

## Metaphorical Mirrors of the West: China in the British Economic Press

Minyao Tang<sup>1</sup>

Fechas: Recibido 6 de marzo de 2017 / Aceptado 5 de mayo de 2017

**Abstract.** Metaphors are key to constructing mnemonic bridges to mediations of the past. This paper will explore this process using the metaphorical representations of China in the British economic press in the contemporary era and assess the extent to which this coverage is based upon older stereotypes of China. The power of stereotypical metaphors of China lies in the adept utilization and application of our shared understanding and nationally specific imaginations of China. Metaphors conceptualizing China as a prototypical exemplification of the Western concept of the Other are systematically associated with ideological justifications for national imaginations and memories of China in British media.

**Keywords:** metaphor; economic journalism; China; stereotype; ideology; Orientalism.

### [es] Espejos Metafóricos de Occidente: China en la Prensa Económica Británica

**Resumen.** Las metáforas son claves para construir puentes mnemónicos con las mediaciones del pasado. Este artículo explorará este proceso usando las representaciones metafóricas de China en la prensa económica británica en la era contemporánea y evaluará en qué medida esta cobertura se basa sobre los estereotipos más antiguos de China. El poder de las metáforas estereotipadas de China radica en la utilización y aplicación de nuestro entendimiento compartido y de la imaginación nacionalmente específica de China. Las metáforas que conceptualizan a China como una ejemplificación prototipo del concepto occidental del Otro se asocian sistemáticamente con justificaciones ideológicas para los recuerdos y los imaginarios nacionales de China en los medios británicos.

**Palabras clave:** metáfora; Periodismo económico; China; estereotipo; ideología; orientalismo.

**Sumario:** 1. Introduction. 2. China and Orientalism. 3. Metaphor as Analytical Tool. 4. Metaphors in Economics and Economic News. 5. Methodology. 5.1. Methodological Framework. 5.2 Military metaphor. 5.3 Physical Force Metaphor. 5.4 Bestial Metaphor. 6. Conclusion. 7. References. 8. Appendix: Corpus Data

**Cómo citar:** Tang, M. (2017). Metaphorical Mirrors of the West: China in the British Economic Press, en *Historia y comunicación social* 22.2, 397-413.

<sup>1</sup> University of Sheffield, UK  
mtang5@sheffield.ac.uk

## 1. Introduction

Metaphors are key to constructing mnemonic bridges to mediations of the past, not only as an ornamental addition but also as cognitive devices, structuring our shared memories of the national past and playing an important role in sense-making and persuasion. Metaphors are therefore situated in the most general processes of human interaction with historical reality. This article takes as its case study the metaphorical representations of China in British economic news in the contemporary era and assesses the extent to which this coverage is based upon older stereotypes of China. The power of stereotypical, orientalist metaphors of China underpins the adept utilization and application of British understanding and imagining of China. Metaphors conceptualizing China as a prototypical exemplification of more general Western concept of the Other are systematically associated with ideological justifications for China's national memories in media texts.

Current global recessionary trends have accelerated significant structural changes in the Chinese economy. China's answer to the global crisis, supported by increasing state intervention, brought into relief China's economic situation. China has increasingly become a major player in global economic landscape and is able to act as a potential vanguard in leading the capitalist enterprise out of the recession. China's economic ascendancy has generated a lot of attention in British media. With the upsurge of Chinese nationalism boosted by economic growth, especially after the 2008 financial crisis, understanding of China in news discourse has shifted from an exclusive "otherness" to a proximity to the cultural logic of Western ideologies.

By using metaphor as an analytical tool, this research intends to examine whether contemporary forms of knowledge production on China represent the contemporary face of Orientalism defined as, "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, the Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" (Said, 1978: 3). Through an analysis of contemporary accounts of China in British economic news discourse, this research explores the connections between conventional Orientalist frames and China's rising economic power. In particular, this research analyzes how Orientalist cultural knowledge about China is (re)constructed through metaphors within economic news discourse.

## 2. China and Orientalism

"Confucianism" have long been understood as the dominant Orientalist template for understanding China, often interpreted as an Oriental counterpart to Christianity to build and substantiate the differences between the Western "self" and the imagined, Oriental "other" (Dirlik, 1994). While "Confucianism" may be seen as the dominant Orientalist trope through which Chinese culture has been (re)constructed in the Western imagination (Hung, 2003), Oriental values were shaped by the social and political context through various historical periods. The understanding of Confucius and China shifted from "naive idealization" in the sixteenth century to praise as "patron saint of the Enlightenment" in the seventeenth century (Hung, 2003: 255). However, in the eighteenth century a much more Sinophobic "racist turn" (Hung, 2003: 268) emerged

in Orientalist understanding of China with Europe's imperial expansion. Hegel, for instance, categorized the Chinese as "peoples without history", as "highly tasteless prescriptions for cult and manners" (Hegel, 1956: 252).

