions (Powell, 2005). Again, moral values and political ideology collided with geopolitical and economic interests.

Trade between China and the United States grew enormously and rapidly in the mid-1990s. The images of Tiananmen were still fresh to many Americans. As China and the United States became increasingly important trading partners, the mutually beneficial relationship, however, had generated friction as China exported far more than it imported, creating a serious balance of trade problem for U.S government. This became an even more prominent problem until 2006. To Cohen (2000), more friendly relations with China seemed almost possible in the absence of a shared enemy, such as the Soviet Union had been in the 1970s and 1980s. More importantly, there was an "enormous gap between the values held dear by the American people and those which motivated the Chinese government" during the Tiananmen movement (p. 235). The Clinton administration had been struggling to find a balance between values and interests but often in vain. The bilateral relationship seemed profoundly vulnerable – at least, perceived in both countries.

Bombing of Chinese Embassy

Two incidents in 1999 and 2001, respectively, contributed to the tensions between China and the United States. In both cases, the images of American government deteriorated among ordinary Chinese people. On May 7, 1999, U.S. Air Force's B-52 bomber dropped a bomb and destroyed Chinese embassy in Belgrade, killing three Chinese. The disastrous incident happened when NATO bombed Serbia, whose forces launched "ethnic cleansing" against the Kosovars. The bombing of Chinese embassy created powerful visual images that were repeatedly replayed and reprinted in Chinese media. Those images included pictures of the smoking hulk of the bombed-out embassy, grieving relatives of the dead, and the return of the victims' bodies to their homeland.

The Chinese government rejected American explanations that that was an accident. Thousands of outraged Chinese people went on the streets of Beijing, Chengdu, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Shenyang, Guangzhou, Xiaomen and Xian to demonstrate against the "U.S. atrocity." They besieged the American embassy in Beijing and set fire to the home of the American consul general in Chengdu, capital of Southwest China's Sichuan Province, which disclosed a current of anti-Americanism among ordinary people in China. Lampton (2001) contends, "If powerful visual images of Tiananmen ended Americans' honeymoon with China in 1989, powerful visual images of Belgrade ended what was left of that honeymoon for the Chinese people a decade later" (p. 267).

EP-3 Spy Plane Collision

Another wave of anti-Americanism unfolded in China as a result of an American EP-3 spy plane's collision with a Chinese Air Force fighter in China's southern airspace on April 1, 2001, causing the Chinese aircraft to crash into sea and its pilot dead. The spy

plane was said to do its "a routine reconnaissance flight" along China's coast. Chinese

military claimed the spy plane invaded into Chinese airspace, and two fighter jets

immediately took off and tried to fend off the invader. The spy plane then rammed into

and destroyed a Chinese fighter jet. The American spy plane made an emergency landing

at Lingshui Airport, a Chinese airfield in Hainan province, and none of the 24-member

crew aboard was injured ("U.S. secures," 2001).

Both China and the United States lodged formal protests over the incident through

diplomatic channels. China charged the U.S. side over the intrusion into the Chinese

airspace and landing without permission, and thus demanded an official apology and

compensation from the U.S. government. But Washington refused to apologize for the

incident (Lampton & Ewing, 2002). Angered over the death of their pilot Wang Wei, the

Chinese felt that the incident demonstrated American arrogance, while many Americans

felt that the Chinese acted recklessly and demonstrated aggressive intentions. These

attitudes become the background in which subsequent decision were made by both

Beijing and Washington, including a Pentagon memo to Secretary Rumsfeld calling for a

cessation of all military-to-military contracts with the PRC. Rumsfeld retracted the memo

and asserted that the drafter had misunderstood his intention (Meyers, 2001). Yet, under

Rumsfel's rubric of reviewing all such exchanges on a "case-by-case" basis, military

exchanges were effectively frozen (Gordan, 2001).

Once again Chinese official media criticized the incident disclosed the American

hegemonism and hostility against China. The two incidents created an enduring set of

negative images about the U.S. government in China. Similarly, among Americans, the

incidents entailed unfavorable images of Chinese government – tough, stubborn and aggressive – and Chinese students – xenophobia and easily manipulated.

Lee Teng-hui's U.S. Visit

In the U.S.-China relations, the Taiwan issue has never been far from being a recurring huddle. In April 1995, U.S. President Clinton allowed former Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui to make a "private visit" to the United States, bowing to pressure from Taiwan's supporters in the U.S. Congress. Beijing lashed out at Lee, as it would do repeatedly over the next several years. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said that China is "extremely dissatisfied with and opposed to" the U.S. government's decision to grant a tourism visa to Lee, which was "another erroneous step" Washington took on the Taiwan issue ("China opposes," 1995).

To Beijing, Lee had been the representative of the "Taiwan independence" forces and a thorough "trouble-maker," and not a "private individual" at all. Though Lee had stepped down as Taiwan president, he was believed to "carry out activities in the world to separate China." Zhu said Lee has ulterior political motives behind his visit, and the so-called "visit by private persons" was nothing but a camouflage. The U.S. government's decision to allow Lee to visit the United States could only boost the arrogance of the "Taiwan independence" forces to split China, aggravate the tension across the Taiwan Straits, and undermine the cross-straits and U.S.-China relations, he pointed out ("China opposes," 1995).

In response to the growing pressure, domestic and international alike, Clinton added the element of containment – to contain the growth of Chinese military power – to the policy of engagement, thus becoming a policy of "con-gagement." (Sutter, 2005).

Theme IV: Strategic Ambiguity (2000-2006)

Entering to the 21st century, China has become progressively an integral part of the global economy and world politics, which Washington can no longer afford to overlook, largely due to the fast growing economy ties between them. Since the late 1970s, China had opened its hermit economy to the world, and has lurched toward embracing the market by loosening the state grip on the economy. Little elaboration is needed for China's status as both an economic and political power in the new century, especially after China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) on November 11, 2001. China's entry to the WTO ended its 15-year quest and ushering in a new era of reform expected to bring sweeping changes not only to China's domestic politics and economy, but also the world. Entry to the WTO also marks a major victory for China, which has reinforced the Chinese leadership's confidence in playing a role that matches what an emerging economic and political power holds in the world – China is finally ready to restore "its rightful place in the world."

Mutual Use of Economic Leverages

If economic and trade issues were not the primary motivations for thawing relations in the early 1970s for either Beijing or Washington, they are now. China's economic interactions with the United States and other countries have become a vital force to shape up its image in the post-Tiananmen period. The economic ties are mutually benefited. While China has increasingly relied on the U.S. market, capital and technology, the United States has viewed China as both a huge consumer market and a low-labor-cost export platform to produce products for markets outside China, particularly U.S. domestic market. This happened against the backdrop of receding mutual security

70

concerns, the "constructive strategic partnership" both Beijing and Washington tried to build up, as well as fading Cold War ideology.

The growing U.S.-China economic ties carried with it the potential for miscalculation in both Beijing and Washington. Beijing thought the mutually beneficial economic relations provided itself some leverage over Washington; some in Washington assumed that China's reliance on the U.S. provided leverage to achieve other objectives by threatening to limit Chinese exports to the United States. Lampton observes, "Americans tend to rationalize economic intercourse with China with improvement (as they see it) of the spiritual and political lives of the Chinese people," (p.257), to which Beijing may not agree. The assumed mutually beneficial economic relations can turn into a political bickering between Beijing and Washington from time to time.

The linchpin issue was the growing U.S. trade deficit with China. According to U.S. government figures, in 1988 the United States had a $4.24 billion deficit in its trade with China. By 1997 the gap had increased more than 12 times to about $53 billion, and by 2004 skyrocketing to $162 billion. The mounting trade deficit with China raised popular concerns over "fair trade," revaluation of Chinese yuan (renminbi) and industrial job loss (Lampton, 2001, p. 118). In China, many argue that much of the surplus is accounted for by a number of considerations: the relocation of export production and assembly from the newly industrializing countries to the PRC; valued added by intermediaries cu as Hong Kong; U.S. export controls on its own companies; flawed trade statistics that make Hong Kong a distorting factor; and Chinese production of goods no longer made in America (Fung & Lau, 1996).

Another hot issue concerns protecting intellectual property rights. The worldwide

piracy of intellectual property is a critical concern for much of American industry. China

has been frequently charged of failure to meet its intellectual property obligations after its

entry to the WTO, and the U.S government has failed to "leverage the WTO mechanisms

that might bring China into compliance" (Choate, 2005). The economic stories between

China and the United States since 2000 have demonstrated again that they are important

far beyond simply the money to be made and the leverage each said tried to extract from

the economic association to achieve other ends" (Lampton, 2001, p. 112).

Strategic Ambiguity

In the late 1990s, the Clinton administration and the Chinese leadership began to

call each other "strategic partners." When George W. Bush became U.S. president in

2001, he switched to call China a "strategic competitor." To hedge against China's

potential longer-term challenge, Bush's China policy was committed to engage China

economically, culturally and politically, but contain China militarily and strategically. In

essence, the Bush administration has "traded in a policy of 'strategic ambiguity' with

respect to the Taiwan Strait for a policy of strategic ambiguity with respect to the PRC"

(Lampton & Ewing, 2002). The ambiguity resides in Washington's eagerness to

cooperate with China due to its status of an emerging world power, while guarding

against China's perceived likelihood to challenge the U.S.-dominated security order in

the future.

One of the vital concerns embedded in Bush's China policy was over the Taiwan

Strait. In the past years, Taipei had repeatedly provoked Beijing by taking some

significant moves to seek the separation from the mainland, which was long declared as

intolerable by Beijing. If Taiwan leader Chen Shui-bian was emboldened enough to cross Beijing's bottom line, i.e. declaring as an independent state, Beijing was highly expected to use force for interference. This is the last thing the United States wants to see in the Taiwan Strait. Any military conflict between the United States, the world's strongest nuclear power, and China, the most populous one, is not in the national interests of the United States. Washington had to balance between deterring Beijing from using force against Taiwan and making sure Taipei would not provoke Beijing's bottom line.

China's reaction to the new U.S. president was mixed. Many in Beijing were worried about Bush's tough rhetoric but hoped that the momentum of exisiting policy would push him toward a China policy similar to his father's. Into the new century, China was faced with tough domestic challenges – corruption, social equlity, freedom and democracy demands, etc. -- that the current regime wanted to focus on (See Wang & Hu, 1999). It tried to further its economic relations with the United States as a continuation of China's integration into the global economy is believed to be in the best interests of China. All these shaped China's accommodating policy toward the United States despite some tough rhetoric from time to time up until the terrorist attack of the U.S. on September 11, 2001.

U.S.-China Cooperation after "9/11"

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2000 have radically affected America's sense of security. Where China once loomed to some observers as the biggest potential threat to America's long-term security, the United States is now locked in a protracted struggle against international terrorism and is facing the prospect of future acts of terrorism on U.S. soil. Being preoccupied with homeland defense and "hunting down"

terrorist groups and the regimes that support them, the United States needs all the geopolitically central nations that it can get on its side in the war on terrorism. This shift in current threat perception has offered a rationale to improve the U.S.-China relations. As a result, President Bush has invested far more personal time interacting with Chinese leaders than Bill Clinton did in his first term with a vision that Beijing could do a lot in the war against terrorism (Lampton & Ewing, 2002). U.S.-China relations were redefined with the input of Chinese exchanges of counterterrorism information, efforts to interdict terrorist funds, and Beijing's influence in Muslim world. China's human rights issues thus were "lower on the Administration's priority list than it was in the first Clinton term," and instead "security has become the touchstone" (p. iii).

In China, although economy produced a record growth over the past two decades, more perplexing economic problems emerged and popular discontent is widening. While facing growing foreign economic competition and international pressures to implement WTO commitments, China's domestic difficulties such as the growing pressure of political reforms, fragile banking system, decaying state-owned industry, and high urban unemployment rate have become almost insurmountable (Wang & Hu, 2001). Widespread domestic instability would affect Beijing's ability to cooperate with Washington in the international arena, for example, the North Korean nuclear program, and increase the prospect that the Chinese leadership would rely upon nationalism for its legitimacy. Still, Beijing genuinely shares the U.S. determination against worldwide terrorism as it considers terrorism – Muslim-supported separatist movement in Xingjian – a direct threat to itself. Chinese leaders have repeatedly promised to contribute more efforts in the war on terrorism and holding its responsibility in nonproliferation.

The Future of U.S.-China Relations

As the world's most populous country, with a huge and rapidly growing economy, and a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, China is becoming an emerging force in global affairs, whether Washington likes it or not. History has repeatedly shown that an emerging power has often been treated negatively, in particular, by the existing powers (see Mearsheimer, 2001; Bracken, 1999) There is no doubt that the U.S.-China trade and economic ties will be further developed, but confrontations, politically and economically, may happen from time to time. As Bush's former National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice (2000) said, "U.S. policy toward China requires nuance and balance. It is important to promote China's internal transition through economic interaction while containing Chinese power and security ambitions." Although cooperation should be pursued, she asserted, the U.S. "should never be afraid to confront Beijing when out interests collide" (p. 57).

In the United States, domestic criticism mounts on Washington's China policy, mostly for a lack of consistency and clarity (e.g. Carpenter, 2000). A notable struggle will continue, and sometimes could go quite fierce, between those who want to perpetuate the cooperative U.S.-China relations of the 1970s and 1980s with some modest modifications, and those who see China as a repressive dictatorship and an emerging adversary of the United States and therefore favor a more hard-line approach in dealing with the emerging power (Shambaugh, 1996). Many have tried to sum up the United States' relationship with China in a catch phrase – friend or enemy, good or bad, strategic competitor or strategic partner (see Harding, 1992). Such characterizations are neither useful nor

accurate. The relations between the two great nations are too complex, varied, and fast changing to be reduced to sound bites.

Why have U.S.-China relations proven so difficult to manage? What is the vital ideological difference between Chinese perception of the United States and American perception of China, which seems to have shaped the ups and downs of the bilateral relationship? Insightfully addressing the two questions, Lampton (2001) construes that "none more central than the Chinese quest for control over their internal affairs and the deeply held American belief that China's internal governance is also the United States' proper concern." (p. 276).

There can be little doubt that both Beijing and Washington hold genuine reservations on each other. Today the ideological, political and cultural differences which are profoundly embedded in the long and complicated history still exist between the two countries. Tensions or even confrontations between the two can be expected to continue most likely over trade, human rights, the Taiwan issue, nonproliferation of advanced weapons, and other economic and political issues. Tension and confrontation over new issues can also emerge from time to time with some very rocky moments almost inescapable.

No matter how difficult the relations would be, one thing can be ascertained: As the profound importance of the bilateral relations in a broad sense is being shared by both sides, it is hard to imagine the two nations' relationship would return to the hostility and estrangement of the 1950s and 1960s.

Chapter 4

Method

To testify the validity of the pyramid model of news decision making proposed in Figure 1, this study uses an experimental design to investigate news decision making in the context of two different cultures and media systems in the United States and China. The design is that two groups of U.S. journalists and two groups of Chinese journalists received the same treatment, then their news decisions are measured and analyzed to see any differences or similarities as a consequence. Thought no random sampling is a must for experiments, experimental research requires both the proper experimental procedures and the appropriate sampling to ensure that inferential generalization is available (Boniface, 1995). "The main requirement for proper experimental procedures" is random assignment, participants being randomly allocated to the processes (p. 5). Experimental design was used in this study mainly because it is powerful in testing causal relationships in a variety of situations where other design or even classical design usually does not work as well.

Participants

A total of 137 working journalists from the United States and China were recruited to participate in this research from November 20, 2005 to February 25, 2006. The data of 120 journalistic participants were included in this study because they fully saturated the experiment design, which has 12 cells and needs 10 subjects per cell (see Figure 3). The participant pool consists of four groups of journalists: 30 U.S. journalists working as domestic journalists in the United States; 30 U.S. journalists working as

foreign correspondents in China; 30 Chinese journalists as domestic journalists in China; and 30 Chinese journalists as foreign correspondents in the United States.

In the United States, the U.S. journalists were randomly selected from the 2005-2006 Directory of National Press Club of Washington (NPC), which contains its members' email addresses, phone numbers and news affiliates. The National Press Club lists the membership of more than 4,000 journalists from news media organizations across the United States and other countries. The random number table was used to pick up the participants from the NPC directory.

This study conducted almost a census among Chinese foreign correspondents working in the United States, who wrote news stories on a daily basis for China's print and broadcast media. During 2005-2006, a total of 12 Chinese news organizations dispatched their correspondents to the United States. Excluding business managers, photojournalists, office workers and other personnel who were not directly involved in news writing, there were over 30 Chinese correspondents who wrote news stories on a daily basis, mostly in Washington D.C., New York and Los Angles. Twenty-six of them participated in this experiment, representing all the 12 Chinese news organizations which had a bureau in the United States. Four more Chinese journalists, who just returned to China after working as foreign correspondents in Washington D.C. for three years, were recruited to participate in this experiment in Beijing in January 2006.

In China, all the Chinese participants were journalists working for China's national or provincial news organizations based in Beijing, Shanghai or Shenzhen. This study recruited 30 U.S. correspondents working in China for this experiment, which can

be taken as a census of U.S. correspondents who wrote news stories for U.S. print and broadcast media from China.

Most U.S. correspondents in China belonged to the Foreign Correspondents Club of China (FCCC), an association of Beijing-based professional journalists reporting on China for audiences around the world. The FCCC president forwarded the researcher's invitation letter to all her members, which recruited the first group of U.S. correspondents. The other U.S. journalists were selected from the pamphlet "Foreign Press in China," published in August 2005 by the Information Department of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The pamphlet contains all foreign correspondents' detailed contacts, including office addresses, office phone and cell phone numbers. Excluding business managers, photojournalists, cameramen, office workers and other personnel who were not directly involved in news writing, there were 38 U.S. correspondents who wrote news stories on a daily basis, mostly in Beijing and Shanghai, and 30 of them participated in this research. For a summary of the design, please see Figure 3.

