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**Towards The Construction Of Asian Values :
A Study Of Chinese Values In Xinhua Press Releases**

By

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Abstract

Values have been studied from two basic approaches in the past: as universals that apply across cultures and national groups and as specifics that are considered within the cultural, national context. The study of Asian values seems to be rooted in the specific approach, arguing that the uniqueness of perspective given Asian cultural traditions makes it distinct from other points of view. This paper argues that Asian values are at best a nebulous concept that need to be developed through the careful examination of specific values for the many distinct cultural groups that make up this region. Further, the development of an understanding of Asian values must proceed from understandings of cultural heritages as they are modified by interaction with other perspectives and as they evolve over time. Research on mediated communication from China was conducted in this study in an attempt to begin the process of building Asian values. Press releases from the Xinhua News Agency were examined in two periods to determine if traditional values were a part of the way news was determined and if so, how those values affected other influences. Results indicated that cultural values were consistently found in both periods of examination though the degree to which they were used varied considerably. Factor analysis was used to understand how cultural values interacted with other values. Interesting new conceptions of newsworthiness appropriate to the Chinese experience at specific times were generated. Both the frequency analysis and the factor analysis resulted in findings that support the notion of values of communication unique to a cultural environment. These results provide a foundation for comparison to determine if similar values exist elsewhere that might form the basis of a truly Asian system of values.

Introduction

The term "Asian values" has become a familiar catch phrase in recent years. It has been used to explain differences in political systems, economic growth, and human rights decisions to name but a few areas of application. But is there such a thing as an distinctly Asian value system? If there is, what then is the nature of that distinct system? And how do these Asian values affect mediated communication?

Research on values seems to have taken two directions. One approach assumes there are universal values that apply across the social, national and cultural landscape of humanity (Bennett, 1979, p. 209). This, to use Berry's (1989) linguistic conceptualization, is the 'etic' perspective which argues for homogeneity of values given the universality of basic human behaviors (Smith and Bond, 1993, p. 47). The other research perspective (which Berry labels an 'emic' approach) allows for diversity of behaviors and "focuses on the different, varied ways in which each of these [human] behaviors [is] carried out in any specific cultural setting." (Smith and Bond, p. 47). A concept of Asian values, though seemingly 'emic' or specific, is really just a more defined 'etic' approach inferring that all Asian societies have a set of universal values based on their unique, common philosophical heritage, goals, principles and ideals. This may not be the case.

A great deal of discussion regarding Asian values has resulted mainly because of political and economic questions, but the impact on and the effect of mass mediated communication has been considered as well. Efforts have been made to define Asian values in communication as well as to determine what the implications of this definition may mean. Godwin Chu (1988) noted general dissatisfaction with Western approaches to communication and began to consider a scope of reference for something distinctly Asian, but did not really define characteristics of an Asian perspective of communication. Dissanayake (1988) pointed to the classical intellectual traditions of Asia as a starting place for an Asian approach to communication noting that these 'traditions of Asia contain many useful concepts that can trigger exciting new thinking.' (Dissanayake, 1988, p. 17). Chitty's (1993) work went far to establish that there were realms in which both universal and specific Asian values might operate concurrently for the same national or cultural group, thus allowing for both approaches to values to apply at once.

However, a weakness in this discussion has consistently been that there is no clear definition of "Asian values". Is there a commonality in the values among Asian countries? Those arguing in the affirmative have been accused doing a poor job, simply and misleadingly delineating this commonality by making a contrast of "ideal Asian values with stereotypical [negative] values of the West." (Kohut, 1995, p. 13). Others question

whether there really can be a set of Asian values for such a diverse cultural environment as is found in Asia. Kohut succinctly notes this challenge, saying:

One also finds huge cultural difference within Asia--differences which arguably overshadow similarities and make the whole notion of a set of common Asian values quite nebulous. (Kohut, 1995, p. 13).

Perhaps the problem with both these approaches is they have put the cart before the horse. That is, both the universal and the Asian values approaches have not built upwards to support their concepts, but rather assume generalities and search for their assumptions. From a universal values perspective, this results in what Berry (1989) calls an "imposed etic" or what others have termed cultural imperialism. From an Asian values approach, assuming regional likenesses without justification leads to criticism over what is seen as merely an excuse for authoritarian practices and human rights violations. Rather than assume the nature of values begins at an international or regional level, it is important to look at a more basic starting place. Berry offers a strategy to do this by starting at a cultural level and then considering in comparative studies what lies in common. The task at hand would appear to understand first how defined cultural values for a specific people interact with other influences to have an impact on mediated communication. This is the first building block in the establishment of what might be an Asian system of values and then, with more comparison, what might be universal.

