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NEWSPAPER CRIME COVERAGE IN CHINA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

by
Xiaoping Zhu

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the School
of
Criminology

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Newspaper Crime Coverage in China: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

This study examines crime-news coverage in a Chinese newspaper to reveal the images of crime and criminal justice institutions that were presented in the news. It was designed on the basis of a review of Western studies of media and crime news. The findings provided the framework for comparisons between the Chinese newspaper and Western newspapers.

The Chinese media were examined against the backcloth of their social and cultural settings. The media are the most powerful channel for announcing and spreading the Communist Party's messages with the force of law. The media have been used as an educational tool and to promote social change. The People's Daily is the pacesetter for the media system. It functions to indoctrinate, mobilize and guide the people for the implementation of the Party's ideology and philosophy.

A combined method involving both quantitative and qualitative analyses was employed in this study. The quantitative analysis showed that the Chinese newspaper shared more common characteristics with Western quality newspapers than with Western popular newspapers. The reporting on how official misconduct is dealt with is the most important theme. In the qualitative analysis, the reporting of murder and embezzlement was examined. While stories about the apprehension and punishment of murderers were reported as "good news," the reporting of embezzlement revealed the newspaper's role in launching, mobilizing and guiding a mass campaign desired by the Party/government.

This case study shows how the Chinese media function as a key form of social control. In spite of their similar functions, however, the Chinese and Western media have operated in ways which appear to have more differences than similarities. The People's Daily openly states that it must follow the Party's line. The appearance of objectivity and impartiality is not required in the reporting of crime, and there is no need to resort to special effects to entertain the reader and enlarge its circulation. The style of crime-news reporting shown in the newspaper has its roots in traditional Chinese culture and

philosophy. It is also determined by the traditional reliance on the informal social control system to deal with crime and deviance.

Dedication

To My Parents

Acknowledgments

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Chapter I. Introduction

This exploratory study systematically examines crime-news coverage in a Chinese newspaper, the People's Daily. Although there have been a few studies on the general content and readership of Chinese newspapers, no previous research has been conducted to specifically examine crime-news coverage. This is also a comparative study. It was designed on the basis of a review of Western studies of media and crime news. The findings obtained from the analysis of the Chinese newspaper were compared with those of the Western studies. This study includes a discussion of the news and the media as they are portrayed in Western studies, which provides the theoretical framework for this present study; a review of content analyses of crime news in Western newspapers as the basis for comparisons of the Chinese newspaper with Western newspapers; an examination of informal social control in China, the function of the Chinese media and its role in social control for the purpose of developing a thorough understanding of crime-news reporting in the Chinese newspaper; the presentation of the research design covering methodology and major research questions formed on the basis of the discussion in the earlier chapters; the exposition of the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the study's findings; and, finally, the articulation of the author's conclusions.

Chapter II and Chapter III present reviews of Western studies of the media and content analyses of crime news in Western newspapers. In the West, the newspaper industry has experienced intensified monopoly control. The dominant media companies are

controlled by the power elite and are subject to market-profit-oriented forces. The news organisations themselves are powerful ideological institutions, setting the agenda for political, social, and economic debate and shaping public opinion on these issues. The media serve as a central agency of social control. However, they must appear to be neutral and identified with the public interest in order to function effectively. The appearance of objectivity and impartiality is crucial for the legitimacy of the media. In news reporting, the media rely heavily on official sources to process news for them. They share the interests and values of these sources and become part of the source organisations. Involved in the activities of law making and law enforcing, journalists function as central agents of social control. They play a key role in elections; they are power distributors; and they help maintain order and warn against disorder. They are also in a powerful position in their relationship with their sources. Therefore, news is ideology. It is used by the state and institutions of social control for the purposes of legitimization. As constructed reality, news involves control through its routine selection, the influence it has on its sources, and its articulation of public opinion.

The review of the findings of content analyses of crime-news coverage in Western newspapers reveals a general pattern of reporting. The areas examined include the amount of crime news; the relationship between crime-news reports and crime statistics; the types of crime that are most frequently reported; the types of crime stories that are used in reporting; the stages of the criminal justice process at which crimes are reported; information about the offender and the victim; evaluation of the criminal justice system; etc. It is also noted that there are differences between newspapers, especially between

those described as “popular” and “quality” newspapers. News of crime and crime-control efforts has been a regular feature of Western newspapers. The findings of the content analyses examined show that the space devoted to crime news and the relative amount of news devoted to each crime topic is stable over time. The news coverage of crimes gives a highly distorted version of the actual situation. The content of crime news is dramatically different from the patterns available in official crime statistics. Violent crimes are the most frequently reported topics because violence is an essential component in the process of dramatisation. It is also shown in the findings that the majority of crime stories relate to the beginning stages of the criminal justice process, while phases of the criminal justice process after arrest are generally ignored. There is also a tendency to over-report sentences of imprisonment. The format of these Western content analyses is then applied to the analysis of the Chinese newspaper, and the major findings of Western studies are compared with those obtained from this study.

Chapter IV and Chapter V examine the functions of the Chinese media in the context of their historical and social settings. The nature and tradition of the informal social control system is first discussed, followed by a description of the acclaimed functions of the media and an analysis of their role as a form of social control apparatus. In China, social control is exercised through non-governmental institutions as well as explicitly identifiable institutions of social control. Although the Communist Party has made use of both as a means of moulding and controlling behaviour, the key to understanding social control in China lies in the pressures and constraints experienced by citizens within informal groups. This model of social control is achieved through a lengthy

and continuing educational process consistent with many traditional Chinese ideas. The Chinese government has traditionally adopted a paternalistic stance toward the people. The government considers that it has a duty to foster the development of people's opinions and to decide and provide for people's needs, while the people are regarded as a passive force to be shaped and influenced. The role of education in social control has been emphasised explicitly and consciously since ancient time. For the Communist Party, political education has been the preferred means of eliciting conscious and voluntary action from the people. The majority of less serious crimes are handled through non-legal mechanisms.

As the most important institutional connection between the Communist Party and the people, the media have served as agents of informal social control. The Chinese media have been education in their orientation and have been used to promote the form of social change desired by the Party. The media act as an instrument for the dissemination of the Party's messages and the mobilization of the people to achieve its objectives. They are supposed to function as the eyes, ears and mouthpiece of the Party. As the pacesetter of the entire media system, the People's Daily is the principal organ of the Communist Party. It has the official duty to propagate the Party's political line, policies, and tasks among the people. Chinese journalists are integrated into the political system as junior partners of the political elite. They are required to construct a positive picture for news reports. The Chinese style of journalism seeks to guide an uncritical audience which must be protected from erroneous information.. While crime is a staple of news fare in the Western

newspapers, it was not until the past decade that crimes began to appear in the Chinese newspapers. Crime stories are considered a vehicle for guidance and education.

The research questions are defined on the basis of the discussion of Western studies and the functions of the Chinese news media. Chapter VI discusses the research questions and methodology used in this study. Since this study is exploratory in nature, the emphasis was placed on finding a general pattern. Basically, it focuses on the following questions: 1. What areas and types of crime does the newspaper focus on, and how are the crimes reported; 2. At which stages of the criminal justice process are the crimes most often reported; 3. What are the types of crime story most often reported in the newspaper; 4. How are the criminal justice institutions evaluated and what are the explanations of the causes of crime; 5. What is the relationship between crime-news reporting and official crime statistics? In order to examine these questions and test the hypotheses raised in relation to them, a combined method of quantitative and qualitative content analysis is conducted. Both the strengths and limitations of the methodology are discussed.

Chapters VII and VIII present discussions of the findings revealed in the quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative analysis examines the news formats, news contents, and the interpretative and evaluative information that is presented in relation to the phenomenon of crime and the criminal justice system. Various areas of crime-news reporting are discussed in relation to the research questions. Two types of comparisons are made. One is to compare the three periods sampled for the Chinese newspaper, and the other is to compare the findings with Western findings. For the comparison of the three periods, some noteworthy changes are revealed and reasons for

these changes are discussed. In the comparison with Western findings, similarities as well as differences are examined within the theoretical framework discussed in earlier chapters. The qualitative analysis systematically examines the reporting of murder and embezzlement. It is shown that, while murder stories are reported as “good news” because the offenders have all been caught and punished, the reporting of embezzlement reveals the role of the newspaper in launching, mobilizing and guiding a mass campaign desired by the Party.

This study concludes that both Western and Chinese newspapers have similar functions in their role as a social control apparatus. This is demonstrated by their over-reporting of selected crimes at selected stages. This Chinese case study shows more clearly than Western cases how the newspaper functions as a key form of social control. The differences between the Chinese newspaper and Western newspapers can be explained by different types of ownership, different market orientations of the audience, and different perceptions of newsworthiness. The style of reporting of the Chinese newspaper has its roots in traditional Chinese culture and philosophy, and is determined by the traditional reliance on the informal social control system to deal with crime and deviance.

Chapter II. News and the Media Portrayed in Western Studies

Introduction

The study of news media and news has been one of the liveliest fields for many years. More and more studies focus on the relationship between the news media and the phenomenon of crime and the role that the news media play in generating public perceptions of crime (for example, Graber, 1980). Garofalo (1981) once suggested that relatively little was known about the nature and content of crime news. He contended that criminologists should take the media into account in their theories and research because of the pervasive media consumption by the public. Since then, the research literature has been largely expanded to fill gaps in knowledge about this field (for example, a series of studies conducted by Ericson and his colleagues). Crime reporting in newspapers has had a long tradition dating back to the very early days of newspapers (Surette, 1993). To present an overview of the available research and studies relevant to the topic of the present study, this chapter looks at newspaper ownership; news organizations; their needs and sources; the nature and essence of news; newsworthiness; and crime news.

Newspaper Ownership

In their early days, newspapers in Canada were published to provide current local commercial and official information. They were small, politically oriented, low-circulation journals. Material critical of authority was absent in newspapers because of their heavy dependence on government support and patronage (Vipond, 1989). After 1815, political

controversy and criticism began to appear in the newspapers (Vipond, 1989). Major newspapers had clear partisan loyalties. The role of the print media in political elections was paramount. The extent of partisan support given by newspapers was deemed a major determinant of the success or failure of political parties (Ericson *et al.* 1987; Fletcher, 1981).

In Western countries, the link between newspapers and political parties was weakened because of the growing need for larger audiences. Newspapers gradually asserted their political neutrality, as the larger publishers became more interested in profits and sales. When competition escalated in the 1840s, newspaper owners had begun to shake themselves free of traditional partisan ties and to produce newspapers aimed at the broadest audiences possible (Dreier, 1982; Fletcher, 1981; McQuail, 1989; Surette, 1993; Vipond, 1989).

In Canada, the press was controlled by the state and political parties at the time of the founding of the Canadian state. Starting in the 1950s, the widespread tendency to merger and monopoly was fueled by the increased competition for advertising revenue. In 1981, the Royal Commission on Newspapers concluded that newspaper competition was virtually dead in Canada (Vipond, 1989:68). The big story of the last thirty years has been newspaper concentration. During the last couple of decades, the newspaper industry in North America and Europe has experienced a pattern of development characterized by three tendencies: i.e. concentration, diversification and multinationalization (Dreier, 1982; Ericson *et al.* 1987; Ericson, *et al.* 1991; Fletcher, 1981; Hartley, 1982; Vipond, 1989).

Control has shifted to monopoly chains, which produce more than three-quarters of all newspaper copies in Canada (Ericson *et al.*, 1987:32-34).

According to Hartley (1982:49), monopoly control has intensified since the transition. The dominant media companies are "controlled by very wealthy people or by managers who are subject to sharp constraints imposed by owners and other market-profit-oriented forces, and they are closely interlocked and have important common interests with other major corporations, banks, and government" (Herman & Chomsky, 1988:14). The power elite closely linked with media companies exerts influence on government policy in various ways including placing representatives in high-level positions in government, while political parties hire public relations directors and have directors sitting in the media companies' boards (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Dreier, 1982; Fletcher, 1981; Surette, 1993). According to Dreier's survey (1982), these directors from outside the media companies have more elite affiliations than directors from the owning companies who usually run the day-to-day operations of their firms. Thus, the outside directors provide a bridge between the newspaper companies and other capitalist institutions. In Canada, the government has become the biggest single advertiser in newspapers (Ericson, 1987:39). Moreover, the federal government has directly subsidized the newspaper industry for over a century by granting postal rates for second class mail well below the actual cost of carriage (Vipond, 1989).

News Organizations

The news media are powerful and effective ideological institutions. They set the agenda for political, social, and economic debate and shape public opinion on these issues.

The media can legitimate or undermine powerful institutions, individuals, and ideas (Dreier, 1982; Ericson, et al. 1987; Hall, in Cayley, 1982; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Maxwell *et al.* 1972; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). However, the news media's ideological effects are not necessarily the result of a conscious or an intentional process. These effects emerge as the consequence of the attitudes which the news media share with their society and of the economic and institutional needs of the media organizations (Carley, 1982:127; Herman & Chomsky, 1988:302)).

In Manufacturing Consent, Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue that the American media serve the ends of a dominant elite. The "societal purpose" served by the media is to "inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state" (*ibid.*, 298). This is not as obvious as in the case of the propaganda system of a totalitarian state with monopolistic control over the media. The American media function in a different manner. "They permit and encourage spirited debate, criticism, and dissent, as long as these remain faithfully within the system of presuppositions and principles that constitute an elite consensus" (Herman & Chomsky, 1988:302). According to Chomsky (in Carley, 1982:136), however, it is brainwashing under the guise of freedom, and a kind of fake dissent. With this system, "the public is exposed to powerful persuasive messages from above and is unable to communicate meaningfully through the media in response to these messages" (Herman & Chomsky, 1988:303). Similarly, Hartley (1982:55) argues that the news media must appear to be neutral and identified with the public interest. They would not be able to function as they do if they openly served a particular class or group.

Ericson, *et al.* (1987) examine the role of the news media as an agency of social control. According to them, the functions of the state--fostering law and order, consensus, economic advancement, and national interest--can be seen also in terms of the same functions of the mass media (p.28). The media are a means of control, management and innovation in society. They have become a "dominant source of definitions and images of social reality for the public (McQuail, 1989:3). It has been argued that the media have a crucial effect on social control in the way that they simultaneously present selective information to direct attention to some conditions and to draw attention away from others (For example, see Cohen & Young, 1981:435-6).

Organizational Needs and News Sources

Hartley (1982:47-8) argues that news organizations are themselves shaped by the relationships between them and other agencies. Therefore, of all the considerations that affect news organizations, those governing the choice of sources are the most significant. Clearly, the media rely heavily on official sources. The media routinely obtain information from sources with whom they share values and they construct their accounts of reality from them. The reason for choosing these sources is because they have power; they have the resources to process news for the news organizations (Curran, in Carley, 1982:133; Gans, 1979:281-3; Surette, 1993:59-60). According to Ericson *et al.* (1991:349), newspapers, especially quality newspapers, give heavier weight to government sources than do other media agencies. It is said that, although the media collectively constitute a major force in society, they are more often driven by organizational needs than by political ideologies (Surette, 1993:4). In their efforts to routinize the gathering and processing of

news, the media depend on government bureaucracies which can provide them with information in a scheduled and predictable way (Fishman, 1988:143; Gans, 1979:84, 281-3; Surette, 1993:59-60;).

Official sources can provide the media with accurate, competently presented account of affairs. They are the most efficient, reliable, easily and quickly available (Bennett, *et al.*, 1985; Fishman, 1980, 1988; Gans, 1979; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Surette, 1993; also see discussion below). This is also partly a matter of cost. The media are commercial businesses and must make profits. Therefore, they tend to be conservative and reluctant to challenge the status quo. The news they construct is dominated by standardized formats, styles, themes, plots, and content, which are rooted in traditions, ideas of audience taste and interest, and pressures of time and space (Dreier, 1982; Herman & Chomsky, 1988:19; McQuail, 1989:169; Surette, 1993:249). Carley points out that the need of advertisers to reach certain audiences constitutes an important determinant of the character of what newspapers print. He suggests that the Globe and Mail is not as dependent on its advertisers as tabloids, "but it still must present the news in such a way as to attract the elite audience which its generally prosperous advertisers want to reach" (Carley, 1982:131). Vipond (1989) shows another example of the media's efforts to increase profit and minimize cost. According to her, the Canadian media must purchase cheaper editorial material from the United States rather than produce it themselves.

Carley (1982:128) argues that, when news organizations rely on powerful sources to process news for them, the news will then encode the interests and definitions of those sources. He suggests, however, that news organizations may as well share the interests

and assumptions of these sources. Similarly, Ericson *et al.* argue that journalists visualize deviance, control remedies, and political reform in much the same way as the organizations they report on. The news organizations become entwined with their source organizations. News organizations and source organizations overlap and become part of each other. They are not only physically but, over time, socially and culturally, part of the source organizations. Their values are consistent with those of their sources (1987:23, 345; 1989:6-7).

The Journalist

Journalists' rules for investigating events and reporting news are integrally tied to bureaucrats' ideological views of the world. The journalists learn these rules through a process of informal socialization and internalization of the assumption that the bureaucracies are functioning well (Chibnall, 1981:86; Fishman, 1988:139; Herman & Chomsky, 1988:306). According to Fishman (1988:139), the journalist "will be critical of particular agencies or specific officials, but the governmental-bureaucratic structure cannot be doubted as a whole without radically upsetting the routines of newswork. Routine news leaves the existing political order intact, at the same time that it enumerates the flaws."

It is also argued that journalists function as agents of social control (Ericson *et al.* 1987; Gans, 1979). In his book, Deciding What's News, Gans (1979:290-6) discusses the journalists' major functions. Journalists play a key role in the election and testing of national leaders; they are power distributors inasmuch as they give individuals or groups helpful publicity; and they are moral guardians, helping maintain order and warning against

disorder. According to Gans, "insofar as the news media carry the messages of official controllers, and insofar as news legitimates their messages, journalists help control the citizenry (1979:296)."

Ericson *et al.* (1987, 1991) present a more radical argument regarding journalists' roles. According to Ericson and his colleagues, journalists do not merely reflect others' efforts to effect control; they are directly and actively involved in the activities of law making and law enforcing as central social control agents. As a deviance-defining elite, their social-control activities include shaping the moral boundaries and contours of social order, using the news media to provide an ongoing articulation of the proper bounds for behaviour in all organized spheres of life, and "imprinting reality in the public culture to police what is being done in the microcultures of bureaucratic life" (Ericson *et al.* 1987:7, 356). Ericson *et al.* (1987:67) argue that journalists' social control impact is also revealed by their decisions not to report. They give an example of the general consensus made by the news media in Toronto not to report suicides in the city. This consensus is based on the belief that reporting will have the effect of provoking imitation.

Ericson and his colleagues argue that journalists are in a powerful position in their relationship with their sources. The reality of the work journalists do is embedded in the nature and type of social and cultural relations between journalists and their sources. While journalists have the power to systematically underpin these sources, they also have the power to deny a source any access, to sustain coverage that gives the source a negative image, and the power to translate specialized knowledge into common sense (1989:357, 378 and 1991:377).

However, the ideology of professionalism requires journalists to be impartial and objective. The appearance of impartiality is crucial for the legitimacy of the news media because only in this way can they interpret power elites' interests into the public interest (Hartley, in Ericson *et al.*, 1991:168). It is also fundamental to routine news production. Citing counter-statements from two different sources does not require the journalist to have extensive knowledge of the matter in dispute. It is suggested that there are various techniques for producing objective-looking news. "The professional ideology of objectivity and impartiality is directed at the enhancement of professional autonomy, strengthening the authority of news and thereby enclosing on it" (Ericson *et al.*, 1991:168-9).

News as Constructed Reality

News is not something "new" because it corresponds to what one expects to happen and it draws upon materials that are located within the existing frameworks of press ideology. According to Gans (1979:284), news most often reports on those at or near the top of the hierarchies, and those at the bottom who threaten them. News is directed to an audience, most of whom are located in the vast middle range between top and bottom. Ericson *et al.* believe that news perpetually represents order--morality, procedural form, and social hierarchy--in ways that help people to order their daily lives and that people take action based on the versions and visions of social order presented in the news (1991:3-4).

News is ideology (Carley, 1982; Chibnall, 1977; Fishman, 1978; Gans, 1979; Hartley, 1982; Tuchman, 1978), which means that news is partial knowledge. According

to Fishman (1978:531), all knowledge is knowledge from some point of view, resulting from the use of procedures for knowing a part of the world. News organizations rely on official sources in their routine gathering and processing of news. Ideological accounts arise from their procedures. Ericson and his colleagues (1987) argue that news is partial knowledge because it gives preferred readings to the ideological messages of particular source organizations and their version of reality. News has meaning only in relation to other institutions (Hartley, 1982:5, 8-9).

Being selective and partial, news as ideology prevents the realization of free speech and public governance (Tuchman, 1978:180). It constantly maps the limits of controversy (Hartley, 1982:62), and it is systematically used by the state and institutions of social control for the purposes of legitimization by disseminating it to the public as the "facts" of the world (Fishman, 1988:138; Hall, in McQuail, 1989:287). Producing the news involves control through its routine selection, through the influence it has on its sources, and through its articulation of public opinion. In the meantime, news erases many control activities in its accounts. This also has control implications for news readers (Ericson *et al.* 1991:286-9).

The media do not simply report events which are naturally newsworthy in themselves. Hall argues that the news is "the end-product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories (1978:53). According to Chibnall (1977:3), the media show a systematic tendency to reproduce definitions of reality derived from the political elites. The reality constructed by news stories serves to legitimate the status quo. Tuchman

suggests that news be regarded as an artful accomplishment attuned to specific understandings of social reality. These understandings, constituted in specific work processes and practices, legitimate the status quo (Tuchman, 1978:215-6).

Selection of News

What is presented as news is the product of a set of institutional definitions and meanings; namely, news values or newsworthiness. The news media depend on, and contribute to, the dominant cultural ideology. News values form an “ideological code” which sees the society as consensual. Only those events that are considered newsworthy are selected for presentation as news. Newsworthy events are those that seem to interrupt the consensus which is based around legitimate and institutionalized means of action (Ericson *et al.*, 1987; Hall, 1978, 1981; Hartley, 1982).

Newsworthiness involves what is sensational, bizarre, tragic, strange, sudden, extraordinary, etc. Such events are by definition untypical; therefore, they are considered newsworthy. In fact, the more a report of an event is true to reality, the less newsworthy it is. Unexpected or rare events have the highest chances of being included as news (Dussuyer, 1979; Galtung & Ruge, 1981; Hall, 1978; McQuail, 1989; Roshier, 1981; Smith, 1984). Hall argues that news is constantly fitting the unusual, the surprising, and the dramatic back into the consensual framework (Hall, in Carley, 1982). Timeliness has a great influence on the selection process. It is often the key factor in selecting news (McQuail, 1989; Tuchman, 1978). In terms of newsworthiness, bad news is good news. Bad news is about conflict, violence, rivalry and disagreement which are a threat to the underlying consensus. Thus it has educational value because it provides good lessons

about collective values and identity (Galtung & Ruge, 1981; Hartley, 1982). Bad news has the effect of reproducing the perceived consensus of social order. It reinforces and re-legitimizes dominant societal values by publicizing and helping to punish those who deviate from the values (Gans, 1979:296). Therefore, the news media focus on bad news as a means of establishing a consensual paradigm for society as a whole (Ericson, 1987:30-1). Moreover, Roshier (1981) argues that anything which has entertainment value and contains human interest in the widest sense makes newsworthiness (Roshier, 1981).

Crime News

Crime becomes news because it is a violation of consensual values (Gans, 1979:40) and "its treatment evokes threats to, but also reaffirms, the consensual morality of the society (Hall, 1978:66)." According to Hall (1978:68), crime news illustrates the special status of violence as a news value. Violence is perhaps the supreme example to show that news values focus on negative consequences. Since crime is understood as a permanent and recurrent phenomenon, it is reported by the media in a routinized manner (Hall, 1978:67). It is said that, in Western countries, printed crime news is nearly as old as printing. News of crime and crime-control efforts has been a regular feature of newspapers (Ericson, 1987; Surette, 1993). According to Sherizen (1978), newspapers are the most detailed purveyors of crime news of any of the media. In the U.S., crime is the third largest category of subjects covered by newspapers. It is even suggested that crime news is reported in a similar manner in a variety of countries regardless of the differences among their societies (March, cited in Shibata, 1993:23).

To explain the news media's obsession with stories of crime, law, and justice, Ericson *et al.* (1991:341-2) argue that 'law has become the primary cultural device for defining acceptable behaviour, identity, and reality. News operatives pick up on these culturally definitive aspects of law because they are especially helpful in pursuing their own cultural tasks. News operatives use the law as a tool of cultural construction, as one of the predominant means by which the authority system instructs people on what to be as well as what to do.'

Crime news is suited to the routines of news work. It is presented as stemming from reliable and credible sources, whose documentary or verbal accounts can be treated as facts (Ericson, 1987:52). Most accounts of crime and justice in the news are about how the criminal justice system and government officials deal with individual criminals and street crimes. In fact, the gathering of crime news is fundamentally the product of the joint efforts of news organizations and government. During the process of selection, which crime gets reported is determined by its newsworthiness in comparison with other crimes. Once a specific crime is selected as news, it will likely continue to be news for some time because of the routine actions of both criminal justice and news organizations (Surette, 1993:58-61, 203).

In terms of newsworthiness, the relative infrequency of violent crimes as compared to property crimes in the real world leads to its frequent appearance in crime news, which turns it into the common crime image (Surette, 1993:203). A crime reporter noted that white collar crime is a difficult thing to write about; "you can't work the clichés into it, there's no violence, no drama. Crime has to have colour about it, something to make

people react (Chibnall, 1981:87)." Ericson (1991) argues that, in this dramatized world, drama forms an important part of comprehension of the media. To achieve this effect of dramatization, social problems must be isolated from their contexts and sensationalized in a complex theatrical process. Violence is often an essential component in this process of dramatization. According to Ericson *et al.* (1987:50-1), crime news serves as a morality play. While it engages and maximizes the audience by being entertaining and titillating, crime news also functions to reassure the audience that, with the evil element being condemned, the conflict has been resolved by authoritative sources.

Summary

This chapter reviews a set of studies of news media in Western countries. Starting from the shift of newspaper ownership from government/party patronage to monopoly chains, this chapter discusses the functions of news organizations and journalists, and the relationship between news organizations and their sources. The media are powerful ideological institutions because they set the agenda for political, social, and economic debate; shape the public opinion; and legitimate or undermine powerful institutions, individuals, and ideas. The news media serve as an agency of social control, and journalists function as essential agents of social control. While the media rely heavily on official sources, journalists are in a powerful position in their relationship with their sources. To reveal the nature of news as ideological, this chapter also discusses newsworthiness in the selection of news to construct reality. Finally, why crime news is reported by the media in a routinized manner is discussed.

Chapter III. Content Analyses of Crime News

Introduction

It has been suggested in the previous chapter that newspapers, in their construction of reality, give a distorted impression of crime through the process of selecting news. Research (Garofalo, 1981; Roshier, 1981) has shown that there is a high degree of uniformity between newspapers in the content of crime news. The structure of crime news is remarkably consistent both over time and between newspapers. However, there still exist some noteworthy differences.

