The Dynamics of Chinese Media Practices and Regulation: Explanations and Interpretations

Xi Chen

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Planning, Governance and Globalization

Timothy W. Luke, Chair

Ilja A. Luciak

Edward Weisband

Karen M. Hult

August 21, 2007

Blacksburg, Virginia

The Dynamics of Chinese Media Practices and Regulation: Explanations and Interpretations

Xi Chen

(ABSTRACT)

Based on the understanding that a country's media system can provide important insights into its politics, this dissertation reexamines the development of Chinese politics in the reform era through the media lens, and television in particular. Given that Chinese media have been a marker of the nation's socio-political developments, the media perspective is believed to be particularly useful in interpreting China's changing political circumstances. By tracing the dynamics of television news reporting practices and government regulation of the news media, this analysis will map out the evolving roles of television in today's China to use them as subtle indications of how Chinese politics are evolving in the reform era. Chinese television adopted a Soviet TASS style from its very beginnings due to the heavy Soviet influence that placed an emphasis on imparting a heavily ideological messages and propagating government policies and rules. This practice, however, has been substantially changed during the reform era. Television news reporting in today's China is moving towards the liberal media style in both format and content. What specific changes have taken places in television industry? To what extent has Chinese media departed from the Soviet style? What are the implications of these media changes for China's politics? To answer these questions, I conducted content analysis of the China Radio and Television Broadcasting Awards news reports and television regulations in the reform era, which revealed that Chinese media was developing towards a hybrid of Soviet and liberal models in which both control and liberalization trends can be identified. While encouraging and authorizing increased managerial, editorial, and programming freedom and autonomy, the Party-State has

managed to retain its control over political content through increasingly indirect and sophisticated means. The continued marginalization of alternative political voices confirms that democracy with political pluralism, free flow of information and rule of law has not yet materialized after more than two decades' economic reform. By collaborating with market and technology, the Communist Party of China has actually managed to consolidate its control over both the political and economic power while authorizing increased freedom in individual, cultural, and social domains.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would be impossible for me to complete this dissertation without the help and support from many individuals. My deepest appreciation goes to Professor Timothy W. Luke, who has been my supervisor and mentor ever since I came to the United States in 2001. His intellectual stimulation, encouragement, leadership, fighting spirits, and unfailing support have guided me throughout this PhD journey. The strength and faith I gathered from him has allowed me to squarely face all of the challenges that an entirely different academic and cultural environment could possibly create. I also wish to express my heart-felt gratitude towards Professor Edward Weisband for his direction, strong support, professional influence, and friendship. His outstanding teaching has become an indelible part of my memory. It has influenced and inspired my own teaching at both Virginia Tech and the UTPA. Special thanks also go to Professor Ilja Luciak for his excellent leadership, warm support, and professional guidance during my stay at the Department of Political Science. I am grateful for the opportunity to teach Chinese Politics at Virginia Tech. As the first course I offered in the United States, this experience has laid the corner stone for my career as a university teacher. Many thanks also go to Professor Karen Hult for her thoughtful guidance, insightful comments, and support for my dissertation. I have admired her conscientious and professional work style ever since I knew her. Moreover, I would like to extend my thanks to Professor Shiping Hua, Suijian Guo, Yongnian Zheng and Barrett McCormick for honoring my research with their interest in my work as well as invitations for papers, presentations, and professional meetings. Furthermore, I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to my colleagues at the Political Science Department at the UTPA for offering a friendly and supportive work environment so that I can manage to work on the revision of my dissertation while teaching and working. Special thanks go to Edward Jackson, Ellen Baik, and James Wenzel. Edward has reduced my workload by making exam questions for my American and Texas Government class; Ellen and James have offered various assistance in helping me settle down in McAllen, Texas.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

When Charles Dickens wrote the famous line: "it was the best of times; it was the worst of times" during the Victorian Era, it would have been beyond his imagination that he also had provided the best assessment of China at the beginning of the 21st century. More than two decades of economic reform and organizational change have transformed China from a totalitarian, monolithic, drab, homogeneous, and closed regime to a more vibrant, colorful, heterogeneous, capitalist, and globalized society. The unprecedented prosperity, vitality, and diversity in the economy and society, however, have yet to fundamentally change the nature of the Chinese political system. For what is special about China's reform is that economic reform has never gone hand in hand with political reform. Now it actually appears that a free-wheeling market economy can coexist with enhanced Party-State's domination of political power in China. While the new values, ideas, practices, and knowledge flood in the country, the old political system continues to hold fast to its roots.

Without any doubt, the rapidly developing "socialist market economy"[1] has revived China as an economic powerhouse and enlivened Chinese society with diverse new values and trends[2] while pushing the government towards limited decentralization and political reform such as the adoption of village level elections and the incorporation of the rule of law into the constitution. These liberalization trends, however, have been accompanied with persistent official efforts to solidify the political control over the media and society. Ideological propaganda campaigns such as the anti-spiritual pollution campaign in 1986, the anti-bourgeois liberation campaigns in 1987, the anti-Falungong campaign in 1998, and the campaign to strengthen party spirit in 2005 have all served this purpose.

This display of tendencies towards both liberalization and control are as contradictory as they are confusing. What is the direction of Chinese political development in the reform era? Is China developing towards greater democracy with political pluralism and a rule of law? Can China be fully democratized in the near future or not? Many academic arguments about these topics have taken place in recent years. There are optimistic scholars arguing that the adoption and further implementation of market logic and practices will erode the current political system of the country. This shift will, in turn, lead directly or indirectly, through the growth of a more truly civil society, to fundamental political change and ultimately the democratization in China.[3] On the other hand, there are scholars who hold more

---

[1] The concept of "Socialist Market Economy" was first put forward by Deng Xiaoping as a breakthrough of the "Socialist Economic Theory". It is unique in that the market mechanism is utilized to a full extent while public ownership is still held as a basic property right system. According to Deng, market economy itself is not specific to capitalist society. As a tool to develop a country's economy, it can exist in both capitalist and socialist society. The economy mechanism itself will not fundamentally alter the socialist nature of Chinese society. For detailed elaboration of the theory, please refer to the electronic version of Deng Xiaoping's talk on "We can develop market economy under socialism" delivered on November 26th, 1979, available on the *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Volume II)* at the link of
http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol2/text/b1370.html .
[2] For detailed information about the cultural and social changes, please refer to Jensen M. Lionel and Timothy B, Weston, *China's Transformations: the Stories beyond the Hardliners* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007).
[3] See e.g. Dali Yang's *Remaking Chinese Leviathan: Market Transition and the Politics of Governance in China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); Bruce Gilley, *China's Democratic Future: How It will Happen and Where It will Lead* (New York: Columbia University, 2004).

reserved and skeptical views regarding China's democratic future.[4] According to them, democracy is not impossible to attain in China; however, given the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) demonstrated level of adaptable flexibility,[5] it is highly doubtful that the CCP is in imminent danger of collapse or replacement in the foreseeable future. Therefore, China's democratic prospects are growing dimmer rather than brighter.

1.2 Research Outline

China is obviously at a critical crossroads now and a wide range of studies on Chinese politics confirms this evaluation. Amidst these conflicted views on China's political development, it is imperative to explore alternative interpretations of China's politics in the reform era. To advance this goal as well as join the debate about China's political future, I have chosen to look at the prospects for Chinese democratization through a media lens   a perspective through which China's political development is continuously evaluated by the degree and depth of media freedom in China. Given that Chinese media have been a marker of the nation's socio-political developments, the media perspective is believed to be particularly

---

[4] See e.g. Bruce Dickson, *Red Capitalists in China: the Party, Private Entrepreneurs and Prospects for Political Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Yongnian Zheng, *Will China Become Democratic?* (Singapore: Eastern University Press, 2004).

[5] Faced with declining party legitimacy and influence, Jiang's administration adopted the theory of the "Three Represents" in 2002, which includes the capitalist class, that is, businessmen and private entrepreneurs into the Communist Party. This coalition-building strategy both strengthened the Party's legitimacy and monopoly of political power in China. According to the speech Jiang delivered at the 16th CCP Congress in November, 2002, "the Party must always represent the requirements of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of the development of China's advanced culture, and the fundamental interest of the overwhelming majority of the people in China. For an elaborated rational and implications of the three represents policy, please see Bruce Dickson, "Dilemmas of Party Adaptation: The CCP's Strategies for Survival", in Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen, eds., *State and Society in Twenty-First Century China: Crisis, Contention and Legitimation* (New York: Routledge, 2004). Besides, to accommodate the pubic outcry for rule of law, the government also incorporates the concept of rule of law into the state constitution by way of amendment in 1999. See e.g. Randall Peerenboom, "Globalization, Path Dependency and the Limits of law" in Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu, eds., *Domestic Politics in Transition: China's Deep Reform* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006), p196. The most recent efforts made by the Hu administration to renew its power and legitimacy are that they tried to revive the spirits of the Confucianism to dilute the pervasive social tensions in China. The 2004 marked a sizable revival of Confucianism culture with a series of seminars and exhibitions marking the 2, 555th birthday of the great sage. See e.g. Willy Wo-Lap Lam's *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao's Era: New Leaders, New Challenges* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2006), p280.

useful in interpreting China's changing political circumstances. As the most influential medium in today's China, television is particularly relevant to affording fresh perspectives on the current study of Chinese politics. Due to the fascinating social and economic developments in China and the controversial nature of the country's politics, most of the existing research has scrutinized Chinese political development by focusing on the rapid economic growth,[6] rampant social tensions,[7] and limited legal and institutional reforms.[8] These studies do provide profound and revealing knowledge about the changes that are taking place in China. Their confined focus, however, marginalizes other equally important perspectives on different institutions. Take the mass media, for example. Since the ownership of Chinese media remains in the hands of the Party-State, any study of the mass media in China is itself a study of Chinese politics and democracy. As the Party-State's instruments of mass communication, the mass media are the CCP's mouthpieces for change. The on-going development of the Chinese media has enormous impact on the possibilities for change in the country's politics. Generations of scholars have recognized the importance of the media in shaping and interpreting a country's

---

[6] See e.g. Dali, Yang's *Remaking Chinese Leviathan: Market Transition and the Politics of Governance in China* (CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); Hongyi Lai, *Reform and Non-State Economy in China: the Political Economy of Liberalization Strategies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Shaoguang Wang, "Openness and Inequality: the Case of China" in Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu, eds., *China's Deep Reform: Domestic Politics in Transition* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006) , p 251-285; and Yingyi Qian, "The Process of China's Market Transition, 1978 -1998: the Evolutionary, Historical and Comparative Perspectives", in Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu, eds., *China's Deep Reform: Domestic Politics in Transition* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006), p229-250; Wu Yanrui, "New Patterns of Economic Growth" in John Wong and Lai Hongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges* (Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 2006); Yanlai Wang, *China's Economic Development and Democratization* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003); and Gerald Chan, *China's Compliance in Global Affairs* (Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 2006).
[7] See e.g. Yongyi Lai, "Income Inequality, Limited Social Mobility and Remedial Policies", in Jong Wong and Yongyi Lai, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd, 2006), p323-351.
[8] See e.g. Yongnian Zheng, "The Rule by Law vs. Rule of Law" in Guangwu Wang and Yongnian Zheng, eds., *Reform, Legitimacy and Dilemmas* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2000), p135-166; Keyuan Zou, "Rule of Law and Governance", in John Wong and Hongyi Lai, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd, 2006), p191-216; and Andrew Nathan, "China's Constitutionalist Option", in Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu, eds., *Domestic Politics in Transition: China's Deep Reform* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers), p177-190.

politics by exploring their roles in fostering cultural hegemony,[9] creating a public sphere,[10]orchestrating political propagandas,[11] setting public agenda,[12] and limiting frames of political interpretations,[13] however, little research has been done since 1978 on China's electronic media. The limited available literature has focused their research either on the more traditional print media[14] or on very new media such as the Internet.[15] When television was studied, the research in these rare cases remains largely general and preliminary.[16] For the most strictly censored television program, or television news essentially, no in-depth research has been conducted on its implications for Chinese politics. To fill this gap, I have conducted very current research on the dynamics of Chinese television news reporting practices and regulation during the reform era to assess their correlations to Chinese politics.

---

[9] See e.g. Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebook (*Lowrence and Wishart Ltd, 1973).

[10] See e.g. Jurgen Harbemas, *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere* (New York: Polity Press, 1992)

[11] See e.g. Norm Chomsky, *Media Control: the Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1997).

[12] See e.g. M. McCombs and D. L. Shaw and W. David, *Communication and Democracy*. (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, In., Publishers, 1997).

[13] See e.g. R. M. Entman, "Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm", *Journal of Communication*, vol.43, issue 4 (December 1993), p51-58; and his *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[14] See e.g. T. Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); A. D. Barnett, "A Note on Communication and Development in Communist China" in D. Lerner and W. Schramm, eds., *Communication and Change in Developing Countries* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1967), p231-234; R. L. Bishop, *Qi Lai! Mobilizing One Billion Chinese: The Chinese Communication System* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989); Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); G. G. Wu, " Command Communication: The Politics of Editorial Formulation in the People's Daily" in *China Quarterly*, no.137(March 1994), p194-211; G. C. Chu's *Popular Media in China: Shaping New Cultural Patterns* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978); and K. Wright, "Political Fortunes of Shanghai's World Economic Herald", *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 23 (January 1990), p121-132.

[15] See e.g. Yongming Zhou, *Historicizing Online Politics: Telegraphy, The Internet and Political Participation in China* (Palo alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005); C. Hughes, *China and the Internet: Politics of Digital Leap Forward* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Zixue Tai, *The Internet in China: Cyberspace and Civil Society* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Xu Wu, *Chinese Cyber Nationalism: Evolution, Characteristics and Implications* (Lanhan: Lexington Books, 2007); Jens Damm and Simona Thomas, *Chinese Cyberspace: Technological Changes and Political Effects* New York: Routledge, 2006); and Francoise Mengin, *Cyber China: Reshaping National Identities in the Age of Information* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[16] See e.g. Junhao Hong, *The Internationalization of Television in China: The Evolution of Ideology, Society, and Media Since the Reform* (Westport, CT.: Praeger, 1998); and Tsan-kuo Chang, Jian Wang and Yanru Chen, *China's Window on the World: TV News, Social Knowledge and International Spectacles* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2002).

The rapidly changing nature of Chinese television and politics as well as China's socio-political situation, eliminate the possibility for any single theory, developed for a relatively stable and mature society in the West, to sufficiently decipher the interactions between media and politics in China. Therefore, a context-sensitive, integrative, and multi-perspective approach, which incorporates the analysis of several relevant theories on media and politics, will be adopted for my research on Chinese television and politics in the reform era. Among these theories, Seibert, Peterson, and Schramm's theories of the media and society provide the key framework for my research.[17] As the classic comprehensive on media systems, the *Four Theories of the Press* represented the first systematic efforts to investigate the relationship between media and politics. Despite the widespread critiques made against it, all the existing theories in the field have benefited from this work in one way or another. The four theories have immediate relevance to my research on Chinese media and politics for both the heavy influence of the Soviet Communist theory on Chinese media practices and theory, and the state approach adopted by the three authors in classifying the world's media system into four models based on different forms of political society. Moreover, the categorization of the media systems in terms of authoritarian media model, the libertarian model, the social responsibility model, and the Soviet communist model provides the platform for me to examine the transitional nature of Chinese television in the reform era. Compared to Seibert et al.'s four theories, the relevance of the agenda-setting and framing analysis is micro-level in a sense that they offer tools to investigate and discern various editorial, institutional, and political control over Chinese television. The agenda-setting theory allows one to decipher the television agendas though analyzing the issues that have been attached special attention to in Chinese news reports, whereas the framing analysis enables one to judge television messages through exploring the attributes of the issues in the news. More importantly, a longitudinal study of the television news agenda and frame changes during the reform era is expected to generate important knowledge about the dynamics of the

---

[17] See e.g. Fred S. Seibert, Theodore Peterson, Wilbur Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956).

Chinese media and politics. Considering the fact that Chinese television news reporting practice is increasingly taking on the look of the media in Western liberal democracies in format and content, my initial expectation was that the old Soviet style Party-State control over television had been substantially relaxed and declined in the reform era. Hence, Chinese television as a mass medium accordingly has begun to enjoy some increased freedom.

To test this proposition, I used combined research methods of archival research, content analysis of news reports and regulations, and face-to-face interviews for this dissertation.[18] Since the objective of the research is to explore the development of national news reporting practices and regulations in China, the central part of the research is the content analysis of videotapes of the China Radio and Television Broadcasting (CRTB) Awards news reports and relevant television regulations promulgated in the randomly selected years during the reform era. The archival research provides the background information for analyzing the historical development of Chinese media practices and regulation. Face-to-face interviews, however, complement the research results of both the archival research and video analysis.

Since the purpose of the archival research is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the historical development of Chinese media practices and regulation, various relevant literatures, laws, regulations, rules, and documents have been examined.

Based on the development of a historical framework that emerged from the archival research, I did content analysis of the Videotapes for the CTRB Awards winner news in the randomly selected four years: 1990, 1995, 1999, and 2003. This was designed to produce relatively objective, quantitative, and systematic description of the manifest content of the videotapes. Besides, content analysis was also conducted for television regulations promulgated in 1987, 1998, 2001, 2003, and 2005.

---

[18] Please refer to the Appendix II for details of the research design.

As the most authoritative professional awards for Chinese television news broadcasting, the CRTB Awards played an extremely important role in shaping the development of Chinese television news reporting. By studying the CRTB Awards news reports, I expected not only to develop an understanding of the changes that happened in China's television news reporting practices but also to get an idea about the evolution of professional standards for discerning good news reporting. This will finally enable me to tell whether China's news reporting has been allowed to resemble the news practices in the Western liberal democracies.

In order to ensure that the research result would comprehensively reflect the development of Chinese television news practices, the overall sample was neither randomly nor arbitrarily selected. The following factors were considered in selecting data. First and most importantly, the selection of data depended on the availability of resources. Since the data for 1990 and 2003 were the earliest and the latest available, I decided it was important to include them in my study. Next, given the main objective of the research, which was to figure out the interaction between national news reporting in China and Chinese politics and society, I included data of news reporting under each generation of leadership. The research covered a 14 year time span (1990-2003), beginning with the last years of second generation of leadership, covering the full term of the third generation of leadership and ending at the beginning of the fourth generation of leadership.

For the time slots chosen, I conducted content analysis as follows: For each year's awards broadcast, I took each piece of news as the coding unit, regardless of its length. The coding scheme was partially based on Tsan-Kuo Chang's model.[19] The variables mainly dealt with the ideas that would be most visible and identifiable on television news in China, such as the general categories of when, who, what, how and why. In addition to the categories created by Tsan-Kuo Chang, I also observed the attire, tone, verbal, facial expression and body Language of the news anchors and the image flow of the news reports. Such an analysis yielded useful knowledge about the cultural, social, and political changes happening in China. As a native

---

[19] See e.g. Tsan-Kuo Chang, *China's Window on the World: TV News, Social Knowledge and International Spectacles* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2002).

speaker of Chinese, I myself coded all the news stories and interpreted the data. My previous life and research experience, educational background, Language skills, and cultural knowledge of China put me in an advantageous position to interpret the data gathered for the research. For each news story, 16 variables have been identified and recorded according to the range of values provided.[20] By collecting data for all the above-listed variables, I not only found the major changes in news content, format, organization, and technology, but also was able to calculate the provincial weight, demographic orientation, and the directorial control room logic for most of the CTRB Awards news. Moreover, various comparisons have also been conducted upon the four sets of data.

For the analysis of the television regulation, I chose to focus on the STARFT promulgated regulations listed on the *China Radio and Broadcasting Yearbook* for the selected years of 1987, 1998, 2001, 2003, and 2005. Similar to the selection of date for the CRTB Awards news reports, the selection of the regulations for this study is also based on consideration of the availability and spread of data. Since the regulations for 1987 and 2005 were the oldest and most recent data available, I include them in this research for a more fruitful longitudinal study. Besides, in order to be able to tell the relationship between politics and media policy, I chose to include data for each generation of leadership. The 19 years' time span of this research on television regulations covers the last years of the second generation of leadership, the full term of the third generation of leadership and the early years of the current generation of leadership.

To complement the findings of the archival research and content analysis of news reports and regulations, I also conducted informal interviews with media scholars and practitioners at both the local (Shandong) and central (Beijing) levels. The interviewees for my study included news anchors, editors, and journalists at the Shandong Television Station and the CCTV, as well as media scholars from both Shandong province and Beijing Communication University (the former Beijing Broadcasting Institute). Media scholars and university professors were asked questions related to the curriculum and educational objectives for the students

---

[20] Please refer to the appendix II for the details of the variables.

majoring in journalism, broadcasting and editing. Questions related to their perceptions of the most valued qualities for the future editors, news anchors, and journalists were also posed to the interviewees. For the interviews conducted with the media practitioners at both the Shandong TV Station and the CCTV, different sets of questions were devised for the editors, news anchors, and the journalists. For the editors, who usually have the greatest power in making decisions on who will appear on each day's news, and how, and when, important questions related to principles and rules of deciding placement of news, news topic, news length, attribution of news, news format, and proportion of each type of news were asked of them. As for the news anchors, who are primarily responsible for reading the news, they were mainly asked questions regarding their freedom of choice in terms of attire, tones, and body language in reporting different types of news. The interviews with the journalists included questions about their freedom in choosing topics covered in the daily news, relevant rules and regulations that restrict this freedom, and their standards in choosing news topics and their priorities in news reporting. To minimize the potential risks to the interviewees, no electronic devices such as tape recorders, or camcorders were used during these interviews. (Please refer to the Appendix II for the list of interview questions)

My research results will partially support the proposition that Chinese television as a mass medium has begun to enjoy increased freedom in the reform era. According to my findings, Party-State control over the television news reporting has largely loosened in the coverage of social, economic and culture topics. For political content, however, more sophisticated, indirect, and still yet stricter controls are being developed. The symbiosis of both liberalization and control in the media industry reflects Beijing's dilemma in further developing its market economy while maintaining its monopoly of political power over the media. The need to deepen the country's economic reform has left the Beijing authorities little choice except to further commercialize and modernize China's media sector. The Party's desperate need for power and legitimacy, however, makes it imperative that it continues to pay a close attention to the circulation of political information that might tarnish the CCP's image and cause negative repercussions among the public. Are these two

trends, as some would have it, tearing Beijing apart? By taking a closer look at the changes in both television production practices and central government regulation of the industry, I found that this belief is nothing more than an illusion. Instead of weakening the Party-State, the market increasingly is accepted by the Party-State, resulting in renewed political control over the television industry. When market liberalization and political control act cooperatively, it becomes easier to understand why there has been state authorized and sponsored industrialization in the television industry. By liberalizing aspects of television content and management, the Party-State's goals are two-fold: on the one hand, the CCP expects that the diversification of the non-political media content and commercial management will further enliven the industry and turn it to a lucrative sector of the national economy; and it anticipates that market competition, flashy commercials, meaningless entertainment shows, and diverse social topics will effectively divert public attention away from the potential democratic political development as well as dilute China's ever escalating social tensions. The implications of these changes in the media sector for Chinese politics are both profound and alarming. Despite the continued lip-service paid by the Party to the communist ideology, the CCP is developing into a bloc of special interests collaborating with the new capitalist and business elites. By monopolizing both economic and political power, this new class, seems intent upon marginalizing the oppositional and alternative voices in Chinese society, thus establishing a democracy featuring political pluralism, free flow of information, and rule of law impossible for the foreseeable future.

1.3 Chapter Overview

The dissertation is divided into nine chapters. Following this introduction, chapter two will provide a comprehensive literature review of the existing research on Chinese politics, media, and television in particular. To anchor my research in a larger field of work, I first review the major existing works on Chinese politics. After outlining the strengths and weaknesses of existing research on the tendencies of Chinese political development, I move on to elaborate why the media perspective could produce useful knowledge about Chinese politics. A review of the relevant

literature that explores the important role of the media in shaping and influencing a country's politics is conducted here. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the current status of the research on the interaction between politics and media. By mapping out these arguments, my goal for the chapter is to explain how my study will fill a gap in the research on Chinese politics in general and on media studies in particular to advance our understanding of the political development in today's China.

The main thrust of chapter three is to review the theories that are relevant to this analysis. The theories explored in this chapter include the four theories of the media developed by Seibert et al., agenda-setting theory by McCombs, and frame analysis theory by Tuchman and Entman. The four theories developed by Seibert et al. provide the key framework for my research. Agenda-setting theory and frame analysis offer the analytical tools for my analysis of the television news reports and regulations. This chapter first reviews and evaluates the arguments made by each theory, then explains and justifies the relevance of each one of them to the study. Given that *The Four Theories of the Press* has been subject to widespread criticism in the post-Cold War era, much effort will be made to resurrect or reevaluate the controversial work by Seibert et al. in this chapter.

After laying out the theoretical framework, the fourth chapter will explore the historical development of media roles in Chinese politics, media control, and television in particular. As the mass media evolve from ideological instruments for political propaganda to major outlets for commercial and entertainment programming in the reform era, the old style of all-encompassing political control gradually gives way to a more indirect and less ideological mechanism. By tracing the evolution of media control mechanisms over time, this chapter provides a platform for interpreting and understanding the research in chapters five and six, which focus on the dynamics of television practices and regulations in the reform era.

Chapter five centers on the development of television news reporting practices and their implications for Chinese politics. By analyzing China Radio and Television Award (CRTA) winner news reports, this chapter explores the changes of

Chinese television news reporting practices during the reform era. The research findings reflect an imbalanced development of Chinese media. One the one hand, Party-State monopoly over television news has been considerably relaxed in a sense that there has been increased volume of news in circulation, and the news reports have become more balanced, diverse and close to reality. However, there has been more disguised, indirect and sophisticated control on political content and further marginalization of voices of the minority groups such as ethnic minorities, women, and peasants.

To better understand the changing face of Chinese television practices, chapter six examines the dynamics of Chinese television regulation. Given the old Soviet-style mouthpiece role of the mass media in China, Chinese television regulations are essentially rooted in political and ideological directives. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the country' cultural and media policies and directives is necessary for deciphering television regulations. The chapter starts with a review of Chinese cultural and media policy, which set the limits and boundaries for media and television regulations in particular. After exploring all three stages of Chinese media policy developments, a review of the historical development of television regulation follows. The research findings confirm that the CCP has made enormous efforts to keep its television regulations alongside the development of the industry. The overall characteristics of the regulations reflect the rationale of building socialism with Chinese characteristics. While authorizing the expansion of more editorial, programming, and managerial freedoms to the television stations, the government has made it a routine to impose limits on political content and news reporting.

Based on the research conducted in chapter five and six, chapter seven outlines the recent developments of Chinese television industry and their implications for the media industry as a whole. The chapter argues that by retaining the state control elements of the Soviet model and incorporating marketization, commercialization, technological innovations, and professionalization from the liberal model, Chinese media are developing towards a hybrid of the two. This can be characterized by commercialization and industrialization with state monopoly, technological

innovation with party interference, editorial freedom with political limits and professionalism with party influence. Through this hybrid model, a fusion of market and political power in the media industry is taking shape. Instead of diminishing the Party-State control, the market is increasingly integrating its dynamics with the Party-State in restricting the free flow of information in China.

Chapter eight centers on the implications of the media development for Chinese politics. Based on the analysis of the current status of Chinese media in Chapter Seven, I argue that by integrating with the new capitalists in China, the Party is transforming the market into its tool and ally for monopolizing political power. It is also developing into a special-interest class that is more interested in maximizing its political and economic interests than promoting democracy in the country. To illustrate these points, the following trends and phenomena have been discerned and analyzed. First of all, there have been enlarged individual and social freedom without political liberalization; second, there has been a fusion of the power of the market and the Party-State; and finally, the Communist Party of China is evolving into a special class that is further distancing itself from the grassroots population and interests.

Chapter nine concludes the dissertation with a discussion of the prospects of China's democratic future. The findings of the research on television practices and regulation are interesting and complex. Their implications for Chinese politics and China's democratic future, however, are alarming. Despite all of the optimism that market forces of the media industry bring, they will not erode the Party control over the media and bring about political democracy to China. The research reveals that the decline of the Soviet style media control does not necessarily lead to free media and political democracy in China. Certainly, the presence of the Party in the media industry has substantially reduced and the free flow of social, economic and cultural information has been improved, but the intensity of its control over the political content, however, has been considerably strengthened due to the fusion of the Party and market. From these changes in the media industry, it has become all too evident that political democracy will not emerge in China in the foreseeable future. China might eventually become democratized in the long run, but the development of

democracy is contingent on the capability of the Party to slowly accommodate divergent interests within the Party, balancing factional powers, and addressing the intensified domestic problems.

During the research process that unfolded while working on this project, parts of this dissertation have been presented on different professional,[21] international,[22] and invited conferences,[23] and then published on refereed academic journals in both the United States and Hong Kong. The original research findings of chapter five, which investigates the dynamics of the Chinese television practices, have been published on the *Journal of Chinese Political Science*.[24] Part of chapter six, which explores the development of Chinese media regulations, has been published on the *Journal of Comparative Asian Development*.[25]

---

[21] Including the *2006 Annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (APSA)*, the *2007 Annual Convention of the International Studies Association (ISA)*, the *19th Annual Meeting of the Association of Chinese Political Studies (ACPS)*, the *47th Annual Conference of the American Association for Chinese Studies (AACS), etc.*.

[22] The *Joint International Conference of the Association of Chinese Communication Studies (AACS) and Xiamen University*, Xiamen, China (December 28 – 31, 2005).

[23] The *Conference on Politics and Media in China*, Madison, WI. (May 26-28, 2005), Invited by Professor Barrett McCormick.

[24] See e.g. Xi Chen, "Media Lens Revisited: Television and Socio-Political Changes in China", in *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, vol. 12 no. 2 (Summer 2007), p167-184.

[25] See e.g. Xi Chen, "Dynamics of News Media Regulations in China: Explanations and Implications", in *Journal of Comparative Asian Development*, vol.5, no.1 (spring 2006), p49-64.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

My decision to approach Chinese politics in the reform era from the lens of the media is partially inspired by my reading of the existing research on Chinese politics. China in the reform era has attracted enormous academic attention due to its rapid departure from a monolithic, poverty-stricken, and rigid past as well as its controversial and often contradictory policies and developments. As the concept of "socialist market economy" indicates, the goal of China's reform era has been to enjoy the benefits of the market without having to accommodate their political consequences. However, as China's economic reform further deepened, various social tensions and problems arose from this unparalleled reform policy, which intensified to the extent that they were bottlenecking China's further economic development and shaking the CCP's rule in China. Faced with a dilemma of sustaining high-speed economic development while keeping the country's political system intact, Beijing has responded with seemingly contradictory policies and initiatives. There were moments that the government took steps towards political reforms such as carrying out administrative reforms,[26] implementing local elections,[27] institutionalizing the political "exit" system,[28] and incorporating rule of

---

[26] Since early 1980s, the government has experienced five waves of administrative reforms, including the 1982 reform led by the pro-reform leader Zhao Ziyang, the 1988 reform under Li Peng, the 1993 reform under Li Peng, the 1998 reform under Zhu Rongji, and the 2003 reform under Wen Jiabao. For details, please refer to Yongnian Zheng, ed., *Globalization and State Transformation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[27] Elections at Village level has implemented since 1987. See e.g. Yongnian Zheng, *Will China Become More Democratic?* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International, 2004), p116.

[28] It refers to the adoption of the retirement system for top leaders, which put an end to China's endemic problem of retiring senior leaders. Top Chinese leaders were usually able to hold onto their

law;[29] there were also moments that the government tightened its reign on the society by suppressing political dissents,[30] launching ideological campaigns,[31] cracking down grassroots protests and muffling pubic opinions.[32] What does this double-faced China tell us about its political reality? Has market-oriented economic reform and globalization brought about a certain degree of democracy to China? Have the Chinese Communist Party's efforts to develop a freewheeling economy while keeping its monopoly of power in the country been successful?

Numerous scholars have worked to search for answers to the above questions. However, most of their arguments fall into two major categories. One group of scholars, impressed by China's economic achievements in the past two decades, argue that China's market-oriented economy, pluralizing society, the rise of the red capitalists, and its further integration into the global market will accelerate the development of socio-economic pluralism which will ultimately undermine the communist institutions. This will in turn lead to the demise of the Party-State's domination over political power and pave the way for the rise of political democracy.

---

positions until they die before the 1990s. Start from the 1990s, the leadership began to make substantial efforts in building an "exit" system, putting an age limit (70) on all senor officials in Beijing. See e.g. Yongnian Zheng, *Will China Become More Democratic?* (Singapore, Marshall Cavendish International, 2004), p116.

[29] The fifteenth congress of the Chinese communist party, convened in September 1997 in Beijing, proposed for the first time since the reform began in 1978 that the Party should give its highest priority to rule of law. The principle of the rule of law was incorporated into the constitution formally though the 1999 amendment. See e.g. Yongnian Zheng, *Will China Become More Democratic?* (Singapore, Marshall Cavendish International, 2004), p48.

[30] The most recent examples is the official crackdown on *Freezing Point*, a weekly supplement of the national newspaper China youth daily, the official voice of China's communist youth league, for its publication of a scholarly article challenging the orthodox version of Chinese history taught in junior-high school textbook and criticizing the uncritical anti-foreign nationalism pervasive in late Qing dynasty. This article was accused officially for vindicating the criminal acts by the imperialist powers in invading China…violating news propaganda disciple, damaging the national feelings of the Chinese people… and creating a bad social influence. For details, please follow the following link at www.zonaeuropa.com/20060126_1.htm .

[31] In 2005, Hu launched an ideological campaign within the Party aimed at maintaining the advanced nature of the CCP, which required all CCP members in offices, schools, and work units to spend Thursday afternoons and all day Saturday studying party history and the speeches of the current leaders and criticizing one another and self-criticizing for their political failings. See e.g. Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p48.