This study begins that process by examining the impact traditional Chinese cultural values have on the definition of news. By considering this specific set of cultural values as it operates with other news value systems, potentially new and unique ways of defining newsworthiness may be revealed. Also, it will show how the cultural element interweaves with other influences to maintain consistency and diversity through adaptability. Finally, it reaches to a distinct 'emic' level of investigation to study this process.

While a variety of different cultural contexts have been studied in the effort to understand the impact on communication (Chu, L., 1988; Hasnain, 1988; Reddi, 1988; Erlich & Tonooka, 1988, Tehranian, 1988, Chu, G., 1988 among others), the Chinese cultural tradition was specifically selected for investigation in this particular study for several reasons. China's culture, while not static by any means, does present readily consistent elements that are appropriate for this effort. A well-developed literature on Chinese values exists to draw upon in this investigation. And since several Asian nations have Chinese populations, or influences historically, the findings of research in this regard would be readily applicable for direct comparison in the attempt to find commonalities that might link together to create a truly Asian perspective of communication.

The basic premise of this research is that traditional values combine with other values to create new definitions of what is deemed newsworthy. In order to study this, the

literature on journalism history in China was explored and several news perspectives were found to be influential in recent Chinese history. These perspectives on the news were a Western approach (influential before 1949 and to varying degrees after 1976), a development communication approach, and a Marxist approach. Traditional Chinese values have been defined in a variety of ways in earlier studies (Chu & Cheng, 1978; Chao, 1985; Chang, 1979; Chin, 1979; and Bennett, 1979). The values from this literature were then consolidated into a set of six values that incorporated the range of specific traditional Chinese values for use in this research. These values were presented to a panel of experts on journalism in China, then modified according to their suggestions.

With these four sets of news values (Western, development, Marxist, and Traditional Chinese), research was conducted to examine the following research questions:

- 1. How are traditional Chinese cultural values used in determining what is news in Xinhua’s official press releases? and,
- 2. How do these values change over time?

Method

Content analysis was used to examine press releases of the Xinhua News Agency for two years from each of the decades of the 1950s and the 1980s. These periods were selected because they represent the beginning and most complete recent decades of China’s modern history. Individual news items were examined and coded according to whether 23 specific news values were contained in the presentation of that news item. The news items coded in each period is noted below:

Table 1. Sample			
Time	# Days Sampled	# Press Releases	Average # Per Day
1957-1958	27	2,058	80.2
1987-1988	24	5,251	218.8
Total	51	7,309	

Intercoder reliability was established at .91 among six researchers coding the data. When the data collection was completed, frequency analysis was used to consider the values by period, specifically exploring how a traditional Chinese perspective of news values was used across time. Finally, factor analysis was used to probe for an underlying structure in the values of both periods to determine if and how the traditional values were interacting with the other perspectives noted in the literature.

Findings

Twenty-three news values were used, representing four major areas suggested by the literature as having an influence on the way China selects the news. Clearly defined, these values represented characteristics of an event that would, potentially, make it newsworthy. News items were coded on the basis of whether the defined value was evident in that presentation of the news. A description of the findings of the values based in traditional Chinese culture is presented below. Examining how these Chinese values were found in the news items by period was revealing in many ways. Three values out of the six seemed to be accounted for consistently in more of the news items than the others. These values were harmony, morality and respect for age and the past. Harmony as a value decreased from being part of one-third of all news items in the 1950s to just over a quarter of all items in the 1980s.

Table 2. Frequency of Individual Traditional Chinese News Values by Period

Values Included (%)	Periods	
	1957-58	1987-88
Fatalism	.8	2.4
Harmony	34.0	26.2
Morality	32.7	7.8
Family	.9	.4
Past	4.7	3.5
Respect	27.8	10.5

The news value of morality can be defined as the superiority of virtue in individuals in contrast to material gain. It is evident in characteristics such as peacefulness, contentment, humility, industriousness and personal honor. This value was represented in a third of all releases in the 1950s but dropped in frequency in the 1980s to account for only 7.8% of all news accounts. The major change in the 1980s was the implementation of economic reforms which might have switched the attention from contentment and frugality to the drive for success symbolized in the new way of thinking that “to be rich is glorious.”