This chapter mainly looks at the general findings of existing content analyses which may be relevant to the present study. The strengths and weaknesses of their methodologies are not discussed. It is expected that a review of the content analyses can provide the basis for this study. These findings may show which areas have been covered and examined and what patterns have been revealed in crime news reporting. They may be helpful in deciding where to direct the attention of this study. Equally important, the findings will be used for a comparison with those of the present study to uncover similarities and differences. This comparison will be made within the theoretical framework discussed in the earlier chapter together with what will be discussed in the next two chapters.

Amount of Crime News

There appears to be great stability in the amount of crime news in North American and some European newspapers. The space devoted to crime news ranges from 5 to 28

percent of total space available and the relative amount of news devoted to each crime topic was stable over time (Dominick, 1978; Garofalo, 1981; Graber, 1980; Roshier, 1981). Variations in the amount of crime news are the result of different definitions adopted in different content analyses. For example, some researchers adopted a narrow definition of crime news. In their analyses, only reports of specific criminal events were included. In other studies with a broader definition, editorials and features were also counted. Some studies included politically motivated violence as crime news, whereas this was excluded in many other studies (Garofalo, 1981). It is said that a typical American metropolitan newspaper devotes around 5-10% of its available space to crime news (Dominick, 1978). However, in her study of three Chicago newspapers with a much broader definition of crime and justice news, Graber (1980) found that 22 to 28 percent of space was devoted to crime and justice topics. In her study, crime stories included editorials, letters to the editor, features, and cartoons, as well as ordinary news reports. Moreover, items about the courts, crime statistics, terrorism, and criminal justice reform, were also included along with reports about specific crimes (Graber, 1980:2).

Crime News and Statistics

Comparisons of crime news and crime statistics have produced consistent findings. Various study findings have shown that there is no consistent relationship between the amount of crime news in newspapers and the local crime rates. In fact, the press coverage of crimes gives a highly distorted version of the actual situation (Davis, 1952; Dominick, 1978; Garofalo, 1981; Katz, 1987; Roberts, 1988; Roshier, 1981; Sheley & Ashkin,

1981). The content of crime news has been found to diverge widely from the patterns available in official statistics.

The most common distortion of the image of crime is seen in the reporting of violent crimes. For example, Graber's findings (1980) show that, while murder made up 0.2% of all crimes in official statistics, it accounted for 25 percent of all crime stories. Humphries (1981) found in his content analysis of an American newspaper that 45% of the routine stories in his samples were devoted to serious crime, whereas serious crime represented only about 20% of the offenses known to the police.

It is also found in the studies that, although property crimes accounted for a large proportion of crimes known to the police, they are less frequently reported in crime news. In Graber's study, theft accounted for one-third of all crimes known to the police, whereas only 3.4% of crime stories dealt with theft cases (1980). Dussuyer (1979) reports similar findings in Canadian newspapers. However, he argues that the seriousness of the crime involved did not automatically lead to more prominent handling of the news; the frequency of crimes being reported correlated highly with the actual incidents of crimes known to the police during a similar period, with the exception of murder and robbery. News reporting of white-collar crimes has also been found to reverse the relationship found in official statistics (Graber, 1980; Katz, 1987). Although the media present a constructed image of crime, the demographic characteristics of the offenders portrayed in the news are in agreement with police statistics (Garofalo, 1981). Those characteristics of the offenders will be discussed later in this chapter.

Overrepresentation of Violence

Violent individual crimes, particularly murders, are represented disproportionately in news media presentations about crime. The type of crime most likely to be reported is individual crime accompanied by violence (Dominick, 1978; Garofalo, 1981; Humphries, 1981; Katz, 1987; Roberts, 1989; Roshier, 1981). Graber (1980) found that the news coverage of street crime far exceeded that of white collar crime. Murder accounted for 26 per cent of the specific crimes mentioned. In contrast, the common property crimes of burglary and theft accounted for less than 6 per cent of all crime stories, while embezzlement accounted for only 3 percent. This is consistent with the findings of Jones and Cirino in their studies of U.S. newspapers (Dominick, 1978; Sheley & Ashkin, 1981). In his study of four Chicago newspapers, Sherizen (1978) found that almost half of all crimes reported were murder and manslaughter with another 35% involving such serious crimes as robbery and aggravated assault. While 70% of homicide cases were reported, such crimes as theft and burglary were basically ignored. This pattern was also found in the content analyses of newspapers in Britain (Roshier, 1981; Smith, 1984) and Canada (Doob, see Roberts and Edwards, 1989; Dussuyer, 1979; Ericson, *et al.* 1991; Sacco and Fair, 1988).

Ditton and Duffy (1983) found in their study of Scottish newspapers that, in addition to over-emphasis upon crimes of violence there is a pattern of over-reporting of crimes involving sex. Voumvakis and Ericson (1984) reported that crime news showed an over-emphasis upon sexual assault. However, this argument is contrary to some other findings. For example, Dussuyer (1979) found in his study of 40 Ontario newspapers that,

while murder and robbery were overreported, rape, which is possibly equally newsworthy, was underreported. He suggests that it might be due either to self-imposed editorial restraints or a function of the time sampling in the study. Roshier (1981) points out that, although newspapers were found to over-represent more serious offenses, this was not so in a study of Oslo newspapers by Ragnar Hauge. However, no specific reason is given to explain this phenomenon. In his discussion of Scandinavian studies, Dussuyer (1979) also discussed Hauge's findings. He suggested that the findings showed that the legal significance of cases appeared to exert no influence on whether or not they were reported in the newspapers examined.

Information about the Offender and the Victim

Generally speaking, both victims and offenders were invisible in the crime reporting. When they did appear, they were described only briefly. The typical information given about offenders was their name, age, and address, while for victims, their name, age, sex, occupation, and/or injury were provided (Dussuyer, 1979; Humphries, 1981; Roshier, 1981; Sherizen, 1978). According to Humphries (1981), information about race was always given in his samples of the New York Post and sometimes the employment status of the offender was given. In his analysis, he suggests that the news fragments crime by presenting violence as the individual attributes of demographic categories. Some studies also found that there was a tendency to over-report higher social class offenders (Graber, 1980; Hauge, see Dussuyer, 1979; Roshier, 1981)

Reporting Stage of Criminal Event

It is said that the criminal justice system and its component parts are seldom in themselves the subject of news reports. The criminal justice system often serves as a background setting for a news story rather than the subject of a story (Surette, 1993:64). It has been shown in many studies that the press gives very little attention to the post-dispositional processes of the criminal justice system. The police phase of a criminal incident was most frequently reported in crime news which rarely dealt with post-trial events and the correctional process (Dussuyer, 1979; Katz, 1987; Sherizen, 1978). It has been found that more than two-thirds of crime news coverage relate to the beginning stages of the criminal justice process (Sherizen, 1978; Surette, 1993:66). Phases of the criminal justice processes after arrest and before sentence were largely ignored (Dussuyer, 1979; Graber, 1980).

The Roshier study of British newspapers shows that there was a unanimous tendency to concentrate on solved crimes (1981). When dispositions of cases were reported, there was a marked tendency to over-report the more serious punishments, particularly imprisonment. However, little attention was paid to the nature of imprisonment as well as other forms of punishment (Graber, 1980; Roberts, 1988; Roshier, 1981). Roberts (1988) reports in his study of Canadian newspapers that imprisonment was the disposition in 70% of the reported cases. Alternatives to imprisonment appear infrequently in the sentences reported by newspapers (Garofalo, 1981; Roshier, 1981).

Evaluation of Criminal Justice System

Criminal justice information was rarely interpreted from historical, sociological, or political perspectives. Evaluation of the criminal justice system was generally absent from the news (Surette, 1993:64). When there was evaluation of the justice system, the police always received the most favourable appraisal. In contrast to the news presentation of police efficiency and effectiveness, the institutional activities of both courts and correctional agencies are less frequently and less positively displayed (Graber, 1980; Sacco & Fair, 1988; Sherizen, 1978). Dussuyer's findings (1979) showed some different results. The evaluative tone of the majority of crime stories in his samples was overwhelmingly positive in tone, with no critical or detracting comments (1979:54). The reason for the police to be treated more favourably in the news is said to be due to the close relationship developed between the police and crime reporters for the benefits of both sides (Fishman, 1980).

Explanation of causes of crime

The amount of space devoted to examining general issues concerning crime constitutes only a small fraction of total newspaper space. It has been found that, in a typical American metropolitan paper's coverage of crime, less than 5% of available space is devoted to crime and its causes, remedies, etc. (Dominick, 1978; Graber, 1980). Crime stories consist primarily of brief accounts of discrete events, with few details and little background material. There are very few attempts to discuss the causes of, or remedies for, crime or to put the problem of crime into a larger context (Garofalo, 1981; Graber, 1980). Ericson and his co-authors (1991) also found that the news downplays

explanations. When there is an attempt to explain crime, the impression is that crime occurred without the opportunity for the police to prevent it; the individual was responsible for it (Sherizen, 1978). One reason for this is that news imperatives work against explanation. As discussed in the earlier chapter, an event could be stripped of its structural conditions or linkages with other events, which could be helpful in having social-control effects (Ericson *et al.*, 1987:268).

Hard Crime News and Soft Crime News

The findings of Sacco and Fair's study of a Canadian newspaper (1988) show that about 80% of the crime articles were of the hard crime news type while only about 20% could be described as soft crime news. Hard news reported on the occurrence of specific crime-related incidents, whereas soft news included general discussion, feature pieces, letters to the editor or editorials. They suggest that there is a tendency in the media to emphasize the reporting of discrete events rather than the interpretation or contextualization of these events. Moreover, it is relatively rare that an incident is judged to be sufficiently newsworthy to warrant long-term attention. This is consistent with some other findings. For example, Dussuyer (1979) found in his study that 93% of items reported on the occurrence of specific criminal offenses or the law enforcement activities following from such offenses, whereas only 7% of crime news items were of a general nature. Ericson *et al.* (1991) found the same pattern in popular newspapers. Their findings will be discussed later in this chapter. It is reported that, among the editorials commenting on crime phenomena, frequent topics were law and the administration of justice and specific crimes (Dussuyer, 1979:59).

Influence of Crime News on the Public

The findings of studies on whether, and how, crime news influences the public are the least consistent among all the findings. The media are the primary source of information about crime for the public (Ericson *et al.*, 1991; Graber, 1980). Graber (1980) reports that 95 percent of the respondents in her samples designated the media as their primary source of information about crime and criminal justice.

Sherizen (1978) argues that, for a reader who absorbs the image of crime presented by the media, crime appears to be out of control, and likely to strike physically at any moment. Similarly, Sheley & Ashkins (1982) suggest that newspapers, receiving summaries of crime trends from the police, tend to give minor coverage to decreases and banner coverage to increases. Therefore, the public gains a sense of increasing crime by noting the stories of increases presented by the media (also see Davis, 1952). According to Roberts and Doob (1989), an overwhelming majority of respondents overestimated the proportion of crimes in Canada involving violence and had distorted views of sentencing. They believe this perception of crime is caused by the media (also see Roberts and Edwards, 1989). Dussuyer (1979) argues that press reports of crime can have a great impact on people's behaviour, either to commit a crime or react to crime, although he agrees that many fundamental questions concerning media influence have not been answered. However, some researchers (Garofalo, 1981; Graber, 1980) believe that public appraisals of the crime and justice system are based on the factual conditions reported in the media rather than on media evaluations. According to these researchers, the public is more influenced by official counts than by media emphasis. According to Roshier (1981),

there is little evidence to suggest that crime news was very influential on public perceptions of crime.

Differences between Newspapers

It has been repeatedly demonstrated that different newspapers devote varying amounts of space to crime news (Cohen, 1975; Dominick, 1978; Meyer 1975; Roshier, 1981). Hauge's findings of Oslo newspapers found that although some generalization could be made about crime news, the differences in coverage of crime between the Oslo newspapers examined were almost as great as the similarities (see Dussuyer, 1979).

Voumvakis and Ericson (1984) conducted a study of news accounts of attacks on women in three Toronto newspapers. In their comparison of one national newspaper and two local ones, they found no substantial differences among them in terms of the news contexts in which attacks on women stories were reported. Approximately two-thirds of all items on the theme appeared in primary news story contexts, with little variation among the three newspapers. It was predicted that the national newspaper, the Globe and Mail, would have had a relatively greater proportion of secondary news, especially features, on the theme. In fact, the newspaper gave the theme considerably less attention than the others. Their explanation for this is that the national newspaper is directed at an elite audience of readers who are interested in business and economic issues, national politics, and international affairs, while local newspapers clearly have different market orientations.

It can be reasonably assumed that there are more similarities between the same type of newspapers than different types of newspapers (Graber, 1980; Shibata, 1993). In

their recent findings based on a series of comprehensive studies of the role of the mass media, Ericson *et al.* (1991) discuss differences between popular and quality news outlets in Canada. Popular newspapers were predominantly local in orientation, whereas quality ones were more diversified. Since the two types of newspaper were intended to serve different audiences, the emphasis was therefore put on different types of crime despite the fact that the overall coverage of crime was similar in each case.

Ericson *et al.* (1991) demonstrate that the quality newspaper gave much more attention to political deviance, official deviance, and white-collar crimes, while the popular newspapers over-emphasized violent crimes. Both paid little attention to common property crimes, such as theft and breaking and entering. The quality newspaper only reported robbery and reported murder when they were related to an important theme in its reporting, whereas these specific crimes were staple items in popular newspapers. While government officials were a dominant source in both types of newspaper, this was particularly true for the quality newspaper. Ericson *et al.* noticed significant variation in specific types of government sources between the two types of newspaper. As mentioned above, the police received the most favorable evaluation in crime news reporting. However, Ericson *et al.* (1991:41) argue that the police perceive quality newspapers as "a threat rather than as an ally and erect different physical, social, and cultural barriers to the access of journalists from quality outlets than is accorded to journalists from popular outlets." They found that the popular newspaper cited police twice as often as did the quality newspaper. Also, the police officials cited in the popular newspaper were mainly

lower-ranking officers, while those cited in the quality newspaper were mainly higher-ranking officers.

Their findings also show that violent crime was particularly dominant in the popular news outlets examined. While the quality newspaper focused more on economic deviance and how it was regulated by the government, the popular newspaper paid particular attention to deviant acts by individuals without an organizational affiliation to their deviance. Their findings about explanation of causes of crime given in the news are consistent with the research literature. However, there is a significant difference between the popular newspaper and quality newspaper, with the latter offering more explanation and recommendations than the former.

Some Noteworthy Content Analyses of Crime News

There have been very few content analyses of crime news coverage in the newspapers of countries other than those in North America and Europe. However, those available generally show a similar pattern of crime coverage despite the differences in cultural, legal, political, social, and economic circumstances in the various societies concerned (Priyadarsini, 1984; Shibata, 1993).

Takemura, cited in Shibata (1993:38-9), conducted a content analysis for three major Japanese national daily newspapers in 1970. His findings suggest that crime news accounted for less than 3% of news space and that homicide was one of the most frequently reported crimes.

A more recent and more ambitious study by Shibata (1993) concludes that crime news, and the images of crime, the criminal justice system, the victims of crime and of criminal offenders portrayed in Japanese newspapers were similar to those in North American newspapers. According to Shibata, the contents of crime news were manufactured by similar newsmaking processes with similar standards of news selection. The two national newspapers in her samples showed a high degree of similarity in the selection of crime stories, the content of evaluative elements, and the source biases, which were not shared by the tabloid newspaper in the samples. To take reporting style as an example, while the national newspapers carried an equally large proportion of primary news, the tabloid devoted considerably more space to secondary news.

Priyadarsini's content analysis of Indian newspapers also shows a similar pattern of crime news coverage to that in North American newspapers (1984). According to Priyadarsini, crime news is a major ingredient of Indian newspapers, although the proportion of the space devoted to crime news is close to the lower percentages in Western newspapers. Unlike Western newspapers, the focus of crime news in Indian newspapers is on the illegal conduct of public officials and public-disorder events. Street crimes are less often found in the Indian press. However, no explanation is given for the phenomenon.

A content analysis of crime coverage in two Nigerian newspapers shows that the government-owned newspaper is less inclined to report crimes than the other one jointly owned by the government and private interests (Murty, *et al*, 1989). However, both newspapers cover political crimes more frequently than any other type of crime. The

authors argue that this can be explained by the historical and political background of the country. The extensive reportage of political crime may approximate the existing state of affairs at the time.

According to Sheley (1986), homicide is a crime emphasized by most Latin American newspapers. His study of the influence of news reporting on public perceptions of homicide in Cali, Colombia, reveals that two-thirds of crime reports involve homicides and that public views in general were related to newspaper coverage of homicide.

Summary

This chapter discussed the general findings of existing content analyses of newspaper coverage of crime. The major issues examined include the proportion of space devoted to crime news; the relationship between crime news and statistics; the images of crime; the criminal justice system; the victims of crime and of criminal offenders presented in the newspapers; the influence of crime reporting on the public, etc. This chapter also discussed some differences found in the content analyses and between different types of newspapers. Besides the content analyses of North American and European newspapers, this chapter also reviews some content analyses of newspapers in Asian, African and Latin American countries. These findings showed how the phenomenon of crime and criminal justice system was portrayed in the news. The various aspects discussed in this chapter help lay the foundation for examining crime news in Chinese newspapers and for a comparison of crime-news reporting between Chinese newspapers and Western newspapers in general. In the next two chapters, the Chinese systems of informal social

control and mass media will be examined in order to provide the backcloth for the discussion and comparison of crime-news reporting.

Chapter IV. Informal Social Control in China

Introduction

Mass media are bound up with the overall dynamics of a society. Thus they must be studied in the context of their social settings in a holistic way. To this end, it is necessary to look at the social and cultural structures in which the media function (Gerson, 1968; McQuail, 1989). In this chapter and the next one, the Chinese media are analyzed based on an examination of the Chinese system of informal social control. This chapter discusses the nature of informal social control in China and its roots in Confucianism, which became a state doctrine in the Han Dynasty, 206 B.C. to A.D. 220, thereby providing the foundation for social control in China for 2000 years (Troyer, 1989:12).

One thing that should be noted here is that, when conducting studies of China, it is necessary to be very careful before making generalizations. As Klein & Gatz put it, "there are many Chinas" (1989:173); differences in region, generation, cohort, etc. need to be taken into consideration. Moreover, because of recent, rapid change in China, anything written tends to become dated quickly. Taking into consideration that changes have also been taking place in the system of informal social control, this chapter aims at providing merely background information for the analysis of crime-news reporting that will be discussed in later chapters.

Nature of Informal Social Control

Deviance and social control are universal facts of social life. When a society develops its own way of looking at deviant behaviour and the machinery for controlling it,

it is that society's cultural patterns or options that make its approach to social control characteristic or unique (Wilson, 1977). The social control system in China has manifested certain noteworthy characteristics. Since the Chinese Communist Party makes all significant social activity its business, social control is exercised through non-governmental institutions such as families, neighbourhood committees, schools, work places, etc. as well as explicitly identifiable institutions of social control (e.g. police organizations, courts). To put it another way, formal agencies make informal groups the locus of social control (Klein & Gatz, 1989; Troyer, 1989). This point will be further demonstrated in later sections.

This seemingly informal social control system is no less formal than social control systems in other countries. Although the formal criminal justice institutions constitute a very important element of the whole system, the key to understanding social control in China lies in the pressures and constraints experienced by citizens in the family, and at the neighborhood, workplace, school, etc. (Allen, 1987; Johnson, 1983; Li, 1977; Troyer, 1989). Such an informal social control system, however, is not an innovation of the Communist Party. Although the Party has made great efforts to bring about social and cultural change in Chinese society, it has not changed the traditional roles of government and still relies heavily on cultural traditions to solve conflicts and exercise social control (Chang, 1988; Troyer, 1989).

In "The Role of Law in Communist China," Victor Li (1970) discusses two models of law. While the external model is based on the establishment of a formal, written set of rules, the internal model stresses an educational process whereby a person first learns, and

then internalizes, the socially accepted values and norms as a result of external reinforcement. Li argues that Chinese law is based on both the external and internal models. Traditionally, the main purpose of law was to educate .

The Communist Party has made use of both models as a means of moulding and controlling behaviour. The external model is now reflected in a comprehensive code of criminal procedure. Following the principles of the internal model, however, proper modes of conduct are taught through a lengthy and continuing educational process consistent with many traditional Chinese ideas. The two models are said to have worked side-by-side in a combination of harmony and competition (Allen, 1987, 1988; Li, 1970). Legal norms are communicated through various means. The mass media, for example, play an important role in spreading messages that urge particular types of conduct and also lay down general guidelines. "Good consequences ensue for those who carry out these urgings, and less pleasant consequences follow for those who do not" (Li, 1978:15).

With the two co-existing models, only an extremely small proportion of the cases involving anti-social or criminal behaviour ever reach the stage of arrest. Most of the crucial actions and decisions concerning criminal justice take place at the peer group level. The majority of less serious crimes are handled through non-legal mechanisms (Allen, 1987; Li, 1978; Troyer, 1989). Therefore, the focus of research should be on the Chinese justice system in a very broad sense.

Paternalism

In China, the government adopts a paternalist stance towards the people. In many societies, according to Wilson (1981:10), dominant positions are often justified on the basis that those who occupy them have a special mandate to define and enforce proper moral behaviour. This is particularly true in Chinese society where, traditionally, it has been assumed that the most desirable function of government was to maintain a virtual monopoly over the development of people's social nature (Munro, 1969; Wilson, 1977; Wilson, 1981). It was the ruler's responsibility to identify the proper rules for conduct and to encourage citizens to follow them. The government had a duty to foster the development of people's opinions. Throughout Chinese history, emperors were deeply interested in educating the general populace and scholar-officials were supposed to propagate their imperial truths to the common people on behalf of the state (Cheek, 1989; Munro, 1977). From heaven the people received their potentially good nature, one Confucian said, and from the King the education which completed it (Nathan, 1985:134).

Today, although the current leadership in China is less authoritarian, it is no less paternalistic than in the past. The fundamentally paternalistic party-state apparatus has continued to decide and provide for people's needs "without allowing them any significant individual or collective responsibility for organizing their own lives and work" (Howard, 1986:295). For the individual, on the other hand, this paternalistic system maintains "a rigid network of duties, obligations, and sanctions that keeps behavior within relatively narrow boundaries" (Grant, 1989:18).

The Party/government employs political power to create new sets of norms as a means of modeling people's behaviour. While denouncing feudalism, the leaders of the Communist Party also assume that their seizure of power gives them a right to total control over the state. Without alienating itself from traditions, the Party believes that it has superior knowledge, abilities and judgment; it knows best what China needs and it is acting legitimately toward the people when directing the formulation of the approved ideology. The Party determines what is correct or incorrect and what should or should not to be done for the people (Cheek, 1989; Grant, 1988; Johnson, 1983; Howard, 1986; Nathan, 1990; Wilson, 1977).

Similarly, Troyer (1989:9, 26-7) points out that, according to the "fosterage principle" accepted by the Communist Party, the primary role of the state is to "cultivate" the people's minds. Thought must be fostered in order to transform society. One of the Party's tasks is to mobilize and organize the people from the "ground up" to develop a society that meets the Party's ideal. To overcome communication barriers between the Party and the people, the so-called "mass line" principle (all correct leadership is necessarily from the people to the people) has been used to get popular support, and to act as a check on official actions or as a counter-balance to official power (Bracey, 1989; Howard, 1988; Johnson, 1983; Li, 1970; McCabe, 1989). However, Howard argues that the technique is used by the Party only to legitimate a basically paternalistic relationship (1986:299).

Group Orientation and Internalized Control

As the primary control is formally vested in social groups rather than in social institutions, there is less reliance on intervention by the latter. To understand Chinese social control, therefore, it is necessary to bear in mind the primacy of the group over the individual and the group over formal societal institutions. This issue will also be discussed in the section on group orientation.

Group identification is a noteworthy characteristic of the Chinese. In China, an individual inevitably belongs more or less permanently to one or more small groups closely affiliated through place of residence, employment, or other ties. The prime function of small groups is to exert social pressures of many sorts to achieve acceptance, compliance, commitment, and action. This group-orientation is extremely effective in bringing to light any member's deviations from the accepted norms of thinking or behaviour. No individual can easily escape the group pressure for conformity to the socially accepted values or norms. Traditionally, with a uniform system of moral values, challenging or testing the boundaries was never considered attractive or heroic (Barnett, 1979; Johnson, 1983; Li, 1977; Redding & Ng, 1989; Wilson, 1977). Since informal social control groups are used to keep surveillance on individuals, this makes possible early detection of deviance as well as early treatment. However, it should be noted that dramatic changes in the government's political and economic policies since the 1970s have brought about rapid social changes in various ways, especially in recent years. The tradition of group identification may have been weakened during the process of the social changes.

In the East, according to Allen (1988), there is a greater emphasis on discipline and self-control than in the West. This is an especially noteworthy characteristic of Chinese society. The Chinese definition of deviance blends law and morality together. A violation would not only constitute unlawful behaviour, but also immoral behaviour. As Chinese are basically afraid of social criticism, misconduct would bring them a sense of shame and potential damage to their family reputation (Chang, 1988; Jan, 1983).

The Communist Party puts enormous stress on normative goals and values. It believes that there is an intimate link between thinking and behaviour. If people are induced to accept the right thinking, their compliance will be close to being automatic (Barnett, 1979). ‘When people develop the right attitude toward the norms and the habit of obeying them, control is internalized rather than being applied from without’ (Munro, 1969:112). Where such self-control fails, social scrutiny and pressure will arise to correct and control the deviant. The internalization of the socially accepted norms and values is considered a more effective means of controlling behaviour than the use of coercion. It is argued that such an internal form of control is even more difficult to escape than is the case with external controls (Allen, 1987; Jan, 1983; Johnson, 1983; Li, 1970, 1977; Munro, 1969).

Punishment

The majority of Chinese people, especially those in rural areas, are historically governed and controlled by family discipline, local customs and traditions. When approved and expected conduct is not forthcoming or, even worse, violated, the common forms of

punishment involve loss of respect, humiliation, shame, disgrace, ridicule, banishment, etc. (Munro, 1969; Wilson, 1981:12-3).

There are also administrative sanctions imposed by various organizations and enterprises owned by the state. These administrative methods include criticism and self-criticism, warning, negative records in one's personal file, demotion, being fined or fired, and so forth. Party disciplinary punishment is another type of sanction on party members, which is imposed by the party committees at different levels. If these sanctions fail, the formal justice institutions get involved. There is no concept of "victimless crimes," since it is considered that these acts directly harm all of society (Li, 1977). Before the Criminal Law is applied, there are the Regulations of the People's Republic of China Concerning Punishments for Disturbing Public Order, which also include police-administered sanctions, namely, those that are still within the jurisdiction of the formal criminal justice system. Under these sanctions, the sentence of two-year labor camp can be imposed and it can be extended if no remorse is exhibited. However, people who are punished according to these regulations are not regarded as criminals. (All the regulations have been compiled and published yearly by the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China.)

However, the rules for administering sanctions are obscure (Lubman, 1969). For example, a specific case could be sanctioned under the Criminal Code, the Regulations Concerning Punishments for Disturbing Public Order, administrative methods, or the Party disciplinary procedures. To reduce and prevent government corruption, for example, the Ministry of Supervision established in 1987 is responsible for dealing with cases involving

non-party members. Meanwhile, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection is the body that deals with corruption among Party members (McCabe, 1989). Of the cases handled by such organizations, only those that are considered most serious are referred to the criminal justice institutions, and in this case, the people's procuratorates. (For a description of the functions of the procuratorates and other institutions, see Levitz, 1988.)