Stimulus Materials

Three versions of news packages about natural or man-made disasters were designed as stimulus materials for the experiment. Each news package is about one of the three natural or man-made disasters: an earthquake, health risk or a nuclear power plant accident that happened 10 hours and killed more than 100 persons in a fabricated country. All the news packages are the same in terms of format, content and wordings except each with a different topic. For example, all the news packages provide the same death toll, the same news sources, the same rescue efforts and official reactions.

Each news package contains four pages of raw materials: 1. A one-page official news release from the press secretary of the Denka's Presidential Palace with an official logo and the secretary's contacts; 2. A one-page transcript of a phone interview with a local doctor who helped rescue victims (three questions and answers); 3. A one-page transcript of a phone interview with a tourist (three questions and answers). For U.S. journalists, the tourist was an IT specialist from New York City, while for the Chinese journalists, he was an IT specialist from Shanghai); 4. Finally, a one-page transcript of phone interview with a local waiter. All the content was arranged to reflect the news elements at three proposed process levels of news decision making: Psychological, cultural and ideological levels. Four measures were designed to measure each of the three process levels (see Table 1).

All the news packages have two language versions: English and Chinese (one of the news packages in English language is attached in appendix). The Chinese-language versions are translated word-by-word by the author, a native speaker of the Chinese language who worked in Beijing for six years as a reporter and later chief sub-editor for the front page of *China Daily*, a leading national newspaper. Special care was devoted to the accurate translation of metaphors, catchphrases and depictions to ensure that cultural nuances were recognized without distortion or misinterpretation.

Table 1

Experiment Design with Measurements

	Power Distance			
Psychological Level	**Very High** (Officials)	**High** (Doctor)	**Medium** (Tourist)	**Low** (Waiter)
Damages	Some	A lot	Serious	Very serious
Death	100, 120	140	160	180
Looting	No	Some	A lot	Rampant
Civil Order	Good	OK	Bad	Very Bad
Cultural Level				
Corruption	No	Very serious	Serious	Not serious
Sheltered in 2 weeks	Yes	Impossible	Difficult	Possible
Rescue work	Good	Very Bad	Bad	OK
Unity call	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree
Ideological Level				
Officials' role	Best	Very poor	Poor	Good
Sabotage	Yes	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely
Socially fairness	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree
The poor suffers most	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree

The disasters were the ones happened in a made-up country should help prevent the subjects[5] from having a sense of geographical proximity to their own countries, which is widely believed to affect news decision making.

The official press release and three interviewees represent four different social power distances. The president and prime minister quoted in the press release represent very high social power, the local doctor high social power, the tourist medium social power, and the local waiter low social status. The classification of these sources' social power distances remains largely true in both U.S. and Chinese societies today. They arguably have long been embedded into both U.S. and Chinese cultures. Hofstede (2001)

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[5] Each subject was debriefed in advanced that the event described in the news package was fabricated and happened in a fabricated country in the thought of helping avoid any potential pre-test effects among the participants. If a real event was used, some pre-test effects, for instance, some subjects knowing an event better than others, could comprise the validity of the experiment findings.

termed the phenomenon "power distance," which he borrowed from the Dutch social psychologist Mulder, who conducted experiments to investigate interpersonal power dynamics in the 1960s (p. 79).

In this dissertation, power distance is referred to social power distance indicating both a news source's social status and the distance to the authorities. For instance, president's words indicate high social power, and a local waiter's low social power. Social power distance then became a variable to measure how the participants evaluate the news sources with different social power distance. Finally, the questions from the four news sources were designed to measure the news elements at three cognitive processing levels as proposed in the pyramid model: Psychological, cultural and ideological levels.

Topics of Bad News

The three topics chosen for this study are either a natural (earthquake) or man-made disaster (nuclear power plant accident), or a widespread health risk, which are commonly labeled bad news. Bad news often deals with "unpleasant, unfortunate, conflict-laden, and other wise aversive events, circumstances, and conditions" (Aust, 2003, pp. 511-512). Empirical studies discover that the frequency of bad news far exceeds that of accounts of good fortune, at least in the Western media (Carroll, 1985; Haskins, 1984; Haskins & Miller, 1984; Stone & Grusin, 1984; Stone, Hartung, & Jensen, 1987). Charles Aust (2003) observes, "News providers appear to be partial to covering mishaps, setbacks, tragedies, and disasters suffered by people from all walks of life, whether or not such reports are of consequence to news consumers" (p. 512). Galcian and Pasternack (1987) did a national survey of U.S. television news directors and found that

they were well aware of the dominance of bad news about misfortune. American scholars of mass communication also find that many U.S. journalists rated bad news more important and newsworthy than positive versions (Bohle, 1986; Aust, 2003). Litter literature can be found about the perspective of Chinese news professionals on good news and bad news.

The raw news materials this study provides for the participants should be as closely as possible to what they process in their newsrooms, although all the provided raw materials are fabricated. This will help generate some news decisions close to what the participants make in real world. With these reasons, three identical fabricated disastrous events being chosen as the topics for examining news decision making. Another reason of three topics being chosen instead of only one is that a test can be performed to find out if there is any correlation between the topics. If no correlation is found, more confidence is achieved in the results because they are not affected by the topics. Thus the experiment design has a more sound validity.

Design and Procedure

When a list of the subjects was completed, each of them received either an English- or Chinese-language invitation letter for participating in the experiment. The copies of the letters are attached in Appendices C and D. After she or he agreed to participate, one of the three versions of news packages was *randomly* selected and sent to the participant via email. In some cases, a hard copy of news package was brought to the newsrooms where the participants worked. In those cases, an informal interview was often conducted with the participants after they finished the whole experiment.

The experiment consists of three parts: 1. Writing a news story based on provided materials; Each subject was then *randomly* assigned to write a breaking news story based on one of the three versions of news packages, which severed as stimulus materials for exploring his or her news decisions. She or he could write the story long or short, but it must be done under a deadline (30 minutes) and all the raw materials must come from the provided news package. 2. Filling in an online questionnaire on the news decisions they made during writing the news stories, as well as some general information on their news decisions during their daily work; 3. Answering a set of open-ended questions on why they decide to include certain news elements when they wrote the stories.

Online Questionnaire and Latency Data

The second part of the experiment was a 61-question online questionnaire. The first question asks how similar the provided materials were to the kind of material the subjects encounter in their daily work. The next 36 questions ask about three key concepts (each with 12 questions) associated with news decisions: 1. Utility (e.g. How *useful* is the press release's information on the death toll to your news story?); 2. Trust (e.g. How *trustworthy* do you think the doctor's comment on officials' role in the disaster?); 3. Credibility (e.g. How *qualified* do you think the tourist is when it comments on the officials' role in this disaster?).

The next 24 questions are about general news decisions in newsrooms, the participants' perceptions of U.S.-China relations, attitudes to U.S. and Chinese governments, people and cultures, and finally demographic information of participants, such as gender, age, types of news outlets they work for, years of formal journalism education, and years as a journalists.

Administering the questionnaire online allows for collecting latency data. When the participants were answering the online questions, software was programmed to collect the latency data simultaneously by recording how much time a participant used for answering each question in millisecond, or one thousandth (10^{-3}) of a second.[6] Latency to respond is a commonly accepted measure of mental efforts involved. As discussed previously, the pyramid model of news decision making proposed in this dissertation postulates there are three levels of news decisions from Level 2 (Psychological level), to Level 3 (Cultural level) and Level 4 (Ideological level). As the higher level a news decision falls on, the more mental efforts are needed and the longer time it will take. Thus if there is a significant difference in terms of how much time the participants used to answer those questions, the latency data might sever as extra evidence to prove the proposed pyramid model reflects the reality of news decision making.

Pretest data revealed that if one just logs into the questionnaire's webpage and randomly clicks one of the five multiple choices without reading the question and the choices, it takes about 500-600 milliseconds. If he or she reads the question and its multiple choices, it takes about 800 milliseconds, but usually no more than 15,000 milliseconds. Considering some participants may be extremely fast or slow, this study will discard any latency data that are below 700 milliseconds and over 15,000

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[6] A program named SOS was embedded applets, or small executable programs in the Web document that contained the instrument. The software activated a clock when the subject clicked a mouse on a start button at the top of the page at the beginning of each question. Subjects read the question and clicked a radio button for the appropriate response. They then clicked on a button at the bottom of the page, which stopped the computer's clock and advanced the document to the next page. Both the self reported data and the latency to respond to the question, measured in milliseconds, were recorded in a file and transferred to a server upon completion of the survey. The software recorded the data in such a way that latency scores were not dependent on the response time of the Internet or other external factors. SOS was developed at the Advanced Technology Laboratory at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland. This version, name SOS 1.0, is an updated version of SLIMY (see Newhagen, 1993).

milliseconds, which will then be marked as missing values in analyses as the assumption goes that the subject was not performing the latency task.

Operationalization of Cognitive Processing Levels

At psychological level, three kinds of general news values—importance, proximity and drama—were embedded into the stimulus materials (Westerståhl & Johansson, 1994). They were used as measures of psychologically salient information. "Importance" denotes the information about or from elite nations and elite people, which implies "a dichotomy between the elite and the rest" (p. 73). "Proximity" implies the relatedness of the news event the participants covered to the audience, while "drama" suggests how dramatic an event can be to a general audience in accordance to the participants' assessment. Westerståhl and Johansson (1994) observe that each of the three values has "a causal effect on the selection of news" (p. 74).

As previously noted, culturally salient news elements are the information laden with cultural values—"shared abstract perspectives on what is good, right, and desirable in a society (Williams, 1970). This study devotes special attention to measuring cultural differences displayed between U.S. and Chinese journalists when they make similar news decisions. The United States is often seen as holding the most extreme Western cultural values, while China, along with some other Asian countries, holds the most extreme Eastern values (Warden, Chen & Caskey, 2005). Hofstede's (1980, 2001) dimensions of culture values also confirm that U.S. and Chinese cultures holding opposite values. This becomes apparent when their views on individualism and collectivism are compared. Individualism and collectivism are one of the six dimensions Hofstede designed to measure cultural difference at a national level (Hofstede, 1980; 2001). In this study, a set

of news elements addressing government corruption, rescue efforts, providing shelter to victims and an official call for national unity before the disaster were inserted in the stimulus materials. The four measures were designed to reflect both individualism and collectivism approaches. For example, if a journalist uses a news element in the story on the rescue efforts at a collective level, rather than individual level, one score will be recorded showing Easter cultural influence. If two or three news elements are used in a story, two or three scores will be recorded, and so on. If the journalist chooses both individualism- and collectivism-oriented news elements, the total of his or her individualism score and collectivism score will be like to show the strength of either individualism or collectivism.

Ideologically salient information is regarded as news elements reflecting "perception of society and a set of societal values" (Westerståhl & Johansson, 1994, p. 75). Ideological level information can appear on regional, national or international level with different degrees of specification. When international news reporting, Westerståhl and Johansson (1994) suggests that ideological values at national level is most prominent because this level "dominates in the majority of countries most of the time" (p. 75). In the stimulus materials, news elements regarding the officials' role after disaster (officials' role), the official call for guarding against possible sabotage from neighboring "evil countries" (sabotage), social fairness and the poor people's situation (the poor) were categorized into ideological level information.

Thought-Listing Questions

Finally, three open-ended questions were administrated to the participants as thought-listing. Here thought-listing procedure was used as a method of cognitive

assessment for measuring and categorizing individual journalists' thoughts in responses to the news decisions they made in the experiment. After the experiment, the thought-listing questions were presented to the participants and they were asked to recall their thoughts and explain why they made certain news decisions they just did (for a review, see Cacioppo & Petty, 1981). This procedure helps collect some data on news decision making that might fail to be documented in previous three parts of the experiment. Specifically, the following information will be drawn from the thought-listing data:

1. Prominence: How many thoughts do the participant provide in all the three answers?

2. Valence: Is there a problem or solution frame, or none of the two frame used for the news story?

3. Uncertainty Avoidance: How many pairs of conflicting information are used in the news story?

4. Importance: News decisions at which process level: psychological, cultural or ideological level, are viewed as the most important for the news story?

5. Avoidance: Do the participants try to avoid any news decisions at psychological, cultural or ideological level?

In summary, four sets of data were collected:

1. Data from the online survey

2. Latency data of online questions

3. Data from the content analysis of the participants' news stories

4. Thought-listing data from the participants' open-ended responses to their decision making processes

Factorial design is appropriate for this research because it enables us to measure the effects of two or more independent variables and their combinations. In this study, special attention was devoted to measuring the simultaneous effects of two pairs of independent variables on U.S. and Chinese journalists' news decision making: 1. Nationality (U.S. or Chinese, and can be further divided into two sub-groups: domestic or foreign journalists) vs. the process levels (psychological, cultural and ideological levels), and 2. The process levels vs. power distances. In this experimental design, the two pairs of treatments are the independent variables, and the performance scores of participants are depend variables. This study measures three main effects:

1. Main effect of Factor A (1st IV): Nationality, the overall difference between the two levels of Nationality (U.S. or Chinese journalists.). The difference here mostly refers to direction, not to the size of the difference.

2. Main effect of Factor B (2nd IV): Beat, the overall difference between the two levels of Beat (domestic journalists or foreign correspondents). The difference here mostly refers to direction, not to the size of the difference.

3. Main Effect of Factor C (3rd IV): Process Levels, the overall difference among the three levels of Process Levels (psychological, cultural and ideological levels) that is consistent across the levels of A or B. The difference here mostly refers to direction.

4. Main effect of Factor D (4th IV): Power Distance, the overall difference among the four levels of C (Low, medium, high and very high power distance) that is

consistent across the levels of A or B. The difference here mostly refers to direction.

Meanwhile, this study will measure five interaction effects:

1. Interaction of AxC (Nationality*Process): Differences among the levels of Factor A depend on the levels on the Factor C. The difference here refers to direction and size of the effect. This means, for example, that some difference between the levels of Factor A may hold true at one level of B but not at another level of B; or that the difference between two levels of A may be much stronger at one level of B than at another level of B, even though it is in the same direction.

2. Interaction of BxC (Beat*Process): Differences among the levels of Factor B depend on the levels on the Factor C. The difference here refers to direction and size of the effect. This means, for example, that some difference between the levels of Factor B may hold true at one level of C but not at another level of B; or that the difference between two levels of A may be much stronger at one level of B than at another level of B, even though it is in the same direction.

3. Interaction of AxD (Nationality*Power): Differences among the levels of Factor A depend on the levels on the Factor D. The difference here refers to direction and size of the effect

4. Interaction of BxD (Beat*Power): Differences among the levels of Factor B depend on the levels on the Factor C. The difference here refers to direction and size of the effect.

5. Interaction of CxD (Process*Power): Differences among the levels of Factor C depend on the levels on Factor D. The difference here refers to direction and size of the effect.
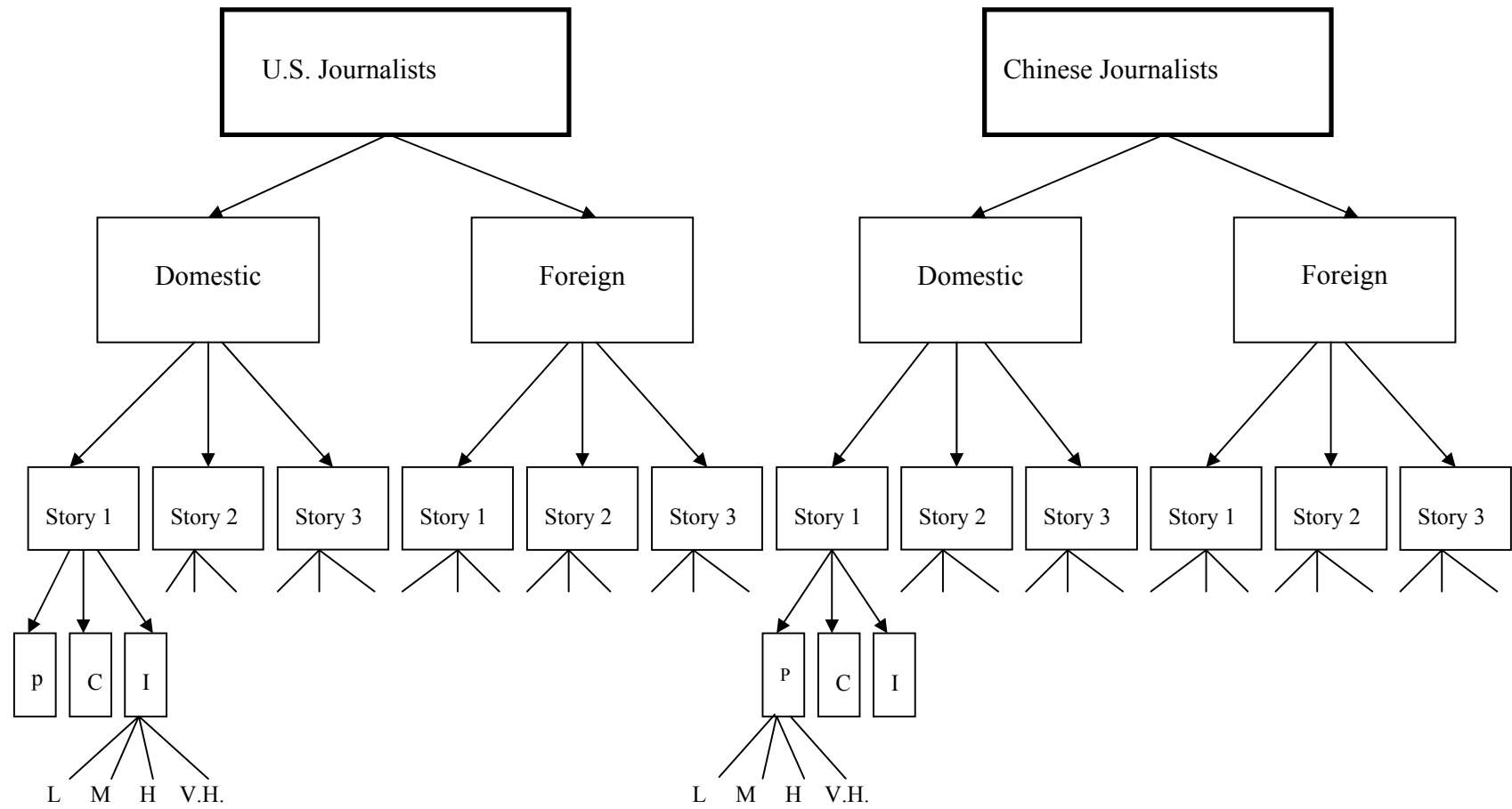
Figure 3. A 2X2X3 Design

Chapter 5

Results

This study examines the process of journalists' news decision making when they write news stories. It is especially interested in the cognitive processing of news decisions and social power distance of news sources. Cognitive processing is divided into psychological, cultural and ideological levels. Social power distance has four levels: low, medium, high and very high. These independent variables function as factors shaping story content. The analytical strategy of analyzing the data generated in this experiment will be:

1. To do a content analysis of the 120 news stories the participants wrote for the experiment;

2. To examine self-reported data captured in a Web-based survey focusing on the participants' rating of two key concepts of a news story: *utility* of news elements and source *credibility* measured as trust and qualification from the stimulus materials that generated their stories;

3. To examine the participants' latency to respond to those online questions, i.e. the time in milliseconds spent for answering each of the online questions;

Story Content Assessment

Repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to measure how the story content could be affected by cognitive processing and social power distance. Story content was classified into psychologically, culturally or ideologically salient news elements. Social power distance has four levels: low, medium, high and very high, which

represent, respectively, four news sources in the stimulus materials from low to very high: a waiter, a tourist, a doctor and officials.