The third variable that received a great percentage of attention is respect for authority. This value is characterized by an ingrained belief in the legitimacy of authority that manifests itself in obedience towards authority at any level of society. This value decreased in frequency from the 1950s to the 1980s. It dropped to only about 10% of all items in the period of the 1980s, which was logical given China’s development. In the 1950s there was the need for the new government to rally support, so therefore respect for authority is reasonable in this time. But the 1980s does not have any of the earlier needs for order against the threat of chaos. In this relatively stable period there was not the need

for reinforcement of respect which might explain the low figures for this value in contrast to the past periods.

The other three values of this perspective have relatively low frequencies for both of the periods under examination. The priority placed on tradition and age represents the variable called past. It accounts for three to four percent of all items in three of the four periods in this sample. Fatalism is the belief that struggle against the inevitable is useless. Submission to fate is the only logical course humans can take. This value does not fit well with the basic premise of the People's Republic that the masses were capable of anything. Therefore, in both periods, it is but a minor variable found in news items to a very limited degree. Finally, the orientation towards the family as a prime component from which all life transpires is noticeably absent from the determination of news to all but a minor degree. This too is logical given the official change in the primary reference groups after 1949.

T-tests were used to determine if there was a significant difference between periods on the six variables that constituted this news perspective. As a result of these tests, statistically significant differences on all variables was found between all periods at $p < .05$ with the exception of the following:

**Table 3. T-Test of Traditional Chinese Values By Periods:
Variable Found Not Significant**

<u>Variable: Harmony</u>					
Periods	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	DF	2-tail p.
1957-58	1.64	.497	-.21	4253.7	.834
1987-88	1.64	.567			

Therefore, except in these this one case, it can be seen that there was a statistically significant difference in the use of traditional Chinese values in the press releases of Xinhua in the 1950s and 1980s. Frequency analysis indicates that this difference is a consistently lower amount of all traditional Chinese values in 1980 than in 1950 except for the value of harmony. This shows that the use of traditional values change across time and are not static criteria for the determination of what is considered newsworthy. As well, it indicates that the value of harmony to the construction of news from a Chinese perspective is important as this value is consistent and high in frequency in both periods of investigation.

Frequencies of Perspective Intensity by Period

In order to understand how the Traditional Chinese perspective differed by period, a variable was created by computing the sum of individual values each time one was included in a news item. The resulting score was an indication of how many of the parts of a particular perspective a news item was found to have. The degree to which this perspective was found in news items in each of the periods is seen in Table 4. Most of the time, just one or two Chinese values appear in news items. This is evident in the fact that this occurs in more than fifty percent of all items in the 1950s and about a third of all items in the 1980s. Generally speaking, when traditional Chinese news values appeared in news items, they represented a weak to minor degree of influence (that is, when present, there were usually only one or two out of the potential total of six).

Table 4. Frequency of Degrees of Traditional Chinese Influence by Period

Amount of Inclusion	Periods	
	1957-58	1987-88
No Inclusion	35.8	64.9
One variable	34.8	21.6
Two variables	22.7	11.7
Three variables	6.0	1.4
Four variables	.7	.3
Five variables	0	.1
Six variables	0	0

From this frequency distribution, it is apparent that Chinese values were evident in both the 1950s and 1980s. In both periods of the sampled news items, one to three traditional Chinese variables were most often found in the news items. All six of the variables making up this perspective found in news items were not found in any one news item. The inclusion of Chinese news values dropped dramatically in the 1980s to the point where traditional Chinese values were a part of only about a third of all the news items.

Table 5. Inclusion of Perspective in News Items by Period

Perspective	1957-58	1987-88
Traditional Chinese	64.2	35.1
Marxist-Leninist	72.2	23.7
Development	62.4	78.9
Western	81.0	59.7

Table 5 shows the percentage of inclusion in news items of Traditional Chinese values compared to the inclusion of the other approaches. It can be seen clearly that

traditional Chinese values are an important component of news construction in both periods, though considerably more so in the first period. This is very important for it helps illustrate one of the basic notions that was driving this research: that culture was an important part of news over time. Table 5 also offers support for the idea that, with the inclusion of a cultural element, the construction of the news in China is more than a just simple mechanistic or ideological exercise. Clearly more than political factors are influencing the development of what is considered newsworthy.

