

‘According to sources...’: The use of sources in reporting China in the European press

Dani Madrid-Morales
Macau, 24 June 2013

Contents

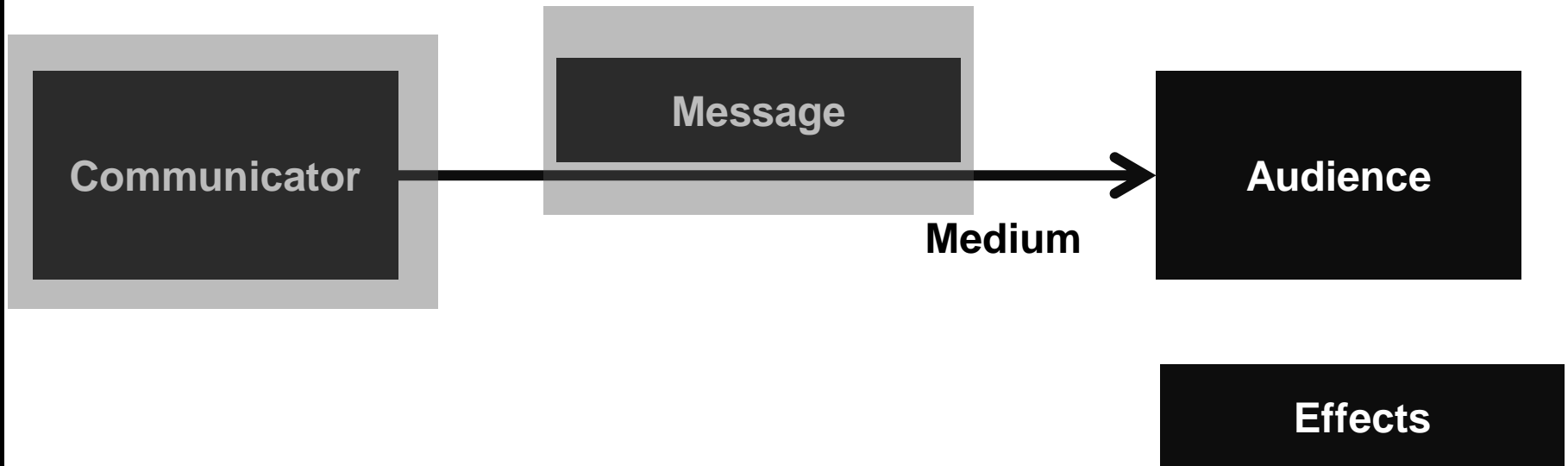
1. The relevance of news sources.
2. Reporting China in the media.
3. Methodology.
4. Findings of preliminary data analysis.
5. Discussion.

Why do news sources matter?

- Media are supposed to contribute in the circulation of diverse perspectives and opinions. But do they?
- Despite (and because of) the increased amount of information available the selection of source has become a central part of the job of journalists.

What do we mean by sources?

- There are multiple levels in the study of sources and the media themselves are considered sources.



Definition of news source

A **news source** can be an individual (spokesperson, scholar, witness...), a group or institution (NGO's, think tanks, research center) and a corporation that provides journalists with information, that is later used to produce a news item.

Why China?

- The way non-Chinese media cover China has been extensively studied, but there are few studies that deal with the new media context in China.
 - Regional and commercial newspapers
 - Openness in Chinese universities
 - Increased visibility of intellectuals with diverse opinions
 - Advent of SNS as a space for public discussion
 - Proliferation of Chinese NGO

Media discourse on China

- China has been said to be demonized by the media (Lubman 2004, Peng 2004), reported in mainly negative frames (Liss 2003, Shambaugh 2003) and presented as a threat to U.S. hegemony (Stone & Xiao 2007, Zhang 2010).
- Chinese leaders have voiced concern on media representations abroad and created an alternative narrative.

Methodology

- News items containing the word 'China' from 1st January 2011 to 31st December.
- Full text of the articles obtained through the Lexis-Nexis database.
- An initial sample size of over 6.000 articles, manually reduced to over 1.000.

The Newspapers

Best British bike rides
24 page supplement on how to get there, what to see, the terrain, the gradients, the pubs and more

FREE GUIDE

BIKE RIDES

the guardian
weekend edition

How GCHQ watches your every move

Exclusive Operation Tempora revealed

Internet traffic and calls tapped from fibre optic cables

Information shared with American spy agency

British spies have been tapping the world's most important fibre optic cables, according to a report published in the Guardian. The report, which is the first to name the programme, says that the British government has been intercepting data from a network of cables that carry 90 per cent of the world's internet traffic. The cables are owned by a consortium of companies, including British Telecom, and are based in the Canary Islands. The report says that the British government has been tapping the cables since 2003, and that the programme is known as Operation Tempora. The report also says that the British government has been sharing the intercepted data with the American National Security Agency (NSA).

