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# Evolving Frames: British Newspaper Coverage of Repression and Resistance in China over Time, 1949–2009

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**ABSTRACT**

This study sets out to see if the Western media frames of China change over time and how the dominant ideology emerges in the representations. It investigates how the Tibet-China conflict was portrayed and represented in the British national daily newspapers across four research periods from 1949 to 2009. It examines the frames chosen by the press and the influence of the sources (especially external journalistic influence) reflected on the frame-building process. In this research, both content analysis and qualitative frame analysis were used to analyse 955 news articles from ten newspapers. The present study shows that the British media frames of the Tibet-China conflict evolved over the period of fifty years. During the Cold War period, the coverage reflected the ideology of anti-Communism and during the post-Cold War period, it presented China as a human rights violator in Tibet. The changes in frames can be attributed to the external reality of the Cold War, the constantly changing international relations, and other internal or external journalism factors. It indicates that the frame-building process not only reflects news frames as tools used by journalists to construct reality, but also explains which external journalistic factors influence this evolving process.

## Introduction

"News is a window of the world. Through its frame, people can learn of themselves and others, of their institutions, leaders, and life styles, and those of other nations and their people" (Tuchman 1978, 1). As Tuchman (1978) indicates, people usually rely on secondary sources, especially the mass media channels, to open up their communication with and experience of foreign countries. Great changes have taken place since the People's Republic of China (PRC)[1] was founded, especially since the implementation of the opening and reform policy in 1978, and China has received increasing international media exposure (Neuhaus 2012). In addition, the long-term conflict between the PRC and Tibet has been the subject of a considerable debate in the past few decades, and it captured the attention of Western media, such as the 1959 Tibetan Uprising and the 2008 Tibetan Unrest. In Western literature, Tibet is usually displayed as a paradise where love, peace, modesty, joy and spirituality prevail (Daccache and Valeriano 2012). It is worth studying

the Western media's representations of China in the context of Tibet. There are some limitations in existing research. News coverage of China has been studied within the US media as a whole in broad political and cultural issues, or in separate, episodic events (e.g., Golan and Lukito 2015; Stone and Xiao 2007). There is little research that has been done on the U.K. media representations of China (see Sparks 2010). The U.K. media as the traditional Western media, which are classified within the *liberal model* (Hallin and Mancini 2004). They concentrate on covering news from a distinctive political standpoint. The U.K. media system allows for diverse viewpoints covered by a number of media outlets with different voices (Fridriksson 2004). In addition, the abolition of newsprint rationing in 1956 contributed to the British newspapers revolutionising their format and content freely (Niblock 2008). Meanwhile, because of commercial requirements and reader preferences, the size and shape of the newspapers have changed throughout their history (Esser 1999). For instance, they increased the number of pages, added and expanded supplements and sections in the newspapers to cover a broader range of topics (Williams 2010). According to the changes of the British press, their representations of the Tibet-China conflict would probably have changed accordingly. This study aims to examine representations of the Tibet issue in the British national daily newspapers between 1949 and 2009.

This study utilises frames and framing theory to explore media representations and the major factors that profoundly shape and influence the perceptions of the media when they report other countries. It hopes to provide valuable information and benchmarks for how the Tibet-China conflict was framed in the British press from 1949 to 2009, in order to gain some insight into the trends in the U.K. society's perception of China. It examines which frames the British newspapers chose and the reasons behind the selection. This study also explores the frame-building process when the British press covered Tibet in different historical eras between 1949 and 2009: the Cold War and the post-Cold War periods. It is only through such a temporal comparison that we can gain a better understanding of media frames of China and how they match to common perceptions. The research thus seeks to fill the gap found in existing framing analysis, which tends to ignore historical analysis and has not systematically specified whether and how frames are evolving over time. It provides new perspectives on the framing analysis which usually overemphasises the degree of journalistic autonomy and treats frames as "bias," and illuminates the role of dominant, elite and journalistic ideology in shaping news frames as well as the effects of other socio-political factors on media representations. It applies both content analysis and qualitative frame analysis as research methods to examine how the British press framed the Tibet-China conflict over the period of fifty years.

## Frames and Framing

Framing theory looks at how an issue or event is portrayed and explained in the news, and reflects the process by which media construct social realities. The idea of frames in news content is firstly defined by Goffman (1974) as a way of organising experiences: we use frames to identify what is taking place. A frame can be viewed as a central organising idea of news coverage that provides a context and suggests the issue through selecting, emphasising, excluding and elaborating (Tankard et al. 1991). Reese (2001) indicates that frames are organising principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that

work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world. Accordingly, the media frame is on the one hand from past experience; on the other hand, it is impacted by the consciousness of social culture, organising everyday events and making them meaningful. In terms of framing, Entman's definition is widely cited: "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (1993, 52). It also refers to the way in which the media, by highlighting some aspects of an issue and ignoring others, can result in a mixed audience perception of that issue (Iyengar and McGrady 2007). de Vreese (2005) outlines an integrated model that includes two distinct framing processes: frame-building (how does a frame come into being) and frame-setting (frame effects). This study focuses on the process of framing—frame-building as central organising ideas to construct social reality, which not only reflects news frames as tools used by journalists to construct reality, but also explains which factors influence this process. Previous studies have pointed out that there are three major sources of influence on frame-building of news content (Shoemaker and Reese 1996; de Vreese 2005): (1) external influence (e.g., interest group, political actors, authorities, and other elites), (2) journalist-centred influence (e.g., ideology, attitudes, and professional norms), and (3) organisational routines (e.g., the type or political orientation of the medium).

Media frames are not only descriptive but also explained—the media possibly decide not only which but also how the events are to be covered. They often stand for a particular ideological position of journalists, media organisations and the host country, and offer news perceptions and influential viewpoints for media professionals and the influence on them from their environment. Therefore, this study utilises frame and framing theory to research how the British media coverage of the Tibet-China conflict represents journalistic decisions, values and practices.