The world landscape has become much more complex in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The emergence of East Asia as the most dynamic center of growth in the global economy has led to an apparent accord of capitalism with Confucian values, which is "a reversal of a long-standing conviction (in Europe and East Asia) that Confucianism was historically an obstacle to capitalism" (Dirlik, 1994: 350). Yet while the particular Orientalist stereotypes used to describe China have been transformed through different historical periods, the cultural reductionism central to the Orientalist frame has remained static. Furthermore, although the dynamics of the world landscape have influenced how the "Other" was imagined over time, the Hegelian idea that China's development was unhistorical persists in constructing the basis of contemporary sinological understandings of China (Hung, 2003).

The approach of this paper is drawn from frames developed by both Edward Said (1978) and Daniel Vukovich (2012). Said (1978) argues that the Orient is "almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (p.1) and Orient is an external process of defining and redefining an Oriental "other" through the production of knowledge and representation relating to its culture, politics and ideology, from the point of view of the West. Orientalism is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (p.3). Vukovich's approach diverges from Said as he situated his focus on China instead of the Middle East and South Asia. Vukovich (2012) claims that the process of "Othering" which Said attributes to Western representations of the "Orient" cannot be considered as the primary principle of the representation of China in modern Chinese Studies in the West. Vukovich (2012) argues that China is characterized not only as "Other", but as "becoming-the-same". The West takes sides and decides who is "Our Chinese" and who is the Oriental Other; who will guide China to join modern "normality," and who will drag it back to the past. This ideological analysis intends to identify how Vukovich's cultural logic of Orientalist discourse works fundamentally to contrast Chinese with Western and "to validate the universal truth of liberalism and Western forms of governance" (Vukovich, 2012: 144).

### 3. Metaphor as Analytical Tool

#### *Theoretical Framework: Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)*

Cognitive linguists tend to understand metaphor as a basis for human concept creation and human reasoning. Instead of considering that metaphor is located in a non-figurative language system that consists of signs, symbols and linguistic conventions, Gibbs and Steen (1997) point out that the "home base" for metaphor is our everyday conceptual system. Metaphor is able to "ground our conceptual systems experientially and to reason in a constrained but creative fashion" (Johnson, 1992: 351). Metaphor also acts as concentrated argument and is "linked to corresponding modes of reasoning" (Fahnestock, 2002: 24). By proposing that metaphors exist as

part of the human reasoning process rather than solely as adornments to language, it is feasible to identify the nature of metaphor that is based upon understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Accordingly, metaphor serves as an interpretative strategy, culturally and socially shared in a group to the extent that it is able to be utilized to offer a concrete, simple, and intelligible explanation of something with a higher degree of complexity (Fahnestock, 2002). For this reason, we may best understand that each metaphor has a source domain and a target domain. Our knowledge about the source conceptual domain is used to reason out the target conceptual domain.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) claims that “abstract thought is only possible through the use of metaphor” (Goatly, 2007: 14). Kövecses (2002) identifies target domains as “abstract, diffuse and lack[ing] clear delineation” and “as a result they cry ‘out’ for metaphorical conceptualization” (2002: 20). Evans and Green (2006) describe source domains as tending to be more tangible and comprehensible due to the difficulty in transmitting their abstract aspects. As a result, the target domains can only be comprehensively understood through the use of metaphorical linguistic expressions tied to the source domains. The ontological correspondences between the entities, attributes, and processes in target and source domains are conceived of as mappings across conceptual domains. Ontology refers to a particular system of categories accounting for a certain vision of the world (Gruber, 1993) and can be used as a tool to categorize concepts, and thus conceptual metaphor mappings can be systemized based on ontology. This ontological mapping indicates the process of lexicalization from source domain, which is typically that of a context of common somatic action, to a target domain which is in a less epistemologically and pragmatically fundamental context (Crisp, 2001).

While being the manifestation of a cross-domain mapping, metaphorical expressions allow us to explore the cognitive model of an interpretation of reality. On a micro level, the conceptual metaphor consists of a psychological reality and thus partly structures an individual’s bodily action and his/her interpretation toward this ongoing action (Gibbs, 1994). On a macro level, metaphor is ubiquitous (Paprotté and Driven, 1985) since metaphor can be understood as being fundamental to language, thought and human experience and is able to conceptualize all three as an omnipresent part of both common language and ordinary cognition, constructing social and cultural reality (Kövecses, 2002).