Table 6. Frequency of Degrees of Influences by Period: 1957-58

Amount of Inclusion	Development	Western	Marxist	Chinese	Mean
No Inclusion	37.6	19.0	27.8	35.8	30.0
One variable	36.7	21.9	15.7	34.8	27.2
Two variables	15.4	19.3	32.5	22.7	22.4
Three variables	6.4	24.7	14.0	6.0	12.7
Four variables	2.3	12.9	5.8	.7	5.4
Five variables	1.0	2.1	3.0	0	1.5
Six variables	N/A	0	1.1	0	.36

Table 7. Frequency of Degrees of Influences by Period: 1987-88

Amount of Inclusion	Development	Western	Marxist	Chinese	Mean
No Inclusion	21.1	40.3	76.3	64.9	50.6
One variable	27.4	31.7	14.8	21.6	23.8
Two variables	30.7	11.8	6.8	11.7	15.2
Three variables	12.2	9.6	1.4	1.4	4.5
Four variables	7.0	5.1	.5	.3	3.2
Five variables	1.6	2.2	.1	.1	1.0
Six variables	N/A	.2	.0	0	.06

In Tables 6 and 7, it is apparent that traditional values as a news perspective do not stand out as the prime motivating element. This is an important concept, for the cultural element itself in the Chinese situation does not appear to dominate the construction of news. From the descriptive analysis, it seems that traditional values in this news system may be working at deeper levels of synthesis, influencing the other news perspectives towards the Chinese way. By examining the frequencies of perspectives, it is impossible to discover relationships between variables. What is needed is a way to explore the underlying structure of these variables in relationship to each other, a way to determine if traditional values are merging with and modifying other values to create something unique and Chinese. The statistical means to do this is called factor analysis. It was used in the

section that follows to understand if cultural values are influential in the interplay of news values.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical method for reducing and summarizing data. Hair, et al., (1987, p. 235) says that this method “addresses itself to the problem of analyzing the interrelationships between a large number of variables...and then explaining these variables in terms of their common underlying dimensions (factors).” A major question raised by this research concerns whether China has synthesized different perspectives and how that process was affected by the inclusion of traditional values evolving over time. Given the fact that each period contains hundreds if not thousands of news items with each representing different combinations of news perspectives, factor analysis was deemed highly appropriate as a means to get at the underlying dimensions of news values created in each of the two periods sampled. (All factors in the were named by identifying the variables that contributed to the underlying structure with factor loadings of .5 or above)

Period 1957-58

Six factors were generated by factor analysis for the part of the sample taken from the period of the 1950s. Factors were interpreted with reference to the high loadings in the matrix generated. Those factor loadings above .5 were considered to be important to the underlying structure of the factor and thus used to identify it. As a result, factors were named as indicated in Table 8.

The first factor generated was named Emerging Communism because it took concepts of looking ahead to the future and keeping things in context with the basics of ideology, criticism and party-orientation. That the past was a strong influence in defining this new variable is indicative of the emergent process that this factor seems to possess. The second factor, named Cultural Tuition has strong influences of the Chinese heritage with the high loading variables of clarification and instruction. It seems that this variable is one that is similar to Wright’s function of cultural transmission, passing on the cultural heritage in a teaching mode. The third factor in this analysis was named Ethical Propaganda. It seems to reflect the moral foundation from which a particular point of view is justifiably promulgated. Factor number four takes several Western variables and creates a new factor that has been labelled Proximate Incidence. It was labelled as such because the idea of proximity in both the spatial and temporal senses was vital to this factor. Incidence helps focus on the event-orientation of this new variable. Common Amity is the name assigned to the fifth factor because it seems to reflect the need for positive relations between common people. Here traditional Chinese values are merged with the people-orientation to focus on how people get along with each other in a positive way. The final

factor takes a high negative loading for eliteness and a high positive loading for the Marxist-Leninist concept of progress towards the socialist state to create a new variable called Populist Promotion. This factor has the notion that the masses are progressing, developing, growing and moving forward and this informs the way news might be selected as it represents this.