A starting point of the article is that there are several drawbacks to the existing frame-building analysis. First, frames are usually reduced to story topics and attributes in the frame-building analysis (for instance, Powers and Andsager 1999; Ospina Estupinan 2017). Some scholars either directly employ existing frames (for example, Dirikx and Gelders 2010; Zhou 2008), or randomly create new frames without adequate explanations and in-depth exploration (see Arif and Hayat 2018; Leung and Huang 2007). In this case, the issues regarding how the media represents a specific issue and whether media frames change over time in dominant ideology[2] are overlooked. Second, most frame-building analysis "assumes the determining agency of the individual journalists or editors" (Vliegenthart and van Zoonen 2011, 108). It overemphasises the degree of journalistic autonomy in the framing process. In this case, media frames are often treated as "bias"—the concepts of pro or con, favourable or unfavourable, negative or positive in existing framing studies (e.g., Luther and Zhou 2005; Zhang and Boukes 2019). They generally lack in-depth analysis of the role of external sources and the possible effects on various aspects in the frame-building process. Third, although some current frames studies have examined news sources, they mainly focus on the analysis of the agenda-building power of news sources and rarely explore whether and how that transfers to frames that are beneficial to their interest (e.g., Peng 2008; Stone and Xiao 2007). Therefore, this study will examine why particular frames dominate news narratives and others are ignored, to determine to what extent the variants of media frames could be explained

by the combinations of effects of external and internal journalism factors. We will also explore how certain frames are connected to an underlying structure—a historically rooted but dynamic cultural context, the changes of frames over time and whether different frames are involving. This study aims to advance knowledge about journalistic practice through the analysis of the framing strategies employed by the U.K. media in their discussion of foreign affairs.

## The Sino-Tibet Conflict and Britain's Early Interaction with Tibet

Relations between Tibet and China have been the subject of a considerable debate in the past few decades, focused on topics such as human rights issues, conflict and other issues. As a result of this debate the conflict has captured the attention of Western media, including coverage of events such as the recent violent protests, riots and unrest in Lhasa.

Moreover, in regard to Britain's interaction with Tibet, its earliest interest in Tibet can be traced back to the late eighteenth century (1780–1792), when two British officials George Bogle and Samuel Turner tried to establish a trade relationship with Tibet (Anand 2009). In Lord Curzon's famous dispatch of 8 January 1903, he proclaimed that "We regard the so-called suzerainty of China over Tibet as a constitutional fiction—a political affectation which has only been maintained because of its convenience to both parties" (Ghosh 1977, 43). His dispatch was followed by the Younghusband expedition (1903–1904) to Tibet. As a result, the *Treaty of Lhasa* was signed in 1904 between Tibet and Britain. Subsequently, Britain modified the *Treaty of Lhasa* and signed the *Convention Between Great Britain and China Respecting Tibet* in 1906. And the British government clearly accepted Chinese rule as suzerainty without insisting too much on Tibetan autonomy (Anand 2007).

In addition, the West's perception of Tibet has been shaped by legends and illusions because accurate information about this remote country, isolated from the outside world, has been difficult to obtain (Daccache and Valeriano 2012). As Norbu (1998, 27) says, "Tibet, however wonderful, is a dream; whether of a long-lost golden age or millenarian fantasy, it is still merely a dream." Therefore, the current research focuses on a longitudinal look at a protracted issue—the long-debated political status of Tibet, which will reveal the changes in the basic storylines reporters have applied to explain the developments over time. It tries to explore the frame-building process when the British press covered Tibet in different historical eras: the Cold War and the post-Cold War periods. It also aims to find out how the British media frames about this issue have changed over the past fifty years, to gain a better understanding of how the British media portrayed China.

## Research Questions and Method

The specific research questions underpinning this investigation were:

Q1: How did the British press frame the Tibet issue through each research period from 1949 to 2009? What were the dominant frames?

Q2: In reporting the Tibet issue, are there any differences in the coverage of different research periods? How did frames change over time?

### Sample

The focus of the current research was to examine how the Tibet issue was framed in the ten British national daily newspapers: *The Times*, *The Manchester Guardian*[3] (later *The Guardian*), *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Independent*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Herald*[4] (later *The Sun)*, *Daily Graphic*[5] (later *Daily Sketch*) and *News Chronicle*.[6] These newspapers were selected because they were not only daily newspapers in the UK, they were also collectively known as the "national press" and dominated the UK market.[7] Together they have long been regarded as a primary source of public information about, and knowledge of, national and international issues (Sparks 2010). Sparks also notes that, compared to the national press, local and regional newspapers have much smaller circulations, and "the papers' editorial concerns are more parochial" (Sparks 2010, 350). In this study, the investigation was concerned solely with the representation of the Tibet issue in the British national daily press, since this was where it was likely to be the most frequent, most covered, and most extensive.

Contemporary journalists' reports about Tibet usually start off with the history of the "drastic opening" of Tibet in 1950 with the Chinese occupation (Anand 2007). The time frame of analysis covered fifty years, from 1949 to 2009, in order to see any major changes directly related to the Tibet issue and observe whether media frames were affected by changes in the political and cultural environments. Four different historical periods were selected from the fifty-year period for further analysis and interpretation. The selection of these research periods was based on particular events, which attracted substantial British media attention and reflected Tibet's relations the PRC. To be more precise, Tibet appeared briefly on the international political stage in 1950–1951. Nevertheless, since the 1959 Tibetan Uprising, following the flight of the Dalai Lama into exile in India, Tibet seemed comparatively low on the Western media's agenda (Smith 2019). As Peter Bishop (1989) suggests, it was due to the fact that Tibet lost its spiritual significance for the West when the Dalai Lama left in 1959, taking the exoticism and mysticism of Tibet with him. After 1959, Tibet was closed to Western travellers which was attributed to the "Bamboo Curtain" (McRae 2012). Then, the wider international situation (e.g., the Cuban Missile Crisis) had probably also diverted Western attention away from Tibet (Neuhaus 2012). After Deng Xiaoping took office in 1978 and initiated the Open Door Policy, China began to open up to Western business interests and Western travellers (Garnaut, Song, and Fang 2018). In this context, Tibet was inevitably opened to the outside world again and interest in Tibet resurfaced from the mid-1980s onwards. Additionally, the selected research periods covered two major significant phases: the Cold War and the post-Cold War period. Hence, the focus of this study is to examine how the British national daily newspapers represented the Tibet issue according to specific events during a range of periods from 1949 to 2009. All news articles about Tibet were examined every following specific event (see Table 1). The articles retrieved were published within one month of

**Table 1.** The sampling periods of the Tibet issue from 1949 to 2009.

| Length of selected period | | The selected events |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The early Cold War | 7 October 1950–7 November 1950 | The Battle of Chamdo |
| | 10 March 1959–10 April 1959 | The 1959 Tibetan Uprising |
| Near the end of the Cold War | 5 March 1989–5 April 1989 | Lhasa Protest in 1989 |
| The post-Cold War period | 14 March 2008–14 April 2008 | The 2008 Tibetan Unrest |

each event. Each research period mainly covered the whole process in which the particular Sino-Tibetan conflict turned violent and subsequent protests against China's military actions occurred. These research periods coincided with the start, climax and end of the Cold War, as well as the post-Cold War period.