[32] As China's economic reform deepens, there have been various grassroots demonstrations by laid-off workers, dissatisfied farmers, urban migrants, Muslim extremists, and even retired people's liberation army veterans. Although the number of people involved in protests kept increasing in the past decades, no permission has been granted to the Chinese media in reporting these protests. See e.g. Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p48.

In contrast, by directing attention to the Party's adaptability and flexibility to newly emerged tendencies, circumstances, and challenges, the other group of scholars argues that the Party is far from being in imminent danger of collapse or replacement as it still enjoys a number of advantages and maintains control over both the country's economic and political life, which might allow it to muddle through indefinitely. These two groups of scholars will be labeled as "optimists" and "pessimists" respectively for convenience sake.

Despite the divergence of points of views, scholars also differ from each other in their respective approach and perspective in examining Chinese political development, and the development of democracy in particular. While some choose to focus on the economic developments and their implication for the country's politics, others center on various social strife and tensions that are posing threats to the CCP's rule. Still others, however, delve into the legal reforms in search for their answers to China's political future.

Both the general debate between the pessimists and the optimists, and the multiple approaches and perspectives involved in Chinese political studies produce important knowledge about the political development in China. Their focus on the most frequently touched upon topics in Chinese politics such as economic development, social conflicts, and legal construction limits the scope of interpretation they can possibly provide. To improve the situation, alternative perspectives are needed that may offer improved interpretations of China and its political development. The mass media is an appropriate choice for this purpose. As powerful tools in shaping public opinion and creating social knowledge, media wield enormous clout over a country's politics. This is especially true for China, where the media is an integral part of the country's political system. Being special state institutions, the media message is the political message in China. Therefore, it would be necessary and reasonable to approach Chinese political development from this perspective. Due to the difficulty in collecting data and the sensitivity of the topic, there is quite limited research available on the interaction between the media and politics in China. In the rare studies of media and politics, a general approach is

often adopted by compounding all types of mass media together. To fill such a gap, a television lens will be adopted in exploring Chinese political development in the reform era. To be more specific, based on the conviction that in-depth understanding and knowledge calls for specific research, research on specific medium will focus on the dynamics of Chinese television news, one of the most sensitive and most tightly controlled type of TV program in China. The ultimate goal for conducting such a research on TV news practices and regulations is to explore their implications for Chinese politics. The following part of the chapter, therefore, will first map out the existing debate and approaches related to Chinese political development in general, and then review the research on the interactions between media and politics in particular. By doing this, the chapter is designed to explain why and in what way the research conducted for this study will contribute to the current literature of Chinese politics.

2.1 Current Debate on China's Recent Political Development

The former WTO director general Mile Moore once generalized, "there are only two types of people today, those who are talking about China and those who are not."[33] For these who are indeed talking about China politically, anything but consensus has been reached on the direction of Chinese politics as illustrated by the optimists vs. pessimists' dichotomy. Since the debate between these two groups of scholars has dominated recent research on China's political development, a review of the respective arguments made by the two groups will help to delineate the picture of the current research situation of Chinese politics

2.1.1 The Optimists View

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the optimists invariably believe that democracy featured by a regime change will eventually come through in China.

---

[33] Mike Moore is the former Prime Minister of New Zealand and former Director-General of the world Trade Organization. For details, please refer to the news report, "Mike Moore, former Prime Minister of New Zealand and former Director-General of the world Trade Organization", *South China Morning Post* (December 9th, 2004), pA19.

Despite this shared conviction, however, they differ from one another in their understanding of the possible routes that China will follow in this journey. Anchoring their optimism on the pluralization of Chinese society, deterioration of social problems, and increased international influences, the optimists argue that the one party rule of the CCP will gradually end as a result of uncontrollable social conflicts, norm and value changes among the population, and factional strife among the top leadership of the CCP. In the case of the social revolts, there will be radical bottom-up transformation into democracy. In the case of the triumphs of the reform minded leaders in future factional struggles, there will be top-down initiatives to gradually incorporate democratic ideals into the system. Moreover, democracy will also come through with a combination of both grassroots uprisings and top-down promotions.

Author Waldron suggests the possibility for a bottom-up development of Chinese democracy. His "revolution of rising expectation" rhetoric argues that the rapid economic growth, rising living standards of the public, and increased international communication and exchange between China and the rest of the world have made a revolution of rising expectations more and more likely and even insuppressible, which will burst into grassroots overthrow of the CCP.[34]

Different from Waldron, Dali Yang and Yongnian Zheng and Bruce Gilley see more top-down hopes and tendencies in China's democratization. By exploring and evaluating various institutional reforms designed to facilitate the market-oriented economic development, Yang argues that efficiency, transparency, and accountability oriented institutional reforms have imposed constraint on the current regime, "sowing the seeds" for democratic transition among the top leadership.[35]

---

[34] See e.g. Arthur Waldron, "The End of Communism", *Journal of Democracy*, vol.9, no. 1 (1998), p41-47.
[35] See e.g. Dali Yang, *Remaking the Chinese Leviathan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), p314.

Although compared to Yang, Zheng's optimism is a little more cautious.[36] Nonetheless, he believes that a "meaningful regime change"[37] is possible in China and a "democracy with Chinese characteristics" will eventually happen from the top-down. By examining Chinese political culture and history, he makes strong points that despite the frequently mentioned role of the external forces and influences on Chinese politics, China's democratic future largely depends on the domestic top-led political developments such as the administrative reforms, exit system for senior officials, and local elections. In response to China's grassroots population, Zheng argues that despite the opportunities created by market-oriented industrialization, globalization, and state rebuilding, a revolution from below is not likely for the foreseeable future due to the modernization of the Party-State's coercive forces, China's de-facto federal system, a lack of regional and national level agents for organizing social movements, and the changing political culture in China. As an insider of Chinese politics, Zheng stresses the perception changes of the Party among the public and the conservative tendencies among the Chinese intellectuals who used to be agents of social and political changes in China. In review of this situation and the recent policies adopted by the Party-State to upgrade its administrative functions and the rule of law, Zheng argues that a top led democratization is most desirable and possible in China.

In the continuum from a radical bottom-up overthrow to top-down initiatives, Bruce Gilley's view falls in the middle ground.[38] According to Gilley, the shift of the balance of power for and against the CCP, the growing pluralization of social interests, and the declining legitimacy of the Party will intensify public dissents, which will force the current regime to adopt democratic principles. With the

---

[36] Zheng believes that democracy is not impossible in China. However, he also anticipates uncertainties and various domestic barriers on China's road to democracy. See e.g. Yongnian Zheng, *Will China Become Democratic*? (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International, 2004).

[37] By "meaningful regime change", Zheng means a change from the current regime to a real democratic one. He purposely tries to exclude the possible regime changes that will bring China's situation from back to worse, such as changes to uncertain democracy or new forms of authoritarianism. For details, please refer to Yongnian Zheng, *Will China Become Democratic*? (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International, 2004), p317.

[38] See e.g. Bruce Gilley, *China's Democratic Future* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pX.

pressure from the bottom, the Party will eventually fall in the hands of a group of reform-minded political elites, thus making the elite-led transformation the most likely scenario in the decades to come. Gilley's reservation with a popular overthrow is based on three kinds of evidence he has collected. First of all, the state remains strong enough to withstand overthrow. Second, the coercive forces continue to be loyal enough to the state, and to the ideal of public order, or act to protect the state against violent overthrow. Moreover, the CCP has kept for itself a monopoly over other areas of the infrastructure such as telecoms, transport, and utilities.[39]

2.1.2. The Pessimists View

While a number of scholars are fantasizing about an incoming political democracy in China, there are scholars who are pessimistic about China's democratic future and express their concerns. Most scholars in this groups argue that since the CCP has demonstrated remarkable flexibility and adaptability in both developing the country's economic system and adjusting to the social changes and ramifications through accommodations and compromises, it is all too likely for the Party to develop new policies or approaches to consolidate its domination of power. Therefore, the most likely scenario for the future is that the CCP will increase its efforts in appeasing and negotiating with various new developments in Chinese society.

Bruce Dickens has made convincing arguments in *Red Capitalists in China* about the prospect for a protracted one-party regime in China. By studying the nature of China's rising red capitalists and their political views and behaviors, Dickens argues that instead of being the agent or catalyst for changes in the Chinese political system, the red capitalists, who are increasing in both economic and political power, are not enthusiastically supporting democracy-oriented political reforms. Rather, they tend to integrate into the state and identify themselves with the state. According to Dickens, this is mainly because of the successful two-pronged

---

[39] For details, please refer to Bruce Gilley, *China's Democratic Future* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p120-121.

strategy adopted by the CCP, which is aimed to create corporatist links between the sate and the business sector and co-opting individual entrepreneurs into the CCP.[40] Therefore, although economic reform is giving rise to new and more diverse and complex social strata, this does not necessarily signify the foreseeable downfall of the CCP rule. Just as the Party has accommodated the rising class of entrepreneurs and businessmen, it will also search for ways to turn these seemingly oppositional forces into its allies.

Minxin Pei also makes strong arguments for CCP's continued efforts to upgrade its power. According to him, although there have been signs of gradual political liberalization in the field of elite politics, institutional development, and state-society relations, they are forced upon the regime by the market development and therefore kept within the limits set by the Party-State. This central control over the liberalizing forces greatly restricts their agency in fostering regime change in China, thus rendering them as little more than tools for the current regime to revive its legitimacy and upgrade its control over political power.[41]

Susan Shirk echoes the sentiments of Bruce Dickens and Minxin Pei in arguing that China does not and will not give up its efforts in maneuvering to muddle through various challenges.[42] By exploring the conflicting policies adopted and postures assumed by the CCP in both domestic and international settings, Shirk reiterates the fact hat that the CCP has made enormous efforts to strengthen its control over political power. Although there have always been moments of transparency and relaxation of central control, these may be seen as both expedient and strategic moves to dilute domestic and international tensions. In response to the widespread rhetoric of China's rising as a superpower, Shirk looks into the inner part of Chinese politics and argues that the deep unrest and insecurity felt on the CCP top leaders' part will force the CCP to use both domestic and international

---

[40] See e.g. Bruce Dickens, *Red Capitalists in China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p169.
[41] See e.g. Minxin Pei, *China's Trapped Transition: the Limits of Developmental Autocracy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2006), p6.
[42] See, e.g. Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

forces extensively in consolidating its regime. Although Shirk is not assertive about the end of the one party rule in China, she nonetheless reveals convincing evidence for China not to give up its grip on power.

The debate between the optimists and pessimists provides the basis to interpret the direction of Chinese political development in the reform era. A more in-depth and systemic understanding, however, will not be achieved without an overview of the available approaches and perspectives adopted by scholars in conducting their research.

2.2. Approaches and Perspectives

In exploring and evaluating China's political development in the reform era, a wide range of approaches and perspectives have been adopted. Among them, the economic approach, legal/institutional perspective, and social/cultural perspective have dominated the current research in Chinese politics.

2.2.1   Economic Approach

By shedding its ideological straitjacket, replacing the Stalinist-style central planning with a market economy, and opening itself to foreign trade and investment, China has grown into one of the most dynamic economies of the 21st century. The vibrant economic development has not only lifted the majority of the population from poverty but also given rise to the economic approach in the field of Chinese politics. Based on the belief that political liberalization will be materialized in the process of economic growth, and political reform will emerge as a response to the functional requisites of economic modernization, many China scholars have chosen to search for answers to China's democratic future through its economic policies and practices.

Although there is no consensus as to the degree in which the economic development has challenged the political system in China, by studying the evolving patterns of Chinese economic growth, changes and reforms in the financial markets,

corporation governance, foreign direct investment, land policies, and China's integration into the global economy, this group of China scholars have developed a shared understanding. This understanding contends that there have been growing incompatibilities and discrepancies between the country's increasingly open economy and its current political system as China's economic integration into the world economy expands. To address this situation, corresponding adjustments of China's political system need to be done. Take Wu Ranrui's research on China's growth pattern for example, Wu argues that that China's new economic growth pattern based on further economic reforms will inevitably lead to the development and perfection of the country's regulatory and legal systems,[43] which will in turn lay the cornerstone for the rise of democracy. Similarly, by conducting research on Chinese economic institutions, Yanlai Wang argues that institution-building practices in the economic sector have been spread into the ideological, civil-social, constitutional, and political fields. This, according to Wang, reflects the trend that China is moving away from its traditional one-party authoritarian rule towards a democracy.[44] Gerald Chan, by studying China's compliance in the WTO, also perceives a promising democratic future for China. According to him, despite the various difficulties China faces in its economic, social, and political transitions, China has largely complied with the relevant norms and rules of the international economic organizations with a responsible image and stance. Upon its entry into the WTO in 2001, remarkable efforts were made to adjust its national judicial system in accordance with international treaty obligations and norms. This compliance with the WTO is interpreted by Chan as a sign of China's willingness to initiate gradual political reforms that will incorporate democratic ideals.[45]

Given that economic reform has led to the emergence of an increasingly complex and differentiated political-economic hierarchy in China, which defies the

---

[43] See e.g. Yanrui Wu, "New Patterns of Economic Growth" in John Wong and Lai Hongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges* (Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd, 2006), p241.

[44] See e.g. Yanlai Wang, *China's Economic Development and Democratization* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), p227.

[45] See e.g. Gerald Chan, *China's Compliance in Global Affairs* (Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 2006).

CCP's centralized control, revealing correlations can be made between China's economic and political reform. The above researches have produced useful insights into the various challenges posed by the growing market economy for the CCP in the reform era. It is true that further marketization and privatization will ultimately reduce the role and functions of the state, however, the nature of this change remains blurry and unpredictable due to the remaining state involvement in the economic sector and the quasi-market nature of the Chinese economy. After all, the economic reform developed and implemented by the CCP remains under the control of the Party despite its discursive effects on Chinese society and politics.

2.2.2   Legal/Institutional Approach

Despite the slow pace and small steps in the process of Chinese legal and political reform, a number of research studies have been conducted to examine the changes in China's constitution, rule of law, administrative law, and elite factional politics. Differing from the economic perspective, which assumes that the market is the most powerful force in fostering political changes in China, scholars that hold a legal/institutional perspective tend to emphasize legal and institutional changes. It is their shared conviction that legal and institutional changes will fundamentally affect the future course of Chinese politics.

As Chinese society becomes more complex, the top leadership in Beijing is being pressured to search for news ways to govern. The most recent and ambitious goal of the CCP is to incorporate and implement the "rule of law."[46] Yongnian Zheng, in his research on the rule of law vs. rule by law,[47] explains why the CCP, which has traditionally stood above the law, set up the rule of law as one of its goals at the Party's fifteenth congress in 1997. According to him, the reason why the CCP

---

[46] By making an amendment to the constitution in 1999, the second plenary session of the Ninth National People's Congress gave constitutional legitimacy to the "rule of law". According to the article five of the constitution, the PRC should implement rule of law with an aim to building socialist state of law. the complete version of the constitution is available at the following link: http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2004-03/15/content_1367387.htm .

[47] See e.g. Yongnian Zheng, "The Rule by Law vs. Rule of Law" in Guangwu Wang and Yongnian Zheng, eds., *Reform, Legitimacy and Dilemmas* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2000), p135-166.

was able to stand above the law for so many years is multi-fold. The monopoly of power is the most important factor, but not the only one. Besides the monopoly, there are also cultural, organizational, and structural resistances to the rule of law in Chinese society. Since China has assumed a different perspective with its society and economy being transformed in the reform era, it is both natural and inevitable that China reconsiders and reforms its legal system. However, the official initiative to incorporate the rule of law into the nation's legal system does not guarantee faithful implementation of it. To tame the power of the state and speed the materialization process of the rule of law, future changes in China's socio-economic structure are needed.[48]

By approaching the rule of law from an administrative perspective, Zou Keyuan also shares the confidence that the rule of law will finally prevail under the combined effects of both domestic and international factors, which will in turn provide a legal guarantee for political reform towards democracy.[49] Domestically, he argues that both the deepening of market-oriented economic reform and officially pledged legal and the administrative construction call for the implementation of the rule of law. Internationally, China's membership obligations in international and multi-lateral organizations such as the WTO also forces China to change its law enforcement mentality and methods so as to free all roadblocks to free trade. To make a stronger point,   Zou also emphasizes the fact that the top leaders of CCP's current generation of leadership have better training in law than their predecessors. According to Zou, the number of leaders with law degree rose form 3% to 8% between the last two CCP Central Committees.[50]

China Scholars not only examine the implications of China's on-going legal reform on its political future, they also take one step further in making detailed suggestions for China to effectively incorporate legal reforms that will gradually

---

[48] See e.g. Yongnian Zheng, "The Rule by Law vs. Rule of Law" in Guangwu Wang and Yongnian Zheng, eds., *Reform, Legitimacy and Dilemmas* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2000), p162.
[49] See e.g. Zou Keyuan, "Rule of Law and Governance", in John Wong and Lai Hongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd, 2006), p191-216.
[50] See e.g. Zou Keyuan, "Rule of Law and Governance", in John Wong and Lai Hongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 2006), p216.

lead to a transition from an authoritarian to a democratic regime. Andrew Nathan has made such proposals in his China's constitutionalist option.[51] According to Nathan, through empowering the national people's congress; invigorating elections at both the national, provincial and local levels; and improving the independent functions of the courts; China will be able to evolve from a Leninist one-party system to a system with a certain degree of separation of powers and federalism. Nathan argues that this will lay the foundation for further development towards a Chinese democracy.

Driven by the desire to substantiate the rule of law in Chinese politics, there have been encouraging signs of a stronger National People's Congress.[52] Several waves of administrative reforms, and gradual institutionalization of the leadership succession process in recent years. Although none of these changes guarantees extensive political reform in the foreseeable future, the exploration of them contributes to an understanding of the fundamental changes the CCP leadership is undergoing in the reform era. The legal/institutional/political/perspective, in this sense, offers a better opportunity to explore the possibilities of the top-down approach towards political democracy in China. After all, considering the cost of a chaotic and instable China for the Chinese people, China's Asian neighbors, and the rest of the world, the most affordable and preferable change in Chinese political system is the gradual and piecemeal transition towards democracy. However, the limitation within this perspective is that the elite focus could easily create the illusion that the CCP still have the final say regarding the future course of the country's political development, which in reality is no longer true. Although none of the social, economic, and ideological challenges for the CCP's rule have gained substantial momentum for the time being, the existence of the bottom-up resistance to the CCP's domination of power has been made very clear in recent years.

---

[51] See e.g. Andrew Nathan, "China's Constitutionalist Option", in Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu, eds., *Domestic Politics in Transition: China's Deep Reform* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, INC.), p177-190.
[52] The National People's Congress is the legislative branch of Chinese government. Due to its lack of concrete power, it was called "Rubber Stamp" in the past, which indicates that its role is nothing more than symbolic.

2.2.3　Social/Cultural Approach

The social perspective complements the elite and economic approaches in a sense that it gives serious consideration to the grassroots challenges to the Party's domination of power. By centering on various social tensions and problems rising from the imbalanced economic development such as income inequality, increased social mobility, lack of social insurance, health care, and population imbalance, this group of China scholars suggests that instead of a top-down democratization, Chinese political reform will more likely follow a bottom-up model. In the worst scenario, the social tensions will reach the point that it will be out of the government's control and be finally translated into violent revolt that will topple down the current regime. In the best scenario, however, it will result in political reforms at the bottom, which will be gradually spread to the rest of the nation, resulting in a "percolation model" of political reform.[53]

In his research on income inequality and social mobility in China,[54] Lai Yongyi analyzes the trends of income distribution and social stratification in the reform era. According to him, the urban-rural gap of development has increased steadily in the last decades, reaching an alarming level in 2001.[55] At the same time, regional disparity in terms of development rate has also been widened as demonstrated by the ratio of the per capita income between the interior region and coastal region.[56] Besides the regional and urban-rural disparity, Lai also notices the

---

[53] "Percolation model" of political reform was used first by Lowell Dittmer to refer to a kind of political reform that is first originated at the bottom, then appreciated by higher cadres, and finally spread to the entire nation. For detailed explanation of this model, please refer to Lowell Dittmer, "Chinese Political Reform", in T. Y. Wang, ed., *China after the Sixteenth Party Congress* (Ontario, Canada: De Sitter Publications, 2005), p25-53.

[54] See e.g. Lai Yongyi, "Income Inequality, Limited Social Mobility and Remedial Policies", in Jong Wong and Lai Yongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd, 2006), p323-351.

[55] According to Lai, an average rural resident's consumption was equivalent to 34.1% that if an average urban resident. This ratio improved to 43.3% in 1985, but decreased dramatically to 33.9% in 1990. Astonishingly, it reached an unprecedented low point at 23.8% in 2001. for more details, please refer to Lai Yongyi, Income inequality, limited social mobility and remedial policies, in Jong Wong and Lai Yongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd, 2006), p320.

[56] According to Lai, the per capital income in the interior region in 1985 was 67% of the coastal region. This dropped to 55.8% in 1995 and reached a much lower 46.5% in 2001. for more details, please refer to Lai Yongyi, Income inequality, limited social mobility and remedial policies, in Jong Wong and Lai Yongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges*

enlarged income gap of different strata. Those regional, rural, and urban inequalities, together with restricted social mobility, have given rise to various social unrests, including protest, violence, and mass demonstrations. Despite the efforts of the government to make various policy adjustments to tackle these problems, the effects of the social programs designed to aid the poor and the disadvantaged, or the *ruoshiqunti,* and the various regional developmental programs developed to reduce regional disparity are very limited in the absence of substantial political reform.

The concerns over the mounting challenges posed by the restricted social mobility and increasing inequality in China are also shared by many other China Scholars.[57] Willy Wo-Lap Lam, Cai Yonshun, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai offer extensive research on the social unrest resulted from various inequality and corruptions and their implications for Chinese political future. Willy Wo-Lap Lam analyzes various rural and urban disturbances and rebellions among the peasants and workers, the plight of other disadvantaged sectors of Chinese society including the victims of the AIDS and environmental depredation, and the corresponding policy initiatives and expedient measures adopted by the Hu-Wen administration. He argues that, despite the Hu-Wen Administration's efforts to tame the grassroots rebellions and popular unrests by "beefing up the carrot and stick", the social

---

(Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd, 2006), p330.

[57] See e.g. John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, Democratizing China, in T. Y. Wang, ed., *China after the Sixteenth Party Congress* (Ontario, Canada: de sitter Publications, 2005); Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007); Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era: New leaders, New Challenges* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2006); Zhao Litao, "Labor Market Reforms under Hu-Wen", in Jong Wong and Lai Yongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd, 2006), p351-378; Edward Wu, "From Social Insurance to Social Assistance", in Jong Wong and Lai Yongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd, 2006), p405-436; Ake Blomqvist, "Governments, Markets and Health Care Sector", in Jong Wong and Lai Yongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd, 2006), p437-466; Cai Yongshun, "Managing Social Unrest", in Jong Wong and Lai Yongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd, 2006), p379-404; John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, "Social Changes and Political Reform in China: Meeting the Challenge of Success", in Yun-han Chu, Chih-Cheng Lo and Ramon H. Myers, eds., *The New Chinese Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities after the 16th Party Congress(The China Quarterly Special Issues New Series)*, No. 4 (2004), p107-123; Dorthy J. Solinger, "State and Society in Urban China in the Wake of the 16th Party Congress". In Yun-han Chu, Chih-Cheng Lo and Ramon H. Myers, eds., *The New Chinese Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities after the 16th Party Congress* (Melbourne, Australia: University of Cambridge Press, 2004), p124-140.

30

tensions have been escalating over time. In other words, the populist and piecemeal approach without concrete power delegation to the grassroots population provides no "thorough solutions to the social injustice that is tearing apart the body politic in China."[58] This point of view is echoed by John W. Lewis and Xue Litai as they express their doubts about the effectiveness of the Party's piecemeal or "fire-fighting" strategy in easing social tensions. According to them, the incremental approach to political reform is no longer adequate because of the ever-escalating challenges and pressures posed by the oppositional forces in Chinese society. Their conclusion is that "the Party has taken a huge gamble, and the problems [with which we began this analysis] could grow and overwhelm."[59]

Without question, the economic, legal/political, and social perspectives all produce profound insight into the political democratization in China. Given the fact that there is impetus for reforming the current political system from the top and the bottom, the focuses on economic developments, legal reform, and social resistance all capture key aspects of the ongoing political changes in the country. However, our knowledge of the political changes in China could be greatly enhanced by developing new perspectives or by integrating all the three dominant perspectives.

One powerful way to create the link among the available perspectives in China study is to approach Chinese politics from the lens of the media. As the mouthpiece of the Party and government, revenue-generating machines, entertainment tools, key information providers, as well as the watchdog of the local governments, the mass media in China best manifest the embroilment of contradictory and conflicting trends and forces that are present in Chinese society.

2.3 Mass Media as an Alternative Approach

---

[58] See e.g. Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era: New Leaders, New Challenges* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), p103.
[59] See e.g. John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, "Social Change and Political Reform in China: Meeting the Challenge of Success", in Yun-han Chu, Chih-Cheng Lo and Ramon H. Myers, *The New Chinese Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities after the 16th Party Congress (The China Quarterly Special Issues New Series),* No. 4 (2004), p107-123.

Given the powerful role of the media in shaping public opinion, fostering consensus, energizing social movements, fanning public sentiments, and creating knowledge, approaching a country's politics through the media perspective is far from a new development. To cite a few examples, Timothy W. Luke has conducted a thought-provoking study on the role of information technology in creating social meanings and new forms of power in post-industrial societies.[60] Norm Chomsky's exploration of media roles in manufacturing consent, controlling public mind, and facilitating special interests is equally revealing and provocative.[61] By investigating the ownership of the American media, Ben H. Bagdiken has enriched our thinking about the nature of American politics.[62] Robert W. McChesney's research on the changing role of the media in American politics also challenges the assumption that a society rich in commercial information choices is necessarily democratic.[63]

Compared to the rich literature available on media and politics in liberal-democratic societies, research studies that approach Chinese politics from the media perspective are scarce. The few cases that exist center on the more traditional media, such as newspapers and radio[64] or on the newly emerged media, the Internet.[65] Studies of Chinese TV, the most popular medium in today's China, are very few.[66] This may be due to a combination of several factors ranging from the lack of access to Chinese television programs, the difficulty in conducting field

---

[60] See e.g. Timothy W. Luke, *Screen of Power: Ideology, Domination, and Resistance in Informational Society* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

[61] See e.g. Norm Chomsky, *Media Control: the Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1997).

[62] See e.g. Ben H. Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997).

[63] See e.g. Robert McChesney, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

[64] See e.g. Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); T. Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997; G. C. Chu, *Radical Change through Communication in Mao's China* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1977); and C.C. Lee, *Voices of China: the Interplay of Politics and Journalism* (New York: The Guildford Press, 1990).

[65] See e.g. C. Hughes, *China and the Internet: Politics of the Digital Leap Forward* (Oxford, London: Routledge, 2003); and Yongming Zhou, *Historicizing Online Politics: Telegraphy, the Internet, and Political Participation in China* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).

[66] Junhao Hong's research on the internationalization of Chinese television is the most comprehensive study of Chinese television. However, his focus however is on importation and exportation in Chinese television industry. For details, please refer to Junhao Hong, *the Internationalization of Television in China: The Evolution of Ideology, Society, and Media since the Reform* (Westport, CT.: Praeger, 1998).

research in China, and the worldwide preoccupation with more rapidly growing media such as the Internet.

Attempts to investigate Chinese television news, the most tightly controlled TV program in China, are even more scarce. Tsan-Kuo Chang's research on the China Central Television (CCTV) news program and its implications on China's social changes and international image represent the first attempt to systematically examine Chinese national television news.[67] His narrow focus on the *CCTV Network News* program during Jiang Zemin's era restricted the explanatory power of the television news in interpreting the country's political development.

To fill this gap, this study will focus on the development of the nationwide television news reports and regulations in the reform era and their implications for the political control and development of democracy in China. Although a media system free from government control does not guarantee democracy for China (whose media system has been subject to tight ideological control by both the Party and state throughout its history) the withdrawal of the Party-State interference in media operation and management indicates increased political freedom and autonomy in Chinese society. It is based on this understanding that this research will seek to identify signs of change within the television news reporting practices and regulations. By exploring the development of the political control over the medium in the reform era, this research study aims to uncover answers to the broader questions of China's democratization process, such as whether China is developing towards democracy, and to what extent has democracy taken place. Chapter three and four will provide the theoretical and historical framework for the research while chapter five and six will be devoted to the analysis of television news reporting practices and regulations.

---

[67] See e.g. Tsan-Kuo Chang with Jian Wang and Yanru Chen, *China's Window on the World* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2002).

CHAPTER THREE: TELEVISON AND POLIITCS:

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

No media operate in a political vacuum. Despite the fact that all countries in the world guarantee their citizens a certain degree of freedom of expression, the control over the media, direct or indirect, is pervasive everywhere in today's world. Given this pervasiveness of media control throughout the world, a number of theories have been developed to address the relationship between media and politics. Among them, Seibert's four theories of the press[68] represent the first attempts in this direction. McCombs' agenda setting theory as well as Tuchman and Entman's frame analysis are two of the most well-known researches in this regard. In this chapter, I will first examine the three theories mentioned above and then analyze their relevance for my research on Chinese television and politics. Since Seibert et al.'s work has been subject to widespread critique, much effort has been made to reconsider and resurrect it as an important work on media and politics in this chapter.

3.1 Seibert et al.'s Four Theories of the Media

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the relationship between media and politics has been subject to scrutiny by scholars from a wide range of perspectives in

---

[68] Although the term "press" is used throughout the book, as Seibert makes very clear at the beginning of the book that it refers to all the media of mass communication. See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p1.

liberal democratic societies. Despite the different approaches, however, all these currently available research share one similarity, that is, they all inevitably directly or indirectly benefited from Seibert et al.'s classic, *Four Theories of the Press (1956)*. They are either the extension or modification of Seibert et al.'s work, or the denunciation or repudiation of it.[69] *Four Theories of the Press* represents the first well-known effort to investigate the relationship between media and political society. It is true that the four theories have been subject to widespread critiques and questionings after the Cold War due to various reasons ranging from their "simplistic" classification of media systems in the world,[70] misinterpretation of Leninism,[71] lack of consideration of the agent role of the audience in fostering changes in both the media and society,[72] as well as its narrow focus on philosophic and political rationales or theories rather than operational distinctions.[73] This, however, can not be the basis or excuse to make it corollary to denounce the value of the theories completely. As Junhao Hong and Jonathan Becker illustrate in their respective research, the four theories' classification of the media systems based on

---

[69] According to McQuail, the four theories proposed by Seibert et al. provide a framework to understand the relationship between media and society. All the new theories after it are medications of the "four theories" by addition or subtraction. See e.g. Denis McQuail's, *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction* (London: SAGE Publications, 1987).

[70] Seibert's four theory of the press was criticized for being "outdated and simplistic" by a number of scholars. See e.g. Jack M. McLeod and Jay G. Blumler, "The Macro-Social Level of Communication Science", Charles R. Berger and Steven H. Chaffee, eds., *Handbook of Communication Science* (California: SAGE Publications, 1989), p271-322; John Martin and Arju Grover Chaudhary, *Comparative Mass Media Systems* (New York: Longman 1983); and Denis McQuail's, *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction* (London: SAGE Publications, 1987).

[71] The Soviet media theory was particularly criticized for its misinterpretation of Marxism. See e.g. Haiming Liu, "Misinterpretations of Communism in His Soviet Communist Media Theory" (in Chinese), *Hunan Mass Communication Journal*, vol. 5, No. 6 (November 2005), p26-29. According to him, Soviet media theory was developed under Stalin's regime, during which Marxism and Leninism has been distorted in various ways. Schramm, the author of the Soviet media theory, however, neglected this fact and lumped Marxism, Leninism and Stalinism together. Colin Sparks also denounced the Soviet media theory as outdated and incorrect. For more details, please refer to Colin Sparks, "Media Theory after the Fall of Communism", in James Curran and Myung-Jin Park, eds., *De-Westernizing Media Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p35-49.

[72] Jennifer Ostini and Anthony Y. H. Ostini criticized Seibert' Peterson and Schramm's overemphasis on the role of state policies in shaping a country's media theory in their "Beyond the Four Theories of the Press: A New Model of National Media Systems", *Mass Communication and Society*, vol. 5, No. 1(2002), p41-56. They pointed out the autonomy and flexibility for journalists to actively shape the product of mass communication and negotiate between professionalism and state control.

[73] For detailed criticisms against Seibert et al.'s lack of "operational distinctions", please refer to Colin Sparks, "Media Theory after the Fall of European Communism: Why the Old Models from East and West Won't Do Any More", in James Curran and Myung-Jin Park, eds., *De-Westernizing Media Studies* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), p35-49.

political society and their analysis of the media freedom and control though theoretical and normative descriptions remain very useful in interpreting media developments in the post Cold War Russia and China[74].

3.1.1 Introduction

Based on the different social and political environment, Seibert et al. divide the media systems in the world into four models: the authoritarian media model, the libertarian model, the social responsibility model, and the Soviet communist model.[75] This classification, on the one hand, provides a platform to analyze and understand the media systems in relation to the political environment they are embedded in; on the other hand, however, it also provides an analytical framework for studying the development and transition of the media system in a society. It has been noted that the demise of the former Soviet Union made the word "Soviet" seem awkward within Soviet communist theory. Given the theoretical, analytical, and explanatory power of the theories, however, it is very little more than "throwing out the baby with the bath water" to exaggerate this defect and discredit both the categorization and logic of the four theories as Cold War antique.[76] After all, the Cold War did not result in the "end of the world" as Fukuyama predicted, and the world still manifests a remarkable degree of political diversity. As long as the differences in political systems persist, the relevance of the four theories developed by Seibert et al. will continue to have relevance for our examination of the relationship between media and society.

---

[74] Hong applies the four theories in his analysis on the internationalization of Chinese television. For details, please refer to Junhao Hong, *The Internationalization of Chinese Media* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998); and Becker applies the four theories in studying media in post Cold-War Russia. For details, please refer to Jonathan Becker, "Lessons from Russia: A Neo-Authoritarian Media System", *European Journal of Communication*, vol.19, no. 2 (2004), p139-163.

