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Beyond the Four Theories of the Press: A New Model of National Media Systems

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Work on categorization of national press systems in the last 40 years has been grounded in the well-known Four Theories of the Press. Whereas this approach has been strongly criticized by international scholars for its idealism and its poverty of empiricism, it is still widely taught in introductory journalism courses across the country, and few theorists have engaged in grounding the theory with data in international settings. Although journalism is contextualized and constrained by press structure and state policies, it is also a relatively autonomous cultural production of journalists negotiating between their professionalism and state control. This article thus proposes a new model incorporating the autonomy of individual journalistic practices into political and social structural factors—the interaction of which might currently more accurately represent press practices in the new international order. With an understanding of the background of the journalistic practices and state policies of 4 countries/cities, the multinational media coverage of a specific event is explicated in the light of the new model. This new model explains the journalistic variations that cannot be clearly revealed using a state-policy press model alone.

The world order has changed greatly in the last decade. As people celebrate the fall of communism and the hope of a new millennium, it seems that few have pondered how we can reinterpret our social, media, and information orders

using new theories and frameworks. Many of the old frameworks—including those of the media such as the Four Theories of the Press (Four Theories)—are obsolete and inapplicable for contemporary analysis. The new order has already annulled their explanatory power. We need new ideas to account for the development of our internationalized and diverse forms of media. Such theoretical models must go beyond the state-policy and normative focus of the Four Theories as a conception of “what the press should be and do” (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956). Theoretical models should not be bounded by dominant ideological perspectives and hinged on certain historical blocs—namely those of Communism and the Cold War—and subsequently void with the demise of these concepts. Postulating a model of media systems that will survive the test of history and empiricism, as well as sufficiently explaining the new order is an important concern.

The purpose of this article is twofold. Previous constructions and conceptions of media models are reviewed and an attempt is made to develop a new model to account for the global media systems. Following this, ideas are suggested for ways to test this media model based on content analysis of multinational media coverage of a specific event.

A BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW OF MEDIA MODELS

The Four Theories of the Press

The Four Theories are a linear combination of two analytical subdimensions based on state systems: authoritarian and libertarian. Siebert (1956) referred to the authoritarian dimension as the original prototype and most pervasive of all the dimensions. By this, he meant that this dimension continues to influence press practices even when a government may officially subscribe to other systems. This assumes, from a structural-functionalist perspective, that the state has a fundamental interest in maintenance and stability of the power structure in its favor. In this model, libertarian theory is held to be the ideal in which the prime function of society is to advance the interests of its individual members (Siebert et al., 1956, p. 40). Adherence to libertarian ideals involves an innate distrust of the role of government and the state. State surveillance becomes the basic social function of media (Wright, 1986). The Soviet Communist model is seen as an extreme application of authoritarian ideas—in that media are totally subordinated to the interests and functions of the state. The social responsibility model is based on the idea that media have a moral obligation to society to provide adequate information for citizens to make informed decisions. In contrast, libertarian theory argues that the “citizen . . . had the right to be uninformed or misinformed, but the tacit

assumption was that his rationality and his desire for truth would keep him from being so" (Siebert et al., 1956, p. 101).

Revisions of the Four Theories

The Importance of Political Economy

Lowenstein (Merrill & Lowenstein, 1971/1979) argued that the original Four Theories lacked the requisite flexibility to analyze modern press systems and expanded it into Five Theories by adding a category based on ownership. To more appropriately depict the political situation at the time, he renamed the Soviet Communist model as the social-centralist model in the 1971 edition of his book and further named it as social-authoritarian in the second edition. By using the term *social-authoritarian*, his model removes the negative connotations of the Communist label and replaces it with a concept linking it to the social responsibility theory. The social responsibility theory was relabeled social-libertarian as a derivation from the libertarian theory. The concept of social centrism in which a government or the public owned press sources to ensure the operational spirit of the libertarian philosophy was used to describe the new fifth category (Merrill & Lowenstein, 1971/1979, p. 164).

