

Longitudinal Analysis of News about China in the US Media: Changes Explained by World System Theory?"

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Introduction

Since being introduced into scholarly discourse in the late 1950s (Schramm 1959), the determinants of coverage of foreign countries in the US news media have become well investigated subjects of research inquiry for the field of international communication. Most of the initial research made exclusive use of newspapers, while studies from the last two decades have increasingly incorporated news magazines and television network news as sources for investigation. Due to differences in how news is presented in print and on television, some determinants regarding type and content of news have been found to be more compatible with one type of medium than the other. For example, sensational visual images have been found to be more compatible with network news, while detailed analyses are considered more compatible with newspapers and news magazines. However, regarding the structural factors that determine which countries receive coverage and which do not, there are some distinct cross-medium similarities.

The approach to this study, one such similarity bases the amount of coverage given to countries on the paradigm of the world economic system, which separates countries into the three continual categories: periphery, semi-periphery, and core. Much of the motivation for research that emphasizes this structural determinant has been the visible lack of balance in coverage given to countries representing different categories (Chang 1998). These studies typically show that, despite the existence of other factors, the amount of news coverage a country receives can be predicted by its position on the world system continuum, which is commonly determined by indicators such as gross domestic product or gross national income (Chang 1998; Chang, Lau, Xiaoming 2000; Kim 1996; Golan 2008).

However, since the world system paradigm was first outlined in the mid-1970s, one of the most important restructurings its parameters have undergone is the inclusion of a country's potential to move up the continuum. This re-conceptualization has altered the way scholars of international relations understand the influence

individual countries have in world affairs. The new paradigm recognizes that certain courses of economic action taken by developing countries in the periphery can increase their respective influence.

Even though the world system paradigm has been applied to a number of sophisticated studies on the determinants of coverage of foreign countries in the US news media, the concept of inter-categorical mobility within the world system has not been worked in to the understanding of how these two variables are related. To address this gap in the research, this study utilizes the economic rise of China, a phenomenon that has been described as China's ability to manufacture and export its way out of the world system periphery and move to a more favorable position on the continuum as an example of the potential for upward mobility. It is assumed that as China's position on the continuum moves upward, its status in the international equation and influence in world affairs increases. It is hypothesized that the US news media responds by increasing its coverage of China.

US News Coverage of China

This study draws from research on the determinants of foreign news coverage in the US media. Because the study is part of a much larger research project on how the presentation of China the US news media from the late 1980s to the present has at times influenced US foreign policy toward China, two elite newspapers (*New York Times* and *Washington Post*) were chosen as sources of data. However, for reasons stated above, conclusions about how the world system paradigm fits into the determinants of international news in print and on television are used in the literature review.

There is no lack of research criticizing the nature and scarcity of international news in the US media. At the same time, it is well understood in the literature that US news media gatekeepers have specific time and space limitations that render it impossible to provide equal coverage to all nations around the world (Chang 1998).

Nevertheless, research on the space allotted for international news in both types of media has shown that in general, the volume of international news in the US media has been decreasing in recent years. Wu and Hamilton (2004) argue that even after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the US illustrated the necessity for the US to strive for a better understanding of world affairs (which was noticeable temporarily), the space occupied by international news in US newspapers succumbed to a quick flagging of attention similar to previous national crises. Riffe and Budianto (2001)

showed that in all three major US television networks, the amount of international news coverage in relation to the amount of domestic coverage is decreasing. This study argues that because of this trend in the US news media, when the coverage of a country increases, examining the reason would help understand the theoretical intricacies of this trend.

To illustrate this argument, China is selected as a case of realized upward mobility potential in the world system. It is no mystery that news coverage of China in the US media has increased since the late 1980s. In a recent study, Stone and Xiao (2007) showed that news coverage of China in three US news magazines increased after the fall of the Soviet Union and became increasingly more negative. They approach their study from the balance of power theory of international relations and argue that “China has emerged as Russia’s replacement enemy in the US global power standoff.” By looking at news coverage from two sets of five years before and after the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident (1984-1988 and 1995-1999), the incident is considered the event that placed China in the context of US anticommunism, a position they argue to be central to the US understanding of international relations, and a position formerly occupied by the Soviet Union. The dominance of the anticommunist frame in the US news media is also the subject of Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad’s (2000) study on coverage of the Fourth UN Conference on Women and the NGO Forum on Women, both of which were held in Beijing in 1995.