Main Effects for Cognitive Processing Levels and Social Power Distances

Figure 4 shows a main effect for the number of news elements used across three cognitive processing levels, $F(1.76, 117) = 274.40$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .70$[7]. This means that the participants used most news elements in the news stories came from psychological level information ($M = .50$, $SD = .02$), which is followed by cultural level ($M = .28$, $SD = .01$) and ideological level information ($M = .13$, $SD = .01$). It is easy to understand why the journalists believe the materials with basic news values are important, especially when they were writing a breaking news story like in this experiment. "Getting facts straight" is almost the first lesson journalism students have learned. The idea since then has often been emphasized again and again in journalists' daily work. But it may not be so obvious why they also rate the raw materials containing ideological values almost as equally useful as those basic news values.

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[7] The degree of freedom (df) here is 1.76, rather than 2, because Huynh-Feldt was used as a correction procedure in the condition of the Sphericity assumption was not met, which is the case in this test. Sphericity, referring to the equality of the variances of the differences between levels of the repeated measures factor, requires that the variances for each set of difference scores are equal, which is also an important assumption of repeated measurers ANOVA. When the Sphericity assumption is not met, the F-statistic will be too liberal, and as a result, the Type I error rate will be inflated. To correct the Sphericity, the degrees of freedom must be altered and so is the significance value of the F ratio. Hereafter whenever the df is not an integer, the Huynh-Feldt is used.
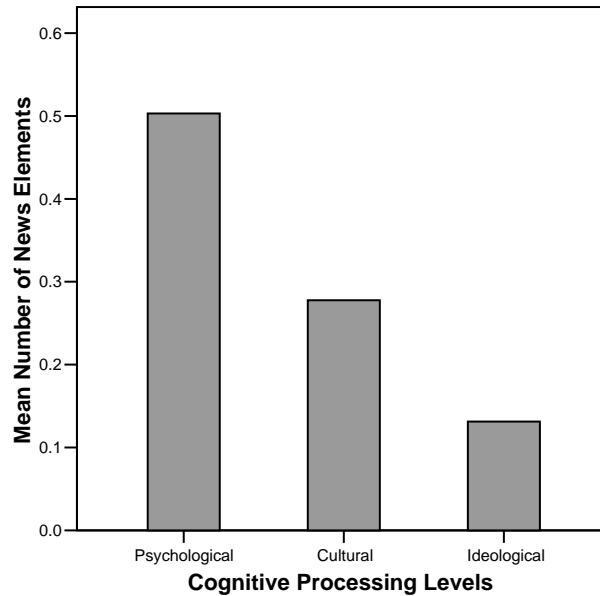
Figure 4. Cognitive Process Level on Number of News Elements Used in Stories

Figure 5 shows another main effect of the number of news elements used across the

four social power distances $F(2.92, 116) = 139.66$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .55$. This means that the

participants used different amount of information across the four sources: The officials, the

doctor, the tourist and the waiter. Most news elements used in the stories come from the

doctor ($M = .40$, $SD = .02$), which is followed by the tourist ($M = .36$, $SD = .02$), the

officials ($M = .31$, $SD = .01$) and the waiter ($M = .15$, $SD = .01$). The two main effects

confirm the existence of proposed three-level cognitive processing of news decision making

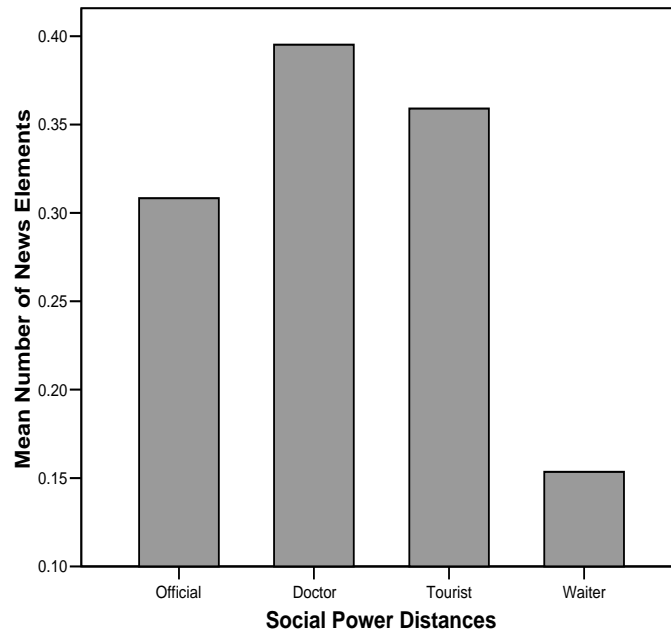and the four-level social power distance.

Figure 5. Social Power Distance on Number of News Elements Used

Interactions for Cognitive Processing Levels and Social Power Distances

Figure 6 shows an interaction between cognitive processing and social power

distance on the number of news elements used in the stories, $F(4.44, 113) = 19.74$, $p < .001$,

$\eta_p^2 = .41$. Psychological level information coming from the doctor scores the highest (M

$= .82$, $SD = .03$), which is followed by the officials ($M = .45$, $SD = .02$), the tourist (M

$= .45$, $SD = .03$), and the waiter ($M = .29$, $SD = .03$). For the cultural level, the participants

used less materials provided by the doctor ($M = .29$, $SD = .02$), the officials ($M = .26$, SD

$= .02$) and the waiter ($M = .03$, $SD = .01$) than at psychological level, except the tourist (M

$= .53$, $SD = .02$). The tourist topped all other sources as an information provider.

Ideological level information mostly comes from the officials ($M = .21$, $SD = .01$),

followed by the waiter ($M = .14$, $SD = .02$), the tourist ($M = .10$, $SD = .01$) and the doctor ($M = .08$, $SD = .02$).

Comparing to those at cultural or ideological levels, most of the stories use more psychologically salient news elements in general. The numbers of psychologically salient news elements used become less widely spread at cultural level. At ideological level, they are low and group tightly.
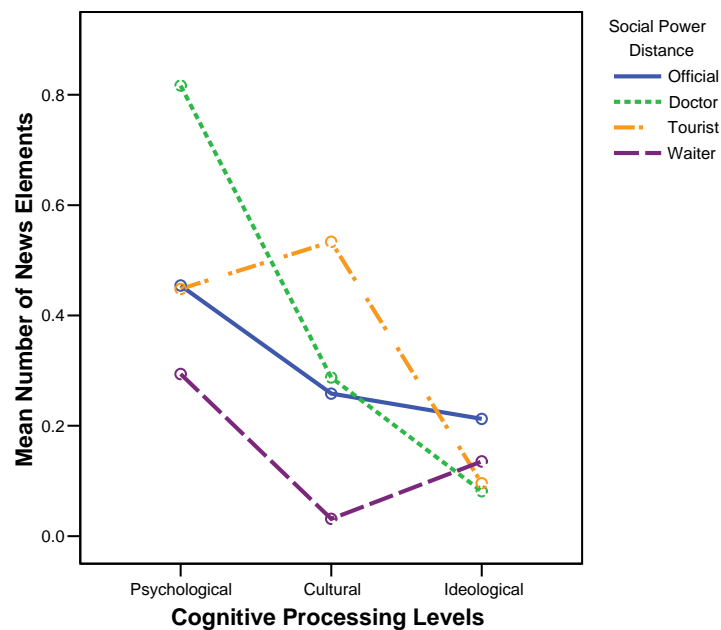

Figure 6. Cognitive Processing and Social Power Distance on Number of News Elements Used

Intervening Factors

The participants' nationality (U.S. or China) and journalistic beats (domestic or foreign) were introduced as intervening factors functioning on the relation between cognitive process and the number of news elements used.

Figure 7 shows an interaction between cognitive processing and nationality on the number of news elements used in the stories, $F(1.67, 115) = 13.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$. As the data show, most news elements U.S. and Chinese participants used in their stories are psychologically salient news elements, which are followed by culturally and ideologically salient information. This means that the participants, regardless of their nationality, used different amount of news elements across psychological, cultural and ideological levels.
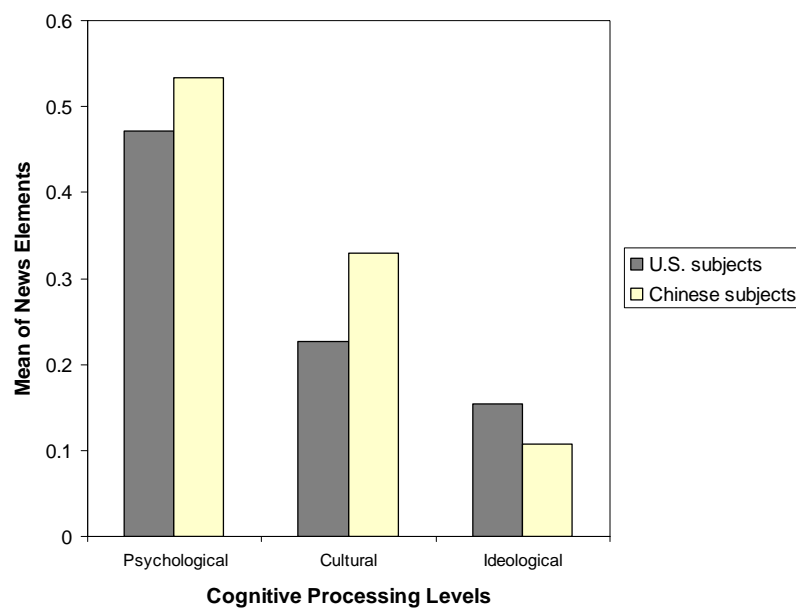
Figure 7 Cognitive Processing and Nationality on Number of News Elements Used

In Figure 7, some differences between U.S. and Chinese participants are apparent. U.S. participants ($M = .15$, $SD = .02$) used more news elements at ideological level in their stories than their Chinese colleagues ($M = .11$, $SD = .02$) did, while the Chinese participants used more materials at both psychological ($M = .54$, $SD = .03$) and cultural levels ($M = .33$, $SD = .02$) than U.S. participants ($M = .47$, $SD = .03$ for psychological level; $M = .23$, $SD = .02$ for ideological level). But no significant difference exists between the two groups of subjects.

Figure 8 shows an interaction between social power distance and nationality on the number of news elements used in the stories $F(2.92, 114) = 5.32$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .44$. The Chinese participants included more materials from the doctor ($M = .42$, $SD = .02$), the tourist ($M = .35$, $SD = .02$), and the waiter ($M = .18$, $SD = .02$) than U.S. journalists (for the doctor, $M = .37$, $SD = .02$; for the officials, $M = .27$, $SD = .02$; for the waiter, $M = .13$, $SD = .02$). It is palpable that the tourist's information was used comparatively evenly by all the participants, regardless of their nationality, though the U.S. participants used slightly more of the tourist's materials ($M = .37$, $SD = .02$) than their Chinese colleagues (M =.35, $SD = .02$).
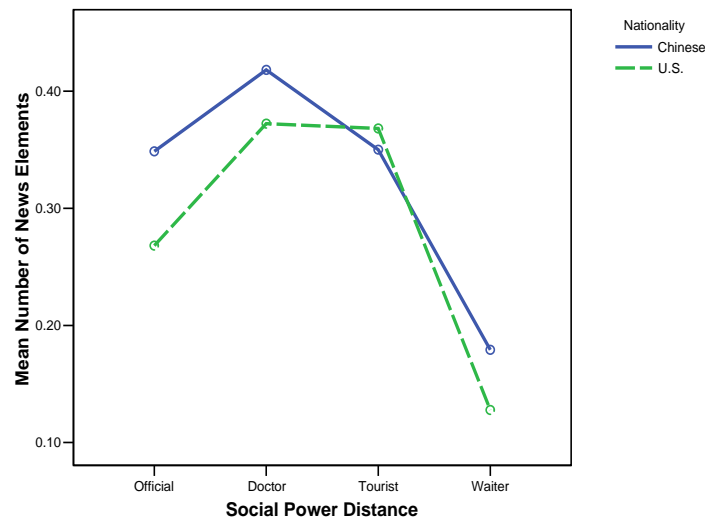
Figure 8. Social Power Distance and Nationality on Number of News Elements Used

Figure 9 shows an interaction between cognitive processing and journalistic beats on the number of news elements used $F(2.11, 114) = 6.02$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. The domestic participants included more materials from the doctor ($M = .41$, $SD = .02$) than foreign correspondents ($M = .38$, $SD = .02$). But the foreign correspondents ($M = 38$, $SD = .02$).

Finally Chinese participants used more materials from the officials ($M = .33$, $SD = .02$), and

the waiter ($M = .12$, $SD = .02$) than U.S. participants (for the officials, $M = .29$, $SD = .02$;

for the waiter, $M = .12$, $SD = .02$). The pattern of news decision making between the two

journalistic beats, which is shown in Figure 9, is similar to that between U.S. and Chinese

participants as shown in Figure 8.
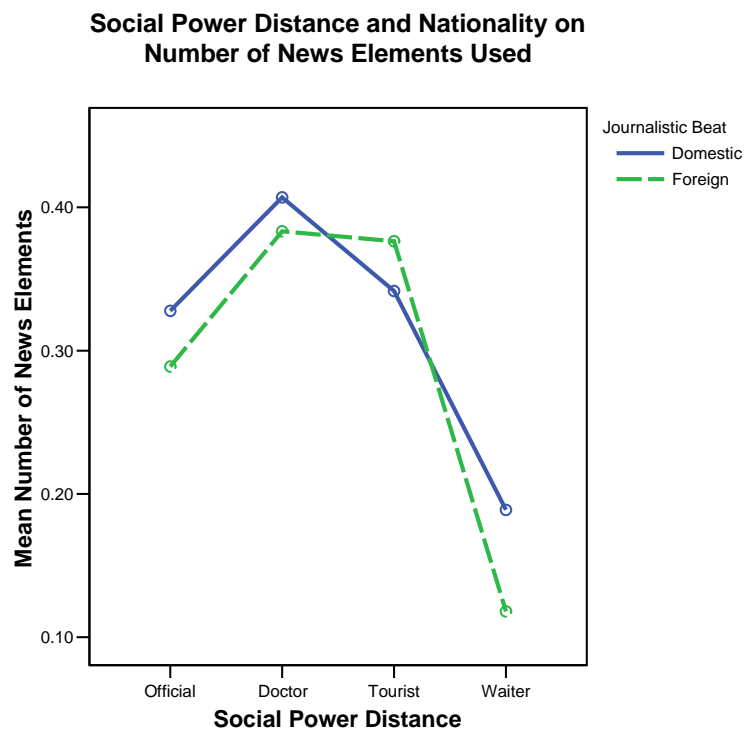
Figure 9. Social Power Distance and Journalistic Beats on Number of News Elements Used

In sum, the story content assessment shows both main effects and some interactions

among the three levels of cognitive processes, as well as the four levels of social power

distance. Variance explained is substantial (see Table 2 for all effective sizes tested). The

results also demonstrates an interaction of cognitive process and power distance on the

news elements the participants used in their stories, but no other interaction effect was

found. There is a general pattern of news decisions on how the participants used news

elements. First, the participants used more psychologically salient news elements in the stories, such as the basic facts of the event, than culturally or ideologically salient information. Second, most news elements included in the stories came from the sources of the doctor and the officials, representing high and very high social power. The news elements from the waiter, representing low social power, were used the least among the four sources.

Participant Assessment of News Element Utility and Source Credibility

Self-reported and latency data captured in the Web-based survey were examined to investigate the participants' assessment of two key concepts that are associated with news decision making: *utility* of news elements and *credibility* of the news sources. The latency data, measured as the time in milliseconds the participants spent in answering each question in the Web-based survey, were used as an indication of how much mental effort was involved in assessment of the news sources. Empirical studies discover that the more time used for making a choice indicates the more mental effort must be involved in the decision (Newell, 1990; Bower & Clapper, 1993).