To get a complete list of news articles on the Tibet issue during 1949–2009, multiple resources were consulted: the microfilms at the British Library Newspapers section, and the online resources (e.g., LexisNexis database). The online databases were used to retrieve relevant news articles by using "Tibet," "Tibetan," "Dalai Lama," and "Lhasa" as search terms. So, combining the data from the online databases and the microfilm resources after excluding duplicates and irrelevant results, 955 articles were compiled for the Tibet issue (see Table 2).

## Analytical Strategy

Framing analysis decides which frames are behind the news framing in selected cases and explains how the organised data are interpreted in order to demonstrate and support the frames. This research employed two main research methods: content analysis and qualitative frame analysis to conduct framing analysis. The content analysis provided quantitative data to answer the questions about the similarities and differences in media coverage of Tibet over the period of fifty years. We categorised the content of 955 new articles; examined types of news articles, their basic topics and sources. We then used a qualitative frame analysis to analyse the selected news articles according to the content analysis results. It provided qualitative data to further explore how the press represented and explained the Tibet issue. In terms of technique for qualitative research analysis, the "how" of identifying news frames in this study consists of three steps (Linström and Marais 2012; Harjuniemi 2019). The first phase involved a general multiple reading of news articles while taking descriptive notes about the content. In the second phase, the articles were read a second time to identify certain recurring themes, frames and values. In this process, all framing devices were used to detect each frame, and the information needed to be clustered and catergorised. Lastly, we conducted a close-reading of the articles to select a sample that could be analysed more intensively. The third reading was necessary for an in-depth interpretation of these articles. By this means, we identified different discourses with their respective frames. A news article might contain one or more frames.

**Table 2.** Samples of research on the Tibet issue, 1949–2009.

| Length of selected research period | Valid selected range of the British national daily newspaper | Filtered results: number of selected articles |
|---|---|---|
| 7 October 1950–7 November 1950 | The Times, The Manchester Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, Daily Herald, Daily Graphic, News Chronicle | 120 |
| 10 March 1959–10 April 1959 | The Times, The Manchester Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, Daily Herald, Daily Sketch, News Chronicle | 260 |
| 5 March 1989–5 April 1989 | The Times, The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, Daily Express, Daily Mail, The Sun | 64 |
| 14 March 2008–14 April 2008 | The Time, The Guardian, The Independent, The Daily Telegraph, Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, The Sun | 511 |
| | | Total: 955 |

In the first phase of this research, content analysis was used to explore what the British newspapers reported on the Tibet issue, with particular interest in the period 1949–2009. It can help to limit the subjective involvement of the person who is doing the framing analysis and improve the reliability and validity of the results. Quantitative content analysis of each article was conducted in the study to collect data in order to interpret the formatting devices of framing, give emotional context of the story. Thus, the results of quantitative content analysis were expected to shed light on the patterns of coverage of Tibet within defined periods. The research method is also adapted for "studying processes occurring over a long time" (Babbie 2015, 334). That is to say, it is a useful tool to compare categories at different time periods. It is an ideal method to analyse how Tibet reportage and news sources used in the British newspapers had changed over time. The key variables coded included type of the news article, topics and sources.

*Type of the news article*. News article type (news, feature, editorial/commentary, etc.) can influence how the issue is defined, the scope and depth of coverage, and calls to action. This variable separates news from opinion in newspapers. It also distinguishes among several techniques of presenting information. The "type of the news article" results will tell us what sections of the newspapers or in what format coverage of Tibet tends to appear, such as news, letters to the editor, features, editorial/commentary etc.

*Topics*. Coding for topics give us details on what kinds of stories are getting attention and what issues may receive more coverage than others. A close reading was undertaken of all the topics that emerged within the total sample of newspaper coverage analysed. Different categories of topics were then constructed and each article was coded for the presence of up to three of these topics.

*Sources*. Certain frames that circulate in public debate may be picked up by the news media, whereas other frames are typically applied by a specific frame advocate (e.g., interest groups and authorities). It is advisable to strategically collect sources of "frame sponsors" who use frames for strategic purposes (Kruse 2001), including, for example, the Dalai Lama, NGOs, and political parties. Each article was coded for the presence of up to four of these sources.

All 955 articles were analysed and the codebook was marked by hand for each article, entered into Microsoft Excel, and then imported into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for analysis. SPSS analysis was conducted using, such as frequency counts and cross tabulations. In order to test the reliability of the coding, three coders independently coded ten randomly selected articles. Using an online utility, ReCal, which is developed by Deen Freelon (2010) to calculate inter-coder reliability, all the results were over 80%—which were acceptable reliability levels according to Neuendorf (2002).

Even though content analysis sketches out a general picture of the main characteristics of selected news texts, using only this method is too general to answer my research questions. First, the method confines itself to count what is in the coverage rather than to analyse and explore the internal meanings and relationships between texts (Rose, Spinks, and Canhoto 2015). For instance, merely showing the number of times some specific key words appear could not tell you about the context in which it takes place, or the broader meaning the words convey. In addition, the method probably ignores what is not said in a particular text. In some situations what is omitted may be as significant as what is included. Another limitation is that content analysis is a purely descriptive method, and it describes what is there, but may not reveal the underlying motives for

the observed pattern ("what" but not "why") (Bryman 2015). Namely, it is difficult to access the motivations and perceptions of those involved in the construction of the manifest content examined through content analysis (Kaid and Wadsworth 1989). So, it could not answer the questions such as why the representations of Tibet in the British press did/did not change over time.

The most important guideline of framing is to focus not only on what a text is about, but also on how the story is told (van Gorp 2010). As mentioned above, frames are constructed by the "evidence," which comes from wider but more complicated social conditions that have impact on the media in relation to their selection of words and expressions. Meanwhile, content analysis could not necessarily provide insights into the underlying reasons for relationships and trends in data, but only justifies the samples and gives an idea of which articles can be used for further in-depth analysis. Hence, qualitative frame analysis was used to examine media representations further, it was used to investigate what frames were identified and how they were presented or built in media discourses within a broader socio-cultural context. Texts of news items were analysed on a word level from journalistic context to social context for the sake of exploring ideologies behind news reporting. The identification of frames is through examining the manifest elements in a text that function as demonstrable indicators, which is called "framing devices" (van Gorp 2010). They can be divided into two categories: rhetorical devices and technical devices (Linström and Marais 2012). Rhetorical devices that can be examined are "the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgement" (Entman 1993, 52). Although these indicators will not directly reveal frames, they will offer the analyst important concepts in a text which may help "diagnose" and "nominate" central ideas around which the frame is constructed (Touri and Koteyko 2014). These analytic points merged into dominant themes that fulfilled the four functions of framing at difference stages of the report: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments and suggesting remedies (Entman 1993). The qualitative assessment of frames in this study focused on the examination of all selected articles with these framing focal points.