By looking at findings from the previous research, it becomes obvious that, even though international news in the US media has decreased as a whole, coverage of China has increased since the 1980s. It also seems that US news media gatekeepers consciously select news for publication that employs an anticommunist frame in its assessment of China. Stone and Xiao (2007) utilize the world system paradigm to categorize both the Soviet Union and China as semi-peripheral countries. However, even though they consider China’s trade with the US an important predictor for coverage about China, the capacity of China’s upward mobility within the system is not considered in their theoretical framework. Despite these important findings, China’s relevance to the US is interpreted through ideological lenses. The increasing coverage of China coupled with its emphasis on anticommunism is viewed as a result of the US news media’s objective to promote national unity.

Taking a different approach, this study emphasizes China’s upward mobility in the world economic system as an alternative reason the increase in coverage given to China in the US media. It is argued below that this upward mobility can be operationalized by the increase in China’s total exports to the world. In addition to this

variable, the highly significant correlation between China's trade with the US and the amount of coverage about China found by Stone and Xiao is considered as a related indicator of China's relevance to the US. The increasing trade deficit that the US has with China is also considered as another related indicator of variance, which – along with relevance to the US and position within the hierarchy of nations – is understood within the literature to be a key determinant of the amount of coverage a country receives in the US news media.

It is not uncommon for major shifts in the structure of international relations to bring about a shift in how the determinants of international news coverage are examined. Wu (2000) argues that the bipolar prediction framework for international news during the Cold War has become outdated and needs to be reexamined. Golan (2008) argues in a similar way about the new international political paradigm promulgated by the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. This study argues that the rise of China over the last two decades, although a more gradually unfolding event than the end of the Cold War and September 11 attacks, is also changing the structure of international relations. However, it is the gradual nature of this change that requires a type of analysis less common in studies of the determinants of international news: a longitudinal regression.

The Determinants of International News Coverage

Research on the determinants of news coverage of foreign countries in the news media can be traced back over four decades. In one of the first attempts to assess these determinants, Galtung and Ruge (1965) identified twelve variables they considered relevant for the four Norwegian newspapers they used as data sources: frequency, threshold, intensity, ambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, predictability, expectedness, continuity, composition, relevance, and negativity. Of these twelve, the variable that has been most utilized in subsequent studies is the relevance of a country being covered to the home country of the news publication (Hester 1973; Chang, Shoemaker, and Brendlinger 1987). In another early study, Ostgaard (1965) found that domestic political and economic characteristics such as censorship and news media ownership are important in considering which countries receive coverage in the world's four major news agencies (of that time): Agence France-Presse, Associated Press, Reuters, and United Press International.

Hester (1973) took an international relations approach to the flow of international news and other types of information, offering the first insight into the

thread of literature the present study addresses. Three important determinants concluded from Hester's research are the hierarchy of nations, cultural affinities between countries, and economic association among countries. Hierarchical variables include a country's geographic size, population, level of economic development, and tenure of sovereignty. Cultural affinity variables include commonality of language between countries, human migration between countries, and their historical relationships. Economic association variables include level of international trade between countries, amount of foreign aid given or received by a country, and amount of foreign direct investment between countries.

Regarding research done exclusively on US sources of news, Chang, Shoemaker, and Brendlinger (1987) attempted to classify the determinants that had been found to date, and contributed with one of the literature's most influential theoretical discoveries. They argue, "What seems obvious is that the theoretical thinking can be grouped into two categories: context-oriented versus event oriented, with the former being the dominant paradigm." In short, event-oriented determinants focus on the nature of an international news event. Context-oriented determinants evaluate how the countries involved perform within the international system.