Utility Assessment

A bank of 12 questions measured the participants' assessment of how useful news elements in the stimulus materials were to their stories. There is a main effect for the participants' assessment on news element utility across the four cognitive processing levels from psychological, cultural to ideological levels, $F(1.96, 117) = 51.55$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .31$. The results also find a main effect of news element utility on the four-level social power distance, $F(2.61, 116) = 31.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$. No other significant main effect was detected.

Figure 10 shows an interaction between cognitive processing and social power distance on news element utility, $F(5.31, 113) = 51.03$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .31$. Psychologically salient news elements from the officials scores the highest in term of utility ($M = 4.33$, $SD = .05$). This is followed by the doctor ($M = 3.81$, $SD = .09$), the tourist ($M = 3.22$, $SD = .09$), and the waiter ($M = 3.20$, $SD = .09$). At cultural level, the participants assessed that the doctor ($M = 3.43$, $SD = .09$) provided the most useful information, which is followed by that from the tourist ($M = 2.97$, $SD = .08$), and the waiter ($M = 2.89$, $SD = .09$). The culturally salient news elements from the official source ($M = 2.46$, $SD = .10$) dropped to the lowest among the four sources and across the three cognitive processing levels.

The ideologically salient news elements from the doctor ($M = 4.13$, $SD = .08$) once again topped other sources and became the most useful to the participants' stories, which is followed by that from the tourist ($M = 3.68$, $SD = .07$), and the waiter ($M = 3.45$, $SD = .09$). Again, the participants reported that the least useful information was from the officials ($M = 3.26$, $SD = .09$).
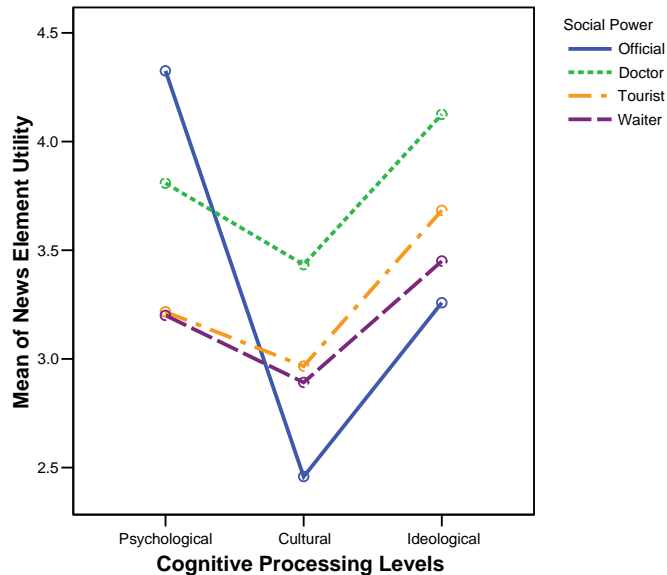
Figure 10. Cognitive Processing and Social Power Distance on News Element Utility

In sum, the utility scores of the four news sources dropped to the lowest when they were at cultural level. The most dramatic change among the four sources happened on the official source. It was ranked the most useful when the journalists sort through basic news elements at psychological level, but it became the least useful among the four sources for the journalists when they made news decisions at cultural and ideological levels. Little change can be found on the other three news sources. In fact, the changes from one cognitive processing level to another are quite similar, during which the information provided by the doctor was always ranked more useful than that from the tourist and waiter.

Nationality and Journalistic Beat on News Element Utility

The participants' nationalities and journalistic beats were introduced as intervening factors functioning on the relations between cognitive process and the utility of news elements from in the stimulus materials. Figure 11 shows an interaction between social

power distance and journalistic beat on news element utility, $F(3, 114) = 6.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Regardless of their nationalities and beats, the participants viewed the doctor's information most useful, and the waiter's information least useful among the four sources that represented four power distances from low to very high. No significant difference is found between U.S. and Chinese journalists when they assessed news element utility.
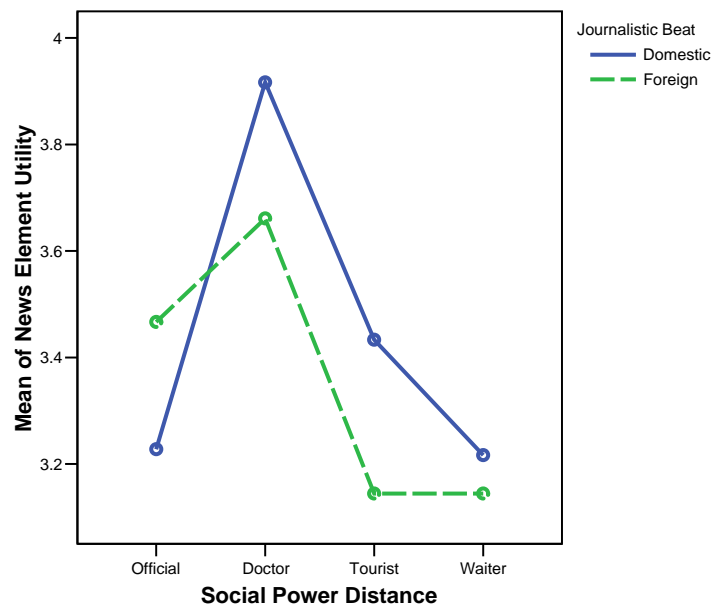
Figure 11. Social Power Distance and Journalistic Beat on News Element Utility

In Figure 11, the domestic reporters believed that the most useful information came from the doctor ($M = 3. 91$, $SD = .09$), which is higher than the foreign correspondents' rating of the same source ($M = 3.66$, $SD = .09$). As for the information from the tourist and officials, domestic reporters and foreign correspondents rate them differently: domestic reporters rated the tourist's information ($M = 3.43$, $SD = .08$) more useful than that from the officials ($M = 3.22$, $SD = .08$), while the foreign correspondent assessed the official

information ($M = 3.45$, $SD = .07$) more useful than that from the tourist ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .08$). In fact, little difference exists when the domestic professionals assessed the utility of the information from the officials and the waiter.

In sum, the data here do not show a significant difference between U.S. and Chinese journalists. But it is worth noting that Chinese participants believed the information from the tourist was quite useful (next only to that from the doctor), while the U.S. participants categorized it, along with that from the officials, the least useful for their news reporting. This may indicate that the proximity of news materials was more important for the Chinese journalists than their U.S. colleagues. It also shows that the domestic journalists might be influenced more strongly by the proximity of news information, while foreign correspondents rated a news source with low social status more useful.

Credibility Assessment

The credibility of news materials and sources can be further divided into two concepts: trustworthiness and expertise (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1959; Newhagen & Nass, 1987). Thus in the survey, two separate groups of questions (each containing 12 questions) were designed to measure the participants' assessment of news element trustworthiness and source qualification in the stimulus materials.

Measuring Trustworthiness

A bank of 12 questions measured how trustworthy the participant thought the news elements provided by the four news sources in the stimulus materials. These questions were designed to reflect the news materials at three cognitive processing levels: Psychological, cultural and ideological levels, and their sources with four different social power distances

from low, medium, high to very high, which were represented, respectively, by the waiter, the tourist, the doctor and the officials in the stimulus materials.

A main effect is found in source trustworthiness across the three-level cognitive processing, $F(1.97, 117) = 16.89$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$, meaning the participants' assessment of source trustworthiness is different across the psychological, cultural and ideological levels. The results also show a main effect of source trustworthiness across the four levels of social power distance, $F(2.09, 116) = 55.77$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .33$. No other significant relation was detected.

Figure 12 shows an interaction between cognitive processing and social power distance on source trustworthiness, $F(4.47, 113) = 24.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .18$. The doctor was trusted the most across psychological, cultural and ideological levels. In addition, the participants' trust on the doctor's information goes all way up from psychological level ($M = 3.46$, SD .09), cultural level (3.78, $SD = .07$), to its highest at the ideological level ($M = 3.98$, $SD = .07$). The participants' assessment of the information from the tourist and the waiter followed the same pattern, i.e. from low to high across the three cognitive processing levels. Specifically, the trust on tourist's information starts low at psychological level ($M = 2.67$, $SD = .08$), going higher at cultural level ($M = 3.19$, $SD = .06$), and reaching the highest at ideological level ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .07$). Respectively, the trust scores on the waiter's information are low at psychological level ($M = 2.7$, $SD = .08$), higher at cultural level ($M = 3.11$, $SD = .06$) and ideological level ($M = 3.23$, $SD = .08$). However, the trust on the official information displays an opposite picture, which drops from high at psychological level ($M = 3.18$, $SD = .08$), to low at cultural ($M = 2.89$, $SD = .10$) and ideological levels ($M = 2.70$, $SD = .09$).
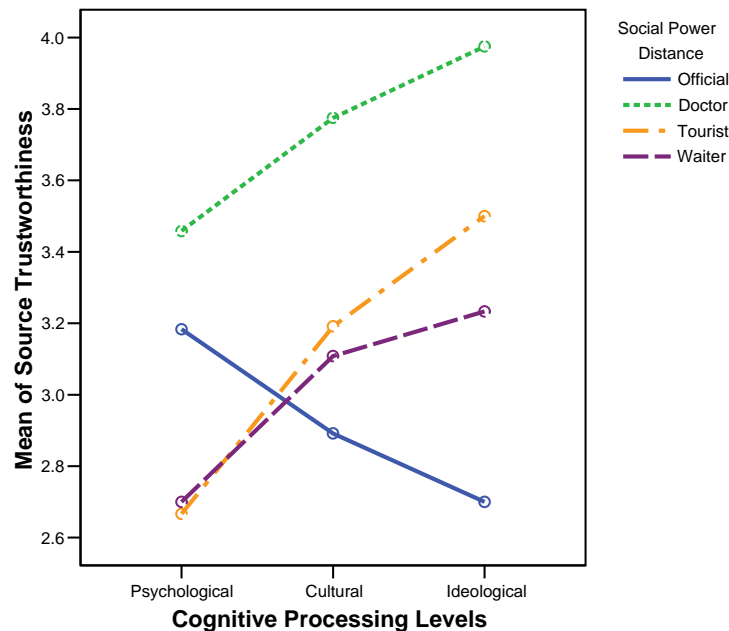
Figure 12. Cognitive Processing and Social Power Distance on Source Trustworthiness

Nationality and Beat on Source Trustworthiness

The participants' nationalities and journalistic beats were introduced as intervening factors functioning on the relations between cognitive processing and source trustworthiness. No interaction is detected, meaning there is little difference between U.S. and Chinese participants, as well as between domestic reporters and their overseas colleagues when they assessed source trustworthiness.

Though no significant difference is detected, there are some differences between U.S. and Chinese participants when assessing source trustworthiness. Figure 13 shows that the Chinese participants trusted ideological level information ($M = 3.38$, $SD = .06$) the most, which is higher than their U.S. colleagues ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .07$). This is followed by Chinese participants' trust on cultural level information ($M = 3.34$, $SD = .06$), higher than

the U.S. participants' same rating ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .06$). Both U.S. and Chinese participants

trusted psychological level information the least, which U.S. participants ($M = 2.92$, SD

$= .08$) rated even lower than the Chinese ($M = 3.09$, $SD = .08$). In terms of source

trustworthiness, the participants trust the sources when they provided information with

cultural or ideological values. They trusted the least psychological level information such as

some basic facts of the event.

A similar pattern can also be found between domestic reporters and their overseas

colleagues, who trusted the sources when they provided cultural or ideological level

information more than when they did psychological level information.
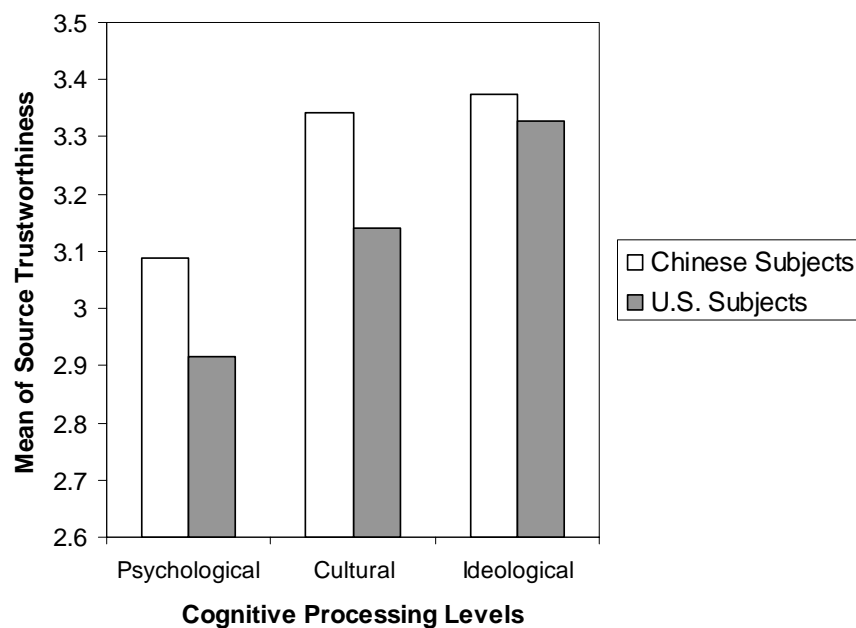
Figure 13. Cognitive Processing Levels and Nationality on Source Trustworthiness

When social power distance was introduced into the test, no interaction is found

either. In Figure 14, the results discover that the doctor became the most trustworthy source

to the participants. Chinese participants ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .08$) trusted the doctor even more

than U.S. participants (*M* = 3.69, *SD* = .08). For Chinese participants, this is followed by

the trust on the tourist (*M* = 3.21, *SD* = .61), the officials (*M* = 3.07, *SD* = .09). For U.S.

participants, their trust next goes to the tourist (*M* = 3.03, *SD* = .06), then the waiter (*M* =

3.01, *SD* = .07), and finally the officials (*M* = 2.78, *SD* = .09).
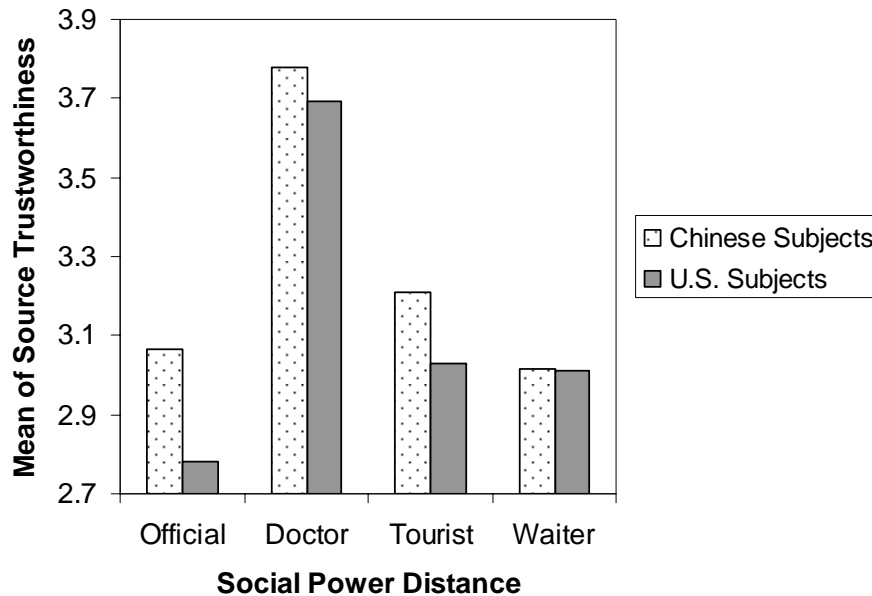
Figure 14. Social Power Distance and Nationality on Source Trustworthiness

No difference is found between the domestic journalists and foreign correspondents.

Both of them reported that they trusted the doctor the most. It is followed by the tourist, the

waiter, and finally the officials. It is worth noting that the foreign correspondents viewed the

trustworthiness of the tourist, the waiter and the officials not so differently as the domestic

reporters did on the same three sources.

In sum, all the participants, regardless their nationality or journalistic beat, showed a

similar trust pattern when they assessed how trustworthy the sources were when they

provided news elements at psychological, cultural or ideological levels. They trusted the

information at ideological level the most, and the psychological level the least. In general,

Chinese participants trusted the sources more across the three cognitive processing levels than their U.S. colleagues. The domestic journalists were less skeptical, trusting the sources more when they provided psychological, cultural and ideological information than their colleagues working overseas.

Measuring Qualification

In the Web-based survey, a group of 12 questions was employed to ask the participants how qualified the news sources are when they provide information. These questions were designed to reflect news elements at psychological, cultural, ideological levels, as well as from four levels of social power distances from low, medium, high to very high, which are represented, respectively, by the waiter, the tourist, the doctor, and the officials in the stimulus materials.

A main effect is found in source qualification across three cognitive processing levels: Psychological, cultural and ideological levels, $F(1.66, 117) = 26.47$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .19$. Another main effects is discovered in source qualification across the four levels of social power distance, $F(2.53, 116) = 62.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .35$. No other main effect was detected.