[75] Seibert made it clear that among the four theories they developed, the later two are merely developments and modifications of the first two. To be more specific, the Soviet Communist theory is only a development of the much older authoritarian theory,, and the social responsibility their is only a modification of the modification of the libertarian theory. the reasons why they treat them as four separate theories, is because the Soviet practices were spectacularly different from the older authoritarian and the social responsibility theory was taking shape so rapidly that it represents the direction of media development in the states. See e.g. Seibert, Peterson and Schramm's Four theories of the press (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois press, 1956), p2.

[76] See e.g. Jonathan Becker, "Lessons from Russia: A Neo-Authoritarian Media System", *European Journal of Communication*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2004), p143.

Based on the belief that the media system always "takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates" and "reflects the system of social control whereby the relations of individuals and institutions are adjusted,"[77] Siebert et al. begin their research with the exploration of the social and political systems throughout the world. To be more specific, they investigate certain "basic beliefs and assumptions which the society holds," such as the nature of man, the nature of society and state, the relation of man to the sate, and the nature of knowledge and truth. According to these three authors, the knowledge of the social systems in which the media function is the key to "see the differences between media systems in full perspective."[78]

Although Seibert makes it clear at the beginning of the book that Soviet Communist theory and social responsibility theory are merely developments and extensions of the authoritarian and libertarian theory, the four theories are treated as separate yet interrelated categories throughout the book. Given that the analysis of each theory has been grounded in a different collection of philosophical works by political philosophers such as Plato, Machiavelli, Milton, Locke, Mill, Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, as well as certain political and technological movements such as the Enlightenment and the Communication Revolution[79] The book represents a philosophical and political study of the media system in the world.

Born in the authoritarian climate of the Renaissance, the authoritarian media theory is the oldest among the four models. However this in no way diminishes its validity in interpreting the relationship between media and politics in the modern age. As a theory "under which the press (the media), as an institution, is controlled

---

[77] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p2.
[78] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p2.
[79] To be more specific, their discussion of the authoritarian theory is grounded in centuries of authoritarian political thought from Plato to Machiavelli; the libertarian theory is grounded in Milton, Locke, Mill and the Enlightenment; the social responsibility theory is grounded in a communication revolution and in certain behavioristic doubts about the philosophy of the enlightenment; and the Soviet communist theory is grounded in Marx, Lenin, Stalin and the dictatorship of the communist party in the Soviet Union.

in its functions and operation by organized society through another institution"[80] it has been "consciously or unconsciously adopted in modern times by diverse countries in the world."[81] As with any other theory of mass media and society, the authoritarian theory has its own basic philosophical assumptions about the nature of humanity, the nature of society and state, the relation of humanity to the state, and the nature of knowledge and truth. Heavily influenced by the ideas of Plato and Machiavelli, authoritarian theory has a very reserved assumption of human ability of attaining their full potentiality. According to authoritarian theory, an individual can only accomplish their purpose through a group, community, or society. The state, as the highest expression of group organization, in return, represents the most important force in achieving the full development of man, and fostering an advanced civilization. As to the assumptions of the nature of knowledge and truth, this perspective believes that truth can only be produced by the elite; therefore power should rest in the hands of this small group of elite. The combined effects of these underlying assumptions inevitably legitimize the state control over the mass media in the name of achieving efficiency of managing state affairs. Although private ownership is permitted under this authoritarian system, the state practices tight control over the media by issuing patent, organizing guilds, licensing, and censorship. As a consequence, no criticism of political machinery and officials in power is tolerated.

Differing from the authoritarian system, the libertarian media system depicts a totally different picture of the relationship between media and state. Under such a system, states exist to serve the needs of the people and government and not to interfere with mass communication activities. Influenced by Milton, Locke, and Mill, this theory assumes that all individuals in a society are able to actively create knowledge by making rational decisions and judgment of the information available to then. By recognizing the capability and agent nature of human beings, this theory critiques the top-down formation and dissemination of knowledge. Private

---

[80] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press*. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p10.
[81] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press*. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p9.

ownership is both allowed and protected as the dominant practice under libertarian systems. Instead of being servant to the government as in authoritarian system, media in the libertarian system are information sources, entertainment providers, social knowledge creators, profit making machines, and most importantly the government's watchdog. The only restraints imposed on media are laws that are designed to protect the rights of the individual such as libel laws and privacy laws.

The authoritarian and libertarian media theories aforementioned provide the basic framework for us to interpret the relationship between the media and politics in two political systems. The social responsibility theory and the Soviet media theory, however, offer an opportunity to understand the application of the two theories in two specific countries in the world, the United States and the Soviet Union. Although developed out of the authoritarian and libertarian media theories, the social responsibility and Soviet media theory represent both continuation and innovations from their predecessors.

The social responsibility media system arises out of the concern with media monopoly among the developed countries where the libertarian media model is adopted. As the ownership of media gets further consolidated within the hands of a small group of media corporations, the trends toward media concentration and monopoly have become increasingly evident since the 1960s. The typical pattern of a multiplicity of small media units expressing different political viewpoints as conceived by the libertarian system is no longer there. This absence of a multiplicity of media opinions results in limited choice for the audience in the marketplace of ideas, which directly threatens "the public's rights to know."[82] To avoid or reverse the situation, the social responsibility system modifies the traditional libertarian system by emphasizing the public's right to information and requires the publisher to assume moral responsibilities. According to this theory, "freedom carries concomitant obligations;"[83] in other words, there is no absolute freedom. Therefore the media, which enjoy the privileges under the libertarian system, are responsible to

---

[82] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p73.
[83] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p74.

society to carry out certain essential functions of mass communication in contemporary society. If the media do not take on such responsibility themselves, it may be necessary for certain public agencies to enforce it. Social responsibility theory accepts the functions of the media ascribed by the traditional libertarian theory such as severing the political and economic system, enlightening the public, and safeguarding the liberties of the individual. However, it also suggests that the media themselves are not competent enough to perform tasks such as safeguarding the liberties of the individual as the role of the media in serving the economic system should in no way take precedence over other functions such as promoting the democratic process or enlightenment; and the entertainment furnished by the media should be good and healthy. This reinterpretation of the functions of the media reflects social responsibility theory's views of the nature of humanity and governing bodies. Differing from the traditional libertarian views of humans as rational and moral beings, social responsibility theory has little confidence in the rationality of human beings by arguing that humans are lethargic. People are capable of using their reason but loath to do so. Therefore, one could easily be manipulated by demagogues, advertising pitchmen, and others persuasive actors. Based on this skeptical view of humanity and the self-righting process, social responsibility theory emphasizes the role of moral codes in regulating the media and their practitioners.[84] In terms of the nature of government, instead of considering government as the chief foe of liberty, social responsibility theory recognizes the positive roles of government in maintaining the freedom of the individuals and society. The author argues "the government must not merely allow freedom; it must also actively promote it."[85] More specifically, "the government should help society to obtain the services it requires from the mass media if a self-regulating press and the self-righting features of community life are insufficient to provide them."[86] This should be in way translated into an advocate of a heavy-handed role of government in mass media, for the theory also clearly states that private ownership must still be

---

[84] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p101.
[85] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press), p95.
[86] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press), p95.

the foundation for the media and the government should not interfere in the media ownership.[87]

Although the Soviet Communist media theory arose in the early twentieth century, it relates to authoritarian ideals developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As with the media in an authoritarian regime, the media in the Soviet communist media theory serves the ruling party. But it also differs from the media in authoritarian system in the ownership of the media. To be more specific, the media in the Soviet communist theory are owned by the state.[88]

Molded by the nature of the Soviet socio-political system and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the Soviet communist theory blends media theory and state theory in the Soviet Union. As Schramm mentioned, "the Soviet media have grown so as to reflect the Soviet official ideology, the Soviet state, and the Soviet 'ideal personality.'"[89] Mass communications are actually conceived instrumentally as tools of political power, which are integrated with other instruments of state power and party influence, thus contributing to the advancement of the revolutionary cause of the working class, the power of Soviets, the unity within the state and the Party, the formation of political consensus, and successful orchestration of various political propaganda directed by the Politburo of the CPSU.

Theoretically, the Soviet theory considers the mass media outlets as the "collective propagandists, collective agitators, and instruments to be controlled by the state, instruments of social change and social control, and instruments of serious purpose."[90] Given the instrumental roles of the media in spreading the Communist party's revolutionary ideas, propagating party lines and directives, exciting the masses, and promoting party images, "a rigid supervision is exercised over all undertakings connected directly or indirectly with printing and publishing."[91] This

---

[87] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press), p95.
[88] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p128.
[89] See e.g. Seibert et al., Four *Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p116.
[90] See e.g. Seibert et al., Four *Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p116.
[91] See e.g. B. W. Maxwell, "Political Propaganda in Soviet Russia", in Harwood L. Childs, ed., *Propaganda and Dictatorship* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1936), p76.

Soviet concept of the media clearly reflects certain Marxist notions. First, it conceives of the mass media as a state institution that was designed to shoulder the responsibilities for interpreting party doctrine for the CPSU and implementing the government's policies and directives. This is closely connected to the Marxist concept of party/state unity, which would not permit the press to function as a fourth estate, independently criticize government, or serve as a forum for free discussion like in most liberal-democratic societies. Moreover, Soviet media theory also insists that the government always owns the facilities of the mass media. This idea was derived from the Marxist notion of material determinism, which suggests that control of the press can only be achieved by owning the facilities. According to Marx,

> "The press would rest with those who owned the facilities, the press, the paper, and the broadcasting stations. So long as the capitalist class controls these physical properties, the working class will never have a fair access to the channels of communications. To have real access, the working class must own the means and facilities of mass communication, for the press, like other institutions of the state, are simply a class organ."[92]

The mass media are undoubtedly transformed into state apparatuses under the Soviet system. State apparatuses, according to Marx, not only contain coercive apparatuses such as the government, the administration, the army, policy, the courts and the prisons, but they also contain ideological state apparatuses, such as religion, education, family, politics, culture, and communication. The major difference between state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses lies in their respective ways of functioning in a society. State apparatuses function through violence or coercive enforcement while ideological apparatuses, in contrast, work through ideas or ideology. As ideological state apparatuses, the mass media are required to faithfully serve the interests of the state and the Party. Siebert et al. summarized the

---

[92] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p111.

functions of the mass media as such: "to provide the popularized 'revelation,' by which to contribute to the political consciousness of the masses; to provide the doctrinal explanations by which to inform the leaders of though; and to contribute to the smooth functioning of the Party and the organization of the workers by carrying a great deal of official information."[93]

Despite the fact that the Soviet government justified its instrumental uses of the media for social and political control with Marxist and Leninist ideology, its media systems were frequently attacked by liberal democratic societies for its apparent lack of freedom and integrity. In response to outside criticism, Soviet leaders argued that their mass media system was far more responsible than the so-called free media system of the West, for the Soviets used the mass media mainly for serious purposes rather than for entertainment. Moreover, continually reaffirmed that Soviet citizen's rights to freedom of speech, the press, assembly, meeting, street parades, and demonstrations were guaranteed with one condition: the mass media must be utilized in accordance with what the CPSU leadership deemed the interests of the toiling masses and to serve as what the Politburo regarded as the means of strengthening the socialist social order. In short, Soviet leaders believed their state was a great co-operative enterprise that alone made a good life possible for individuals. It was not a necessary evil against which the individuals had to be protected like in liberal-democratic societies. The enforced conformity that permitted almost no deviation from political, social, and cultural viewpoints was closely controlled by a few men in the Kremlin. Therefore, it represented positive freedom in the Soviet Union. This logic automatically legitimized the CPSU's duty to protect Soviet citizens from all influences, which would interfere with their new ways of living or the doctrine set forth by party leaders. To refute criticism from the liberal-democratic societies, the Soviet leaders also stressed that the liberal media in the West were similarly subject to control measures, although a different kind of

---

[93] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p125.

control usually practiced by special interests, which were deemed notoriously corrupt and irresponsible.[94]

The authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and Soviet communist media theory outlines the relationship between media and politics in different political and social settings. Although the four theories all root in a specific period of time and are closely tied to specific political conditions, the categorization and explanation of the four theories is relevant in analyzing the relationship between media and politics in the modern era. The relevance and the explanatory power of the four theories can be seen from the continued scholarly efforts to apply them in different research studies on media and politics in the post Cold War Russia and China.[95] After all, no theory is completely free from historical constraints and circumstances. What is more important for scholars is to identify the embedded ideas and values of the theory that are beyond the limitations of time, so as to anchor, guide, and improve our interpretation of modern societies. By explaining that why and how the four theories is relevant to the study of Chinese media and politics during the reform era in the following part of the chapter, as well as applying the theories to this dissertations analysis of Chinese media and politics in the following chapters, one of the goals will be to resurrect the state approach in identifying and interpreting media control in different political societies or at different stages of one political society inherent in the *Four Theories of the Press*.

3.1.2   Relevance to My Research

For my research on Chinese media, the four theories bear immediate relevance. First of all, Soviet communist theory has not only guided the establishment of media systems in the People's Republic of China but also continued to exert influence on Chinese media education, practice, and theory. In this sense, it is crucial in deciphering both the Chinese media in history and at present. Second, despite the

---

[94]   See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p105.
[95]   See e.g. Junhao Hong, *The Internationalization of Television in China: The Evolution of Ideology, Society, and Media since the Reform* (Westport, CT.: Praeger, 1998); and Jonathan Becker, "Lessons from Russia: A Neo-Authoritarian Media System" in *European Journal of Communication*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2004), p139-163.

liberalization trends, the Party-State still plays a dominant role in Chinese media in the reform era, thus making the application of the state approach developed by Seibert to the analysis of Chinese media appropriate. Finally, the distinction drawn between media systems by the Seibert et al. in their *Four Theories of Press* provides the analytical tools to explore, analyze, and interpret the changes in the landscape and nature of Chinese media and politics.

The Soviet communist media system is sometimes criticized as a selective description of the press theory in just one country, the Soviet Union, and in just one historical period, the height of the Stalinist period and the Cold War.[96] However, the basic concept of the Soviet communist media system and its basic principles have been accepted, implemented, and enforced in a number of countries even after the Cold War era. The Soviet notion that that the mass media should act as the Party's collective propagandists, agitators, and organizers was particularly "instrumental in shaping the Chinese Communist Party's journalism policy."[97] It is true that by the end of the twentieth century the world witnessed upheavals in the Communist Bloc in which one system crumbled after the other. However, after nearly 90 yeas of communist experience, while there are only a few national leaders that still pay tribute to it, China stands as the last remnant. In this sense, the Soviet Communist theory remains relevant and meaningful in analyzing Chinese media and politics.

The influence of the Soviet media theory can be seen from two sides. On the one side, Soviet media theory has influenced Chinese media management, practice, and theory. Built out of the Soviet model, the media ownership and management are tightly controlled by the Party-State in China. As state institutions, all media outlets are required to be registered under an institution, university, research institute, or working unit. The media have always been used instrumentally in propagating party policies, directives, and ideologies, agitating the public, and organizing social

---

[96] See e.g. Colin Sparks, "Media Theory after the Fall of European Communism: Why the Old Models from East and West Won't Do Any More?" in James Curran and Myung-jin Park, Eds., *De-westernizing Media Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[97] See e.g. Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and The Bottom Line* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998), p19.

movements and events during the revolution and pre-reform era.[98] Moreover, the Soviet theory also influences Chinese media theory, party journalism, which was an embellishment of the Soviet theory based on the Chinese situation.[99] As the official media theory, the influence of this party journalism remains to be pervasive in present day China. On the other side, when the tendency towards de-emphasis of communist ideology become evident in the reform era, the Party still adheres, at least verbally, to the principles of the Soviet media theory with an aim to legitimize the continued Party-State control over the media.[100] Although the Party journalism has been enriched by each generation of leadership, all four generations of the leadership invariably emphasize the mouthpiece role of the media and the importance of positive propaganda. Given the ramifications within Chinese politics and society in the reform era, the official adherence to the Soviet media theory gives insight into the uneasiness felt on the Party's side in the face of contending and clashing ideas and values. By conducting research on the development of the media's role in Chinese society and politics in the reform era and contrasting it to the normative models developed by Seibert et al. in both the democratic and non-democratic regimes, it is expected that interesting findings and knowledge will be produced regarding Chinese media and politics in transition.

Despite the tendency for all three authors to investigate media control under different political systems, the state has been taken as the starting point of the analysis of media control. To be more specific, the theorists consider the degree of

---

[98] The instrumental use of the mass media reached its peak during the great leap forward and Cultural Revolution. For details, please see e.g. R. L. Bishop's *Qilai! Mobilizing One Billion Chinese: The Chinese Communication System* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989); W. H. Chang, *Mass Media in China: History and Future* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989); T. Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); L. P. Van Slyke, *The Chinese Communist Movement* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968); and Xing Lu, *Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: the Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture and Communication* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2004).

[99] This theory of "party journalism" is composed of three parts: the media must accept the Party' guiding ideology as its own; the media must accept the Party's policies, directives and programs; and the media must accept the Party's leadership and adhere to the Party's organization policies and press policies. See e.g. Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1998), p19.

[100] The role of the media as the mouthpiece of the Party and instruments for the Party to orchestrate positive propaganda is continued to be emphasized by the head of the central propaganda department. See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2007* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Publishing House), p3-6.

state involvement as the standard in judging media freedom in different societies. Although Norm Chomsky, Ben Bagdiken, Timothy W. Luke, and Robert W. McChesney have reminded us that the absence of state provides no guarantee of media freedom in real sense, few scholars would hesitate to admit that the massive presence of the state will definitely harm democracy. For China, where state once monopolized media ownership, management, and content, the state withdrawal represents an important step towards media freedom. Due to the presence of various elements and influences in the Chinese media industry, it is still unclear how much state influence has been reduced and towards which direction Chinese media is developing. The state approach will assist my research on the dynamics of the information flow in China.

The classification of the world's media system into four models offers a platform for studying the Chinese media in transition. China's economic reform has remolded Chinese society and politics. Under the combined effects of the decentralization of political power, opening up to the rest of the world, and official encouragement for commercialization and market mechanism, China's media industry has experienced rapid expansion, resulting in the transition of the media from propaganda instruments to a combination of revenue-generating machines, entertainment providers, and sometimes even watchdogs of local governments. How should one interpret the changes in the Chinese media system? In which direction is Chinese media freedom developing? Is Chinese media developing toward a libertarian model, or a quasi-authoritarian and quasi-libertarian model? To what extent have the liberal elements been incorporated into Chinese media? The framework provided by Seibert et al.'s four theories of the press provides the framework to explore answers to these questions.

3.2 Other Theories on Media and Politics

After the publication of Seibert et al.'s work, there have been unremitting efforts among scholars of both political science and communication studies to further explore the relationship between media and politics. Agenda setting and framing analysis represent two of the most well-known and popular theories derived from

such an effort. Seibert et al.'s four theories of the press, together with McCombs and Shaw's agenda setting theory and Tuchman and Entman's framing analysis produce insights into the ways that the media could possibly influence public opinion and politics. The four theories lay the framework to analyze the interaction between media and politics in different political settings while agenda setting and framing present concrete tools to conduct more in-depth analysis of the interactions between media and politics.

3.2.1 Introduction

Embedded in social constructivism, the most well-known research on media agenda-setting theory was conducted by McCombs and Shaw in 1968. McCombs and Shaw investigated the role of the mass media in influencing the public opinion during the presidential elections. The research results confirmed that the mass media exerted strong influence on what the voters considered as the most important issues of the campaigns.[101] In their analysis on the dynamic relationship between the media and the public opinion in North Carolina during the 1968 presidential election, they provided explanations about the possible ways for the media to set the agenda in politics. According to McCombs and Shaw, the mass media can shape public opinion by making certain issues salient. In other words, they can set agendas by purposely including and excluding certain issues in the coverage. By doing this, the media tell the public what to think about rather than what to think. This invisible manipulation of public opinion blurs the distance between the real world and the picture in our mind as highlighted by Lippman.[102]

Framing analysis is also grounded in constructivist tradition. Ever since Goffman defined the concept of "framing" as "labels for schemata of interpretation, which enable individuals to locate, perceive, identity and label occurrences or information,"[103] it has been subject to various interpretation and application. As the first scholar that applied the concept of framing to the news process, Tuchman

---

[101] See e.g. Maxwell E McComb and Donald Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Functions of Mass Media", *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 36 No. 2 (Summer 1972), p176.
[102] See e.g. Walter. Lippman, *Public Opinion (*New York: Free Press, 1922).
[103] See e.g. Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p560.

redefined framing as "templates, or working routines largely unspoken and unacknowledged that allow journalists to quickly identify and classify information and then package it efficiently for their audience"[104] by applying the concept to the news process. Entman further developed the concept by defining news frames as both mentally stored principles for processing information of the news texts through keywords, metaphors, concepts, and symbols. According to him, news frames work to make some ideas more salient in the text, others less so, and others entirely invisible.[105] Therefore, framing is "the process of selecting, highlighting, and sorting into a coherent narrative."[106] Despite the apparent differences among the above definitions of framing, it is clear that they all acknowledged the existence of threats to the media objectivity and impartiality, and confirmed the absence or disintegration of the marketplace of ideas in liberal-democracies. Due to the explanatory power of the concept of framing, it has been frequently re-defined[107] and applied in the analysis of a wide range of topics.[108]

3.2.2 Relevance to My Research

Although the two theories differ from each in their argument about the possible ways that the media could shape public opinion, they improve our understanding of the relationship between media and politics in a couple of ways.

First of all, by highlighting the distance between the media portrayal of 'reality' and what is really occurring in a society, these two theories allow us to

---

[104] See e.g. Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Story of the Construction of Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978).
[105] See e.g. Robert M. Entman, "Framing US Coverage of International News: Contrasts in the Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Accident", *Journal of Communication*, vol.41, no.4 (1991), p6-27.
[106] See e.g. Robert M. Entman and Susan Herbst, "Reframing Public Opinion as We Have Known It", in Lance W. Bennett and Robert M. Entman, eds., *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p203.
[107] See e.g. Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, "Framing Theory", in *Annual Review Political Science,* no.10 (2007), p103-126.
[108] See e.g. D.V. Dimitrova, L. L. Kaid, A. P. Williams, and K. D. Trammell, "War on the Web: The Immediate News Framing of Gulf War II, in *Press/Politics,* no. 10 (2005), p22-44; and D. V. Shah, M. D. Watts, D. Domke and D. P. Fan, "News Framing and Cueing of Issue Regimes: Explaining Clinton's Public Approval in Spite of Scandal", in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, no.66 (2002), p339-370.

discover the multiple means of disguised media control or factors that empower the media to construct/distort the reality, foster knowledge, manipulate the public opinion, and limit public interpretations of political events in societies. By setting agendas or establishing frames of interpretations, the media function as the tools for molding and manipulating the mind of public.

For agenda-setting theory, instead of telling the audience what to think, the media tell the audience what to think about by making certain issues salient. In McCombs' words, "in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality; readers not only learn about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue."[109] This molding process could happen at both individual and institutional levels. Journalists could consciously or unconsciously integrate their values, judgment, and ideological inclinations into their selection of topics and reports. The institutional preferences and networks can play equally important roles in shaping the outcome of the media production. In the case of framing analysis, however, the salience is given to the attributes of the issues rather than the issues themselves. As a result, the media tell us how to think about certain political issues.

Second, by exposing the disguised and indirect ways of media control, both of the two theories push us to re-think the concept of media control as well as the liberal authoritarian paradigm developed by Seibert et al., and the libertarian model in particular. A media system free from government control has been long embraced and applauded as free media, which helps to promote liberal democratic ideals and values. Given the pervasiveness of disguised controls and manipulations, however, the questions remain of how free the media in liberal democratic societies is, to what extent will the withdrawal of the state in media management and operation guarantee media freedom, and to what extent has the so called free media in liberal democracies promoted or harmed the market place of ideas. State involvement in the media production and management definitely poses the most malignant threat to media freedom, however, it in no way means the exclusion of state will

---

[109] See e.g. Maxwell E McComb and Donald Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Functions of Mass Media", *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 36 No. 2 (Summer 1972), p176.

automatically lead to the freedom expression. After all, it is myth rather than reality that the commercial media give the people what they want due to market competition. In this sense, both the agenda-setting theory and framing analysis add sophistication to the four theories developed by Seibert et al.

Compared to Seibert et al.'s four theories, the relevance of the agenda-setting and framing analysis to my research is more micro-level in a sense that they offer tools to identify, investigate, and discern various editorial, institutional and party control over Chinese media, and television news in particular. The concept of agenda-setting allows the singling out of the issues that have been attached special attention to in Chinese news reports. This will help to clarify the public agenda that the television news grogram prefers to see via the news media. Whereas the knowledge of frames enables one to tell the positions and perspectives held by the television stations or the state through exploring the attributes of the issue in the news. By analyzing how the news discourse is constructed and negotiated, a more in-depth knowledge about the possible media bias will be produced. More importantly, a longitudinal study of how the television agendas and frames change over a period of time could be expected to generate insights into China's media and political changes.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE PARTY-STATE, TELEVISON, AND

POLITICAL CONTROL: A HISTORICAL REVIEW

The television, together with all other forms of mass media, has been an integrate part of the Party-State ever since the CCP moved to the center of the political stage in China. This importance attached to the mass media is derived partially from the Party's revolutionary experience, in which the media had played a critical role in spreading communist ideology and gathering mass support, and partially also from the Soviet media theory, which considers mass media as instruments of state and party "revelation, propaganda, and agitation."[110] As a state institution, both the ownership and management of the Chinese television were subject to complete state control in the early years of the republic. The introduction of the market logic to the media sector in late 1970s transformed media practices and management in China. However, these new developments in the media sector remain closely entangled with and controlled by China's political development. Given the situation, a thorough understanding of Chinese television news reporting practices will not be possible without some background information on the interlocking relationship between the media and politics in China. Among all media outlets, television has been picked as the focus of my research. This is partly because the inadequate research on television compared to other media and partly also because the importance of television as the mass information provider in China. Due to the easy

---

[110] See e.g. Seibert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p121.

access and availability, television has replaced newspapers and radio as the most important and most popular medium in the 1990s. The great potential for the television to impact public opinion makes it a viable topic to examine. The following part of the chapter will first explore the general role of the mass media in Chinese politics and then investigate the historical development of Chinese television in relation to the country's politics.

4.1 The Politics of Chinese Mass Media

As a result of the Soviet influence and its rich experiences in using the media during the revolutionary years, the CCP has development its own theory on journalism, *party journalism*, as early as the 1940s. As an embellishment and extension of the Soviet media theory, party journalism clearly defined the relationship between the mass media and the Party in China: the news media must accept the Party's guiding principle as its own; propagate the Party's programs, policies, and directives; accept the Party's leadership; and stick to the Party's organizational policies and press policies.[111] Under the guidance of this party centered theory, Chinese media have played a critical role in the country's political development. In one way, they have functioned as the mouthpiece and loudspeakers of the Party in propagating party politics and directive, promoting unity and stability in Chinese society, and consolidating party image and legitimacy among the masses. In another way, however, they have been used as instruments for factional struggles within the Party.

4.1.1 The Party, the State and Control over the Media

As illustrated by the above section, the media are the instruments for promoting the influence and image of the Party; however, they are also used as weapons for factional struggles among the Party members. Despite the contradictory use of the media in politics within or without the CCP, the important role of the media in Chinese politics has been confirmed in either case. With an aim to effectively manipulate public opinion in China, the CCP has developed elaborate control

---

[111] See e.g. Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), p19.

mechanisms over the mass media after decades of experiences using them as propaganda tools. The control mechanisms developed by the Party include the control of ownership, control of management, control of content, as well as pre-publication and post-publication punishment.

Compared to most of the media systems in liberal democracies, the distinguishing characteristic of the Chinese media system is that it is owned by the state. As mentioned earlier, this state ownership of the media is derived from the Soviet media theory and practices, according to which the media should function as a state institution. Due to China's "leaning to one side"[112] foreign policy, it had maintained a very close relationship with the Soviet Union in the early 1950s. China not only heavily relied on the Soviet Union for protection, but many of Chinese party leaders tried to copy the Soviet model in developing China's social and economic system, including its mass communication system. Under the guidance of Soviet media theory, the CCP quickly tightened and consolidated its control over the media in the early years of the PRC. The state ownership of the media was achieved gradually during the socialist transformation movement in the early 1950s. The economic landscape in China was largely fragmented due to the existence and interlay of feudal, capitalist, and socialist economic elements. According to the statistics provided by China Central United Front Department, the capitalist industry accounted for over 63.3% of the total national industry value.[113] In terms of the media industry, 55 out of 281 newspapers in 1951 were privately owned.[114] To avoid creating "new" enemies for socialist China and curb the escalation of social tensions, which maximized the expertise and experience of private business owners and capitalist managers, the government initially introduced friendly and inclusive measures to work with the national bourgeoisie and petty private business owners and managers. The formation of the National Industrial and Commercial Union in

---

[112] China took a clear-cut stand between the Soviet Union and the United States in the early years of the PRC. Mao considered the relations with the Soviet Union as the top priority of its foreign relations. For details, please refer to Xi Chen, "China's Foreign Policy: Dynamics and International Order", in Yannis A Stivachtis, ed., *International Order in a Globalizing World* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007), p85-100.

[113] Available at the link of www.zytzb.cn .

[114] See e.g. J. S. Lang, *zhongguo xinwen zhengce tixi yanjiu (The Study of Chinese Media Policy)* (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2003), p61.

1953 symbolized these official efforts in history. With the united front between the CCP and the national bourgeoisie, the government was able to transform the ownership of the media industry smoothly in the same year. What is remarkable about this transformation is that it was far ahead of other industries in China,[115] which confirmed the importance attached to the media industry by both the Party and the state from the very beginning of the PRC.

Besides, the CCP also retains its control by monopolizing media management. The required media affiliation to government ministries, institutes, research facilities or organizations is designed to serve this purpose.[116] By attaching media to various state institutions, the Party-State applies dual supervision over media work. General guidelines and parameters for news operations can be found in party resolutions, directives, announcements, editorial bulletins, and speeches and informal messages of leading Party figures. Take Xinhua News Agency as an example, of a department under the State Council, its daily operations relies heavily on instructions from various levels of the Party bureaucracy. Under the dual supervision system, the influence of the Party far outweighs that of the state. This predominance of the Party can be clearly discerned from the standards for appointing chiefs of various media outlets. As Mao has made explicit, "a method to improve (communication) work is that the central bureau and the provincial party committees have to assign a comrade who thoroughly understands the right line and right policies of the Party to oversee the newspaper, which is led by the committee itself, before its publication. The newspaper may not publish until this comrade review it."[117] Here, no requirement for professional skills is mentioned, whereas there is an emphasis on thorough understanding of the "right line and right policies of the Party." The weight given to the ideological reliability in assignment of personnel can be seen in various media outlets in China. One prerequisite for employment with the Xinhua News Agency is that the applicants had to be party members or candidates. In addition to imposing

---

[115] See e.g. J. S. Lang, *zhongguo xinwen zhengce tixi yanjiu (The study of Chinese media policy)* (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2003).

[116] See e.g. Todd Hazelbath, *The Chinese Media: More Autonomous and Diverse, Within Limits* (Langley, VA: Central Intelligence Agency, 1997).

[117] See e.g. G. G. Wu, "Command Communication: The Politics of Editorial Formulation in the People's Daily", *China Quarterly*, No. 137 (March 1994), p204.

ideological requirements on the personnel recruitment, several ministries are also established to effectively control the management of different forms of media. The Central Publicity Department (formerly known as the Central Propaganda Department)[118] is the most important organ in controlling the ideological orientation of the all media outlets in China.[119] If there is any media effort trying to test the limits of the government, the Central Publicity Department is the first to react. Besides this overall control on the ideological content of the mass media in China, each medium is also subjected to supervision by a specific government unit such as the State Press and Publications Administration; the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television Broadcasting Bureau; and the Ministry of Information Industry.[120] All these administrations, departments, and ministries together form the control cartel over the media in China.

To control the electronic broadcast networks, the government establishes the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (formerly known as Ministry of Radio, Film and Television). Unlike any other government department, this ministry is considered both to be a news organization and a broadcasting administrative bureaucracy. Two national broadcast networks, the CPR (Central People's Radio) and the CCTV (China Central Television), are all under the direct control of this ministry. The editorial board of the administration, composed of responsible deputy ministers, heads of the three radio and television networks, as well as leaders of other departments, such as the Film Bureau, the Broadcast Publishing House, and the Television Arts Committee, is

[118] See e.g. Yuezhi Zhao, "The State, the Market and the Media Control in China", in Pradip N. Thomas and Zaharom Nain, eds., *Who Owns the Media? Global Trends and Local Resistance* (New York: Zed Books, 2004).

[119] Realizing the negative connotation of the word "propaganda" in western societies, Chinese government has changed the name of the Central Propaganda Department into the Central Publicity Department. This can be seen as a sign of its efforts to further downplay ideology and increased interests in more indirect and sophisticated ways of media control. Yuezhi Zhao has mentioned the name change of the CPD in her article of "The State, The Market and the Media Control in China' in Pradip N. Thomas and Zaharom Nain, eds., *Who Owns the Media? Global Trends and Local Resistance* (New York: Zed Books, 2004).

[120] See e.g. Xi Chen, "Dynamics of News Media Regulations in China: Explanations and Implications", in *Journal of Comparative Asian Development*, vol.5, no.1 (Spring, 2006), p53.

"directly in charge of the news, features and programming of the three stations and the detailed duties of it includes delivering Party and government directives to the news outlets, drafting strategies for carrying out these directives, organizing and coordinating large-scale media campaigns, approving major media activities, propaganda plans and program change initiated by the broadcast network, and exercising editorial control of important news items and programs."

The ministry is also a "huge government bureaucracy in charge of every aspect of the country's broadcast operations, such as issuing regulations, setting technical standards, training personnel, and coordinating research."[121]

For the print media, the government establishes the State Press and Publications Administration under the supervision of the Party's Propaganda Department to draft and enforce press regulations, license publications, and monitor text. This government agency had no authority over central Party newspapers, but was in charge of all the publication agencies at the provincial and county levels.