In terms of technical framing devices, Tankard (2003) suggests the following indicators: headlines and kickers (small headlines over the main headlines); subheads; photographs; photo captions; leads; source selection; quote selection; and concluding statements and paragraphs. Visual images were not available through the archive over fifty years ago and thus were not used to examine frames in this study. In order to explore the most prominent and specific ideological frameworks in news discourse on the Tibet issue, the headlines were examined first. It was because they were the most prominent feature of news coverage. As Pan and Kosicki (1993) indicate, "a headline is the most salient cue to activate certain semantically related concepts in readers' minds: it is thus the most powerful framing device of syntactical structure" (59). The other technical devices of the news articles were analysed accordingly. They comprise of a range of details, examples, etc., which play an important role in sustaining and justifying given ideologies.

## Findings and Discussion

When we look back over the four research periods, across a total of 955 news articles, newspaper coverage of Tibet had increased enormously over fifty years (see Table 2).

This is no doubt in part because the content of newspapers had increased over time (Niblock 2008), but the growth occurred, too, during a period of greater openness of China to the West and the West's growing interest in China, especially in the early twenty-first century (Goldstein 2017), which undoubtedly contributed to increasing concern in the UK about Tibet.

## Types of News Articles

In this study, all types of news articles on Tibet were examined. According to Figure 1, overall, news was always the top reportage category, which accounted for over 71.9% of total articles. Around 12.4% of Tibet stories were letters to the editor and 9% of items were editorials/commentaries. The reportage categories of sport and features followed.

Figure 1 also shows that there were statistically significant differences in the types of news stories between the four research periods ($x^2 = 145.843$, $p < 0.05$). More exactly, news articles of 1950 stood out with the highest proportion of news, constituting 95.8% (within 1950). In 2008, the reportage category of news reached just 57.3% (within 2008). However, the reportage categories of editorial/commentary, letters to the editor, sport and features were more evident in 2008 than in the other research periods.
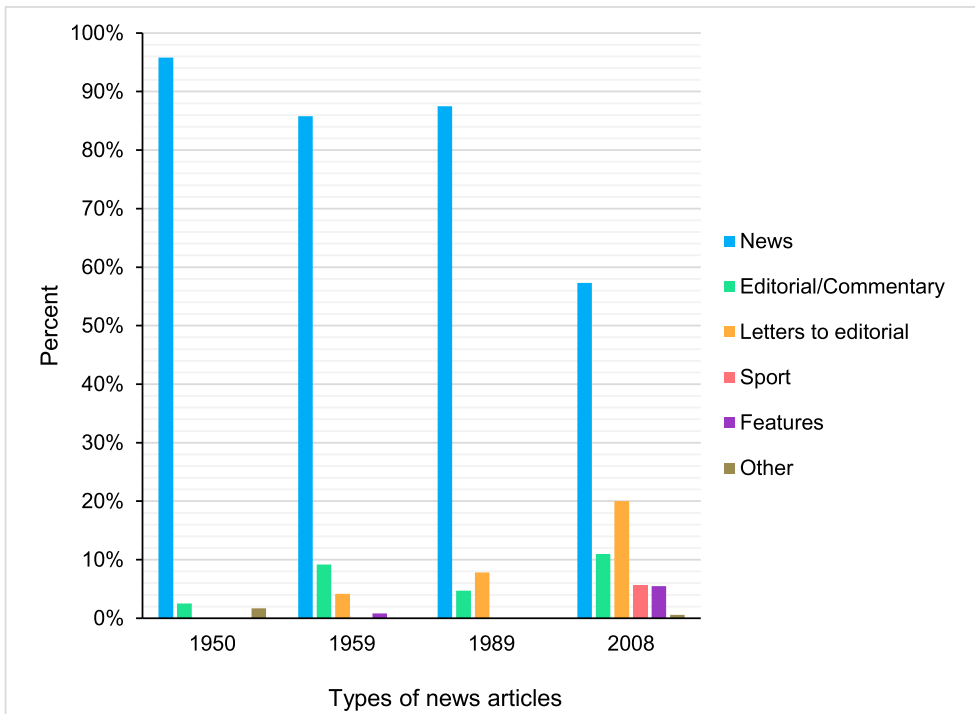


$x^2 = 145.843$; d.f. = 15; p<0.05

**Figure 1.** The number of types of news articles on Tibet from 1949 to 2009. $x^2 = 145.843$; df = 15; $p < 0.05$.

As discussed above, compared to the years of 1950, 1959 and 1989, news coverage of 2008 provided a wider variety of types of news articles on Tibet than in previous news. They gave more "colour" to coverage by formulating their opinions via editorials/commentaries, and they also provided more in-depth coverage of Tibet as well as a certain amount of public engagement through features and letters to the editor. This may be due to the changing nature of the press (e.g., structures, ideology) (Rottwilm 2014). During WWII and for several years afterwards, newsprint rationing contributed to limited page extents of the British press (Griffiths 2006). After the lifting of the restrictions on newsprint in the mid-1950s, the British newspapers were free to revolutionise their format and content in order to attract new readers (Niblock 2008). They increased the number of pages, added and expanded supplements and sections in the newspapers to cover a broader range of topics (Williams 2010). Furthermore, they gradually shrank the size of the newspaper page (Esser 1999), incorporating changes in the size, values and production methods associated with "tabloidization" (Williams 2010). On the other hand, the result reflects that newspapers in 2008 could access more information about Tibet, and thus a wider range of ways to report the Tibet issue. This will be further examined in the next section through discussion of the changes of topics about Tibet between the four research periods from 1949 to 2009.

## Topics

Table 3 shows the number of topics[8] in coverage of Tibet from 1949 to 2009 and demonstrates that there were marked differences across the four research periods. Topics related to India appeared more often in 1950 and 1959 than in the other research periods. This perhaps explained India played quite an important role in Sino-Tibetan relations during the early Cold War period, especially when the Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959. In addition,