Figure 15 shows an interaction of cognitive processing and social power distance on source qualification, $F(2.53, 113) = 3.27$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. At psychological level, the official source ($M = 4.26$, $SD = .06$) was assessed as the most qualified, which is followed by the doctor ($M = 3.43$, $SD = .06$), the waiter ($M = 2.70$, $SD = .08$) and the tourist ($M = 2.68$, $SD = .08$). At cultural level, the participants viewed the doctor ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .07$) as the most qualified news source, which is followed by the officials ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .08$), the waiter ($M = 3.59$, $SD = .08$) and the tourist ($M = 3.08$, $SD = .08$).
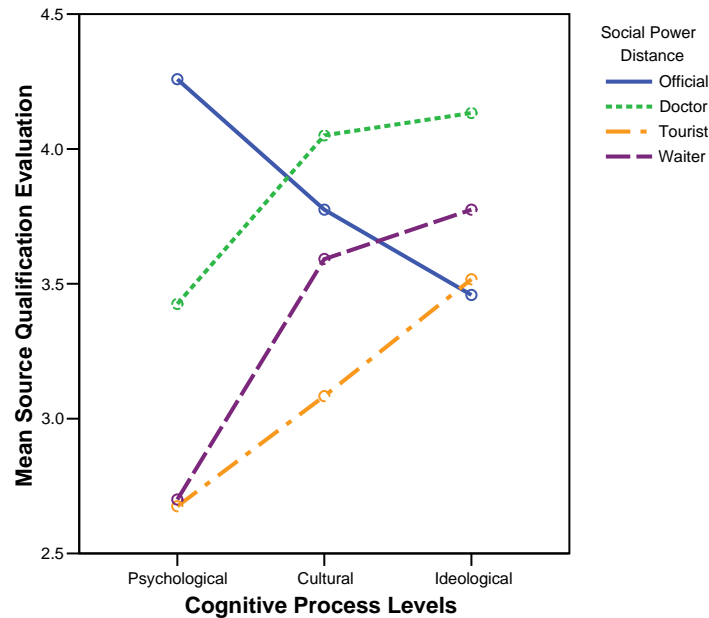
Figure 15. Cognitive Processing and Social Power Distance on Source Qualification

The most dramatic change across the three cognitive processing levels in Figure 15 should be the participants' assessment of the official source qualification. At the psychological level, the official source was rated the most qualified, indicating the participants believed the officials were the most qualified source when they made news decisions on materials with basic news values. It dropped sharply at cultural level, but still as the second most credible source next to the doctor. Finally it became the least qualified source for ideological level information. The other three news sources demonstrated an exactly different scenario, all going all way high across the three process levels.

Nationality and Beat on Source Qualification

When two intervening factors of nationality and journalistic beat are introduced into the test, an interaction is found between cognitive processing and nationality on source

qualification, $F (1.66, 117) = 3.64$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, meaning U.S. and Chinese participant assessed the source qualification significantly different across the three cognitive process levels (see Figure 16). The Chinese participants viewed the sources most qualified when they provided ideological level news elements ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .07$), which was followed by the sources providing cultural level information ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .07$) and psychological level information ($M = 3.26$, $SD = .09$). U.S. participants followed the same pattern, rating the sources providing ideological level the most qualified ($M = 3.58$, $SD = .07$), followed by cultural level ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .07$) and psychological level (M =3.27, $SD = .09$).

It is worth noting the main part of this main effect lies at the source qualification when providing cultural or ideological level information, but not psychological level information. Both U.S. and Chinese participants reviewed the qualification of the sources almost equally low when they provided psychological level information, and much lower than either cultural or ideological level information. Then the two groups of participants appeared different when they reviewed the sources when providing cultural level information. Their difference becomes the biggest when reviewing source qualification when ideological level information is provided. No interaction was found between the two journalistic beats. In sum, U.S. and Chinese participants showed similarity when they rated the qualification of the sources when providing psychological level information, such as the basic facts of the event. But the two groups of participants show difference in rating source qualification when they provided cultural and ideological level information.
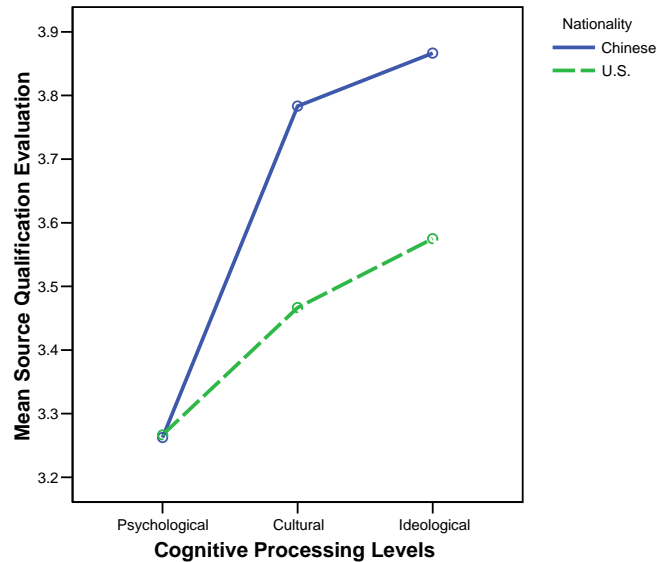
Figure 16. Cognitive Processing and Nationality on Source Qualification

Figure 16 shows an interaction between social power distance and journalistic beat

on source qualification, $F(3, 114) = 2.91$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. As Figure 16 shows, foreign

correspondents rated the official source as the most qualified (M = 3.92, $SD = .07$), which

was followed by the doctor (M =3.85, $SD = .08$), the waiter ($M = 3.32$, $SD = .08$), and the

tourist is the lowest ($M = 2.97$, $SD = .08$). Domestic journalists rated the doctor as the most

qualified source ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .08$), followed by the officials ($M = 3.74$, $SD = .07$), the

waiter ($M = 3.39$, $SD = .08$) and the tourist ($M = 3.22$, $SD = .08$). Both the two groups rated

the waiter as the lowest qualified source and they gave the waiter a quite similar score, too.
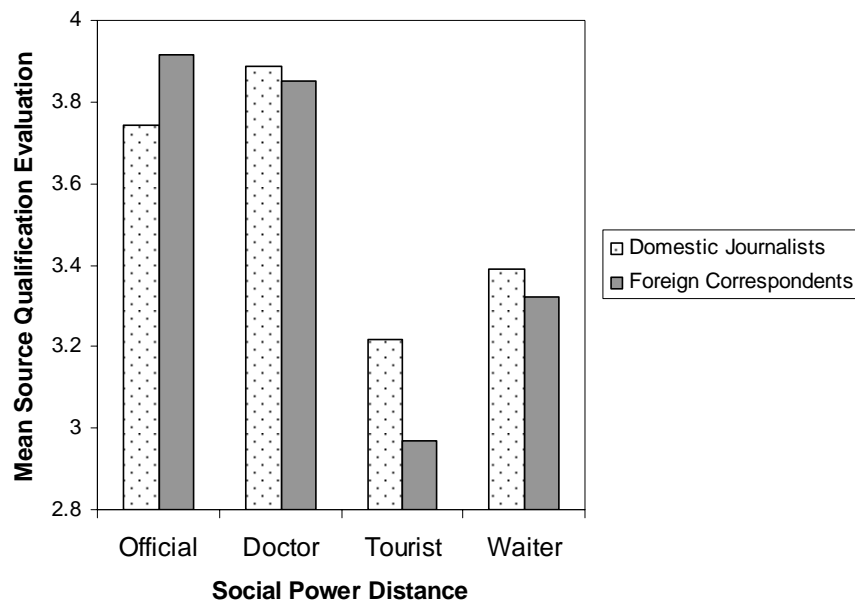
Figure 17. Social Power Distance and Nationality on Source Qualification

In sum, credibility assessment shows that there is little difference between U.S. and Chinese participants when they assess source qualification at psychological level. They also viewed source qualification similarly at cultural and ideological levels. The only difference is that Chinese participants simply viewed both more qualified than their U.S. colleagues did.

All the participants generally believed that the sources providing ideological level information were the most qualified, while those offering psychological level materials were viewed the least qualified. This might be in part due to the stimulus materials they had for writing the news story. In those raw materials, much more conflicting information was embedded at the psychological level than the ideological level. When a considerable amount of uncertainty is involved in the news elements at a specific process level, the journalists usually need more mental efforts to sort through those materials. They might thus rate the materials with more conflicting information less credible than some other

elements they believe they have more certainty, though no the current data could prove this. The data also suggest that the participants simply did not think the tourist was very qualified for providing information.

Latency Data Assessment

Latency data were documented by self-designed software programmed in the Web-based survey, i.e. recording how much time the participants spent in answered each of the online questions. Three repeated measures ANOVA models were employed, respectively, to examine how the latency to respond to the three questions on utility, trust and qualification could be affected by cognitive process and power distance. The results reveal the same significant relations: The significant main effect of power distance on the time spent for answering the questions, and the interaction effect of cognitive process and power distance on the time spent for answering the questions. No other significant relation was determined. Figure 17, for example, shows the significant relations between power distance and the time spent for answering the questions exploring news element utility.

Figure 18 shows a main effect of social power distance on the latency for answering utility question, $F(2.89, 114) = 52.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .32$. In Figure 18, the participants spent most time in answering questions on news elements from the official source ($M = 6748.93$, $SD = 233.52$), followed by the doctor ($M = 5919.23$, $SD = 271.75$), the tourist ($M = 4633.28$, $SD = 215.29$) and the waiter ($M = 4074.08$, $SD = 225.43$). The results of the ANOVA tests on the latency in answering questions on trust and qualification show the same pattern, spending most time in answering questions on news materials from the official source, then the doctor, and tourist, and finally the least time in those from the waiter.
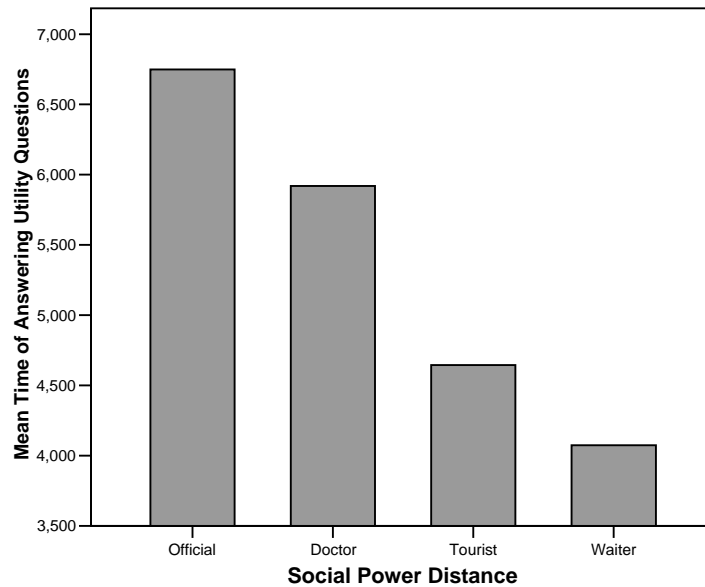
Figure 18. Social Power Distance on Latency for Answering Utility Questions

A similar main effect is also found in social power distance on the latency for answering source trustworthiness questions, $F_{(2.81, 116)} = 90.13$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .44$. Like the pattern shown in Figure 18, the participants spent most time in answering questions from the officials ($M = 6495.90$, $SD = 257.44$), followed by the doctor ($M = 5250.48$, $SD = 205.55$), the tourist ($M = 3789.30$, $SD = 190.98$), and the waiter ($M = 3435.94$, $SD = 162.68$).

One more similar main effect is discovered in social power distance on the latency for answering source qualification questions, $F_{(2.53, 116)} = 62.45$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .35$. The participants spent most time in answering questions from the official source ($M = 5359.77$, $SD = 266.30$), followed by the doctor ($M = 4544.45$, $SD = 195.84$), the tourist ($M = 4442.18$, $SD = 188.22$), and the waiter ($M = 3666.50$, $SD = 161.42$).

Figure 19 shows a main effect of cognitive processing on latency for answering source qualification questions, $F_{(1.66, 117)} = 26.47$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .19$. The participants

spent most time in answering questions when the sources provided psychological level information (M = 4652.92, SD = 213.61), followed by the ideological level information (M = 4470.21, SD = 179.29), and cultural level information (M = 4385.80, SD = 180.31). It is apparent that the participants spent much more time in answering questions at psychological level than those at either ideological or cultural levels.
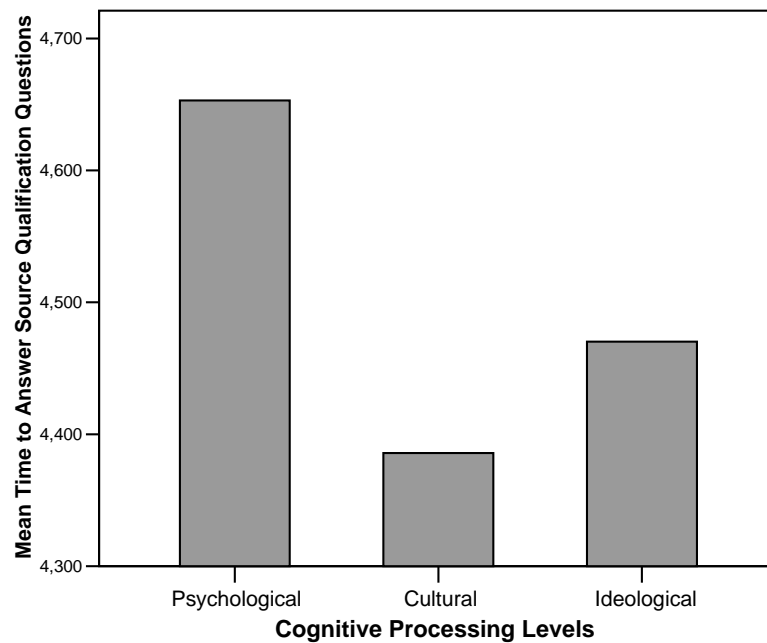
Figure 19. Cognitive Processing on Latency for Answering Source Qualification Questions.

The latency data, showing the time for the participants to answer each of the survey questions, provide extra evidence to support most of the findings captured in both the content analysis of the news stories and the participants' self-reported data. For example, both U.S. and Chinese participants tend to spend more time in answering questions regarding the qualification of the sources with high social power distances such as the

117

officials and the doctor than the time on the sources with low social power distances such as the waiter. It is generally agreed that people often spend more time in the matters they care and value more. If this statement is true, the participants in this study disclosed that they might take the sources with high social power distance more seriously. As a result, they should assess the materials from these sources more trustworthy and thus use more news elements they provided. All these had been proven largely true in previous data sets discussed.

Figure 20 shows an interaction between cognitive processing and social power distance on latency to answer utility questions, $F_{5.43} = 2.90$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. When answering questions at psychological level, the participants spent most time in answering questions from the official source ($M = 6897.72$, $SD = 324.21$), which is followed by the doctor ($M = 4845. 77$, $SD = 248.24$), the tourist ($M = 3476.62$, $SD = 220.97$).

For cultural level, the participants spent more time in answering questions from the doctor ($M = 5731.57$, $SD = 304.16$), the tourist ($M = 5731.57$, $SD = 304.16$), and the waiter (3712.85, $SD = 265.09$) than they did at psychological level. The time for questions from the official source ($M = 5983.85$, $SD = 331.57$) drops, but still tops the other three sources.

At ideological level, a similar pattern like the one at psychological level is found: Most time goes to answering questions from the official source ($M = 6606.13$, $SD = 390.78$), which is followed by the doctor ($M = 5174.10$, $SD = 305.70$), the tourist ($M = 3987.66$, $SD = 298.37$) and again the least time to the waiter's questions ($M = 3559.22$, $SD = 288.40$).
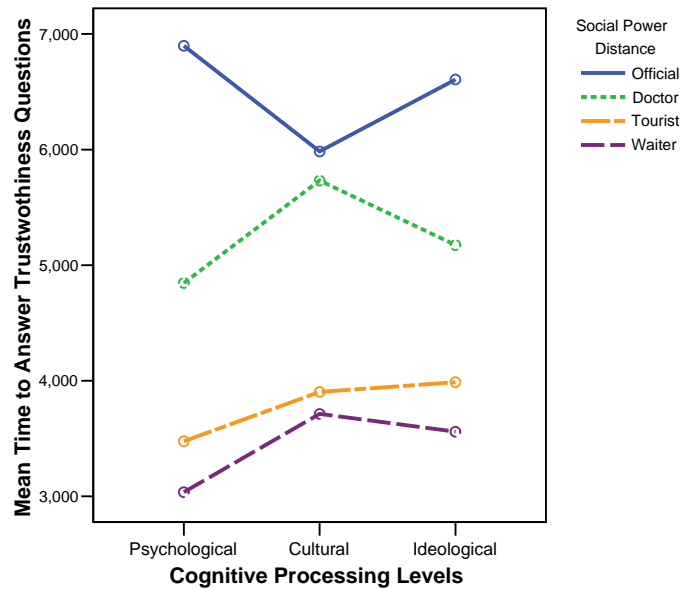
Figure 20. Cognitive Processing and Social Power Distance on Latency for Answering

Source Trustworthiness Questions

Figure 21 shows an interaction between cognitive power distance and journalistic

beat on latency for answering questions on source trustworthiness, $F(3, 114) = 3.98$, $p < .01$,

$\eta_p^2 = .03$). As the data show, the domestic reporters spent more time than foreign

correspondents in answering questions across all the four cognitive power distances, among

which more time went to the questions from the official source and the doctor. Other

results displayed in the latency data analysis includes that Chinese participants spent more

time in answering almost all the questions than their American colleagues. The only

exception is that U.S. participants ($M = 5309.99$, $SD = 294.93$) spent more time than

Chinese participants ($M = 5224.40$, $SD = 294.93$) when they answered the questions

exploring news element utility at different cognitive process levels.
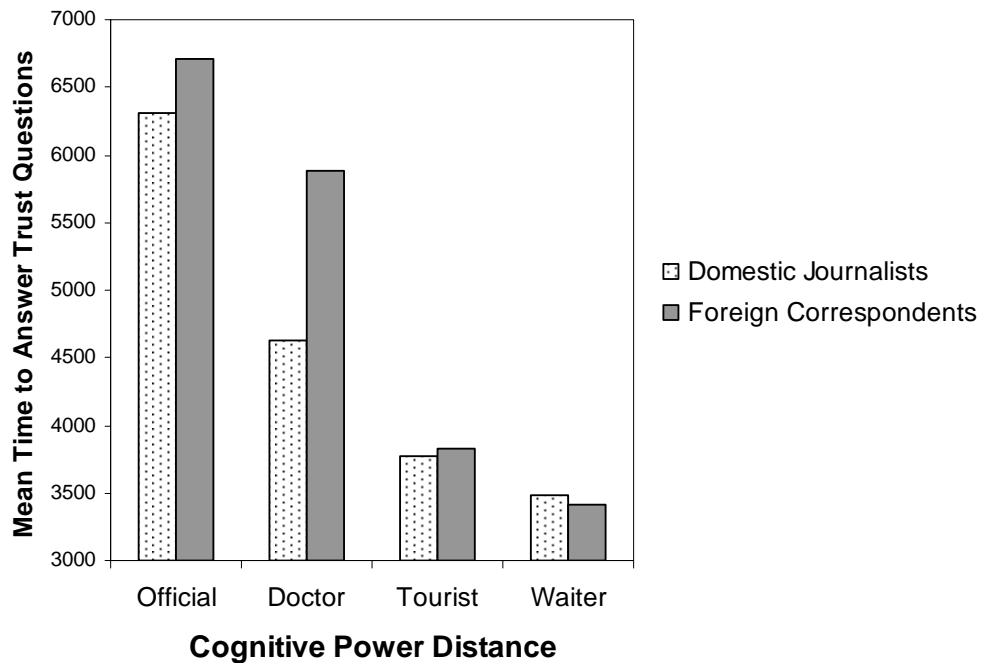
Figure 21. Cognitive Power Distance and Journalistic Beat on Latency for Answering

Source Trustworthiness Questions

In sum, the time the participants spent in answering the questions shows significant

difference across the four sources of the officials, the doctor, the tourist and the waiter, but

no significant difference across the three cognitive process levels. The general pattern of

time usage is similar, the participants, with minor exceptions, spent most time in answering

questions associated with the official source, followed by the doctor, the tourist and the

waiter. The participants spent the least time when answering questions from the waiter, and

the time they spent does not change much across the three cognitive process levels.