The addition of this fifth element based on the level of ownership allowed for categorization of press systems based on private, multiparty, or government ownership. However, it failed to either explain variance or add more analytical power to the existing categories. The original Four Theories were based on ownership of the press as well as functions and thus, Lowenstein's explicit labeling of ownership categories seems superfluous.

Hachten (1981, p. 61) also proposed five theories or concepts of the press emphasizing politics and economics: authoritarian, Western, Communist, revolutionary, and developmental or third world. Hachten's conception of authoritarianism was similar to that of Siebert et al. (1956) and Lowenstein (Merrill & Lowenstein, 1971/1979). However, his Western concept encompassed both the libertarian and social-responsibility models with its defining characteristic being that it is relatively free of arbitrary government controls (Hachten, 1981, p. 64). Under the Communist concept, media are tools that serve as implements of revelation (by revealing purposes and goals of party leaders) as well as instruments of unity and consensus (p. 67). The main difference between authoritarian and Communist systems is ownership. In authoritarian systems, press can be privately owned as opposed to state ownership in Communist systems. Hachten defined the revolutionary concept as being illegal and subversive mass communication utilizing the press and broadcasting to overthrow a government or wrest control from alien rulers

(pp. 69–70). He admitted that examples of this type of press are difficult to find and suggested only the example of underground presses in Nazi-occupied France (p. 70).

Finally, the developmental model was seen to have arisen out of a combination of Communist ideas, anti-Americanism, and social-responsibility ideals (Hachten, 1981, p. 72). Hachten saw the defining characteristic of this concept as being the idea that individual rights must be subordinated to the larger goals of nation-building and thus must support authority. This concept is also seen to be a negative response to the Western model. However, Hachten's classification never yields a clear distinction of the press systems, for the analytical dimensions are defined both under the system of the state (authoritarian, Western, Communist) and the functions of the media (revolutionary and developmental).

Akhavan-Majid and Wolf (1991) argued that the fundamental flaw of the original Four Theories was that it ignored the role of economic influence in media systems. They argued that a number of factors have resulted, not in deviation from the libertarian norm in the United States, but in fundamental changes to the structure of U.S. media for which a new explanatory model must be found. These factors include increasing concentration and conglomeration of ownership and the subordination of the ideals of diversity and independence to the corporate search for synergy and profits (Akhavan-Majid & Wolf, 1991, p. 139). Instead of the libertarian model as an explanation for U.S. media systems, Akhavan-Majid and Wolf suggested an elite power group model that is seen as the opposite of the libertarian model. The main reason for this is that U.S. media are characterized as having concentration in media outlets, integration with other elite power groups (such as big business and government elite), and two-way flow of influence and control between the government and the press (p. 142). These characteristics of media are argued to result in decreasing diversity of opinions and representations and a lessening of the media's watchdog role.

Idealism and Press Theories

Many of these theories have reflected Western idealism and championship of a Western perspective of democracy. The work of Picard (1985) is no exception. He reviewed previous categories of state–press relations and added a further concept, that of the democratic socialist theory of the press. This theory argued that the press's purposes are to provide an avenue for expression of public views and to fuel the political and social debates necessary for the continued development of democratic governance (p. 67). Under the umbrella of the theory, the role of the state is to ensure the ability of citizens to use the press and to preserve and promote media plurality (p. 67). Akhavan-Majid and Wolf (1991, p. 141) presented Picard's model as one that attempts to prescribe a means of restoring the essential democratic-libertarian elements (i.e., diversity, plurality, and public access and participation) to the U.S. mass media system. Picard argued that the fundamental

difference between this and other theories is that the democratic socialist theory regards media as public utilities rather than tools of the state or privately owned institutions. However, he subsumed democratic socialist, social responsibility, and libertarian ideas under Western theory.