Indeed, the world system approach to this field of research, which stems from Hester's (1973) context-oriented hierarchy of nations determinant, is one of the apparent leading sources of inspiration for much of the recent literature, including the present study (Chang 1998; Barnett 1996). However, one landmark event-oriented finding relevant for this study is Shoemaker, Chang, and Brendlinger's (1986) examination of news coverage according to the construct of deviance. Their study argues that news media gatekeepers implicitly select news for publication based on two factors. One factor is the potential for social change deviance variable, which measures the extent an event threatens to alter the status quo of the country in which it occurs. The other factor is the normative deviance variable, which is the extent an event would have broken US norms if it had happened in the US.

Independent Variables

This study has two purposes. One purpose, as outlined above, is related to finding and testing the appropriate determinants of coverage about China in the US news media in the context of China's upward mobility in the world economic system. In order to synthesize this purpose with the relevant findings of the previous literature, three independent variables are tested for their ability to predict three different aspects of

how China is covered. The three independent variables are the total amount of Chinese exports to the world, the total amount of trade between China and the US, and the amount of trade imbalance benefiting China in this trade relationship.

Gunaratne (2001) argues that unlike gross domestic product or gross national income, which are commonly used to assess a country's position in the world system, the size of a country's exports represents its "ability to expand into the global economy on a competitive basis." This study thus assumes that exports to the world can be considered an alternative yet relevant indicator of a country's position in the world system. This may especially be true for China, which has become renowned for its economic transformation through manufacturing and exporting. Indeed, in an economic sense, China's present status in the international equation is somewhat similar to other East Asian countries that successfully exported their ways out of the periphery of the world system. Thus, this variable stems from Hester's (1973) hierarchy of nations context-oriented determinant, and follows the proposal of Chang (1998) that the world system paradigm should be incorporated as a theoretical framework for the study of the determinants of international news coverage. Figures for China's exports to the world were obtained from the World Trade Organization Statistics Database.

This study operationalizes China's relevance to the US by measuring the total amount of trade between China and the US. Regarding this variable's relation to China's upward mobility, Urata (2007) argues that the final destination of China's exports to the world is Western Europe and the US. Since exporting is China's vehicle for upward mobility, China's trade with the US is especially important to this means. As shown above, the relevance of a country being covered to the home country of the publication was one of the original determinants of coverage found by Galtung and Ruge (1965). Hester (1973) conceptualized this type of relevance as part of the construct of economic association between countries. In a study of news coverage of thirty-eight countries, Wu (2000) found international trade to be a leading predictor of how much coverage a country receives. The relevance variable has also been operationalized in this way by Shoemaker, Danielian, and Brendlinger (1991), Golan and Wanta (2003), Stone and Xiao (2007), and Golan (2008). Figures for international trade between China and the US were obtained from the US Census Bureau's foreign trade statistics records.

In order to synthesize the concept of deviance with China's upward mobility, it is conceptualized differently than in most previous studies. Typically, deviance falls under the event-oriented group of variables, as explained above in the discussion on social change deviance and normative deviance (Shoemaker, Chang, and Brendlinger 1986; Chang, Shoemaker, and Brendlinger 1987). This study considers the trade

imbalance between China and the US as an example of context-oriented deviance. In the US, this imbalance is usually referred to as the trade deficit with China. It is a major source of economic and political debate within the US, and is thus considered here as a determinant of coverage of China in the US news media. The variable's relation to China's upward mobility follows a logic that is similar to the relevance variable's relation. Put simply, the trade imbalance is a measurement of capital being moved from the US to China. As more capital is moved, China's capacity for upward mobility increases. Figures for the trade imbalance between China and the US were also obtained from the US Census Bureau's foreign trade statistics records.

Dependent Variables

This study's second purpose is more of a contribution to the methodology of this field of research, which typically measures coverage by counting news items. Practically no attention has been given to the location of news items within the entire news source, or to the amount of space these news items occupy. Because this study makes use of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* as data sources, articles about China are the unit of analysis. However, the current study separates the commonly employed dependent variable of coverage into three separate variables: number of articles, location of articles in the newspaper, and length of articles. In doing this, the current study seeks to determine what aspect of coverage can be best explained by the independent variables.

