ABSTRACT

In the past three decades, the Chinese news media has experienced great leaps from a propaganda machine to market-oriented industry. Although the state has managed to strengthen the information control, heterogeneity in journalistic value orientations has constructed different media discourses. This thesis discusses the diversity within different news organizations in China, and the influence of state-media dynamics on the quality and role of journalism.

Previous literature in the area of media-power relations focus on the general landscape of Chinese media shaped by the three forces: the state, the market and the professionalism while neglecting individual cases which contribute for the complexity of the intertwined mechanisms.

Supported by the sociological theory of news production and concepts from international relations, this study uses a micro approach to examine the process of international news making in two newspapers. The arguments in this study are based on in-depth interviews with 25 journalists, participant observation, and textual analyses of news reports on Libya Crisis.

This study has three major findings. Firstly, the intricate power relations of social forces within China's social context produces much space, as well as obstacles, for the professional practice of journalism. The liberal newspapers keep challenging the state and pushing the boundary of media autonomy while the party organs still serve for maintaining CCP's legitimacy but package the "old wine" in a new way.

Secondly, the old Chinese ideology dominated by official communism has been broken up by the emergence of neo-conservatism, old and new-leftism, liberalism and other intellectual discourses which influence the government's decision-making on domestic and international issues. Accordingly, international news reports in newspapers with various interests are manifestations of the divides.

Thirdly, the different value preference of newspapers decides the media behaviors. Some choose to speak for the party and help maintain existing social order, while some others serve for public interests. Although both of them practice self-censorship, the former enjoy commercial benefits from seeking refuge from the authority and the latter promote social development by using tactics in news reports. The discrepancy creates space for diversified discourses that added to the complexity of power structures in Chinese media.
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