A major characteristic of Chinese informal social control is that it is proactive. The main form of social control has long been before-the-fact socialization rather than after-the-fact arrest. Taking into consideration the size of the population and territory, this type of self-policing is a practical means of controlling behaviour, since it is much cheaper than the cost of the maintenance of an even larger state police apparatus (Allen, 1988; Johnson, 1983; Li, 1970).

Confucianism and Informal Social Control

Confucius (551-479 B.C.) lived during the Zhou Dynasty (1122-221 B.C.). He was the most influential Chinese philosopher, whose ideals, integrated with other schools of thought, have persisted throughout the subsequent 2,000 years of Chinese history. As the Communist Party often draws on cultural traditions in devising and operating the social control system, it is necessary to undertake an analysis of the traditional ideas and methods developed by Confucians.

Confucius once said that "equal queens, equal sons, equal powers and equal cities-all lead to disorder" (cited in Young, 1981:42). Here he sees society as dependent upon the hierarchical relationships between different classes and positions. All individuals are

caught up in this hierarchical system of allegiances and dominance. Equality between positions is rejected as impossible since this would only cause chaos and disorder. According to Confucians, it is the superior's task to teach the inferior right from wrong (Grant, 1989; Jan, 1983; Troyer, 1989). Once the people recognize right from wrong, they will live quietly. This notion of righteousness is a central concept of justice in Confucianism (Young, 1981). Law or rules protect the status quo as well as controlling deviant behaviour.

--Rule by Persons Versus Rule by Law

Little significance was attached to the codification of law in China either in the past or in modern times. The strong degree of skepticism toward formal law and the legal system has its roots in Confucian philosophy (Troyer, 1989; Wilson, 1977). The subordination of law to policy is characteristic of traditional China (McCabe, 1989). Lubman (cited in McCabe, 1989:116) summarizes four important aspects of traditional Chinese law: "1. The dominance of informal means of settling disputes and punishing minor offenses, 2. the lack of functional separation between law and bureaucracy, 3. popular fear and avoidance of the legal system, 4. the subordination of law to a dominant state philosophy."

Confucius said: "Lead the people by laws and regulate them by punishments, and the people will try to avoid wrongdoing but will have no sense of shame. Lead the people by virtue and regulate them by the rules of propriety, and the people will have a sense of shame, and moreover, will become good (Li, 1981:104)." Confucian philosophy asserts that the superior person is concerned with virtue, whereas the inferior person is concerned

with law; the superior person understands what is right, whereas the inferior person understands only what is profitable (Troyer, 1989:86).

Munro (1969:110-2) argues that there are three reasons for the Confucians' opposition to the rule of law. First, a universally applied law would undercut the distinctions between noble (superior) and mean (inferior) in the society which are essential to maintain social order. Second, laws cannot cover all possible circumstances. Third, the function of law in maintaining social order is through the fear of punishment. However, law does not change people's attitudes, and, therefore, cannot change their behaviour. Thus, social control should be ideally maintained through the presentation of virtuous models of attitudes and behaviour that would be emulated by the people and made habitual. This system of rule by persons instead of rule by law will ensure proper conduct even when there is no one monitoring it.

This Confucian philosophy has helped shape and develop the informal system of social control in China. The formal justice system became the last resort. Even when there is law, Jan (1983) argues, the law is deliberately made unclear to the general public so as to enable the ruling class to have total control of its subjects and maintain the status quo. It makes the testing and challenging of the law more difficult when the boundaries and punishments are not clearly defined. According to Jan, the strategy is to make the individual overestimate the severity of the punishment in order to derive the maximum deterrent effect. For the Chinese, traditionally, involvement in the courts, which would have severe consequences, is an experience to be avoided (Allen, 1988; McCabe, 1989; Troyer, 1989). Gilmartin (1990) gives an example showing that the Chinese, particularly

women, have little faith in the law for the protection of their rights. Women, victims of assault, rape, forced marriage, marital abuse, etc. often believe that only by committing suicide can they make the legal system intercede on their behalf and prosecute their attackers.

--Group-orientation

Confucians believe that "any person, household, or state in a condition of disorder is likely to be taken over and ruled by others, while a group that keeps its own house in order will prevail" (Nathan, 1985:52-7). Thus they stress the notions of authority, responsibility, and the subordination of private to collective interests (interest of small groups, such as family, clan, etc.); and they emphasize the centrality of society rather than the importance of the individual. There was much less individualism in traditional Chinese culture than in Western cultures. There were no rights for citizens until the Western concept of rights was brought into China after the 1911 revolution when the imperial system of government was overthrown (Allen, 1987; Jan, 1983; Schell, 1988).

Troyer (1989) suggests that in a society that places a low value on individualism and that emphasizes the values of the group, a sense of responsibility to the group is paramount. This is true for Chinese society. During the process of socialization, messages sent to children frequently stress the primacy of the group, the individual's responsibility to be cooperative with others and the need for obedience to the goals of the group (Wilson, 1981). Chinese values stress strong group identification, conformity to group expectations, cooperation with other group members, and loyalty to leaders. An individual "should act through the group, at times subordinate his own interests to the

interests of the group, and derive satisfaction from seeing benefits that accrue to the group” (Li, 1978:95). Within the group, one is expected to follow the leaders, to be loyal to them, and to determine one's own achievements by comparing them with other group members. With this group identification, individuals are especially concerned with how others see them. With this emphasis on the values of the community or group at large, intrusion into other people's lives is taken for granted and viewed positively.

Early in the 1900's, during the Qing Dynasty, Mr. Liang Qichao, a famous scholar and reformer, translated Bentham's writing along with those of Hobbes, Rousseau, and others into Chinese. To present Bentham's pleasure-pain argument to a Chinese audience, Liang added the notion that one's own pleasures are largely dependent on the welfare of the group. "All true weighers of their own interests will devote themselves to the collective welfare. The private interests that appear to clash with public interests are only a kind of lower or illusory interest, at a higher level of reasoning, such conflicts disappear” (Nathan, 1985:52-7). In his book Discos and Democracy, Schell (1988:180) tries, through one of his interviewees' words, to explain why the Chinese have been so loyal to the Communist Party. In Chinese classical literature, according to the interviewee, there are many stories or models that may be drawn on in order to teach and reinforce the concept of obedience and the sense of obligation to society. People are required to attend to the various relationships that demand loyalty and obedience before they attend to themselves.

--Moral Education

Confucian philosophy assumes that human nature is basically good and individuals can be taught or led to virtue. The beliefs people hold will definitely have some

behavioural implications; there is no thought that does not entail some consequence for action. Therefore, education and training are the best means to produce virtuous people; and good education is the vehicle to perpetuate cultural norms and values (Bracey, 1989; Jan, 1983; Munro, 1969; Troyer, 1989).

The role of education in social control has been emphasized explicitly and consciously since ancient times. Education is regarded as the key to the solution of urgent political and social problems (Munro, 1969). Various forms of education have been employed to make people understand and appreciate social values. The primary aim of education is to give people a permanent and correct attitude toward established norms. If proper norms are not defined for people to learn, then whatever they do will not correspond to what is correct for them to do, which will inevitably, cause social disorder.

Confucians see people mainly as a passive force to be shaped and influenced. The educational environment determines whether or not people will be good or evil (Cheek, 1989; Dawson, 1989:47). In Confucianism, deviance is explained in terms of a history of inadequate or wrongly directed educational or societal influences. Therefore, it is the educational methods or procedures that need to be improved so as to let people's sense of values develop and properly function. A change in educational techniques is a key to changing human behaviour (Munro, 1969:82, 162-9; Wilson, 1977:32).

According to Munro, Chinese learning theory assumes that people are innately capable of learning from models. Learning can occur unintentionally, through the unconscious imitation of those around one. It can occur intentionally, through the

purposive attempt to duplicate the attitudes and conduct of someone else. Most people are attracted to, and consciously seek to emulate, virtuous models (1969:52, 96-7, 162-171). Providing virtuous models is the best way to change the behaviour of large numbers of citizens (Munro, 1969; Young, 1981).

Munro (1969) argues that model emulation is not unique in China, but the degree to which it has been used as a technique of social control is far greater than in any other land. Models have been presented to people for emulation throughout Chinese history (Munro, 1969). The same assumptions of education, which include the notion of moral training, are held by the Communist Party. For the Party, a great deal of effort has been invested in attempting to discover or create suitable models; and political education has always been the preferred means of eliciting conscious and voluntary action from the people (Johnson, 1983; Munro, 1969; Troyer, 1989).

Summary

This chapter is intended to serve as the basis for the discussion of Chinese media in the next chapter. It discusses the nature of informal social control in China. There are two ways of maintaining social order, i.e. through informal and formal social control systems. In China, the two models have been used to complement each other. Both of them have been used as a means of moulding and controlling behaviour. However, it is the informal system that has been more widely used, whereas the formal one has been used only as the last resort. The Communist Party has developed and utilized various means and methods to promote desired social changes. This Chapter also discusses some important premises

of Confucianism that serve as the grounds of many practices of social control adopted by the contemporary Party/government.

Chapter V. The Chinese News Media and Social Control

Introduction

The establishment of the People's Republic enabled the Communist Party to realize the full potential of its propaganda. The resources of the state have been vigorously mobilized to propagate the Party's desired changes. Every conceivable communication channel in China--the Party's organizational hierarchy, the mass media and small local groups--has been employed to carry the Party's messages, its societal goals, and its desired norms and values to the people (Chu, 1979; Yu, 1979). In particular, the mass media have been acting as the most important institutional connection between the Communist Party and the people. The role of informal controls is particularly apparent in the area of the media (Nathan, 1985; Polunbaum, 1992).

This chapter examines the Chinese communication system and discusses the functions of the mass media, particularly the press, which began in its organized form during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. to A.D. 220) (Chang, 1989:4). Finally, how and why the media can operate as a social control apparatus will be explored.

Cultural Background

To thoroughly understand the historical background of the Chinese communications system is, in fact, to study virtually all feasible vehicles of human expression and every conceivable means of influencing people's attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, one must look, in examining the Chinese communication system, at things other than the modern media (Chu, 1979; Barnett, 1979; Yu, 1979). Moreover, in the

analysis of the Chinese media, it is necessary to refer back to traditional Chinese cultural patterns in order to explain contemporary practices which show a strong continuity with China's past (Pye, 1979). According to Lee (1990), the media have grown up and operate today in the shadow of China's long heritage of central government autocracy. No Chinese leader has been able to escape from the shadow of the imperial past.

Yu suggests that the Chinese communication system is both an instrument and an outcome of the Chinese Communist Revolution. "It is shaped by Chinese Communist politics and policies, by the personalities who control it, and by the problems with which the Party is confronted (1979:27)." This system includes two major elements, i.e. the mass media and interpersonal communication. Both of them are successfully used by the Party for the maintenance of social order and for the achievement of desired social changes. The media are the most powerful channel for announcing and spreading the Party's messages as law, whereas small groups function as a vital part in the system for downward communication to the entire population.

There is a crucial link in China between communication and organizations. On the one hand, communication is seen as a means to create new political and social organizations; on the other hand, all the political and social organizations are utilized as important channels of communication. Barnett contends that this makes the Chinese system fundamentally different from that in any modern pluralistic society, where no disciplined organizational structure exists, nor is one desired (Barnett, 1979). The mass media use a variety of means supported by a network of organized interpersonal communication at the grassroots level. The media have become increasingly specialized

and complicated, and they have served as a central institution in its daily functioning since 1949 when the Communist Party took over power (Nathan, 1985).

Since the two key components, the media and the interpersonal communication through small groups, are integrated, an analysis of the media cannot be undertaken without examining the interpersonal communication, and vice versa. However, here the emphasis is on examining the nature of the mass media, and the brief discussion of interpersonal communication is only to facilitate a better understanding of the media system.

Media History

China's media have been in essence educational and used to promote social change. The concept of using communication for social change is almost as old as Chinese civilization. Chu (1977:21) argues that Confucius advocated the use of value-oriented communication through moral teaching, model emulation, rituals, folk music, and ancestor worship to change what he considered to be an unhealthy society back to its old form in the early Zhou Dynasty.

According to Chang (1989), China was among the first nations to print newspapers. The earliest newspaper in China originated in the first half of the 8th century and continued in various forms until the 20th century. However, journalism in China remained largely undeveloped until the late 19th century. The rise of journalism and newspapers reinforced the educational nature of the media. In the 1890s, Liang Qichao (1873-1929), along with three other main advocates, called for the adoption of a

constitutional monarchy. The idea of reform to achieve national salvation caught on and became a political movement with the support of the people. Among other activities, they began publishing newspapers to spread their ideas on reform so that China could be strong enough to resist foreign aggression. While criticizing the government, they proposed, through their newspapers and magazines, major changes to resolve the national crisis. Following the failure of the reform in 1898, Liang devoted himself solely to the task of propaganda and his journalism became the model for China's educational journalism (Chang, 1989; Cheek, 1989).

The Communist Party took hold of the age-old Chinese tool of value-oriented communication and blended it with the task of agitation and propaganda from the very beginning of its establishment (Chu, 1977). During the period between 1921, when the Party was established, and 1949, when the People's Republic was established, the Party attached great importance to the press, which was used as a means to mobilize people for revolution. The media came to play an integral part in the Party's management system. It is said that the impact of the press in influencing people's thinking and winning them over was significant during that period. This tradition of the Party's use of the press has remained since then (Starck and Xu, 1988). Historically, the communication system in China was effective, but it was slow. The diffusion of cultural values and social practices through this system was the result of a very gradual filtering-down process. In the People's Republic, as Barnett puts it, once the impulses are sent by the centre, they are transmitted very rapidly throughout the entire country (1979:389).

The Media's Claimed Functions

The media's functions today would sound familiar to the renowned advocate of reform, Liang Qichao. Once Mao Zedong, the late Chairman of the Communist Party, said that the media exist to propagate the policies of the Party, to educate the masses, to organize the masses and to mobilize the masses (Chang, 1989:27; Bishop, 1989:93). A speech by Mao in 1948 is considered the classic statement of the media's function of propagating the Party's policies: "The role and power of newspapers consist in their ability to bring the Party program, the Party line, the Party's general and specific policies, its tasks and methods of work before the masses in the quickest and most extensive way" (cited in Chu, 1977:27; Chu, 1979:57; Nathan, 1985:154). He later repeated this, saying that "the most important responsibility of newspapers is to propagandize party policies, link up party policies, reflect party work, and reflect the lives of the masses" (cited in Cheek, 1989:57).

Chu suggests that China's development has drawn its strength from the participation of the people rather than from the use of materials and capital. Mao firmly believed that development must start with the people, "the people, and the people alone, are the motivating force in the making of world history" (cited in Chu, 1977:2). The role of the mass media is emphasized as carriers of ideological admonitions rather than as sources of news and information. The mass media act as an instrument for the dissemination of the Party's messages and the mobilization of the population for production and class struggle. It is believed that the media can be used to support the

change of the material base of the social system and to cultivate a favorable ideological consciousness as well (Chu, 1977; Cushman, 1987).

On mobilizing the people, Mao said, "we should go to the masses and learn from them, synthesize their experience into better, articulated principles and methods, then do propaganda among the masses, and call upon them to put these principles and methods into practice so as to solve their problems and help them achieve liberation and happiness" (cited in Chu, 1977:24-5). Chu (1977:24) argues that this was Mao's way of bringing about structural and ideological transformation in China. Communication is at the very center of the whole approach. The Communist Party has relied on this communication system to achieve its objectives.

Newspapers are considered to be of great importance in this respect. "Newspapers are the most useful tools for Party propaganda and agitation work," said Mao, "every day reaching hundreds of thousands of masses and influencing them. Because of this, successful handling of newspapers is a central task of the Party" (cited in Cheek, 1989:57). The Guidelines on Journalism also states that "we already know that newspapers do not only report the news, they are also sharp weapons in constructing our nation and party and in reforming our work and our lives" (Cheek, 1989:58). The news media are supposed to function as the eyes, ears and mouthpiece of the Party, and to propagate its policies and philosophy. At the same time, the media also are supposed to be the eyes, ears and mouthpiece of the people to criticize official misconduct and give voice to popular grievances (Polumbaum, 1992; Womack, 1990).

Newspapers are expected to provide intelligence to the Party leaders on the public's feelings and behaviour and the performance of lower-level cadres. They are expected to help the leaders and people supervise the bureaucracy through the exposure of official wrongdoing (Bishop, 1989; Nathan, 1985). As this is supposed to be a two-way communication, the Party leadership expects to learn from the masses and then reorganize their experiences into new programs of socialist reconstruction. Newspapers have played an essential role in this respect (Chu, 1979).

Hu Yaobang, former Party General Secretary, reaffirmed in 1985 the role of the press and of journalists to educate the public, uphold party policy, help the masses (under the Party's guidance), and provide social research and public criticism to improve the Party (Cheek, 1989). Although criticism is urged, it nevertheless should be approved by the officials. Hu Jiwei, former editor of the People's Daily, said that criticism should be constructive and guided by party organs (Chu, 1977:31).

Polumbaum (1992) argues that the media are not monolithic. Although the People's Daily functions to set up the agenda, other types of newspaper and medium, such as local newspapers, radio and television, may want to choose their particular themes of reporting with their own styles. Even journalists who work for the People's Daily have advocated press reforms (see the section on "Press Reform" for further discussion). Facing dramatic social and political changes, the party tries to maintain central management over the news. All media organizations and employees are expected to know and follow basic policies and guidelines emanating from a working group under the

Politburo and further interpreted and disseminated by central party and government bodies.

Party Journalism

In Visualizing Deviance, Ericson *et al* (1987) point out that research on social reaction to deviance has focused on the more obvious agents of social control, whereas the role of journalists as central agents in the reproduction of order has been ignored. Thus, in examining the relationship between the mass media and social control in China, the functions of journalists are also explored.

Over the years, the Communist Party gradually developed its own theories on journalism. The foremost demand on Chinese journalists is obedience, said Liu Binyan (1992:53), a well-known veteran Party journalist who was purged twice during his forty-year career. Journalists are answerable first and foremost to the Party/government. An explicitly and repeatedly stated requirement for journalists is obedience to the Party leadership. They must speak strictly on behalf of the Party (Chang, 1989; Lee, 1990; Polunbaum, 1992).

Hu Jiwei, former chief editor of People's Daily, outlined the Party's requirements for journalists. The journalist must report directly to the Party what he/she observes and hears during the course of his/her work, behaving as the "eyes and ears" of the Party and as the "assistants" of leading Party cadres (Grant, 1988). Hu Yaobang once used similar language; "Journalism should reflect what the Party and government say, and espouse the Party line and government policy....Freedom or rights cannot be separated from

responsibilities and obligations. There is no freedom without responsibilities or rights without obligations" (Bishop, 1989:152). The main task of Party journalism, according to him, is simply "to use a vast quantity of vivid facts and speeches promptly and accurately to promote the ideas of the Party" (cited in Lee, 1990:8).

In spite of these strict requirements, China has never had an official censorship system. The regulations concerning mass media are vague, and vary from time to time. The informal censorship functions through the network of Party committees which control the publishing houses. The party committee of each organization takes responsibility for censoring what it publishes (Nathan, 1990). The political standing and personalities of the officials in charge of the mass media play a very important role in determining what goes into a newspaper. In fact, there is room for journalists to expand their freedom (Liu, 1992).

However, the journalists have in general observed the Party's requirements and kept in tune with the Party's line. The ambiguity of the editorial control works to keep them in check. Journalists themselves act as the most effective censors of news. Here, the weight of tradition as an influence on Chinese journalism cannot be ignored. Probably the most important factor is internalized control. It is believed that the journalists exercise self-censorship far more often than they feel external censorship (Bishop, 1989). Just like their counterparts in the West where editors are chosen, promoted, and rewarded because they basically agree with the owner of the newspaper, the Chinese journalists keep themselves in line largely through internalized self-censorship. For the same reason, they are selected and rewarded because they agree with the owner of the newspapers (the

Communist Party, in the case of the People's Daily) (Bishop, 1989; Polumbaum, 1990). Referring to the People's Daily, Tan (1990:160-1) suggests that although the latitude for editorial judgments built into the organization of work leaves room for editors to stray away from the official line, they seldom do so "because their training, socialization and positions made them staunch loyalists and devoted propagandists."

At the institutional level, the media are an arm of the ruling party. At the individual level, "this innovation has built on existing Chinese traditions of the scholar-bureaucrat to fortify the modern intelligentsia's identification with the state" (Polumbaum, 1990:34). The price of dissent is always high. According to Polumbaum (1990), journalists are already integrated into the political system as junior partners of the political elite. They have defined their interests and performed their work according to the requirements of whoever is in power.

Polumbaum (1992:52) contends that the contemporary philosophies and practices of journalism are not simply creations of the Chinese communists, but rather are hybrids of old and new. Chinese journalists have a culturally inherited propensity to accept news management. She discusses the notion of loyal opposition to describe journalists who have ever criticized the Party or departed from the Party's line. According to her, loyal opposition is an old and time-honored concept, and the journalists who criticize those in power are doing so from a patriotic stance. On the other hand, journalists hold a paternalistic view similar to that of the Party leaders. They share the same stance as that of the Party--namely that the people need to be guided and educated (Polumbaum, 1990). Referring to Confucianism, Cheek suggests that there are powerful roots for educational

journalism and weak roots for critical journalism in Chinese society. The Chinese style of journalism seeks to guide an uncritical audience which must be protected from erroneous information (Cheek, 1989).

Journalism eats from two pots: it depends on state funding to publish newspapers, and it also depends on a Government-owned organizations to subscribe to the papers (Polumbaum 1990). Thus they have been assigned a difficult balancing act as a link between the Party and the people. Serving the political authorities or serving the public has obviously caused tension for journalists (Cheek, 1989; Chang, 1989; Polumbaum, 1990). They are described as "riding the horse between the leaders and the masses, afraid of displeasing both (Polumbaum, 1990:45).

Social Control Apparatus

--Organizational Control

In China, newspapers must be licensed by the Party/government in the name of certain organizations. Publications, research institutes, and most enterprises are hooked into the Party's control network. No totally independent newspapers or other organizations exist (Nathan, 1990; Womack, 1990). The mass media are under the effective direct or indirect control of the Party's Propaganda Department or its local bureaus. There are general policy statements to guide the news organizations. Moreover, the Party directly gives specific instructions to their administrators, editors, and reporters (Polumbaum, 1990). All newspapers are answerable to the Party and directly supervised

by Party groups and committees within and above the units that publish them (Nathan, 1985; Nathan, 1990; Polunbaum, 1990).

The senior Party leaders are actively involved in the management of a few official publications of the Party's Central Committee. The People's Daily is considered the most important organ. According to Nathan (1985), Zhou Enlai, the late premier, read every word and corrected thousands of manuscripts for the paper. Also, Mao used to publish his writings as unsigned People's Daily editorials. What is published is largely determined by the policy needs of the Party. This remains true although major changes have happened in the media system in China.

Under this system, the media are not allowed to criticize the Party. Whenever the press intends to publish something counter to the Party's policies, administrative interference and censorship will occur (Bishop, 1989; Starck & Xu, 1988). Only individuals may be criticized, even at the highest level, and only then with the Party's permission. Hu Jiwei once said that "The handling of criticism of high-ranking cadres who have committed mistakes is always linked to the whole situation. To resolve a problem concerning the situation requires the Party committee making the decision. The newspaper cannot make the decision without the Party committee...it is only the Party's assistant, a propaganda and opinion tool under its leadership (Bishop, 1989:151)."

--Power Struggle

The primary functions of the mass media are to indoctrinate, mobilize and control the population for the implementation of the Party's ideology and philosophy (Barnett,

1979; Chu, 1979; Cushman, 1987). Nathan (1990) argues that factionalism, based on personal loyalty, has long been a feature of Chinese politics. This is equally true for the Communist Party. When factions are struggling for power, the mass media are always used to "transmit very important political messages to one another in such a way that the outside world does not understand or even notice" (Yu, 1979:46). This function of the media as an instrument of the political power struggle has been expanding with the growth of the Party.

Lee (1990:5) argues that the mass media are the loyal servants of the Party, but not of the people. They are used by the Party to create a "total institution" and impose ideological hegemony on the civil society. According to him, the mass media do not simply echo official slogans; they may also be used to initiate policy shifts that come after intense power struggles within the Party. The anti-rightist campaign and the cultural revolution are taken as examples. During both periods, articles instructed or even written by Mao Zedong appeared in the newspapers to start the campaigns.

According to Pye (1979), however, the leaders of the Party need to present the appearance of consensus to the people even though they compete for power among themselves, since the present system remains a traditional elitist form of politics in which the ruling class monopolizes the power in the society and manages the affairs of the masses.

--Propaganda Tool

Propaganda is not a negative word in Chinese. As has been discussed earlier, there is a long tradition of scholars and officials propagating the officially approved moral values. The rulers in China accept this role with no exception (Cheek, 1989). The media's primary function has never been to inform; rather, it is to serve as a tool of propaganda. The journalists tend to accept this responsibility despite whatever complaints they may have. (See the section of 'Press Reform' for further discussion.) The Party has relied heavily on the media adhering to its propaganda guidelines to reach the people who live in an environment dominated by various forms of constant propaganda (Cheek, 1989; Nathan, 1985).

Traditional methods of moral indoctrination sought to educate and train the people. For the Communist Party, however, the demands for propaganda have increased because society must be changed according to the Party's ideals and people must be mobilized to perceive and act on the overriding common interests they share with the Party. The media must work to stimulate action, to change beliefs and ideological orientations, and then to help change behavioural patterns (Barnett, 1979; Chu, 1979; Nathan, 1985; Pye, 1979).

--No Bad News

Historically, the Chinese common people were always presented with a display of peace and prosperity by the ruling class. This remains true for the Communist Party. Information input is screened and the expression of divergent views is discouraged. From

the propaganda, the people are only able to know whatever causes least alarm and least damage to Party prestige and presents no challenge to the authority of the Party (Chu, 1977; Grant, 1988). News is not the latest report of an event. It is any information that can be used to build up the socialist state (Bishop, 1989).

Therefore, journalists are required to construct a positive picture. For public news reports, emphasis must be placed on "good" news, whereas "bad" news is always toned down or not carried at all. The proper proportion of praise to blame is set at 80:20, that is, criticism or negative news should be restricted to 20% of the coverage, with 80% devoted to propagating the party's achievements (Chu, 1979; Grant, 1988; Lee, 1990). As explained by an editor of the People's Daily, "(b)y relying solely on reports of the good side, it is hard to move some people; it is also hard to find anything new to say. By exposing a few negative examples, news reports more easily make an impression" (Lee, 1990:8). During the years from 1958 to 1960, according to Liu Binyan (1992), although millions of people died of famine, no journalist was punished for writing "false" reports of achievements. Coverage exaggerating achievements has since flourished.