It is assumed that the number of articles variable requires no further explanation since it is the dominant dependent variable in the field. However, regarding the location of articles in the newspaper, the surface of the newspaper pages is considered by this study as a kind of real estate. Articles that appear closer to the front of the newspaper are more valuable than articles that appear in the back pages. It should be commonsense that the most important news articles of a certain day appear on the front page of the newspaper's first section. Other important articles appear on the front pages of other sections, which are more content specific and thus aim to attract the interest of a specific kind of reader. Merely counting articles with no regard for where those articles appear in the newspaper neglects the very reason for having a front page and organizing the newspaper into specialized sections.

Regarding the length of articles, the real estate metaphor remains applicable. Most articles that are written for publication do not get published; they are discarded at some point in the article selection process. Thus, the surface of the newspaper is a

coveted space; the amount of space an article occupies is also representative of the article's value. Furthermore, the length of an article signifies the depth into which the article covers the respective topic. In order for an article to breach the boundary between factual news and analytical news, space is required. Thus, longer articles can be considered to contain more analytical content and higher quality news.

Hypotheses

This study investigates how China is covered by two elite US newspapers between the years 1988 and 2006. Based on the above synthesis of the study's approach with the review of the literature on the determinants of international news coverage into three independent variables and three dependent variables, the following research question and nine hypothesis are presented and predicted, respectively:

Research Question: What are the longitudinal characteristics of the coverage of China in elite US newspapers?

Hypothesis 1: The greater the level of China's exports to the world, the more articles will appear about China in elite US newspapers.

Hypothesis 2: The greater the level of China's exports to the world, the better position in elite US newspapers articles about China will occupy.

Hypothesis 3: The greater the level of China's exports to the world, the longer articles about China in elite US newspapers will be.

Hypothesis 4: The greater the level of China's total trade with the US, the more articles will appear about China in elite US newspapers.

Hypothesis 5: The greater the level of China's total trade with the US, the better position in elite US newspapers articles about China will occupy.

Hypothesis 6: The greater the level of China's total trade with the US, the longer articles about China in elite US newspapers will be.

Hypothesis 7: The greater the level of the US trade deficit with China, the more articles will appear about China in elite US newspapers.

Hypothesis 8: The greater the level of the US trade deficit with China, the better position in elite US newspapers articles about China will occupy.

Hypothesis 9: The greater the level of the US trade deficit with China, the longer articles about China in elite US newspapers will be.

Methodology

The Lexis-Nexis portal was used to obtain articles about China from the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* from the years 1988 to 2006. In order to ensure that each article would be about China, the search was limited to articles that included a Chinese city in the dateline. This means that each article retrieved was written in China, presumably by a foreign correspondent stationed in China. Thus, it can be assumed that each article was indeed about China.

The search was limited further to articles that included the word China at least fifteen times. This procedure was taken in order to make the coding of the articles' location and length more manageable. However, in the midst of coding, it was noticed that this delimiting did not apply exclusively to the articles contents, but also included the automatic geographic relevance function supplied with any article search on Lexis-Nexis. Thus, some articles likely did not mention China fifteen times, but rather mentioned something related to China that prompted the automatic function to respond. However, this is not considered a limitation as more articles were likely retrieved, resulting in more accurate data. The number of articles retrieved from each newspaper for each year is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of Articles

Year	<i>New York Times</i>	<i>Washington Post</i>	Total
1988	90	32	122
1989	110	68	178
1990	58	36	94
1991	112	44	156
1992	133	64	197
1993	131	50	181
1994	125	71	196
1995	121	90	211
1996	131	115	246
1997	116	92	208
1998	182	159	341
1999	205	171	376
2000	204	158	362
2001	152	125	277
2002	99	89	188
2003	129	102	231
2004	131	69	200
2005	213	61	274
2006	148	64	212

As explained above, each article retrieved was coded for its position in the newspaper. Regarding newspaper position, a four-point scale was employed. A score of four was given to an article that appeared on the front page of the newspapers first section. A score of three was given to an article that appeared on the front page of any other section of the newspaper. A score of two was given to an article that appeared on any other page in the newspapers first section. A score of one was given to an article that appeared on any other page of any other section of the newspaper. The average location of articles for each year was taken to assess the longitudinal trend, which is shown on Table 2.