In the case of the management of the Internet, the situation is more complicated than all the other forms of the media. Officially, it is under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Information Industry, which provides technological support for Internet content filtering and online censorship. In practice, however, it also takes orders from the Central Publicity Department and the State Administration of Radio, Television, and Film. This cross control over the Internet partially explains why China has the most extensive and technologically sophisticated system of Internet control in the world.[122]

The administrative structure of media at the local level is very similar to the structure at the state level. Each province and municipality has its own broadcast bureau, which is under the dual leadership of the government and the Party. This strict government control provides very little flexibility for the media to operate independently from the government.

---

[121] See e.g. Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), p23.
[122] See e.g. Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Super Power* (New York; Oxford University Press, 2007), p91.

Besides controlling ownership and management of the media, the Party-State also practices censorship, including both pre-publication censorship and post-publication censorship, over media content. The Party's Propaganda Department usually provides detailed instructions for reporting domestic issues. These instructions not only set the agenda for the media but also restrict the framing of the news reports. To cite an example, content related to democracy, political reform, protests, discussions in government meetings, the 1989 Beijing student movement, human rights, Falungong, corruption at the top, Tibet, Taiwan, and various political dissents, is forbidden.[123] According to the principle of positive propaganda, no disclosure of the natural disasters and major accidents were allowed in the pre-reform era. For this reason very few Chinese knew how many people died during the famine following the Great Leap Forward; almost no one knew the death toll of 300,000 people who drowned when a thunderstorm in southern Henan Province caused the Banqiao Reservoir's dam to burst in 1974; and it took ten years for the Chinese to know about an estimated number of the people killed during the Tangshan Earthquake in 1976.

As to the long process of the pre-publication censorship, the first decision made by the top leaders of the propaganda department is whether to cover certain topics or not. Once the topic is selected, explicit directions on how to cover the topic will be passed on to the journalists that are assigned to cover the situation strictly. The assigned reporters are chosen more according to their political viewpoints than to their professional competence. The news has to be covered in line with the general guidelines and writing style determined by the Xinhua New Agency. Once the reports are completed by the politically reliable reporters, the news coverage needs to be evaluated by the reporter's department head or the editor-in-chief, who are usually veteran party ideological workers. After the article is published, it is up to the Propaganda Department to closely monitor its content. Any failure in adhering to the guidelines of the government on the editors' side would result in punishments ranging from writing self-criticism reports to demotion or even dismissal.

---

[123] See e.g. Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p90.

Post-publication punishment is another mechanism for the Party to control the media in China. As in the Soviet Union, the mass media in China are also expected to carry positive propaganda, that is, to carry favorable reports about the Party and the government. The government has reiterated, on different occasions, that criticism of the Party, views opposing the Party's major decisions, and open discussion of policy issues that the Party had already decided were not allowed.[124] To avert certain unfavorable comments appearing on influential newspapers or publications without official approval or criticism of government policies, the journalists were fired or even put in jail, and the publishing houses were shut down for allowing these kinds of reports to appear in their publications. As the fate of the *Freezing Point*, a weekly supplement of a national newspaper the *China Youth Daily* illustrate, the punishment mechanism such as the dismissal of the journalists and the closedown of the publishing house are still in practice.[125]

Finally, the government also set up numerous official journalist associations to practice ideological control. Among them, the All-China Journalists' Federation, which has more than 400,000 members, is the largest association established to control journalist behavior.[126] This association is supervised directly by the Propaganda Department. It is of great importance for the journalists in that every practicing journalist has to join this organization in order to obtain an official press card. The association also ranks individual journalists based on their seniority, achievements, and political consciousness and behavior. Therefore any journalist wishing to win recognition of the people would have to win recognition within the All-China Journalists' Association.

During Mao's leadership, myriads of associations were in charge of the ideological indoctrination and control of the Chinese population. The network of ideological control was very complex and penetrating, and it touched every social

---

[124] See e.g. Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), p20.

[125] Freezing Point was closed down due to the publication of an article urging the Chinese government and the people to reflection on its history and cool down the irrational nationalist sentiments. For details of the case, please refer to Susan Shirk's, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p78.

[126] See e.g. Todd Hazelbath, The *Chinese Media: More Autonomous and Diverse, Within Limits* (Langley, VA: Central Intelligence Agency, 1997), p14.

cell ranging from a variety of professional propaganda systems from the CPC, the military system, the CPC school system, the educational system, the scientific research system, and mass organizations to the mass media and publication systems. As tools of ideological control, there were also many local journalist associations in China. They were not only used by local governments to keep an eye on journalists but also used by journalists to keep an eye on each other. Since an entire paper could be shut down for one or two critical articles, resulting in journalists losing their jobs, this reciprocal control has proved to be very effective in upholding the socialist ideology and the government's standpoints.

The control cartel over the media in China is undoubtedly sophisticated and powerful; however, it is also facing with mounting challenges as China's media sector becomes further marketized and industrialized. Spurred by the desire to modernize the country's media industry, Deng's leadership not only authorized the expansion of media infrastructure but also generously sponsored upgrading technology in the industry. Despite the top-down approach, the rapid development of the mass media substantially augmented their bargaining power. With the national environment becoming further depoliticized compared to the 1960s, journalists actually initiated their own discussion over drafting an independent media law to protect the rights of the media practitioners and outlets. Zhao Ziyang, the former general secretary of the Party and reform-minded political leader, openly supported the further de-politicization of the media industry and the media practitioners' aspirations for professionalism by encouraging them to "be close to the people, to people's life and to social reality" in 1987.[127] The enthusiasm for media reform among both the reform-minded party leaders and journalists was undoubtedly dampened in the spring of 1989.[128] But the brief period of unprecedented media freedom during the movement and the active role of the Chinese media in organizing and covering the movement indicated the changed role of the media in Chinese

---

[127] For details, please refer to *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1988* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 1988), p9.
[128] For the political leaders, the active role played by the media in supporting the student movement made them extremely alarmed for further media liberalization; Due to the jailing and administrative punishment of the journalists after the 1989 movement and recentralization of media control then, it had become impossible for them to pursue media reform any more.

society. Needless to say, the several years after the Tiananmen student movement were the darkest days for Chinese journalists since the Cultural Revolution. This period of darkness, however, did not last long, for Deng Xiaoping became very impatient about the slow pace of China's economic development and the conservative approach adopted by Jiang in handling state affairs in the post-Tiananmen years. To urge his successor to abolish the man-made road blockage for the country's economic development so as to release new momentum for the economic reform, he made the famous Southern China Tour to Shengzhen in 1992, which gave rise to another wave of rapid social and economic developments in China.

The disruption in the socio-economic sectors was also felt in the media industry. As market logic became more and more entrenched in media management, commercialization overshadowed all other trends, becoming the most striking phenomenon on the Chinese media landscape. Booming commercial advertising literally changed the face of the Chinese media, turning it into a revenue-making machine. China's advertising industry totaled US$ 9.4 billion in 1999, which was up from US$6.4 billion in 1998 and just US$300 million in the early 1990s.[129] The commercialization of China's media was also accompanied by a technological upgrading of the media infrastructure. Under the combined effects of the relaxed government environment and technical innovation, Chinese media content and programming became highly diversified and enriched. Take the CCTV for example; its channels have been expanded to over a dozen in the reform era. Consequently, Chinese television screens are filled with a wide range of programs designed for news, sports, entertainments, education, and law. Technological upgrading also made live coverage more available. For the first time in its history, the CCTV live broadcast President Bill Clinton's state visit to China in 1998, which was considered as a landmark event for both television and political development in China.[130] The

---

[129] See e.g. A. Redl and R. Simons, "Chinese Media One Channel, Two Systems", In S. H. Donald, H. D. Stephanie, M. Keane, H. Yin, eds., *Media in China: Consumption, Content and Crisis* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), p18-27.
[130] See e.g. China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1999 (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 1999).

commercialization of the media industry also helped further expand the managerial and editorial autonomy of the media outlets in the post 1992 period. In recent years, the government actually began to diversify the ownership and management of the media industry by promoting industrialization of the sector. The establishment of over a dozen national, regional, and provincial media conglomerates indicated the changes that the Chinese media are undergoing now.

Compared to the domestic challenges, the international challenges is equally strong. Take China's entry into the WTO as an example, as a member country of this organization, China has promised to open its media industry on a gradual basis. although China was given a grace period for adjusting domestic institutions and rules, chances for China to stick to the former control mechanism and rules over the media are nonexistent in the longer run. The government surely will come up with strategies that will facilitate its continued supervision over the media. The country's need to further develop its economy and integrate into the rest of the world will make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for China not to make major compromises in the field of media control.

4.1.2. Mass Media as the Mouthpiece of the Party-State

Given the fact that there has never been unanimous consensus among the CCP regarding the key decisions and policies throughout its history, the concept of the "the Party" seems to bear little meaning in China except that it differentiates the CCP from the rest groups of the Chinese population. Despite all the intra-party strife and conflicts, however, the CCP has managed to keep the factional struggles within certain limits so that the public will have very little knowledge about the splits within the Party leadership, what they can see has always been a united, strong, and steadfast communist party. This false impression among the public facilitates the launching of various political propaganda against both the domestic and international hostile forces, which in turn reinforces the false image of the Party as a robust, legitimate, and closely knitted force in the country's politics. This use of the media as consensus-building, image-improving, and legitimacy-reinforcing instruments can be traced back to the beginning years of the CCP. In accordance

with Leninist ideas about propaganda and a party press, Chinese media were used as tools to mobilize the morale of the people for communist revolution during the harsh times of both the anti-Japanese war and the civil wars. Prominent political leaders such as Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi emphasized the "tremendous significance of the journalism" on several occasions during this period of time.[131] Consequently, the press became an integral part in the Party's organizational order. The role of the newspapers, wall posters, and loudspeakers in spreading revolutionary ideas and winning people over was strikingly felt during this period of the history.

Being influenced by the Soviet revolutionary experience, which relied heavily on the urban workers for the communist revolution, the main goal of the CCP in the 1920s was to raise revolutionary awareness among the workers in China's big cities. To facilitate the implementation of this goal, the Party set up newspapers in Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan, Jinan, Guangzhou, and other locations. The most influential included *Labor Weekly* in Shanghai and *Worker's Weekly* in Beijing. Among the periodicals established by the Party were *Guide Weekly, Vanguard Weekly* and *New Youth.* As the Party's propaganda needed to be increased and the media outlets further expanded, Red China News Press, the forerunner of the Xinhua (New China) News Agency, was established in the late 1920s. As the name of the agency indicated, this news agency was designed to promote the "red" or communist ideology in China. It was especially active in "releasing declarations and other documents of the CCP party central committee and the central government, stories on construction in the Soviet areas, communiqués on battles fought by the Red Army and news about struggles carried on by the people in the Nationalist Party (KMT)[132] ruled areas."[133] After the Long March, and during the war against Japan, the Communist Party also developed its journalistic institutions both in key party base areas, and then in the other parts of the country, as its power and influence were gradually consolidated and expanded. To serve the political ambition of establishing

---

[131] See e.g. Won Ho Chang, *Mass Media in China: History and Future* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989), p29.

[132] The Nationalist Party is also referred alternatively as the KMT or the Guo-Min-Dang.

[133] See e.g. Won Ho Chang, *Mass Media in China: History and Future* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989), p17.

a new regime in the near future and also maximize popular support for the CCP in its base areas during the anti-Japanese war, the Party created new symbols and rhetoric to accommodate these goals. The renaming of the Red China News Press to Xinhua News Agency in 1937 was designed to win broader support from the non-communist demographic within the society. Instead of favoring the "Reds," a "New China" was advocated to serve all Chinese that aspired to have a brighter future. Consequently, the "New China News Agency" was believed to appeal to all Chinese regardless of their ideological preferences and affiliation. Driven by this political goal, a number of new newspapers were set up one after the other in CCP's liberated areas. Among these papers, the most influential and well-known ones include *Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Daily*, *Central Bebei Guide*, *Popular Daily*, *Hebei-Shandong-Henan Guide*, *Daybreak Daily*, *Resistance Daily* and *Central China Daily.*[134]

The Xinhua News Agency together with the rudimentary form of the CCP's communication network in general profoundly lifted the morale of the CCP members and the Chinese people during the anti-Japanese war and civil wars. In 1946, the Party Central Committee designated the Xinhua News Agency as its official news agency. Three years later, the *People's Daily* became the official newspaper of the Central Committee, which "occupied the highest position among all newspapers in China, as did *Pravda* in the Soviet Union."[135] As an organ of the CCP, the People's Daily played an active role in facilitating policy implementation in China. According to Chang (1969), the daily actually used editorials as a means of issuing orders on behalf of the Party. In 1945, the Party also developed a radio broadcasting station in the Yanan base area, which was the forerunner of the Central Broadcasting Station.[136] Although rudimentary, this Yanan radio station followed

---

[134] See e.g. Won Ho Chang, *Mass Media in China: History and Future* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989), p21.
[135] See e.g. M. Chang, *The People's Daily and the Red Flag Magazine during the Culture Revolution* (Hong Kong: Union Press Limited, 1969), p1.
[136] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2001*(Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2001).

the Party wherever it went during the anti-Japanese and civil wars, and it played a crucial role in expanding the influence of the CCP.

The establishment of the PRC in 1949 marked the beginning of another stage of the Party's instrumental use of the mass media. Given the chaotic and anarchic domestic situation in 1949, the most important task for the CCP was to stabilize the country in order to restore its social, economic, and political structures among the remnants of Nationalist China. To facilitate the restoration and reconstruction efforts and mobilize mass support for grand social and economic programs, the Party again turned to the media for assistance. As a result, numerous propaganda campaigns were launched nation-wide via loudspeakers, wall posters (*dazibao*), and radios. These mass propaganda efforts were also facilitated by the establishment of the Central Press Bureau in 1949 and the transformation of media ownership from private to state. The instrumental use of the media as "tongues and throats" of the Party reached its peak during the mass movements of the Great Leap Forward and the Proletariat Cultural Revolution. Through Mao's controlled media, "slogans were coined, wall posters were produced, revolutionary songs were composed, and rituals related to the cult of Mao were performed throughout the country during the Cultural Revolution."[137]

The year 1978 marked a crucial point in Chinese politics as the Party leadership began to correct the "leftist" errors of the Cultural Revolution by adopting policies of economic reform and opening up to the outside world. Following the fall of the *Gang of Four*, there was widespread disillusionment with Marxism and a loss of faith in the CCP. To bring Party legitimacy back from the brink of collapse in this crisis of confidence, the pragmatists within the Party headed, by Deng Xiaoping, began to push their unique modernization project by adopting the policy of economic reform and opening up to the outside world. As the focus of the Party and government shifted to this new socialist modernization drive, the propaganda tasks designated to the media also changed accordingly. Instead of sticking to the heavily ideological propaganda, the priority was given to the

---

[137] See e.g. Xing Lu, *Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: the Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture and Communication* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), p5.

publicity of reform related policies and directives and the creation of a favorable environment for the market-oriented economic reform initiatives. The de-emphasis on ideology accompanied by the nationwide embrace of the market logic largely depoliticized the content of Chinese media, rendering the upbeat revolutionary slogans and propaganda to a marginalized status. This departure from the Soviet ideological control finally resulted in further liberalization in both media management and content

In order to meet the challenges of the market economy and reduce the financial burden of the government, reform measures aimed at transforming the management of the media through modern corporate management practices were adopted in late 1970s. The appearance of the first advertisement on the Liberation Army on the first day of 1979 signified the rise of commercialization in Chinese media sector.[138] This official decision to change the media from a pure state institution to a quasi-corporate state entity resulted in greater media autonomy, freedom, and a boom in the industry.[139] In 1980, the government further relaxed the control over the media by issuing the *Notice on Permission for Foreign Commercials on Chinese Newspapers, Radio and Television Broadcasting.[140]* From then on, the Chinese media were turned into largely self-sufficient state institutions. The state subsidy continued to exist to a certain extent, but the proportion of funding nonetheless gradually decreased over years. While China was enjoying unprecedented rapid economic development, it also paid a price for it. Due to China's increased

---

[138] See e.g. Randall Stross, "The Return of Advertising in China: A Survey of the Ideological Reversal". *China Quarterly*, no. 123 (September 1990), p486.

[139] See e.g. G. C. Chu, The Greatwall in Ruins: Communication and Cultural Change in China (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992); S. Faison, "The Changing Role of the Chinese Media", in T. Saich, ed., *Perspectives on the Chinese People's Movement*, 1989), p145-163; F. C. He, "Liantong: A Quantum Leap in the Reform of China's Telecommunications" in *Telecommunications Policy*, no.18 (1994), p206-210; D. R. Heisey and W. Gong, *Communication and Culture: China and the World Entering the 21st Century* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodop,1998) ; Y. Huang and A. Green, "From Mao to Millennium: 40 Years of Television in China (1958-1998)' in D. French and M. Richards, eds., *Television in Contemporary Asia* (New Delji: Sage, 2000), p267-292; C. C. Lee, *Voices of China: The Interplay of Politics and Journalism* (New York: The Guildford Press, 1990); C. C. Lee, *China's Media, Media's China* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994); C. C. Lee, Power, Money, *Media: Communication Pattern and Bureaucratic Control on Cultural China* (Evanston, Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2002); and C. C. Lee, *Chinese Media, Global Context* (London: RougledgeCurzon, 2003).

[140] See e.g. J. S. Lang, *zhongguo xinwe zhengce tixi yanjiu (The Study of Chinese Media Policy)* (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2003), p71.

interaction with the rest of the world and its imbalanced development strategy between the eastern coastal areas and the hinterland, as well as the urban and rural, social and ideological tensions and problems mushroomed throughout China. In order to curb the spread of "bourgeoisie ideas" during the reform era and maintain national stability, Deng made remarkable efforts to control the media. He not only looked to Singapore for policy leadership in the management of media systems,[141] but he also launched several propaganda campaigns including the "Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign" in 1986 and the "Anti-Bourgeois Liberation Campaigns" in 1987.[142]

Among all four generations of the CCP leadership, Jiang Zemin represents one that has most engaged with the media. Jiang was particularly skillful in orchestrating propaganda for the improvement of the Party image and stirring up nationalist sentiments among Chinese population to strengthen the legitimacy of the Party rule.[143] Take the transfer of sovereignty of Hong Kong in 1997 for example, China successfully orchestrated a grand media campaign upstaging national pride and dignity, and glorifying the communist party as the savior of the Chinese nation that brought this long-lost child back into the embrace of the motherland from British imperialists.[144] In order to guarantee the quality of the live broadcast of the grand event, the government actually made generous investments in television technology and equipment prior to the transfer ceremony.[145] The propaganda organized for the bid of the Olympics also sprung the whole nation in action.[146] Moreover, the media

[141] See, e.g. S. H. Donald, M. Keane and H. Yin, eds., *Media in China: Consumption and Crisis* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[142] See e.g. Yu Huang and Chin-Chuan Lee, "Peddling Party Ideology for a Profit: Media and the Rise of Chinese Nationalism in the 1990s," in Gary Rawnsley and Ming-yeh Rawnsley, eds., *Political Communication in Greater China: the Construction and Reflections of Identity* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p41-61.

[143] See e.g. Christopher R. Hughes, *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[144] See e.g. Z. Pan and J. Chan, "Building a Market-Based Party Organ: Television and National Integration in China." in D. French and M. Richards, eds., *Television in Contemporary Asia* (New Delhi: Sage, 2000), p233-266.

[145] China officially promoted the technological upgrading of the CCTV in mid 1990s for effective propaganda. The investment made in importing the equipments for live coverage in 1997 made the live broadcast of the sovereignty transfer ceremony worldwide possible.

[146] See e.g. Y. Chen, "Setting a Nation in Action: The Media and China's Bid for Year 2000 Olympics.' in D. R. Heisey and W. Gong, eds., *Communication and Culture: China and the World*

successfully stirred up public resentment against the United States for leading a conspiracy to harm the national prestige of China by installing roadblocks for China's bidding efforts. Taiwanese President Li Teng-hui's visit to the United States in 1995, and the NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 were two other cases during Jiang's leadership, which fanned the nationalist sentiments among the public to put political pressure on the United States.

Compared to the first three generations of the leadership, Hu Jintao demonstrated a rather low-key style in orchestrating political propaganda. This should in no way be translated into Hu's lack of interest in the instrumental use of the media. As some Sinologist observers have pointed out, Hu's administration actually demonstrated increased sophistication in both propaganda skills and capabilities. Instead of launching upbeat and empty political propaganda, Hu's leadership attempts to achieve their political ends by imposing indirect control over the media. By reviving the "three closes" principles put forward by Zhao Ziyang in 1987 and encouraging media exposure of the social tensions and problems, Hu has successfully garnered support for his populist approach, diluted the ever-escalating social tensions, promoted the deciding legitimacy of the Party, and consolidated his power. The enthusiasm with the indirect approach has marginalized but not eliminated the old-fashioned ideological propaganda. Straightforward ideological propaganda continues to reveal itself. Take the 2005 ideological campaign for example; in order to maintain the advanced nature of the CCP, the Party required all CCP members in offices, schools, and work units to spend Thursday afternoons and all of Saturday for four consecutive months studying Party history and the speeches of the current leaders and criticizing one another and themselves for their political failings.[147]Compared to the former generations of leadership, the control approach of Hu's administration is more proactive than reactive. Instead of orchestrating propagandas to fight against detrimental tendencies in both the society and the country's politics, Hu is working steadily and patiently to step up the propaganda capability of the Party. The ongoing "Xi-Xin Project," designed to expand the media

---

Entering the 21ˢᵗ Century (Amsterdam: Rodopi, B.V., 1998), p289-309.

[147] See e.g. Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p48.

infrastructure in Tibet and Xinjiang, as well as the "Stepping-out Project" developed to promote Chinese public diplomacy abroad, well illustrate the proactive approach of Hu's leadership to shape public opinion both at home and aboard.

4.1.3 Mass Media as Instruments for Factional Politics

Despite the apparent harmony and consensus among the CCP members, intra-party struggles and conflict have been the norm of the CCP's daily workings throughout its history. "The history of the CCP is a chronicle of factionalism, purges, counter-purges, and attempted coups."[148] When the conflicts become irreconcilable, they can be resolved only be vanquishing one of the competing groups. Take the leadership succession as an example; all the former hand-picked successors were purged before Jiang Zemin. The underlying reasons for the pervasiveness of factional politics in China have multiple roots in the country's history, ideology, culture, and politics. Due to the one-party rule, the highly personalistic nature of Chinese politics, the lack of a rule of law, and the lack of institutionalization of the political process, the top leadership frequently disagree with each other on questions of policy, ideology, and distribution of power. When the ramification of these disagreement reaches the irreconcilable point, it can only been resolved by vanquishing, or in other words, purging, one of the competing groups. Among these violent, and sometimes even bloody behind-the-scene factional strife, the media have been used as crucial instruments for attacks and counterattacks between political heavyweights.

Starting from the revolutionary years, there have been differing opinions on how to carryout Chinese revolution among the CCP leadership. The factional conflicts got intensified after the PRC was established in 1949 due to changes in both the domestic and international political environment. Domestically, two factions known as "the reds" and "the pragmatists" emerged within the CCP, around the development direction and strategy. As these factional politics played out, the

---

[148] See e.g. Marlowe Hood, "The Use and Abuse of Mass Media by Chinese Leaders during the 1980s", Chin-Chuan Lee, *China's Media, Media's China* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), p37-59.

pragmatist faction, headed by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, gradually expanded their support base resulting in the decline of the prestige of Mao Zedong within the Party.

The aspirations of the pragmatists to focus on developing the nation's economy rather than launching endless empty and pompous ideological propaganda were partially inspired by Khrushchev's decision to openly attack the personality cult of Stalin and promote collective leadership in Soviet Union.[149] With an aim to preventing a Chinese personality cult and the deification of Mao Zedong thought, Liu and Deng officially warned against this tendency and adopted legal guarantees to assure their purpose. The removal of the sentence reading "taking Mao Zedong thought as the primary guiding ideology of the country" from the new constitution in 1954 triggered an almost 20-year long "anti-rightist" movement directed by Mao.[150] In the name of encouraging self-criticism among the CCP members so as to enrich the socialist culture, Mao Zedong launched the campaigns of "Letting a Hundred Flowers Bloom" and "Letting a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend" in late 1950s. The ultimate goal of such a move was to single out and then eradiate "the "rightist" elements within the CCP.[151] Without any warning, Party members, who expressed candid criticisms and reservations against the Party work during the initial stage of the movements, were swiftly purged, and many tortured one by one in late 1950s.[152] The "anti-rightist" political struggles continued in the Great Leap Forward movement amidst various intra-party oppositions[153] and culminated during the Cultural Revolution. In the brief period between the two mass movements, the pragmatists, headed by Liu and Deng, were able to take control over the national economic adjustment as well as the political power, allowing them to wield strong

---

[149] See e.g. Neil Renwick and Qing Cao, "China's Political Discourse towards the 21st Century: Victimhood, Identity, and Political Power" in *East Asia*, vol. 17, no. 4 (December 1999), p5-163.

[150] See e.g. Neil Renwick and Qing Cao, "China's Political Discourse Towards the 21st Century: Victimhood, Identity, and Political Power" in *East Asia*, vol. 17, no. 4 (December 1999), p66.

[151] See e.g. J. S. Lang, zhongguo *xinwen zhengce tixi yanjiu (The study of Chinese media policy)* (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2003), p67.

[152] See e.g. T. Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China* (New York: Oxford University, 1997).

[153] Zhou Enlai openly expressed his concern and opposition against the unrealistic and radical industrialization plan during the great leap forward, but Mao turned deaf ears to his advice. For details, refer to Jing Huang, *Factionalism Chinese Communist Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p211-246.

influence over national media such as the Party's flagship newspaper, the *People's Daily*. However, this did not last long; once the economy returned to the normal track, Mao's faction revenged with the "socialist education campaigns" aimed to restore his authority by cleansing the "bourgeoisie elements" within the Party headed by Liu and Deng. As the prelude to the Cultural Revolution, this ideological campaign represented the last peaceful infighting within the top tier of the CCP. During the ten years between 1966 and 1976, factionalism became both intense and bloody. With the media falling into the hands of the Gang of Four, factional control over communication became extreme and chaotic during the ten-year calamity. The media were used extensively as powerful tools in class struggles "through a broad mobilization of human resources in the country."[154]

The endless ideological campaigns dampened the developmental momentum of all of China's media. Consequently, the number of mass media productions and outlets declined dramatically. The media were just "joining in the chorus of deifying Mao, lauding ultra democracy, repudiating the so-called revisionist clique headed by Liu Shaoqi, and humiliating intellectuals."[155] The media were turned into political bulletin boards, propaganda trumpets, and announcers of the gang of four's combat orders. During this political turmoil, the fallacy that facts should follow the interests of political line became the guiding principle of journalism in China. To be more specific, the priority of the media then was to report the issues that the Gang of Four preferred to see from a heavily ideological perspective rather than depict a balanced picture of the social reality in China. The basic elements of the news in a professional sense, which emphasizes timeliness, impartiality, balance, and ethics, were virtually invisible. What people could acquire from the Chinese media was a distorted reality. Consequently, the mass media became class struggle tools for the Gang of Four, and their content was characterized by the Red Guards' single-minded propaganda around the personality cult of Mao Zedong and class struggle. The

---

[154] See e.g. G. Hedebro, *Communication and Social Change in Developing Nations: A Critical View* (Iowa City, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1982); and G. C. Chu, *Radical Change through Communication in Mao's China* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1977).

[155] See e.g. Won Ho Chang, *Mass Media in China: History and the Future* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989), p44.

insanity and hysteria of the era rings in the slogans chanted by the red guards, such as "Long live Chairman Mao," "never forget the class struggle," "to rebel is justified," "sweeping away all the monsters and demons," and "bomb the headquarters." As all alternative voices were blocked out from the media, the people were deprived the rights to have access to reliable information. When thousands of people poured onto Tiananmen Square in April 1976 to mourn the death of Zhou Enlai, China's popular premier, the demonstration, which signified the public denouncement of the Maoist gang of four and the endorsement of the reform–minded Deng Xiaoping, was summarily crushed. A *People's Daily* article published afterwards denounced the demonstration as a pre-planned, organized, and engineered counter-revolutionary political event.[156]

Obviously the factional conflicts have become less bloody and lethal since 1978. However, this in no way signified the decay of the factional politics in China. As ruthless factional struggles during the Cultural Revolution turned Party politics into treacheries, plots, and purges, "factional politics actually became more rampant in the post-Mao period."[157] There were new yet continued intra-Party conflicts throughout Deng's leadership. Being locked out of access to the media, purged, and humiliated during the media campaigns orchestrated by the Gang of Four, Deng learned a powerful lesson that the media could be used as weapons in political warfare, and not just as loudspeakers to propagate policies. His skillful use of the media in the wake of the Cultural Revolution greatly facilitated his rise to power. By encouraging the public to vent their grievances and criticisms against the Cultural Revolution in 1978 via wall posters, Deng garnered strong support to remove Hua Guofeng, the handpicked successor of Mao, from his position. This paved the way for both his rise as a paramount political leader in China and the implementation of his reform policies. However, when the open discussions of the Cultural Revolution or denunciations to be more precise were gradually transformed into a progressive debate about China's democratic future and political reform, Deng resolutely shut

---

[156] See e.g. Lu Keng, "Press Control in 'New China' and 'Old China'", in Chin-Chuan Lee, ed., *China's Media, Media's China* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), p155.
[157] See e.g. Jing Huang, *Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p20.

down the communication channels for further public discussion by banning the use of wall-posters and jailing the scholars who expressed progressive political views. It was not that Deng was a brutal tyrant who resented democracy; rather, given his brutal experience of being purged twice during the Cultural Revolution, he recognized the necessity and importance of democracy. However, as the core of the second generation of leadership, Deng's practical concerns about the country's economic development overshadowed democratic political ideals. Since the smooth implementation of economic reform cannot be achieved without political consensus and unity among the public, open discussion about reforming the country's political system was considered more detrimental than helpful to Deng's grand economic plan.

The 1989 Beijing Student Movement was another example of how different factions, the *People' Daily* in particular, used the media to attack each other.[158] The dynamics of the *People's Daily*'s coverage of the movement mirrored the conflicts between the hardliners headed Yang Shangkun and Li Peng, and the reformed minded-leaders headed by Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang. Deng Xiaoping, although an indisputable hardliner, did not have clear factional affiliation. He was originally aligned with the reformers' group. But when the student movement, supported by the reformers, began to evolve into a mass movement and attracted international attention, Deng resolutely took the side of the conservative leaders. At the initial stage, when the death of Hu Yaobang and students' demand to organize open mourning of him were publicized and lamented by the progressive newspaper in Shanghai, the *World Economic Herald*, the conservative faction took immediate action to order the *People's Daily* to publish an editorial affirming the nature of the student parades and demonstrations in Beijing as counter-revolutionary turmoil. This official verdict was followed by the closing of the *World Economic Herald* and the removal of its editor-in-chief from his position. As the students from Beijing and all over the country organized the mass demonstration at Tiananmen Square, the reform-minded leaders headed by Zhao Ziyang gained increased bargaining power,

---

[158] See e.g. Xi Chen, 2003, "Mass Media as Instruments for Social and Political Control in China." M.A. Thesis, Virginia Tech.

which finally led to the compromises between the two factions and between the students and the Party leadership in Beijing. Consequently, balanced reports with voices from all sides began to appear on the *People's Daily*. The increased publicity and reporting of the movement by the *People's Daily* quickly amassed nation-wide support for the students. As students were joined by others in early May, favorable reports of the student movements dominated the *People's Daily*. The triumph of the reform-oriented faction within the Party did not last long. Its fatal defeat was signified by Li Peng's declaration of martial law to Tiananmen Square on May 20 and the tearful presence of Zhao Ziyang at the Tiananmen Square before the martial law.

Once the conservative faction regained control over the political power, the *People's Daily*, the battlefield of the two factions, began to carry single-minded condemnation of the movements, the bourgeoisie element within the Party, and the hostile international forces. All five reports on the student movement that appeared on *People's Daily* on May 20th were unanimously official versions of the stories. However, disregarding the order from the conservative leaders to shut down official media's support for the student movements, the *People's Daily* managed to voice their dissatisfaction with the government via innuendo, analogy, and manipulation of foreign news. After the militant suppression of the movement, foreign news once again became a vital channel in the *People's Daily* for venting dissatisfaction with and opposition to the regime. Often, the resistance was distilled in the headlines, such as the unusually prominent headline placed over a Xinhua story, stating, "Khomeini aged and in poor health, who will succeed him?"[159] This was a clear reference to Deng Xiaoping and other aged Chinese leaders still in power. Another headline over a Xinhua story quoted Hungary's prime minister as saying, "use of military to resolve internal problems not permissible."[160] This was an obvious reference to the imposition of martial law in Beijing. Such use of innuendo peaked again on June 4th, the day after the military repression. For example, in the domestic

---

[159] See e.g. *People's Daily*, (May 21st, 1989), pA1, originally cited in Xi Chen, "Mass Media as Instruments of Social and Political Control". M. A. Thesis, Virginia Tech.
[160] See e.g. *People's Daily*, (May 22nd, 1989), pA1, originally cited in Xi Chen, "Mass Media as Instruments of Social and Political Control". M. A. Thesis, Virginia Tech.

news section that day, there was a story about a handicapped person winning an athletics medal. Yet, the story was accompanied by the incongruous headline: "the people's heart will never be conquered." The title was clearly irrelevant to the story. By adding such a title, editors could voice their opposition to the government. The implied meaning here was that although the student movement had been put down by the government, their pursuit of democracy could in no way be stopped by military action. For the international news column, the editors selected a cluster of three stories with the following titles: "Students in Seoul staging a hunger strike to protest the government's killing of students"; "Israeli army invades south Lebanon: again they use airplanes and tanks to deal with civilians"; and "The leader of Poland says that election is a great try-out for conflict resolution: one must not play with fire." Here, the title of the last story was printed in a small font, but its subtitle "one must not play with fire" was in big and bold characters and was not particularly related to the news. An old proverb in China says that those who play with fire will eventually burn themselves; the implication was that the government would definitely be in trouble by playing with fire.