**Table 3.** The number of topics in coverage of Tibet from 1949 to 2009.

| Topics | 1950 | 1959 | 1989 | 2008 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| China's advance/control | 29.1% (n = 87) | 0.3% (n = 2) | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.7% (n = 9) |
| India's views | 11.0% (n = 33) | 11.9% (n = 75) | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.2% (n = 3) |
| Tibetans' actions rather than resistances/ protests | 10.4% (n = 31) | 1.3% (n = 8) | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.4% (n = 5) |
| China's views | 7.7% (n = 23) | 4.8% (n = 30) | 11.0% (n = 20) | 3.7% (n = 49) |
| Other policies | 7.0% (n = 21) | 2.2% (n = 14) | 1.6% (n = 3) | 3.9% (n = 51) |
| India's actions | 6.0% (n = 18) | 4.8% (n = 30) | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.0% (n = 0) |
| Other actions | 4.7% (n = 14) | 10.2% (n = 64) | 4.4% (n = 8) | 7.9% (n = 104) |
| Tibetans' views | 4.0% (n = 12) | 0.8% (n = 5) | 2.7% (n = 5) | 0.7% (n = 9) |
| India's policies | 4.0% (n = 12) | 7.9% (n = 50) | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.2% (n = 2) |
| Tibetans' resistances/protests | 4.0% (n = 12) | 13.8% (n = 87) | 22.5% (n = 41) | 12.1% (n = 160) |
| The Dalai Lama's actions/ situation | 4.0% (n = 12) | 14.0% (n = 88) | 2.7% (n = 5) | 0.4% (n = 5) |
| Other | 3.3% (n = 10) | 7.9% (n = 50) | 6.6% (n = 12) | 3.9% (n = 51) |
| UK's views | 2.3% (n = 7) | 1.1% (n = 7) | 0.5% (n = 1) | 5.6% (n = 74) |
| Other views | 1.3% (n = 4) | 6.3% (n = 40) | 7.7% (n = 14) | 6.7% (n = 88) |
| China's policies | 0.7% (n = 2) | 2.1% (n = 13) | 19.8% (n = 36) | 3.3% (n = 44) |
| UK's policies | 0.3% (n = 1) | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.0% (n = 0) | 3.5% (n = 46) |
| China's suppression | 0.0% (n = 0) | 10.6% (n = 67) | 19.8% (n = 36) | 14.1% (n = 186) |
| Olympic (Torch Relay)/Sports | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.0% (n = 0) | 24.3% (n = 321) |
| Human rights | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.5% (n = 1) | 8.8% (n = 116) |
| Total | 100% (n = 299) | 100% (n = 630) | 100% (n = 182) | 100% (n = 1323) |

the topics of "Tibetans' resistances/protests," "China's suppression," "China's views" and "China's policies" were presented in news articles of 1989 more often than those of the other research periods. During the early Cold War, China closed its doors to the West and capitalism in general (Daccache and Valeriano 2012), which led to limited access to information from both Tibet and China. However, from the 1970s, China was opened to the outside world again (Garnaut, Song, and Fang 2018) and Sino-British relations improved (Barnes 2016), which contributed to more opportunities to get information about Tibet as well as more attention to be paid to China. Therefore, the British press could present more topics related to China and "Tibetan's resistances/protests" than previous periods.

Until the post-Cold War period in 2008, they used a greater variety of ways to represent the Tibet issue. The topics of "the Olympics (Torch Relay)/Sports" and "human rights," which appeared frequently in the news articles of 2008, were not at all common across the other three periods. The run-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics generated significant coverage, not just of the Olympics or sports, but of human rights aspects of the Tibet issue amid the attitudes of the rest of the world. Furthermore, the topics related to other countries (especially the UK) were also more evident in the press coverage of 2008. To a certain extent these results reflect that after 1989 the international world was more concerned about the Tibet issue, particularly its human rights aspects, than ever before. Possible reasons for this will be expanded upon later in the sections of the qualitative frame analysis.

## Who Spoke on Tibet?

As shown in Table 4, first, the results indicate that compared to the other research periods, news articles of the early Cold War were more likely to quote authoritative government sources,[9] which were always treated as the most reliable and preferred sources of information.

In addition, they also quoted more unofficial sources which were hearsay but there were less use of the general public as sources (e.g., observers/witnesses/travellers and residents). This might be due to Tibet's distant location and language barriers, and China's constrained political system (China closing its doors to the West and capitalism in general) (Daccache and Valeriano 2012). The British newspapers acquired information about Tibet through limited and sometimes inappropriate sources. However, the opening and internationalisation of Tibet in the 1980s (Wemheuer 2014) and the improved Sino-British relations contributes to more opportunities to obtain information about Tibet. The newspapers could make more use of observers/witnesses/travellers as sources near the end of the Cold War and during the post-Cold War period.

Second, the Dalai Lama/those close to him quite often appeared in the articles of 1989 and 2008, which reflected that the Dalai Lama was considered to be the true representative of Tibet and the Tibetan government-in-exile, and was depicted as playing an increasingly important role in the Tibet issue. This might be because the opening of Tibet was accompanied by international tours by the Dalai Lama, which led to his establishing considerable international prestige. In addition, the award of the Noble Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama in 1989 got widespread coverage in the press, which played a major contribution to the popularity of the Dalai Lama all over the world.

**Table 4.** The number of sources in coverage of Tibet from 1949 to 2009.

| Source | 1950 | 1959 | 1989 | 2008 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Government | | | | |
|   India's government | 24.9% (n = 48) | 24.9% (n = 130) | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.1% (n = 1) |
|   China's government | 9.3% (n = 18) | 7.9% (n = 41) | 21.1% (n = 37) | 12.9% (n = 127) |
|   Tibet's government | 8.3% (n = 16) | 1.5% (n = 8) | 4.6% (n = 8) | 2.1% (n = 21) |
|   US's government | 2.6% (n = 5) | 1.3% (n = 7) | 1.1% (n = 2) | 3.4% (n = 33) |
|   UK's government | 2.6% (n = 5) | 1.0% (n = 5) | 1.1% (n = 2) | 9.2% (n = 91) |
|   Other government | 1.0% (n = 2) | 3.4% (n = 18) | 2.9% (n = 5) | 6.2% (n = 61) |
|   Total | 48.7% (n = 94) | 40.0% (n = 209) | 30.9% (n = 54) | 33.9% (n = 334) |
| Media/journalist | 23.3% (n = 45) | 19.2% (n = 100) | 24.0% (n = 42) | 9.2% (n = 91) |
| Unofficial (unconfirmed) reports/sources/news | 20.7% (n = 40) | 16.9% (n = 88) | 1.1% (n = 2) | 0.2% (n = 2) |
| The general public | | | | |
|   Residents | 2.6% (n = 5) | 2.9% (n = 15) | 9.7% (n = 17) | 4.9% (n = 48) |
|   Demonstrators/campaign ers/protestors/activists | 0.0% (n = 0) | 1.0% (n = 5) | 2.3% (n = 4) | 5.6% (n = 55) |
|   Observers/witnesses/trave llers | 1.6% (n = 3) | 1.0% (n = 5) | 11.4% (n = 20) | 3.2% (n = 31) |
|   The general public other | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.6% (n = 1) | 0.7% (n = 7) |
|   Total | 4.1% (n = 8) | 4.8% (n = 25) | 24.0% (n = 42) | 14.3% (n = 141) |
| Politicians/political groups | | | | |
|   The Dalai Lama/those close to him | 0.0% (n = 0) | 1.9% (n = 10) | 11.4% (n = 20) | 7.0% (n = 69) |
|   Other politicians/political groups | 0.0% (n = 0) | 5.2% (n = 27) | 1.7% (n = 3) | 4.2% (n = 41) |
|   Total | 0.0% (n = 0) | 7.1% (n = 37) | 13.1% (n = 23) | 11.2% (n = 110) |
| Non-governmental organisations | 0.0% (n = 0) | 0.6% (n = 3) | 0.6% (n = 1) | 16.2% (n = 159) |
| Experts | 0.0% (n = 0) | 3.4% (n = 18) | 1.1% (n = 2) | 4.4% (n = 43) |
| Other | 3.1% (n = 6) | 8.0% (n = 42) | 5.1% (n = 9) | 10.6% (n = 104) |
| Total | 100% (n = 193) | 100% (n = 522) | 100% (n = 175) | 100% (n = 984) |