Many events in China go uncovered or are covered only in internally circulated bulletins. Taboo topics have been defined situationally. Newspaper items and stories contain carefully edited versions of those journalistic investigations which are considered suitable for educating the people. Critical reports should be selected for the potential benefits to the Party in its current power struggle. Also, efforts are made to avoid painting too dark a picture of the society in the aggregate. Officially, they must reflect a Marxist standpoint. Nathan (1985:154-5) cites Liu Shaoqi, late President of the People's Republic,

that anything which is thought to be against Marxism must be restricted, and that anything that is thought to benefit the Party's enemy is not allowed to be published. Instead, Liu suggested that journalists present such material in an internal report. Internal reports are prepared by most newspapers and contain detailed information on subjects considered too touchy or sensitive for the public. Since they do not see these internal reports, the public will not be adversely affected. The internal reports go directly to the Party's leadership organs providing an important means for politicians to check up on the administration of policies (Grant, 1988). Grant argues that the journalist, therefore, has a dual function, i.e. the Party's intelligence gatherer and propagandist.

Liu Shaoqi, once told a group of journalists in 1948: "(t)he party doesn't fear anything--except for one thing. We never feared American imperialism or the atomic bomb.... We only fear becoming divorced from the masses....The center relies on you as an instrument to keep in touch with the masses..." (cited in Nathan, 1985:155). The importance of the media's role as a liaison between the Party and the people has always been stressed. People may send their opinions to the official press, but they have no legitimate means to influence the response. The Party leadership, however, tries to make the ideas of the Party sound as if they were the ideas of the people. It is done in such a way that, on the one hand, the public will appear to be expressed and, on the other, that the goals of the Party are achieved (Yu, 1979). Nathan (1985:227) argues that "instead of enabling the citizen to influence government, the entire web of participatory organizations is designed to, and does, render the citizen more susceptible to control from the party center in Beijing. Chinese democracy involves participation without influence." Similarly,

according to Barnett (1979), the Chinese communication system is most effective in achieving control and compliance. How effective it is in achieving basic value change and real commitment is harder to judge.

--Crime News

It is argued that crimes have been a staple of news fare in the Western press for centuries (see discussion in Chapters I and II, and Polumbaum, 1990). In China, however, it was not until the past decade that crimes, accidents, and natural and man-made disasters began to appear in the newspapers. Even now, they are not covered as a matter of routine. Crime stories are considered a vehicle for periodic guidance and education. They are not chosen for the purpose of increasing circulation. According to some journalists, they "can't report everything --there is too much crime. The criteria are: is it representative? and does it have any educational aspect?" (Polumbaum, 1990:57) It is believed that crime reports could lead to more crimes or make readers lose faith in the Party. Gilmartin (1990) argues that it is deeply rooted in Chinese traditions to regard violence as an embarrassing indicator of governmental mismanagement. Polumbaum (1990) contends that the true motive for suppressing the reporting of crime news may be to hide incompetence or mistakes.

Beginning in 1979, according to Gilmartin (1990), reports about violence against women began to appear in the press and these constituted a significant portion of all the reports about crime. In 1983, when there was a crackdown on crimes that were categorized as endangering public security and the notion of swift and severe punishment of crime was promulgated, rape became a subject of public discussion. Newspapers

carried stories of the harsh punishments meted out to the offenders. Robberies and embezzlement and other so-called economic crimes also received media attention. Gilmartin (1990:203) cautions that "the sketchy and editorialized nature of these published accounts precludes both a systematic examination of the legal intervention process and a statistical analysis."

There is no uniform policy about publishing news. Different types of newspapers may report crime news in different manners. For example, the Fazhi Bao (Legal System), a nationwide-distributed popular newspaper should, by its nature, carry a considerably larger number of crime stories than Guangming Ribao, another national newspaper focusing more on science and technology. Their styles of reporting may also vary. The emphasis of a national newspaper should not be the same as that of a local newspaper. Thus, their styles of crime-news reporting are not supposed to be the same. Besides differences in the type of newspaper, there are also regional differences. In reporting police and court news, for example, newspapers in Beijing tend to wait for the judicial process to take its course, whereas in southern cities there are more reports of unsolved crimes or investigations that are still in progress (Polumbaum, 1990).

In the People's Daily, there are four major types of report that cover crime news: general discussions of the phenomenon of crime and criminal justice system (Crime statistics are often an important part of this type of reports); editorials or commentaries that usually comment on a specific crime case; features that report the experience of a specific individual or the development of a specific case in relation to crime and the

criminal justice system; and reports of specific crime cases. An example of a report of a general discussion is given below to demonstrate how crime is reported in the newspaper.

A general discussion of kidnapping (Dec. 4, 1989, p.3) includes three paragraphs. The first one (two sentences) introduces an effective strategy used by a county government in Anhui Province in dealing with illegal marriages and with those who are engaged in kidnapping and selling women. So far, it says, about 700 women have been saved, more than 160 persons who were involved in kidnapping and selling the women have been arrested, of whom 100 have been sentenced. The second paragraph (three sentences) tells readers that the women who were kidnapped were mostly from other provinces. Among them, there were not only workers and peasants but also government officials and university graduate students. The traders in human beings used various means and methods to cheat, trap and abuse these women. Some of them made huge profits and got rich in this trade. The third paragraph with three sentences describes actions taken jointly by different organizations under the leadership of the county government to counter-attack the traders. They have shown dramatic effects, it says. An example is given in one sentence to illustrate the effects. After being sold to this county, a woman kidnapped from another province was moved to 20 different villages by her buyer. However, she was freed after 59 days as the result of continuous efforts made by government officials. This is a very brief report of this type, but the way the story develops is no different from the way it develops in longer reports. The style, flavor, and wording of this type of report show a similar pattern regardless of the length and particular content.

This is true even for reports of specific crime cases. However, more specific information about the offender, the incident, and the sentencing is provided.

The People's Daily

People's Daily, (or Renmin Ribao) the most important party publication, is the principal official organ of the Communist Party. This means that it is a government/party organization, completely financed by the government. The newspaper makes profits, which are re-invested by the government (Bishop, 1989:154).

The People's Daily has the world's largest readership. The circulation of the newspaper since its establishment in 1948 has ranged from three to seven million (Liu, 1990; Merrill, 1983). It is said that there are numerous techniques to ensure that the people will read the newspaper (White, 1979). Although its circulation is not large compared to the total population of China, the total number of its readers far exceeds its circulation. It is estimated that each copy of the People's Daily reaches about 25 people (Cushman, 1987). A survey in 1987 showed that within China the readership of the paper consisted of 81 percent of all scientists and technicians, 80 percent of government employees, 52 percent of professors and teachers, 42 percent of workers, 36 percent of students, and 13 percent of peasants. A breakdown of the paper's total readership showed that workers accounted for 33 percent of the total; government employees, 22 percent; scientists and technicians, 12 percent; peasants, 9 percent; employees in business, 7 percent; professors and teachers, 6 percent (Chang, 1989:96-7). Besides its headquarters in Beijing, the paper is printed in 22 other major Chinese cities to ensure that people all over the country can read the paper the same day it is printed. It is also printed in Hong

Kong, Tokyo, and San Francisco for delivery to 123 countries and regions outside China (Chang, 1989:93-4).

As the organ of the Party, the newspaper has an official duty to propagate the Party's political line, policies, and tasks among the people. As the pacesetter for the media system, it is directly controlled by the Party's highest policy-making body, the Party Central Committee's Politburo (Merrill, 1983; Liu, 1990). The People's Daily is the place where the Party leadership places its most authoritative editorials. Internal control of the People's Daily rests with an editorial committee headed by the editor-in-chief. Receiving instructions from the Party's Central Committee, the editorial committee decides the paper's policies, chooses personnel, and supervises daily operations of the paper and its associated enterprises. Important editorials and official declarations from the People's Daily are reprinted or quoted in newspapers at different levels and in other publications (Bishop, 1989; Merrill, 1982; Tan, 1990; Yu, 1979). In addition to reporting and writing for open publication, the newspaper's journalists are entrusted with filing internal reports for the Party and government leaders (Liu, 1990).

The newspaper is always responsive to the Party's power structure (Bishop, 1989). Removal of top personnel is the way for the Party leadership to reassert authority over the newspaper and to discourage troublemaking in the organization (Tan, 1990). According to Bishop (1989:153-4), however, the organizational structure of the People's Daily is not too different from that of an American newspaper. According to Tan (1990:160), there is a hierarchy of editorial forms that appear in the People's Daily. At the top are newspaper editorials instructed by the highest political authorities. This type of editorial is sometimes

written by a top party leader, the chief editor, or a trusted leading editor who can translate the Party's instructions into appropriate prose. Staff commentary follows next in the hierarchy and is written by an assigned editor representing more of an in-house view. Below this are the commentary and brief commentary which are more individualistic. At the bottom of the hierarchy, there are the editors' notes. There is a column of 'Letters to the Editor', which carries letters from ordinary people. This column is used by the editor to address current important issues.

Press Reform

The open door policy and economic reforms which have been developed and implemented since the 1970s have brought about changes in all aspects of life in China. The loosening of economic controls also led to the relaxation of press controls. In the 1980s, press freedom expanded as a result of the persistent efforts of progressive journalists. The degree of press freedom changed with the changing political climate. According to Polunbaum (1990:40), Chinese journalists have been mostly "frustrated with pressures to publish what they considered irrelevant and boring reports and documents, with official meddling in what they saw as judgments better left to news practitioners, with the obstacles they faced in trying to report controversial affairs they considered of concern to the public, and with the lack of certainty about what was permissible and what was not." The journalists want more informative news, better representation of public sentiment, press overseeing the political process, and journalistic autonomy. In the late 1980's, there were heated discussions of the need to report the bad along with the good, to

act as a watchdog over public functionaries, and to air diverse opinions and ideas (Polunbaum, 1990; 1992; Starck & Xu, 1988).

Journalists' desire for the right to make independent news judgments without threat of censorship, suppression, or punishment was best demonstrated during the peak of press reform in the spring of 1989 before June 4th. At that time, the Chinese newspapers were able to report, in an unprecedented manner, the true facts about an anti-government movement (Liu, 1992; Polunbaum, 1990). According to Tan (1990), the People's Daily, the most important propaganda tool of the Party, emerged as a flagship of rebellion which grew out of the tension between the newspaper's role as mouthpiece of the political authorities and its journalistic desire to explore news issues.

During the persistent struggle for press freedom, young journalists and editors employed at the very pinnacle of the propaganda apparatus were the main force pushing reforms. In China, while the leadership class is locked in China's traditional culture, many young people have been influenced by exposure to Western social values and dream of dialogue (Liu, 1992; Nathan, 1990; Polunbaum, 1992). However, almost all of the reformers see themselves not as challenging the regime. According to Nathan (1985), they see themselves in a traditional role--as remonstrators, not only loyal to the state but forming an integral part of it. This is unique among democratic movements in former socialist countries. Traditionally, the remonstrators would put their life and property at risk to awaken the ruler to his own interests and those of the state. Lee (1990:11-12) sees that the reforms in the 1980's as elitist and embryonic. The best-known reform proponents, according to Lee, had been devout members of the Communist Party, who

had undergone abuse during movements such as the Anti-rightist Campaign and the Cultural Revolution. They would never challenge socialism nor Marxism. They wanted to keep China socialist as they understood the term (Nathan, 1990).

Although the need for change is deeply felt, the direction and nature of the reforms are still at a fragmentary, conceptual stage. The reformers only called for very modest measures of political openness and competition. Thus, the controlled change represents evolution rather than revolution. This is in accord with the goal of maintaining social stability (Nathan, 1990; Starck & Xu, 1988). In spite of this, publications and institutes are increasingly operating as independent social forces, "including not only those set up outside the Party and subsequently hooked into it, but also those set up by the Party itself, such as the research institutes of the Academy of Social Sciences and the theory department of the People's Daily" (Nathan, 1990:122-3).

Summary

This chapter discusses the functions of Chinese news media and journalists. Historically, the media in China have been educational and used to promote social changes. The Communist Party has assigned them the task of agitation and propaganda. The press, in particular, has been used as a means to educate and mobilize the people and to propagate the party's policies. Newspapers have played an essential role of serving as the Party's organs. The Party maintains central management over the news. Journalists have been assigned a difficult task of serving the Party and the people. Journalists often serve as a propaganda tool, although some of them have advocated an informative role for the media. They are required to construct a positive picture for public news reports. This

chapter also briefly described the operation of the Party's newspaper, the People's Daily, and the press reforms advocated by its staff before June 4, 1989.

Chapter VI. Research Design

Introduction

It is argued that "media content happens to be one of the most voluminous and accessible sets of data which may indicate much about a society, and its accessibility extends over time and sometimes across national frontiers" (McQuail, 1989:178). In this chapter, the research questions and hypotheses are raised for the purpose of examination. This chapter also deals with the methodological issues in this study. The data sources and the sampling procedures are examined. A combined method, including both quantitative and qualitative content analyses, is discussed and followed by a brief discussion of the limitations of this study.

Research Questions

Based on the discussion in the earlier chapters, some basic research questions are raised concerning crime-news reporting in Chinese newspapers. Since no previous studies of a similar nature have ever been undertaken for a Chinese newspaper, this research is exploratory in nature.

Drawing upon the findings of Western media studies, several areas of crime news reporting in Chinese newspapers are examined and discussed in relation to Western findings. It must be noted that, because of difficulties in data collection, this study only takes one newspaper, the People's Daily, as its sample. As discussed earlier, the People's Daily is a national newspaper; therefore, caution should be taken in comparing the findings of this study with those of studies of local newspapers. Instead, the locus of the

comparison will be on those very limited existing studies of national newspapers; namely, those undertaken by Ericson and his colleagues (1984, with Voumvakis, and 1991, with Baranek and Chan).

In order to understand the relationship of news texts, as an expressive cultural form, to social order, and to indicate the complex and variable nature of this relationship (Ericson *et al.*, 1991), this study focuses on the following questions:

1. What areas and types of crime does the newspaper focus on, and how are the crimes reported?

From what has been discovered in the content analyses of newspapers discussed earlier, it can be safely assumed that, as a quality, national newspaper, the People's Daily, unlike local tabloids, places more emphasis on misbehaviour of governmental officials than on violent common street crimes. Attempts will also be made to explore if, and how, Western journalists' valued news imperatives can be applied to the Chinese case. In Chapter IV, it is stated that Chinese journalists are said to be advocating objective news reporting. It is of importance to see if the professional ideology of objectivity required of Western journalists in their language of reporting applies to China's case.

2. Do the types of crimes, criminals, and disposition of cases covered in news stories reflect the patterns revealed in official statistics?

Content analyses of crime-news coverage have been most commonly used as a basis for comparison with official statistics. For the Chinese newspaper, the same

approach will be taken to reveal the relationship between crime news and official crime statistics. The proportion of total news content that involves crime and criminal justice stories will first be established.

However, this researcher does not assume that official statistics necessarily reflect the reality of crime. It is argued that official statistics can only be used to study the workings of official agencies. Crime data are easily subject to misinterpretation and deliberate manipulation (Bottomley, 1981; Brantingham and Brantingham, 1984; Ditton, 1979; Lowman and Palys, 1991). This is particularly true for the Chinese case (from personal experience), although no research in this field has been conducted in the Chinese context.

3. At which stages of the criminal justice process are crimes most often reported? and how are the various stages evaluated in crime news stories?

Crime reporting in Western newspapers focuses more on the early stages of the criminal justice process; namely the police stage, which usually gets positive evaluations. Criminal justice activities are usually described as crime-fighting, whereas other aspects are left invisible (for example, see Sherizen, 1978). It is hypothesized that in the Chinese newspaper the pattern is different. There should be a greater degree of emphasis on solved crimes, thereby producing more reports concerning the later stages of the criminal justice process. In this way, bad news is turned into good news. The threat of punishment through legal sanctions is assumed in China to have an educative function--namely, to develop perceptions of the legal consequences of criminality.

4. What are the types of crime story most often reported in the newspaper? What are the explanations, if any, of the causes of crime?

According to Dussuyer (1979:59), the fact that an issue is discussed in an editorial "indicates that the newspaper has abandoned its neutral role of describing as objectively as possible, and now comments and takes a stand." The editorial thus gives an indication of what are considered to be more salient issues. Taking into consideration what has been discussed in Chapter IV about the cultural and educational functions of the Chinese newspaper, one would expect to encounter more editorials or secondary crime stories explaining or interpreting crime phenomena than primary news. Thus it is hypothesized that there is more "soft" news than "hard" news. Here, "hard news" refers to routine crime stories reporting a particular criminal event, whereas "soft news" consists mainly of background or time-free news, which include editorials, general discussions and statistics, and features (McQuail, 1989:166; Tuchman, 1978:47-8). This research will try to uncover what messages the soft news delivered.

Methodology

--Data Sampling

In this study, the data source is the People's Daily, which is listed among the world's great newspapers in terms of its quality, prestige, contents, format and reporting styles (Merrill & Fisher, 1980). Two six-month periods and one one-year period are chosen for an examination of the research questions discussed above, i.e. (1) July 1st to December, 31st, 1983; (2) July 1st to December 31st, 1986; and (3) January, 1st to

December 31st, 1989. During the first period, a campaign was launched for the speedy and severe punishment of criminals by the Chinese Communist Party (Scobell, 1990)(also see Chapter VI for more details). The third period includes the buildup to, and aftermath of, the significant events of the democracy movement of 1989, which has been reported in numerous Western publications (e.g. McCormick *et al.* 1992; Ring, 1989). The second period, in which no major events apparently took place, is chosen for comparative purposes to help show the trend of change or continuity. The reason for choosing three periods instead of one is to see if there is a trend of increasing crime news coverage over time parallel to the economic reforms and "open door" policy which have brought about rapid social changes to Chinese society. The whole year (1989) sampling provides a satisfactory sample size for an in-depth analysis of as broad a range of crime reports as possible. For the three periods chosen, the number of sampled issues of the newspaper totals 733 (184 for 1983, 184 for 1986 and 365 for 1989). Each issue contains eight pages, with each page being about the same size of that of the Globe and Mail. It should be noted that Chinese text is far more compact than English text.

--Sample Unit

In this content analysis, the sample unit is one crime story. This research adopts a relatively narrow definition of crime news. It includes stories about criminal events that occurred within China; general discussions of the crime phenomenon and crime prevention; crime statistics; and those editorials and features which report on the phenomenon of crime and the criminal justice system. This means that only those legal infractions involving Criminal Code sanctions will be examined.

In the Criminal Law, there are five principal punishments (sentences are almost exclusively referred to as punishments in the Code): control, criminal detention, fixed term, life imprisonment, and death. There are also two supplementary punishments: fines and deprivation of political rights (Felkenes, 1989). (For further explanation of the punishments, see the English translation of the Criminal Code of China in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, 1982, 73:138-70). Therefore, in this study, forms of deviance not dealt with by the Criminal Law are largely ignored. Letters to the editor are not included for the same reason. The Tiananmen Square incident of June 4th, 1989 was officially denounced as a riot. The individual incidents surrounding this event are defined as crime stories if they were dealt with by formal criminal justice institutions. However, general discussions of the event and related incidents not dealt with by the criminal justice system are not considered as crime stories. Pictures are not included in the analysis, because there are no more than ten pictures in the issues that make up the sample.

--Quantitative Content Analysis

It is traditionally argued that content analysis is a method of studying and analyzing the media in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring certain message variables (Beleson, 1971). A researcher can sort through a massive amount of material, while systematically selecting data for analysis. It also allows the analysis of relationships between content variables, as well as chronicling content changes over time (Beleson, 1971; Dominick, 1978; Holsti, 1969) All content analysis is concerned with comparison, the type of comparison dictated by the investigator's theoretical framework (Holsti, 1969:5). To minimize subjective predispositions, each step

in the research process must conform to explicit rules and procedures (Beleson, 1971; Holsti, 1969). To be systematic, the inclusion and exclusion of content should be undertaken according to consistently applied rules in order to reduce the bias the researcher may have when collecting data. Finally, generality requires that findings have theoretical relevance, which means that comparison can be made of the findings with other research data (Berelson, 1969; Holsti, 1969).

Traditionally, the patterns of regularities revealed in quantitative content analysis have been compared to other measures of reality. The basic questions concern the extent to which, and the ways in which, news mirrors reality. Does the cultural product reflect the social reality? (ibid.) Ericson *et al.* (1991:50-2) argue that quantitative content analysis is a valuable means of revealing the patterns in news content, and testing assumptions about how the news is structured and presented. This method assumes repetition is the most valuable indicator of significance. In his discussion of the techniques of content analysis, Holsti (1968:644) suggests that coding is the process in which raw data are "systematically transformed and aggregated into units which permit the precise description of relevant content characteristics." Thus, coding rules are the operational link between the researcher's data and his/her theory and hypotheses. Holsti (1968:646) further points out that the definition of categories requires that they actually represent the elements of the investigator's theory.

In this research, a protocol (see Appendix A.) was made, drawing upon Graber's (1980) coding design for her crime content analysis and upon the research design developed by Ericson and his associates (1991). The protocol was not closed at any point

in the data-collection process so that the categories could be built up inductively over the entire research process. As content analyses are generally time-consuming, variables were carefully chosen in this study to ensure every variable would be used later in the discussion of findings. There are 38 variables. It was hoped that by analyzing these variables, chosen on the basis of the discussion presented in Chapter II, a basic pattern of crime-news reporting would be revealed. The categories of these variables were left open at the beginning and filled gradually during the process of coding.

--Qualitative Content Analysis

Once the quantitative analysis had been conducted, the study went on to examine the implications of, and hidden meanings in, the messages through the use of qualitative analysis. It has been shown that when analyzing continuing stories and news themes, some patterns and relationships can be revealed only through qualitative research techniques (Ericson *et al.*, 1991). The interpretations in qualitative content analysis are generally made as part of the analytic process, following the analytic procedure in quantitative analysis. Unlike its quantitative counterpart, qualitative analysis is primarily concerned with discovery and verification. It is argued that this type of analysis is capable of pinpointing the subtle ways in which news operatives combine different items and stories to create new meanings and novel themes in the news (Ericson *et al.*, 1991:54-8).

It is also argued that qualitative analysis is a special type of quantification or that it is quasi-quantitative in nature. In the case of qualitative analysis, the quantity is considered insignificant for the inference made and is too small or inexact to justify formal and precise counting. Thus, there is no strict dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative analysis

(Berelson, 1971:121-126). Holsti (1968:600) cites Pool, saying that the relationship between qualitative and quantitative methods is circular; each provides new insights for the other.

In this study, a qualitative, ethnographic approach is taken, inspired by Ericson and his colleagues' study (1991). According to these researchers, ethnographic readings of content result in the discovery of themes, patterns, and additional questions over the entire course of data-collection. With this method, data are coded conceptually so that the same item is potentially relevant to a broad range of research topics. It is hoped that the qualitative analysis may serve as "the glue that cements the interpretation of convergent results" (Johnson, 1988:43), thus making a holistic work out of this study.

Limitations

There are limitations in content analysis. A basic limitation of content analysis is that it can deal only with what has been disseminated. Many topics receive relatively little exposure in the media; thus there will not be enough messages available for such research (Ericson *et al*, 1991; Wimmer & Dominick, 1987). According to Ericson *et al.*(1991:55), only observational methodologies applied to newsrooms and source organizations can tell us what is considered for inclusion, but is not published, and why. The findings of a content analysis are limited to the material that has been published, and they are further restricted to what can actually be quantified. This limitation leads to a concentration on aspects that are simple, measurable, and subject to standardization (Ericson, 1991; Kline, 1982; Wimmer & Dominick, 1987).

One major issue is the requirement of objectivity. It is argued that subjectivity is inevitable no matter what kind of precautions the researcher takes during the coding process to reduce discriminatory or biased inclinations (Ericson *et al.*, 1991; Johnson, 1988; Holsti, 1968). The requirement of objectivity limits the utility of content analysis for exploring the latent meanings between the lines of the text (Holsti, 1968). A content analysis can only be as good as the categories and subsumed categorical distinctions which inform the protocol. Due to the limitations inherent in content analysis, it is advisable that inferences drawn with the technique be corroborated by independent evidence (Holsti, 1968, 1969). Another limitation is that content analysis alone cannot serve as the sole basis for claims about media effects on the public. Therefore, this study does not examine the social effects of the newspaper in question.

Besides weaknesses inherent to content analysis, there are other aspects which may also limit the findings and analysis of this study. As content analyses of crime-news reporting most often compare their findings with official data to see if crime news reflects reality, this study tries to make similar comparisons in the Chinese context. However, the access to official crime statistics in China is highly restricted. The only type of data available was from reports to Interpol. These data were published in the Law Yearbook of China (1987). Only seven types of crimes are reported to Interpol and published in the book. They are mostly street crimes, including murder, assault, robbery, rape, theft, fraud, and counterfeiting. For 1983, only the total number of cases filed by the police is published. For 1986, the numbers of cases filed by police by crime are published along with the total number of cases filed by police. The only difference in the 1989 data is that

the number of serious thefts is also given along with other categories. Therefore, there is actually very little room for the comparison of official data with crime-news reporting in the People's Daily. Again, to repeat what has been pointed out earlier in this chapter, the debate about the measurement accuracy of crime statistics was not discussed in this study. When the inaccuracy of statistics is assumed to be constant, comparative studies can be made with little question of their validity.

The data of 1989 may give a distorted image of crime reporting because of the event of June 4th, 1989. As it was officially defined as a counter-revolutionary riot, there may be more reports of crimes of counter-revolution and riot-related crimes. Moreover, since the triggering factor of the event was a call for stopping government corruption, there may be an unusually large number of reports on official misconduct in the newspaper.

However, if there is any distortion, it is unavoidable. In the last four decades in China, there have often been various political campaigns, turmoil, or other major events that affect crime reporting. It is, therefore, necessary to take these events into account when doing the analysis. It should be noted that the focus of this study is not on the June 4th event, although the democratic movement which reached its peak during that time could have been an intensive theme for a study of newspaper reporting. On the basis of this exploratory study, more research can be conducted to further analyze the functions of the Chinese media. More recent periods should be included as samples to examine if there have been any changes after 1989.

As this study is the first attempt of this type conducted in relation to a Chinese newspaper, there should be some limitations on making comparisons with Western findings because of different social settings and different definitions of crime. Strictly speaking, no content analyses are really comparable unless the operational definitions adopted are identical. The present study ignores these restrictions. To make a comparative study possible, Western findings are summarized so as to reveal a general pattern in crime-news coverage. The findings of this study, which basically explores similar aspects of crime reporting as did the Western studies, are actually compared with this pattern. Thus, any conclusions should be reached with caution.

The comparisons are further limited by the fact that only one medium, and one newspaper, was analyzed. Moreover, as an organ of the Communist Party, the People's Daily is quite special as a newspaper. To examine the arguments presented in the earlier chapters, other media, such as television and radio, should also be included. Since the People's Daily is a national newspaper, local newspapers, specialized newspapers, and even underground newspapers should ideally be included to compare the messages disseminated to the public by different sources. This type of comparative study can further reveal the role that the People's Daily plays in presenting crime news. The People's Daily is not the only source where people obtain information about crime and the criminal justice system. The findings of this study should not be taken as representing all types of newspapers in China.

Chapter VII. Discussion of Findings (Quantitative Analysis)

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the quantitative analysis. Firstly, the news formats will be examined. According to Ericson *et al* (1991:149), "formats are the devices by which journalists are able to categorize, choose, organize, and represent knowledge as news." News formats are as important as the specific substantive topics addressed in the content. They, too, have ideological implications (ibid:150). Secondly, the news contents will be examined to reveal the types of crimes reported. The patterns of crime-news reporting will be compared with the pattern shown in the official data. Thirdly, the explanation of causes of crime, type of knowledge delivered, and the evaluation of criminal justice institutions will be examined. The findings of this study will be compared with those found in studies of Western newspapers. Comparisons will also be made for the three different periods that were sampled. It should be pointed out again that of the three periods sampled, only 1989 was sampled for the whole year and the other two were only six months.