Despite the efforts made by the liberal factions to revert the political fate of their head, Zhao Ziyang, the factional strife in 1989 ended with victory for the conservative. Neutral accounts disappeared after June 4th. On June 4th, there was even an article in the form of a "letter to the editors" criticizing the *People's Daily* for inflaming the student movement. According to this letter, the newspaper had failed to be loyal to the Party; the government and the people during the movement in that it had tried various ways to ignore the government's position and thereby inflamed the movement. By publishing this kind of piece in the *People's Daily*, the government was actually warming up for the forthcoming campaign against enhanced or expanded media freedom witnessed in China during the reform era. The leadership openly blamed the media for the 1989 movement. According to Jiang Zemin, "the turmoil... shows how much harm and what tremendous losses will be caused if something goes wrong with the media and propaganda work, if the

propaganda machine is not in the hands of genuine Marxists."[161] To tighten the Party control over the mass media, Jiang's leadership appointed conservatives to fill the senior posts in the communication-related areas, including Wang Renzhi, the director of the Central Propaganda Department, Xu Weicheng, the deputy director, Deng Liqun, Politburo Ideologue, Gao Di, publisher of the *People's Daily*, and He Jingzhi, the acting Minister of Culture.[162]

Despite the house arrest of Zhao Ziyang and Deng's resignation in the wake of the 1989 Beijing Student Movement, factional friction continued to exist after 1989. As the new president Jiang Zemin, under the assistance or supervision of the conservative senior leaders, attempted to repair the political damage caused by the student movement by launching ideological campaigns and discussions on the nature of the socialist market economy, the pace of the economic development was largely slowed down. This worried the already retired Deng Xiaoping and triggered another round of factional struggles. In order to reassert his economic agenda, Deng suggested a more rapid economic development. However, his suggestions turned out to be ill-fated in Beijing because of the leftist-dominated politburo. In response to the ignorance in Beijing, Deng traveled to Shanghai to solicit support there. His opposition to the empty and counterproductive ideological campaigns and sermons was immediately echoed by the reformed minded officials in Shanghai and the general public. Brushing aside the conservative's craving for militant revolution campaigns, Deng emphasized that debate and controversy over the nature of China's reform should gave way to the concrete economic development. While he continued to maintain that rightism was an undesirable tendency, he unprecedentedly emphasized that the leftism was posing a more imminent danger.

"At present, we are being affected by both Right and ``Left''
tendencies. But it is the ``Left'' tendencies that have the deepest

---

[161] See e.g. an abridged version of Jiang Zemin's speech on mass media work, titled "seven questions concerning journalistic work- an outline of a speech at the study class of journalistic work", *Qiushi (Seeking Truth)*, no. 3 (March, 1990).
[162] See e.g. Joseph Man Chan, "Commercialization without Independence", *China Review* (1993), p25.3.

roots. Some theorists and politicians try to intimidate people by pinning political labels on them. That is not a Right tactic but a ``Left'' one. ``Left'' tendencies have a revolutionary connotation, giving the impression that the more ``Left'' one is, the more revolutionary one is. In the history of the Party, those tendencies have led to dire consequences. Some fine things were destroyed overnight. Right tendencies can destroy socialism, but so can ``Left'' ones. China should maintain vigilance against the Right but primarily against the ``Left''. The Right still exists, as can be seen from disturbances. But the ``Left'' is there too. Regarding reform and the open policy as means of introducing capitalism, and seeing the danger of peaceful evolution towards capitalism as coming chiefly from the economic sphere are ``Left'' tendencies. If we keep clear heads, we shall not commit gross errors, and when problems emerge, they can be easily put right.''[163]

Despite Deng's open challenge, the conservative leaders in Beijing continued to ignore his initiative by keeping all major national media silent on Deng's efforts. To fight media control, Deng decided to tour the southern provinces of China to spread his reform strategies. This strategic move forced the leftists within the top leadership to make concessions. Several months after Deng's South China Tour, news reports on Deng's call for further economic openness and reform began to appear on national media, which gave rise to a new wave of rapid economic development.

Despite the existence of factions such as the "Shanghai Clique," "China Youth League," and "Princelings"[164] among the current leadership, the factional conflicts have become less violent and obvious in recent years due to the fluidity of the factional loyalties and further de-emphasis on ideology. The fluidity was made possible through both the de-emphasis on ideology within the Party and the tendency for the Party leaders to cultivate multiple ties. Being a protégé of both Deng Xiaoping and the conservative party elder, Song Ping,[165] Hu Jintao showed

---

[163] See e.g. Except from talks given by Deng Xiaoping at Wuchang, Shengzhen, Zhuhai and Shanghai between January 18 and February 21, 1992, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol. III. Section II. Available at the link of http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/d1200.html.

[164] Refers to the offspring of the senior party leaders who have risen to power via "helicopter ride".

[165] See e.g. Susan Shirk, China, *Fragile Super Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

less interests in encouraging factional politics based on ideological camps. When factional struggles did appear in recent years, regional interests and policy disputes rather than ideological inclination and orientation became the center of struggle.[166] Since there is no formal channel to express alternative political views within the one-party system in China, as long as the differences in interest persist, there will continue to be factions and factional struggles within the CCP. This is the inevitable process for China's one party system. Moreover, given the inclusion of enterprises and businessmen into the Party in 2001,[167] the possibility for intra-party conflicts have increased rather than decreased. In this sense, the media will likely continue to be the battlefield of China's political factions.

4.2 The Politics of Chinese Television

Compared to more traditional media such as newspapers and radio, the development of Chinese television has lagged far behind the rest of the world due to lack of technology and television broadcasting infrastructure. Whereas television was already popular in the United States and Europe in the late 1950s and 1960s[168] and became common in Japan in the 1970s, it was not even introduced into China until late 1950s.[169] As with all other forms of mass media, the development of television in China is entangled with the country's politics. In the pre-reform era, the television has mainly functioned as the elite information source and the mass propaganda tool for the Party-State. As China adopted the market-oriented reform and opened its door for foreign trade and investment, this situation changed dramatically. Instead of being mainly the mouthpiece of the Party-State, television began to play multiple

---

[166] See e.g. Jing Huang, *Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[167] In order to expand the supportive basis of the CCP, Jiang's leadership put forward the "three represents" theory, which legitimizes the inclusion of businessmen and entrepreneurs into the CCP in 2002. An English explanation of the "three represents" is available at the link of http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2003-01/21/content_699933.htm.

[168] See e.g. J. W. Roman, *From Daytime to Primetime: the History of American Television Programs* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 2005); E. Buscombe, *British Television*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); and M. Hilmes, *The Television History Book* (London: Gildford Press, 2004).

[169] See e.g. J. Lull, *China Turned on: Television, Reform and Resistance* (New York: Routledge Publisher,1991); and M. Muelller and Z. Tan, *China in the Information Age: Telecommunications and the Dilemmas of Reform* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers,1997).

roles as an entertainment provider, profit-generating machines, and sometimes a watchdog of the local governments. The following section will examine the historical development of Chinese media roles in detail.

4.2.1   From Elite Information Source to mass Propaganda Tool

The trial broadcasting of Beijing TV Station, the first television station in China, took place on May 1, 1958.[170] Upon the establishment of the Beijing Television Station (BTV), top government officials began to show support and special attention. Premier Zhou Enlai paid an inspection visit to the station in 1958 and Chairman Mao Zedong named the station in 1965 as a gift.[171] Developed out of the Great Leap Forward spirit, the trial broadcast of the BTV was designed, in part to "showcase the prowess and contribution of the Chinese workforce in the communist revolution."[172] Yet, it was also meant to announce the success of Communist China in "winning the competition with Taiwan, which was also planning to launch its television broadcasting in the same year."[173] The inaugural broadcast of the BTV was filled with political and ideological messages, setting the tone for the distinct political orientation, assumptions, and practices that would dominate Chinese television for many years to come. As the review of the television program in its early days illustrated,

> "The programming on BTS began with a 10-minute report on a meeting organized to celebrate the May 1st international labor day. Model workers from various industries made patriotic and upbeat speeches about the proud achievements in production output at their factories. The report was followed by the documentary entitled "going to the countryside," which as the title implied, described

---

[170] See e.g. Z. Z. Guo, *zhongwai guangbo dianshi shi (International Broadcasting History)* (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2005), p238.
[171] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 1998); and *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2004).
[172] See e.g. T. K. Chang, J. Wang and Y. Chen, *China's Window on the World: TV news, Social Knowledge and International Spectacles* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2002), p4.
[173] See e.g. Z. Z. Guo, *zhongwai guangbo dianshi shi (International Broadcasting History)* (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2005), p239.

communist cadres journeying into the countryside to work with and learn from the farmers. Next came cultural programs, including dance and poetry reading. To conclude the inaugural programming, the broadcast schedule ended approximately with a feature on "television" produced by the former Soviet Union."[174]

Broadcasting time was very limited during the early years of Chinese television due to technological insufficiency, and a lack of professional experience in television program production. BTS programs were aired only twice a week, with each broadcast lasting for 2 to 3 hours. Television was more of an elite information source for a handful of senior political leaders than a mass communication outlet.[175] Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai and Zhu De were known as the loyal audience of Chinese television in the late 1950s and 1960s.[176] Driven by the desire to rapidly further the industrialization of the Chinese television system, BTV's programming schedule was later expanded to four times a week in 1958 and eight times in 1960. With the rapid expansion of broadcasting time, the reach of the Chinese television also went beyond its national border. From the early 1960s, Chinese television began to have international exchange and cooperation with more than a dozen countries. Although they were mostly China's communist allies, such as the Soviet Union, Romania, Hungary, Poland, East Germany, and Cuba, this move signified the rapid development of Chinese television prior to the Cultural Revolution.

Following the début of the BTS, two other television stations in Shanghai and Heilongjiang also started broadcasting on October 1 and December 20th respectively in 1958.[177] By the end of 1960, 15 of the 29 provinces in China had set up their own TV stations.[178] With an aim to further the development of television broadcasting in

---

[174] See e.g. T. K. Chang, J. Wang and Y. Chen, *China's Window on the World: TV News, Social Knowledge and International Spectacles* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2002), p5.

[175] See e.g. A. Redl and R. Simons, "Chinese Media One Channel, Two Systems". In: S. H. Donald, S. D. Hemelryk, M. Keane, and H. Yin, eds., *Media in China: Consumption, Content and Crisis* (Routledge Curzon, London, 2002), p18-27.

[176] See e.g. Z. Z. Guo, *zhongwai guangbo dianshi shi (International Broadcasting History)* (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2005), p240.

[177] See e.g. Z. Z. Guo, *zhongwai guangbo dianshi shi (International Broadcasting History)* (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2005), p239.

[178] See e.g. T. K. Chang, J. Wang and Y. Chen, *China's Window on the World: TV News, Social*

China, premier Zhou wrote the following for the people's broadcasting cause in 1965: "Hold the banner of Maoism high, give full play to the hardworking and self-reliance revolutionary spirits, and make endeavors for the development of the people's broadcasting cause."[179]

Having copied the Soviet model in building its television broadcasting system, the Chinese broadcasting style was heavily influenced by Soviet media practice in the pre-reform era. Under the Soviet system, television, together with other forms of the mass media, were considered to be "collective propagandists, collective agitators, instruments to be controlled by the state, instruments of social change and social control, and instruments of serious purpose."[180] Within the Soviet system, news reporting in most cases helped to depict a picture of wise leadership of the Party, clean government, social and economic achievements, social stability, economic prosperity, and the happiness of the people. Topics like natural disasters, accidents, social conflicts, failure of policies, and dissent among the population were simply missing from the TV screen.

This picture remained constant throughout the Great Cultural Revolution, during which all sectors of the Chinese society, including Chinese mass media, were disrupted. Like other more traditional media in China, television served solely as a catalyst for the communist spirit and revolutionary change. Both the form and content of Chinese television during the Cultural Revolution demonstrated ideological purity. The world on the television screen was reduced to a one-dimensional reality. The programs are all about the struggles of the proletariat against the "bourgeois." Mao Zedong became the dominant political figure of the news. Coverage of Mao was mostly of his talks with the Red Guards. There were occasional reports of technological achievements such as the launching of space satellites and the explosion of the atomic bomb; However, all these achievements were described as the "revolutionary fruits" of the Great Cultural Revolution.[181] The

---

Knowledge and International Spectacles (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2002).

[179] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1998* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 1998).

[180] See e.g. Siebert et al., *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956).

[181] See e.g. Z. Z. Guo, *Zhongwai guangbo dianshi shi (International Broadcasting History)* (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2005), p249.

only entertainment program on Chinese television at the time was the *Yang ban Xi*, an art form created by Mao's wife, Jiangqing. Furthermore, television was also used a tool to humiliate the "rightists" and bourgeois "roaders" within the Party. Wang Huangmei, the first lady of China, was once humiliated in front of the masses on television with her head bowed 90 degree forward, hands tied behind her, and a necklace made of ping-pong balls hanging around her neck. The counter-revolutionary crime she committed was that she demonstrated a bourgeois habit of wearing pearl necklaces during state visits to foreign countries with her husband, the then president, Liu Shaoqi.[182]

Chinese television stations such as BTS began to renew these contacts and exchanged programs with foreign television stations in the early 1970s. Nixon's state visit to China in 1972 spurred a new wave of development for the Chinese television system. The US cutting-edge television production equipment opened the eyes of the Chinese journalists as well as the Party leaders. Realizing the technological distance between Chinese television and American television, the State Council authorized the importation of color television equipment in the name of enhancing national security and dignity. According to the State Council, it was humiliating for communist China to rent the communication equipments in covering political events within China's border. Moreover, it was also not secure enough to allow foreign communication technical staff to be close to the senior political leaders in China. After considering various political consequences, the government gave up the more readily available American NTSC mode and adopted the Soviet SECAM mode and eventually adopted the German PAL mode in developing national television. Thus Chinese television industry was revived from its stagnant beginning during the Cultural Revolution. Despite few program importations, China began to engage in increasing interactions and cooperation with the rest of the world. Consequently, on occasion, films from countries such as North Korea, Albania, and

---

[182] See e.g. Carma Hinton, Geremie R. Barmé, Richard Gordon, Directors, *Morning Sun* (Video) (Brookline, Mass.: Long Bow Group, 2003).

Romania would be shown on Chinese television.[183] It was not until 1978, however, that television and other media in China embarked on the road of rapid development.

4.2.2. Towards Multiple Roles in the Reform Era

On May 1, 1978, the BTV was renamed China Central Television (CCTV), which was announced as China's official network and responsible for national service. If one of the reasons for the first station to be called Beijing Television was that the signal coverage of the station was limited to Beijing then, the renaming to China Central Television Station signified the government's determination to establish a centralized national television broadcasting infrastructure for China. Given the special status of the CCTV, its influence was ever increasing. The government not only made generous investments into it, but also frequently arranged official inspections and visits to the station. By this point, all four generations of CCP leadership had either made inspection trips to the CCTV or held talks with the CCTV managerial and professional staff.[184]

The rapid development of Chinese television has been reflected in the increased number of television stations and relay stations. By the end of 1990, the number of the stations reached 509 and it further expanded to nearly 1000 in the year 2000. As for relay stations, there were only about 12,159 during the mid 1980s; however, the numbers have jumped to more than 42, 830 in 2000. Furthermore, the surge in the number of television stations has been coupled with the rapid development of cable and satellite televisions as a result of huge government investment in expanding media infrastructure in China. The improvements of programming in both quality and quantity, as well as the rise of professionalism,

---

[183] See e.g. Kaarle Nordenstreng and Tapio Varis, *Television Traffic- A One Way Street? A Survey and Analysis of the International Flow of Television Programme Materials* (Paris, France: Boudin, 1974), p27.

[184] Premier Zhou Enlai made an official visit to the BTV, the forerunner of the CCTV in 1958 (Source: *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1998*); Deng Xiaoping met Journalists from CCTV and CPRS (*Source: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2005*); Jiang delivered a speech to the working staff at the CCTV with the accompany of the head of the Central Propaganda Department at the SARFT (*Source: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2002,* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2002); and Hu Jintao met the head of the CCTV in 2003 (*Source: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2004* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2004).

were made possible by the improvement of in journalism and communication education in China. Given the involvement of media practitioners, scholars, and government officials, the establishment of various professional awards such as China News Awards and China Radio and Television Awards reflected the interplay of multiple interests in the Chinese media system an increased media freedom. (Please refer to Figure 1)

As the country's economy continues to become more commercial, the TV stations penetrate into most corners of the country. Consequently, the average coverage of television signals over the population has reached 95.81% in 2005. Most strikingly, the coverage in Shanghai reached 100% in the same year. [185] (Please refer to Figure 2)

Together with the expansion of television stations and signals, television audiences continued to grow steadily in the reform era. The total television audience was 590 million in 1987 and reached 1.15 billion by 2002. (Please refer to Figure 3)

Besides the development in technology and infrastructure, the management of television was further industrialized in recent years. With the formation of broadcasting media groups throughout China since 2001, the media industry was given much more managerial and editorial freedom. In order to attract audiences so as to reach rating goals and maximize commercial revenue, television stations at various levels increased the diversity and quality of their programming. The most frequently used strategy was to imitate the Western entertainment television programs. The successful localization of several talk, singing, and dance shows by local televisions stations like the Hunan Satellite Television Station (HNSTS) not only gave rise to the nationwide feds of entertainment shows , but also ignited a nationwide competition for ratings within the television industry, gradually breaking down the CCTV's monopoly of Chinese media market. The emergence of both national and local media groups threatened the dominant position of the CCTV. According to the viewership investigation conducted for BTV, CCTV, and satellite

---

[185] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2006* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2006), p45.

Figure 1: Growth of Chinese Television Stations

	1965	1975	1985	1989	1997	2000
Television Stations	12	32	202	469	923	980
Relay stations	---	---	12,159	22,139	41,205	42,830

Source: Chang, 2002, p. 11

Figure 2: Coverage of Television Signals over the Population in 2005

City	Population (Million)	Coverage (percentage)
Beijing	*1.162*	*99.99%*
Shanghai	*1.352*	*100.00%*
Guangdong	*8.160*	*97.30%*
Tibet	*0.226*	*85.97%*
Gansu	*2.377*	*90.77%*
Average	*122.617 (total)*	*95.81% (average)*

Source: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook (2006)

Figure 3: Investigation of Television Audience between 1987 and 2002
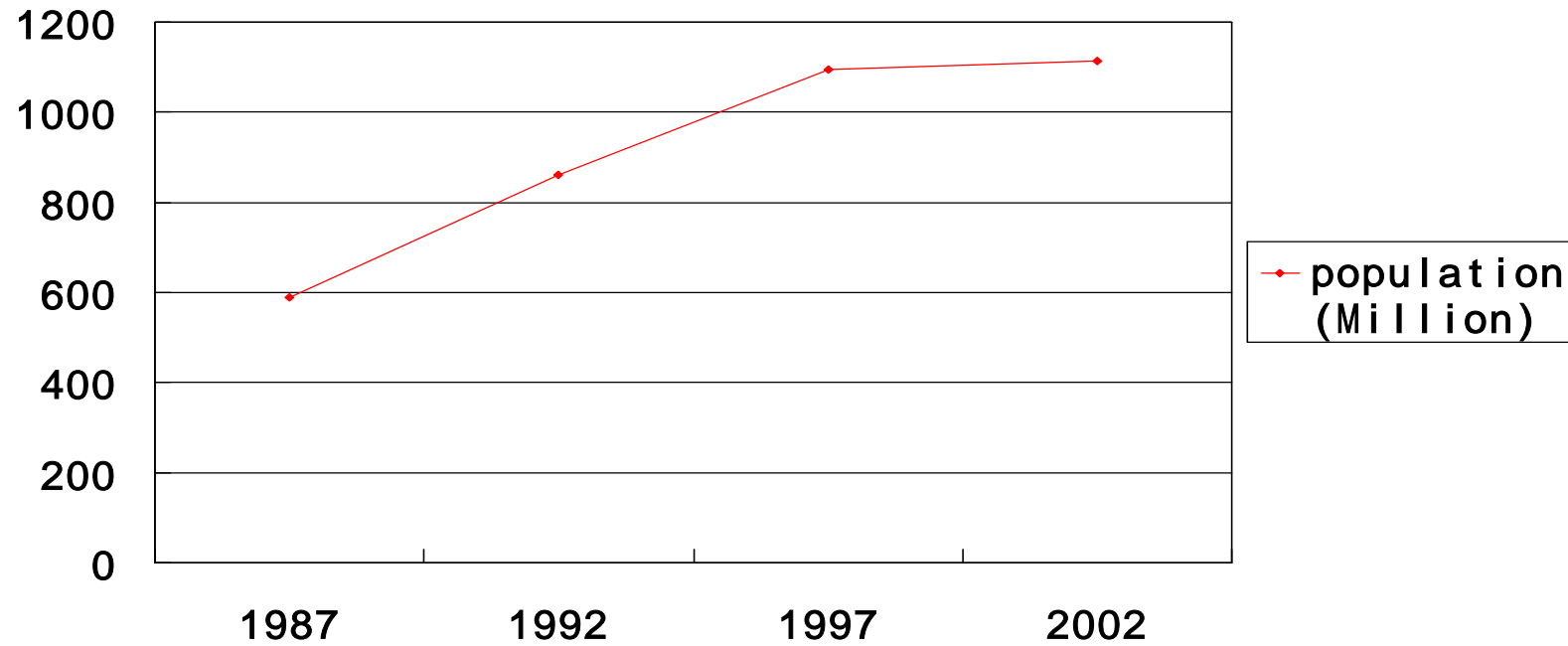
Source: **China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2003**

TV in 2003, the rating for BTV far surpassed that of the CCTV except for the month when CCTV was broadcasting Olympic Games live. (Please refer to Figure 4)

In order to maintain a macro-level control over the balanced development of the industry, the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television frequently yet controversially intervened in the market-driven development of the industry. Given the fragmented situation of the television industry, the government regulations over it were sometimes self-contradictory. Take the "Super Girl" and "Super Boy" show for example; when the "Super Girl" show reaped unprecedented ratings in Chinese television history in 2005, the SARFT adopted a rather tolerant attitude. It praised the HNST as being the model for the local television stations to emulate. As this television station's continued success threatened the No. 1 position of China's flagship television station, CCTV, the SARFT, for fear that local television stations would overshadow this propaganda fort of the Party and the state, applied restrictions on entertainment shows nationwide. According to the SARFT's most recent notice, no entertainment program is allowed to be broadcast continuously for over two and half months in China.[186]

While authorizing and promoting media industrialization at different levels, the Chinese government also became aware of the imbalanced distribution of media infrastructure between the eastern coastal area and the Western hinterland. In order to address the problem, a number of projects have been introduced one by one over the past several years. Take the "Tibet and Xinjiang Project" and the "Wired Villages Project" for example; they are designed to decrease the regional gap in terms of television development and signal coverage. In terms of international cooperation and competition, the television sector has become more open to foreign investment. In the years of 2003 and 2004, China vigorously implemented its "Stepping-Out Project" which was designed to promote Chinese media presence outside of the Chinese territory and in Western countries in particular. By the end of 2003, the CCTV-9 and CCTV-4 had successfully landed in over 104 countries in the world and the number of its registered households has reached 17 million outside the

---

[186] See. e.g. Mdiachina.net. "SARFT will Restrict but not Prohibit Television Shows Next Year" (Aailable at http://mediaChina.net/index_news_view.jsp?id=88011, August 31, 2007).

Figure 4: 2003 Rating for BTV, CCTV and Satellite TV in Beijing
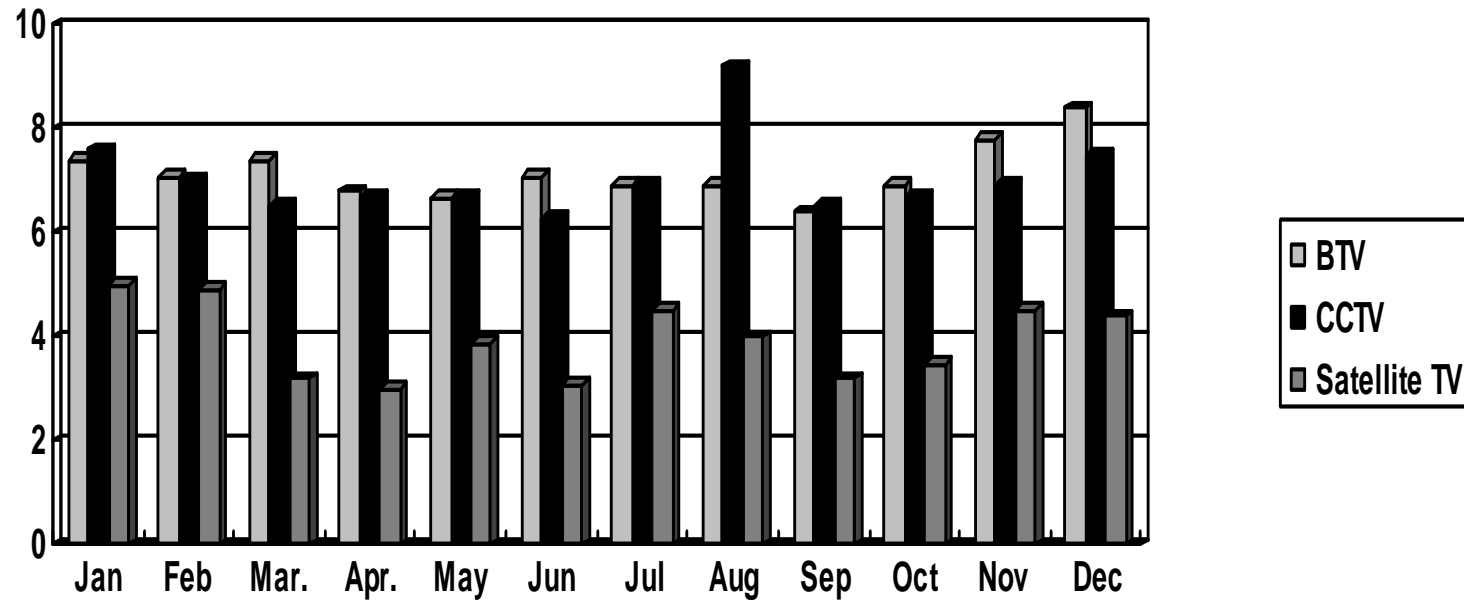
Source: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook2004

Chinese territory.[187] The Chinese government also extensively cooperated and exchanged with its Asian neighbors such as South Korea and Japan during these same years.[188]

To adapt to the changes in Chinese television management and practices, the employment policy and recruiting procedures of television stations have also been transformed in recent years. Instead of offering lifelong jobs, the television stations are employing more flexible and contract-based mechanisms in recruiting new employees. The introduction of competition into the industry revived Chinese television broadcasting's vitality and creativity and has also resulted in the major television station's reliance on outside labor sources. The fact that CCTV has been sent into disarray by the forced layoffs of its temporary employees two months ago partially confirmed the picture. Due to a recent change in China's labor law and the government crackdown on fake news reports, the CCTV, China's sole nationwide broadcaster, was forced to lay off more than 1,800 temporary employees in late August of 2007. This massive loss of human power immediately resulted in repetitive broadcasts of news items and the malfunctioning of the whole station.[189]

If the trends of industrialization, marketization, and flexible employment policy and procedure are all authorized by the state, the rising professionalism must partially reflect the desire of the journalists to excel. The professional tendency can be discerned from the rise of the investigative reports, the diversification of TV program formats, and the revival of the open discussion of drafting media laws. First, the quality of the television programs nationwide has evidently been increased. This is especially true for the television news programs. With the rise of investigative news and pubic-oriented livelihood news, the television news programs tend to produce more in-depth and thought-provoking reports. Second, the maturation of communication technology and increased professional skills and knowledge makes live broadcast and integrated programs with audience participation via cell-phone

---

[187] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2004* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2004), p47.

[188] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook, 2004*, (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2004), p47.

[189] See e.g. *Wall Street Journal*, 2007, "Labor Rules Force Layoffs at China's Main TV Broadcaster" (Thursday, August 23), pD8.

and Internet more prevalent on the Chinese television screen. Given the political risks of the live coverage and audience participation programs, these changes in the television industry indirectly reflect a more relaxed political environment in China. Third, the increase in the professionalism among television practitioners can be discerned from their revived interests and discussion of drafting media laws such as radio and television laws. The first time for media law to be discussed in China can be traced back to mid 1980s when media reform was a buzzword. Due to the 1989 student movement, the discussion has been largely ever since. It was not until 2003 that the journalists and scholars revived the discussion of drafting an independent media law.[190] Finally, the reduced coverage of political formalities such as the seeing off or welcoming parties for the top officials allows television more flexibility to design its program according to the rule of journalism rather than political directions. This, to certain extent, greatly weakens the propaganda role of the media.

The review of the recent developments in television reveals increasing managerial and professional freedom in China. Despite these encouraging signs and developments, however, there is still persistent political control over television broadcasting in China. The officials' withholding of information during the early stages of the SARS crisis in 2003, the consistent government emphasis of the mouthpiece role of the television industry, and the increased efforts for the government to regulate the television industry all bespeak the remnants of the old Soviet style media control.

Despite the alleged goal of promoting balanced development of television broadcasting throughout China and promoting the culture development of the remote and underdevelopment regions, the Tibet-Xinjiang Project and the No-Village-Left-Behind Project have been developed based on strategic consideration to strengthen the Party's propaganda capability so as to effectively control public opinion. Given the fact that Xinjiang, Tibet, and the vast western hinterland region have been covered extensively by signals of foreign television and

---

[190] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2004* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2004).

broadcasting networks, the government's generous investment in the infrastructure of radio and television broadcasting in the autonomous regions and western hinterland is also an effort to counter the influence of international media in the region. Likewise, the "stepping-out" project may be seen as an official endeavor to actively shape public opinion worldwide.

4.3 Summary

As the history of Chinese mass media and television in particular reveals Chinese media began to enjoy increased managerial and editorial freedom and autonomy since 1978. This not only sped the technological upgrading process of the industry but also substantially improved the quality of media programming and content, and increased the nationwide competition within the industry. However, all these developments were achieved amidst persistent state control over television ownership and intermittent official interference in the management of the industry. As both tendencies towards further economic liberalization and renewed political control are making their way into the media landscapes, the picture of Chinese media in the reform era is as confusing as conflicting. Chapter four and five will further explore factors in the media industry by examining the development of televisions news reporting practices and regulation in the reform era.

CHAPTER FIVE: CHINA ON SCREEN: DYNAMICS OF

TELEVISION NEWS IN THE REFOM ERA[191]

As revealed in the review of the historical development of Chinese media, and television in particular, the media landscape in China remains largely fragmented, contradictory, and imbalanced in the reform era under the sway of the market, the Party-State, the pluralistic society and the rise of professionalism. The future of Chinese media development might look confusing and blurry with these multiple tendencies and possibilities, but the fact that it has further departed from its early Soviet model is indisputable. Heavily influenced by the Soviet style, Chinese news reporting by the first TV station in China, the BTV, followed the Soviet TASS style since its inception in 1958. It focused on imparting a heavy ideological message to propagate government policies and rules. This practice, however, has been dramatically changed, if not totally transformed, in the reform era. Despite the largely state-owned nature of the television stations, the style of the news reporting in China today is very little more than that in the liberal democratic societies. Evidence for this transformation can be found in every aspect of news production in today's China, including content, format, technology, visual images, etc. However, to what extent has Chinese news reporting moved away from the Soviet style? What made these changes possible? And what do these changes from Soviet to liberal style tell us about socio-political developments in China? This chapter will address

---

[191] Part of the content of this chapter was originally published on the *Journal of Chinese Political Science.* For details, please refer to Xi Chen, "Media Lens Revisited: Television and Socio-Political Changes in China", in *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, vol. 12 no. 2 (Summer 2007), p167-184.

these questions by investigating the changes in Chinese television news reporting practices and regulations in the reform era.

5.1 China Radio and Television Broadcasting Award

I have chosen the China Radio and Television Broadcasting (CRTB) Awards television news reports between 1990 and 2003 to ground my research on television news reporting practices. The most prestigious national broadcasting award in China, the CRTB Awards were established in 1989 by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) and organized by the China Radio and Television Society (CRTS) as an incentive to excellence in journalism in China. Television news reports produced by television stations at various levels are put on equal footing in the competition for the awards, which are given out on a yearly basis. Among the four categories of the CRTB Awards (radio news, radio social and educational programs, television news, television social and educational programs), I have chosen to focus on television news in this study.

The CRTB Awards were the outcome of several combined factors ranging from the deepening of the economic reform, rise of the aspirations for Western journalist professionalism among journalists, demand for academic excellence of the media scholars, to the request of the Chinese government to upgrade its control over the information circulation in the new era.

As Deng's pragmatic reform policies revived economic development, they also brought vigor and vitality to the media industry, which resulted in the rise of multiple roles for the media in China. As illustrated in chapter three, the instrumental use of television went to extremes during the Great Cultural Revolution. It was mobilized as a tool of class struggle, particularly for the Gang of Four. In as much as any "news" was produced, it was all about the one-side story of the "heroic" and "revolutionary" deeds by the Gang of Four, the radiant and godlike image of Mao Zedong, and the violent and brutal public denunciation and torturing of the "capitalist and revisionist roaders" who were also called "monsters and

demons."[192] Under such circumstances, no questioning of any official rhetoric was allowed. Chinese journalists that dared to tell the truth and adhere to professionalism in news reporting practices were either humiliated and or tortured to death[193].

As a result of these experiences, journalists were prohibited from pursuing the Western journalistic professionalism, which emphasizes accuracy, objectivity, and balance in covering news. The violent political storm between 1966 and 1976 greatly harmed the Chinese people's trust in the state, and also in the media. Due to empty remarks, flamboyant comments, stereotyped views, and tight ideological control over news reporting during the Cultural Revolution, the news media in China not only lost their credibility in the eyes of their audience, but also lost the personnel that once were appreciated for their sharp opinions, good judgment, and language skills. Consequently there was nationwide skepticism of media messages in late 1970s.