Balancing Structural Control and Individual Responsibility

Altschull (1984/1995) moved further away from the Four Theories. Although unwilling to dogmatically categorize media types and trying to avoid the fallacy that the groupings are mutually exclusive or collectively exhaustive, he identified three categories: market, communitarian, and advancing (p. 419). In simplest and idealized terms, market systems operate with no outside interference—as documentors of society, not as agents of change. Communitarian systems serve the people by reflecting the desires of a political party or government, but are not themselves agents of change. In advancing systems media serve as partners of government (p. 426). In Altschull's typology, all media systems seek truth and try to be socially responsible. Only in market systems are the media seen as having no role in political and cultural education. All systems seek to serve the people but in different ways. The market system focuses on impartiality while actually supporting capitalism. Communitarian systems serve by trying to modify opinions to support correct doctrine (p. 429) and advancing systems try to promote beneficial change and peace. Altschull (p. 427) made a significant contribution in identifying beliefs about media systems as articles of faith that are irrational, not arrived at by reason, often held with the passion shown by true believers. Thus, many conflicts (especially at international levels) cannot be solved because they are clashes of faith rather than reason.

Limits of Previous Models

The fundamental problem with many of the media models discussed here is the prescription that these authors attempt to impose on current systems—that is, they try to prescribe rather than to describe social phenomena by using an empirical basis for inquiry. Theories of the press from Siebert et al. (1956) onward have focused on normative theories largely based on traditional mass media structures. Normative theories lack explanatory power in that they are based on how things should be and do not necessarily relate to how things are. As discussed earlier, the original Four Theories model was constrained by the ideology and historical circumstances of its inception. Political changes in the world have limited the explanatory power of the model. For example, the Soviet Union no longer exists and socialism in China is very different from Cold War ideas about Communism.

In addition, the Four Theories model (developed in a Western setting) assumed an evolutionary mode of development in which press systems would move from Communist to authoritarian to liberalism and on to social responsibility. This assumption has proved to be false and this one-way, linear, and somewhat ethnocentric epistemology undermines the basis of the model. Subsequent models based on the same, or similar, assumptions such as Hachten's (1981) political development model, have similar difficulties.

Picard's (1985) model illustrates the problem of focusing exclusively on state–press relationships. This approach ignores dynamic microlevel interaction among organizations, journalists, and the state. Akhavan-Majid and Wolf (1991) provided the vital missing element of economics to the model but again operated at a macro rather than a micro level of analysis. Consideration of media economics is vital to understanding press systems but media operations, journalistic reporting, and editorial decisions are not totally determined by the economic base (of capitalists and the state; Williams, 1977). A primary focus on the economy and the state ignores the semiautonomous nature of the press that operates also on the basis of journalistic professionalism. On the other hand, taking a neo-marxist approach, the press economy should be analyzed in the “first instance,” not in the last analysis (Hall, 1982). According to this critique, analysis of the state and the economy remains an important first step, but should not be the ultimate purpose of the study. In an analysis of the political economy of the press, Murdoch (1982) hinted at the possibility of integrating both the “intentional model” and “structural models” (pp. 118–150). The Four Theories of the press focuses exclusively on structural factors and ignores the individual journalist's autonomy, professionalism, and enduring values. Primary focus on traditional mass media also excludes new media types and changing forms of traditional media (McQuail, 1994).

The question is whether a new model can be constructed that bridges structural factors and professional practice while allowing for the incorporation of new media forms and structures and can be empirically tested. This article seeks to present such a new model and to illustrate the model's potential through a preliminary case study of press coverage of a specific event.

TOWARD A NEW PRESS MODEL

Structural Factors

As with previous models, the main structural factor that will be taken into account is the system of government with its economic, political, and cultural subsystems. Different political systems are typically generically labeled as capitalist or socialist, democratic or authoritarian. These generalized labels do not take into account

variants of socialism as economic structures tied closely to public policy and political arrangements of government, nor democracy laden with its values of capitalism and profit orientation.

