
Abstract

This dissertation investigates the Chinese media's "border" and its determinants. The concept of news slanting is introduced to indicate the media's border. Since the commercialization reform, the forces affecting media's borders are dual-faceted. The first factor is the state that manipulates the media to slant toward the ideology of ruling Communication Party of China. The second factor is the market that drives the media to supply the content satisfying the audience. The preferences of the state and those of the market are identical in issues of low ideological density, while they are divergent and even contending in issues of domestic politics. When the news is slanted towards the audience, the media organization acquires the benefits in the market and it at the same time possibly incurs the costs of being punished by the political power. Hence the media must trade off between the preferences of the state and those of the market, between the economic benefits and political costs.

Among these two forces of the state and the market, the most crucial is the influence of the state that delimits the borders for the media. Based on a case study of dailies in Guangzhou, China, the dissertation proposes a bargaining theoretical framework that situates the marketized media and the state within an asymmetrical bargaining problem. The formation of media's border is largely the result of bargaining with the political power. The argument is that the variance of state power determines the media's trade-off between the economic benefits and political costs, and this trade-off affects the news slanting.

The political power is of three aspects. The first, and the most important of all, is the host Party Committee over the media organization. When the top leaders have a preference for creating a favorable political climate, the media encounter fewer political costs and reduce more news slanting. Conversely, when the top leaders that totally side with the central state are in power, the costs of political punishment increase and thus the media present a high slanting degree. Secondly, when the media's distance with the concerned governments increases, the media encounter fewer political costs and reduce more news slanting. The third is the interest groups that draw on the coercive power of

state to manipulate the media organizations, which is conceptualized as rent-seeking. The analyses of propaganda directives in one daily find that when the media encounter the rent seekers of high competence the costs of bargaining increase, and thus the media present a high degree of news slanting. Conversely, if the rent seekers are less influential, the costs of bargaining decrease and the news slanting declines.

Finally, the dissertation looks into the strategies employed by the media to bargain with the state. Theoretically, the Chinese media take an incremental reform approach in that they maintain the propaganda content and at the same time introduce the new market-oriented content. The empirical investigation identifies two types of bargaining strategies, expanding pages in *Guangzhou Daily* and establishing press groups in *Nanfang Daily Press Group*. The division of labor between the old content and the new content temporarily satisfies the contrasting needs of the state and those of the market. However, the Chinese media's borders or the news slanting in the future are subject to the influence of various forces, including the transformation of political institution, and the development of media market.