Prominence and amount of crime news

As described earlier, each issue of the People's Daily has eight pages. The first page is usually devoted to major events, both domestic and international, coupled with an editorial or commentary. The second page is for domestic news-- mostly economic news. The formats for the rest of the pages often change, being devoted to various columns including "Cultural life", "Literature", "Education", "Sports", "Theory", "Letters to the

Editor", "Legal column", "Book reviews", "Theater reviews", etc. Some of these columns, totaling up to about 50, are run on specific days of the week, while others are printed every day. Each issue contains approximately 75,000 Chinese characters. On the seventh and eighth pages, the paper usually runs advertisements that sometimes occupy one full page. These ads promote products ranging from consumer goods to books and magazines (Bishop, 1989; Chang, 1989; and personal sampling of 1989's papers).

Dussuyer (1979:64) argues that when an article is placed on the front page, it signifies that, for the editor, it has high news value and, for the public, it has a higher probability of being noticed and read than those on other pages. Table 1 shows that crime stories were most often carried on Page 1 and Page 4 for all of the three periods. Page 7, the international page, did not carry national news. The proportions of crime stories carried on the rest of the pages of the paper vary among the sampled periods. Table 1 gives the proportion of crime stories that appeared on the front page, the most prominent place.

Table 1. Distribution of Crime Stories by Page Number

Page	1983 Percent	1986 percent	1989 Percent	Total Percent
1	34.9	21.2	25.5	25.7
2	1.6	1.8	29.3	20.8
3	7.9	1.8	7.8	6.6
4	33.3	75.2	30.1	39.3
5	19.0		5.1	5.6
6	3.2		1.5	1.4
8				0.5
Total	100	100	100	100

Note: For 1983 and 1986, only six months were included in the samples (July to December). For 1989, the whole year was sampled.

The findings of this study show that the total amount of space devoted to crime news for the People's Daily is significantly smaller than comparable findings for Western newspapers and Japanese newspapers (as discussed in Chapter II). Table 2 shows the percentage of space devoted to crime stories and the numbers of crime items for each sampled period. In the Western newspapers studied, the amount of space devoted to crime stories ranged from 5 to 28 percent, depending on the breadth of the definitions adopted, while the total amount set aside for crime stories in the People's Daily is no more than one percent during the three periods studied. As is shown in Table 2, although the total space devoted to crime stories for 1986 is slightly smaller than that of 1983, the total number of crime stories for that year is almost twice that of 1983.

Ericson *et al* (1991) found that, compared with popular newspapers, quality newspapers more often carry longer items, features and continuing stories. There is a concern with being a source of record both at the moment and historically. Dussyuer (1979) found in his study of 40 Ontario newspapers that the majority of crime stories sampled were short, containing little more than a basic story outline with few background details.

Table 2. Number of crime stories and proportion of total space by year

	1983 2nd half	1986 2nd half	1989 1st half	1989 2nd half	1989 Total
Frequency	63	113	223	173	396
Percentage	0.66	0.56	0.95	0.93	0.94

It is demonstrated in Table 3 that, although the total space devoted to crime stories increased in 1989, there was a trend towards a reduction in the length of the crime stories. In 1983, only 10 percent of the stories were categorized as short, while in 1986 the proportion of short stories increased to 38 percent and in 1989 to 52 percent (see Appendix A for the sizes of the three categories). The physical dimensions of a news item are also an indication of its importance (Dussuyer, 1979:65). Longer articles, which suggest greater newsworthiness, may carry messages in more depth, whereas the information in a short story may be limited and narrower. This change of pattern will be examined later in this chapter.

Table 3. Story Size of Crime-News Reports

	1983 Percent	1986 Percent	1989 Percent	Total Number
Short	9.5	38.1	52.0	254
Medium	77.8	61.9	46.7	304
Long	12.7		1.3	13
Total %	100	100	100	100%
Number	63	113	395	572

The fact that the Chinese newspaper apparently devoted smaller amounts of space to crime stories indicates that the phenomenon of crime and the formal criminal justice

system received less attention than in Western newspapers, both the popular and the quality press. This is especially true for the years of 1983 and 1986. The reporting of crime was a new practice. For a long time, the locus of social control was in the informal institutions. It was not until 1980 that the first Criminal Law in China was enacted. Until recently, information about crime and criminal justice activities have been considered unsuitable for ordinary people to consume. It is reported in an article in the People's Daily (March 2, 1989, p.2) quoting the head of the Beijing Supreme Court that the Court should not keep its routine daily activities secret. He suggested that the court change its "closed-door" policy and that the court staff cooperate with news organizations and journalists. This change of attitude may partly explain the trend of increased crime reporting. However, it is possible that the increase of crime-news reporting could have been caused by a combination of factors, of which this change in attitude is but one.

Type of crime stories

Crime stories vary in the extent to which they are specific or general in their theme. In this study, those covering specific individual incidents of crime/law enforcement were classified as specific crime stories. Another category is feature articles which are concerned less with day-to-day occurrences and more with the interpretation and evaluation of certain events or behaviours. General discussions and crime statistics give an overall view of crime trends and offer a commentary on one or more aspects of the crime phenomenon. The editorial and commentary features generally deliver more specific interpretations, evaluations, and recommendations about a particular crime phenomenon or criminal case. Examples of these different types of crime story will be given in the

qualitative analysis discussed in Chapter VII. The legal column is treated separately because it was present only for certain periods and only for the purpose of explaining selected provisions of the Criminal Law. The articles it carried did not fit the categories described above. It should be noted that it is not easy to distinguish general discussions and crime statistics. The general discussions covered important conferences, as well as the Party's policies and instructions. Crime statistics were often an inseparable part of the general discussions.

Table 4 shows the proportions of different types of crime story in the sampled periods. In spite of a decreasing trend in soft news, it is obvious that more attention was given to opinion-based columns in the Chinese newspaper than in its western counterparts. It has been found in some Canadian newspapers that hard crime news accounted for 80 percent of crime-related news (Sacco and Fair, 1988). Dussuyer (1979) found in his study that interpretative and "in-depth" reporting about crime phenomena represented only a very small proportion of crime stories (less than 7%). Ericson *et al* (1991:259-62) argue that strongly worded statements were a part of the daily menu in the newspapers sampled. Even so, about 75% of the news items sampled in both quality and popular newspapers were news or features, whereas only one-quarter of the items were explicitly opinion pieces rather than news or features.

Table 4. Nature of Crime Story by Year

	1983	1986	1989	Total
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Number
Specific/Feature	46.0	45.1	63.9	333
General/Editorial	41.3	26.5	33.8	190
Legal Column	12.7	27.4	1.3	44
Other		0.9	1.0	5
Total (%)	100	100	100	
Number	63	113	396	572

Table 5. Percentage of Hard and Soft Crime Stories by Year

	1983(Jul -Dec)		1986(Jul -Dec)		1989(Jan -Jun)		1989(Jul -Dec)	
Type of story	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Hard	23	36.5	42	37.2	141	63.0	92	53.0
Soft	40	63.5	71	62.8	83	37.0	80	47.0
Total	63	100	113	100	224	100	172	100

Table 5 shows that the proportion of reports of specific crime cases was smaller than what was found in Western newspapers. For the category of specific crime cases alone, it was 63% (Jan.-Jun.) and 53% (Jul.-Dec.) for 1989, 37% for both 1986 and 1983. The number of specific crime cases was considerably larger for the first six months of 1989 than the second. This difference may be explained by more crime reports in response to the event of June 4th. What specific types of crime were more often reported during that time will be further examined later in this chapter.

As shown in Table 6, general discussion/crime statistics and editorial/commentary more often appeared on the front page than did specific crime stories. On the average of the three periods, 24% percent of the specific crime stories, 38 percent of the general

crime stories, and 37 percent of the editorial or commentary sections appeared on Page 1. Thus, secondary news was given a more prominent place than primary news. This large proportion of explicitly opinion-based crime stories reflects the functions of the newspaper sampled. As discussed in Chapter IV, being the "eyes, ears, and mouth piece" of the Communist Party, the newspaper plays an important role in propagating the policies and ideas of the Party. It is an important agent in promoting social changes in harmony with the Party's line and in providing moral education and maintaining social order. The newspaper serves the Party's needs. It does not have to appear to be objective and impartial.

Table 6. Distribution of Crime Stories on the Front Page

	Front Page %	Other Pages %	Total %
Specific crime	24.2	75.8	100
General discussion	38.1	61.9	100
Editorial/commentary	37.1	62.9	100
Feature	2.9	97.1	100
Legal column	2.3	97.7	100
Total Number	147	425	572

According to Ericson *et al* (1991:168), the question of what sides of a conflict are presented in the news and whether a particular side is favoured has been central in debates about journalism. In Western news institutions, the appearance of impartiality is crucial. Journalists' professionalism is equated with commitment to objectivity and impartiality. Chinese journalists, however, are supposed to be propagandists and intelligence gatherers for the Party. They are trained and required to be one-sided. This is especially true for

those working for the People's Daily, although the call for objectivity and impartiality in news reporting was always the central issue of press reforms.

The People's Daily is intended to reach the largest possible audience, which includes people of all walks of life and with different levels of education and literacy. As discussed in Chapters III and IV, those who govern have a paternalistic view towards people and always think that they need to be educated in order to tell what is right and what is wrong, and to know what type of behaviour they should follow. Therefore, it is not enough to give only facts. Interpretations and evaluations are always needed. This characteristic will be repeatedly shown in this analysis. In fact, even in specific crime stories, there were always clear messages being delivered. However, the quantitative analysis cannot reveal the subjective impact of the words in the crime stories.

A pattern in reporting crime stories was found in the data of 1983 and 1986. In 1983, there were 10 editorials or commentaries in total. Six of them were paired with specific crime cases reported on the same day and three of them concerned discussion or statistics of certain crimes run on the same day. In 1986, of the total of 13 editorials or commentaries, eight aimed at crime cases reported on the same day and three referred to crime cases in the legal column of the same day. However, no similar pattern was found for the data of 1989, which showed a considerably smaller proportion of editorials. It is shown in Table 7 that there was some change in the length of story for specific crime stories. The proportion of shorter ones was increasing while the proportion of medium and long stories was decreasing. These phenomena may suggest that crimes were reported in a more cautious and more emphatic way in the first two periods than in 1989. More

information about the cases reported was given and more interpretations and comments were made on the cases.

Table 7. Length of Specific Crime Stories by Year

	1983	1986	1989	Total
	%	%	%	%
short	8.7	42.9	67.4	59.4
medium	91.3	57.1	32.6	40.6
Total (%)	100	100	100	100
Number	23	42	233	298

Sources of crime stories

In this study, only very basic information was collected for a discussion of the relationship between the news organization and its sources as reflected in crime-news reporting. According to Ericson *et al* (1991:181-2), news is very important to sources because it helps them to constitute their authority. Image-making is crucial to sources. Those in official positions use the power of the media to establish publicly the symbols of their administration. Through their designated spokespersons, the sources help to author the news. However, not everyone is able to exercise his or her authority equally. News organizations have their own legitimating justifications. The findings of Sigal's survey of the New York Times and the Washington Post indicated that 78 per cent of all news items sampled involved government officials (see Ericson *et al*, 1991:191). According to Ericson *et al* (*ibid.*), the official imprint of a government agency is often required before something is regarded as news at all. Government institutions predominate in setting the agenda and sustaining preferred accounts.

In the People's Daily, government sources dominated the reporting of crime news. As shown in Table 8, the overwhelming majority of sources cited in the samples were government organizations (including the news organization itself and the Xinhua News Agency, another central organ of the party/government). The agencies of criminal justice are also government organizations. They are under the control of the government/party, as there is no independent judiciary in China. Only a fraction of crime items (7.4%) attributed their sources to unspecified individuals. It should be noted that, in fact, sources were not often clearly identified in the newspaper. They were not a necessary part of the news unless authorities in high positions were involved.

Table 8. Sources of Crime Stories

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Own organization	197	34.4	34.4
Other news agency	120	21.0	55.4
Criminal Justice	146	25.5	80.9
Other government source	67	11.7	92.7
Unspecified	42	7.4	100
Total	572	100	100

It is shown in Table 8 that 34 percent of crime stories did not attribute information to outside sources. However, the findings of the study conducted by Ericson *et al* (1991:183-4) showed that the newspapers in their sample had very few items in which no other sources of information were cited or referred to. The quality newspaper sampled almost always cited outside sources, with only two percent of its news items lacking reference to other sources. In their study (Ericson *et al*, 1991), moreover, 34 percent of the newspapers had a substantial proportion of their stories with four or more outside

sources cited. The use of multiple sources was a technique that was not found in this study. There was, if any, only one explicitly indicated source in each crime story. This study also showed that criminal-justice sources appear frequently in the news, especially for the 1989 samples. This is similar to Western newspapers, especially for popular newspapers as discussed in chapter II.

The small proportion of individual sources in the samples of this study may be partly due to the exclusion of letters-to-the-editor. However, it is worth noting that, as Ericson *et al* argued (1991:196), individuals as sources were routinely used to provide "public reaction" to events already framed by institutional sources in the news. It was found during the process of coding that their argument also applies to the Chinese newspaper.

Crimes portrayed in crime stories

Table 9 gives all types of crime reported in the crime stories by rank order. There are, in total, 192 provisions in "Part II, Special Provisions" of the Criminal Law of the People's Republic China. These provisions are grouped into seven chapters, including crimes of counterrevolution, crimes endangering public security, crimes undermining the socialist economic order, crimes infringing upon the rights of the person or the democratic rights of citizens, crimes of property violation, crimes disrupting the order of social administration, crimes disrupting marriage and the family, and crimes of dereliction of duty. To list all types of crime found in the newspaper is to show a general picture of what are reported as crimes, as the Chinese Criminal Law is dramatically different from the criminal law in Western countries (Felkenes, 1989).

Although it is not within the range of this study to discuss the Criminal Law as such, it is relevant to point out that, in China, one main purpose of law is to educate and guide people. This "parental jurisprudence" (Berman *et al.*, 1982:238), is manifested by *profuse moralism* in the Criminal Law, especially the definitions of crimes and the punishments for wrongdoers (ibid.:239, 251; McCabe, 1989). Another noteworthy point is that the Criminal Law was promulgated in 1980 soon after the end of the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, it inevitably reflected the impact of that upheaval. Shown in Table 9, there are such provisions as "beating, smashing, and looting" and "publicly insulting by using 'big character' or 'small character' posters". These behaviours are associated with the Cultural Revolution. The crime of "beating, smashing, and looting" re-appeared in news reports and criminal prosecutions during and after the events associated with June 4th, 1989.

Table 9. Nature of Alleged Crimes Reported in Crime Stories by Rank Order

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Embezzlement	131	11.5	18.5
Bribery	60	5.2	8.5
Smuggling/speculation	46	4	6.5
Theft and burglary	45	3.9	6.4
Unspecified	41	3.6	5.8
Murder	37	3.2	5.2
Not applicable	35	3.1	4.9
Fraud	25	2.2	3.5
Robbery	24	2.1	3.4
Counterrevolution	24	2.1	3.4
Neglect of duty	24	2.1	3.4
Sabotage of cultural relics	22	1.9	3.1
Pornography	19	1.7	2.7
Assault	18	1.6	2.5
Sex offense	13	1.1	1.8
Beating, smashing and looting	13	1.1	1.8
Unlawful detention	11	1	1.6
Libel	10	0.9	1.4
Weapon violations	9	0.8	1.3
Hijacking	8	0.7	1.1
Tax evasion	8	0.7	1.1
Kidnapping	7	0.6	1
Bombing	7	0.6	1
Corporate crime	7	0.6	1
Gambling	6	0.5	0.8
Arson	3	0.25	0.4
Poison	3	0.25	0.4
Drugs	5	0.4	0.7
Sabotages of electrical equipment	5	0.4	0.7
Hooliganism	4	0.3	0.6
Prostitution	4	0.3	0.6
Sabotage of means of transportation, etc.	4	0.3	0.6
Protecting criminals	4	0.3	0.6
Misappropriating state funds for disaster relief	3	0.3	0.4
Publicly insulting or defaming other	3	0.3	0.4
Violations of boundary control	2	0.2	0.3
Traffic offenses	2	0.2	0.3
Obstruction of justice	2	0.2	0.3
Violations of control of	2	0.2	0.3

monetary affairs			
Juvenile delinquency	2	0.2	0.3
Mismanagement causing major accident	1	0.1	0.1
Taking hostage	1	0.1	0.1
Perjury	1	0.1	0.1
Sabotages of communi- cations equipment	1	0.1	0.1
Judicial personnel misconduct	1	0.1	0.1
Violation of forestry regulations	1	0.1	0.1
Assembling a crowd to disturb public order	1	0.1	0.1
Violations of trademark control	1	0.1	0.1
Violations of freedom of correspondence	1	0.1	0.1
Witchcraft	1	0.1	0.1
Total	1144	100	100
Missing	436	38.1	

Note: -- When more than one crime was involved in a crime story, two types of crime were coded according to the emphasis. Thus, two variables were used for coding types of crime stories. Single crime-type coding (one of the two variables) yielded 572 crimes because there were totally 572 items. For the second variable, only 136 crimes were recorded because the majority of crime stories involved only one type of crime. Double coding of crime yielded 708 crime stories. Here the missing number is caused by double coding ($572 \times 2 - 708 = 436$).

--Valid percent shows the percentage of a category when missing values are excluded.

It is shown in Table 9 that there is a considerable proportion of unspecified crimes. This is partly because of confusion in the grouping of crimes in the Criminal Law and crime reporting, and partly because of the method of reporting. During the coding process, it was found that the reporters tended to use two terms to classify certain crimes. One was "criminal cases" used for common street crimes, such as those reported to the Interpol; the other was "economic cases", used mostly for white-collar crimes. These two

Table 10. Proportion of Crimes reported by type

	Frequency	Percent	Proportion to total cases
Crime against person	127	100.0	17.9
Murder	37	29.1	
Sex offense	13	10.2	
Assault	18	14.2	
Robbery	24	18.9	
Hooliganism	4	3.1	
Kidnapping	7	5.5	
Unlawful detention	11	8.7	
Libel	10	7.9	
Publicly insulting & defaming other	3	2.4	
Crime against property	312	100.0	44.1
Theft and burglary	45	14.4	
Fraud	25	8.0	
Embezzlement	131	42.0	
Smuggling/speculation	46	14.7	
Misappropriating state funds	3	1.0	
Violations of monetary control	2	0.6	
Bribery	60	19.2	
Other types of crime	269		38.0
Missing cases	436		
Total	1144	100.0	100.0

Note: The missing value is caused by double coding.

terms were concurrently used as if those economic cases were not under the jurisdiction of the Criminal Law. Moreover, although in the Criminal Law, bribery is under the category of "crimes of dereliction of duty", in practice it was called and grouped into economic crimes. It is often seen in the samples that embezzlement and bribery were reported and discussed together, sometimes without distinguishing them. In fact, a considerable proportion of specific cases of embezzlement also involved bribery. On the other hand, it is not rare to see that one single specific crime story could contain multiple "criminal cases", or "economic cases", without indicating what exactly the crimes were about. This will be further examined in the next chapter.

Table 10 compares the proportions of crimes against the person and crimes against property in the samples. Because of problems caused by the definitions of crimes in the Criminal Law and by the method of reporting, it is sometimes not easy to distinguish the two types of crimes. For example, the crime of "beating, smashing, and looting" is classified under "crimes infringing upon the rights of the person and the democratic rights of citizens" in the Criminal Law. However, violations of both person and property are involved in the definition and punishment of this crime. To take another example, the crime of acting as a "hooligan," which is grouped under the category of "crimes disrupting the order of social administration" in the Criminal Law, involves violence against the person and against property. Therefore, those crimes with vague definitions were excluded from these two types of crime for the purpose of comparison with the findings in Western studies. It is shown, in Table 10, that reports of crimes against the person accounted for 18%, while those of crimes against property accounted for 44%. As a supplement to show the nature of crimes reported, Table 11 gives the proportion of violent crimes found in the samples. The grouping is just slightly different from what is shown in Table 10.

Table 11. Proportion of Violent Crimes

	Frequency	Percent	Proportion to total cases
Violent crime	135		19.1
Murder	37	27.4	
Sex offense	13	9.6	
Assault	18	13.3	
Robbery	24	17.8	
Hooligan	4	3.0	
Kidnapping	7	5.2	
Taking hostage	1	0.7	
Bombing	7	5.2	
Beating, smashing and looting	13	9.6	
Unlawful detention	11	8.1	
Crime against property	312		44.0
Other types of crime	261		36.9
Missing	436		
Total	1144	100.0	100.0

Note: The missing values are caused by double coding.

The findings of this study thus are different from the general findings of the Western studies discussed in Chapter II, in which violent crimes were overrepresented, while such common property crimes as theft and burglary were ignored. Dussuyer's study (1979) found that 30% of items in the samples concerned offenses against persons and 20% offenses against property. Moreover, the offenses which appeared most often in crime news also tended to be the more serious. The present study found it difficult to measure the seriousness of crimes, partly because of different perceptions and definitions of crimes. In China, some crimes against property may be regarded as more serious than some crimes against the person, especially for those involving the state's property. The severity of sentencing in China may reflect different perceptions as to the seriousness of the crime. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

However, when taking into account types of newspaper, the findings of this study no longer seem to be unique. Ericson *et al* (1991:244-6) found that the reporting of property crimes was rare in both quality and popular newspapers. However, their findings show that only 18 per cent of news items in the quality newspaper were on topics related to violence, which was defined as acts of both threatened and direct violence, whereas the proportion was almost doubled for the popular newspaper. On the topics of murder and robbery, the contrast between quality and popular newspapers was striking. While murder and robbery were a staple part of the coverage in the popular newspaper, the quality newspaper simply ignored them unless such reports were relevant to important local issues or to general legal trends.

Murder and robbery were among the top ten crimes reported in the People's Daily (see Table 9). At this stage, it is not clear if they were overrepresented. However, it should be noted that there were several major events during the sampled periods. In September, 1983, a campaign aimed at some crimes endangering public security was launched after two legal documents were enacted. One was the Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Regarding the Severe Punishment of Criminals Who Seriously Endanger Public Security; the other was the Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Regarding the Procedure for Prompt Adjudication of Cases Involving Criminals Who Seriously Endanger Public Security (For the English translation of these two documents, see The Laws of the People's Republic of China [1987]). In 1986, a "Legal Column" was created to meet the needs of legal education. Selected provisions of the Criminal Law were interpreted and

explained along with some crime cases taken as examples for each topic. In 1989 demonstrations around the country were triggered by the strong resentment of government corruption among the people and the government's response later turned into one of the great tragedies in Chinese history. In August, a campaign targeting pornographic publications and audio-visual materials was launched after a national conference held by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the State Council. Also in August, 1989, the Supreme Court and the Supreme Procuratorate jointly issued an announcement published in the People's Daily (August 16, p.1) which became a legal document named Announcement Requiring Criminals Who Have Committed Embezzlement, Bribery, Speculation, etc. to Confess and Surrender before Deadline (October, 31st, 1989). These events might stimulate heavy reporting of certain crimes in the newspaper during certain periods; namely, "crime waves" could be created by such events.

In the West, a crime wave is constructed through a collaboration of news organizations (Ericson *et al.*, 1984; Fishman, 1979). Crime waves raise public consciousness of the crimes at issue. According to Fishman (1978:531), only those themes dealing with street crime ever become crime waves in the Western media. There were crime waves in the reporting of crime news in the Chinese newspaper. The themes chosen should always reflect the Party's requirements and needs. Restricted by the sample size, this study cannot examine those crime themes which could last for a long time, such as government corruption, the ever-lasting problem since the founding of the People's Republic of China (Troyer, 1989). However, to take pornography as an example, there

was not a single report of cases involving pornography in the samples of 1983 and 1986. In 1989, there was only one item in the first seven months of the year, while there were 18 items beginning in August 1989, when the national conference on banning pornographic publications and audio-visual materials was held by the Party (Table 12).

Table 12. Reporting of Pornography by Month

	Frequency	Percent
Jan-July, 1989	1	5.3
Aug- Dec, 1989	18	94.7
Total	19	100

Note: There was no report of pornography in 1983 and 1986.

In the study, white-collar crimes were given more attention than common street crimes (see Table 13). Reports of white-collar crimes were double those of common street crimes. Moreover, the reports of white-collar crimes were more often placed on the more prominent front page. Table 14 gives the rank order of 11 crimes selected and the proportion of each crime that appeared on the front page. It shows reports of embezzlement as the largest proportion of cases appearing on the front page.

Table 13. Most Frequently Reported Crimes by Rank Order

<u>White-Collar Crime</u>			<u>Street Crime</u>		
Rank		Percent	Rank		Percent
1	Embezzlement	11.5	4	Theft and Burglary	3.9
2	Bribery	5.2	5	Murder	3.2
3	Smuggling/Speculation	4.0	7	Robbery	2.1
6	Fraud	2.2	8	Assault	1.6
7	Neglect of Duty	2.1	9	Sex Offense	1.1

Note: Reports of different crimes are rank-ordered according to their frequencies of being reported in the newspaper.

Table 14. Crime Stories Appearing on the Front Page by type of Crime

	Frequency	Percent
White collar crime		
Embezzlement	40	40.8
Bribery	26	26.5
Smuggling/speculation	21	21.4
Neglect of duty	7	7.1
Fraud	4	4.1
Total	98	100
Street crime		
Robbery	6	30.0
Theft and burglary	6	30.0
Assault	3	15.0
Kidnapping	3	15.0
Murder	1	5.0
Sex offense	1	5.0
Total	20	100

In her study, Graber (1980:37) found that "white-collar crime stories received basically the same display as street crime stories in prominent page and section placement, headline size, story length, and pictorial coverage." Katz's study of an American newspaper (1987) showed that white-collar crimes (66% in the crime news and 22% in the official statistics) received much more media attention than did common street crimes (21% in the crime news and 70% in official statistics). Ericson *et al* (1991) also argue that the reporting of white-collar economic crimes was much more frequent than the reporting of blue-collar theft and burglary. Therefore, the findings of this study are similar to their findings in this respect.

According to Ericson *et al* (1991:252-3), journalists focus on crime, corruption, negligence, mismanagement, and procedural impropriety to foster accountability and effect change in the organizations concerned. However, while the popular newspaper focuses on

street crimes stripped of organizational and institutional contexts, the quality newspaper acts as the watch-dog of government officials (ibid.:256). Their findings showed that the quality newspaper (50 per cent) was twice as likely as the popular newspaper to publish items imputing deviance to officials in government (ibid.:253-5). The findings of this study reveal a similar tendency. Misconduct of government officials usually received great attention. Embezzlement and bribery were the number one and number two crimes most often reported in the samples. More than half of the reports of the two crimes involved either a party member or a government official or both (see Table 15). This is consistent with the role of the newspaper and its journalists. As is discussed in Chapter IV, the People's Daily is used by the leadership of the Party as a check on mismanagement and other official misconduct, while the journalists are the Party's intelligence gatherer. In fact, crimes of embezzlement and bribery have been a major theme in the reporting of news in the newspaper (see Table 15).