A fundamental aspect of metaphor is ideology (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003). As stated by Van Dijk (1998), ideologies are “clusters of belief in our minds” (p.26), and “such beliefs are general, that is abstract and context-independent, as well as socially shared” (p.32). Purvis and Hunt (1993) relate ideology to human experience. They highlight the importance of media as a social institution in penetrating belief systems, which grants them significant influence over how individuals perceive the world. This links to the theory of audience design (Bell, 1991), pointing out that the press contributes to the creation and maintenance of ideologies that fit its agendas by adapting communication behavior to their audience. Metaphors, as an analytical tool of news, are able to articulate the ideologies and conceptualize the power of the press.

One of the ways ideology is manifested in metaphor is through ontology. Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) concept of ontological metaphor points out that ideology is made manifest in metaphor through entailments, or linked secondary concepts that

accompany metaphors. For instance, in business news discourse, people apply basic knowledge about war to reason out business when interpreting business in terms of war. Males playing the dominant role in war entails the same role of males in the business world. The war metaphor thus subtly intensifies gender bias against women and see them as the “Other” in the business field. Koller (2004) points out that there is a tight connection between the use of the war metaphor and the readership of business magazines, 90% of whom are males. This complementary use of war metaphor “strengthens the individual’s sense of maleness [...] and a predominantly male culture” (Wilson 1992: 898). The power of metaphor lies in its construction of similarities and with this power, people can understand social reality in line with their ideologies.

As “society is pervaded by media language”, news axiomatically influences much of our lives (Bell, 1991: 1). Much of the knowledge we have about the world comes from the news. News in the press, on television and on the internet is the dominant discursive practice, besides everyday conversation, and “is engaged in so frequently and by so many people” (van Dijk, 1991: 110). As a consequence of the ubiquity of news, it plays an essential role in shaping public opinion. Metaphors are not just expressions of how journalists interpret reality, they also play an essential role “in creating the reality in which they are used- and they affect the actors’ perceptions of this reality and the way they act in it” (Gravengaard, 2011: 1068).

Additionally, metaphor is a powerful analytical tool as it has the ability to highlight some aspects of a concept while at the same time hiding others (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 10), generating tenuously persuasive messages fulfilling ideological purposes in the news (Charteris-Black, 2004). Metaphorical language in news texts has been studied widely with the aim of revealing ideologies and persuasive effects in immigrant discourse (e.g. Santa Ana, 1999), in political discourse (e.g. Chiang and Duann, 2007; Mulsolff, 2004; Musolff, 2006), in economic and business discourse (e.g. Alejo, 2010; Charteris-Black, 2004; Koller, 2004), in sports reporting (e.g. Charteris-Black, 2004) and in the study of journalism itself (e.g. Conboy and Tang, 2016; Vos, 2011).

#### **4. Metaphors in Economics and Economic News**

The choice of media is of particular interest as financial journalism is often viewed as more quantitative, more scientific than other more general forms of news and therefore the presence of metaphors will inform us not only about the primary research questions but also the place of metaphor in professionalized discourse on the global economy.

The use of metaphor in an abstract discipline like economics may be as prevalent as it is necessary since metaphor is “the main mechanism through which we comprehend abstract concepts and perform abstract reasoning” (Lakoff, 1993: 244). Economy, being an abstract entity, relies heavily on metaphors to make economic facts and processes easier to grasp, at least for a specific audience with a need to understand economic information (Richardt, 2003). One of the main reasons is that metaphor can be utilized to ease the complexity in the process of economic reasoning as “each step in economic reasoning, even in the reasoning of the official rhetoric,

is metaphoric” (McCloskey, 1998: 40). In economics, we can find entrenched metaphors (e.g. “growth”) that are evident in its most conventionalized language. This is valuable in studying conceptual metaphoric choices from a cognitive perspective. The use of conceptual metaphors in mainstream economics facilitates the process of objectification of economic activities in order to achieve the goal of economics that is to be considered as a concrete discipline at the same level as the rest of the natural sciences (Alejo, 2009).