The report says that the British government has been tapping the cables since 2003, and that the programme is known as Operation Tempora. The report also says that the British government has been sharing the intercepted data with the American National Security Agency (NSA). The report says that the British government has been tapping the cables since 2003, and that the programme is known as Operation Tempora. The report also says that the British government has been sharing the intercepted data with the American National Security Agency (NSA).



Le Monde

PIERRE BLAYAU À LA TÊTE D'ARÉVA
My Joborg « créer sur les stigmates de l'apartheid »
PSG LAURENT BLANC RELÈVE LE DÉFI

Nicolas Sarkozy, un désir de revanche
L'ex-président s'organise en vue de la présidence de 2017. Ses proches préparent un appel pour l'été 2014

Hollande en visite chœur à Qatar
Nathu et Chiba visitent le pays du Qatar

NILE RODGERS: REN CONTRE AVEC UN GÉNIE DES TUBES

Le légendaire musicien américain Nile Rodgers, 68 ans, est en tournée en France. Il joue à la guitare électrique et au synthétiseur. Il est accompagné de son groupe, les Nile Rodgers & The New Power Generation. Le concert a lieu à la salle Pleyel à Paris.

TELEVISIONS
France Culture: 50 ans d'exception

BANQUES
Le secteur de l'assurance

EDITORIAL
Contre le FN, le front républicain s'impose

mobeco
solides
MATÉLAS - SOMMIERS
CANAPES - SALONS - CONVERTIBLES

01 42 08 71 00

EL PAÍS
EL PERIÓDICO GLOBAL EN ESPAÑOL

EL PAÍS SEMANAL
Larga vida al Tour

CINE INDEPENDIENTE
El gran Lebowski

Anatomía del Tribunal de Cuentas

La troika entra en crisis por las tensiones entre Bruselas y el FMI

Europa y el Fondo se culpan del fracaso en el rescate de países
La próxima cumbre activará el primer estímulo al crecimiento

Los argumentos de la troika (Comisión Europea, FMI y BCE) se han convertido en una guerra de attrition y descalificación mutua. Bruselas y el Fondo se culpan del fracaso en el rescate de países. La próxima cumbre activará el primer estímulo al crecimiento.

DISFRUTA DEL MEJOR CARIBE
BRUBA MATA

OLLANTA HUMALA Presidente del Perú
«Ya no se puede hacer invisibles a las pobrecas como hace 50 años»

LOGITRAVEL.com

Circulation: 204,440

Circulation: 322,872

Circulation: 370,080

Results | Diversity of findings

- The analysis of the three newspapers lead to very different findings:

- ***El País***

- A high percentage of stories (90%) lacks diverse and antagonistic sources.