In this model, the structural constraints imposed on the press and journalists are represented (as suggested in many other models) as one dimension: one end of the scale labeled as democracy and the other, authoritarianism. Democracy is simply defined in the context of media as being political freedom for the media to freely criticize state policies and to operate largely without government controls in a free marketplace of ideas without precluding the possibility of invisible control of the market. Authoritarianism is defined as a system that enforces strict obedience by the media to political authorities. Constraints may be political and economic. In the context of media, authoritarianism is operationalized as strict control of content by the state and a general lack of freedom for the public to criticize state policies.

Professional Factors

The second dimension of the model represents professional factors such as individual journalistic values and the autonomy of individual journalists within media institutions. Media sociologists Windahl and Rosengren (1976, 1978) suggested that professionalization can be approached using two main perspectives: individual professionalization and collective professionalization. Individual professionalization is a form of socialization. The individual practitioner *qua* individual internalizes a positive view of education and training for the work, special requirements for entering the occupation, and the concept that the occupation has autonomy and self-regulation. Collective professionalization is a process involving the whole profession as such, and as a service ideal. Collective professionalization possesses attributes such as the existence of a professional association, training of members, a code of conduct or ethics, degree of autonomy, claim of monopoly over certain types of work, and the expression of a service ideal. Despite various socialization processes, the worldview of the individual journalists nourished under the two types of professionalism cannot be assumed to be congruent with the readers. In some cases, there even existed a considerable discrepancy between journalists' worldview and the media stance. The expression found in the media content is thus an interaction between these collective and individual journalistic values.

The specific professional individual values of interest here are subsumed under the dimension of conservatism-liberalism. Conservatism is operationalized as journalists being averse to rapid change, the avoidance of extremes, and the support of the societal status quo. In this sense, journalists may sacrifice their autonomy and their professional values in favor of the state policy, media stance, and

the socialization process of their environment. Liberalism is operationalized as journalists supporting social change and reform, individualism, competition, and free speech (McQuail, 1994). Journalists who are said to be liberal adhere strongly to their own worldview, professional codes, and their own ethical and professional standards. Figure 1 illustrates the four categories created by the interaction of state system and individual journalistic values. As can be seen in this figure, national press systems can be classified as democratic-conservative, democratic-liberal, authoritarian-conservative, or authoritarian-liberal.

Democratic-conservative media systems are those in which the political system is democratic but the professional values of the majority of journalists are conservative—that is, the professional system(s) in which they operate emphasize support of societal status quo. Conversely, in a democratic-liberal system, dissent and free speech are values supported by both the political system and the individual journalists within that system. Authoritarian-conservative systems officially control press content and professional values within media organizations support such constraints. Authoritarian-liberal systems are those in which official policies suppress dissent, but individuals within media organizations support social reform and display such support in their practice of journalism.

A Test Case

A case study was used to examine the new model in the context of actual media coverage of a specific event. An important innovation was testing of the model using data from international coverage of an event rather than purely domestic

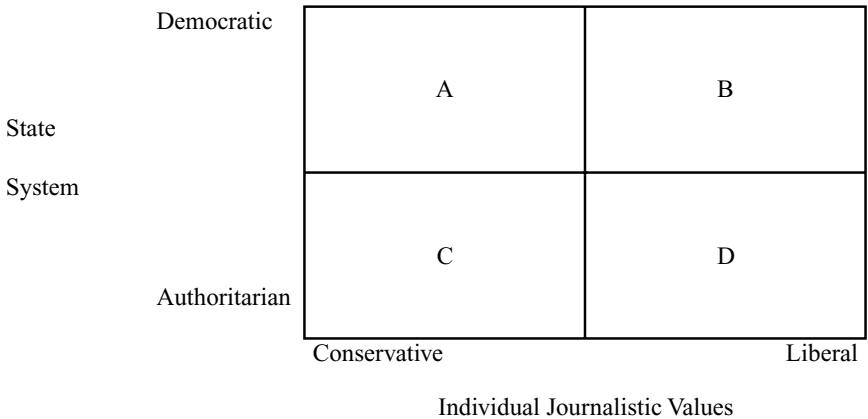


FIGURE 1 State system × Individual journalistic value model.