Much research into popular economic discourse has been concerned to identify the conceptual metaphors used in the genre, and has started from the linguistic analysis of texts, often using a corpus linguistic methodology. However, although much attention has been given to the presence and use of metaphor in economic discourse in general, and periodical articles such as economic news reporting in particular, demonstrating a pervasive role in creating and communicating knowledge in the economic press, few studies focus on the ideological use of metaphor, especially the ideologically-based choice of particular metaphors in economic press. This ideological role is particularly relevant in journalism given the underlying ideology of journalistic discourse. As Richardt (2003) points out, “[...] economic journalism does not only serve the purpose of informing about ongoing economic processes but also that of selling a particular world view [...] thus serving as a means of manipulation” (p. 281). Accordingly, this research intends to fill this research gap by exploring how metaphor is applied in economic news discourse towards ideological ends in reporting economic events relating to China.

## 5. Methodology

*The Economist* and the *Financial Times* were chosen as the research focus. The news articles in the *Financial Times* chosen for analysis were taken from the LexisNexis UK online database, and the news articles in *The Economist* were extracted from the digital archive for print editions on [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com). Articles relating to China were found by searching the keyword “China” and refined with a date search. The sampling period was from the outbreak of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis in August 09, 2008 to March 31, 2015.

This corpus-based study aims at answering the following research questions:

1. How did *The Economist* and the *Financial Times* construct metaphoric representations of China during and after the 2008 financial crisis?
2. Does the metaphoric representation or part of it include any Orientalist framings of China? Do any metaphoric representations fit into Said’s conventional orientalist frames? Do any metaphoric representations fit into Vukovich’s “becoming-the-same” Orientalist frames? How do these frames conceptualize China’s image?

### 5.1 Methodological Framework

Metaphors were identified using Charteris-Black’s (2004) Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) method. News articles in the corpus were evaluated to determine “the

presence of incongruity or semantic tension – either at linguistic, pragmatic or cognitive levels – resulting from a shift in domain use” (Charteris-Black, 2004: 35). This approach includes three stages: metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation, metaphor explanation.

Metaphor Identification involves identifying the presence of metaphors in a text and exploring a relation between a literal source domain and a metaphoric target domain (Charteris-Black, 2004). Originally, metaphor identification requires a close reading of a pre-selected sample of texts to identify candidate metaphors and their keywords. However, in this particular research, selective sample reading and keywords-based searching cannot comprehensively delineate the overall metaphoric mapping although automatic keyword searching is able to accelerate the process of identifying the presence and frequency of metaphors in a large corpus. Therefore, a comprehensive sample reading and coding were adopted in order to achieve accuracy and integrity. All news articles relating to China were analyzed individually and metaphors were coded manually. This coding process produced a set of metaphor keywords whose contextual meaning was analyzed in order to determine whether it was used metaphorically. The total of metaphors associated with China was 6,742. In addition, all the metaphor keywords were labeled and grouped into lists according to their thematic meanings. Thematic groupings were quantified (See Table 1). The top five of the total 16 groupings were: governmental economic policy and practice; economic issues; international (regional) relations; social issues; political issues.

After linguistic metaphors were identified, conceptual metaphors were explored by grouping linguistic metaphors into lists according to the meanings of their source domains. An inductive categorization of metaphors that have been gathered in the stage of interpretation was performed based on the framework of CMT at this stage. Groups of underlying conceptual metaphor categories were quantified (see Table 2). The top five of the total 75 groupings were: military; physical force; bestial; water; journey.

The last stage, metaphor explanation, involves identifying the discourse function of metaphors that permits us to uncover the implicit textual content and the ideological motivation of the textual choices. Discourse should be analyzed within its sociocultural context rather than textual content and patterns alone (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Therefore, metaphoric patterning and frames, as representations of conscious textual choices, should be interpreted as “a complex set of discursive strategies” that is situated in a special context (Fürsich, 2009: 240). In order to examine metaphor’s discourse function, salient groupings of conceptual metaphors have been discussed based on their sociocultural contexts. Conceptual metaphors with orientalist implications were analyzed based on an Orientalist framework in comparison with metaphors that convey an impartial or positive image of China.

## 5.2 Military metaphor

...the PBoC made five times as many tweaks to bank rates as it did during the 12 months before, when it raised the RRR nine times...qualitative measures are a *heavy-duty weapon*.  
Internet finance in China: *Foe or frenemy?*

The top three themes that military metaphors address are governmental economic practices and policies, foreign business operating in China and international relations. Conceptual metaphors MARKET AS BATTLEFIELD and BUSINESS AS WAR are crucial for describing most economic activities. China's governmental economic practices in this context are perceived and conceptualized in terms of warfare. The concept of "war" acts as a powerful metaphor, heightening the intensity with which the Chinese government mobilizes its efforts to create, exploit, or retain economic opulence. Military strategies are applied to reason out economic practices. For instance, qualitative measures can be seen as "a heavy-duty weapon"; strategic relations (e.g. "foe or frenemy") can be unstable or uncertain.