Table 15. Proportion of Crime Stories Involving Party Members or Government Officials by Crime

	Embezzlement				Bribery			
	Party membership		Gov't Officials		Party membership		Gov't Officials	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	80	61.1	59	45.0	49	81.7	34	56.7
No	14	10.7	14	10.7			2	3.3
Not given	17	13.0	38	29.0	5	8.3	18	30.0
Not Applicable	20	15.3	20	15.3	6	10.0	6	10.0
Total	131	100	131	100	60	100	60	100

Table 16a. Rank Order of Alleged Crimes by Year

1983(Jul-Dec)		1986(Jul-Dec)		1989(Jul-Dec)	
	N %		N %		N %
Embezzlement	12 9.5	Murder	14 6.2	Embezzlement	66 29.6
Smuggling/ speculation	12 9.5	Embezzlement	14 6.2	Bribery	35 15.7
Assault	6 4.8	Neglect of duty	14 6.2	Pornography	18 8.1
Hijacking	5 4.0	Smuggling/ speculation	9 4.0	Smuggling/ speculation	14 6.3
Counter- revolution	4 3.2	Unlawful detention	9 4.0	Counter- revolution	12 5.4
Protecting criminal	4 3.2	Bribery	9 4.0	Murder	8 3.6
Sex offense	3 2.4	Libel	7 3.1	Fraud	7 3.1
Fraud	3 2.4	Theft/ burglary	6 2.7	Sabotage of cultural relic	6 2.7
Theft/ burglary	2 1.6	Fraud	4 1.8	Theft/ burglary	5 2.2
Kidnapping	2 1.6	Arson	4 1.8	Neglect of duty	5 2.2
Total	53 42.2		90 40.0		176 78.9

Table 16b. Rank Order of Alleged Crimes, 1989

Jan.-Jun.	N	%	Jul.-Dec.	N	%
Embezzlement	39	14.2	Embezzlement	66	29.6
Theft and burglary	32	11.7	Bribery	35	15.7
Robbery	20	7.3	Pornography	18	8.1
Bribery	16	5.8	Smuggling/speculation	14	6.3
Murder	15	5.5	Counterrevolution	12	5.4
Sabotage of cultural relic	13	4.7	Murder	8	3.6
Fraud	11	4	Fraud	7	3.1
Smuggling/speculation	11	4	Sabotage of cultural relic	6	2.7
Beating, smashing and looting	11	4	Theft/burglary	5	2.2
Assault	9	3.3	Neglect of duty	5	2.2
Total	136	64.5	Total	176	78.9

Table 16a and Table 16b give the rank order of crimes reported in the samples for the three periods. The purpose of making two tables is to make the comparison of the three periods valid (all of them included only the second six months) and detect significant changes in crime reporting before and after June the 4th, 1989. It is surprising to find that crimes of counter-revolution were given much attention for all three periods (for 1983 and 1989 this crime ranked among the top ten crimes, while for 1986, it was the 11th). It may indicate that, for the People's Daily, the consolidation of political power is a theme that deserves long-term attention.

It is shown in Table 16a that the general patterns for the three periods are similar. White-collar crimes were given more attention than were street crimes for all of the three periods. In 1989, reports of embezzlement and bribery considerably increased. This can be explained by the occurrence of the movement before and around June 4th that was triggered by unprecedented serious corruption of the government. In response to people's

anger and requirements, the Party launched an anti-embezzlement campaign. As a result, more reports of the crime appeared in the People's Daily, especially for the second half of the year (See Table 16b). The reporting of this campaign will be discussed in the next chapter.

Table 16b also shows that there were more reports of street crimes in the first half than the second half of 1989. There were 20 reports of robbery and 32 reports of theft/burglary in the first six months, whereas there were only 5 reports of theft/burglary and no report of robbery in the second six months. Moreover, the number of murder reports for the first six months was twice that for the second six months. "Beating, smashing, and looting" that was made a crime in the Criminal Code in order to prevent the reoccurrence of what happened in the early stage of the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, reappeared during this period. Although no details of the cases were recorded during the process of coding, there is no doubt that the major theme of reporting before and around June 4th was to portray and denounce the "riot," thus the theme of crime-news reporting was related to public order and security. After the crackdown, the major emphasis was shifted to deal with the issue of government corruption.

It is shown in Table 16a that murder was the most frequently reported crime in the samples of 1986. A further analysis shows that more than half of the items concerned were carried in the "Legal Column" for a discussion of the definition of murder. This pattern changed in 1989 (see Table 17). There were more reports of individual murder cases in that period. Besides the effect of June 4th discussed in the earlier paragraph, this change may also indicate that social problems were more openly discussed in the year of 1989.

The issue of crime was no longer kept as secret as before, especially street crimes. There will be further discussion of this issue in the section on murder reporting in the next chapter.

Table 17. Distribution of Reports of Murder by Type of Story (1986 and 1989 only)

	1986 (Jul.- Dec.)		1989 (Jan.- Dec.)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Specific crime	3	21.4	16	69.6
General discussion	1	7.2	1	4.3
Feature	2	14.3	6	26.1
Legal column	8	57.1	0	0
Total	14	100	23	100

Despite the fact that, in 1983, the two "decisions" were issued regarding the severe and swift punishment of crimes endangering public security, the findings did not show an increase in the reporting of the crimes concerned. In the reporting of specific crime stories, a large proportion of stories contained more than one case (see Table 18). Thus, although the total space devoted to, and the numbers of crime news items, were not large, there were many more cases involved in each report. This may partly explain the phenomenon found in the 1983 data mentioned above. This style of multiple reporting may have different effects than is the situation with single-case reporting. However, a quantitative analysis cannot do much in this respect. As discussed in Chapter III, the technique of quantitative content analysis should not be used alone for examining the effects of the media (Wimmer & Dominick, 1987).

Table 18. Proportion of Specific Crime Stories by Case Number, 1989.

Value Label	Frequency	Percent
Only one case	193	48.7
Between 2 and 5 cases	28	7.1
Between 6 and 10 Cases	9	2.3
11 cases and more	68	17.2
Not applicable	98	24.8
Total	396	100

The present study did not intend to probe the images shown in the crime stories about the offender and the victim. From the very basic information collected, it is found that usually only offenders' names were given, while other information was always missing (Table 19). Table 20 shows that there were often multiple offenders in one crime story. One reason for this is what has been mentioned earlier, namely, that there were many multi-case crime stories in the samples. Victims were generally invisible in the crime stories (Table 21). Therefore, the findings of this study in this respect are consistent with those found in Western newspapers.

Table 19. Information About the Offender

	Offender's name		Offender's age		Offender's sex	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Given	310	54.2	38	6.6	306	53.5
Not given	147	25.7	419	73.3	28	4.9
Offender Unknown	6	1.0	6	1.0	127	22.2
Institution	10	1.7	10	1.7	10	1.7
Not applicable	99	17.3	99	17.3	1	0.2
Total	572	100	572	100	572	100

Note: -- The category of "offender unknown" means that the offender was not mentioned in the crime story. The category of "institution" refers to non-individual offenders.

--When the crime story was not about a specific case and did not involve any individual offenders or victims, e.g. in most cases of general discussion, it was then categorized as "not applicable." This also applies to the tables below.

Table 20. Number of Offenders in Crime Stories

	Frequency	Percent
One Person	144	25.2
Between 2 and 5	119	20.8
More than 5	127	22.2
Not given	67	11.7
Not applicable	115	20.1
Total	572	100

Table 21. Information About the Victim

	Frequency	Percent
None	295	51.6
One to 3 sentences	93	16.3
More than 3 sentences	12	2.1
Not applicable	172	30.1
Total	572	100

In the samples, only a very small proportion of crime cases were repeatedly reported. Generally speaking, no long-term attention was paid to individual incidents. The

only topic which received a series of reports was the hijacking of a Chinese airplane by six Chinese citizens to South Korea in 1983.

Crimes stories and official statistics

It has been mentioned earlier that the official data are very limited and questionable. However, they are the only source available. For 1983, there was no breakdown for the seven types of crimes usually reported to Interpol since 1986. Only an aggregated number of the crimes was published. On the other hand, the total number of reports of the seven crimes in the newspaper sampled is only 15 for 1983 and 30 for 1986 (Again, in this study, only the second six months of these two years were sampled). The sample sizes are considered too small to make a reasonable comparison. Therefore, only the data of 1989 were used for the purpose of this section.

Table 22. Comparison of Selected Crimes Between Newspaper Reporting (People's Daily) and Official Statistics in China, 1989.

	Crime News		Crime Statistics	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Murder	23	19.3	19590	1.0
Assault	11	9.2	35931	1.8
Robbery	21	17.6	72881	3.7
Rape	8	6.7	40999	2.1
Theft	37	31.1	1673222	84.9
Fraud	18	15.1	42581	2.2
Counterfeit	2	0.08	865	0.04
Total	120	100	1971901	100

Table 22 compared the reporting of the seven crimes with official data. In the official data, the majority of the cases involved theft (about 85%), while each of the remaining crimes accounted for only a fraction of the total crimes in the official data. In

the crime stories, however, the proportion of theft cases (31%) is considerably smaller than that in the official data, and for the four types of violent crimes, the total proportion (53%) was much larger than in the official data. Yet, it is not correct to conclude that, in the newspaper, violent crimes were over-represented, while property crimes were under-reported. It would be safer to say that, comparing this group of crimes, the reversed representation is not as obvious as is the case in Western newspapers. It has been pointed out that a considerable proportion of crime stories contained more than one case in each item (see Table 18). Moreover, crime statistics were an important part of general discussions of crime phenomena. Therefore, although the total number of individual crime stories was small, the total number of criminal cases referred to in these stories was probably much larger. Considering this style of reporting, it is not that straightforward to say which crime is over-represented and which is under-represented. How the public's perception of the incidence of various crimes will be influenced by this style of reporting needs to be further examined.

As mentioned earlier, it was found in the present study that, in fact, the People's Daily serves as an official source of crime statistics. Crime statistics were available from general discussions, reports of government institutions, or reports of major relevant conferences published in the newspaper, although they were not carried in a systematic and consistent manner.

It is not the purpose of this study to get crime data from the newspaper. However, some data found in the samples are considered useful for the discussion in this section. It was reported in the People's Daily (October 26th, 1989, p.3) that a total of 71,055 cases

of embezzlement and bribery (economic crimes) were reported to all the procuratorate institutions in the country from the beginning of January to the end of September, 1989. It was also said in the report that, compared with 1988's figure during the same period, the number of embezzlement and bribery cases was more than two times larger. When looking at the cases filed by the procuratorate institutions, the number was only half of that of cases that were reported. Moreover, a considerable number of the cases were reported and filed after the joint "Announcement" by the People's Supreme Court and the People's Supreme Procuratorate (see Chapter V) was published on August 15th, 1989 in the People's Daily. These numbers give an idea of the extent to which crimes of embezzlement and bribery existed in reality. It can be inferred from the numbers that, even for the whole year, the total number of embezzlement and bribery cases was within six digits. This number was, thus, much smaller than the total number of those seven types of crimes published and reported to Interpol (see Table 22). However, embezzlement and bribery received more media attention than all of those crimes reported to Interpol put together (see Table 23). It contrasts with Western studies, in which a media emphasis was put on street crime as compared to white-collar crime (see Chapter II).

Table 23. Frequency of Mention of Selected Crimes

	1983		1986		1989	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Murder	--	--	14	26.9	23	8.3
Sex Offense	3	11.1	2	3.8	8	2.9
Assault	6	22.2	1	1.9	11	4.0
Robbery	1	3.7	2	3.8	21	7.6
Theft	2	7.4	6	11.5	39	14.1
Fraud	3	11.1	4	7.7	18	6.5
Embezzlemen t	12	44.4	14	26.9	105	38.0
Bribery	--	--	9	17.3	51	18.5
Total	27	100	52	100	276	100.0

Nevertheless, this comparison lends support to the view that was discussed in the earlier section. The People's Daily, as a quality newspaper as well as the organ of the Party, sets its targets at "those prostituting themselves for the high life in established institutions (political corruption) more than those engaged in the low life of illicit prostitution (vice and 'normal crime')" (Ericson *et al.* 1991:41). The mass media have an agenda-setting function. They made readers pay attention to certain issues (McCombs and Shaw, 1972); in this case the issue is official misconduct or the campaign against corruption by individual government officials. From the newspaper, readers learn not only about this issue but also how much importance to attach to it from the amount and prominence assigned to it.

Stages of reporting

In the Western media a crime incident often appears as if it is a complete episode rather than part of a series of episodes. It is reported that the media generally focus on the beginning stages of the criminal justice system (Dussuyer, 1979; Garofalo, 1981; Graber,

1980; Katz, 1987; Sherizen, 1978; Surette, 1993). Typically, the first phase in a crime story is the reporting of an incident defined as criminal to the police who then may verify and investigate, apprehend and interrogate. Some findings (Dussuyer, 1979; Sherizen, 1978) showed that two-thirds of crime-news items sampled were related to police actions. It was found that crime incidents, arrests, captures, suspect follow-up and/or charges were the most prevalent responses to reported crime. The commission of the crime provided the basis for the major details contained in the article (Dussuyer, 1979).

Table 24. Percentage of Crime Stories by Stage of Criminal Justice Process

Top Ten Ranks Only (All Years)	After arrest, before prosecution	Sentencing	Execution	Other stages	Total
Murder	36.8	42.1	10.5	10.6	100
Assault	46.2	30.8	15.4	7.6	100
Theft and burglary	33.3	20.8	25	20.9	100
Embezzlement	33.9	29	12.9	24.2	100
Sabotage of cultural relics	68.4	15.8		15.8	100
Counterrevolution	38.9	44.4	11.1	5.6	100
Smuggling/speculation	42.3	19.2	7.7	30.8	100
Neglect of duty	38.5	15.4		46.1	100
Beating, smashing & looting	41.7	25	8.3	25	100
Bribery	43.8	25	3.1	28.1	100

Note: In this analysis, the term "execution" means the carrying out of a sentence, in most cases, of death. If the sentence was imprisonment, then "execution" means that the criminal was serving the sentence.

The findings of this study also show a large proportion of crime-news reports at the police stage. It is shown in Table 24 that about 40% of the crime news were reported after the offender or suspect was arrested. It was rare to report an incident when it had just occurred. Similar to what is found in Western newspapers, a typical report of a crime case at this stage includes mostly the description of the crime itself. Other aspects were rarely mentioned (see Table 27). However, to report a crime only after the offender has been apprehended offers the public a visible suggestion that something is being done about it and that the crime has been solved. It is not the particular incident that is thought to be newsworthy; what is more important is the message that there has been a victory over the "bad elements". In this way, potentially negative news is turned into good news.

Table 25. Percentage of Crime Stories Containing Three or More Sentences about Various Stages in Criminal Justice Process (All Years)

	Frequency	Percent
Description of Event	323	56.5
Description of actions after arrest	3	0.5
Description of Court Procedures	2	0.3
Description of Sentence	16	2.8
Not Applicable	128	39.9
Total	572	100

It was found in the findings of the Western studies that the post-arrest stages of the criminal justice system were seldom mentioned. The impression made by the news was that the police were busy arresting people but that nothing else was happening in the criminal justice system to back the police up. The activities of the criminal justice agencies were thus described mainly as crime-fighting, leaving other aspects of these activities almost invisible (Dussuyer, 1979; Sherizen, 1978). Table 24 shows that little attention was given to the phases after arrest and before sentencing in this study. Almost no crimes were reported at the stages of prosecution and trial. There were almost no reports of what was happening after the offender was arrested except the mention of a charge that was going to be laid against him/her. Also, there was little description of what was happening after the prosecution and during the trial (see Table 25). Also shown in Table 24, there was a large proportion of crime stories that were reported at the stage of sentencing at the end of trial and at the stage of execution. A considerable number of crime stories were reported after the execution of offenders who had been sentenced to death.

Dussuyer's study (1979) found that, of the post-arrest stages, the court procedures were the most often mentioned topics in the samples. Criminal court proceedings are open

to the public and to the press. Thus, according to him, what was reported at this stage of a criminal incident depended less on what information was released and more on what the court reporter decided to select for news coverage. In crime stories, the courts were not generally shown as institutions, but as settings for individual cases; namely, they were mentioned only for the description of the development of individual cases (Surette, 1993).

In China, criminal court proceedings and criminal cases in general are usually kept secret from the public. However, it was found in the samples that there were some reports of public trials and even public arrests. In the cases of public arrest, after the alleged crimes were denounced, the offenders (usually there was a group of offenders involved in the same or different cases.) would be taken away by the police. In the case of a public trial, sentences would be announced and the offenders would be executed immediately after sentencing if they were given capital punishment. Findlay (1989) argues that the essential function of a public trial is to attract media treatment, and that the audience intended to be reached is an important consideration when examining the immediate and extended purposes for the display. Thus he calls the public trials after June 4th "show trials."

Dussuyer (1979) found that the court verdict and sentence imposed represented half of the news items about court proceedings. Similarly, this study found very limited information about court procedures other than sentencing. If there was any information other than sentencing, it would routinely be the same one line, reporting that the criminal had appealed the decision of the first instance and that the appeal was denied. As discussed in Chapter III, people in China were familiar with all the practices under the

model of informal social control, while what was really happening within the formal criminal justice system was not made known to the public, especially what happened during the phases after arrest and before sentencing.

This study found that both crime fighting and punishment were greatly emphasized in the crime stories (see Table 26). These were two crucial parts in the reporting of crime news. The reporting of arrests shows that crimes were under control and solved, while the reporting of sentencing delivers the message that the criminals got what they deserved--the punishment was meant as deterrence for criminals and potential criminals. The news media mostly ignore the stage of corrections (Dussuyer, 1979; Graber, 1980; Sherizen, 1978; Surette, 1993). In fact, corrections are mentioned so infrequently in the news that content-analysis studies discussing corrections are practically nonexistent (Surette, 1993). It is argued that the minimum reporting of corrections could reflect on the efficiency of the correctional system in keeping the information about such newsworthy events as escapes or riots from becoming available to the public. The Western findings show that, when corrections did become the subject of a news story, they were always reported in a negative light (Surette, 1993). This study obtained similar findings for the newspaper sampled (see Table 26). Very few specific crime cases in the news were reported at the stage of corrections. Out of 572 crime stories, only 15 discussed corrections or were relevant to that stage. When the information about corrections was given, it appeared either in a feature story or a general discussion. What is different from the findings of the Western studies is that the reporting of corrections, if any, was usually in a positive light.

Sentencing and timeliness

Sentences reported by newspapers are atypical of actual practice (Roberts and Doob, 1990). A content analysis conducted by the Canadian Sentencing Commission in 1988 showed that, in 70% of all the sentencing stories sampled, the sentence reported was a period of imprisonment, whereas fines appeared in fewer than 10% of the stories. In reality, however, sentences of imprisonment are relatively rarely imposed in Canada, while fines are the most commonly imposed sentences (ibid.:453).

This study indicates similar findings from the Chinese paper, although the composition of the sentences imposed in reality is unknown. In fact, no official statistics of sentencing are available. As shown in Table 26, the vast majority of sentences imposed found in the specific crime stories in which a sentence was given were imprisonment and death penalty. Ten percent of the stories did not specify the sentences imposed. Only fewer than 4% of the cases reported involved sentences other than imprisonment or death penalty. The most serious sentence, the death penalty, constituted the largest proportion of the sentencing stories. This suggests that serious crimes and severe punishments were over-represented in the samples of this study.

Table 26. Sentences Reported in Crime Stories, 1989.

	Frequency	Percent
6-month to 10-years	52	31.3
11 or more years	14	8.4
Life imprisonment	18	10.8
Death penalty	60	36.1
Unspecified	16	9.6
Other	6	3.6
Total	166	100

Note: In the "General Provisions" of the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China, a distinction is made between "fixed-term" imprisonment and "life" imprisonment. It defines, "the term of fixed-term imprisonment is not less than six months and not more than fifteen years." In its "Special Provisions," however, it seems that a ten-year period is used as a demarcation. For many crimes defined in the Code, the punishment is either less than ten years or more than ten years. These factors were taken into account when the coding protocol was designed.

Moreover, it is shown in Table 27 that the more severe the sentence imposed, the more quickly the newspaper would respond to it. Such dramatic events as public trials and execution were certainly newsworthy topics, although the messages delivered may vary. In this case, the purpose is "to execute one as a warning to a hundred." The publicizing of the severe sentences is part of the continuous education process. This was openly acknowledged in the newspaper. For example, the headline of an article (October 26, 1989, p.3) says, "Continuously Handle Serious Cases; Severely Punish One In Order To Warn Hundreds."

Table 27. Sentences in Crime Stories by Time of Reporting, 1989

	Within 2 days	Within 1 week	Within 1 month	After 1 month	Time unspecified
6-month to 10- years	15.8	15.8	18.4		50
11 or more years	16.7	16.7	16.7		50
Life imprisonment	44.4	11.1		11.1	33.3
Death penalty	51.0	18.4	6.1		24.5
Other	33.3		16.7		50.0
Not applicable	16.5	14.2	13.1	5.1	51.1

Roberts and Doob (1990) argue that news media treatment of sentencing must be seen in the context of media coverage of crime in general. The over-representation of the sentences of imprisonment is because the media over-represent crimes of violence. In the samples of the content analysis conducted by the Canadian Sentencing Commission, more than 50% were sentences imposed upon offenders convicted of crimes involving violence, whereas official data showed that fewer than 6% of all crimes involved violence (ibid.).

Table 28. Sentences Reported in White-Collar and Violent Crime Stories, 1989 (in percentage)

	6 months to years	11 years 10 or more	life imprison- ment	death penalty	unspecified	other
Violent Crime						
Murder	6.7			73.3	20	
Sex offense	60			40		
Assault	42.9			42.9	14.3	
Robbery			16.7	66.7	16.7	
Kidnapping				33.3	66.7	
Beating, smashing			25	75		
Unlawful detention	80				20	
Total Number	11		2	24	8	
White-Collar Crime						
Fraud	60		20		20	
Embezzlement	18	6	6	30	34	6
Smuggling /speculation	27.3		9.1	18.2	36.4	9.1
Neglect of duty	71.4				28.6	
Bribery	10	10	40	20	10	10
Total Number	21	4	9	19	25	5

Violent crimes were not over-represented in the samples of this study. Table 28 shows the distribution of sentences in the selected specific crime stories sampled. To stress what has been discussed earlier, the boundaries between crime and non-crime, and the definitions of, and punishments for, crime are not made clear. The consequences of a certain deviant behaviour may not be predictable and instead depend on various factors. To take as an example an article in the newspaper (July 18, 1989, p.4), it reported that a high-ranking county government official was expelled from the Party and punished under the Regulations on the Administrative Penalties for Public Security for watching

pornographic videos and raping a 16-year-old girl. According to the article, people in that county were asking why no criminal sanctions were imposed on this official.

The findings of the study conducted by the Canadian Sentencing Commission show that, in its samples, information about the offense or the offender was very limited. As well, little explanation of the judicial reasoning behind the sentence was provided. This is true for the findings of this study. It was also found in this study that the reporting of severe sentencing increased over the years as did the proportion of “unspecified” sentences (Table 29).

Table 29. Sentences Reported in Crime Stories by Year

	1983*	1986*	1989	Total
	%	%	%	%
6-month to 10-year	57.1	52.9	19.3	29
11 or more years		3.9	7.8	6.5
Life imprisonment	7.1	7.8	9	8.7
Death penalty	28.6	11.8	35.5	29.9
Unspecified	7.1	17.6	24.7	22.1
Other		5.9	3.6	3.9
Total number	14	51	166	231

* Last six months only.

Evaluation of criminal justice system

Graber (1980) found that the news provided little explicit system-wide information to help the public evaluate or comprehend the information about individual crimes and cases. This was true for the Chinese paper sampled. It has been mentioned earlier that a typical crime story shown in the samples contained a brief description of the incident and the sentence imposed if it was reported at the stage of sentencing. What was happening after arrest and during trial was almost always missing in the stories (see Table 25). Even

though a large proportion of specific crime stories were reported at the stage of arrest, there were usually no detailed descriptions of the investigation and arrest itself. Therefore, no direct and explicit evaluation could be found in the stories unless some particular words, that were routinely used, were subjected to analysis. This will be done later in the qualitative analysis.

As is pointed out by Surette (1993:64-5), most media evaluations of the criminal justice system are implicit, conveyed through references to the ability or inability of the system to control crime. Table 30 shows the evaluations of the criminal justice system which were mostly gathered from general discussions and editorials. It is found that the evaluations were explicitly and straightforwardly conveyed. Most of the evaluations were positive, while both negative and mixed comments accounted for only a small proportion. Most negative evaluations were about individual criminal justice officials whose improper behaviour was criticized. Comparatively, the number of cases with negative comments was larger for the court system. This may be caused by some stories citing reports from a couple of major party/government conferences in 1989 that the courts had been too lenient to those who were charged with economic crimes such as embezzlement.

Table 30. Evaluation of Criminal Justice Institutions, 1989

Evaluations	Police		Prosecution		Court		Corrections	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Positive	112	81.2	67	75.3	41	61.2	13	86.7
Negative	14	10.1	11	12.4	14	20.9	2	13.3
Mixed	12	8.7	11	12.4	12	17.9		
Total	138	100	89	100	67	100	15	100

Dussuyer found in his study (1979:54-5) that the evaluative tone of most crime news stories was overwhelmingly positive, with no critical comments. Others argue that the news media portrayed the police as doing a fair job, but the courts and the correctional system as doing a poor job, or doing nothing (Graber, 1980; Sherizen, 1978). The more favourable evaluations received by the police could be explained by the close relationship between crime reporters and the police. The present study did not show such obvious differential treatments. As discussed earlier, only an ethnographic research within the news organization and source organizations could provide further light on this issue.

Type of knowledge about crime

The news generally downplays explanations. In Western newspapers, crime stories rarely address the causes of crime (Dussuyer, 1979; Ericson *et al.* 1991; Graber, 1980; Sherizen, 1978). This could be explained by the fact that news imperatives work against explanation (Ericson *et al.*, 1991:268).

Table 31. Causes of Crime Given in Crime Stories (All Years)

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Individual pathology	357	60.4
Organizational pathology	17	2.9
Circumstances	3	0.5
Western influence	7	1.2
Old social customs	11	1.9
Not given	195	33.0
Other	1	0.2
Total	1144	100.0

Note: Causes of crime were double coded. There were 553 missing cases. The number of valid cases was 591.

Contrary to Graber's findings (1980:70) which showed that only 4% of the samples ever mentioned causes of crime, a large number of crime stories sampled in this study discussed the causes of crime, implicitly or explicitly. Table 31 gives percentages of different factors cited as causing crimes. A number of factors could explain this difference. As is discussed in Chapter IV, the way that newsworthiness is perceived by the Chinese media is different from the way that it is perceived by the Western media, owing to differences in types of media ownership, market orientation of audience, and functions. The Chinese newspaper mainly functions to propagate the Party's line and to educate and mobilize the people. The reporting of an incident should be postponed until a desired or satisfactory outcome has been obtained. Then the incident can be used as ideal educational material.