Table 8. Factor Analysis of News Values in Period 1957-58

	Emerging Communism	Cultural Tuition	Ethical Propaganda	Proximate Incidence	Common Amity	Populist Promotion
Future	.75704	.17127	-.16427	.02629	-.01095	-.10549
Context	.71869	.05561	-.03482	-.08572	-.11186	-.02570
Ideology	.66618	.08318	.26402	.13770	.15456	.08149
Critical	.57419	.44868	.03308	.08339	.06602	-.03916
Party	.56882	.10960	.24206	.13654	.25731	.19887
Past	.50353	.45242	.05906	.08314	.34879	-.01777
Collect	.49737	.26508	.19268	.06536	.23122	.14842
Clarify	.02461	.67973	.06033	.08902	-.11680	.10114
Instruction	.31946	.58136	.01204	.01522	.06640	.23027
Fatalism	.48196	.57932	.16146	.10306	.41477	-.12687
Family	.47209	.56844	.14429	.14428	.41491	-.12024
Drama	.28173	.54377	.14719	.26435	.28122	-.14289
Subjectivity	.01918	.08862	.86096	.07124	.07882	.08944
Propaganda	.24028	-.03904	.83730	.08266	.02543	-.08404
Morality	-.06051	.17785	.77377	.08303	.12739	-.12080
Meaning	.09900	.10187	.10019	.87779	.02009	.13032
Timely	.17230	.05143	.09295	.82607	.07148	-.07189
Event	-.12207	.15494	.04130	.77973	.26911	-.01599
Respect	.03357	.02816	.17595	.15664	.73425	.05594
Harmony	.22107	-.14493	-.10599	.19205	.68663	.25045
People	.00802	.26703	.09654	-.00565	.65294	-.16353
Elite	.24227	.10299	.35403	.00094	-.00948	-.69708
Progress	.27568	.29981	.16604	.02916	.04167	.69635

Variance explained by Factor 1: 28.7%

Variance explained by Factor 2: 10.1 %

Variance explained by Factor 3: 8.6%

Variance explained by Factor 4: 5.9%

Variance explained by Factor 5: 5.4%

Variance explained by Factor 6: 4.8%

Cumulative variance explained by six factors: 63.5%

It is important to see that traditional values were actively part of the underlying structure in four of the six factors generated in Table 8. This represents an important finding: that Chinese values have merged with other values to create new concepts appropriate to the definition of newsworthiness from the People's Republic of China's

unique perspective at this particular point in time. Some of these new ways of conceptualizing newsworthiness are influenced strongly by traditional values (like the concept of Common Amity). Others indicate less of a primary influence of Chinese cultural values yet nonetheless still add to the conceptualization of a new concept in a telling way. This can be seen in the case of the factor labelled Emerging Communism which includes a past orientation variable from the set of Chinese values and thus contextualizes the idea of communism within the cultural background. This would indicate that culture combines with ideology to create a way of determining the news that was relevant to life in the People's Republic of China in a way that would have been different from approaches in other communist countries at the same time. Another variable, Ethical Propaganda is also enlightening as to the impact of Chinese cultural values in this time period. Grounding the nature of pushing forward ideas within the cultural value of attempting to improve the nature of mankind (and not simply to force ideas on a public that has no choice) defines another Chinese news variable at this time. If this factor analysis has merit in the understanding of news values, it is most valuable in giving us clearer conceptions of how China was defining terms (like propaganda) and not how other countries might (negatively) assign meaning to those terms. That is a great asset of this study, to allow indigenous interpretation of mediated communication values rather than assert meaning upon it from outside the environment in which it was created. It allows the mediated voice of China to define its own meaning of newsworthiness values.

Period 1987-88

This set of factors represents a difficult periods of analysis, and yet contains factors that explain a tremendous amount of variance. There are only two factors that were generated and of these the first accounts for 65.3% of the variance. The factors were not cleanly defined as the loadings for many were high (above .5) on both factors. Therefore a number of different techniques were used to attempt to get better defined factors. SPSS-X was used to calculate the factor analysis for these variables in this period using various extraction and rotation methods but in every case there was generally an ill-conditioned correlation matrix.