*A clumsy public battle* with Google could have all sorts of unpredictable consequences.

The Chinese government's harsh treatment of Google and other internet groups over the past six months has deterred Yahoo from attempting to *conquer* this market on its own...

The investment climate for foreign businesses operating in China is also militarized. Commonly we see the market as a battlefield because business competition is conceptualized in terms of fierce fighting between organizations. The concept of China as a battlefield where international businesses fight for opportunities has become widely associated with the increasing importance of China in the global economy. China's metaphorical depiction as a global market battlefield is reified by the dramatic shift in its growing economic power. However, military metaphors describing how foreign businesses perform in China mainly highlight China's less liberal political and economic system. For instance, because of China's tight internet control, Google was involved in "a clumsy public battle" and Yahoo had to "conquer this market on its own". This group of metaphors indicates that China's market is challenging for foreign businesses because of the existence of Socialist ideology and Communist heritage. Moreover, China's investment environment somehow instantiates strangeness and these images are reinforced by its exotic, Oriental quality.

From the outside, the *battlelines in the renminbi wars* look quite simple: the US on one side, threatening the heavy ordnance of currency legislation unless the exchange rate is liberalised; China on the other, threatening unspecified *carnage if the artillery is fired*.

There is a *ticking time bomb* under the dollar. When it explodes depends not just on the US economy but also on policy actions in Beijing and Washington.

China's trade allies in US *losing fight with hawks*.

In spite of India's growing thirst for energy, it has been lagging behind China in the *battle* to secure energy resources.

Economic power plays an important role in determining whether a country is conceived as powerful or weak. For instance, in the renminbi wars with the US, China can be considered on an equal-footing, a masculine opponent of the US; and the way of portraying Sino-US relations as "a ticking bomb" implies that their relationship is unstable and can be renovated by the dynamics of the Sino-US economic correlation. This depiction does not only highlights the "China threat"

imagery but impinges upon the historically established Orientalist metaphors. In the age of globalization and transnational capitalism, assuming China as an equal opponent of the US in trade and currency wars reflects that China is seen by Westerners as moving towards a mirror image of modern, liberal and capitalist societies (Vukovich, 2012).

These depictions point out that China is in a process of “becoming the same as us” (Vukovich, 2012), representing a sign of how the world order may be reconstructed based on the outcome of the war. Relations between China and others are conceptualized in terms of an asymmetrical power distribution. Power relations between China and others are unstable and can be determined based upon the outcome of battles. As power is relative, China can be seen as powerful through only as compared to those who are weaker. For instance, China lost its fight “with the hawks” in a trade war; but it won the battle with India over energy resources.

### 5.3 Physical Force Metaphor

Such sums might give the impression that China has been *throwing its money around with abandon*.

...China is *throwing its weight around* in a way that is unfriendly.

On top of this, a Chinese bid to *wrest control* of a sixth of Nigeria’s proven crude reserves risks bringing matters to a head.

The government entities that own majority stakes in most Chinese banks are all expected to maintain their levels of ownership in order to preserve the *state’s grip* on the sector.

Physical force metaphors employed to address China’s governmental economic policies and practices are highly cultural and specifically geo-political. For instance, its national and international fiscal policies, especially its skyrocketing credit expansion after the 2008 Financial Crisis were depicted as “throwing money around with abandon”, “throwing its weight around”; and its global expansion strategies were portrayed as “wrest[ing] control” over international resources. Evaluating China governmental economic practices through such physical force metaphors, reinforces Said’s (1978) Orientalist stereotypes would indicate that Orientals are barbarians, ruling by emotionality rather than rationality. Micro-metaphors within this thematic grouping have depicted China as a place unlike other liberal capitalist countries: China operates on a cultural basis, rather than as a market, representing logics that are viewed as bellicose and barbarian in their need to see outsiders yield to its dictates.

Physical force metaphors used to describe governmental economic practices and policies also point out the deep social and historical roots behind China’s economic rise. China’s market economy established at the end of 20th century is still partial due to state’s monopolization of important sectors including oil, railway, and finance and “state’s grip” on the lifeblood of the national economy. This group of metaphors implies a long-term problem that distinguishes China from liberal capitalist societies. China’s state economy is still plagued by residual problems emerging from

extensive growth development model imported from Soviet Union in early 1950s, which relied on large-scale state investment to shore up growth.

Concerns over monetary tightening in China heavily *dragged* on the materials sector.

Commodity prices declined further after China's manufacturing growth figures disappointed as well, *hitting* resource-related stocks.