Table 2: Average Location of Articles

Year	<i>New York Times</i>	<i>Washington Post</i>	Total
1988	2.24	2.26	2.25
1989	2.51	2.53	2.51
1990	2.13	2.15	2.25
1991	2.19	2.22	2.21
1992	2.16	2.16	2.16
1993	2.27	2.30	2.28
1994	2.24	2.25	2.24
1995	2.42	2.43	2.42
1996	2.26	2.26	2.26
1997	2.37	2.39	2.39
1998	2.31	2.32	2.31
1999	2.27	2.28	2.28
2000	2.33	2.33	2.33
2001	2.64	2.64	2.64
2002	2.54	2.57	2.56
2003	2.42	2.41	2.42
2004	2.57	2.56	2.58
2005	2.28	2.28	2.28
2006	2.44	2.44	2.44

Each article was also coded for its length. A scaling method sensitive to increments of 500 words was employed. Because the longest article retrieved was 5,728 words, a twelve-point scale was used, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Length of Article Scoring Scale

Words	Score	Words	Score	Words	Score
1-499	1	2,000-2,499	5	4,000-4,499	9
500-999	2	2,500-2,999	6	4,500-4,999	10
1,000-1,499	3	3,000-3,499	7	5,000-5,499	11
1,500-1,999	4	3,500-3,999	8	5,500-5,999	12

Due to the coding for both article location and article length being rather straightforward, it was assumed that no additional coders were necessary to achieve reliability. As was done with article location, the average length of articles for each year

was taken to assess the longitudinal trend, which is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Average Length of Articles

Year	<i>New York Times</i>	<i>Washington Post</i>	Total
1988	2.30	2.30	2.30
1989	2.66	2.67	2.66
1990	2.41	2.44	2.44
1991	2.28	2.29	2.29
1992	2.30	2.31	2.30
1993	2.53	2.55	2.54
1994	2.40	2.40	2.41
1995	2.50	2.51	2.50
1996	2.47	2.47	2.47
1997	2.50	2.53	2.53
1998	2.40	2.40	2.40
1999	2.40	2.40	2.40
2000	2.48	2.47	2.47
2001	2.72	2.72	2.72
2002	2.83	2.87	2.86
2003	2.69	2.69	2.69
2004	2.89	2.89	2.90
2005	2.68	2.66	2.68
2006	2.69	2.70	2.70

Statistical Procedure

In order to maintain the standard of research on the determinants of international news coverage, this study seeks to go beyond descriptive statistics and incorporate more sophisticated statistical procedures for predicting the three aspects of coverage of China in the US news media. Indeed, at defining moments in this field's literature, explicit calls for such action have been made (Shoemaker, Chang, and Brendlinger 1986; Wu 2000). It is thus hoped that the present study contributes to the increasing improvement of how coverage is both determined and defined.

In addition to descriptively examining the content analysis of the three dependent variables, Pearson correlations are used to measure the relationship between these variables and each independent variable. This technique has become

widely used in the recent literature, and is used here to test the nine hypotheses.

Furthermore, a longitudinal regression is used in order to predict coverage based on the three independent variables. One of the common problems in applying this statistical method to news media analysis is that variables such as coverage and are not normally distributed. It is typically considered that this problem can be overcome by logging the variables (Wu 2000); Golan 2008), a technique this study also employs.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 lists the total number of articles about China appearing per year in each newspaper. The results indicate that the *New York Times* published more articles about China than the *Washington Post* each year. On average, the *Washington Post* published 64% (ranging from 29% in 2005 to 90% in 2002) of the number of articles published by the *New York Times*. However, even though consistently published more articles, the two newspapers increased and decreased their number of articles together. This finding was not hypothesized, but a Pearson correlation of the two newspapers' number of articles indicates a significant and relatively high correlation (0.670, $p= 0.000$). Because the *New York Times* is considered to lean left and the *Washington Post* is considered to lean right, this correlation may indicate that the two newspapers are representative of some concept of the US news media in general regarding coverage of China.