media coverage. Requirements for selection of the event were that it be covered by the media of several different countries (state system), tap into the journalistic values of individual journalists, and be of interest to the researchers. The event chosen was the 1996 debate between China and Japan over ownership of the Diaoyu or Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea. This debate provoked diplomatic rows and civil protests in Hong Kong, China, Japan, and Taiwan. These local protests tapped into issues of Chinese and Japanese nationalism and militarism—issues that might be expected to be linked to individual journalistic values. The sample consisted of newspaper coverage from Japan, Hong Kong, China, and the United States. U.S. media coverage was included because the main actors, Japan and China, saw the current problems as related to post–World War II U.S. Pacific foreign policy.

When previous models for the classification of national media systems are examined, little or no room is allowed for variation between countries that do not fall clearly into Western democratic or traditional Soviet Communist models. Table 1 identifies the categories under which each country studied here would be placed by each model and illustrates the problem of differentiating between these countries. Even when models based on economic factors are included such as those of Altschull (1984) and Akhavan-Majid and Wolf (1991) media in capitalist economies are grouped into the same category although clear differences exist. For example, the Four Theories model would place Hong Kong, Japan, and

TABLE 1
National Media Systems Classification

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Four Theories (1936)</i> | <i>Lowenstein (1971)</i> | <i>Hachten (1981)</i> | <i>Altschull (1984/1995)</i> | <i>Picard (1985)</i> | <i>Akhavan- Majid & Wolf (1991)</i> |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Hong Kong | Libertarian | 1. Private/ multiparty/ govt. 2. Libertarian and social- authoritarian | Western | Market | Libertarian | Elite power group |
| Japan | Libertarian | 1. Private 2. Libertarian | Western | Market | Libertarian | Elite power group |
| China | Soviet Communist | 1. Government 2. Social- Authoritarian | Communist | Communi- tarian | Communist | |
| United States | Libertarian | 1. Private 2. Social- libertarian | Western | Market | Western (social responsi- bility /libertarian) | Elite power group |

the United States media in the same category, as would Hachten's (1981), Altschull's (1984/1995), and Akhavan-Majid and Wolf's (1991) models. Picard's (1985) model would group Hong Kong and Japanese media systems into the same category with U.S. media identified as Western (a combination of social responsibility and libertarian models).

Method

This study is based on a content analysis of Hong Kong, Japan, People's Republic of China, and U.S. media coverage of the issue in the period September 1 to September 30, 1996. Although selection of this period is somewhat arbitrary, the majority of events and media coverage occurred in the period between September 1 when Japanese coast guard ships prevented Taiwanese commercial boats from fishing in the area near the islands and September 26 when a journalist from Hong Kong drowned while part of a Hong Kong flotilla trying to reach the islands to protest the Japanese presence on them.

The sample. Media coverage in Hong Kong was extensive due to the emotional nature of the protests. The sample consisted of seven Hong Kong newspapers. A range of newspapers was chosen to account for both structural and individual dimensions of the model. These papers were the *South China Morning Post*, a prestigious English paper that was formerly extremely pro-British but now tends to adopt a more neutral tone; the *Oriental Daily*, a pro-China popular Chinese-language newspaper; the *Ming Pao*, representing the conservative intellectual press; two so-called China organs, the *Wen Wei Pao* and the *Ta Kung Pao*; the *Apple Daily*, a popular Chinese tabloid; and the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, the most overtly critical paper in Hong Kong.

The Japanese sample consisted of two English-language daily newspapers, the *Asahi Evening News* and the *Japan Times*. Both are aimed at English-speaking communities in the country, and both carry material translated from local Japanese language media as well as material from international wire services.

At the present the Chinese sample consists only of the *China Daily*. However, this is an important source because it is the official English-language organ of the government of China. As such, articles and opinions carried in it are considered to express government opinions and policy as the government wishes them to be represented to the foreign community both inside and outside China. The U.S. sample consists of articles from the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Star Tribune*, the Associated Press, and the Financial Times—Scripps Howard News Service.