In addition, the use of physical force metaphor in describing economic issues and downturn tends towards the universal in economic and financial news writing. It can be seen as a gateway for the transfer of our understanding about physical force to a complex economic scenario that is in need of visualization. Metaphorical expressions like "hitting resource-related stocks" or "dragged on the material sector" imply current economic difficulties that are the manifestation of contradictions that have accumulated during the expanding hiatus in governmental economic activities.

Analysis of metaphorical grouping of physical force points to the ways in which Orientalist frames relating to China work to reconstruct its image in the light of China's cultural-specific market economy and the potential danger behind its growth story. Within this metaphorical frame, disproportionate attention was paid to the ways in which China has failed to engage in market liberalization and the irrationality behind its prosperous state-controlled economy. China's perceived economic threat, exemplified by its belligerent economic conduct, draws an old Orientalist gaze onto China's propensity as being incongruent with Western ideology. Orientalist knowledge of China projected from the metaphorical grouping of physical force can be seen as "a form of paranoia, knowledge of another kind, say, from ordinary historical knowledge" (Said, 1978: 72-73), indexing China's economic growth as being safeguarded by a mutant form of Soviet-style state machinery with expansive, state-owned economy and administrative socialist ideology. These depictions implicitly differentiate China from Western societies ontologically and epistemologically, "turn[ing] the appetite for more geographical space into a theory about the special relationship between geography on the one hand and civilized or uncivilized peoples on the other" (Said, 1987: 216).

## 5.4 Bestial Metaphor

*Bull in a China shop*: China does not have dangerous bubbles in shares and housing—yet

China's interest rate rise ... could go some way to *cooling the ardour of the most heated bulls*.

...notorious '*Bull in a China stock*' is not alone.

Beijing is caught in '*trap*' over dollar...

...*middle income trap*...

China looks to be caught in *nasty trap of artificial and unsustainable growth*

...it may fail to *tame inflation*

harnessing middle class consumption

The top theme that bestial metaphors address was economic issues. It is interesting to see how the positive metaphor “Bull”, representing investors’ confidence and positive expectations, is used to cast the rise of China’s market prices in a negative light. The bull metaphor has been reconstructed based on metaphorical idiom. For instance, metaphorical expression “Bull in a China shop” implies that China should behave carefully in making financial decisions; the bull seemed problematic and China was in need to “cool the most heated bull”; and the story about “Bull in a China stock” was notorious. References to animal trapping which imply China as an animal to be lured or baited are negative in implication: China can be caught over “middle income trap”, dollar trap or “in a nasty trap of artificial and unsustainable growth”. The group of metaphor relating to domestication also underlines problems in governmental practices and policies, especially conduct relating to tight state control expressed in terms such as “tame” inflation or harness its middle class consumption.

*China, the elephant outside the room*, with which America more or less openly competes for influence in Asia these days.

When Shanghai unveiled its magnetic levitation train...*as a white elephant* by many independent commentators.

*The elephant that didn't bark*

There is also a group of elephant metaphor that is borrowed from metaphorical idioms. Because of its rising economic power, China becomes not only an emerging troublesome elephant but “the elephant outside the room” and under the spotlight of competing with the US for influence in Asia. On the other hand, extravagance such as the magnetic levitation train in Shanghai which reflects China’s rising economic power sometimes can be seen as “a white elephant”: useless, expensive to maintain, but good to swagger about. This depiction once again projects Said’s (1978) orientalist frame that Orientals are irrational and bellicose. Additionally, China was also “the elephant that didn’t bark”, or more specifically, cannot bark out human rights issues or other Western liberal thinking. This imagery employs a common frame – liberal individualism, which is about how the West considers itself a democratic society compared to China, to criticize the Other of being uncivilized and immoral.

*Dragon rising*

Measuring GDP: *The dragon takes wing*

*The dragon's deals* China’s increasing influence in the developing world.

These countries are benefiting from being on the ‘*dragon's doorstep*’ and as such have a close relationship with China.

Asia economies come to terms with power of *Chinese dragon*.

Dragon ‘aggressively’ pursues Mauritius as Africa hub

*Dragon Fighter*: One Woman’s Epic Struggle for Peace with China.