General Trends Assessment

Some general trends of news decision making were revealed when the participants

were examined as four groups, 1. Chinese domestic; 2. Chinese foreign; 3. U.S. domestic; 4.

U.S. foreign.

Figure 22 shows an interaction between cognitive processing and participant group on source qualification $F (6, 114) = 1.87, p = .09, \eta_p^2 = .05$. Even without listing all the means for each group at each cognitive processing level, it is easy to discover a general trend among the four groups of participants. At psychological level, all the participants' ratings are identically low when they assessed the qualification of news sources. This means that the participants were more skeptical when the sources provided them some basic facts of the news events. Then their ratings of source qualification all go up at cultural level, but are no longer close to each other. On the contrary, their ratings scatter widely. Finally at ideological level, though their ratings still spread out, the two U.S. groups' ratings almost join together, and the two Chinese groups' ratings go close too.
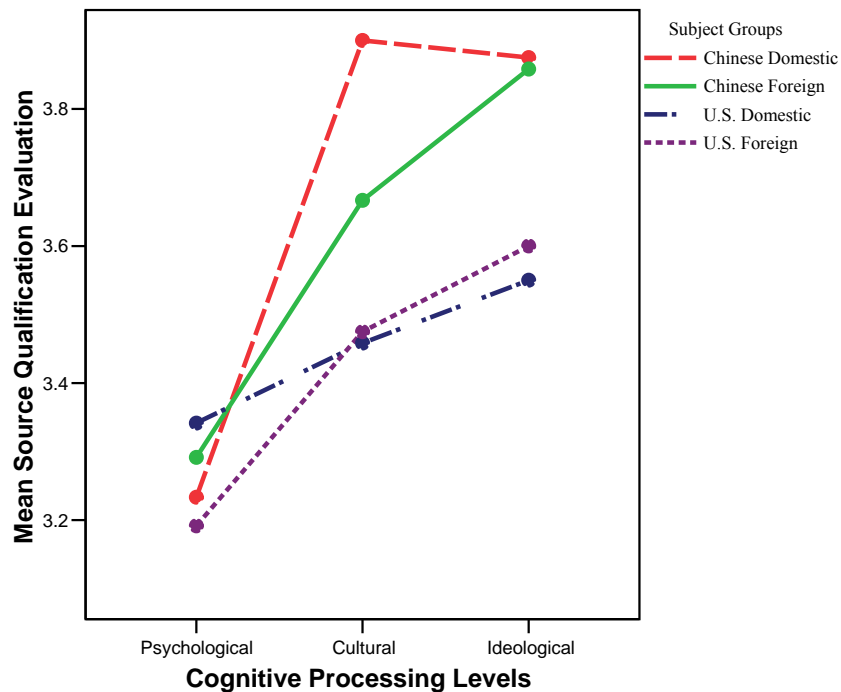
Figure 22. Cognitive Processing and Participant Group on Source Qualification

Figure 23 provides another example all the four participants sometimes could think very similarly during the process of news decision making. As Figure 23 shows, the interaction between social power distance and participant group on source qualification is not significant, but close to. All the participants reported that they believed the sources with high social power distances such as the officials and the doctor were more qualified than the other two sources with medium and lower social power distances when providing news information. There are differences among the four groups, but a general trend to assess source qualification is clearly shown in Figure 23.
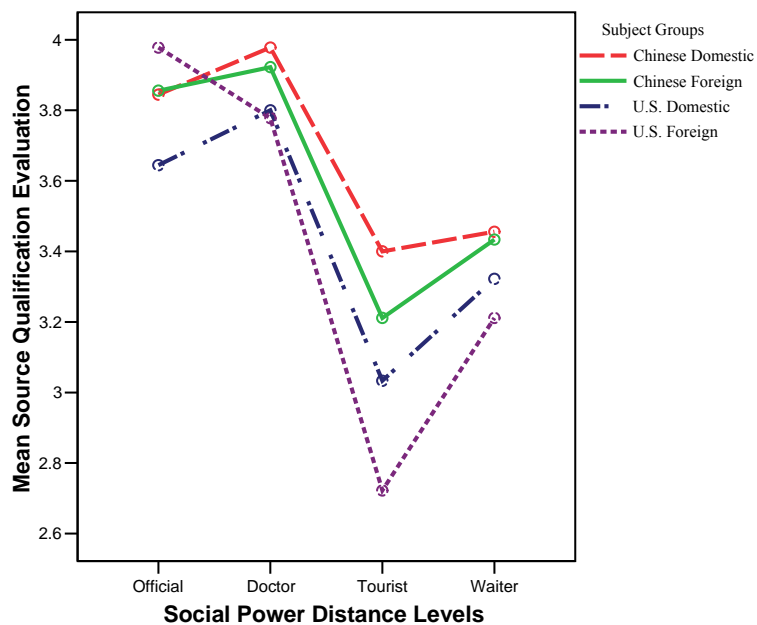
Figure 23. Social Power Distance and Participant Group on Source Qualification

This general trend can also find evidence in latency data. For example, Figure 24 shows an interaction between social power distance and participant group on latency to

answer source qualification questions, $F(6, 112) = 2.23$, $p = .04$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Even without

listing the means for each group of participants, all the four groups spent comparable time

across all the cognitive processing levels. They spent most time in answering questions

involved the qualification of official source, which is followed by the doctor, the tourist,

and the waiter. The higher a source's social power distance was, the longer time they took

to answer the questions on its qualification. This general trend holds true for all the four

groups, with little difference between them and no exception within each group.
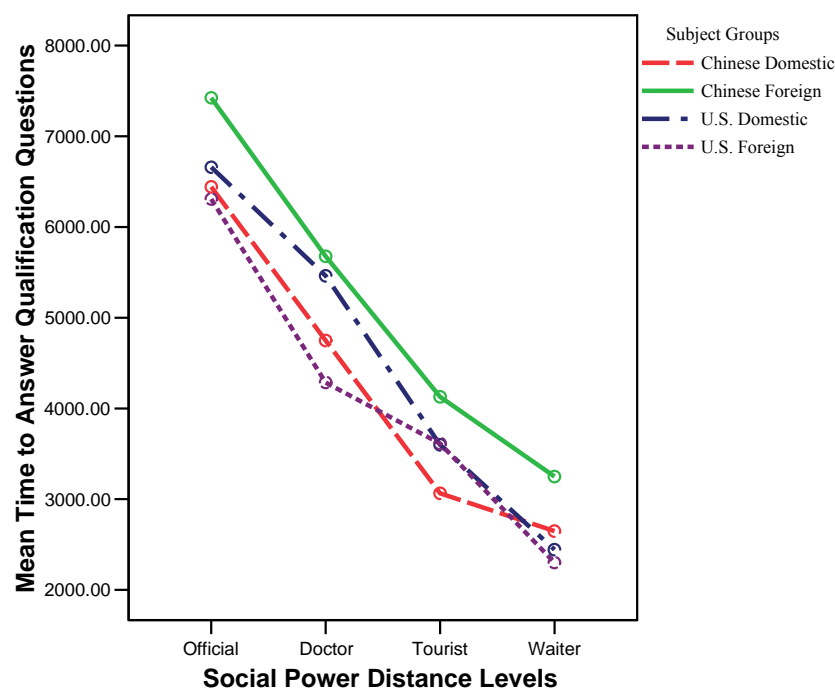
Figure 24. Social Power Distance and Participant Group on Latency for Answering

Qualification Questions.

In sum, most participants from the four groups display a general trend of assessing

news sources, evaluating raw materials, indicating some form of similar news decisions

exists. The similar assessment of the news sources and news information also indicate that the participants took a similar mindset during the process of news decision making, regardless of their nationalities and journalistic beats. All these suggest the existence of a growing transcultural trend in journalism practices today.

Participants' Reflection on News Decision Making

When the participants wrote down the process of their news decision making for writing the story in the experiment, U.S. journalists generally wrote long answers, thus containing more thoughts, than Chinese participants. A sentence or phase providing new information was coded as one thought. Thus a sentence may have several thoughts. For example, a sentence like this, "The president calls for national unity in front of the disaster, adding that his government is doing its best to shelter the victims" is coded as two thoughts. Among U.S. participants, 13% of their answers contain 1 to 10 thoughts, 58% contains 11-20 thoughts, and 28% more than 21 thoughts, while for Chinese participants, 77% contains 1-10 thoughts, 23% 11-20 thoughts, none more than 21 thoughts.

As for the news sources, more than half of U.S. participants (52%) said the doctor was their most important source, followed by 25% for the tourist and 23% for the officials, and none for the waiter. Meantime, most Chinese participants (73%) reported that their most important source was the officials, followed by the other three sources (each 7%). Four Chinese participants said the waiter was the most important source, and four did not mention which was their most important source.

About 57% Chinese participants mentioned that they must be objective when writing this story and 22% mentioned "balanced" reporting, while only 30% U.S.

participants made they tried to be objective, and 8% mentioned balance. All others

mentioned neither of the two in their answers.

Summary of Findings

This chapter examined what the participants did and what they said when they make

decisions on what news elements should be included or into their stories and what should be

withheld. Both sets of data discovered that their decisions were significantly different when

they processed the news elements at psychological, cultural and ideological levels. The

same significant relation was also found when they dealt with news materials from the

sources with different social statues. In their stories, most materials included were from

psychological level, the least from ideological. This is consistent with what they self

reported. During thought-listing of their news decisions, many participants reported that

they tried to remain objective and balanced in reporting a news event happened in a foreign

country, and thus would like to include more basic information and withhold those with

cultural values, especially, with ideological values. It seems that these participants believed

that their stories might not be as objective and balanced if they included more cultural

and/or ideological level information.

Comparing to the news elements from low social status sources, the participants

generally assessed the materials from high social status sources more useful and trustworthy.

The participants also asserted that the sources with higher social statues were more qualified

to provide information than low social status sources. The official source was an exception

in this experiment. The participants did not quote the official source as much as they did

from the doctor and the tourist. But the participants still used more materials from the

official source than those from the waiter, who had the lowest social status in this project.

This is consistent to the results of the participants' assessment of the source trustworthiness and qualification. The official source was not rated high in either trustworthiness or qualification. The only exception is that the participants believed the official source was the most qualified among all the sources when it provided basic news information about the event.

The data also provide evidence that the concept of proximity played a role in the participants' news decisions, whose stories tended to include more materials related to themselves, and the news source that shared the same nationality. For example, most of the U.S. participants include the information of U.S. aid to local people, but none of Chinese participants did this. No data detected a significant difference between U.S. and Chinese participants, or between domestic reporters and their overseas colleagues when they approached the story, although some differences still existed between them.

Table 2. Effective Size (η_p^2) for Relationships Reaching p < .05 Level of Statistics

	News elements used	Utility	Trust	Qualification	Utility Latency	Trust Latency	Qualification Latency
Process	.70	.31	.13	.19			.10
Power	.55	.22	.33	.35	.32	.44	.48
Process*Power	.41	.31	.18	.03		.03	.19
Nationality							
Beat							
Process*Nationality	.11			.03			
Process*Beat							
Power*Nationality	.44			.02			
Power*Beat	.05			.03		.03	

Note: Small effect size is indicated, when $\eta_p^2 < .2$; medium effect size indicated, when $.5 > \eta_p^2 > .2$; large effect size indicated, when $\eta_p^2 > .5$.

Chapter 6

Discussions and Conclusion

This dissertation focuses on the development of an appropriate ontology to model and measure the complexities of news decision making. What happens in journalists' mind when writing a news story can be as important, and even more important than a typical content analysis because it not only describes the messages in news stories, but also reveals the causal inferences embedded. Understanding the relationship between the process of journalists' news decision making and the construction of news stories has merit because that linkage is often ignored or implicit in some studies focusing on the social or cultural context of journalism. Critical literature implies that a great deal of journalistic effort focusing on how to process culturally and ideologically salient news elements gives testament to its importance in the study of news production.

However, the current study finds that the journalists pay a predominant among of attention to processing psychologically salient news elements, rather than culturally or ideologically compelling information. This phenomenon was so pronounced among the U.S. and Chinese journalists that it suggests an emerging transcultural trend in journalism training and practice that may be the product of globalization. Yet the idea of transcultural journalism does not pit one perspective analysis against another. Quite the opposite, uniting them help our understanding of the current trend toward the evolution of global professional standards in journalism.

Journalists report the news under the influences of a broad network of cultural, social, and ideological factors. This study presents evidence that journalists are, like many other professionals, "self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting and self-regulating, not just

reactive organisms shaped and shepherded by environmental events" (Bandura, 2002, p. 121). They are the producers as well as the products of their social systems, in which "human self-development, adaptation, and change are embedded" (p. 121).

Discussions

This study begins by modeling journalistic decision making as a psychological process. It is at this level that psychologically salient information that journalists call "facts" is evaluated and selected to populate stories about news events. The process described here models the application of a more or less coherent set of professional canons that are able to transmit information called "news" even in the face of a great deal of political and cultural pressure.

This view readily recognizes that larger "meta-narratives" exist at higher levels of analysis in any context, not just news. What this study discovered is that journalists give little thought to those cultural or ideological levels in deciding what news elements to include in a story. It may be that core narratives are so deeply embedded in journalists that they are more or less automatically applied. Journalists simply learn to embed the newsroom's dominant cultural and social paradigm in the course of their work.

What's on the Journalistic Radar?

This study then provides a unique answer to the question "What's on the journalistic radar?" It is unique because it not only investigates what U.S. and Chinese journalists say about their news decisions (the self-report data captured in a survey), but also what they do (the results of a content analysis of their news stories). The experiment generated several data sets: One came from a content analysis of the news stories the participants wrote for this experiment, one from the participants' self-report results of their news decisions

captured by a Web-based survey, one from how much the time they spent in answering each of the online questions. These data sets provide an opportunity for cross examinations and comparisons of the effects induced by the stimulus materials used in this study.

When the journalists wrote the stories for the experiment, they rated that the raw materials with news values, simply the "hard facts" in a news story, were more useful than those laden with cultural or ideological values. This is reflected in the fact that they used more psychologically salient news elements in the stories than culturally or ideologically salient information. The stimulus materials in this study were about a breaking news event but they also provide subjects ample opportunities to include culturally or ideologically salient news elements. The U.S. and Chinese journalists who participated in this experiment have ample opportunities to work on the information at cultural and ideological levels. The results show that the participants apparently did not do that. Instead they devoted special attention to processing psychologically salient information. They not only used most psychologically salient news elements, but also spend most time to assess these elements and the news sources that provided them.

This phenomenon was supported by their self-report data on the process of their news decision making captured by an online survey. It is also supported by the latency data, showing that the journalists spent more time in answering the online questions concerning psychologically salient news elements. This indicates that more mental effort was expended when they processed the information of the event's basic facts rather than the information at cultural or ideological level. These findings are consistent with the results when the journalists were asked to rate how useful the news elements were to their stories, and how trustworthy and qualified the news sources were.

Westerståhl and Johansson (1994) provide an answer why journalists respond more consistently to information at psychological level than ideological level. News values are stable over a long period of time, where ideological values change. More importantly, news values are based on relatively stable ground such as basic human psychological traits and the basic structure of society (p. 72).

In general, the journalists not only used more news elements at psychological level than those at cultural or ideological level, but also assessed them more useful and credible. This phenomenon becomes even more salient when the news elements were provided by the sources with high social power. The participants trusted the materials from the officials and the doctor much more than that from the waiter who represents low social power. When processing psychologically salient news elements, much more similarities than differences were discovered in news decision making between U.S. and Chinese journalists.

Again, these results should be taken as one more proof of the existence of a transcultural trend in journalism practice among U.S. and Chinese journalists who come from different cultural backgrounds.

Effects of Social Power Distance

This study also identifies a big effect of social power distances across the four levels from low, medium, high and very high, representing, respectively, the sources of the waiter, the tourist, the doctor, and other officials in the stimulus materials. When the journalists rated whether the sources were qualified for providing the news elements they provided, the participants assessed the sources with high social power, i.e. the officials and the doctor, are more qualified than those with low social power, i.e. the waiter.