The role of the television news solely as official propaganda to manipulate or indoctrinate the Chinese public was transformed in the reform era. The foremost reasons for this were the adoption of market logic in the media industry and the decentralization of power throughout the country. The interplay between market and state definitely created more room for media freedom and autonomy. This, in turn, made it difficult for the Chinese leadership to keep its grip over its news media. Given the potential of the mass media for facilitating the implementation of government policies and strengthening the Party's legitimacy, it was in the interests of the government to come up with more indirect means of control. This move also could accommodate the increasing demand for autonomy and freedom in the media as well as the policy of state-guided industrialization and competition among the industry. Under the combined effects of all these elements, the CRTB Awards were created in 1989 as an official response to both the emerging new challenges to the old form of media control in China and the demand for media freedom in late 1980s.

---

[192] See e.g. Z. Z. Guo, *zhongwai guangbo dianshi shi (International Broadcasting History)* (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2005).
[193] See e.g. T. Tsou, *The Cultural Revolution and Post-Mao Reforms: A historical Perspective* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p150.

Since the CRTB Awards combine elements of state control and Western professionalism, there are both similarities and differences between the CRTA and Western journalism prizes such as the Pulitzer Prize in the United States. The most evident similarity between the two kinds of prizes lies in the format. For example, like the Pulitzer Prizes, the CRTB Awards are awarded on a yearly basis for different categories, ranging from radio news, radio social and educational programs, television news, to television social and educational programs. In each year's competition for the television news reporting prizes, seven sub-categories of prizes are also awarded: short reports, long reports, series reports, commentary, feature reports, programming, and live broadcasts.[194] Although the CRTB Awards define categories differently from the Pulitzer Prizes, the format of categories and the logic of establishing categories is the same. For both prizes, the winners receive a cash award and a certificate as symbols of recognition.

Unlike the Pulitzer prizes, the Party and the government have a big role to play in the CRTB Awards. The members of the CRTB Awards juries are composed of three groups of people: CCP and government officials, media scholars, and media practitioners. The criteria for awarding the prizes well reflect these three different but intertwining interests in Chinese media. According to the rules of the CRTS, the awards winners must meet the following five criteria:

First, the news programs need to adhere to the Party principle, which emphasizes the mouthpiece role of the news media. This is basically an extension of the "positive propaganda" principle, to which the CCP has always held, except for some brief moments when the news media were used for factional struggles, as during the Double Hundred Movements in the 1950s. According to this principle, the news media in China should consciously focus their reports on the achievements and strengths of the Party and the state, rather than reveal the dark side of them such as policy failures, official corruptions and etc. Only by doing this will they succeed to mobilize the people's initiatives and revolutionary spirit. Second, news programs need to reflect social reality, to be close to the life of the public, and to reflect

---

[194] See e.g. T. K. Chang, J. Wang and Y. Chen. *China's Window on the World: TV News, Social Knowledge and International Spectacle* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2002).

faithfully the times. This criterion emphasizes the social relevance of the news reports. In other words, if a news report fails to allow people to make connections to their life experiences, it will not be considered as a quality news report. Third, news reports/programs need to demonstrate distinguished journalistic style, which means excellence in news format, edition, and production. Fourth, news reports should create impacting effects by combining visual and audio technological advantages. This reflects the emphasis of both television esthetics and cutting edge technology in news production. Finally, they should demonstrate high literary quality and originality in program production. This last criterion reveals the importance of innovation and language skills in Chinese news reporting.[195]

These five standards exhibit elements of both ideological control and professional practices, which differentiates the CRTB Awards from Western professional prizes. Since the CRTB Awards was designed as a government response to ever-increasing difficulties in keeping the media in check, the prizes suggest that the Party had actually realized its declining capability and legitimacy in leading Chinese culture in the process of reform. By establishing and sponsoring Western style professional awards, the Party-State tried to send a message that the government was making a serious effort to deemphasize ideology and encourage professionalism in the media industry. This political move had the effect of killing two birds with one stone. On the one hand, the government showed an open-minded stance towards media reform and professionalism among journalists, which was supposed to placate the media practitioners and scholars. On the other hand, the establishment of the prizes reached the public as government efforts to increase transparency and relinquish political control over information flow. By this official initiative, the government successfully quenched the fire that was spreading in the late 1980s among media practitioners, scholars, and the public, who were pushing for media freedom and reform as they became increasingly aware of the declining capability and legitimacy of the Party.

---

[195] See e.g. X. Chang, J.C. Zheng and G. R. Ruan, *zhengduo xinwen jiang zhina (Competing for News Awards: Theory and Practices)* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Press, 2001).

However, no matter how sophisticated and strategic a government policy is, there is no guarantee of the desired outcome. Symbolic or not, the very act of including media practitioners and scholars in the jury of the CRTB Awards and encouraging Western professionalism among Chinese journalists could produce unexpected outcomes. If history is any guide, the gradual change in one country's media system is likely to result in major changes in its political system. Both Mexico's example [196] and China's experience in 1989 have already offered convincing arguments in this regard. The media could be the instrument of the government to facilitate its monopoly of power; they could also be the very forces that overthrow it. It is not completely impossible that China might experience what happened in Mexico in the years to come. Nonetheless, the CRTB Awards initially represent part of the government efforts to rejuvenate its control over the media, one of the goals for establishing the prizes, however, is to encourage professionalism among media practitioners. Although the CCP and government officials are a very important part of the jury, the fact that media practitioners and scholars have also been included in the juries allows the freedom for different norms and frames to guide Chinese television news reporting. This at least partially compromises the monopoly of the Party-State in news reporting content and practices. To make the awards at least appear "professional," it is necessary to include a certain number of media professionals and scholars in the jury so that they can contribute some professional standards and values. To be more specific, this empowers journalists to set their own agenda actively and to develop their own viewpoints in covering news. When political agenda ceases to be the determining factor in news production, the competition among points of view and values will play out in news reporting. In this sense, the establishment of the CRTB Awards had important implications for the development of democracy in China. Besides, since different interests such as the government, the intellectuals and the media practitioners have always been in conflict with each other, the CRTB Awards reports are more representative of the complex social reality in China in this sense.

---

[196] See e.g. J. S. Lawson, *Building the Fourth Estate: Democratization and the Rise of a Free Press in Mexico* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

5.2 Research Design

Based on the historical framework that emerged from the archival research, I did content analysis of the Videotapes for the CTRB Awards winner news in the following selected four years: 1990, 1995, 1999, and 2003, which was designed to produce relatively objective, quantitative, and systematic description of the manifest content of the videotapes.

As the most authoritative professional association for China television studies, the CRTB Awards played an extremely important role in shaping the development of Chinese television news reporting. By studying the CRTB Awards news reports, I expected not only to develop an understanding of the changes which happened in China's television news reporting practices but also to get an idea about the evolution of professional standards for discerning good news reporting. This will finally enable me to tell whether China's news reporting has been allowed to resemble the news practices in the Western liberal democracies.

Due to the lack of data and time and geographic restrictions on the scope of the project, I did not study the CTRB Awards winner news on a yearly basis; instead, I selected several years to study. The years that have been targeted for this study include 1990, 1995, 1999, and 2003.

In order to ensure that the research result was reliable and valid, the overall sample was randomly but not arbitrarily selected. The following factors were considered in selecting data. First and most importantly, the selection of data depended on the availability of resources. Since the data for 1990 and 2003 were the earliest and the latest available, I decided it was important to include them in my study. Next, given the main objective of the research, which was to figure out the interaction between national news reporting in China and Chinese politics and society, I included data of news reporting under each generation of leadership. The research covered a 14 year time span (1990-2003), beginning with the last years of second generation of leadership, covering the full term of the third generation of leadership and ending at the beginning of the fourth generation of leadership.

After taking all the above factors into consideration, I confined my study to the four years mentioned above. For the time slots chosen, I conducted content analysis as follows: For each year's awards broadcast, I took each piece of news as the coding unit, regardless of its length. The coding scheme was partially based on Tsan-Kuo Chang's model.[197] The variables mainly dealt with the ideas that would be most visible and identifiable on television news in China, such as the general categories of when, who, what, how and why. In addition to the categories created by Tsan-Kuo Chang, I also observed the attire, tone, verbal, facial expression and body Language of the news anchors and the image flow of the news reports. Such an analysis yielded useful knowledge about the cultural, social, and political changes happening in China. As a native speaker of Chinese, I myself coded all the news stories and interpreted the data. My previous life and research experience, educational background, Language skills, and cultural knowledge of China put me in an advantageous position to interpret the data gathered for the research. For each news story, 16 variables have been identified and recorded according to the range of values provided.[198]

By collecting data for all the above-listed variables, I not only found the major changes in news content, format, organization, and technology, but also was able to calculate the provincial weight, demographic orientation, and the directorial control room logic for most of the CTRB Awards news. Moreover, various comparisons have also been conducted upon the four sets of data.

5.3 Research Findings

Analysis of all of the videos for the CTRB Awards news in the selected years succeeded in illuminating the current situation of news reporting in China. Essentially, the Chinese television news reporting overall has begun to enjoy increasing freedom and autonomy in covering diverse topics. However, the changes are largely within the predictable range set by the political environment.

---

[197] See e.g. Tsan-Kuo Chang, *China's Window on the World: TV News, Social Knowledge, and International Spectacles* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2002).
[198] Please refer to the appendix II for the details of the variables.

First, the number of news programs that received the CRTB Awards kept increasing steadily over the targeted years. The total number of reports for 1990 was 12. This number jumped to 20 in 1995, and was further expanded to 34 in 1999 and 39 in 2003. This increase in the award news reports was a partial reflection of the overall increase of the news volume in China. As the reform gradually deepened, there was insatiable demand for timely and quality information among the Chinese public, which triggered competition among TV stations at various levels. To appeal to the public, improve program ratings, and excel professionally, TV stations began to work on producing timely new reports from the rich and abundant raw materials that became available as China opened up to the outside world. The steady increase in the news volume reflected the professionalization tendency of Chinese television news reporting practices, and it also revealed the decentralization of power in China. One of the most frequently used means of controlling public opinion in Mao's China was to restrict access to new of current affairs, a direct copy of the Soviet Model. The logic behind this was that by not informing the public, the Party was easily able to create conformity and homogeneity, which was expected to facilitate the implementation of party lines and state policies. But if the all-encompassing control over information was a distinguishing characteristic of Party-State rule in China, as demonstrated by the increase in the number of the CRTB Awards news reports, the power of the Party-State undoubtedly declined in the reform era. (Please refer to Figure 5)

Second, between 1990 and 2003, there was a shift of focus from economic news to social news. For the year 1990, economic news ranked on the top of both social and political news. The situation changed in 1995, with social news surpassing that of the economic ones and becoming No. One on the list.[199] The year 1999 witnessed a slight increase in the number of awards given to economic news.[200] This tendency was reversed by the dramatic increase of social news reports in 2003. With a total number of 16 awards given to social news in 2003, both

---

[199] In 1995, the total no. of social, economic, and political news reports were 9, 8 and 2 respectively.
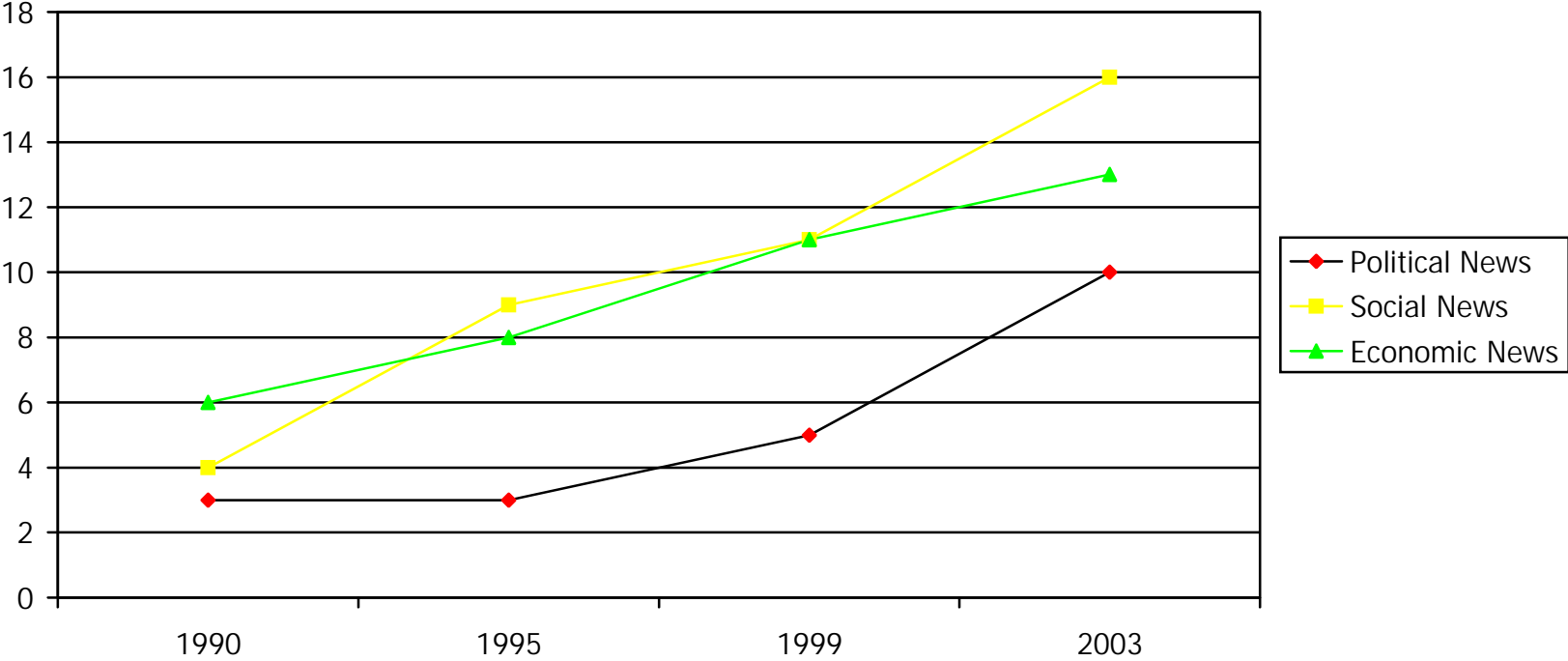[200] The total no. of economic news for 1995 and 1999 were 8 and 11 respectively.

Figure 5: Total Number of CRTB Awards News Reports
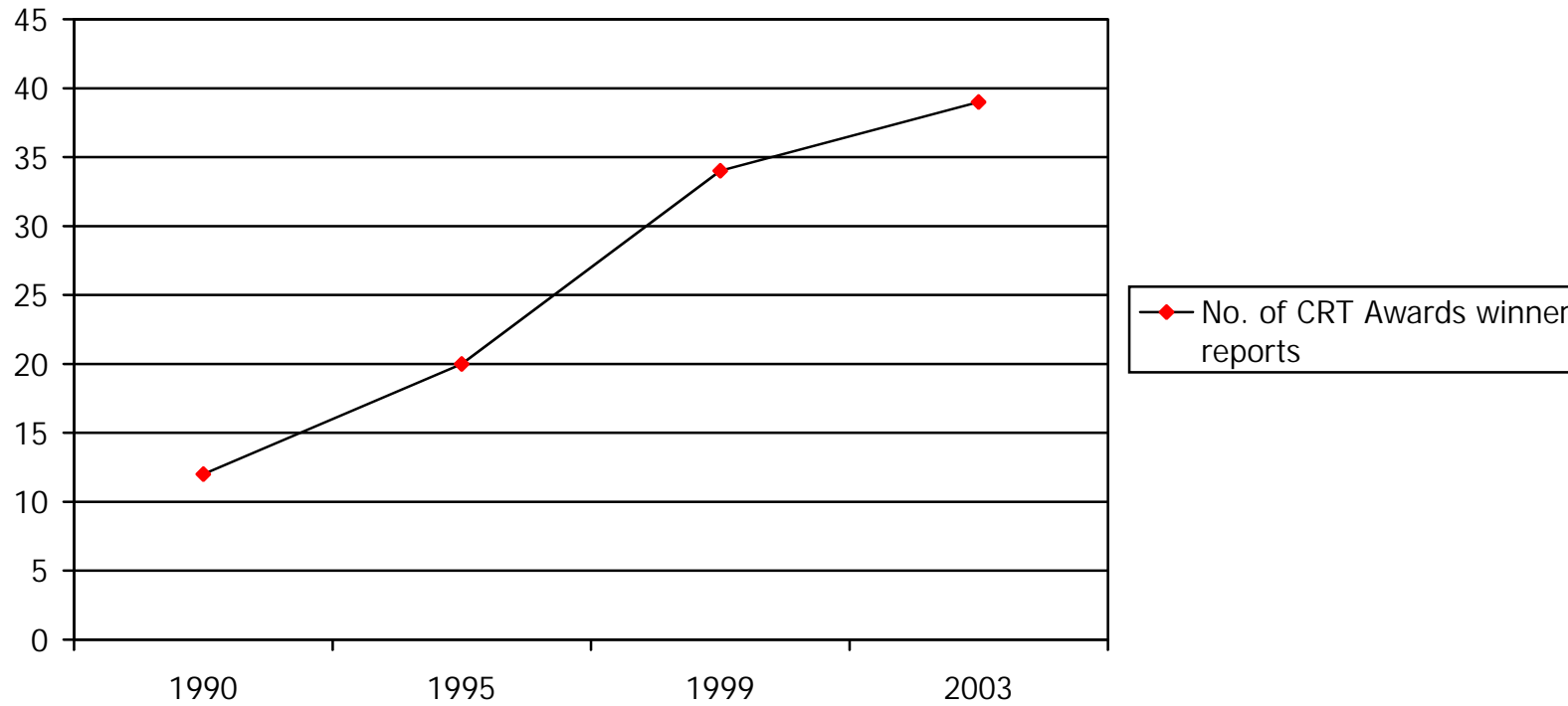
Source: Videotapes for the *CRTB Awards Collections* for the year of 1990, 1995, 1999, and 2003

Figure 6: Overview of the Composition of News Reports for the Years Selected

economic and political news were overshadowed.[201] The salience of the social issues on Chinese television screen reflected changes of priority on the national agenda in recent years. Due to the "GDP-first" development model set by Jiang Zemin's leadership, considerable resources, and attention were devoted to the development of the country's economy in the 1990s. As figure 6 shows, economic news dominated Chinese screen between 1990 and 1999. However, the remarkable double-digit economic development rate was not achieved without a price. As the market-oriented reforms deepened, multiple forms of social problems emerged as a result of the loss of traditional values, the impact of Western values, income disparities, layoffs, unemployment, the lack of social security, the lack of welfare, and the imbalanced development between cities and rural areas, coastal and inland areas. In the early years of the reform, these problems were overshadowed by the impressive economic development nation-wide. But as economic reform further deepened, the tensions escalated and could hardly be suppressed. The point where social problems in China caused a bottleneck effect on the Chinese economy was 2003. To channel and dilute public grievances, Hu's administration actually developed a populist approach to appeal to disadvantaged groups in China in 2003, which required state institutions and officials, including the media outlets, to be "close to the people, to the people's life"[202]. This shift in official stance towards social problems was directly related to the surge of social news reports in the same years. (Please refer to Figure 6)

Third, in terms of the coverage of political news, there was tendency towards objective and balanced reports. The award winner news reports in 1990 and 1995 were very positive about the Party and the state leaders. In the constructed image, the Party and the government were responsible, approachable and capable. Among the three 1990 awards-winning political news reports, the first was about the presence of Central authorities in the Panchan Reincarnation Ceremony held in Tibet.

---

[201] The total no. of economic and political news for 2003 were13 and 10 respectively.

[202] To dilute social tension, promote the popular support for the Party, and facilitate the implementation of the Party's populist policies, Hu's administration has made the "three closes", which was first put forward by Zhao Ziyang. a formal guideline for the media in 2003. the official interpretation of the "three closes" is available at the link of http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/16/20030516/996308.html.

The Party leader was portrayed as benign, approachable and respectful towards the Tibetan Monks and their religious belief. The second one was about a deputy governor of Sichuan taking the lead in extinguishing a wild fire near a railway station. This was sheer old-style Soviet news reports. Although the deputy governor obviously prevented the professional fire-fighters from doing their job in a more timely manner by trying to take over the hose from the fire fighters, who in turn, tried very hard not to let the senior official get involved in the danger, the news was framed was to convince the public about the heroic deeds by the governor who was willing to sacrifice his life for the public good. The third news is even more typical of old-style propaganda: premier Lipeng and the mayor of Shanghai Zhu Rongji paid visits to ordinary Chinese people's homes on the eve of the Spring Festival to convey official care and greetings to them.   The sitatuation remained almost the same for the year of 1995. Among the three pieces of news, one was a portrayal of a model party leader who served in Tibet for 10 years. The second report centered on the campaigns against poverty launched by both the central and local governments. And the last report was about the efforts made by a fearless party leader in Shanxi province to fight against local corruptions.

All the above news reports reflected the continued influence of the positive propaganda style dictated by the Soviet Media theory. The situation, however, apparently changed in 1999 and 2003. In 1999, a mixed picture of the Party and the government started to be revealed. Among the four pieces of the awards-winner domestic political news, the number of positive and negative reports was half-and-half. For positive news reports: one was about a model doctor and party member who served in Xinjang area for his whole life. The other was about Premier Zhu Rongji's inspection in the flood-afflicted areas. The other two reports were negative stories about official corruption and smuggling. For the news reporting in 2003, this trend towards an even more balanced depiction of the Party and government continued. Among the seven pieces of the domestic political news in 2003, one report centered around the heroic deeds of a model policeman, two were specifically related to the development of the advanced military technology, two were about local officials' corruption, one was about the removal of the village head,

Figure 7: Political News Reports
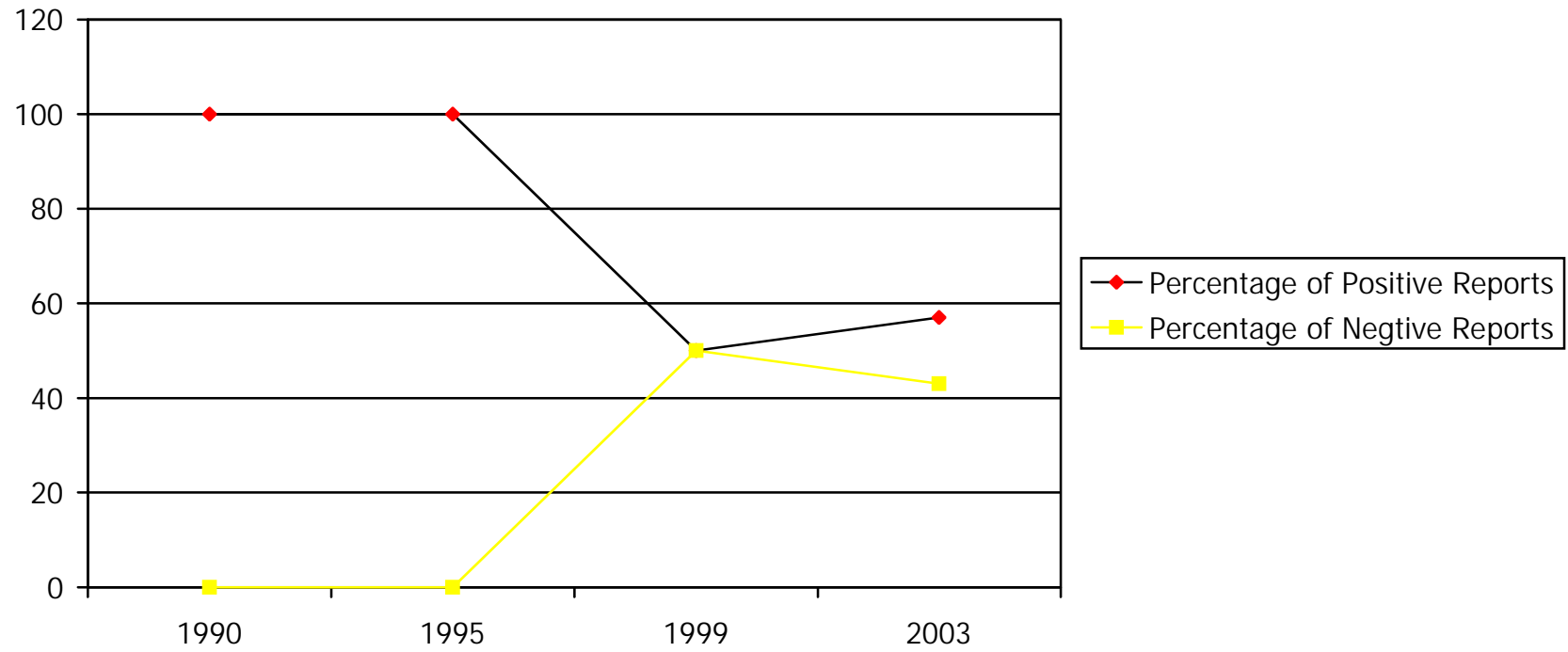
and one centered around the newly elected premier Wen Jiabao, who helped the peasant workers in the village to get their delayed wages back. From the appearance, the rise of the critical reports of the Party and the state seemed to indicate enlarged space for democracy in China. A close look at these reports however throws this fantasy into doubt. Yes, there were reports about official corruption, which used to be a taboo for public discussion. But had any of these reports targeted the roots of official corruptions, the top leadership in Beijing? The answer is none. Then the message was crystal clear: The local officials, in violation of party discipline and state laws, got involved in various corrupt practices, which both tainted the image of the Party and the state. But the message goes on: to maintain the glorious tradition of being a clean party, the top leadership made a smart and resolute decision to fight against these degenerate tendencies by removing these corrupt individuals from their positions. This is anything but scapegoating. The effect on elevating the Party image is nothing less than the effect of traditional positive propaganda. (Please refer to Figure 7)

Fourth, the main actors covered in the news became more diversified. The categories of people covered in 1990 could be easily divided into just a few groups: peasants, government officials, businessmen, and common citizens. This continued to be true in 1995. However, those categories proved to be inadequate for describing the news stories covered in 1999 and 2003. For these two years, it ceased to make any sense to divide the main actors according to their occupations. On the one hand, there were simply too many occupations to account for (private businessmen, teachers, doctors, entrepreneurs, actors, revolutionary soldiers, housewives, athletes, peasant workers, service professionals, etc.), which reflect the ever diversifying and complicating social interests in China. China used to be a highly homogenous society during Mao's era. The memory of the blue and grey Mao jacket, the little red book, the clearly divided social strata of workers, peasants, and intellectuals remained steadfast in a lot of people's mind. This picture was buried by Deng's pragmatist reform policies. As the logic of the market entered into the economy and the door of the country opened to the world, foreign practices plus domestic policy innovations created various new opportunities, which gave rise to the new

occupations in China. It was against such a backdrop that the Chinese society became more complex and rich. The television news considered in the study reflected this social change.

Fifth, as to the geographical preferences in the news reporting, the eastern coastal area was the region that received the most attention throughout the period covered by the study. Besides, despite the sudden drop in 1999, the percentage of reports on the western hinterland areas kept increasing throughout the period of study. For the year 1990, there were only two pieces of news reports about the western hinterland of the country. Seven reports (13%) were on the western part of the country in 1995. The reports on the hinterland in the western and southwestern parts of the country decreased a little in 1999. The number of the reports on the western hinterland culminated in 2003, accounting for about 50% of the total reports in the year. The regional disparity demonstrated by figure 8 exposes the design of Chinese economic reform. The reform model developed in the late 1970s was highly imbalanced. As the eastern coastal areas, the experimental sites of the market reform, enjoyed preferential policies and treatment, the vast western hinterland was largely neglected. No substantial effort was made to improve this situation until regional income disparity began to pose serious threats to social stability and national unity in late 1990s. Hu Jintao, who served many years in the western hinterland before he moved to Beijing must have known the seriousness of the situation better than most of the top leaders in the Capital, which partially explains why he has given more attention to the western part of the country since he formally took office as the president in 2003. Both the *Western Exploration* project and *Building Harmonious Society* project were designed to address the problems arisen from the design flaws of the original reform model. The repetition of the official rhetoric on China's west by Chinese television news programs bespoke the continued mouthpiece role of television in the reform era. (Please refer to Figure 8)

Sixth, the research also revealed that the news reporting about peasants was unprecedented in 1995, accounting for about 44% of the total reports in that year. For the rest of the three years included in the study, the news reports on peasants or

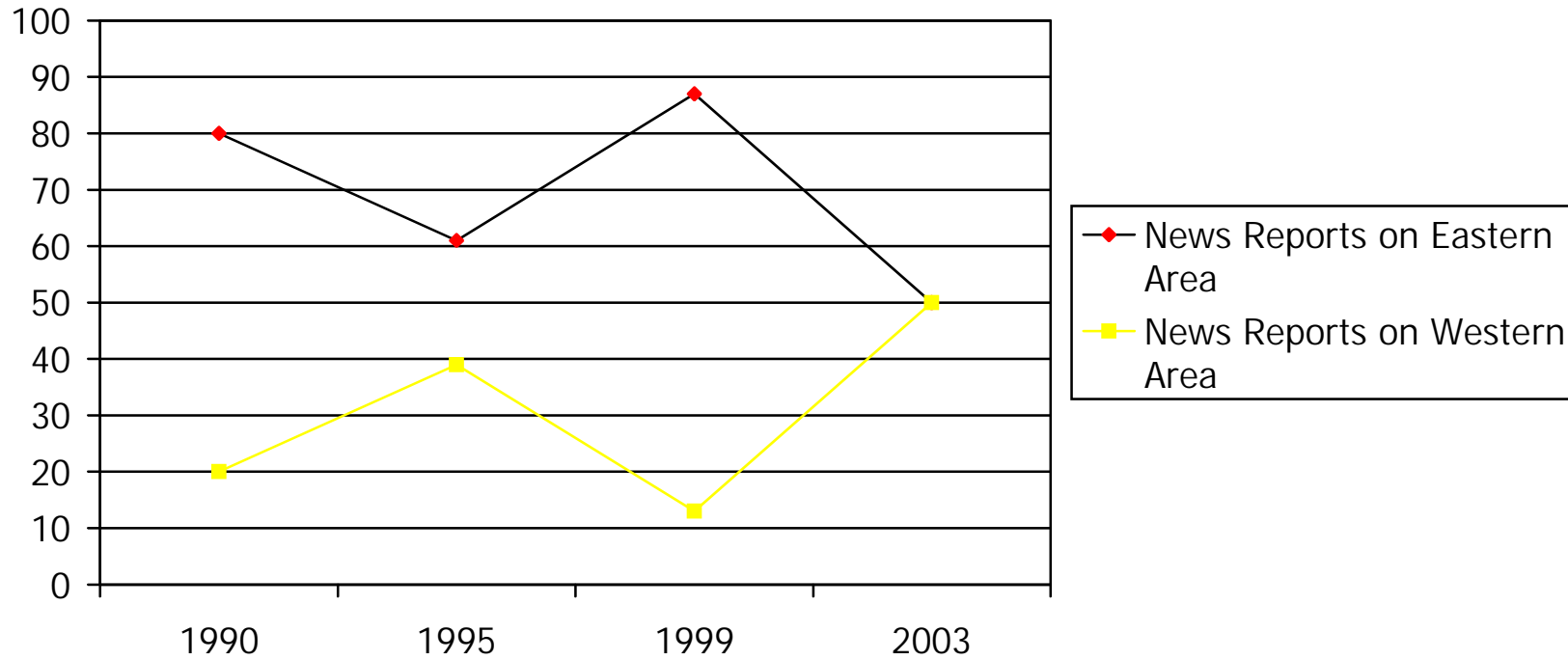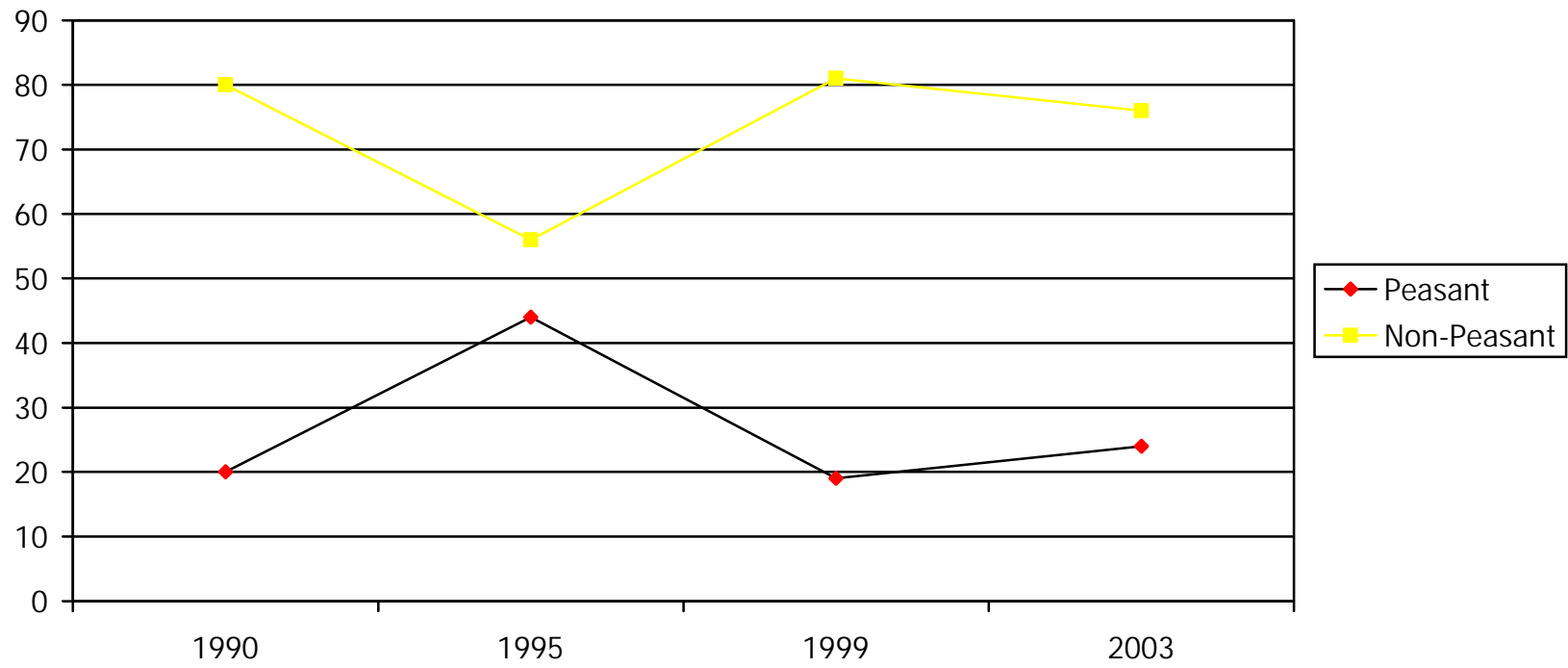**Figure 8: Regional Distribution of News Reports**