*China's green dragon fades to grey*

When the dragon is “rising” and “takes wing”, it carries a positive connotation. The dragon’s increasing influence can benefit other developing peers who are “on the dragon’s doorstep”. Although sometimes the dragon shows a craving for dominance, Asian economies have to “come to terms with power of Chinese dragon”. On the oth-

er hand, the dragon imagery can be cast in a negative light when it is used to describe social issues resistant to western ideas. For instance, people who fight for human rights were termed as “Dragon Fighter”; and social issues like air pollution may lead to the Dragon’s loss of power, exemplified by a colour-fading of the dragon. This set of dragon metaphors does not simply dehumanize China as unthinkingly Oriental or demonize China as a violent, bellicose enemy. China is metaphorically characterized as a mythological, cultural-specific animal with strength. Driven in part by China’s global ambition, the economic relations between China and Western countries have arguably become more intertwined today than at any other historical juncture. This geo-economic phenomenon culminates in the emergence of alarmist tones on China’s possible treat to the West. Apart from describing China as an immediate threat, the metaphorical term “dragon” suggests that China’s growing politico-economic influence is concomitantly ominous. The idea of China as potential threat with economic and political power is systematically established on a conceptual level, and consequently this will build up a coherent argument of a certain ideological configuration.

The West hopes that wealth, globalization and political integration will turn China into a *gentle giant, a panda rather than a dragon*.

How *panda* became cuddly currency

*Charismatic megafauna: pandanomics*

As a salient contrast to dragon metaphors, the West appraises China of being “a gentle giant, a panda rather than a dragon”. The panda is diplomatic gift, a symbol of conservation, a captive animal with a given name; nation states invest them with positive meaning. Positive images may occur at a time when China-Western national interests converge: for instance, Western countries encourage the conception of Chinese currency as a panda that is “cuddly” and can be captive. Panda metaphors imply a major deviation from the classical Orientalism syndrome that stresses a difference in essence between the West and the Orient. This new Orientalist image emphasizes the West’s idealized imagination of China’s “becoming sameness” as civilized “us”.

## 6. Conclusion

This research explored the major metaphorical domains in two British economic publications, *The Economist* and the *Financial Times*, in order to analyze how metaphors contribute to (re)construct knowledge about China. Across military, physical force and bestial metaphors, we can see that the metaphorical representations are been constructed in a very cultural specific way that highlight China’s administrative socialist value and ways of control, isolating China from the Western community. The most common metaphors indicate that the British economic press view China’s rising economic power as a treat to Western countries.

China is routinely constructed within a range of discourse that highlights conventional Orientalist implications. Accordingly, my study suggests that the barbarizing Sinological-orientalism is still salient in British economic press. Although the older stereotypes of China (e.g. Yellow Peril) do not explicitly appear in the selected

news articles, the implication of China as an irrational, barbarian Oriental other still remains central to the contemporary metaphorical representations of China. On the other hand, there is a general shift from interpreting China as an outsider to the global economy to a new era where China plays a major role. China's metaphorical representations seem to approach a new cultural logic of Orientalist discourse where "becoming-the-same" with the West gains prominence. Sinological Orientalism is not only defined by means of established "difference" but is based upon similarities to the cultural logic of Western ideologies.

## 7. References

- Alejo, R. (2009) Where does the money go? An analysis of the container metaphor in economics: The market and the economy. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, pp. 1137–1150.
- Bell, A. (1991) *The Language of News Media*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Charteris-Black, J. (2004) *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Chiang, W. and Duann, R. (2007) Conceptual metaphors for SARS: 'war' between whom? *Discourse & Society*, 18(5), pp.579-602.
- Conboy M. and Tang M. (2016) Core Blighty? How journalists define themselves through metaphor. *Journalism Studies*, 17(7), pp.881-892.
- Crisp, P. (2001). Allegory: Conceptual metaphor in history. *Language and Literature*, 10, pp.5–19.
- Dirlik, A. (1994) *The postcolonial aura: Third World criticism in the age of global capitalism*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Evans, V. and Green, M. (2006) *Cognitive linguistics: An introduction*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press
- Fahnestock, J. (2002) *Rhetorical Figures in Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fürsich, E. (2009) In defense of textual analysis. *Journalism Studies*, 10(2), pp.238-252.
- Gibbs, R. (1994) *The poetics of mind: Figurative thought, language, and understanding*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gibbs, R. and Steen, G. (1997) *Metaphor in cognitive linguistics*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.
- Goatly, A. (2007) *Washing the brain*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub. Co.
- Gravengaard, G. (2012) The metaphors journalists live by: Journalists' conceptualisation of newswork. *Journalism*, 13(8), pp.1064-1082.
- Gruber, T. (1993) A translation approach to portable ontology specifications. *Knowledge Acquisition*, 5(2), pp.199-220.
- Hegel, G. (1956) *The philosophy of history*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Hung, H.F. (2003) Orientalist knowledge and social theories: China and the European conceptions of east-west differences from 1600 to 1900. *Sociological Theory*, 21, pp.254-280.
- Johnson, M. (1992) Philosophical implications of cognitive semantics. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 3(4), pp.345-366.
- Jørgensen, M. and Phillips, L. (2002) *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: Sage.
- Koller, V. (2004) Businesswomen and war metaphors: 'Possessive, jealous and pugnacious'?. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 8(1), pp.3-22.