A closer look at Table 1 reveals that both newspapers published more articles in the years 1998 through 2001 than any other consecutive time period. It is beyond the scope of the present study to speculate about the content or nature of the articles from this four-year period. However, this observation does provide some useful insight for the recent study by Stone and Xiao (2007), who intentionally did not code articles from the period 1989 through 1994 because of “dramatic changes” that might “skew news under normal conditions.” To be sure, there were a much higher number of articles in 1989 than in 1988 or 1990, but such a major increase or decrease in the data does not appear again until 1998. Nevertheless, this study intentionally does not exclude any years from the analysis because dramatic changes occur in many countries on a daily basis without being covered by the US news media. If dramatic changes in China are covered, the reason is due to China's perceived importance to the US.

Table 2 lists the average location within each newspaper of articles about China per year. The results indicate that, even more so than the number of articles, article locations within the two newspapers follow similar patterns. This may be another indication of a general concept of the US media's coverage of China. Ultimately, more

sources would need to be included to test such a construct. Interestingly, when compared to the years that have the highest number of articles in Table 1 (1998-2001), the local value of these articles follows an opposite trend. This means that even though the two newspapers published more articles about China during this four-year period, the articles did not appear in valuable locations within the newspaper. This is an important finding for the second purpose of the present study, which is to improve the conceptualization of the dependent variable coverage in this field of research.

Table 4, which lists the average length of articles about China per year in each newspaper, supports the need for a re-conceptualization of coverage. In general, the data follows a trend similar to Table 2 rather than Table 1. Specifically, between 1998 and 2001, the length of articles also follows an opposite trend when compared to the number of articles from this from this four-year period. Also similar to Table 2 is the obvious pattern shared by the two newspapers in the amount of space they allow articles about China to occupy each year.

While the above description of results addresses the research question, this study seeks not only to investigate the possible differences in three aspects of coverage of China in the US media. It was hypothesized that variables related to China's upward mobility in the world system will be identified as associated with these aspects of coverage. The results in Table 5 show the nature of correlation between the independent and dependent variables. Because the results from the descriptive data showed all aspects of the two newspapers' to be quite similar, the data from the two newspapers was combined for the remaining statistical analyses. The Pearson correlation results indicate highly significant correlations between each combination of variables except China's exports to the world and the number of articles published by the newspapers. Thus, among the nine hypotheses, the first is the only one that cannot be accepted. However, the levels of correlation vary greatly by combination, so the results should be analyzed as such.

Table 5: Pearson Correlations between Independent and Dependent Variables

		Number	Location	Length
China's Exports	Pearson Corr.	0.225	0.391***	0.642***
to the World	Sig. (two-tailed)	0.172	0.000	0.000
US-China	Pearson Corr.	0.290***	0.496***	0.704***
Total Trade	Sig. (two-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Trade	Pearson Corr.	0.314***	0.429***	0.674***
Imbalance	Sig. (two-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000

*** Significant at the 0.001 level.

A comparison of the independent variables indicates that the relevance variable (trade between the US and China) provides the highest levels of correlation with coverage of China. The second highest correlations are provided by the deviance variable (China's trade imbalance with the US). The least correlated of the three is the world system indicator (China's exports to the world). Because the relevance and deviance variables are most explicitly attached to the relationship between China and the US, the results are not surprising even though this study aimed to show that, in general, China's upward mobility in the world system would attract more attention from the US news media. However, the possibility that the world system indicator would not be as highly correlated as the relevance and deviance variables is precisely why the other two were included. We may conclude from these results that the unique role the US has in China's upward mobility is more newsworthy than the mobility alone.