Finally, non-governmental organisations were quoted more frequently in the news articles of 2008 than in the other research periods. This was possible that the internationalisation of Tibet initiated massive pro-Tibet campaigns, which provoked sympathy for the Tibetan people and solidarity with their battle against China's oppression. This would enable Tibet Support Groups, Tibetan communities in exile and other non-governmental organisations to increase both the quality and quantity of media coverage of Tibet, and commit to the hastening of freedom for the oppressed Tibetans.

It is worth noting that during the post-Cold War period, newspapers quoted various information sources (e.g., experts and intergovernmental organisations etc.), which had rarely been quoted in previous news articles. This result implies that the British press was increasingly able to use a diversity of sources and was thus not as likely to rely on information from the authoritative government sources alone.

In conclusion, the content analysis results show that the British newspapers reported the Tibet issue in a different manner between the four research periods from 1949 to 2009. This point of view will be further proved in the next section through examining dominant frames chosen by the press and the influence of the sources (especially external journalistic factors) on the frame-building process across the four research periods. It will provide a deeper context and background for changes in the representation of Tibet in the British press between 1949 and 2009.

## Changes in Frames: 1949–2009

The analysis shows that there were obvious differences in the dominant frames in news articles on Tibet across the four time periods.

### Frame 1: China is the Invader/Oppressor of Tibet: The Red Menace or Not?

China's presence in Tibet was treated as an invasion and oppression, and, in this, there were some differences in the representations of China in the British press from 1949 to 2009. When the Cold War was raging in the 1950s, the news coverage principally displayed China using the ideological labels such as "Communist China," "Communists," "Reds" and "Red China." For instance, the *Daily Mail* commented "That remote, mysterious land has been invaded by the Chinese Communists. [...] For at least a year the Chinese have been preparing to attack Tibet. The deed was done with typical Red brutality" ("Red light in Tibet," October 31, 1950). The *Daily Mail* also demonstrated "Now we have seen the Dalai Lama of Tibet on the run from the Red Chinese terror" ("Mao's great blunder," April 3, 1959). That is to say, most of the British press portrayed China as the Red Menace, which represented China as both a domestic and an international threat. An important factor to be considered was China's membership in the Communist Camp in 1949, which caused renewed fear of the spread of Communism. "Red" China was treated as an ally of the Soviet Union and as a threat to Western countries. Rooted in an opposing ideology and social system, the British press were accustomed to portraying China as a nation that refuted the values and principles that constitute the British way of life. This echoes Herman and Chomsky's (1988, 29) argument that, "opposition to Communism" is the "first principle of Western ideology and politics," thus, anti-Communism became a control mechanism in British newsroom. Accordingly, the fear of a possible Communist expansion out of China resulted in an abundance of metaphors presenting Communism as a disease by the British press (Herman and Chomsky 1988), so China was clearly interpreted within the Cold War frame (Knüsel 2012). The Red Menace was used by the press as a frame to portray Communist China. Furthermore, the Tibet issue was generally perceived by the West as a classic case in which the "evil of Communism" was most dramatically demonstrated: Asia's most powerful military force invading a peaceful and powerless place; the godless Communists conquering the God-fearing people; and a classic case of David versus Goliath (Norbu 2001). Thus, the Tibet issue was deployed as part of the global policy of containment of Communist expansion and consequent counter-Communist crusade (Norbu 2001). On the other hand, certain romantic and pathetic images of Tibet, especially those of 1950 (takeover) and 1959 (the revolt and the Dalai Lama's escape) caught the public imagination, feeding on and reinforcing the prevailing counter-Communism ideal in British society (Norbu 2001).

In contrast, near the end of the Cold War in 1989, the British newspapers no longer portrayed China as the Red Menace, although they continued to treat China as the oppressor. As *The Daily Telegraph* noted, the Tibetans "have been ruthlessly put down" ("China found wanting," March 8, 1989). *The Guardian* indicated that "Events in Tibet have served to expose the Achilles heel of modern China: Its inability to recognise and respect ethnic difference within its own borders" (Jacques 2008). As we review Sino-British relations in the historical perspective, this might be due to several important factors. The UK had showed its intention for a more US-independent foreign policy in the 1970s (Eisel 2007). As Clayton (1997) indicates, in the early Cold War, the UK realised that it was the junior partner in the Anglo-American relationship. Under intense pressure from the US, especially after the Chinese involvement in the Korean War in 1950, and the resulting anti-Communist China policy of the US and the whole Western Camp, the UK proceeded

cautiously (Kaufman 2001). However, the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1960s and the 1972 Nixon visit to China released Britain from the anti-China pressure in the Western Camp as well as making an official re-approach in the political field possible (Eisel 2007). Subsequently, Sino-British relations were raised from chargé d'affaires to ambassadorial level (Barnes 2016), and the friendship flourished. Against this background, near the end of the Cold War, the UK probably saw some favourable global and regional developments that might have encouraged a reduction in "the tensions and suspicions that had originally compelled the Communist armed intervention and direct political action in Tibet" (Norbu 2001, 9).