It is shown in Table 31 that individual pathology was identified as the cause of crimes in the majority of cases. According to Ericson *et al* (1991:275), individual pathology as an explanation attributes deviance to some disability of the individual,

including physiological, mental, social, psychological, or some combination of these. Their findings show that this type of explanation was infrequent. The present study borrowed the term. It is not totally accurate when applied to the samples because here it refers mainly to one aspect, i.e. misbehaviour caused by wrong thinking, which, according to what could be inferred from the crime stories, could be transformed through proper education and labour reform. It is also shown in the table that other types of explanations were rarely seen, e.g. organizational malfunctions. This is unlike the study by Ericson *et al* which shows that the most frequently occurring explanations dealt with mechanisms of bureaucratic efficiency, especially for the quality newspaper sampled (1991:268-272). For the Chinese newspaper, it could be safer to blame the individual than an organizational structure or a system. It can also be explained by different understandings of the causes of crime between China and the West. As the differences are caused by multiple factors, to explore and examine them can constitute another research topic.

Table 32. Percentage of Crime Stories Containing Evaluations/Recommendations (All Years)

	Frequency	Percent
Evaluations in Story	460	80.4
Recommendations	193	33.7

Note: The total number of cases is 572.

Similar to what was found for explanations of crime, a large proportion of crime stories in 1989 carried evaluations (see Table 32). This can be explained by the high proportion of general discussions, editorials and commentaries in the samples. Although the proportion was considerably larger, it is consistent with the findings of Ericson *et al* (1991:262) which showed that news items carried in the quality newspaper were more

evaluative. Table 32 also gives the proportion of crime stories that carried recommendations. These data only show that opinion-based statements were often provided in the crime stories sampled. They cannot be used for further analyses.

This is also true for the discussion of headlines. According to Ericson *et al* (1991:262-5), the headline is an additional and special format for presenting knowledge in the news. Following their design, this study examined several categories: control action, primary fact/background information, evaluation, recommendations, and other. Table 33 gives proportionate frequencies for each category. It shows that the majority of the headlines contained “control action” and “evaluation”. Ericson *et al* (1991) use the term “control action” to describe actions taken by persons involved in the events reported on. In the present study, it simply means that something has been done in regard to the crime concerned. Primary fact or background information refers to material that was directly or indirectly relevant to the crime story. Evaluation involves assessments of whether someone or something was good or bad. Thus, the findings in this respect are consistent with what has been found from the content of the crime stories discussed in the earlier paragraph. The messages delivered through headlines will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Table 33. Type of Knowledge in Headlines of Crime Stories, All Years

	Frequency	Percent
Control action	217	37.9
Primary fact/ background	90	15.8
Evaluation	219	38.3
Recommendation	43	7.5
Other	3	0.5
Total	572	100

Summary

This chapter discussed the main findings of the quantitative analysis of this study. The findings were compared with those of Western studies discussed in Chapter II. Comparisons were also made for the three periods sampled.

Taking into account the limitations imposed by the sample sizes, the comparisons of the three periods show some obvious changes in the samples:

----The number of crime stories increased over the years, although it was still very small compared with that of Western newspapers.

----The proportion of hard crime news increased over the years, while the amount of soft crime news coverage, especially editorials, decreased.

----The size of crime stories was reduced. There were more short crime stories for 1989 than for the other two periods.

----In the samples of 1983 and 1986, it was common for an editorial to be written for a specific crime case, while this pattern was not present in the samples of 1989.

----The criminal justice institutions became more often cited sources in the samples of 1989 than before.

----The types of crime reported in the news were consistent for the three periods. The most frequently reported crime was always embezzlement.

----Compared with the other two periods, there were more reports of public trials and more reports of the death penalty in 1989.

----There were more crime statistics referred to in 1989 than in the other two periods.

----A breakdown of 1989's data shows that there were considerably more reports of street crimes in the first half than in the second half of the year, while the number of reports on embezzlement for the second period was almost twice as that of the first. These differences can be explained by the development of the June 4th event during that time.

Since the event was officially denounced as a "counter-revolutionary riot," the theme of reporting correspondingly focused on maintaining social order and public security through putting down the rebellion. After the democratic movement was suppressed, the focus of reporting shifted to launching the anti-embezzlement campaign to deal with government corruption.

----Crime waves occurred along with campaigns launched by the government/party. This was typically shown in the reporting of embezzlement and pornography.

These changes show that with the emphasizing and strengthening of the formal criminal justice system after the enactment of the Criminal Law in 1980, the reporting of crime became less restricted and the style of reporting became less cautious. Crime cases and crime data were more open to the public and, at the same time, less interpretative statements were needed for the reporting of specific crime cases. This study cannot, however, examine changes in the informal social control system. Another important point is that the increased crime reporting is also the result of the political turmoil that was happening in the year of 1989. More recent samples need to be examined in order to know to what extent this caused the increased coverage of crime in the People's Daily.

Compared with Western findings, the findings of this study showed both differences and similarities. The main results are summarized as the following:

----In the People's Daily, the total amount of space devoted to the reporting of crime news was significantly smaller than in Western newspapers.

----There were more opinion-based stories (general discussions, editorials, etc.) in the Chinese newspaper.

----Government sources accounted for the vast majority of the crime stories sampled (including the news organization itself). Compared with the findings of Western studies, especially for quality newspapers, the difference is just a matter of degree.

----Unlike Western newspapers, there were more reports of property crimes than violent crimes. This is similar to what was found in Western quality newspapers.

----Similar to Western newspapers, white collar crime was given more attention. Great attention was given to government official misconduct. However, corporate crime was invisible for both Chinese and Western newspapers.

----In the Chinese paper sampled, the information about the offender and the victim was also kept to a minimum, and no long-term attention was given to individual incidents.

----When compared with the official crime data, the over-representation of violent crimes was not as obvious as was the case in Western newspapers. In fact, the so-called economic crimes, e.g. embezzlement, were over-represented in the Chinese newspaper sampled.

----While the crime-news reporting of Western newspapers focused on the early stages of criminal justice process, the reporting of crime in the Chinese paper concentrated on two stages, i.e. arrest and sentencing. There was little description of prosecution and courtroom procedures in the samples of the Chinese newspaper.

----The findings of this study showed that serious crimes, and sentences of imprisonment, were also over-represented in the Chinese newspaper. Similarly, there was little explanation of the sentences meted out.

----Evaluations of the criminal justice institutions were not often presented, but they were mostly positive. While the police received more favourable evaluations than other criminal justice institutions in Western newspapers, no differential treatment was found in the samples of this study. Similar to Western findings, reports of corrections were almost absent from the samples. However, when there were comments about corrections, they were always positive.

----In the samples of this study, a large proportion of crime stories contained elements of evaluation or recommendation. This is similar to the findings of the Western study for quality newspapers.

----Causes of crime were often given, implicitly or explicitly, in the samples of this study, which is different from the findings of Western newspapers. Moreover, in China, it was the individual who was to be blamed for the crime committed.

Both Western and Chinese newspapers have similar functions in their role as a social control apparatus. This appears in their over-reporting of selected crimes at selected stages. However, the differences between the Chinese paper and western papers are more dramatic. These differences can be explained by different types of ownership, different market orientations of audience, and different perceptions of newsworthiness. The format and content of the People's Daily are determined by its special position as the Party's organ and its paternalistic stance toward its audience.

Chapter VIII. Discussion of Findings (Qualitative Analysis)

Introduction

The quantitative content analysis discussed in Chapter VI basically shows a general pattern of crime-news reporting in the Chinese newspaper. However, this type of analysis cannot tap the multiple layers of meaning in the news content. The messages being delivered through the crime stories cannot be isolated from the flow of events and portrayed exclusively in quantitative terms. For this purpose, therefore, a more sensitive methodology than that offered in quantitative content analysis is needed (Ericson *et al*, 1991; Johnson, 1988).

This chapter discusses the findings of this study in qualitative terms. In a qualitative analysis, a process of reconstructive interpretation is undertaken to produce the analyst's own text. In the process, the analyst picks out what is relevant for analysis and pieces it together to create tendencies, sequences, patterns, and orders (Ericson *et al* 1991:55). Reporting of murder and embezzlement will be examined to show exactly how an individual crime was reported and the role of the newspaper in an anti-crime campaign. As qualitative content analyses should function as the glue that cements the interpretation of convergent results (Johnson, 1988:39), it is hoped that this analysis will further illustrate the arguments presented earlier.

A qualitative analysis is designed to examine the text in a manner that reveals interpretations (Ericson *et al*, 1991:54). It should be noted that this present analysis is engaged in interpretation on two levels--not only in interpreting the writers' meaning but

also in translating the language used for the readers of this text. Owing to the translation, it is inevitable that some hidden meanings in the language are not fully revealed or even lost.

Reporting of Murder

It was shown in Chapter VI that information about both the phenomenon of crime and the criminal justice system was significantly more restricted in the samples of this study than was the case in Western studies. In the quantitative analysis, most specific crime stories were short in length and limited in content, and most of them were reported when the crimes were considered solved, i.e. arrest or sentencing. Generally speaking, it was very rare that an incident involving crime was reported right after it happened, or before the offender was apprehended. Also, no long-term coverage was given to specific individual cases. Usually, there was only a one-time report, no matter what happened before or afterwards. This pattern applies to the reporting of murder.

The reporting of murder cases can be divided into two types according to the major emphasis in the stories. One group focused on control actions, and the other presented role models for emulation. For most of the crime stories in the first group, the crime committed was reported immediately after the criminals were sentenced to death or executed, while, for those in the second group, it was the victim who was at the centre of the reports. Although the styles of reporting were different for these two groups, the tone in each of them was the same. Both of the two types of reporting served to turn bad news into good news.

For the first group, six murder cases are taken as examples for the discussion. In this group, the reports usually started with the sentencing of the criminals to death and/or their execution. Case 1 (Feb. 13, 1989, p.4) reports the sentencing of an athlete to death. The headline reads "Athlete Li Zhizhong Sentenced to Death for Murder with a Gun", followed by two lines of caption, "Engaged in fighting and brawling, refused to mend his ways despite repeated admonitions, acted in utter disregard of law and discipline, he deserves the punishment." This headline is very typical of the reporting tone of the crime stories. The criminal is absolutely responsible for what he did. To sentence him to death is the only way to uphold justice after moral education and discipline have failed. In the article, there are four paragraphs in total. The first paragraph contains one sentence, saying that Li Zhizhong was sentenced to death and the deprivation of political rights by a provincial intermediate court on February 11, 1989.

The second paragraph constitutes the main body of this article, containing eight sentences. It describes the murder, including time, place, the triggering factor, names (mostly last names only), and sex of the victims. There were two offenders and seven victims (five killed, two seriously injured by gun shot or knife wound). The incident occurred on January 29, 1989. The two offenders fled. Li Zhizhong was caught the next day, and the other suspect was killed when he resisted arrest. The third paragraph of three sentences gives the two criminals' past police records. The last paragraph is only one line, saying that Li Zhizhong does not agree with the judgments and wants to appeal.

Murder is a sensational event by any standard. In this case, five people were killed and two badly injured. The two offenders shot them with a sawn-off rifle. It is illegal to

possess or use this type of weapon, and gun control is very strict in China. Thus, this incident is a very serious and rare case. It is no doubt because of its seriousness and rarity that this murder case was reported in the newspaper. Such an unusual story will attract readers, however, it is problematic to report bad news, as is discussed in Chapter IV, for fear of undermining the government/party's image and influence. Therefore, this incident was not reported until the offender was apprehended, tried, and sentenced to death. By this time, the crime has been solved and the criminal has already been tried, found guilty, and sentenced.

Case 2, Case 3, Case 4 and Case 6 are about the imposition of the death penalty on the murderers. Case 5 is about the arrest of a murderer. These cases share some similarities. The tone and style of reporting in the five cases are the same as those of Case 1, although they are even shorter in length. Case 2 (March 19, 1989, p.2) involves two separate cases; one involves a murder, the other a robbery. The offenders in both cases were given the death penalty. They were reported together because the victims were Japanese travelers in both cases. The headline says, "Murderers and Robbers of Foreigners Sentenced to Death". The article reports that the two criminals had police records.

In Case 3 (April 2, 1989, p.2), the offender, a temporary worker of a factory, killed the director of the factory and injured four, including a deputy director, with a home-made bomb. The incident happened on March 21, 1989. The offender was sentenced on March 31, 1989 and executed on the same day. The article contains only four sentences, with the headline "Criminal Jin Shaoping Executed in Guiyang," and the caption "Bombing Premeditated Revenge."

Case 4 (April 18, 1989, p.2) and Case 5 (Nov. 9, 1989, p.4) have the same length of four sentences and similar headlines, stating that the murderer was sentenced to death. Case 4 is about a public trial of a case of theft and killing along the railway, which was considered a big problem at that time. Although it is not indicated in the headline, three offenders are reported to have been sentenced to death; one committed the murder of a railway staff person while on duty, the others theft of railway materials. Case 5 involves the killing of a government tax collector by a private entrepreneur. The headline of Case 6 (Sept. 3, 1989, p.4) is "Murderer of Feng Yimiao Arrested"; and the caption "The offender is a Vagrant Repeat Offender." Feng Yimiao, the victim, was one of the deputies of The People's Congress and General Manager of a department store in Fuzhou.

These five cases were reported largely because of the victims' identities. In these cases, the victims were a deputy of the People's Congress (well respected by people), foreigners (international reputation), government officials on duty (current social problems), and a leading entrepreneur (tremendous impact). On the other hand, the criminals were of lower social status or simply recidivists. (They were originally considered to be "bad elements"). Obviously, this type of reporting is to serve as a deterrent to other potential offenders. It also reassures the public that crime is under control and that social order is maintained. Justice always wins out. Those who commit crimes are unable to escape the net of justice. They must pay for what they have done. This is the major emphasis embedded in the articles and their headlines.

Although the emphasis is the control action, the activities of the criminal justice system are almost invisible, except for the one line, saying routinely that the criminal was

sentenced to death by an intermediate court. This is partly a consequence of the limitation of space. Also, it is because the focus of reporting is on the outcome of an incident rather than the process of the criminal justice system, which is not yet widely open to the public. As the purpose of titillating and entertaining is much less obvious for the People's Daily than it is for Western newspapers (Vounivakis and Ericson, 1984), an incident, no matter how dramatic or sensational, should not be reported until it is made sure that the outcome is positive. Even at this stage, the description of details is restricted and downplays the incident itself in order to make the outcome positive.

Five cases are taken from the second group of reports as examples for the discussion. In these cases, the focus of reporting is on the victims. However, they are not just victims; they are heroes or heroines and may be considered as role models for people to emulate. As was the case in the first group, the incidents of murder in this group were not previously reported. The length of the reports is also about the same as the first group, except for one case.

Case 1 (March 23, 1989,p.2) has the headline, "Wang Yunling Gave Her Life for Passengers' Safety," and the caption, "Ruffian Brandishes Knife Violently; Attendant Fights Back Courageously." The article consists of three paragraphs. The first one has one sentence, saying that, at a general gathering held by the Railway Bureau of Guiyang, Guizhou Province, the title of "Revolutionary Martyr" was conferred on Wan Yunling, a female attendant, for her death in the line of duty when fighting bravely with a murderer for the safety of passengers.

The second and last paragraphs, each containing three sentences, briefly described the incident causing her death. On a moving train, Wan Yunling tried to stop a peasant pointing a long knife at another man, but she herself was stabbed in the stomach instead. The murderer went on killing in another two carriages. About half an hour later he was caught by other attendants and railway police. The last sentence states, "Because of the serious nature of her injury, Wang Yunling died a glorious death at the age of only 23." The article does not indicate whether anybody else was killed or injured before the murderer was caught and what happened to him.

The story of Case 2 (Jan. 12, 1989, p.4) is similar to Case 1. A young store manager "died heroically while fighting courageously with two escaped criminals with guns." The title of "Revolutionary Martyr" was also conferred on him. The two criminals were killed later when resisting arrest. The end of the article says that those who once accepted the hero's offer of help cherished their memories of this martyr. These two stories show how murder cases typically become known by the public through the media in this way. The reporting of these cases has the function of educating and mobilizing people to learn from these heroes or heroines.

Cases 3 to 5 are about role models in the police force. In these cases, the policemen reported were all killed and either posthumously admitted as members of the Communist Party or awarded such titles as "People's Bodyguard" and first class or second class "Heroic Model." The headlines for Case 3 (August 18, 1989, p.4), Case 4 (August 25, 1989, p.5), and Case 5 (Dec. 8, 1989, p.3) are the following: "Song Yonghe Died A Glorious Death Courageously Fighting with Ruffian" (Case 3); "Facing Ruffian with Gun

in Wanton Killing, People's Guards, Completely Disregarding Their Own Safety, Captured the Criminal," with the caption, "The Party Committee of Fujian Province Calls People to Learn From Chen Shanmin, Liu Xiqiang, etc." (Case 4), and "Courageously Fighting with Murderer, Laying Down His Life for the People" (Case 5).

Case 3 is the shortest of the three cases, but it is not uncommon. It contains three paragraphs with one sentence in each paragraph. The first one says that Song Fenghe, a railway policeman, was awarded the title of "Class Two Heroic Model" by the Beijing Bureau of Railway Public Security, "Revolutionary Martyr" by the government of Beijing Municipality, and posthumously admitted as a member of the Communist Party by the Party Committee of Beijing. The second paragraph says that Song was killed on March 21, 1989, when fighting with a murderer wanted by the Ministry of Public Security. The third paragraph states that Song's wife and sister were recruited by the police force. The message embedded here is that there are successors to carry on his cause.

In Case 4, a railway policeman who was shot and killed while on duty was awarded the title of "People's Bodyguard" and the manager of a railway service company shot to death in the same incident was granted the title of "Revolutionary Martyr." Their heroic acts of "struggling courageously with the ruffian" were highly praised. The articles listed the awards they had previously received and described their good deeds when they were alive. The article says that they (including other people who helped catch the criminal) "made great contributions to the stability of society and protection of people's life and property." It concluded that, at the crucial moment, it is the Party members who,

through their own conduct, win praise from the people and help improve the Party's image.

Case 5 is similar to Case 4, but a more detailed description was provided. In this story, the hero was also shot to death. He was posthumously admitted as Party member and awarded the titles of "Class One Heroic Model," "Heroic Policeman Who Indomitably Fights with the Enemy," and "Revolutionary Martyr." It is said in the article that the hero "passed away with boundless love for the people and deep-seated hatred toward the criminal." The words used in this article to describe the criminal are typical of language used to depict people who committed street crimes. When there is a description of the criminals, it is not rare to see such words as vicious, wicked, evil, sly, unbridled and desperate. They are described as ruffians, scoundrels, evildoers, devils, fiends, or recidivists. It is always these criminals who are solely responsible for the crimes committed. In the articles discussed above, there is no mention of where, when, why and how the criminals obtained strictly controlled weapons (some of them are only used in the military). The tone and style of reporting do not encourage readers to question this.

Another example is a feature story about a prison riot which involved the death of a prison guard (May 3, 1989, p.4). The headline clearly shows the tone of the article: "A Battle Between Human Beings and Demons." As usual, the prisoners in the riot are described with some of the words listed above, while the prison guards are reported as heroes. Again, there is no questioning of the administration of the prison or any malfunctions of the system. The riot happened because inmates were malicious.

This type of report honours heroes and encourages people to learn from them. People are supposed to emulate the role models and fight against the criminals. This type of reporting is deemed necessary so people will not be negatively influenced by the criminal's misconduct. Neither will they fear becoming victims of crime because they are assured that social order will be maintained at any cost. Criminals can never escape the net of criminal justice, formal and informal. In the Chinese newspaper sampled, crime news is thus turned into good news.

However, although the Chinese newspaper may exhibit a style of crime-news reporting significantly different from that of Western newspapers, the functions they serve are similar. In their longitudinal analysis of a murder story reported in different news outlets, Ericson *et al* (1991:106) argue that the reporting of this murder story delivers the message that it is only through the actions of both the authorities and the people that order can be restored and a feeling of security renewed. "It is not only the heroics of individual decision-makers, but the strength of institutions and 'the system' that is on view: images of institutional success through its rituals of morality, procedure, and hierarchy" (ibid.:110). They find that the victim is characterized as respectable, successful, and innocent, whereas the accused is described as violent, dangerous, and less than human. This is comparable to what is found in the murder stories in the People's Daily. However, the Chinese newspaper does not dramatize the details of the crime itself. Creating a sense of insecurity or disorder is avoided. There is no recourse to special effects to entertain the reader and enlarge the circulation. Logically, people are more interested in local crime news. It is common that a local newspaper would play up local crimes (Ericson *et al.*, 1991).

Therefore, it is understandable that, as a national newspaper, the People's Daily does not report crimes unless reporting is considered to have educational value. In this sense, the newspaper is more like the quality newspaper sampled in the study conducted by Ericson *et al.*(1991).

Reporting of Embezzlement

It is found that embezzlement was a constant theme in the samples of this study (see Chapter VI). The reporting of embezzlement became increasingly frequent over time. Toward the end of 1989, it seemed that a mass campaign against economic crime and corruption had been launched and was reaching its high tide. This section tries to unveil the style of reporting about embezzlement and the role of the newspaper in this campaign. As explained in the earlier chapters, embezzlement, bribery, and speculation were always cited together as economic crimes. Thus, the other two crimes will inevitably be involved in the analysis. The crime of speculation is not seen in Western criminal codes. Although it is named in the Chinese Criminal Code, it is not defined at all (McCabe, 1989). As the focus of this analysis is on how embezzlement was reported in the newspaper, events that might have caused or promoted the reporting are not considered to be within the range of discussion.

Embezzlement became such a popular theme of news reporting in 1989 that every month relevant reports were carried in the newspaper, many of which appeared on the front page. (This was unlike reports of murder which were usually carried on less prominent pages.) It was found in the samples that the punishment for embezzlement

could be very harsh, and the death penalty was often imposed on offenders. The message of the reports was that this crime could not be tolerated and must be dealt with harshly.

There are two types of report on how embezzlers were punished. One type was used to report a specific case. For example, in a short article (July 17, 1989, p.5) reporting a public trial of two offenders, the headline is "The Fate of the Worst Embezzlers." The story has two short paragraphs. The first one indicates that, during a public trial on June 27, 1989 in a county of Hunan Province, two "exceptionally big embezzlers" (literal translation) were sentenced to death and deprivation of political rights for embezzling 380,000 yuan (the official ratio of the yuan to the US dollar in 1989 was approximately 1:5). The second paragraph gives the names, ages, and occupations of the two offenders. These offenders, taking advantage of their positions, conspired to steal bank loans totaling more than 380,000 yuan borrowed by more than 20 manufacturers from the county bank where one of them worked. The method they used to cover this crime is described in one sentence. After the crime was known, the report continues, the government and party committee of the county formed a special group with the county procuratorate as the main body to investigate this case. A jeep and fuel were supplied to the special group for its investigation. With the joint efforts made by different local governments, party committees, procuratorates, and police departments, this case was cracked after two months and the two criminals were arrested. By the time of trial, about 180,000 yuan had been recovered. The last sentence tells readers that another six offenders involved in this case were dealt with as a different case. This style of reporting is actually similar to that of the first group of murder stories discussed in the earlier section. Sample headlines indicate

the essential character of this type of story. Consider these examples: "Yesterday's Man of the Hour and Today's Prisoner--Director Li Lin Arrested for Embezzling A Huge Sum of Money" (June 7, 1989, p.2); "Beijing Sentences Group for Serious Economic Crimes--Two Customs Officials Given Death Penalty and Ten-year Imprisonment Respectively (January 27, 1989, p.1)"; "Zhang Bin, Department Deputy Chief, Ministry of Agriculture, Arrested--Making Use of Own Position to Obtain Bribes at Liquor Grading Meeting (August 25, 1989, p.1)"; and "An Ugly Soul" (July 24, 1989, p.5).

Another type of report is that which was classified as general discussion/crime statistics in the quantitative analysis. The length of this type of report may vary, but the contents are very similar. An article carried on the front page of the newspaper (August 8, 1989) reports that for the first six months of 1989 the procuratorates at various levels handled more than 3300 cases which were classified as either serious or important, involving about 120 officials at the rank of county or section leaders and 11 officials at the rank of department leaders. (As the ranking is complicated, whenever the ranks were mentioned they will be referred to as high-ranking in future discussion.) The headline of the article reads, "Procuratorates Deal Severely with Important Cases of Embezzlement and Bribery." The article says that, "according to the department concerned within the People's Supreme Procuratorate, the procuratorates at various levels in the country have, since the beginning of this year, paid close attention to cases of embezzlement or bribery that involved a total sum of more than 10,000 yuan and/or high-ranking criminals." It goes on to give some statistics that show an increasing trend of filed cases of embezzlement and the seriousness of some of the cases, with the worst one involving nearly 2 million yuan.

Then, the article describes what the People's Supreme Procuratorate had done to improve its efficiency, saying that it asked local procuratorates to "pay close attention to the task of countering embezzlement and bribery and never slackening our efforts". In the last paragraph, it reveals that more than 3000 report centres had been set up by procuratorate departments around the country for people to inform against those who were suspected of embezzlement or bribery. The role of these centres is reported to be very positive. In some cases, for example, one letter of accusation could help uncover dozens of individuals guilty of embezzlement or bribery.

This type of reporting served as either a summing-up or mobilization report. It tells what has been done, or should be done, according to the Party's current policies and procedures. In this case, messages were sent out through this type of reporting that those who had committed embezzlement would not be let off; they would be severely and swiftly punished. The message was clear in the headlines of some reports. As it has an agenda-setting function, the People's Daily can surely manufacture a crime wave in the nation-wide print media. (To find out if it is true, more newspapers, including national and local newspapers, and quality and popular newspapers, should be examined.) This concentrated coverage of the summing-up or mobilization reports, together with the reports of individual cases, will arouse public attention and response. By various ways and means developed under the informal social control system, the people are mobilized to participate in and support the anti-economic crime and corruption campaign launched by the Party through its central organ, the People's Daily. Thus, the journalists of the

newspaper do not just create this theme by their instincts, they are keeping in step with the Party's line, a skill they have learned by professional training (see Chapter IV).

As mentioned above, to have people participate and support this campaign, report centres and telephone numbers for reporting were set up all over the country for people to expose and denounce anonymously suspects of embezzlement. It is reported in another article (January 11, 1989, p.1) that, from July 1988 to January 1989, the procuratorates at different levels had handled more than 20,000 filed cases out of 100,000 reports, which led to investigation of more than 4,000 filed cases, prosecution of more than 400 people, sentencing of about 100 criminals, and recovery of 127 million Yuan. The article says that, according to a survey, 60% of the reports received were believed to be true. Therefore, the establishment of report centres is reported as a big success. It is revealed in the article that, on that day, the People' Supreme Procuratorate enacted the Regulations of Handling Reports by Procuratorates (Trial) and established the Report Centre of the People's Supreme Procuratorate.

To stress the active participation and support of people, the newspaper carried a number of similar reports from different geographic areas. Here are some headlines. "Guangxi (Autonomous Region) Procuratorate Departments Seriously Handle Reports by People--Setting Up A Social Network for Cracking Down on Crimes" (January 27, 1989, p.4); "Shanxi (Province) Tracked Down Numerous Cases of Embezzlement and Bribery--Informed by People, Crime Solved Promptly" (May 25, 1989, p.2); "Wuhan (Municipality) Criminals Surrendered One After Another--Thanks to Net Cast by People's Reports and Strict Measures Taken by Procuratorates" (July 1, 1989, p.4); "Zhejiang

(Province) Swiftly Handles Reported Cases--People Have Confidence; Number of Reports Increases”(August 23, 1989, p.2)" and "Guangzhou (Municipality) Procuratorates Solved Over 400 Reported Cases--Embezzlement and Bribery Suppressed; Honest and Clean Performance Advocated” (June 6, 1989, p.1).