Coding scheme. The coding scheme was developed to examine the general attitude of the article; article themes; what the article considered the issues concerned; who were considered the main actors; the level of action involved, that is, whether it was seen to be an international, government, individual, or political

or social group action; and the solution suggested and agency, that is, who was seen to be eligible to take action in this situation. Papers were also coded for their political affiliation, if any, and the location of the article in the paper. Intercoder reliability for the Hong Kong sample was 87%.

For each coding category, conservatism or liberalism on the part of the journalist was defined and operationalized. In the first category—general attitude of the article—conservatism was categorized as support of the status quo, and liberalism as the opposite. The status quo is defined for each country as newspaper reports having an attitude favoring their own country and opposing another country; for example, Chinese newspapers supporting China's claims and opposing Japan's.

For the category of theme of the issue, conservatism was defined again as support of the status quo and emphasis on issues of sovereignty, historical claims, and moral obligation. Liberalism is defined as emphasis on modern, political, and social claims as well as indication of the issue as a matter for individuals, rather than governments.

In the category examining the level of action involved, conservatism is associated with perception of action being at the level of government whereas liberalism is associated with individual and social action. The same associations hold for the category of main actors, that is, who the main actors are seen to be. In examining agency, conservatism is again associated with support of the status quo; that is, each country's newspapers perceiving their own country as having principal agency.

Results

Attitude and theme are important components of the model because they illuminate professional factors. By using a model that takes account of individual professionalism in addition to structural factors, a clearer picture can be built up of the actual operation of media systems. Using previous models discussed earlier in the article, Hong Kong and United States media are similar on the basis of structural factors. Whereas the structural dimensions of the countries examined are assumed and classified into various categories (such as authoritarian or democratic) according to the various models, the professional and individual dimensions are not articulated in these models. The data shed light on these individual and professional dimensions and their links with conservatism and liberalism.

Attitude. Conservatism as operationalized in the context of general attitudes in newspaper reports of the dispute over ownership of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands was defined as having an attitude supporting one's own country and opposing other countries. Looking at the data for support of one's own country and exhibition of negative attitudes toward other countries, China and Japan were the most conservative, with Hong Kong being somewhat less conservative, and the

United States as not at all conservative (Table 2). However, when the converse case was examined (anti-one's own country and pro-another country) distinctions become less clear-cut. News coverage in both the United States and China showed no negative attitudes toward one's own country nor attitudes in favor of another country. The U.S. results can be explained by 100% of its articles being neutral; that is, no stance was taken. An interesting result is that although the majority of results show Japanese media to be conservative, 9.75% of the articles contained anti-Japanese sentiments.

Theme. In the context of perceived theme of the issue, conservatism was linked to ideas of sovereignty, historical claim, and moral obligation. On this basis, Chinese and Japanese media again rank as more conservative than U.S. and Hong Kong media (Table 3). Liberalism was linked to ideas of modern and political claims, concepts of social obligation, and perception of the issue as being an

TABLE 2
Aggregated Content Analysis: General Attitude of Newspaper Coverage

| <i>General Attitude</i> | | <i>Hong Kong</i> (1,378) | <i>Japan</i> (41) | <i>China</i> (16) | <i>United States</i> (12) |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Conservatism | Pro-own country | 5.40% | 12.2% | 81.13% | 0% |
| | Anti-other country | 12.49% | 7.3% | 46.88% | 0% |
| Liberalism | Anti-own country | 1.96% | 9.75% | 0% | 0% |
| | Pro-other country | 7.56% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| | Neutral | 3.75% | 80.5% | 0% | 100% |

Note. For all tables percentage is average proportion (i.e., total percentage across categories divided by number of amalgamated categories).