A comparison of the dependent variables indicates that, by far, article length provides the highest levels of correlation with the three independent variables. The second highest correlations are provided by article location, and the least correlated of the three is the number of articles. These are important findings regarding the methodology of research on the determinants of international news, which typically operationalizes coverage only by the number of news items. It is hoped that these findings will shed some light on the possibilities that exist in defining news coverage. As mentioned above, the length of articles indicates the space that an article is allowed to occupy within the newspaper, as well as the depth of the writing. Location indicates the value of the space that an article occupies as well as the likelihood that the article will be read and by whom it will be read. This finding is especially relevant for studies that venture into the agenda setting capacity of the news media.

The final statistical analysis of this study is a multivariate longitudinal

regression of each dependent variable. Because the analysis is longitudinal, the issue of time is of primary importance; two sets of analysis were carried out to determine the effect of time. Wu (2000) argued that when testing the impact of a variable such as trade on the coverage given to a country in the news media, data from the same year “cannot...logically infer an explanation.” Wu’s (2000) study employed trade data from the previous year to illustrate its impact on the next year’s coverage. This study argues that the effect of an independent variable on news coverage may not take as long as a full year. However, since monthly data is not used, same year data as well as previous year data are utilized to determine the impact of both by comparison. Table 6 lists the results of the regression tests.

Table 6: Predicting Aspects of Coverage based on Independent Variables

Dep. V.	F	Adjusted R ²	Ind. V.	t-value	Sig.
Number	Previous year 0.015*	0.393	Total Exports	-0.448	0.661
			US-China Trade	-0.103	0.920
			Trade Imbalance	0.939	0.363
	Same year 0.000***	0.662	Total Exports	-3.871	0.002**
			US-China Trade	3.152	0.006**
			Trade Imbalance	-1.376	0.190
Location	Previous year 0.086	0.216	Total Exports	-0.681	0.506
			US-China Trade	1.273	0.222
			Trade Imbalance	-1.442	0.170
	Same year 0.031*	0.324	Total Exports	-1.666	0.116
			US-China Trade	2.201	0.044*
			Trade Imbalance	-2.213	0.428*
Length	Previous year 0.001***	0.604	Total Exports	-1.434	0.172
			US-China Trade	2.674	0.017*
			Trade Imbalance	-3.073	0.008**
	Same year 0.011*	0.417	Total Exports	-0.392	0.701
			US-China Trade	1.008	0.329
			Trade Imbalance	-1.201	0.248

* Significant at the 0.05 level; ** Significant at the 0.01 level

A total of six multivariate longitudinal regression tests were carried out: one using previous year independent variable data and one using same year independent variable data for all three dependent variables. Same year data was more successful in

predicting the variance in number of articles published and article location within the newspapers. However, previous year data was more successful in predicting the variance in length of articles. As explained above, the reason may have something to do with the relation between article length and quality of writing. While the number of articles and their location may be more closely related to immediate factors of news demand, the demand for quality news about an issue or event may take longer to develop. However, such issues of demand are beyond the scope of the current study and should instead be addressed by future research.

Comparing the predicted variance across dependent variables also indicates some interesting findings. Even though number of articles showed the lowest Pearson correlations with the independent variables, its significantly predicted variance by same year data was the highest among the regression tests. This contradiction is likely the result of interaction between the independent variables within the regression model, as they are all related to China's upward mobility within the world system. However, predictions themselves are not affected by such cases of multicollinearity. Nevertheless, employing a longer time series or a ridge regression analysis would likely yield less contradictory results, and are also best left to be addressed by future research.

Regarding the independent variables, trade between China and the US is shown to be the most statistically significant predictor of overall variance of the dependent variables. Same year data of this variable was statistically significant in predicting the number of articles published about China by the newspapers as well as their location within the newspapers. Furthermore, previous year data was statistically significant in predicting article length. The US trade deficit with China was the second most significant predictor. Previous year data for this variable was statistically significant in predicting article length, while same year data was statistically significant in predicting article location. The variable for China's total exports to the world was the least significant of the three predictors. However, along with total US-China trade, this same year data of this variable was statistically significant in predicting the number of articles published.

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