Figure 9: News Reports and Peasants

issues related to rural areas comprised about 20% of the total reports. Among the 9 pieces of news that received awards in 1995, 6 reports were positive and heartening reports about various new development in rural China: two of the stories focused on the successful efforts made by local and central governments to lift two villages from poverty; one was about the improvement of the rule of law in villages, which allowed the peasants to get their lost land back from the corrupt village leaders; the other two were about the urbanization tendency in South China, where peasants made increased investment in the third industry; finally, there was a legendary story about a peasant who had volunteered to repair shoes for the PLA soldiers who were dispatched to the area to fight flood for the local residents.   For the 3 negative reports, two of them were about environmental degradation in rural China and one of them centered on the fraud practices by the a village leader in implementing family planning policy in Shannxi. What made the year 1995 a special year for Chinese peasants on Chinese television screen? As part of the reform policies adopted in the late 1970s, the household responsibility system adopted in rural China effectively revived China's agriculture. The effectiveness of the policy, however, could not be sustained because the government gave priority to the economic development in urban areas along the coast in the 1990s. As the income of the peasants became stagnant, the tension pressured the central government to search for new ways to boost rural development in the mid 1990s. The salience of positive rural news in 1995 reflected the shifted attention of the leadership as well as their intention to channel public opinion on the official failure in developing and implementing sound rural policies. (Please refer to Figure 9)

Seventh, in terms of the demographic composition of the main actors covered in the news, women were largely marginalized. The news reporting was centered on men in their robust years (30-60),[203] whose voices were shown as the most strong and effective over all. Women might have contributed to the background voice in many news reports, but they were seldom the focal points. What was more

---

[203] The robust age range is culturally specific. It has to do with Chinese retirement system, which requires most state employees to retire at 55, for those holding higher official ranks, they can retire at the age of 60.

surprising was that for the years 1990 and 1995, there were simply no reports featuring women. The year 1999 was the year in which the largest number of reports (around 11.8%) on women was found, but the number dropped to around 3.3% in 2003. For the 4 reports awarded in 1999, three of them were related to violence: two reports centered on the female Foreign Ministry official who was the one of the two victims of the US-led NATO bombing of Chinese Embassy in 1999; and the other one was about a courageous and smart housewife who fought against intruders to her home. The only violence free news reports on women for the same year was the news coverage of the female peasants who took the lead in getting rich by making and selling paper lanterns in Hebei province. The 2003 awards reports on women created the same mixed image of women as vulnerable victims of violence and social injustice, as well as increasingly independent individuals. Among the three 2003 reports, one was about a Tibaten woman who received donation of a kidney from a male stranger of Han nationality; the other story was about women trafficking in Meimenggu; and the last report centered on a laid-off women worker who became rich by exploring opportunities in the service industry. Undoubtedly, women have been both marginalized and stereotyped in Chinese television news reporting. This image of women on Chinese television was in sharp contrast with China's demographic composition and social reality. The gender ratio between women and men is 1:1.06 in China. But how can a half of the total population were nearly invisible on China's television screen? As confirmed by the second finding, social problems began to be given special prominence on Chinese television in recent years. But why was the group of population that has suffered most from unemployment, layoffs, and lack of health care barely heard and seen? How can the picture of China's social problems be complete without women, one of the most disadvantaged groups of the population in the reform era? The distance between the news coverage and social reality about women raised critical questions about the nature of the increased social news on Chinese television. Yes, there had been more openness to covering the downside of the society, but as to the degree of openness, it was still very limited. After all, the change from no coverage to increased coverage did not necessarily lead to quality or reliable coverage. The effect of this distorted

and omitted coverage was actually worse than no coverage, for it helped to divert the public from knowing the seriousness of the reality. (Please refer to Figure 10)

Eighth, in terms of the news coverage of children and seniors, it is obvious that children have been given very little attention (7 % in average) between 1990 and 2003. Seniors were almost invisible in the television news. There was simply no report on seniors in 1990, 1995, and 2003. For the only year that seniors' voices were heard on Chinese television news, 1999, there was only one featured report, in which a male veteran, with the assistance from the local television station, tried to search for a long-lost friend who had saved his life during the anti-Japanese war. This evident absence of seniors and children from Chinese television screen once again confirmed the eighth finding; men in their robust years dominated Chinese television news coverage. Given the lack of a sound social welfare system and the aging of the population, senior citizens in China have given Chinese government a severe headache. Although the new administration has been working hard to provide at least basic security benefits for the seniors, no substantial improvements have been made so far. The intentional invisibility on television of this group of people, in this sense, could be interpreted as another official effort to distract and divert public attention. (Please refer to Figure 11)

Ninth, as indicated by the date analysis, ethnic minorities have been marginalized in the Chinese news reporting, just like women, children, and seniors. Although there are altogether 56 ethnic groups in China, almost 90% of all the reports for the target years were about Han people. Ethnic groups such as Zang, Hui and Menggu were touched upon now and then, but all other groups were completely invisible from the news reporting. As a country composed of 56 ethnic minority groups, China has never had a period of history free from ethnic conflicts or dissents. This has been especially true in recent years: The Tibetans have never given up their efforts to seek complete autonomy; and the Muslims in Xinjiang flooded the affluent cities along the coasts, creating urban horrors and threats. Then how can there be such scarcity of news stories of the ethnic minorities? First of all, the underexposure of the ethnic minorities on Chinese television indicated that the ethnic minorities
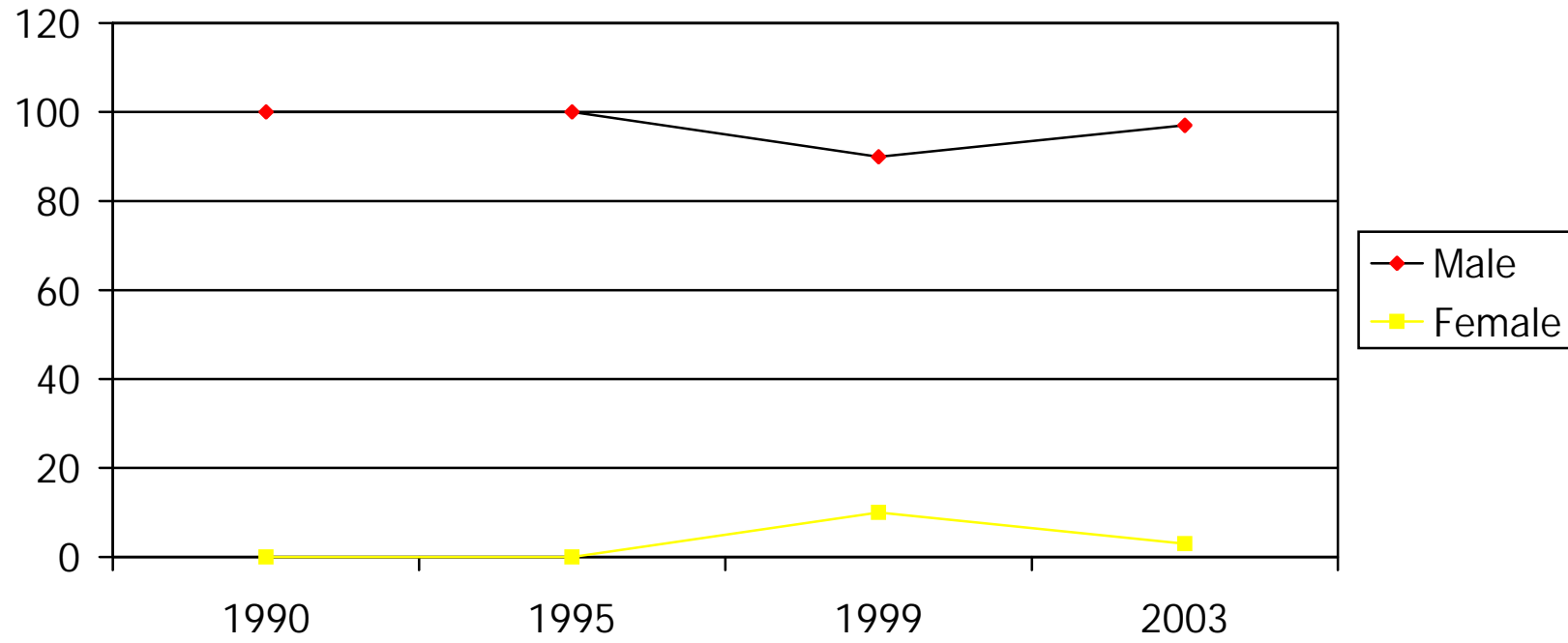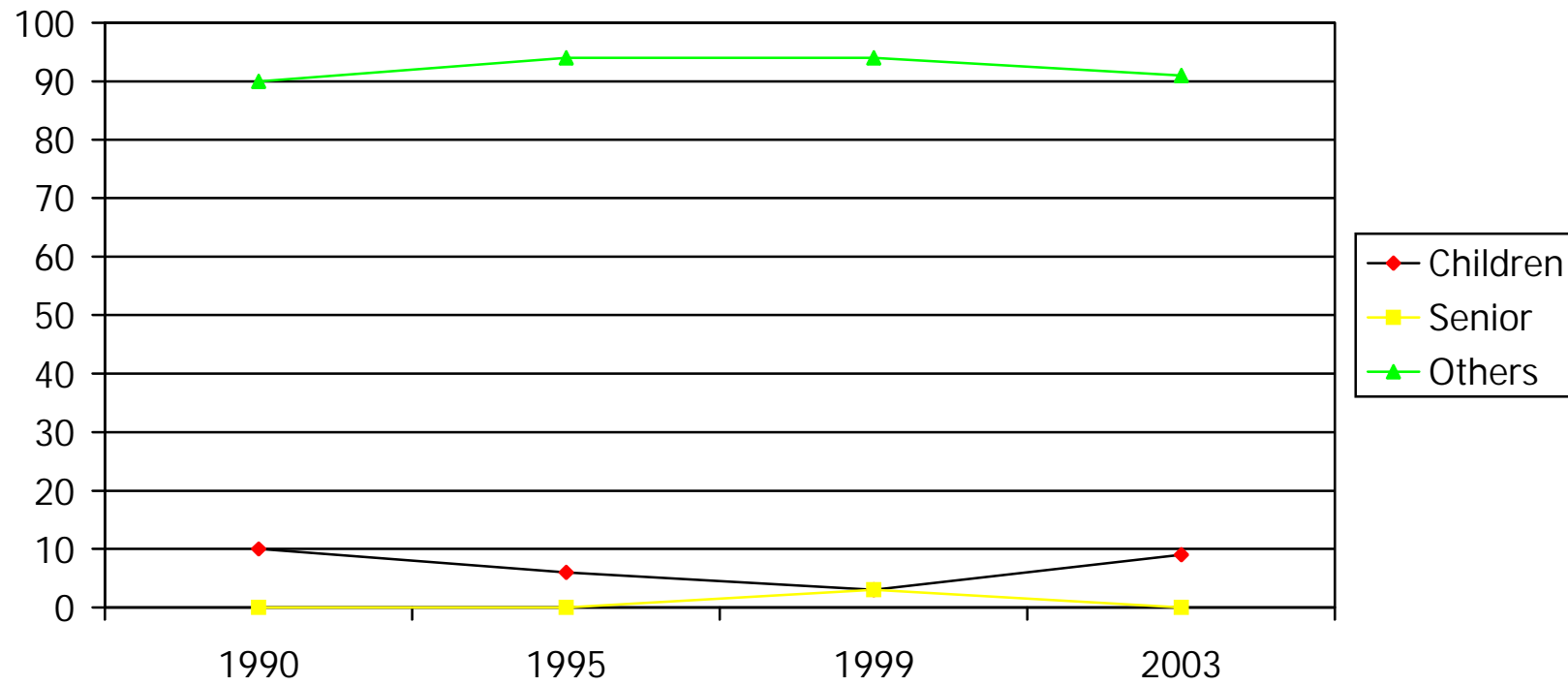
Figure 10: News Reports and Gender

Figure 11: News Reports on Children and Seniors

remained marginalized in the reform era. Although they occupied over 60% of China's territory, their total population, which accounted for only 8% of the total, reduced their potentials to create any big troubles for the central authority in Beijing. Besides, instead of forming clusters of their own, most of the ethnic minorities were dispersed throughout vast areas in the western and southwestern, which further decreased the possibility for them to organize any large-scale revolts or protests. As for Tibet and Xinjiang, since they have been strategically important to both Chinese domestic and foreign policy, the lack of coverage of them simply was another indirect approach to divert public attention. (Please refer to Figure 12)

Tenth, as displayed by the changes in the number of international news programs that have received awards between 1990 and 2003, fluctuating attention has been given to the world outside of Chinese territory. Contrary to the perception of most scholars, who believed that China must have given increasing attention to the outside world due to its open door policy, the percentage of the international news reports reached their height in 1990 rather than in 2003. The number dropped considerably in 1995 and 1999. Although the year 2003 witnessed a resurgence of international news, the proportion of international news was still not comparable to that in 1990. Moreover, in terms of the portrayal of foreign countries, the countries that were mentioned in the award winning news coverage are mainly the countries of strategic importance to China, such as the United States, Japan, Iraq and Yugoslavia. Among these four countries mentioned in the news, the United States remained the center of attention, and the covert aim of the reports on Iraq and Yugoslavia was to portray the United States as abusive and bullying.[204] No other country or region was featured in the award winning news reports in the selected years. (Please refer to Figure 13)

Furthermore, in terms of the framing of the reports, most of the international reports were negative and violent. Like in the US case, the report on US-led NATO

---

[204] The news reports on Iraq was the live coverage of the Iraq War, whose message was that the United States were exacerbating situation in Iraq by creating horror, injury and death among Iraqi civilians. The news report on Yugoslavia was on US-led NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. According to news framing, the United States was taking lead in violating UN rules and international law.

Figure 12: News Reports and Ethnic Minorities
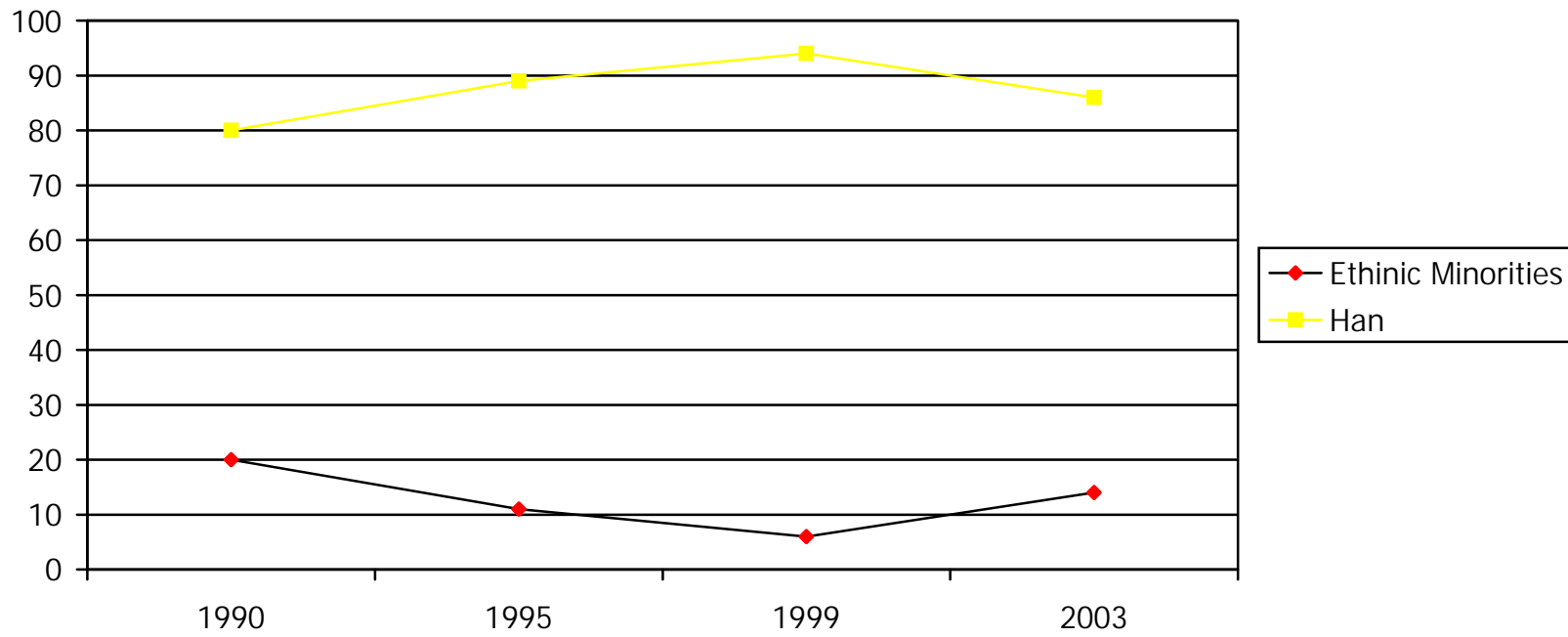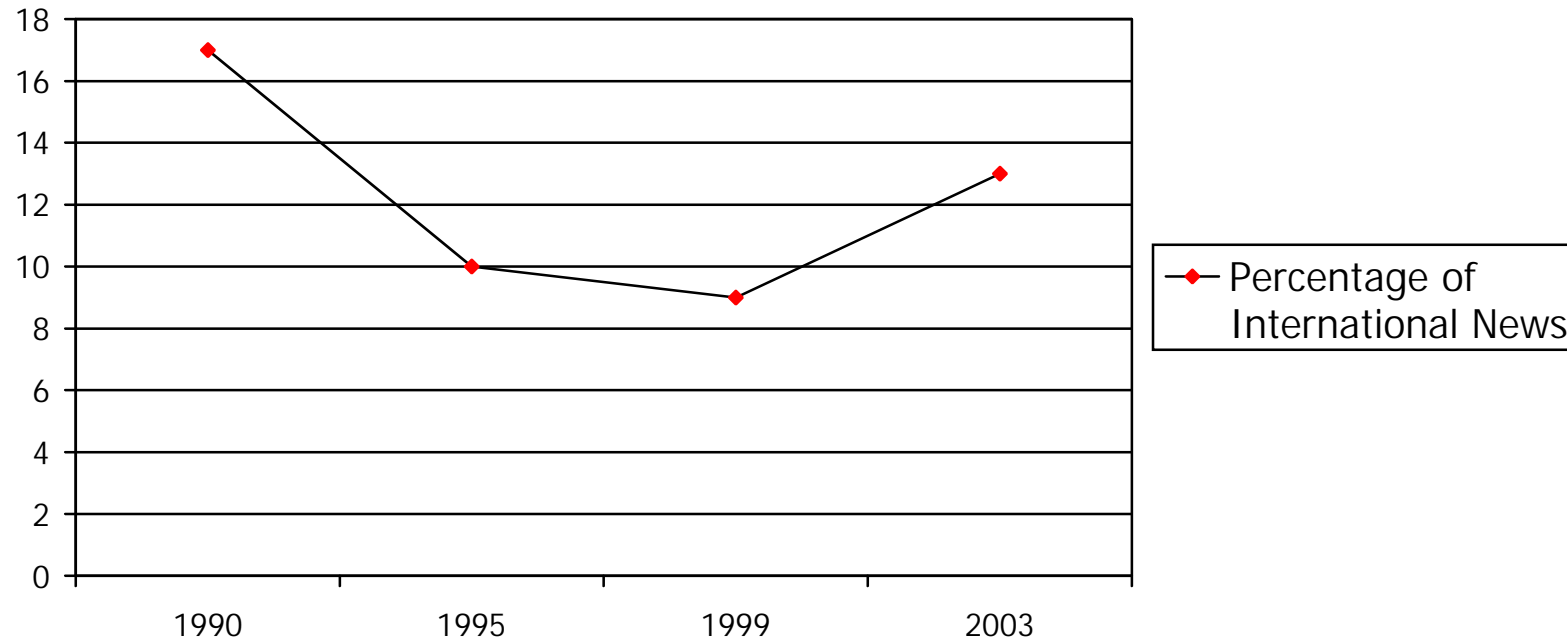
Figure 13: International News Reports

bombing of the Chinese embassy was bloody and heart-breaking. The framing of the Sino-US agreement on China's accession to the WTO as a hard-won success for China also conveyed messages about the negative role played by the US in creating various roadblocks in the past. The news reports on Japan fell in to the same pattern. The only piece of news on Japan was about the remnant chemical weapons left by Japanese troops in China during the Second World War and their continued harm to Chinese citizens in the Northeastern part of China.

Given China's extensive interactions with the rest of the world since 1978, the highly limited and skewed coverage of the international community was definitely not a reliable reflection of the reality. The discrepancy between reality and television reflected China's foreign policy-making style and foreign affairs agenda. Unlike domestic policies, which are frequently subject to public or local discussion and debate, the foreign policy making process was largely restricted to a small group of policy experts in Beijing. Public participation and discussion, therefore, was neither encouraged nor welcomed. This was exactly why limited information has been provided on the outside world on Chinese television screen. Although, as discussed in the previous chapter, there have always been moments when the government tried to draw public attention to certain countries, it was more for the purpose of fanning nationalist sentiments against these countries among Chinese citizens than inviting public opinion on foreign policy making.[205] When nationalist sentiment began to backfire and impede the government's foreign policy, the government never hesitated to cool down the fervent public protests by shutting down the relevant information channels.[206]

---

[205] During the incident of the collision of the US and Chinese jet planes in 2001 and the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in 1999, the government has moved cautiously to fan the nationalist sentiments while keeping it within certain limit. The calculation behind this was that the government wanted to use public pressure as a way to increase its leverage and bargaining power while continuing to main the relations with the US. Obviously a broken relationship will be disastrous for both the United State and China.

[206] In the case of Japan, Jiang Zemin has mobilized strong nationalist sentiment against Japan. As the public outcry has become too loud to be ignored, Jiang's leadership was forced into a very difficult position developing normal relationship with Japan. In order to appease the nationalist sentiment, the government has directed the media to minimize their coverage on topics related to Japan in recent years. According to one of my interviewee at a local television station in Shandong province, for fear that the audiences might show strong sentiments against the Japanese team, the TV station was not

The strategic selection of foreign countries in the news coverage also reflected the country's foreign policy agenda. The salience of the United States and Japan indicate the importance China attached to them. Beijing's attitude to these two countries has been very ambivalent. On the one hand, it obviously realized the benefits of expanding economic cooperation with those two countries; on the other hand, by fanning domestic anti-American and anti-Japanese sentiments, it tried very hard to exert pressure on these two countries to make concessions on both political and economic fronts. The negative framing of the news reports further confirmed the strategic official strategy of using public opinion to solve its international crisis.

Eleventh, the research results conveyed a picture of a peaceful China and a violent outside world. As mentioned above, most of the news coverage of foreign countries related to violence, war, and sensational scenes. Compared to this international portrayal, only one piece of all domestic news reports showed violent pictures: the deputy governor of Sichuan took the lead in extinguishing a fire caused by an explosion along a local railway.[207] The contrast depicted was not a reliable reflection of social reality in China. Although far from rampant, violence resulting from population flow, income inequality, regional disparity, lack of social welfare has in no way been rare in China in recent years. The collective omission of these ongoing tensions on Chinese television screen and the imbalanced world coverage clearly revealed the Soviet remnants of positive propaganda. The underlying message continued to be that China under the CCP leadership had overwhelming superiority to the rest of the world.

Twelfth, live coverage became possible nationwide. As a response to and an encouragement for the increasing live coverage of news, which first appeared in China in 1997, a special award for live coverage was established for the 1999. This timing is linked to the Party's need to orchestrate large-scale propaganda for several key political events in the late 1990s, including the return of Hong Kong in 1997,

---

allow to broadcast any image of the audience during the live broadcast of the football game between Japan and China. For more examples, please refer to Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Super Power* (Oxford University Press, 2007), p142.

[207] This piece of news was one of the award winner reports in 1990.

US president Bill Clinton's state visit in 1998, and Macau's return in 1999. The topics of the award-winning live reports in 1999 included Macau's return to the motherland, the celebration of the 50th university in the PRC, local officials' reception of a foreign investor in Tianjin, party leader's reception of model workers in Zhejiang, and an earthquake in Taiwan. For the year 2003, CCTV's live broadcast of the Iraq war and Xiamen Television station's coverage of the international marathon race were given the most attention.

Finally, the news reporting style has been gradually Westernized in the reform era. Due to the upgrading of television technology, video and live reports have replaced the newsroom's still picture background. Instead of sitting straight in front of the audience reading the news reports in a word-for-word format, news anchors began to play more of an analyst's role. The style became more vivid, relaxed, natural, and sophisticated. In terms of the appearance of the news anchors, although they were equally young and good-looking as their predecessors,[208] there was a gradual change from a rigid and monolithic look to a more sharp, colorful and stylish look.

5.4 Summary

As demonstrated by the above research findings, the analysis of the CRTB Awards news reports produced mixed results, in which both control and liberalization tendencies expressed themselves. Compared to the pre-reform era, China's television news reporting started to enjoy increasing freedom over the period covered in this study. First of all, there was an increased volume of news available, which indicates the relaxed control over information in Chinese society. Second, the news topics became more diverse. Compared to the Soviet-style, rigid, dry and heavily ideological propagandas, the news reports in the reform era tended to cover a much more diverse range of social, cultural, and economic topics. Third, compared

---

[208] One example for the rudimentary form of the journalist professionalism in China is the quality of the new anchor persons. It has been a long and unchanged rule to select young and good-looking persons rather than well-training analysts to host news programs in China. This partially showed that the analytical degree of television news in China remains low. News programs remained to be paper-reading shows to certain extent.

to the all positive propaganda news style in the pre-reform era, political news coverage became more balanced and less ideological. Instead of carrying up-beat reports vaunting the achievements of the Party, the media have begun to cover stories related to official corruption at local levels. Finally, news formats have become evidently Westernized. Instead of having news anchors sitting straight and reading new reports word-for-word, the combination of audio-video elements with simple comments and analysis, the more stylish look of the news anchors, and the emergence of live broadcast has made the newsroom in China look increasingly similar to its Western counterparts.

The liberal changes in the television news reporting practices also reflected the rising level of journalist professionalism in China. That journalists were reporting "dark" stories which according to the TASS standards were not allowed in the pre-reform era, were disclosing the frauds and deceptions practiced by local officials,[209] and were paying more attention to the harsh situation in the remote western and southwestern area of the country all demonstrated that they were becoming more professional in providing reliable information about Chinese society and politics. The increasing amount of live coverage was another indication of a departure from the TASS style and a tendency towards relaxed government control over news reporting. Out of fear that unfavorable information might be disclosed to the masses, no live coverage was allowed in news reporting before the reform era. Then, from Beijing's CCTV to local broadcasters, all stations adopted the practice of recording the program beforehand. It showed not only political vision but also confidence and courage for the central government to allow live coverage to air in China.

Despite the liberalization tendencies listed above, there are also disturbing discoveries. First of all, indirect and increasingly sophisticated control over news content has been discerned amidst the evident tendencies towards diverse, objective, and balanced reports. Though omission, distraction, and distortion, television news reports were diverting public attention from the social and political reality in China.

---

[209] See e.g. the 1995 award winner reports on the local whitewashing efforts fraud and deception in Haerbin, Northeast China and also in Shanxi, Western Hinterland.

In the past, if there was information that the government did not want to let the public know, it simply concealed the information. As economic and technological developments made it impossible to withhold information, the government turned to indirect and more sophisticated means to shape public opinion.

The analysis of the news reports on official corruption, women, ethnic minorities, social topics, and foreign affairs all confirmed this point. Take the coverage of official corruption as an example. Knowing that it was already a truism among the public that there was widespread corruption among officials in China in the reform era, instead of safeguarding the Party-State image by prohibiting the television stations from covering the topic, the government encouraged them to do so. But the bottom line was clear from the analysis of the CRTB Awards winner news reports: no report on senior officials has been allowed to appear on Chinese television screens. By encouraging this kind of selective reporting, the government not only satisfied the public hunger for information but also safeguarded the image and strengthened the legitimacy of the top leadership. The omission of women, seniors and ethnic minorities also illustrated this strategy. By keeping these disadvantaged groups from the television screen, the government tried to mitigate the public grievances by presenting the Chinese audience a distorted reality. Again, the message was clear: China did have a lot of problems, as the citizens felt, but the problems were not as serious as what they heard about. For, as the television showed, the problems at best affected only a small group of people.

Moreover, as to the international news reports, the small percentage of the international news, selection of countries, and negative framing of the reports reflected the government's domestic agenda, its foreign affairs agenda, and its foreign policy making style. First of all, the small amount of international news confirmed that the focus of the Chinese government was still on the domestic front. The intercalation with the world was, at most, the tool rather than the goal for the government. This strategic thinking can partially explain today's twinned trends to deregulate the media industry and equally to protect it from foreign competition.[210]

---

[210] The government allowed all newly formed media conglomerates to enjoy preferable treatments that enjoyed by party media before in 2002. See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting*

Moreover, as the research findings showed, despite Beijing's active efforts in conducting multi-lateral diplomacy,[211] the United States continued to be at the center of Beijing's foreign affairs considerations. Finally, although the Chinese government has taken a proactive stance in improving the Sino-US relations, as reflected in the negative framing of the news, deep in the policy makers' minds the United States remains more of an enemy and opponent than a friend and partner. The comparatively high frequency of covering the US together with the generally negative portrayal of it well confirmed Beijing's realist mindset concerning its foreign affairs.

The above analysis gives a picture of state control juxtaposed with tendencies towards liberalization. Almost thirty years after the reforms, the trends towards further opening the country and its media system are irreversible. China's entry into the WTO in 2001 reinforced and will continue to reinforce this tendency. Upon its entry into the WTO, China promised to open its media market on a gradual basis. However, this does not mean that media freedom will come automatically as the country becomes more economically developed. Considering the fact that Chinese media scholars and policy makers are studying media policies in Taiwan, Singapore and European countries,[212] it is not hard to conclude that China will not follow the pattern of liberal democratic societies such as the United States in reforming its media system. Rather, the possibility is high for China to continue to develop its market economy while controlling the political coverage produced by its media. In this sense, a dual system, which can accommodate both the control over the political news and the commercialization and liberalization of the mass media in covering social and economic issues, is very likely to emerge in China. Under the hybrid form of the Soviet and liberal style, it is not impossible to have increased media freedom in covering political content. However, this calls for effort from all parties concerned. Chinese government officials, media scholars, media practitioners, the

Yearbook 2002 (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2002), p165.
[211] See e.g. Xi Chen, "China's Foreign Policy Dynamics and International Order", in Yannis Stivachtis, ed., *International Order in A Globalizing World* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishers, 2007).
[212] See e.g. J. S. Lang. *zhongguo xinwe zhengce tixi yanjiu (The Study of Chinese Media Policy)* (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2003), p165.

public, and international corporations are all key players in fostering these changes in the Chinese media system.

CHAPTER SIX: TELEVISON UNDER THE REIGN: REGULATORY

TRENDS IN THE REFORM ERA

The research findings of the analysis of the CRT Awards winner news reports in chapter five offer important insights into recent changes in China's television news reporting practices. Contradictory trends, both control and liberalization, have manifested themselves on Chinese television screen. How could this be possible? How did the government manage television as a playfield for these seemingly incompatible trends? This chapter is aimed to search for answers to the above questions by exploring changes in television regulations in the Reform era. Like all other mass media in China, television has been subject to the dual control by the Party and state ever since its inception in 1958. On the one hand, it is required to stick to the Party ideology and be the mouthpiece of the Party; on the other hand, it is subject to administrative control at various levels, ranging from the National People's Congress, State Council, to the State Administration of Radio, Film, and TV. The development of Chinese television regulations has been parallel to the country's economic and political developments. Television regulations, therefore, are both a motor and a mirror for the country's socio-political changes. In this

chapter, I will first review the historical development of Chinese television policy and regulation, and then analyze the recent regulatory trends over television in particular and media in general.

6.1 Television Regulations in China

The CCP's regulations over television were initially developed out of the regulation foundation laid by the Nationalist Party before 1949. With the aim of promoting Nationalist ideological campaigns against the Communists, the Nationalist government, led by Chiang Kai-Shek, developed a variety of regulations and laws for radio broadcasting before the CCP rose to power. These regulations and laws laid the foundation for the CCP to regulate both of China's radio and of television broadcasting after 1949.