To make full use of this new system and to guarantee its continued success, it is reported in an article carried on the front page of the newspaper (May 12, 1989) that, as required by the People's Supreme Procuratorate, local government and organizations must resolutely investigate and prosecute cases of retaliation against accusers by the accused. The article says that, according to a deputy-chief procurator of the People's Supreme Procuratorate, procuratorates at different levels paid great attention to cases of retaliation and, when the acts concerned were deemed to be criminal, severe sentences of punishment were imposed, which even included the death penalty. On the other hand, it is reported in the newspaper that the accusers were considered to have made contributions to this anti-embezzlement movement. A short article (March 18, 1989), which also appeared on the front page, reports that since the establishment of report centres, the procuratorates of 15 provinces and municipalities have awarded about 32,000 yuan to more than 100 people who rendered good services by their accusations. It says that, in order to protect these people, the awards were issued individually as opposed to a collective public awards ceremony.

It is shown in the newspaper that this anti-embezzlement movement took a new turn when a joint proclamation of the People's Supreme Procuratorate and the People's Supreme Court was issued on August 15 and published on August 16, 1989. (See Chapter

VI.) The announcement asked those who had committed embezzlement, bribery and speculation to turn themselves in before the deadline of October 31, 1989. According to the article on the front page of the newspaper on August 16, 1989, the proclamation promised that leniency would be shown to those who made confessions before the deadline, while severity would characterize sentencing of those who did not. On the same page, another article reported that more than 400 economic criminals had turned themselves in and received lenient treatment. According to procuratorates, says the article, the motives of confession were different. Some were impelled by the Party's policies; some were awed by the power of people's exposure; some were forced by the fierce offensives launched by the procuratorates at various levels.

Following the publication of this proclamation, reports about people making confessions frequently appeared in the newspaper. Most of them carried a similar line-- "under the deterrent force of the proclamation." It was reported that two days after the proclamation was issued, a high-ranking official in Anhui Province turned himself in with his embezzled money (August 29, 1989, p.1), and that a dozen people had surrendered and made confessions in Beijing, Shanghai, Zhejiang Province and Hubei Province (August 19, 1989, p.1). One week after the proclamation was issued, it was reported that more than 200 criminals turned themselves in and returned 1.4 million yuan of illicit money. Moreover, those who confessed also informed against others in order to atone for their crimes (August 24, 1989, p.1).

It was reported that up to some 5,000 criminals surrendered within the first month of the proclamation. The People's Supreme Procuratorate issued a news release, urging

those who were still hesitating to make wise and quick decisions (September 20, 1989, p.2). This type of report was continuously carried in the newspaper to sum up what had been achieved over time and to remind people how much time was left before the deadline. The contents and tone of the reports were generally similar. At the time of demonstrating the deterrent power, they also stressed the conscience of the criminals aroused by the Announcement.

During this period, the newspaper carried several reports which contrasted two different ways of handling cases. It was shown that the promise was well kept. Those who turned themselves in were exempted from prosecution, while those who refused to confess were severely punished. One article reported two cases with the headline, "Refusing to Confess, Zhang Ying Was Arrested; Giving himself up, Yang Guang Was Released (October 19, 1989, p.4)". At a so-called general gathering of lenience and severity, Zhang Ying was arrested on the spot, along with five people. His case involved illegal profits made through speculation by a government-owned publishing house where he was the director. He was arrested because he did not investigate this or confess. On the other hand, three other persons were released at the gathering. Yang Guang committed the same crime of speculation and made illicit money which totaled 355,000 Yuan. He was released because he surrendered and returned the money, according to the report, influenced by the deterrent force of the proclamation.

To give one more example of the reporting of contrasting disposition of cases, an article appearing on the front page of the newspaper (August 31, 1989) reported that a high-ranking official who made illegal profits of more than 400,000 yuan received a

mitigated sentence of a 15-year term of imprisonment because of his confession, although he was subject to the death penalty according to what he had done. On the other hand, two other criminals were sentenced to death for embezzling 140,000 yuan because, rather than turning themselves in, they had escaped across the national boundary and were later extradited back to China.

Obviously, while showing the success of this anti-embezzlement movement, the reporting of these cases aimed to encourage more confessions. Toward the end of 1989, the articles carried in the newspaper became more like annual reports. They were mostly about the achievements that had been made since the proclamation had been issued, the awards given to advanced groups or individuals who rendered good services in this campaign, future tasks and development, and problems yet to be solved. The tone of these news reports can be clearly shown through some of their headlines, such as "Never Be Soft On Crimes of Embezzlement And Bribery--Four Key Tasks Of Procuratorates For Next Two Seasons (October 26, 1989, p.3)", "Combat Embezzlement And Bribery, Crack Down on Criminal Activities--Two Major Emphases For Procuratorates Required By Chief Procurator (December 26, 1989, p.1)", etc. (As discussed earlier, the last headline shows that economic crimes were distinguished from criminal offenses in the reporting of crime.)

Summary

This section has shown the style of reporting the progress of the anti-embezzlement campaign. The Party, represented by the criminal justice system, made its decisions and targets known to the people through its organ, the People's Daily. The

newspaper functioned to send the Party's messages down to the people and mobilize them to actively participate in and contribute to this movement. At the same time, it sought to create the impression that no criminals could succeed in escaping. With the medium of the newspaper, the means of informal social control was combined with that of formal social control. These two were inseparable and complementary in the anti-embezzlement campaign. Individuals were held to be totally responsible for what they had done. The whole system was not open to question. As discussed in Chapter VI and the earlier section, there was no discussion of the crimes in terms of fundamental flaws in an administrative structure or regulations (Ericson *et al.*, 1991:270-3).

This chapter discussed the style of murder reporting and reporting of embezzlement through a qualitative analysis in order to reveal meanings and messages in the reports which cannot be obtained through a quantitative analysis. For this qualitative analysis, the crime-news stories were chosen, interpreted and presented according to this researcher's reading. By examining the reporting of murder cases and the anti-embezzlement campaign, the role of the newspaper was portrayed as a central social control apparatus in relation to the discussion in earlier chapters.

Chapter IX. Summary and Conclusions

As Garofalo (1981) suggested, criminologists should take the media into account in their theories and research because of the pervasive public consumption of crime reporting by the media. In this exploratory study, crime-news coverage in the People's Daily was systematically examined to reveal the images of crime and criminal justice institutions that were presented in the news. A combined method was used, involving quantitative and qualitative content analyses. Therefore, both overt content and less obvious meaning in the crime stories were examined. The style and content of reporting was discussed in relation to the functions of the newspaper and its various roles in the systems of both formal and informal social control.

This study was designed and conducted on the basis of a review of Western studies of news media. The review of the literature included analyses of newspaper ownership, the functions and needs of news organizations and journalists, the relationship between news organizations and their sources, the nature and essence of news; perceptions of newsworthiness in news selection, and the specific characteristics of crime news. In Western studies, the news media are portrayed as an agency of social control and as having functions that are similar to those of the state (Cohen & Young, 1981; Ericson et al, 1987). News as ideology is constructed reality (Chapter I). News involves control through its routine selection, through the influence it has on its sources, and through its articulation of public opinion (Ericson et al, 1991).

Crime news is a staple in Western newspapers. Crime news, however, does not reflect reality. For example, in this study, the major issues examined in a review of content analyses of crime news included the amount of space devoted to crime news; the relationship between crime news and statistics; the stages of the criminal justice process reported; and the images of crime, the criminal justice system, the victim, and the offender presented in Western newspapers. This review provided the basis and framework for the present study. The general pattern found in the content analyses facilitated a comparison with the findings of the present study.

The Chinese news media were examined against the backcloth of their social and cultural settings. The Chinese system of informal social control was discussed, as the social control system in China has manifested certain unique characteristics that are different from both developed and underdeveloped countries. The system and its practices have their roots in cultural traditions. The informal and formal social control systems have, through history, been used to complement each other. Both are used as a means of moulding and controlling behaviour. The informal system is more widely used, while the formal system, which is still in its infancy, is used only as the last resort.

The Chinese communication system contains two major elements, the mass media and interpersonal communication through small groups. The mass media use a variety of means that are supported by a network of interpersonal communication at the grassroots level. In China, the media are the most powerful channel for announcing and spreading the Party's messages with the force of law. The media have been used as an educational tool and used to promote social change. The press, in particular, has been used as a means to

educate and mobilize the people and to propagate the Party's policies. This study focused on the media, specifically, on newspapers. Newspapers play a key role for the Party in its quest to achieve its objectives. The People's Daily, as the Party's principal organ, is completely financed and controlled by the Party. It is the pacesetter for the entire media system, and its journalists serve as both propagandists and intelligence gatherers. The newspaper functions to indoctrinate, mobilize and guide the people for the implementation of the Party's ideology and philosophy. Unlike its counterparts in Western countries, crime news did not appear in the People's Daily until the last decade.

The quantitative and qualitative content analyses aimed at revealing the pattern and style of crime-news reporting in the Chinese newspaper. These analyses examined what types of crime were reported, and at which stages of the criminal justice process the crimes were most often reported, as compared with official data; what were the images of the phenomenon of crime and the criminal justice system presented in the crime news; what were the explanations of the causes of crime; and how did the newspaper in its crime-news reporting serve as a social control apparatus.

Two types of comparison were made in the quantitative analysis. Firstly, since recent crime is believed to be related to the modernization effort in China (Troyer, 1989), three different sample periods were examined to see if there was a trend towards increasing crime news coverage over time that was parallel to the economic reforms and the "open door" policy that were introduced in China during the 1980s. Political and socio-economic changes may bring about changes in real crime patterns and in crime-news reporting. The findings showed a trend to increased volume of crime-news reporting,

although no major change was found in the types of crime reported. It is likely that crime reporting became more open to the public during the 1980s--a period in which the role of the formal criminal justice system was emphasized and strengthened. An alternative explanation is that the increase may have been caused by a "crime wave." Crime waves raise public awareness of the crime at issue. They are the outcome of joint efforts made by news organizations and their sources, law enforcement institutions (Fishman, 1978). The increased coverage of crimes can also be explained by the event of June 4th. More street crimes that were thought to be related to "riot" were reported during the first six months, and more reports of embezzlement were reported during the second six months in response to the anti-embezzlement campaign.

Embezzlement was the most frequently reported crime for all the three periods studied. This indicates that corruption among government officials is perceived by the newspaper to be a long-lasting social problem. In other words, anti-corruption has been the most important theme of reporting for the People's Daily. This lends support to the discussion of the functions of the newspaper in earlier chapters. However, although the total number of crime stories increased over the years, the average size of the story was reduced along with a decrease in soft crime news, especially editorials which were written for specific crime cases. This change in the style of reporting may suggest that, when crime cases and crime data became more open to the public, fewer explanations and comments were needed for the reporting of specific crime cases.

Secondly, the findings of this study were compared with those of Western studies. There were a number of similarities revealed by the comparison. It was found that in both

the People's Daily and Western newspapers government sources were the most commonly cited sources in crime news. This is particularly true for the Chinese newspaper. In both the Chinese and Western quality newspapers, white collar crime was given more attention. However, corporate crime was almost invisible. In the Chinese case, this may be explained by the application of various means of punishment and sanctions outside of the formal criminal justice system. In fact, corporate criminality is rarely dealt with by the criminal justice system. In both cases, the information about the offender and the victim was kept to a minimum, and no long-term attention was given to individual incidents. Serious crimes and sentences of imprisonment were over-represented. Moreover, there was little explanation of the sentences meted out. Evaluation of criminal justice institutions was not often presented in either the Chinese or the Western newspapers, especially in the case of corrections. However, unlike Western newspapers, no differential treatment was found in the Chinese newspaper sampled. In fact, a positive image of corrections was always portrayed in the samples of this study.

The findings also uncovered some aspects of the Chinese newspaper that were similar to those of the quality newspapers but different from those of the popular newspapers in the Western studies. While violent crime was over-represented in Western popular newspapers, there were more reports of property crimes than violent crimes in the Chinese newspaper sampled, which is similar to what was found in relation to the Western quality newspapers. Although through the process of selecting news both the Chinese newspaper and the Western newspapers gave a distorted impression of crime, the types of crime that were over-represented, as compared with official data, were not the same.

Unlike Western popular newspapers, government official misconduct attracted disproportionately greater attention, which was again similar to what was found in studies of Western quality newspapers. Similar to the findings of studies of Western quality newspapers, a large proportion of crime stories in the samples of this study contained elements of evaluation or recommendation.

The comparison revealed some differences which appeared more significant than the similarities. The total amount of space devoted to the reporting of crime news was significantly smaller than was the case in Western newspapers. Compared with the history of crime-news reporting in Western newspapers, crime reporting in Chinese newspapers is still a relatively new practice. As discussed in Chapter III, Chinese society has, traditionally, relied on its informal social control system. The formal criminal justice system is still in its infancy as compared with its Western counterparts. This may partly contribute to the fact that less attention was paid to the phenomenon of crime and the criminal justice system in the Chinese newspaper.

The findings of the present study showed that there were more opinion-based crime stories in the Chinese newspaper than was the case in Western newspapers. Moreover, the causes of crime were more often given in the Chinese newspaper. The Chinese Party/government has historically adopted a paternalistic stance towards the people. The newspaper was required to portray a positive picture so as not to adversely affect the people and the image of the Party. Crime stories were not reported for the purposes of entertaining the reader or of enlarging the circulation. They were considered

as a vehicle for guidance and education. Therefore, interpretative statements were needed to satisfy these purposes.

While the crime-news reporting of Western newspapers focused on the early stages of the criminal justice process, the reporting of crime in the Chinese newspaper concentrated on the stages of arrest and sentencing. Other stages were rarely described in the samples of this study. This can be explained by the fact that only solved crimes were generally considered suitable for publication. Once a crime is solved, i.e., the criminal has been apprehended or punished, a negative incident will then be reported as good news. Through the reporting of the incident, the news is supposed to deliver some messages for desired effects, whereas the particular incident itself may not be considered to be newsworthy. The frequent reporting at the stage of sentencing may also reflect an emphasis on deterrence and punishment in the Chinese perception of crime. On the other hand, the criminal justice process was neither widely open, nor really known to the public, including the journalists. This may explain why pre-trial and courtroom procedures were almost never mentioned in the samples of this study.

In the qualitative analysis, the reporting of two types of specific crimes was systematically examined in order to reveal the multiple layers of meaning in the news content which cannot be obtained through a quantitative analysis. The reporting of murder cases was first discussed to show how potentially negative news was turned into good news. Two types of reports of murder cases were examined. One group of cases was generally reported immediately after the criminals were punished for the crime committed, while the other group was reported with the emphasis on the heroism of the victims as

portrayed in the stories. The reporting of these murder cases served to reassure the public that crime was under control and that social order was being maintained. While the criminals paid for what they had done, the heroes and heroines were reported as role models for people to emulate. The focus of reporting was always on the outcome of an incident, whereas the incident itself was given little attention. This was different from reports in Western newspapers, especially popular newspapers. For the People's Daily, no matter how dramatic or sensational an incident was, it was not reported until the outcome turned out to be positive and educative. The philosophy underlying this style of reporting could be that people should not be negatively influenced by the criminals' misconduct and that no sense of insecurity or disorder should be induced by reading the newspaper. It was revealed in the discussion that, in the Chinese newspaper, murder stories were actually reported as "good news."

The discussion of the reporting of embezzlement basically demonstrated the important role that the newspaper played in launching a mass campaign against economic crime and corruption that was designed by the Party/government to guide and mobilize people. Compared with that of murder cases, the reporting of embezzlement was given much more prominence, with many articles appearing on the front page. The message in the reports of embezzlement was that this crime must be dealt with harshly. The people should support and actively participate in this movement launched by the Party through the newspaper.

To make the Party's campaign successful, people were urged to utilize report centres and special telephone numbers, which were set up all over the country, to expose

suspects of embezzlement. Those who provided information and helped uncover serious cases were praised, while retaliation against accusers was warned against. Moreover, differential punishments were repeatedly reported in order to contrast the consequences for those who confessed and turned themselves in with those who did not. From time to time, reports that summed up what had been achieved were carried in the newspaper, which helped form the impression that no criminals could succeed in escaping. Thus, it was shown in the reporting of embezzlement how the Party, represented by the criminal justice system, made its decisions and targets known to the people, through the People's Daily. Through the medium of the newspaper, the means of informal social control were smoothly combined with those of formal social control. Both forms of social control were inseparable and complementary in the campaign. In the reporting of both murder and embezzlement, individuals were always held responsible for their own behaviour, whereas the social order itself was never open to question.

Lending support to Herman & Chomsky's argument (1988) presented in Chapter I, this Chinese case study shows, more clearly than Western cases, how the media function as a key form of social control. In spite of their similar functions, however, the Chinese and Western media have operated in ways which appear to have more differences than similarities. The differences in their crime-news reporting are the result of multiple factors. The People's Daily is the Communist Party's principal organ with people from all walks of life as its audience. It is openly stated that the newspaper must follow the Party's line and serve the Party's needs. Therefore, objectivity and impartiality are not required in the reporting of crime news. Nor is there any need to resort to special effects to entertain

the reader and enlarge its circulation. The newspaper, financed by the Party, is not required to make profits. The style of crime-news reporting shown in the newspaper has its roots in traditional Chinese culture and philosophy and the notion that authorities should guide and educate people. It is also determined by the traditional reliance on the informal social control system to deal with crime and deviance.

The sample used for the study covered three periods, including two half-year periods and one full-year period. The sample size was considered adequate to be used for the purposes of this analysis. To choose three periods also made it possible to examine potential trends or changes in types and styles of crime-news reporting that might have been brought about by the economic reforms and political changes.

More importantly, both qualitative and quantitative analyses were conducted in this study. The quantitative analysis systematically showed a basic pattern of crime-news reporting in the newspaper sampled, while the qualitative analysis revealed implied meanings in the news and portrayed social and political values underlying the crime-news reporting. These two analyses thus were complementary and worked together to facilitate a better understanding of crime-news reporting in Chinese newspapers. As they were made on the basis of reviewing and comparing with the findings of Western studies of newspapers, the differences and similarities in crime-news reporting between the two types of newspapers could therefore be explored and discussed.

As an exploratory study, however, this study showed only a general picture and provides only preliminary results. It did not attempt to discuss the effect of crime-news

reporting by the newspaper. To repeat what was pointed out in Chapter V, the comparisons discussed in this study were not made in strict terms because of differences in definitions of crime and criminal events between Western countries and China. On the other hand, this study could have provided more insights if a local Chinese newspaper had been included in the samples. Moreover, the discussion of the relationship between crime statistics and crime-news reporting in the newspaper was largely restricted as a result of the unavailability of official data.

It is suggested that further studies can be conducted on the basis of the findings of this study. More newspapers, especially local newspapers, should be examined to reveal different patterns of crime-news reporting. The findings obtained could be compared with the present findings. This type of study aims to reveal major functions of Chinese newspapers and the “agenda-setting” role of the Party newspaper in the development of a “crime wave,” or in leading a political campaign. Other media, such as television and radio broadcast, should also be examined together with newspapers. An ethnographic study of the relationship between news organizations and their sources needs to be conducted to examine the process of news selection. These types of study could draw on the studies conducted by Ericson and his colleagues (1987, 1991). Such studies may show more clearly the functions of the Chinese media, their relationship with the criminal justice system, and the role of the media in shaping the public perception of crime, crime-related issues, and the criminal justice system. It is also recommended that, on the basis of the present study, further comparative studies be conducted with more specific research questions and better designed methodologies. As China is in a phase of rapid change,

more recent periods should be examined in order to show whether the pattern of crime-news reporting remains unchanged.

Studies of public perceptions of the phenomenon of crime and the criminal justice system should also be conducted to explore the effect of the media on the audience. For this type of study, Graber's study (1980) may help determine the degree to which the public relies on crime news to form their opinions about crime issues and if there is fear of crime among the public that is caused by the media. Longitudinal studies should be designed to reveal possible trends and changes in crime-news reporting over time. Such studies need to take into account changes in both the formal criminal justice system and the informal social control system. Such studies are necessary to better understand crime and criminality in China.

Appendix A

Protocol

1	Date	01-31	Day of Month
2	Month	01-12	July to December
3	Year	3 6 9	1983 1986 1989
4	Page number	01-08	When a story appears on more than one page, or when the headline appears on the front page and the main body is elsewhere, code the page number on which the main body appears.
5	Story number	01-10	Stories appear on the same page are numbered consecutively.
6	Story length		Measured by square centimeter including headlines
7	Story size		Code according to Variable 4.
		1 2 3	Short (smaller than 92 square centimeters) Medium (smaller than 428 square centimeters, i.e. 1/4 page) Long (larger than one-quarter of a page)
8	Number of cases in story		Code according to number of cases reported in each story.
		1 2 3 4 5	Only one case. Between 2 and 5 cases. Between 6 and 10 cases. 11 cases and more. Not applicable
9	Timeliness		Time between event and reporting.
		1 2 3 4 5 6	Reported within two days. Reported within one week. Reported within one month. Reported in one year. Reported after one year. Time unspecified.
10	Type of source		
		1 2 3 4 5	Own organization Other news agency Criminal justice Other government sources Other

11	Type of Story	6	Unspecified
			Each story will be categorized on the basis of its major emphasis.
		1	Specific crime
		2	General discussion of crimes
		3	Editorial/commentary
		4	Feature
		5	legal column
		12	other
12	Nature of crime		Two types of crime may be coded in order of emphasis
		10	Crimes of counterrevolution
		13	Hijacking
			Crimes of endangering public security
		20	Mismanagement causing major accident
		21	Bombing
		22	Sabotages of communications equipment
		23	Arson/poison
		24	Sabotages of electric power, gas or other explosive equipment
		25	Sabotages of means of transportation
			Crimes of undermining the socialist economic order
		30	Smuggling/speculation
		31	Tax cheating
		32	Misappropriating state funds or materials for disaster relief
		33	Counterfeiting
		34	Violation of trademark control
		35	Violation of forestry protection
			Crimes of infringing upon the rights of the person and the democratic rights of citizens
		40	Murder
		41	Sex offense
		42	Assault
		43	Taking hostage
		44	Beating, smashing and looting
		45	Unlawful detention
		46	Libel
		47	Publicly insulting by using posters
		48	Violation of freedom of correspondence
		49	Kidnapping
			Crimes of property violation

	50	Robbery
	51	Theft and burglary
	52	Fraud
	53	Embezzlement
		Crimes of disrupting the order of social administration
	60	Sabotage of cultural relics or places of historic interest
	61	Hooligan
	62	Violations of boundary control
	63	Illegal drug offenses
	64	Prostitution
	65	Gambling
	66	Pornography
	67	Perjury
	68	Posing as state personnel
	69	Assembling a crowd to disturb public order
	70	Obstruction of justice
	71	Weapon violations
	72	Protecting criminals
	73	Witchcraft
		Crimes of dereliction of duty
	85	Bribery
	86	Neglect of duty causing major losses
	87	Other official misconduct
		Others
	90	Traffic offenses
	91	Juvenile delinquency
	92	Corporate crime
	93	Not applicable
	94	Unspecified
13		Nature of crime
14		Stage of reporting
		Coded by the stage of the criminal justice process.
	1	Upon event
	2	After event, before arrest.
	3	After arrest, before prosecution.
	4	After prosecution, before trial.
	5	After trial, before sentencing.
	6	Sentencing
	7	Execution
	8	After release
	9	Not applicable

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| | | 12 | Other |
| 15 | Description of event | | Code only fact of mention |
| | | 1 | None |
| | | 2 | Some (1 to 3 sentences) |
| | | 3 | A lot (more than three sentences). |
| | | 4 | Not applicable |
| 16 | Description of actions after arrest and before prosecution | | Code only fact of mention. |
| | | 1 | None |
| | | 2 | Some |
| | | 3 | A lot |
| | | 4 | Not applicable |
| 17 | Description of court room procedure | | Code only fact of mention |
| | | 1 | None |
| | | 2 | Some |
| | | 3 | A lot |
| | | 4 | Not applicable |
| 18 | Description sentence/disposition | | of Code only fact of mention. |
| | | 1 | None |
| | | 2 | Some |
| | | 3 | A lot |
| | | 4 | Not applicable |
| 19 | Sentence/disposition | | Two sentences may be coded for each story. |
| | | 1 | Six months to 10 years of fixed-term imprisonment. |
| | | 2 | 11 or more years fixed-term imprisonment. |
| | | 3 | Life imprisonment |
| | | 4 | Death penalty |
| | | 5 | Unspecified |
| | | 6 | Not applicable |
| | | 12 | Other |
| 20 | Sentence/disposition | | |
| 21 | Offender's name | | |
| | | 1 | Given |
| | | 2 | Not given |
| | | 3 | Offender unknown |
| | | 4 | Institution |
| | | 5 | Not applicable |
| 22 | Offender's age | | |
| | | 1 | Given |
| | | 2 | Not given |

		3	Offender unknown
		4	Institution
		5	Not applicable
23	Offender's sex		
		1	Male
		2	Female
		3	Offender unknown
		4	Institution
		5	Not applicable
24	Offender's membership		Whether the offender was a party member.
		1	Yes
		2	No
		3	Not given
		4	Not applicable
25	Offender's occupation		
		1	Government official
		2	Non-government official
		3	Not given
		4	Not applicable
26	Number of offenders in each story.		
		1	One person
		2	Between 2 and 5 persons.
		3	More than 5 persons.
		4	Not given.
		5	Not applicable
27	Victim's information		
		1	None
		2	Some
		3	A lot
		4	Not applicable
28	Causes of crime		Up to two causes may be coded.
		1	Individual pathology
		2	Organizational pathology
		3	Circumstances
		4	Western influence
		5	Old social customs
		6	Not given
		12	Other
29	Causes of crime		
30	Evaluation of police		
		1	Positive

			2	Negative
			3	Mixed
			4	Not given
			5	Not applicable
31	Evaluation of prosecution		1	Positive
			2	Negative
			3	Mixed
			4	Not given
			5	Not applicable
32	Evaluation of court		1	Positive
			2	Negative
			3	Mixed
			4	Not given
			5	Not applicable
33	Evaluation of correction		1	Positive
			2	Negative
			3	Mixed
			4	Not given
			5	Not applicable
34	Secondary knowledge in story		1	Yes
			2	None
			3	Unclear
35	Type of knowledge in headlines		1	Control action
			2	Primary fact
			3	Background
			4	Evaluation
			5	Recommendation
			12	Other
36	Novelty of story			Use this category to indicate an unfolding story of specific crimes or court cases.
			1	New
			2	Major update
			3	Undetermined
			4	Not applicable
37	Evaluations in story			

	1	Yes
	2	None
	3	Unclear
38	Recommendations in story	
	1	Yes
	2	No
	3	Unclear

Note: This coding protocol is constructed on the basis of the designs of the studies conducted by Graber (1980) and Ericson et al. (1991). Compared with Graber's design, the present one is greatly simplified and modified to suit the purposes of this study. Most of the variables in this protocol reflect, more or less, her originality. Variables 28, 29, 34, 35, 37 and 38 show some similarity to the design of Ericson *et al*.

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