It is interesting to note that the journalists included most news elements from the psychological level, but they rated these news elements low in terms of how useful these materials were to their stories.

The results also show that the information from the official source was also rated low in terms of credibility. This might be in party due to the participants' impression of the disaster they covered happened in a country run by a "non-democratic" government as many of them particularly mentioned this during the interviews conducted after they finished the whole experiment. The information from the official source apparently did not convince many of the journalists, in particular, those news elements laden with ideological values, such as a call for national unity, promise of curbing corruption, which, as many participants reported, often remind them of propaganda.

With respect to trustworthiness of news elements and the sources that provide them, the doctor has won most trust from the journalists, and this has prevailed across the participants' nationalities and beats. The comments from the participating journalists on the difference between officials and doctors as news sources may help explain the results. In many societies, doctors have high social status and expertise, or high social power. But unlike that from government officials, another source with high social power, the news elements provided doctors are often not assumed containing much ideological content, which, the participants said, often "raise the red flag" to indicate the information might not be trustworthy as it seems.

Although the participants devoted most attention to the basic facts of the event and viewed them useful information, they did not give those materials an equal status in terms of trustworthiness. In this study, the participants simply viewed the basic news elements the

least trustworthy, while they viewed the ideological level information the most trustworthy. An examination of the conditions journalists often work in may help explain the participants' choices shown in this study. When reporting breaking news, journalists often have to sort through a lot of conflictive information, and often have to make decisions under tight deadlines. Scholars observe when one facing a decision making task, his or her intelligent responses include "the desire to be accurate" (Selart & Eek, 1999, p. 262). Accuracy, belonging to the psychological level, has been an important criterion for news reporting, which has been known to most journalists as soon as they start to do reporting and emphasized in journalism schools and newsrooms.

The data sets also provide information that can helps us understand the social structure the journalists were working in. Dunwoody and Griffin (1999) observe, "Social structure is often associated with variance in (news) coverage strategies" (p. 139). In this study, for example, all U.S. journalists included conflictive information in their stories, and much more than their Chinese colleagues. And 15% of the stories Chinese journalists wrote included none. Scholars find that news media are often given roles as builders of consensus in a society (Olien, Donohue & Tichenor, 1968).

Tichenor, Donohue and Olien (1980) observe that news media in less pluralistic settings should attempt to minimize social conflict by keeping their coverage of conflictive situations to a minimum. In contrast, higher levels of structural pluralism should be associated with a willingness on the part of media organizations to present more conflictive information about an issue. Compared to the United States, China often has been a less pluralistic setting for its journalists. Dunwoody and Griffin (1999) explained that the ultimate role of the media in less pluralistic settings often help maintain the status quo by

conferring legitimacy on the prevailing power structure. As "community booster," the media play an active role in the maintenance of community stability and works hard to prevent tension in the social fabric (p. 143). In this sense, it is easy to understand why the Chinese participants in this study included less conflictive information in their stories. The difference between U.S. and Chinese social structures may also explain why more Chinese journalists than their U.S. colleagues reported the breaking news in a storyline that showed some possible solutions to the difficulties local people had, rather than presenting it as a problem local people faced.

Limitations and Future Studies

Future studies on journalists' news decision making can introduce more intervening factors beyond the two—nationality and journalistic beat—used in the dissertation. Some other important factors include the subjects' gender, years of formal journalism education received, and years working as a journalist. Richard Harris (2004) posits, "Different media may stimulate different types of cognitive processing" (p. 24). The assumption implicates that how information about particular news events is presented in news reports (e.g. television, newspapers) affect people's judgments about those issues (Bandura, 2002). It is possible that the news decisions made by broadcast journalists are different from those by print journalists even when they cover the same event. A comparative study of the news decision making among journalists work for broadcast, print and online media may disclose some interesting findings. The data of above intervening factors were also collected in this experiment, but yet to be analyzed and reported.

Some other intervening factors during the process of news decision making should also deserve our scholarly attention. Time pressure journalists encounter almost all the time

should be one of them. As previously noted, journalists must have the ability to write and produce under the pressure of deadlines, which has become part of the profession norms. Reporting a news story is not just about getting it down on paper or tape. It's about getting it down, and print or air it *on time*. Researchers of decision making observe, "The effects of time constraints on choice are remarkably consistent: Decision makers speed up execution of their decision strategies or switch to simpler strategies, sometimes speeding up after having switched" (Benson & Beach, 1998, p. 51; see Edland & Svenson, 1993). A study of how tight or loose deadlines affect news decision making will assist in understanding the cognitive processing underlying the news the audience consume, which are often invisible to the public, and even to some journalists.

Scholastic attention should also be devoted to the impact of new technologies, in particular, information technologies, on news decision making. Since the middle 1990s, new technologies have been dramatically reshaping how journalists gather news and delivery it, leaving alone the impacts on how the audience consumes news. Journalists begin to use all kinds of new technologies to gather, process and transmit information. Extraordinary advances in technology of communication are transforming the nature, research, speed and loci of human influence (Bandura, 2002). Social practices are not only being widely diffused within societies, but ideas, values, and styles of conduct are also being modeled worldwide. The electronic media are coming to play an increasingly influential role in transcultural change. Albert Bandura (2002) states, "The evolving information technologies will increasingly serve as a vehicle for building social network" (p. 148). As a result, the media content as well the vehicle that carries it and the channels that transmit it have inevitably remodeled people's way to process information, including

journalists' processing of news elements. All these should be applied to the future analysis of news decision making.

As more media companies provide news content in multimedia formats, many journalists not only report the news for traditional media outlets, but also write for news media outlets run by the same media companies. After finishing a news report (package) on television, for example, many CNN correspondents must rewrite the same story for the news website CNN.com, while *New York Times* reporters may post some video clips related to their stories at nytimes.com after they publish an article in the paper's print version.

The model proposed in this study and the related discussions have been concerned mainly with the cognitive processing of news decision making at individual level. Journalists do not work in individual autonomy. They often have to work together as a team to report and deliver the news, which they often cannot accomplish on their own. Thus the social network structure a journalist is enmeshed in can serve as the context to study news decision making. In the social network, a journalist shares information with other people, "give meaning by mutual feedback to the information they exchange, gain understanding of each other's views, and influence each other" (Bandura, 2002, pp. 147-148). A future study can be conducted on how journalists' social ties affect the cognitive processing of news decision making, which include the influences from the occupational colleagues within the same newsrooms, competitors working for other media outlets, interviewees, family members and friends.

In summary, more studies in this area may devote attention to the cognitive processing underlying media effects, in particular, the origins of journalists' thoughts and practices. These research attempts should contribute to opening the "black box" that

operates between a stimulus (e.g. news elements) and a response (e.g. news decisions). Some helpful insights may also be generated for a better understanding of news production process, and the profession of journalism as a whole.

Conclusion

Life is about choices, so is a journalist's professional life. To understand how journalists make choices, it is necessary to explore not only news media effects by looking into journalists' final product—news, but also journalists' cognitive processing of news decision making in the context of psychological, cultural and ideological dimensions that provide incentives for journalists to report the news. This group of professionals is worthy media scholars' interest and research because of the crucial role journalists play in communicating the world. When journalists provide news coverage, "they have primarily delivered a national image" (Boy-Barrett, 2000, p. 319).

A study of journalists' news decision making is of central relevance to journalism studies because it helps present insights into the "black box" of how they operate on raw data and produce narrative news stories for the public. News decisions are the realization of many factors. Some of the factors are common to all human beings, some are the artifact of journalistic canons, some are culturally or ideologically laden values, some are the attributes of media systems, cultures and social structures in which journalists work. The findings in this study present evidence to the observation that "most external influences affect (people's) behavior through cognitive processes rather than directly" (Bandura, 2002, p. 142).

From a cross-cultural perspective, this study provides an opportunity to evaluate press performance in the context of Eastern and Western cultures. As the concept of global village has being increasingly accepted, a check of press performance in one country will

help understand its people, culture and social structure. This study departs from a traditional categorical approach to press system as mutually exclusive units. Instead it looks at the journalistic news making processes as best described as transcultural. The uniformity of some results across the subjects' cultures and beats (i.e. working at home or abroad) suggest that journalistic practice as manifested in professionally accepted canons is more deeply rooted in basic human psychological needs than previously thought.

The amazingly wide scope of similarities discovered among U.S. and Chinese journalists in this study provide transcultural evidence to some scholars' conviction that "there should be an international standard of journalistic professionalism with basic shared values" (Reese, 2001, p. 173). The transcultural journalist has learned to apply a more or less stable set of global standards in the context of widely disparate political and cultural frameworks. This process of professional globalization signals that an important shift has taken place where the ideology of journalism rises above political ideology or social norm. This can be seen even in the highly charged environment of the Middle East in 2006. Regional satellite television networks are able to do an astonishing job of providing near real time accounts of highly volatile news events in a highly charged political and cultural setting.

So it is on Chinese-American cultural interface. This study employed an extensive historical evaluation of relations between the two countries across more than a half century, which demonstrates that there could be no two places separated more by geography, culture, and ideology than China and the United States. This makes the fact that both U.S. and Chinese journalists making news decisions in much the same way even more poignant.

This study is not meant to stand in opposition of the notion that news is the social construction of reality. It agrees that professional news decision making should not be taken as an individual event that takes place in isolation. Social structures have a profound effect on news decision making, in which cultural and ideological values play an important role. However, this study emphasizes that without studying the cognitive processing of news decision making, we are missing half of the story, which is an equally important half, if it is not more important than the other half. It is something we cannot afford neglecting if we like to see the whole picture of news decision making.

In this respect, this study has joined its efforts to resolve the "systematically distorted communication" the world is enmeshed in (Habermas, 1970) by investigating the transcultural trend in journalism practices in the context of mass media globalization. This should be considered as a contribution to the knowledge of understanding how people communicate as a whole in today's world.

Appendix A: A Sample of News Packages

Earthquake News Package

I. Writing a News Story Based on the Provided Materials:

The following materials—an official press release and three transcripts of phone interviews—deal with an earthquake that happened about 10 hours ago in a country named Denka. The epicenter was near the city of Bola, a popular beach resort for Asian and Western tourists with a population of 150,000. Assume you conducted the three telephone interviews from your newsroom. Please write a breaking news story about the event as long as you like within 30 minutes.

Open-Ended Questions: After finish the story, please answer three open-ended questions listed at the end of the news materials.

When you start the questionnaire, please do not take a long break in between when answering the questions. Otherwise, the server may not be able to document your data.

II: Questionnaire:

Questionnaire: www.jnews.umd.edu/bu/english.html

If you have any question, please feel free to contact me any time via email or phone

Thank you!

Denka Federal Cabinet Press Release

For Immediate Release

ROWDINKA, Denka – A magnitude 7.6 earthquake struck Bola and the surrounding areas at around 7 o'clock yesterday evening. The epicenter was 20 kilometers north of Bola. Most deaths and damages appeared to be concentrated in the downtown of Bola, where dozens of buildings collapsed.

President Shaukat Sultan declared a state of emergency for the Bola area. In a 50-minute televised speech, President Sultan said, "More than 120 people confirmed dead, including 50 foreigners, and more than 1,200 were injured in the worst earthquake in our country's history." He also urgently appealed for international aid to help people in the affected area."

To bolster rescue and relief operations, the Cabinet held a special emergency meeting to review government's disaster response, which have proven to be well organized and effective. The cabinet will meet daily to monitor, oversee and review the situation.

At the press conference following the Cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Philip Azad said, "Around 100 people died in the quake. Our government is making every endeavor to rescue the victims, rebuild their homes and restore order in Bola. Today I appeal to the Denkanese people to donate generously to the President's Relief Fund. Your money will be carefully used to alleviate the sufferings of the people and share the burden of the government."

Prime Minister Azad described the reported damages serious, but manageable, adding, "The civil order in Bola remains good, and no looting or other criminal activities have been reported thanks to our diligent police officers." He also said the Government is providing shelter to nearly 10,000 homeless people in Bola and surrounding areas. "Thanks to the fair social system built up by Denka's new government, everyone, no matter how rich or poor, will be treated equally. All of the homeless shall be sheltered in one week or two," he said.

During this difficult time, the heroic Denkanese people must unite together under the leadership of the Central Government and use all possible resources to overcome the current disaster. In history, we have overcome many disasters like this. Now, we can do so again. Our Government also calls on our people to guard against possible sabotage from our enemies or evil countries with ulterior motives. Historically, our enemies tried to take advantage of our difficult moments and failed. If they try again, they will fail again.

President Sultan also thanked foreign leaders who have provided help, particularly, the U.S. president for quickly dispatching eight U.S. military helicopters, which will arrive in Bola tomorrow to assist with relief efforts.

Contact: Mr. Fori Paranka, Press Secretary of the Presidential Office, 1 Presidential Place Road, Rowdinka, Denka. Phone: 1-9881-2001; Fax: 1-9881-2012; Email: presssecretary@denka.gov.

Transcript of Phone Interview 1: An Injured American Tourist

Interviewee: David Kern, 52, an IT specialist from New York City.
Location: A ward at Bola Hospital, where Kern lies in bed watching TV.

Q: Hello, I heard you're an American. How about your injuries and what's your situation?

A. Yeah…, I am an American. When the quake hit, I was having a dinner with my wife and daughter at a nice restaurant. I did not get hurt much, just a fracture of my right arm, and some bruises on the back. We came to Bola on a family vacation, but never thought we could get caught in such a disaster. Thank goodness, my wife and daughter are OK. A guy from U.S. embassy told me I am the only injured American he knew about so far. But I am afraid that more than 160 people died in this tragedy, and the city was seriously damaged.

Q. Can you tell us more about the situation in the city of Bola?

A. Well, the whole situation here is horrible, especially the downtown area. Many people died or injured. More became homeless. I also saw a lot of looting happen in the streets. The civil disorder was bad. The rescue work was slow and bad. I did not see ambulances or fire engines coming until hours later. I'm afraid it will be tough to shelter so many homeless people in just two weeks as the government claims.

Q. What kind of help did local people get from their government?

A. I think officials here did a poor job. No one is in charge. Yet the government is warning against possible sabotage from enemies. As I see, that's an unlikely scenario. I also feel the social system is not quite fair, especially for the poor people. Though I do not stay here for long, I can tell there is some corruption in government. People are called to unite under the leadership of the government. But I think they can help themselves. My concern is as winter approaches, the poor will suffer a lot. Life in such a developing country is hard, especially, after such a devastating disaster.

Transcript of Phone Interview 2: A Doctor at the Bola Hospital

Interviewee: Mikania Zakar, M.D., 37, a female surgeon at Bola Hospital, the city's main public hospital

Location: Hospital corridor, where she is taking a break after working hours.

Q. Doctor, how is the situation in your hospital?

A. It is not bad within our hospital. All the doctors and nurses have been working very hard to save lives. I guess the outside may not be as safe as in this hospital, but it should be OK. In the past two hours, more injured people from surrounding rural areas were brought in. We need more doctors and nurses, and more medicine and blood, or we will see more people die here. From what I hear, I believe more than 140 people died.

Q. Did you get any help from other hospitals near Bola?

A. No, not yet. The government's rescue work is very bad and not well-organized at all. Government officials are doing a very poor job. All of us in this hospital, including our hospital officials, are busy in saving lives. But we get little help from government officials. They were talking about possible sabotage from a certain evil country. That's sheer propaganda and it is very unlikely. Now they are asking us to donate to the president's relief fund. But I am afraid many people will be concerned where that money will wind up to as we have too many corrupt officials in the government and corruption is very serious here.

Q. How are your patients?

A. Most of the seriously injured are poor people who lived in shabby buildings. Our social system treats these people very badly, especially after such a devastating disaster. There is no doubt the poor will suffer the most. It is impossible for the government to shelter the homeless in two weeks. In this country, the poor people are always the first victims in such a disaster.

Transcript of Phone Interview 3: An Injured Waiter

Interviewee: Denny Pukka, 22, a male waiter who was injured in an upscale restaurant.
Location: Sitting in a crowded hospital waiting room, waiting for a surgery.

Q. How did you get hurt and what is the situation in Bola?
A. Last night I was waiting dinner tables when the disaster occurred. People were running like crazy and I did too. Not long I found the bone of my left forearm broken. Before the disaster, I was a happy man. Last night a gentleman tipped me $50! In Bola, many buildings collapsed, and many people were buried and trapped in the rubble. I saw thugs looting stores and a store owner waving a knife at those looters. No one could stop those thugs as looting happened everywhere. But some people who broke in stores were not looters. They just took food and water from those stores for the injured, not for themselves. They were helpers. But the civil disorder was rampant.

Q. How do you think of the government's rescue work?
A. The government is doing a pretty good job. Though I did not see many officials around, they must be somewhere working very hard for us. There's much less corruption than there used to be. Police officers and firefighters were doing a good job too. But it is likely some of our enemies may take advantage of our current difficulties and cause sabotage to Denka. Thus we should unite under the leadership of the central government. Now, we have a fairer social system, and the poor people are getting more help from the government.

Q. What's your major concern right now?

A. I worry a lot about my parents. They live in a village 10 kilometers away from Bola. I called my parents and they told me many people in the rural areas died and more lost their homes. I am afraid more people died than what our government reported, at least 180 died. The rural people did not get as much help as people in Bola did. But I think that all of the homeless will be sheltered in two weeks just like our government has promised.

Three Open-ended Questions

1. Describe how you decided to include and exclude the facts about the deaths and

   damages in this disaster in your story?

2. Describe how you decide to include and exclude information on Denka's culture and

   social system in your story.

3. Describe how you decide to include and exclude information on the government's

   response to the disaster.

Now, please go to the online questionnaire at www.jnews.umd.edu/bu/english.html

This questionnaire may take about 30 minutes. When you start it, please do not take a long

break in between for other issues. But please feel free to take as much time as you need to

think your answers to the questions. THANK YOU!