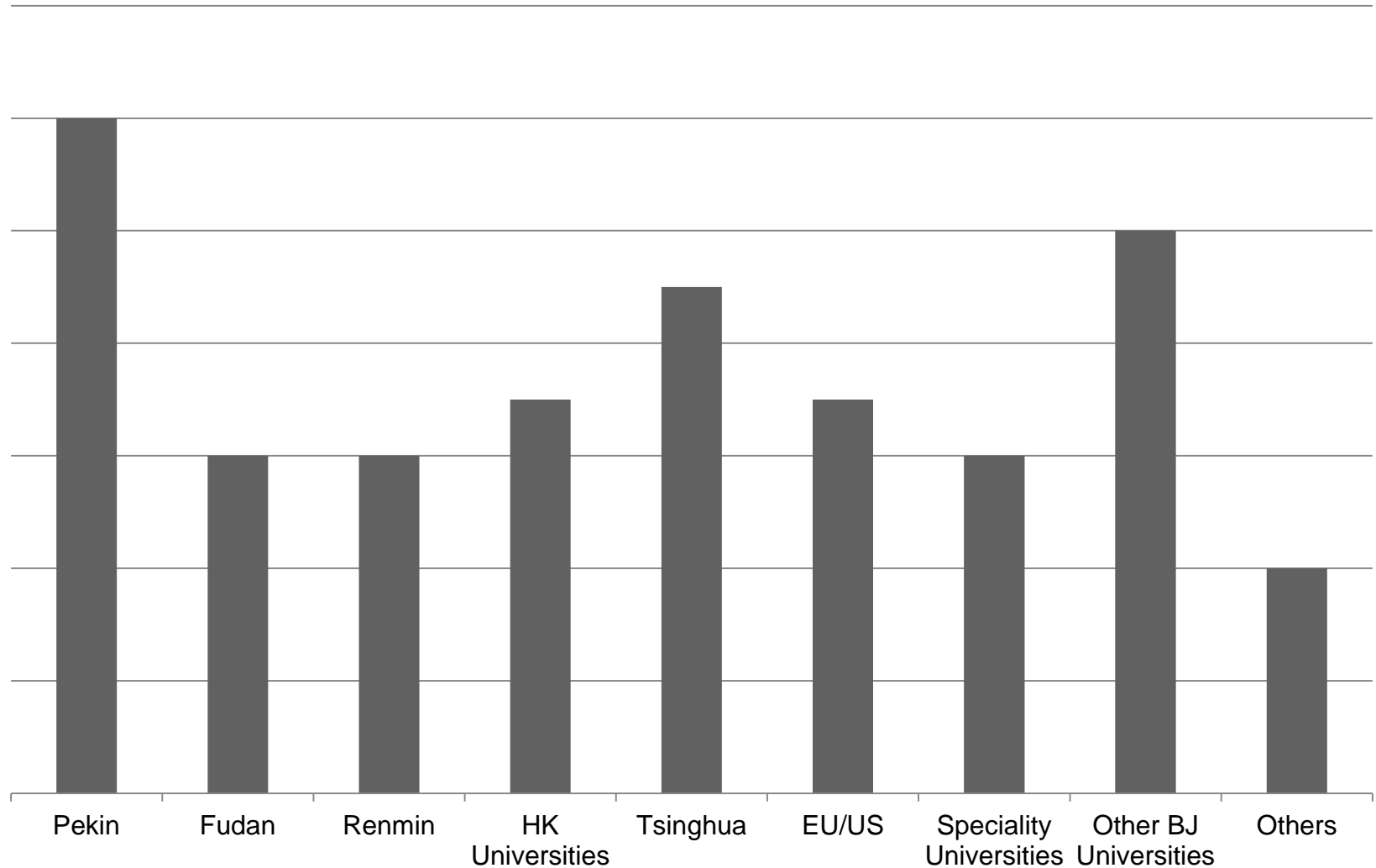
- Chinese ‘experts’ are almost non existent.

- ***Le Monde***

- Hundreds of different experts, mostly Chinese.

- Constant use of Weibo as a termometer of ‘public opinion’

Results | 'Experts' in *Le Monde*



Results | An example

- A recurrent topic in 2011 was Ai Weiwei's detention for alleged fiscal evasion.
- Some of the 'experts' consulted about the topic:
 - Director of Tate Modern
 - Professor at the Asia Law Institute in NYU
 - Ai's wife, Lu Qing
 - Angela Merkel

Discussion on findings

- The findings reveal very different journalistic practices in the three countries which makes comparison very difficult.
- There is an explicit lack of trust in most Chinese media as expressed by journalists whenever they use Chinese sources.

Discussion on findings

- The PRC is still very opaque and does not facilitate the job of the journalists. However, even regular meetings with the press are not often included.
- The lack of trust in Chinese media and authorities contrasts with heavy presence of NGO and think tanks.

Further research

- The area of news sources is still under-researched
 - Research within each of the 3 countries represented in this study could be interesting as cross-continental analysis revealed little similarities.
 - Links between editorial line and political leaning of newspapers could also be explored.
 - Other mass media (TV, online news).

References

- Liss, A. (2003). Images of China in the American Print Media: A survey from 2000 to 2002. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 12(35), 299–318. doi:10.1080/1067056022000054614
- Lubman, S. (2004). The dragon as demon: images of China on Capitol Hill. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 13(40), 541–565. doi:10.1080/1067056042000213391
- Peng, Z. (2004). Representation of China: An across time analysis of coverage in the New York Times and Los Angeles Times. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 14, 53–67. doi:10.1080/0129298042000195170
- Shambaugh, D. (2003). Introduction: Imagining Demons: The rise of negative imagery in US-China relations. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 12(35), 235–237. doi:10.1080/1067056022000054588
- Stone, G. C., & Xiao, Z. (2007). Anointing a New Enemy. *International Communication Gazette*, 69(1), 91–108. doi:10.1177/1748048507072787
- Zhang, L. (2010). The Rise of China: media perception and implications for international politics. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 19(64), 233–254. doi:10.1080/10670560903444199

Thank you

Dani Madrid-Morales
Macau, 24 June 2013