## Frame 2: The Tibetan people: From "Victims" to Active Resisters?

In terms of the representations of the Tibetan people in the British press over the period of fifty years, they were initially portrayed in 1950 as treating the Chinese as the "invaders" rather than as permitting and accepting China's presence. The press showed that the peaceful life of Tibetans had been shattered by the Chinese military entry into Tibet, and they were the victims of China's occupation. As the *Daily Mail* observed that "Now it is the turn of peaceful, inoffensive Tibet. […] The Tibetans were happy in their isolation. They wanted nothing of the outside world. They wished to be alone" ("Red light in Tibet," October 31, 1950). Moreover, they were also framed as the victims of Communist China's oppression in 1959. For instance, in *The Daily Telegraph*'s commentary:

> The Chinese will find it exceedingly difficult to restore order with a few swift, decisive massacres, as did the Russians in Hungary. […] One of the unhappy analogies between Hungary and Tibet is that indignation and impotence are equally great. […] The rape of Tibet has clearly sown a formidable crop of doubts in Asia about Chinese aims. ("Blood on the world's roof," April 4, 1959)

Comparisons were made between the powerless Tibetans and the powerful Chinese in order to emphasise that the Chinese presence should not be accepted. Near the end of the Cold War and in the post-Cold War period, the papers indicated, on the one hand, that Tibetans were the subjects of the Han Chinese conquerors. On the other hand, news coverage showed that the Tibetan people engaged in active resistance when confronting China's oppression. As *The Guardian* described, "the often foolhardy bravery of the Tibetans in challenging the armed might of the world's most populous nation evokes awe and respect" ("China's hold on the halls," March 8, 1989). They were depicted as actively fighting against the military giant for their independence.

Second, there were far fewer accounts of the Dalai Lama in 1950. Even though he was already a political leader, he was only presented as a spiritual leader in the news articles. For example, the *News Chronicle* depicted the Dalai Lama as "The Holy One, Mighty in Speech, Excellent of Knowledge, Absolute in Wisdom, Powerful Ruler, the One Without Equal" (Cliff 1950). However, the Dalai Lama received more attention in 1959, and was treated by the newspapers both as a spiritual and political leader. As the *Daily Mail* quoted Austrian author Heinrich Harrer's description that:

> […] even in youth the Dalai Lama was a strong character. He was far more intelligent than anybody around him at the court. […] In youth he gave signs of strong leadership. He was always very considerate and very clever. […] In Southern Tibet not one person will betray him in the whole country except the small group around the Panchen Lama. […] but

among the ordinary people he is worshipped by every single soul. ("'No fears,' says the God-King's friend," April 2, 1959)

In 1989 and 2008, the Dalai Lama was comparatively more visible in the news coverage. The British press continued portraying the Dalai Lama as the "God-King" and the supreme spiritual leader of Tibetans. It also further strengthened his image as the political leader of the Tibetan people and head of the Tibetan government-in-exile. His declarations had been frequently quoted in the press as being the voice of Tibetans. His claims about the situation in Tibet were convincing due to his special status and influence. This might be explained by the Dalai Lama's influential international role and activity, which increasingly drew the Western media's attention (especially the US and the UK) since the 1980s. His excellent rapport with the media, his timely assessments of to the post-industrial society, his West-friendly role, and above all, his personal charm had endeared himself to people in the West (Norbu 2001).

In terms of the Dalai Lama's reactions to China's presence in Tibet, during the early Cold War period, his seeming lack of reaction and his situation as a hunted fugitive were treated as strong evidence to support the British newspapers' view that the Chinese were invaders/oppressors and Tibetans were the victims. In addition, near the end of the Cold War in 1989, the press reported the Dalai Lama's opinion that Chinese rule in Tibet had been oppressive and destructive of Tibetan civilisation, and he had always advocated that China should find a peaceful solution to the Lhasa protests. For instance, the Dalai Lama was quoted in *The Daily Telegraph* as saying that "The Chinese have lost control over the situation in Tibet, and should realise that force and repression cannot solve the issue" (Luard 1989a). In contrast, during the post-Cold War period in 2008, on the one hand, he was presented as caring for the suffering Tibetans and criticising the Chinese violent oppression. On the other hand, the press showed that instead of outright independence, the Dalai Lama only wanted autonomy for Tibet within China. As *The Independent* quoted the Dalai Lama's statement that "The whole world knows the Dalai Lama is not seeking independence, one hundred times, a thousand times I have repeated this. It is my mantra—we are not seeking independence" (Buncombe 2008).

Lastly, regarding the representation of the international world's views on the Tibet issue, India was presented as the main country to express her concern and opposition to China's military occupation of Tibet in 1950. In 1959, the newspapers started to use opinions from more countries to judge China's presence thereby strengthening the "victim" image of the Tibetan people. As the *Daily Mail* noted, "The world looks at these events with pity and horror, To Asia, with its mysticism and sense of reverence, the rape of holy Tibet has been a profound shock" ("Mao's great blunder," April 3, 1959). Until the post-Cold War period, the British press used sources not only from various countries, but also from diverse non-governmental organisations (e.g., Tibet Support Groups and human rights NGOs), which expressed concern about China's violation of human rights in Tibet. For instance, *The Independent* quoted the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy's (TCHRD) statement of their "deepest fear that monks face extreme inhuman treatment in Chinese detention centres. Torture is a regular exercise in Chinese-administered prisons and detention centres in Tibet" (Morris and Buncombe 2008). This could be as a result of an increasing number of NGOs having been established in the 1980s in order to raise awareness of the Tibet issue around the world (Neuhaus

2012). The British press were likely to use the reports of these NGOs to create awareness on specific aspects of the Tibet issue.

### Frame 3: The Human Rights Frame: From Absence to Presence

In the early Cold War, although the British press started to use words such as "inhuman" and "freedom" in the newspaper headlines, they actually did not mention "human rights" formally in the news articles. For example, in the news content, the *Daily Mail* observed that "The flame of freedom still flickers on the Roof of the World, kept alight by unparalleled sacrifice" (Saxon 1959). Since 1989 (near the end of the Cold War), they largely projected the human rights aspects of the Tibet issue, and successfully transformed the issue from one of cultural interest into a political issue. As the *Daily Telegraph* pointed out that "Western allegations of Chinese human rights violations in Tibet have also contrasted sharply with articles in the Soviet media strongly supporting Peking's policies in the troubled Himalayan region" (Luard 1989b). The *Daily Mirror* also indicated, "China's appalling human rights record, beating and jailing dissenters or—as we have seen in Tibet— killing opponents, deserved the condemnation of yesterday's demonstrators" ("A Flaming Injustice," April 7, 2008). This change might be explained by: first, the opening of Tibet to the outside world in the 1980s after China began to open up to Western business interests, and also to Western travellers in 1978 (Garnaut, Song, and Fang 2018). The Dalai Lama also played an important role in internationalising the Tibet issue. In 1987, the first major initiative to internationalise the Tibet issue was launched when the Dalai Lama announced the famous *Five-Point Peace Plan* in an address to the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus (Han 2013). He made it known to the world that the Chinese refusal to negotiate forced him to appeal to the international community for their support. It was accompanied by more international tours by the Dalai Lama and activities by the Tibetan community, which contributed to additional international attention (especially of the Western nations), sympathy and support for the Tibet cause. In addition, the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama in December 1989 internationalised the Tibet issue almost overnight (Hao 2016). His reception in Washington in 1991 was followed by meetings for the first time with many government officials, including heads of government and heads of state in several countries, including a reception held by the British Prime Minister on 2 December 1991 (Smith 2019). Consequently, in August 1991 the Tibet issue was brought before the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

Second, in the 1980s, Tibetans in exile altered their action and sought support from international grassroots associations, such as Tibet Support Groups and human rights NGOs, in an attempt to relay their rights-oriented demands in the international sphere (Bob 2005). The efforts of these international organisations could be seen as one of the significant factors that contributed to the increase of the international awareness of Tibet's demands for human rights, and cultural and religious freedom.