1. **(similarity)** Would you say the information supplied for the exercise you just completed was similar to the kind of material you encounter in the course of your job?

   - o   VERY SIMILAR
   - o   SOMEWHAT SIMILAR
   - o   SIMILAR
   - o   SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT
   - o   VERY DIFFERENT

2. **(uodeath)** How useful is the press release's information on the death toll to your news story, which provided by the president, and by prime minister?

   - o   VERY USEFUL
   - o   USEFUL
   - o   NEUTRAL
   - o   NOT USEFUL
   - o   NOT USEFUL AT ALL

3. **(uddeath)** How useful is the doctor's information on the death toll to your news story?

   - o   VERY USEFUL
   - o   USEFUL
   - o   NEUTRAL
   - o   NOT USEFUL
   - o   NOT USEFUL AT ALL

4. **(utdeath)** How useful is the tourist's information on the death toll to your news story?

   - o   VERY USEFUL
   - o   USEFUL
   - o   NEUTRAL
   - o   NOT USEFUL
   - o   NOT USEFUL AT ALL

5. **(uwdeath)** How useful is the waiter's information on the death toll to your news story?

   - o   VERY USEFUL
   - o   USEFUL
   - o   NEUTRAL
   - o   NOT USEFUL

o NOT USEFUL AT ALL

6. **(uounity)** How useful is the press release's information on the government call for national unity to your news story?

    o VERY USEFUL
    o USEFUL
    o NEUTRAL
    o NOT USEFUL
    o NOT USEFUL AT ALL

7. **(udunity)** How useful is the doctor's comment on the government call to your news story?

    o VERY USEFUL
    o USEFUL
    o NEUTRAL
    o NOT USEFUL
    o NOT USEFUL AT ALL

8. **(utunity)** How useful is the tourist's comment on the government call to your news story?

    o VERY USEFUL
    o USEFUL
    o NEUTRAL
    o NOT USEFUL
    o NOT USEFUL AT ALL

9. **(uwunity)** How useful is the waiter's comment on the government call to your news story?

    o VERY USEFUL
    o USEFUL
    o NEUTRAL
    o NOT USEFUL
    o NOT USEFUL AT ALL

10. **(uorole)** How useful is the press release's information on the officials' role in the disaster to your news story?

    o VERY USEFUL
    o USEFUL
    o NEUTRAL
    o NOT USEFUL
    o NOT USEFUL AT ALL

11. **(udrole)** How useful is the doctor's comment on the officials' role (very poor) in the disaster to your news story?

- o VERY USEFUL
- o USEFUL
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT USEFUL
- o NOT USEFUL AT ALL

12. **(utrole)** How useful is the tourist's comment on the officials' role (poor) in the disaster to your news story?

- o VERY USEFUL
- o USEFUL
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT USEFUL
- o NOT USEFUL AT ALL

13. **(uwrole)** How useful is the waiter's comment on the officials' role in the disaster to your news story?

- o VERY USEFUL
- o USEFUL
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT USEFUL
- o NOT USEFUL AT ALL

14. **(todeath)** How trustworthy do you think the press release's information on the death toll?

- o VERY TRUSTWORTHY
- o TRUSTWORTHY
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY AT ALL

15. **(tddeath)** How trustworthy do you think the doctor's information on the death toll?

- o VERY TRUSTWORTHY
- o TRUSTWORTHY
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY AT ALL

16. **(ttdeath)** How trustworthy do you think the tourist's information on the death toll?

- o VERY TRUSTWORTHY
- o TRUSTWORTHY
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY AT ALL

17. **(twdeath)** How trustworthy do you think the waiter's information on the death toll?

- o VERY TRUSTWORTHY
- o TRUSTWORTHY
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY AT ALL

18. **(tounity)** How trustworthy do you think the press release's information on the government call for national unity?

- o VERY TRUSTWORTHY
- o TRUSTWORTHY
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY AT ALL

19. **(tdunity)** How trustworthy do you think the doctor's comment on this government call?

- o VERY TRUSTWORTHY
- o TRUSTWORTHY
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY AT ALL

20. **(ttunity)** How trustworthy do you think the tourist's comment on this government call?

- o VERY TRUSTWORTHY
- o TRUSTWORTHY
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY AT ALL

21. **(twunity)** How trustworthy do you think the waiter's comment on this government call?

- o VERY TRUSTWORTHY

- o TRUSTWORTHY
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY AT ALL

22. **(torole)** How trustworthy do you think the press release's comment on officials' role in the disaster?

- o VERY TRUSTWORTHY
- o TRUSTWORTHY
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY AT ALL

23. **(tdrole)** How trustworthy do you think the doctor's comment on officials' role in the disaster?

- o VERY TRUSTWORTHY
- o TRUSTWORTHY
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY AT ALL

24. **(ttrole)** How trustworthy do you think the tourist's comment on officials' role in the disaster?

- o VERY TRUSTWORTHY
- o TRUSTWORTHY
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY AT ALL

25. **(twrole)** How trustworthy do you think the waiter's comment on officials' role in the disaster?

- o VERY TRUSTWORTHY
- o TRUSTWORTHY
- o NEUTRAL
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY
- o NOT TRUSTWORTHY AT ALL

26. **(qodeath)** How qualified do you think the press release is when it provides information on the death toll in this disaster?

- o VERY QUALIFIED
- o QUALIFIED

o NEUTRAL
o NOT QUALIFIED
o NOT QUALIFIED AT ALL

27. **(qddeath)** How qualified do you think the doctor is when she provides information on the death toll in this disaster?

    o VERY QUALIFIED
    o QUALIFIED
    o NEUTRAL
    o NOT QUALIFIED
    o NOT QUALIFIED AT ALL

28. **(qtdeath)** How qualified do you think the tourist is when he provides information on the death toll in this disaster?

    o VERY QUALIFIED
    o QUALIFIED
    o NEUTRAL
    o NOT QUALIFIED
    o NOT QUALIFIED AT ALL

29. **(qwdeath)** How qualified do you think the waiter is when he provides information on the death toll in this disaster?

    o VERY QUALIFIED
    o QUALIFIED
    o NEUTRAL
    o NOT QUALIFIED
    o NOT QUALIFIED AT ALL

30. **(qounity)** How qualified do you think the press release to announce the government call for national unity?

    o VERY QUALIFIED
    o QUALIFIED
    o NEUTRAL
    o NOT QUALIFIED
    o NOT QUALIFIED AT ALL

31. **(qdunity)** How qualified do you think the doctor is when she comments on the government call?

    o VERY QUALIFIED
    o QUALIFIED

- NEUTRAL
- NOT QUALIFIED
- NOT QUALIFIED AT ALL

32. **(qtunity)** How qualified do you think the tourist is when he comments on the government call?

- VERY QUALIFIED
- QUALIFIED
- NEUTRAL
- NOT QUALIFIED
- NOT QUALIFIED AT ALL

33. **(qwunity)** How qualified do you think the waiter is when he comments on the government call?

- VERY QUALIFIED
- QUALIFIED
- NEUTRAL
- NOT QUALIFIED
- NOT QUALIFIED AT ALL

34. **(qorole)** How qualified do you think the press release is when it comments on the officials' role in this disaster?

- VERY QUALIFIED
- QUALIFIED
- NEUTRAL
- NOT QUALIFIED
- NOT QUALIFIED AT ALL

35. **(qdrole)** How qualified do you think the doctor is when she comments on the officials' role in this disaster?

- VERY QUALIFIED
- QUALIFIED
- NEUTRAL
- NOT QUALIFIED
- NOT QUALIFIED AT ALL

36. **(qtrole)** How qualified do you think the tourist is when it comments on the officials' role in this disaster?

- VERY QUALIFIED
- QUALIFIED
- NEUTRAL

o NOT QUALIFIED
o NOT QUALIFIED AT ALL

37. **(qwrole)** How qualified do you think the waiter is when it comments on the officials' role in this disaster?

    o VERY QUALIFIED
    o QUALIFIED
    o NEUTRAL
    o NOT QUALIFIED
    o NOT QUALIFIED AT ALL

38. **(disagree)** How often do you think journalists refrain from disagreeing their editor, producer, or news manager?

    o VERY OFTEN
    o OFTEN
    o SOMETIMES
    o SELDOM
    o VERY SELDOM

39. **(unclear)** How often do you think journalists are unclear on what they should include in their news stories and what they should withhold?

    o VERY OFTEN
    o OFTEN
    o SOMETIMES
    o SELDOM
    o VERY SELDOM

40. **(anxiety)** How often do you feel anxious when you write or produce a news story?

    o VERY OFTEN
    o OFTEN
    o SOMETIMES
    o SELDOM
    o VERY SELDOM

41. **(anxietyfrom)** Most often, the anxiety comes from...

    o OUTSIDE MY NEWS ORGANIZATIONS
    o OTHER NEWS ORGANIZATIONS
    o MY SUPERVISORS
    o MY COLLEAGUES
    o WITHIN MYSELF

42. **(frustration)** How often do you feel frustrated when writing or producing a news story?

- o VERY OFTEN
- o OFTEN
- o SOMETIMES
- o SELDOM
- o VERY SELDOM

43. **(frusfrom)** Most often, the frustration comes from...

- o OUTSIDE MY NEWS ORGANIZATION
- o OTHER NEWS ORGANIZATIONS
- o MY SUPERVISORS
- o MY COLLEAGUES
- o WITHIN MYSELF

44. **(allpeople)** Compared with the 1990s, how would you describe most Americans' overall attitude toward the Chinese people at the beginning of the 21st Century (2001-2006)?

- o MUCH MORE POSITIVE
- o MORE POSITIVE
- o THE SAME
- o MORE NEGATIVE
- o MUCH MORE NEGATIVE

45. **(upeople)** Compared with the 1990s, how would you describe YOUR attitude toward the Chinese people at the beginning of the 21st Century (2001-2006)?

- o MUCH MORE POSITIVE
- o MORE POSITIVE
- o THE SAME
- o MORE NEGATIVE
- o MUCH MORE NEGATIVE

46. **(allculture)** Compared with the 1990s, how would you describe most Americans' attitude toward Chinese culture at the beginning of the 21st Century (2001-2006)?

- o MUCH MORE POSITIVE
- o MORE POSITIVE
- o THE SAME
- o MORE NEGATIVE
- o MUCH MORE NEGATIVE

47. **(uculture)** Compared with the 1990s, how would you describe YOUR overall attitude toward Chinese culture at the beginning of the 21st Century (2001-2006)?

- o MUCH MORE POSITIVE
- o MORE POSITIVE
- o THE SAME
- o MORE NEGATIVE
- o MUCH MORE NEGATIVE

48. **(allgov)** Compared with the 1990s, how would you describe most Americans' overall attitude toward the Chinese government at the beginning of the 21st Century (2001-2006)?

- o MUCH MORE POSITIVE
- o MORE POSITIVE
- o THE SAME
- o MORE NEGATIVE
- o MUCH MORE NEGATIVE

49. **(ugov)** Compared with the 1990s, how would you describe YOUR overall attitude toward the Chinese government at the beginning of the 21st Century (2001-2006)?

- o MUCH MORE POSITIVE
- o MORE POSITIVE
- o THE SAME
- o MORE NEGATIVE
- o MUCH MORE NEGATIVE

50. **(uties)** In the next five years, some people think that U.S.-China relations will further improve, some disagree. What do YOU expect will happen with near-future U.S.-China relations?

- o WILL GREATLY IMPROVE
- o WILL IMPROVE
- o THE SAME
- o WILL TURN BAD
- o WILL TURN WORSE

51. **(allties)** In the next five years, some people think that U.S.-China relations will further improve, some disagree. What do you think most Americans expect will happen with near-future U.S.-China relations?

- o WILL GREATLY IMPROVE
- o WILL IMPROVE
- o THE SAME
- o WILL TURN BAD

o WILL TURN WORSE

52. **(contacts)** Do you have any direct personal contact with any mainland-born Chinese?

o NONE
o 1-2 PERSONS
o 3-4 PERSONS
o 5-6 PERSONS
o 7-8 PERSONS OR MORE

53. **(visits)** Have you ever visited the mainland China?

o NONE
o ONCE OR TWICE
o 3-4 TIMES
o 5-6 TIMES
o 7-8 TIMES OR MORE

Now, a few questions about yourself.

54. **(gender)** Your gender?

o FEMALE
o MALE

55. **(age)** Your age?

o 21-30 YEARS OLD
o 31-40 YEARS OLD
o 41-50 YEARS OLD
o 51-60 YEARS OLD
o 61-70 YEARS OLD OR MORE

56. **(yearin)** How many years have you worked in journalism?

o 4 YEARS OR LESS
o 5-9 YEARS
o 10-15 YEARS
o 16-20 YEARS
o 21-25 YEARS OR MORE

57. **(outlets)** Your current journalism work is mainly for what outlet?

o NEWS WEBSITES
o NEWSPAPERS OR MAGAZINES
o RADIO

- o TELEVISION
- o NEWS WIRES

58. **(moreyears)** How long do you think you will continue working in journalism?

- o 2 YEARS AT MOST
- o 3-5 YEARS
- o 6-10 YEARS
- o OVER 10 YEARS, BUT LEAVE BEFORE I RETIRE
- o UNTIL I RETIRE

59. **(education)** How many years of formal journalism education did you receive?

- o NONE
- o LESS THAN 1 YEAR
- o 1-2 YEARS
- o 3-4 YEARS
- o 5-6 YEARS OR MORE

Appendix C: Invitation Letter for U.S. Journalists

Dear Journalists:

My name is Bu Zhong, who worked as a journalist for a decade in both China and the United States. Now I am a Ph.D. candidate studying the cognitive processing of news decision making in the College of Journalism at the University of Maryland.

I am hoping that you might be willing to help me explore my topic in greater depth by participating in a research project on how journalists choose news elements. In this project, you will be asked to write a breaking news story based on provided materials. To minimize various effects of real events on journalists, you will be asked to write the story based on a fabricated news event in a fabricated country.

Then you will be asked to fill in an online questionnaire about your selection of news elements, which usually takes about 30 minutes. As soon as you start answering questions online, please do not take a very long break in between for other issues. Otherwise my computer server may not be able to document your data.

As a journalist working four years for CNN (Washington D.C. and Atlanta), and six years for China Daily (Beijing), I fully understand how busy a journalist can be each day. But I do hope you can help me deepen my research on this topic. I wish to hear from you soon so that we can discuss more details about the experiment.

All the data will be used for academic research only. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, any data I get from you will be confidential and your name and affiliates will not be used in any reporting of the findings, unless you suggest otherwise.

If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact me. Thank you very much for your time and help!

Yours truly,

Bu Zhong
Ph.D. Candidate
Philip Merrill College of Journalism
University of Maryland, College Park

Appendix D: Invitation Letter for Chinese Journalists

尊敬的中国记者：

我名叫钟布，曾经在中美两国做了 10 年记者，现在是美国马里兰大学新闻学院博士候选人。我现在的研究方向包括记者如何在报道中选取新闻素材。

我的这项研究希望能够得到您的帮助。您的参与将有助于深化我对这个课题的理解。这个课题分成两个部分: 1.根据材料编写新闻稿并回答三个问题；2.网上问卷。

如果您同意参加，这个课题首先请您根据提供的新闻素材编写一篇突发新闻报道。 为了减少真实事件对不同记者可能产生的诸多影响（如某些记者对某个事件更为熟悉等），给您提供的新闻素材是虚拟的。编写完这篇新闻稿后，请您回答三个问题。

第二部分是网上问卷。您一旦开始做网上问卷后，请不要做长时间停顿（但思考答案所需时间不在此限）。如果停顿时间过长，您的数据电脑将无法记录。

希望您尽快与我联系，以便讨论参与这个课题的具体步骤，同时我会把新闻素材和网上问卷的网址电邮给您。

致以最诚挚的谢意！

钟布

于华盛顿市郊马里兰大学校园

2005 年 11 月 10 日

Appendix E: IRB-Approved Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Identification of Project/Title	Search for Meaning: Multi-level Cognitive Processing of News Decision Making in U.S. and Chinese Journalists
Statement of Age of Participant	You state that you are 18 years of age or older and wish to participate in a program of (parental consent needed for minors) research being conducted by Dr. John E. Newhagen and Mr. Bu Zhong in the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742.
Purpose	The purpose of the research is to investigate the use of news elements among working journalists.
Procedures	The procedures involve writing a news story, answering three open-ended questions, and filling in an online questionnaire. The whole process will be approximately 60 minutes. The questions will focus on the use of news elements while writing a news story. A follow-up interview may be conducted. With your permission, this interview will be audiotaped.
Confidentiality	All information collected in the study is confidential. If applicable, the data of the experiment and the questionnaire, and the audiotape of the interview will be kept at the student investigator's home office for up to five years before they will be destroyed (i.e. shredded or erased). Only the principal and student investigators will have access to the data.
Risks	There are no known risks associated with my participation and my interview being taped.
Benefits	The research is not designed to help you personally, but that the investigators hope to learn more about the process of journalists' news decision-making.
Freedom to Withdraw, & Ability to Ask Questions	Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to ask questions and/or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty and/or decline to answer certain questions.
Contact Information of Investigator(s)	Dr. John E. Newhagen, Mr. Bu Zhong Philip Merrill College of Journalism 1117 Journalism Building University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742 Phone: 301-405-2417, Email: jnewhagen@jmail.umd.edu, Phone: 301-405-2407, Email: bzhong@jmail.umd.edu
Contact Information of Institutional Review Board	If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or to report a research-related injury, please contact: **Institutional Review Board Office, (IRB) University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678**
Obtaining a copy of the research results	You may obtain a copy of the results of this research after June 2006 by contacting **Bu Zhong** (student investigator) at the above listed address.
Printed Name of Participant	_____
Signature of Participant	_____
Date	_____

[   ] Please check here if you agree to have the interview taped.

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