TABLE 3
Aggregated Content Analysis: Perceived Theme of the Issue

| <i>Theme of the Issue</i> | | <i>Hong Kong</i> (1,378) | <i>Japan</i> (41) | <i>China</i> (16) | <i>United States</i> (12) |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Conservatism | Sovereignty | 29.4% | 52.8% | 64.58% | 30.55% |
| | Historical claim | | | | |
| | Moral obligation | | | | |
| Liberalism | Modern claim | 3.04% | 6.09% | 3.125% | 8.33% |
| | Political claim | | | | |
| | Social obligation | | | | |
| | Individual matter | (8.8%) | (0%) | (0%) | (8.33%) |
| | Other | 0% | 17% | 0% | 83.33% |

individual matter. On this basis U.S. media are ranked as the most liberal followed by Japanese, Chinese, and Hong Kong media. However, if the single category of individual concern as the main theme is isolated from the other categories, Hong Kong and U.S. media rank as the most liberal (Table 3). This is important because individualism is a key definition of the notion of liberalism.

Main actors. Two further categories are considered together because they measure the individual values of the journalist using the same operationalization of conservatism and liberalism. These categories are those of perception of main actors in the issue and the level of action. Conservatism is linked with ideas about government being the main actor in social and political situations and liberalism is linked with ideas about social or political groups as well as individuals being important actors.

In the category of main actors, Chinese and Japanese media are the most conservative followed by members of the media in the U.S., then Hong Kong. However, on the liberalism scale, U.S. media are the most liberal followed by Japan, Hong Kong, and China (Table 4). In the category examining level of action, Japanese and Chinese media are the most conservative, followed by U.S. and Hong Kong media. However, if factors linked with liberalism are considered the same pattern occurs as in the category of actors; that is, U.S. media rank as the most liberal followed by Japanese, Hong Kong, then Chinese media (Table 4).

Agency. In the category of agency, conservatism is associated with maintenance of the status quo and the granting of agency to one's own country. Agency is defined here as which country is seen to be eligible to take action. Liberalism is associated with granting agency to actors other than one's own country. In this category, Chinese and Japanese media grant the most agency to their own country, whereas Hong Kong and U.S. media grant the least (Table 5). Conversely, U.S. and

TABLE 4
Aggregated Content Analysis: Main Actors, Level of Action, and Agency

| <i>Agency</i> | | <i>Hong Kong</i> (1,378) | <i>Japan</i> (41) | <i>China</i> (16) | <i>United States</i> (12) |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Main actors | Government | 52.6% | 87.8% | 100% | 66.66% |
| | Social or political group | 20.39% | 47.58% | 18.75% | 58.3% |
| | Individuals | | | | |
| Level of action | Government | 28.95% | 56.05% | 46.88% | 29.15% |
| | Social or political group | 10.78% | 29.27% | 6.25% | 20.83% |
| | Individuals | | | | |

TABLE 5
Aggregated Country Comparisons: Agency

| | | <i>Hong Kong</i> <i>(1,378)</i> | <i>Japan</i> <i>(41)</i> | <i>China</i> <i>(16)</i> | <i>United States</i> <i>(12)</i> |
|--------|---------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Agency | Own country | 3.02% | 15.83% | 25% | 0% |
| | Other country | 5.75% | 1.06% | 2.27% | 17.24% |
| | Other | 3.3% | 0% | 0% | 16.66% |

Hong Kong media grant the greatest amount of agency to other countries. Thus, U.S. and Hong Kong media are more liberal than Chinese and Japanese media.

Discussion

Based on these results, extremes of conservatism and liberalism on the part of journalists can be clearly identified. It is clear that the values of U.S. journalists as manifested in news coverage of debate over ownership of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands are liberal, whereas the values of Chinese journalists are conservative. Japanese media are clearly less conservative than Chinese media whereas they tend in the majority of categories to be much more conservative than U.S. media and somewhat more conservative than Hong Kong media.