Third, the Dalai Lama and his Tibetan supporters promoted internationalisation of the Tibet issue at an opportune time. In the late 1980s, popular political culture in the West was rapidly changing. Moral issues such as human rights, environment, ecology and the rights of indigenous people replaced the ideological confrontation politics (Shakya 2000). Thus, the human rights aspects of the Tibet issue suited the Western audience as

the policy position shifted with the end of the Cold War from big strategic questions to panhuman concerns (Norbu 2001).

Lastly, from the Chinese perspective, the Chinese government enforced martial law in Tibet in March 1989. Meanwhile, in the middle of the same year, the crackdown on the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy demonstrations destroyed the trust and support that the new modernising China had attracted in the West (Eisel 2007). Although Sino-British relations had improved in 1989, the Tiananmen incident changed the focus of the Britain's China policy, and triggered international outrage and brought home the truth of the Tibetan tragedy to the West (Norbu 2001). In addition, China rose to prominence along with its rapid economic development in the early twenty-first century (Chow 2015). The above factors may provide reasons why the UK was increasingly focus on human rights in Tibet.

International governments focused on the human rights aspects of the Tibet issue and presented support for the Tibetan position on the political status of Tibet. The British newspapers used the human rights frame rather than the Cold War frame when they reported the Tibet issue during the post-Cold War period. The news content represented China's violations of fundamental rights, and the suppression of cultural and religious freedoms and rights to self-determination of the Tibetan people.

All the results above indicate that media frames are not equal to news topics or news features, and that they evolve over time. They are constructed by the "evidence," which comes from wider but more complicated social conditions that have impact on the media in relation to their selection of words and expressions. The British media played the role of maintainers of the hegemony of a dominant political ideology, especially during the Cold War period. They not only reflected but also strengthened the prevailing political position. Hence, the media frames usually changed to adapt to the ongoing development of the world. We can also find that media frames are different from "bias." They go beyond the concepts of pro or con, favourable or unfavourable, negative or positive, but more or less reflect the dominant ideology in the news in different historical eras, and offer news perceptions and influential viewpoints for media professionals and the influence on them from their environment. In other words, how journalists choose stories is not a simple and one-way selection. The frame-building process not only reflects news frames as tools used by journalists to construct reality, but also explains which potential factors influence this process.

## Conclusion

The present study is primarily empirical rather than theoretical, as it seeks to identify frames in detail. It presents a solid study of framing of the Tibet-China conflict in the UK media. The application of diverse newspapers through a temporal comparison allows us to make more convincing evidence about influences on international news framing than many previous studies (e.g., Su 2004; Xie 2008; Huang and Fahmy 2011), which are often forced to rely on small samples of newspapers or lack of historical analysis. Specifically, these studies may not be able to present clear relationships between media frames and certain factors influencing media representations. The current research also demonstrates how quantitative content analysis and qualitative frame analysis were combined

to explore dominant frames, which can build upon and complement journalistic framing studies.

This study is meaningful in many ways. It provides a more thorough understanding of the socio-political influences on news construction so as to remedy the deficiencies of the tradition of framing research. It contributes to literature on international news framing by providing some evidence for the changing politics of frame-building, which occurs when external and internal journalistic factors influence how journalists interpret and present international affairs to their readers. It makes a valuable contribution to journalistic framing practices by demonstrating that it is possible to use historical examination to understand the potential factors influencing the development of media frames and other behaviours of interest within communication. The U.K. press's coverage of the Tibet-China conflict in the past fifty years proves to be a case in point here. It has showed how media frames changed over time, and how the dominant ideology emerged in frames used across four research periods from 1949 to 2009. The period of fifty years was divided into the early Cold War, near the end of the Cold War and the post-Cold War periods, which were adopted for interpreting changes in frames of the Tibet issue and China. As discussed above, compared to the time of the Cold War, the British press of the post-Cold War period used a completely different way to frame the Tibet issue. The year of 1989, which was near the end of the Cold War period, can be treated as a watershed. This study finds that during the Cold War period the coverage reflected the ideology of anti-Communism and during the post-Cold War period, it presented China as a human rights violator in Tibet. The changes of frames the British press used when they covered Tibet might reflect to a certain extent the external reality of the Cold War, the constantly changing international relations (e.g., Sino-Soviet, Sino-British and Sino-Indian), and other external journalism factors (e.g., the internationalisation of the Tibet issue). Accordingly, they were an outcome of various external and internal journalistic factors. The results of the current study add to the limited knowledge regarding news media framing strategies in the context of international affairs. Discussing the evolving frames offers us an opportunity to reconsider about journalistic framing practice historically. Such discussion can clarify relationships between media frames and certain factors influencing news content. This also poses challenges for journalists and media as how to present the world to the public with more accuracy and context, but less political and ideological biases. It aims to pave the road for future studies on the similar issue.

## Notes

1. In this study, China refers to the People's Republic of China (PRC), which was founded in 1949.
2. Dominant ideology refers to the ideas, attitudes, values, beliefs, and culture of the ruling class in a society. It also indicates political ideology is embedded in a culture's "common sense," in the everyday habits of thought that shape how people think and act as they engage in their routine activities.
3. It was renamed *The Guardian* on 24 August 1959.
4. Relaunched as *The Sun* in 1964.
5. Named *Daily Graphic* 1946–1952. In 1953, it was renamed *Daily Sketch*. In 1971, it was closed and merged with the *Daily Mail*.
6. *News Chronicle* ceased publication on 17 October 1960, being absorbed into the *Daily Mail*.

7.  The newspapers which did not pay much attention to the Tibet issue were excluded in this research (e.g. *Financial Times* and *Daily Star*).
8.  The category of topics is based on multiple-response variables (Topic1, Topic 2 and Topic 3 have been combined into a set).
9.  The category of sources is based on multiple-response variables (Source 1, Source 2, Source 3 and Source 4 have been combined into a set).

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