As indicated by the factors above, the underlying structure is one in which there is a lack of clean factor loadings. In the factors in Table 9, those factor loadings above .5 that load high only on one factor are highlighted for interpretive purposes. The first factor, which explains the lion's share of the variance, contains seven variables that load above .5. Three of these variables (respect, subjectivity, and drama) also load high on the second factor and therefore are not as revealing. Those high loading factors that remain include event-orientation, timeliness, meaningfulness and people-orientation. These variables all represent important components of the Western perspective of news. If all the high

loading factors are considered then a Western perspective with a traditional Chinese slant to it seems to identify this factor structure, hence the identifier of Occidental Confucianism.

Table 9. Factor Analysis of News Values in Period 1987-88

	Occidental Confucianism	Authoritative Advancement
Event	.88790	.20596
Timely	.85498	.22719
Meaningful	.85237	.15652
Drama	.71233	.58149
Respect	.62273	.51741
Subjectivity	.61962	.57903
People	.61675	.46985
Harmony	.49385	.47398
Context	.01173	.78261
Future	.15912	.72986
Family	.65835	.71133
Fatalism	.62507	.70588
Critical	.44011	.70397
Collectivity	.54364	.70091
Ideology	.63754	.69437
Past	.62363	.68823
Party	.65881	.66784
Propaganda	.57870	.62780
Progress	.57674	.61365
Morality	.57696	.61285
Instruction	.56463	.58743
Elite	.31025	.54250
Clarify	.28578	.48245

Variance explained by Factor 1: 65.3%

Variance explained by Factor 2: 5.5 %

Cumulative variance explained by two factors: 70.8%

The second factor likewise has many variables that load high on it and the first. Again, working with only those loading high on the second, a pattern identified with the development perspective seems to be apparent. Concepts like placing news in context, looking towards the future, and actively being critical, all come from the development point of view. The variable of eliteness is also thrown in with the others giving the impression of icons of development standing apart for all to emulate.

If this factor structure indicates anything, it is that the period of the 1980s was a time for news construction when there was not the clear, clean-cut set of factors that identified what events became news items. So much is tied to so many other things. What

appears to be an important outcome of this, however is the fact that the Western perspective is appearing in such a distilled form. The mixture with other elements is minor. Those factor loadings that are most cleanly distinguished in this structure are those that are predominantly Western. Those variables that have the highest factor loadings in the first factor are once again those three that have been seen consistently together in each period: event-orientation, timeliness and meaningfulness. Yet despite the cleanness for the factor loadings of the Western perspective, the Chinese traditional values are found to merge and create something unique in the Chinese context.

In order to see if better defined factors could be forced, another factor analysis was run on variables from this period, again using principal components as the extraction method and varimax as the method of rotation. This time the factor analysis was set with a four factor criteria for factor selection. Four factors were selected because a factor analysis of the entire data set offered a four factor solution, therefore it seemed appropriate to force four factors from the originally generated two factors. Table 10 shows the factor structure for period 1987-88 when four factors were forced in the criteria for the statistics. Again, the first factor has the bulk of the variables. With the loadings the way they are, this first factor seems to be Chinese Communist Development with a great emphasis on the traditional Chinese values. The second factor has high loadings on three very Western news values: meaningfulness, timeliness, and event-orientation. This then seems to be the Proximate Incidence factor noted previously in the period of the 1950s. Factor three shows high factor loadings from three development variables. While one of them (critical) also loads heavily on another factor, still this factor seems to be a Classic Development factor. Due to the fact that four factors were demanded of this factor analysis, the fourth factor has only one variable that defines it. Since this is the clarification variable this factor has been defined as Explanation.

By forcing four factors from this analysis, more, well-defined factors are evident but the closeness to the factors generated from the original full set of data is questionable. It may be that by requesting four factors, an artificial structure has been created modelling the original full data set. More research needs to be done in this regard.

Perhaps the original factor structure may be most informative after all despite the lack of clearly defined factors. This may indeed be more representative of the true situation in Chinese journalism at this juncture. The lack of clear direction may be symptomatic of a general searching for direction in the midst of changes in the state of domestic and international situations.