- Kövecses, Z. (2002) *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lakoff (1993) The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor. In Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (second edition), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1980, 2003) *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McCloskey, D. (1998) *The rhetoric of economics (second edition)*. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Musolff, A. (2004) *Metaphor and political discourse: Analogical reasoning in debates about Europe*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Musolff, A. (2006) Metaphor Scenarios in Public Discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 21(1), pp.23-38.
- Paprotté, W. and Dirven, R. (1985) *The Ubiquity of metaphor*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.
- Purvis, T. and Hunt, A. (1993) Discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology... *The British Journal of Sociology*, 44(3), pp. 473-499
- Richardt, S. (2003) Metaphors in expert and common-sense reasoning. In Zelinsky- Wibbelt, C. (ed.) *Text, Context, Concepts*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter: 243-296.
- Santa Ana, O. (1999) 'Like an animal I was treated': Anti-immigrant metaphor in US public discourse. *Discourse Society*, 10, pp.191-224.
- Said, E.W. (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- vanDijk, T. (1991) *Racism and the press*. London: Routledge.
- vanDijk, T. (1998) *Ideology*. London: Sage Publications.
- Vos, T. (2011) A mirror of the Times: A history of the mirror metaphor in journalism. *Journalism Studies*. 12(5), pp.575-589.
- Vukovich, D. (2012) *China and orientalism: Western knowledge production and the PRC*. Abingdon, England: Routledge.
- Wilson, F. (1992) Language, technology, gender, and power. *Human Relations*, 45(9), pp.883-904.

## 8. Appendix: Corpus Data

<i>Top Thematic Groupings</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Governmental economic policy and practice	15.1%
Economic issues	14.2%
International (regional) relations	13.76%
Social issues	12.36%
Political issues	9.07%
Local business: Business performance overseas	8.12%
Foreign business in China: investment climate	7.05%
Economic rise	5.01%
Local business: Business performance in China	4.86%
Market condition for local business (e.g. internal competition)	4.52%
Internal tensions (e.g. Tibet; Xinjiang; Hong Kong)	3.02%

Economic slowdown	2.21%
Global status	0.69%
National memories	0.02%
Communist ideology	0.01%
Other	Less than 0.01%

Table 1

<i>Metaphorical Groupings</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Military	7.6%
Physical force	6.9%
Bestial	6.24%
Water	5.21%
Journey	4.9%
Diet	3.33%
Antirational	3.1%
Game	2.76%
Corporeal	2.61%
Mechanical	2.60%
Temperature	1.66%
Physical power	1.65%
Sport	1.61%
Light	1.59%
Domesticated environment	1.58%
Sound	1.49%
Disreputable behavior	1.41%
Romantic relationship	1.40%
Fantasy	1.35%
Housekeeping	1.32%
Architectural	1.29%
Physical disability	1.25%
Botanical	1.20%
Religious	1.19%
Verbal Argument	1.18%
Theatrical	1.14%
Optical	1.12%
Bubble-related	1.11%
Fire	1.11%

Breakage	1.08%
Gambling	1.05%
Physical gesture	1.03%
Illness	1.01%
Verbal attack	1.00%
Environmental science	0.97%
Aerial	0.78%
Medical	0.77%
Weather	0.68%
Darkness	0.65%
Scent	0.61%
Geographical	0.60%
Nautical	0.57%
Dirt	0.56%
Physical Danger	0.56%
Meteorological	0.53%
Teacher-student relationship	0.52%
Trickery	0.50%
Fictional Character	0.47%
Logistics	0.46%
Discomfort	0.45%
Traffic	0.43%
Disaster	0.41%
Agricultural	0.39%
Bodily function	0.37%
Disease	0.34%
Art	0.33%
Affiliation	0.32%
Astronomy	0.31%
Social gathering	0.26%
Mental disorder	0.21%
Reward	0.19%
Violence	0.19%
Toxicity	0.02%
Geoscience	0.01%
Physics	<0.01%
Verbal praise	
Historical references	

Handwork	
Fishing	
Royalty	
Treasure	
Spiritual	
Science and technology	
Cosmology	
Biological	

Table 2