Using the model incorporating journalistic values and state systems, and the data gathered from the case study, the media systems of China, Japan, Hong Kong, and the United States can be differentiated as shown in Figure 2. The data clearly differentiate

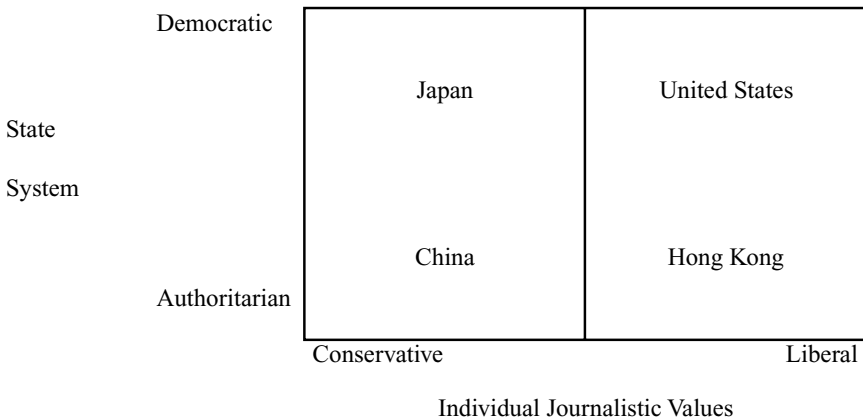


FIGURE 2 National classification under State system × Individual journalistic value model.

countries that share similar structural factors but in which individual journalists operate under different levels of professional autonomy. The Japanese system is seen to be democratic-conservative, contrasted with the U.S. democratic-liberal system. China's media system is authoritarian-conservative compared with Hong Kong's authoritarian-liberal system. This contrasts strongly with the way in which earlier models from the *Four Theories* onward tended to group Hong Kong, Japanese and U.S. media systems with China presented as a stark contrast or ignored entirely.

In addition to providing a greater level of differentiation between media systems, this model provides a link between structural factors and professional practice lacking in earlier normative models that reduced media coverage to a single structural dimension.

CONCLUSION

The study of comparative media systems and the development of philosophies of the press have long histories in the field of mass communication. Dominick (1994) argued that this is because of the implications for media freedom of relationships between the government and media. In any analysis of national systems, their media structures and institutions, as well as their relationship with political and economic structures, must be part of the picture because these relationships and structures are integral to the content, distribution, and reception of information in a society. Previous models describing or theorizing about national media systems have limited the power of their analysis by emphasizing a Cold War characterization of political systems. Models incorporating economic perspectives have increased the analytical power of these models but leave out those actors actually involved in the production of media. Incorporation of value systems of individual journalists as a level of categorization allows for differentiation between countries that would otherwise be categorized as similar on the basis of state or economic system.

This new model incorporates the dimensions of individual journalistic autonomy and the structures of state policy. It thus increases understanding of press systems and the societies in which these systems exist.

One main question remains: Can this approach be generalized across issues, media, and countries? Theories of national press systems have largely remained theories; that is, philosophical and normative proscriptions. By the use of content analysis of media coverage of an actual event, this new model has already moved beyond proscription to description and empirical analysis. Newspapers remain the medium of focus because they traditionally are closely tied to the political power structure and exhibit clearly the different institutional and structural constraints operating on the production of news. Although as a cross-national research and historical inquiry, newspapers also remain the most accessible resources for our studies, the proposed model allows for analysis of

other specific media forms and structures insofar as the two levels of analysis are not medium dependent. That is, state systems operate at a political level above media systems, and journalistic values are incorporated in the individual journalist and not on the medium per se. Thus, this model is readily applicable in other media and country contexts where issues exist that cross these national boundaries.

Similarly the operationalization of conservatism and liberalism is based on individual journalistic values that go beyond coverage of specific issues. That is, the method employed here could be used with virtually any issue provided that a range of newspapers from each country (or other media) and a range of pieces from each newspaper (or other medium) are incorporated into the model to decrease the effect of variance due to individual journalistic differences and allow for analysis of national similarities and differences. For further studies, it would be essential to apply the method and model to different issues within a set of countries to see whether obtained differentiations hold across issues.

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