Table 10. Factor Analysis of News Values in Period 1987-88:
Four Factors

	Traditional Communist Development	Proximate Incidence	Classic Development	Explanation
Respect	.81581	.25365	.11817	.10219
Morality	.79164	.23674	.23466	.16046
Subjectivity	.78526	.27596	.18311	.21959
Family	.78287	.36597	.36890	.25038
Ideology	.75995	.35748	.36998	.22594
Fatalism	.74867	.35598	.35909	.21949
Party	.74217	.39437	.36343	.20900
Propaganda	.71673	.29667	.29808	.22775
Past	.71230	.38112	.40763	.21042
Collectivity	.68730	.29558	.40343	.25780
Drama	.68414	.47865	.29985	.24510
Harmony	.65096	.27469	.31240	-.24638
Progress	.64399	.35715	.35780	.19752
Instruct	.59164	.35239	.30519	.34653
Elite	.51842	.14063	.39108	-.04897
Meaning	.28084	.88962	.18566	.10796
Timeliness	.37385	.83958	.20607	.08865
Event	.47147	.78178	.07390	.14364
Future	.24393	.22930	.82516	.03120
Context	.22903	.03982	.79408	.20442
Critical	.50207	.30799	.51253	.34121
Clarify	.25853	.15916	.17501	.84645

Conclusions

Culture plays an intricate and vital role in the structuring of news in China. It informs the definition of concepts to bring meaning to what is news from a Chinese perspective. Culture undergirds news values, merging and mingling with them to create new variables that are meaningful concepts not only for the Chinese but for general consideration as well. A cultural element is a pervasive influence on news construction that must be considered for a meaningful understanding of how news is determined.

Time is also an important element in considering the determination of the news. Construction of the news is a dynamic process and not one that can easily be fitted into a set pattern. Static definitions of news philosophies tend to stereotype rather than inform the understanding of how news is built and how it can be interpreted. A better understanding of the way events are structured into news is possible by allowing for the dynamic nature of the news evolution to be part of the interpretive process. Indeed, as this

research reveals, some interesting and important aspects of the construction of the news is overlooked if the concept of development across time is ignored.

In terms of news values, all four basic news perspectives were found to be included in the news in both periods under examination. This indicated that China was not limited to one basic perspective of news as might be expected when this country is classified as part of the Soviet-Marxist news philosophy. Despite the fact that all perspectives were operating in both periods, the tides of this inclusion were found to ebb and flow in a way that indicated a complex set of relationships were operating in news construction. Chinese values were found in both periods, but the underlying relationships of these with other values varied from period to period.

Are there universal news values? The variable that was named Proximate Incidence was found loading high on the variables of meaningfulness, timeliness and event-orientation in both periods of investigation. That a Western-oriented news value should load heavily as a new variable in each of these three periods is an interesting development. The relative stability of a seemingly Western news value in two diverse time periods may indicate that these values are more than just Western in orientation.

The concept of universal news values is an idea that is held within the New China News Agency. The Deputy Director of the Research Institute of the New China News Agency noted in an interview in 1993 (Tsui, 1993) that the agency considered news structure not in regard to the Four Theories of the Press but rather on the basis of two other perspectives: World news values and Chinese news values. World news values were such that there was a universal acceptance globally about certain elements that make events newsworthy. Among these universal values suggested in the interview were proximity and meaningfulness. Chinese news values, on the other hand, were those that were defined by socialism with Chinese characteristics (that is, Chinese cultural values). This study begins to identify the Chinese news values fitting in this definition but more research is needed to determine if universal news values do indeed carry from one system to another.

Finally, given the question suggested above, it might be equally revealing to determine if the method employed to probe news construction in the Chinese system is appropriate for examining other systems. If this means of making sense of how news is constructed is valid, it is important to explore its implications on other Asian cultural systems. For only by doing this and comparing similarities can the commonalities that exist be used to realistically establish what can justifiably be called Asian values. And, as more research considers values from outside Asia, the potential to find broad values in communication (or at the least in specific domains of communication like news content) will be possible. This study was titled, *Towards the Construction of Asian Values*, because it assumes a process that must start by listening to the specific voices and meanings of

those voices established by the peoples of Asia themselves to determine what values exist as the first step towards understanding what values are held in common. It also assumes that systems of values are in constant flux, changing in and of themselves over time and as they meet and merge with other systems of values. It stands as a first step in attempting to understand Asian values by understanding Chinese values as they are represented in mediated communication over time. Values represent "an untidy concept" (Bennett, 1979, p. 207) that make for difficulties in attempts to understand them. More work is needed to compare with the results provided here to "tidy up" our understanding of values in order to reliably inform our understanding of Asian communication.

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