Although the first television station of China emerged in 1958, no specific regulation was issued for television broadcasting until the reform era due to the disrupted development of the industry during the succession of ideological campaigns and political movements beginning in the 1950s and continuing until the 1970s. In the absence of television regulations, the CCP leadership relied heavily on the relevant regulations on radio broadcasting to rein the early development of television broadcasting. For the purpose of effectively controlling the media system, the Party established the Central Press Bureau in November in 1949 to "lead and manage the media institutions."[213] The bureau issued three important decisions before it was abolished in 1952: the *Decision on Establishing Radio Receiving Network*, the *Decision on Standardizing the Organization and Work of Xinhua News Agency*, and the *Decision on Improving Newspaper Work*. These government documents not only played pivotal roles in expanding the infrastructure for radio broadcasting in China, but were used extensively in guiding early television broadcasting in China.[214] The CCP also attempted to legalize its media policy by

---

[213]   See e.g. J. S. Lang, *zhongguo xinwen zhengce tixi yanjiu (The Study of Chinese Journalism Policy System)*. (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2003), p59.
[214]   See e.g. J. S. Lang, *zhongguo xinwen zhengce tixi yanjiu (The Study of Chinese Journalism Policy System)*. (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2003), p60.

developing media regulations in early 1950s, finally leading to the constitutional guarantee of basic media freedom in China. According to the 1954 constitution, "the citizens of the People's Republic of China have the freedom of expression and publication."[215]

With the Cultural Revolution paralyzing almost all aspects of the country's economic and social life, including the television system, no development of the industry was achieved between 1966 and 1976. It was not until the 1980s that Chinese television embarked on the road of rapid development. The booming TV industry produced a huge insatiable market, driven not only by its internal logic, but also by external forces unleashed through Deng's political pragmatism and realistic appraisal of China's socioeconomic conditions.[216] The task of regulating Chinese televisions had, therefore, become increasingly compelling and complex due to the interplay of multiple cultural, social, economic, and political forces in the Chinese television system. State regulations on the medium since then have reflected the dynamics of the negotiations, adjustments, and repositioning among the state, market, and the television.

The ramification of Chinese television represented as well as reinforced a number of socio-political changes in China, among which the de-emphasis on ideology was most noticeable. As Chinese society became more vibrant and open due to its increased interactions with the rest of the world, there developed wide-spread political apathy among its public, which in turn, resulted in the ineffectiveness of the straightforward and rigid television political propaganda. To refresh its political control over the public opinion so as to continue to foster consensus in Chinese society, the Party-State turned to regulatory measures that would be legally binding and systematically enforceable in managing and controlling its media industry and television in particular. The government issued formal and legal regulations of Chinese television in response to the rising conflicts

---

[215] See e.g. J. S. Lang, *Zhongguo xinwen zhengce tixi yanjiu (The Study of Chinese Journalism Policy System)*. (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2003), p64.
[216] See e.g. J. Wang and T. K. Chang, "From Class Ideologue to State Manager: TV Programming and Foreign Imports in China, 1970-1990", *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, no. 40, p196-207.

between the state purpose and the market interests in the 1980s.[217] Evidence of the change included the reorganization of the administrative agencies for television management; the promulgation of formal codes and regulations government the activities of the television stations and practitioners; and the imposition of registration and licensing requirements for television stations and personnel.

To anchor the state control over television in a legal and managerial framework, Chinese government renamed the Ministry of Radio, Film, and Television into the State Administration of Radio, Television, and Film (SARFT) in 1982. In the following year, the role and the nature of television in Chinese society were redefined explicitly by the 11th China Radio and Television Conference (CRTC). According to the CRTC, television was the most important tool in encouraging the people of the nation to strive to create a socialist civilization that was both materially and culturally rich; and it was also the most effective connections between the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese Government, and Chinese people.[218] It was the SARFT that has issued most of the regulations over television industry in the reform era. Over 140 more major laws, regulations, measures, notifications, and rules to regulate TV were issued by the administration between 1982 and 1998.[219] These regulations were known mostly as government's response to the medium's rapid development and expansion. They not only reflected the changing party philosophy and conception of the medium but also the Party's desire and effort to formalize and legalize its jurisdiction over the procedural and substantive matters involving the production, distribution, and consumption of Chinese television programming. For Chinese politics, this could be seen as evidence that China was evolving from a charisma based strongman state to a more rational and legal state. Besides formal regulatory efforts, professional codes were also development for television practitioners to practice self-discipline. As the

---

[217] See e.g. J. Yu, "The Structure and Function of Chinese Television, 1979-1989" in C. C. Lee, ed., *Voice of China: the Interplay of Politics and Journalism* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1990), p66-87,

[218] Xiaobing Li, "Chinese Television System and Television News", *China Quarterly*, no. 126 (June 1991), p340-355.

[219] See e.g. T. K. Chang, T. K., J. Wang, and Y. Chen, China's *Window on the World: TV News, Social Knowledge and International Spectacles* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2002), p36.

largest professional organization of Chinese journalists, the *All China Journalist Federation* adopted a code of ethics in 1991, which formalized many ideas that used to belong to private debate over the rights and responsibilities of journalists. The professional code contained both Soviet and western elements. According to it, journalists should strive to provide authentic information to the audience, refrain from incorporating advertisement in disguise of news, and be loyal to the Party.[220] Moreover, in response to the rapid expansion of television infrastructure at local levels, the SARFT also adopted a registration mechanism to practice control over the booming local television stations.

As the economic reform further deepened, television became a vibrant industry in China. It not only greatly expanded its domestic market but also actively sought profits in the international market. As in most developed countries, television ranked far ahead of newspapers and radio among the Chinese advertising vehicles by late 1990s.[221] Since China's entry into the WTO in 2001, the state-authorized television industrialization trend has continued. As the country's television market became open to foreign investment, multiple management, independent production and distribution, increased editorial freedom, and sophisticated television programming have been made possible in recent years.

How has China coped with various new developments in the Chinese television industry? In what way has the government coordinated and mediated the clashing tendencies for further liberalization and continued state control? This following part of the chapter aims to investigate these questions by analyzing the dynamics of the Chinese television regulations in the reform era.

6.2 Research Design

I chose to focus on the STARFT promulgated regulations listed on the *China Radio and Broadcasting Yearbook* for the selected years of 1987, 1998, 2001, 2003, and

---

[220]   See e.g. Judy Polumbaum, Striving for predictability: the bureaucratization of media management in China. in Chin-Chun Lee, ed., *Media's China's, China's Media* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), p113-128.
[221]   See e.g. T. K. Chang, T. K., J. Wang, and Y. Chen, China's *Window on the World: TV News, Social Knowledge and International Spectacles* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2002), p31.

2005 for this part of the research. All the data for the research were gathered from the *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook* for the years of 1988, 1999, 2002, 2004, and 2006.

As part of the state apparatus of mass control, the SARFT was the most authoritative state agency in developing regulations over the television industry. Therefore, an analysis of the regulations promulgated by the SARFT is expected to provide insights into the Party-State's position on media control. Under the direct supervision of the State Council, the SARFT not only sets limits on China's television broadcasting activity and content, but it also oversees television management and international cooperation. Besides, the SARFT also directly controls the national television satiation (CCTV) and a number of television associations such as the China Council for TV Art, the Academy of Broadcasting Science, the Broadcasting Design Institute, and the Radio & Television Publishing House.

Similar to the selection of date for the CRTB Awards news reports, the selection of the regulations for this study is also based on consideration of the availability and spread of data. Since the regulations for 1987 and 2005 were the oldest and most recent data available, I include them in this research for a more fruitful longitudinal study. Besides, in order to be able to explore the relationship between Chinese politics and the development of television industry I chose to include data for each generation of leadership in this study. The 19 years' time span of this research on television regulations covers the last years of the second generation of leadership, the full term of the third generation of leadership, and the early years of the current generation of leadership. For the selected data, I took each year's regulations as the coding unit. The variables dealt mainly with the number of regulations promulgated in each year, the nature of the regulations promulgated (general vs. specific), and the areas of the regulations (content/technology/management).

6.3 Recent Regulatory Trends

After analyzing the promulgated regulations on television industry for the following years: 1987, 1998, 2001, 2003, and 2005, as well as comparing and contrasting the regulations issued in the above-mentioned years, the following regulatory trends over Chinese television have been identified.

In contrast with the deregulation tendency during Jiang's leadership, both Deng and Hu's administration demonstrated regulation tendency. The regulation trends since Hu formally took office in 2003 have been outstanding compared to Deng's era. The years between 1987 and 1998 witnessed the first government efforts to regulate the television broadcasting. Starting from 1998, however, this tendency was replaced by consistent de-regulation. The number of regulations issued in 2003 dropped to the unprecedented low point since 1987.[222] A dramatic increase in government efforts of regulating the industry took place between 2003 and 2005 (see Figure 14). With 28 regulations and rules issued in the year of 2005, television regulations reached the highest point since.

These changes in China's television regulations were deeply embedded in the development of the country's television industry and politics. Given that China's television infrastructure did not take shape until the mid 1980s, the small number of regulations issued in 1987 reflected the lack of experience necessary to apply strict restrictions on the medium. Instead of hindering the development of television, the government actually encouraged the expansion of television infrastructure at this stage. With a generous government subsidy, 366 television stations and 17,570 transmission and relay stations were established by 1987.[223] By this time, 47.8% of Chinese households were known to possess a television set.[224] The fact that three out of 10 regulations issued in 1987 were about rules for protecting television equipment also reflects the official intention to expand television infrastructure construction in the mid 1980s.

---

[222] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1998* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 1998) and *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2004* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2004).

[223] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1988* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 1988), p71

[224] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1988* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 1988), p37

Figure 14: Total Number of Regulations Issued [225]
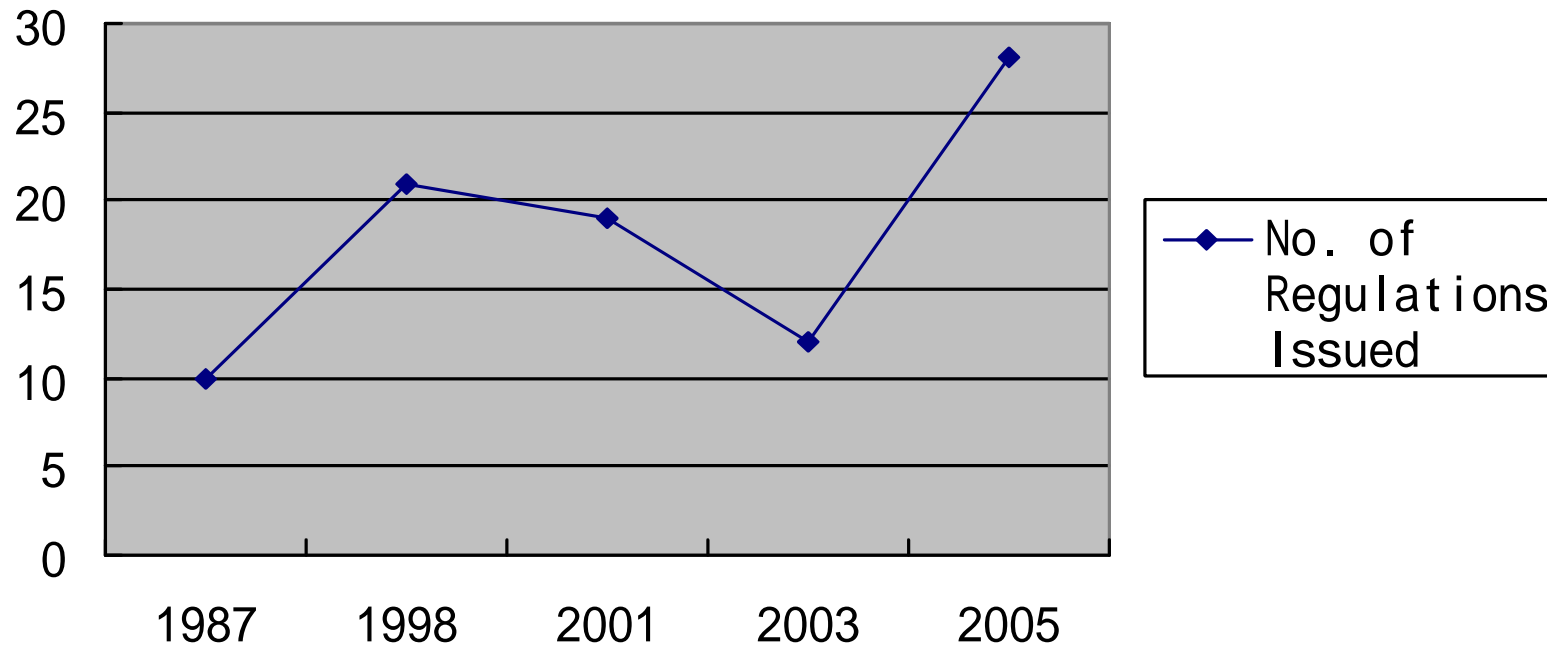
[225] Source: The raw date for the chart are all from China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook, 1987, 1998, 2001, 2003 and 2005

The first regulatory tendency began to take shape in late 1989, which was made possible by a combination of several factors. First, due to the official resentment for the role of the media in general and television in particular in fanning the anti-government sentiments among students and the public in spring 1989, the government tightened its control over all media outlets later in the same year. Television was no exception. This tendency towards enhanced government control was further reinforced by the need of the government to cope with various new media practices and developments emerged in the 1990s. Spurred by the decentralization of political power, de-emphasis on ideology, and further opening of the country's economy to market competition, the infrastructure of Chinese television experienced a nationwide expansion in the 1990s. The coverage of television signal reached 87.4% and the total number of television stations and transmission/relay stations reached 923 and 41,205 respectively in 1997.[226] This technological penetration was also accompanied by a wide range of new practices and phenomenon such as the increased diversity of content, improved programming, relaxed government control over management, rise of commercials, growing audiences, and paid journalism. To handle this situation, it was both necessary and imperative for the government to come up with specific rules and regulations to effectively manage the industry. As the 1997 regulations revealed, ambiguous and sketchy government regulations were replaced with 21 specific yet all-encompassing rules that were designed to address the multiple roles played by television in the reform era. These ranged from propaganda tools, commodity, public information source, educator, to advanced technology.[227] The timely adjustments of government regulations over television in late 1990s proved to be quite effective. The propaganda campaigns for Hong Kong's return to China and Jiang Zemin's visit to the United States were successful in a sense that the majority of the pubic not only accepted the Party's rhetoric but also responded with fervent nationalist expression and activities.

---

[226] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1998* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 1998), p511
[227] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1998* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 1998)

As the country's economic reform further deepened in late 1990s, there was increased need for China to merge into the global market. While the government was making efforts to gain favor with the WTO, it also simultaneously began to tailor the domestic economic structure and practices to the international standards. To appeal to the international organizations and foreign investors alike, the government even made political gestures to liberalize the country's political system. The relaxed control over the media system was made possible against such a background. As a precondition to enter the WTO, China promised to open its media sector, which was once dominated by the Party-State, on a gradually basis. The resulted deregulation tendency was maintained as the government worked hard to honor its promises until 2003, when the newly elected Chinese president, Hu Jintao's capability was put to a severe test during the SARS crisis. Out of consideration to construct a more open, accountable, and capable image of China's new administration, Hu authorized nationwide media freedom in publicizing SARS information in China. State regulations over television consequently struck its lowest point since 1987.

The media freedom brought about by the SARS crisis was at best a temporary, if not fleeting phenomenon. Shortly after the situation was put back under the government's control, Hu's administration made very little effort in concealing the Party's interest in keeping its grip on the mass media in general, and television in particular. This official intention was not only reflected from the ever increasing number of television regulations issued since 2003 both also confirmed my previous study on the development of the media regulations under the fourth generation of leadership.[228] According to the research results, the number of television regulations kept growing between 2003 and 2004 and consequently greatly outnumbered that of other media outlets in 2005 (see figure 15).

Increased attention had been given to the electronic media, including radio and television under the Hu's administration between 2002 and 2004. The percentage of

---

[228] See e.g. Xi Chen, "Dynamics of News Media Regulations in China", *Journal of Comparative Asian Development*, vol. 5, no. 1, (spring 2006), p49-64.

Figure 15: Dynamics of Media Regulations between 2003 and 2005[229]

---
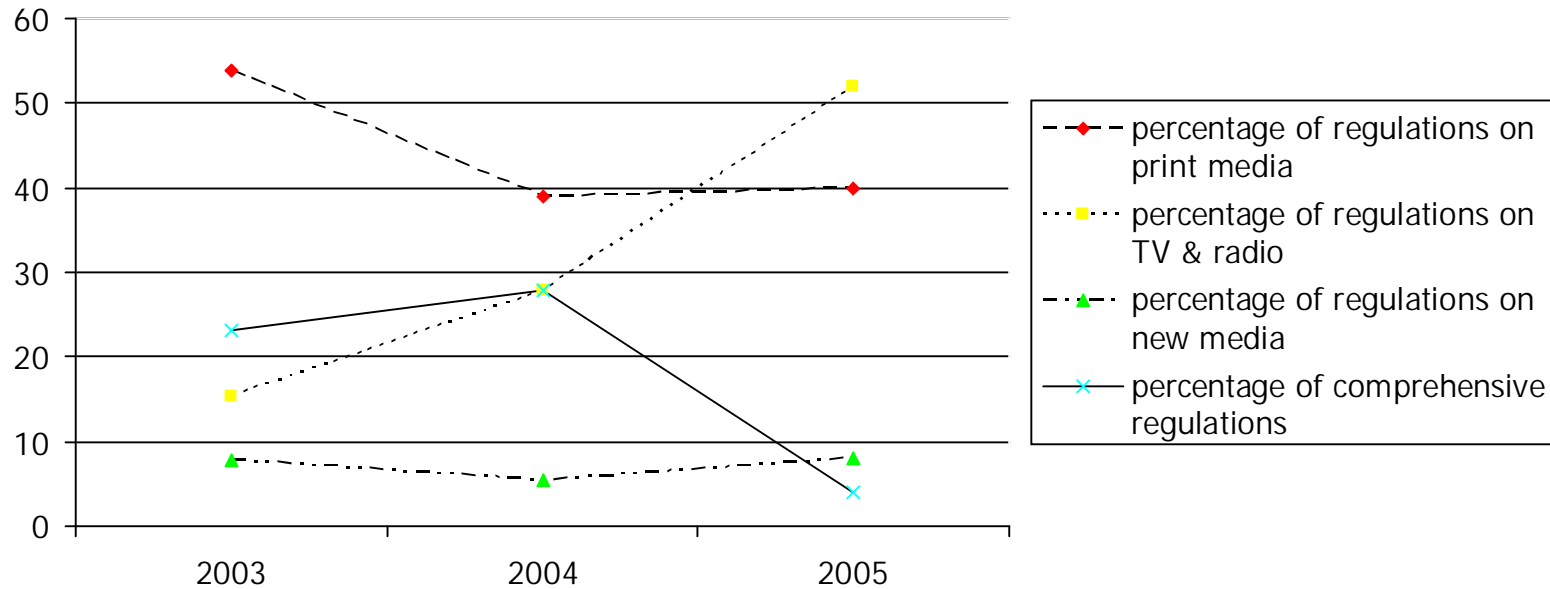
[229] **This chart was originally published in** *Journal of Comparative Asian Development* **(JCAD) in Hong Kong. For details please refer to Xi Chen, "Dynamics of News Media Regulations in China: Explanations and Implications", in** *Journal of Comparative Asian Development* **(vol. 5, no. 1, spring 2006, p49-64).**

the regulations regarding television and radio broadcasting in 2002 was 15.4%. The number was increased to 27.8% and 52% by 2003 and 2004 respectively.

What made the television industry so special to the Hu's leadership? Why did it command such intensive government attention? As aforementioned, the answer might lie in the technological advantages of the medium and the special characteristics of Chinese society. Compared to other media such as newspapers, radio, and the Internet, television is more accessible to the grassroots Chinese population due to its minimum requirement of literacy, its audio-visual quality, and widespread signals in China. The potential power of the television in reaching the grassroots groups and shaping public opinion makes it a center of government attention. Realizing the potential power of television in influencing public opinion and facilitating policy implementation in China, Hu's administration tightened control over the medium while the CCP's legitimacy was being threatened. Although Hu formally emphasized the importance for the media to adopt a mass line in covering news and urged the news media to reduce its coverage of the political figures, conference and ceremonies in 2003, the real intention, as demonstrated by the CRT Awards news reports, was to urge the media to renew their propaganda skills and methods. The following large-scale CCTV propaganda campaigns, which gave special salience to the "three represents" spirit, confirmed the above speculation of the official intention.[230]

Furthermore, besides the parallel and intertwined development of television regulations and Chinese politics, the study also revealed that government regulations became increasingly specific and sophisticated over the years. Compared to lopsided state emphasis on television equipment and infrastructure protection in 1987, regulations in 1997, 2001, 2003, and 2005 were far more inclusive and in-depth, touching upon specifications for television content, format, management, production, Juvenile protection, behavior codes for the practitioners, TV commercials, technology and equipments, and foreign investment.

---

[230]   See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2004* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2004)*, p21*

The issuance of the first comprehensive administrative regulation in Chinese television history by the SARFT in 1997 clearly defined the nature and role of television in China. This formally authorized the decentralization of the television management, and provided the framework for drafting various relevant television laws and regulations such as the *Radio and Television Broadcasting Law* and *Movie Law*. According to this regulation, television was "concurrently the propaganda tool for the Party and state, the state institutions, and the profit-making industry."[231] The promulgation of this regulation represented an official response to the changing social, economic and political circumstances in China in late 1990s, ranging from the growing need for information among the people, the establishment of the market mechanism in the country's economy, the application of the cutting-edge technology in television industry, and the need for the government to practice rule by law in an ever depoliticizing socio-political environment in China.

This tendency towards imposing more sophisticated and specific regulations was also illustrated by the frequent revisions made by the state to its previously adopted regulations. Take the regulations on the reception of foreign satellite television programs for example. As a response to the WTO, the SARFT issued three relevant regulations in 2001, which made detailed arrangements for approving, checking, and managing the reception of foreign satellite television programs in China. According to them, all landing applications must be submitted to the SARFT for approval. Satellite television could only be allowed to land in three-star hotels or above, and residential areas and apartments designated for foreigners only. Moreover, the minute reception conditions were also outlined in the regulations: the applicant must abide by Chinese laws, regulations, and various relevant rules; the applicant must be among the top three television media outlets in its own domestic market; in the spirit of mutual benefit, the applicant should promise to assist the landing of Chinese television programs in the applicant's domestic market; and finally the applicant needs to demonstrate a friendly stance towards China. Despite all these detailed arrangements made in the regulation, there were very limited

---

[231] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1998* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society,1998), p148

specifications on the control over television content, except that the SARFT announced briefly that no foreign news programs would be allowed to land in China.[232] The government's awareness of the lack of content control became evident shortly after the 2001 regulation was issued. To close the loophole, the SARFT issued its first revision in 2003, according to which, the landing rights of the foreign satellite television channels will be revoked in any of the following cases: it carried topics that threatens the national unity, stability, sovereignty, and territory integrity; it leaked state secrets so that harm the national image, reputation, and interests; it sabotaged the unity among ethnic groups in China; it spread information on violence, pornography, superstition, and evil religions; it insulted others with libel; and it violated state laws.[233] By outlining the above red zones for the reception of foreign satellite stations in China, the government firmly set its limits for foreign investment in its television industry. To further strengthen government capability in controlling foreign investment in the television industry, the SARFT once more revised its 2003 regulation on the landing of foreign satellite television stations in China by requiring all imported programs to be copied and registered with the SARFT in 2005.[234] By exercising checks on the imported programs, the SARFT aimed to prevent and/or frustrate the infiltration efforts by hostile Western forces via social, educational, and entertainment programs.

The development of the regulations on the national qualification examination for television practitioners was also revised several times throughout the period covered in this study. While keeping the requirements for "holding the right political and ideological orientation" intact, the professional standards for recruiting the television practitioners were considerably raised over the years. According to one of the 1998 regulations, all news anchorpersons were to hold at least a two-year college degree at above county level television stations.[235] For the televisions stations at the

---

[232] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2002* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2002), p148

[233] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2004* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2004), p156

[234] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2006* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2006), p511.

[235] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Yearbook 1998* (Beijing: China Radio and Television

country level, a high school degree was the minimum requirement. The standard was upgraded in 2002, which turned out that news anchorpersons at all levels need to hold at least a two-year college degree.[236] In the same year, specific qualification standards for television editors and producers were also introduced.

The frequent revisions made to the existing regulations demonstrated CCP's working style of crossing the river by touching the river bed.[237] To guarantee regulatory effectiveness, the SARFT kept revising and devising regulations to accommodate the new practices and challenges that might arise out of the television industry. Due to the further maturation of government regulations on certain issues such as the reception of foreign satellite television stations in China and the organization of the national qualifications examination for television practitioners, the government abolished 45 old regulations that were either repetitive or contradictory in 2005.[238]

The study also revealed that control over the political content on television screen remained tight and all encompassing. The SARFT drafted a list of taboo topics for the coverage of news reports, TV commercials, TV subtitles, rolling cell-phone messages on TV screen during participatory entertainment programs, and key historical events and figures to facilitate state control over media content. The bottom line set for all of these fields was invariably the same; that is, no unfavorable opinions on and free discussions of Chinese politics, national unity and stability, political figures and events, and religious freedom were allowed to exist in any form on Chinese television screens. Take the television commercial as an example. No use of the national symbols in any form was permitted, including the national flag, anthem, emblem, and images of political leaders.[239] As to the television coverage of

Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 1998), p165.

[236] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Yearbook 2003* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2003), p161.

[237] See e.g. J. S. Lang, *zhongguo xinwen zhengce tixi yanjiu (The Study of Chinese Journalism Policy System)*. (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2003 p140).

[238] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Yearbook 2006* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2006), p498-499.

[239] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2004* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2004), p153.

key political events, the SARFT actually formed a leadership group to do pre-broadcasting checks and examinations in July, 2003.[240]

Content control over television news coverage was especially evident. Realizing the importance of the news reports in keeping the legitimacy of the country's party politics, controlling the political information, and creating political consensus among the public, the government spared no effort in applying political control over television news coverage. It not only restricted the involvement of any domestic commercial elements in television news programs, but also prohibited the importation of foreign news programs. Given the intertwined relationship between television and other forms of mass communication in China, such as the Internet and cell-phone, government regulations on television news coverage extended beyond the boundary of television itself and reached the new realms of various media in China. In response to the widespread popularity and penetration of the Internet in China, the SARFT drafted a regulation to manage the audio and video re-broadcasting of television news on the Internet in 2004. Accordingly, all websites needed to acquire permission directly from the State Council to re-broadcast television news. The minimum requirement for the qualifications of websites was that they must have been in business operations for at least three years in China prior to their application. To further reiterate the special political nature of television news in China, the government also prohibited the use of news formats in television commercials (2005). For fear that the synchronous rolling cell-phone messages on TV screen might make it extremely difficult for the government to practice control over their content, the government limited the application of rolling cell-phone messages to entertainment programs only. It also explicitly prohibited any form of audience participation during news programs in 2005.[241]

The prohibition for the landing of foreign news channels in China, which has been mentioned in the previous section of the chapter, also reflected this official control over television news content. Furthermore, the government drafted

---

[240] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2004* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2004), p153-154.
[241] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2006* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2006), p507.

regulations on news collection and production to guarantee the "right" political orientation of television news. Accordingly, journalists were required to "consciously strengthen their political awareness and sensitivity and frequently practice self-regulation so that they can keep national secrets, adhere to the Party lines and directives, and abstain from involving in paid journalism."[242] After Hu Jintao put forward the "three closes" and officially urged the CCTV not to spend much time in covering routine political conferences and procedures, the SARFT cordially echoed this official reminder by drafting regulations on television coverage of political events and figures. According to it, "television stations at various levels should strictly limit the length of the news coverage of the political routines."[243] In addition, the SARFT also made detailed arrangements for the implementation of the "three closes" spirit in the same year, which not only linked the effective propaganda of the "three closes" to the promotion of program producers, editors, and anchorpersons, but also provided guidelines as to how to improve TV propaganda effectiveness in general. The avoidance of the official and political clichés and the employment of the new media technology and skills were emphasized as important rules in producing effective yet subtle and sophisticated political propagandas under the new circumstances in the SARFT regulation of *Suggestions for Improving the TV Propaganda of the 'Three Closes'* promulgated in 2003.[244] Moreover, the state continued to emphasize the positive propaganda role of television news reporting in China. According to the *Regulation on Improving Investigative News Reporting on Radio and Television* promulgated in May 2005, no negative news reports and investigation would be allowed during key political events or sensitive period. Besides, no critical reports on one single issue in one region could be broadcasted extensively within the same period of time. The official justification for this rule was that over-exposure of one problem would cause strong public sentiments or illusion, which would directly threaten regional stability. In the

---

[242] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2004*, (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2006), p150.

[243] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2004*, (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2006), p150.

[244] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2004* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2004), p150.

same spirit, the regulation also prohibited the radio and television stations from covering and investigating news stories that includes problems that cannot be solved at the time being. Furthermore, in order to safeguard social stability as well as the image and the authority of the Party-State officials, the regulation also imposed restriction on discrediting the Party-State officials by directly referring to their names as long as they do not violate state law. If necessary to do so, radio and television states must wait for approval from officials of higher rank than the one being targeted.[245]

Despite the remained political control over content, there have also emerged trends towards protection of public interests. Compared to the regulations promulgated in the 1980s, increased numbers of specific regulations on juvenile protection, control over indecency, and control over rampant television commercials has been introduced in recent years. Take 2005 for example. For the first time in the period, two regulations were issued for promoting the production of radio and television programs for juveniles. According to these regulations, radio and television stations would be authorized to beef up their own production of juvenile programs with the assistance from the SARFT. Due to lack of experience and infrastructure, most of the juvenile TV programs broadcast by Chinese television stations were imported from the United State and Japan in the past. This 2005 regulation, however, allowed the television industry to produced local programs that anchor in Chinese culture, which would be beneficial for both the promotion of national culture and the construction of a health environment for Chinese juveniles. Moreover, the SARFT also set specific restrictions on indecency on television screen. According to the *Regulation on the Audience Participation Television Programs* issued in 2005, no topics related to violence, sex, or superstition would be allowed for audience participation programs.[246] Furthermore, according to the 2003 *Regulation on the Management of Television Advertisements*, daily public advertisements should account for no less than 3% of the total daily advertisements

---

[245] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2006* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2006), p509-510.
[246] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2006* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2006), p508.

on one television station. Advertisements of liquors were also restricted to 12 per day and 2 per hour.[247]

Another point of note was that instead of applying heavily ideological and straightforward political restrictions on the television industry and television practitioners, China tended to adopt more administrative and professional rules and codes in regulating the television personnel. Throughout the period covered in this study, the government introduced eight regulations and rules related to the behavioral codes for a wide range of TV practitioners inducing news anchorpersons, editors, producers, technicians, and engineers. By introducing the certificate system for TV professionals and the nationwide qualification examination system, the government largely standardized the management of the industry personnel. Different from the recruitment and promotion standards in the pre-reform era, which focused solely on the political reliability and ideological orientation, increased emphasis has been given to the professional training and skills in recent years. Despite the continued requirement for correct political orientation, the weight given to this political quality has been considerably weakened in the reform era. Take the *Preliminary Rules on the Management of Radio and Television Practitioner*s promulgated in April 2005 as an example. Among the 17 requirements drafted for the media practitioners, only three are related to their political quality. The first rule made it a compulsory requirement for radio and television practitioners to participate in training sessions on Marxism, Leninism, Maozedong Thought, Dengxiaoping's theory, and the three represents. The second rule required the practitioners to consciously withhold information related to Party-State secrecy. The third relevant rule stressed the importance for the radio and television practitioners to echo official stances and rhetoric in covering news related to foreign affairs. The other 14 rules related to the professional codes such as balance, impartiality, diversity, and social responsibility. In addition, the decline of direct political control could also been seen from the withdrawal of the state council from the regulatory activities of the television industry. In 1987, three out of the seven of the regulations were

---

[247] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2005* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2005), p148.

promulgated by the State Council. This direct interference virtually disappeared in the late 1990s. Start from 1999, all regulations were promulgated by the SARFT. The enhanced role of the SARFT reflected the trends towards more professional and managerial-based regulatory behaviors in the television industry

The study also revealed the further commercialization, industrialization, and decentralization tendency in the management of television industry. Following the establishment of the first national broadcasting group in Beijing in 2001, the government began to promote provincial level industrialization in the same year. According to the SARFT, any province with an annual GDP above 80 billion and a population over 5 million by 2000 could establish their own broadcasting groups upon fulfilling the task of re-broadcasting both the required the CCTV programs and provincial programs.[248] The regulation confirmed the freedom of these broadcasting groups in performing other businesses while focusing on the movie and television industry. As "new propaganda centers for the Party and the state," these broadcasting groups were promised privileges to enjoy the already issued preferential policies for the media industry before 2001.[249] They were encouraged to export Chinese movies and television programs, build movie theatres, and run movie channels on local television stations. The state encouragement for developing digital television and inviting foreign investment in the television industry also elicited the tendency towards further entrenchment of the market logic in the television industry.

Finally, despite the official promotion of industrialization and international exploration for Chinese television, the research showed that Chinese television regulations on areas such as programming format lagged far behind the development of the television industry. As the communication technology and media market thrived in recent years, there emerged live broadcasts of various social and entertainment programs that allowed the audience to participate via telephone, cell-phone, and the Internet. This intertwined development of television and other media increased the difficulty of government regulations. Instead of guiding the

---

[248] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Yearbook 2002* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2002), p165
[249] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Yearbook 2002* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2002), p148.

development of these new programs, the government responded with specific regulations on a case to case basis. For example, in response to the emergence of the rolling cell-phone messages on television screen during the live broadcast, the SARFT drafted a regulation on the audience participation programs via cell-phone and television in April 2005. According to this regulation, local Administration of Radio, Film and Television needed to pay close attention to the newly emerged audience participation programs to make sure that the role of radio and television as the "throat and tongue" of the Party would not be marginalized. More specifically, no audience participation is allowed for news programs in any format and no audience participation programs is allowed to touch upon politically sensitive topics, or topics that might tarnish the national image and pride. Besides the political limits, this regulation also set managerial limits on these audience participation programs in terms of Children's protection, decency of topics, number of phone calls allowed during each program period, and cash limits for the top prize.[250] In terms of live broadcast of key social and political events, the SARFT also required the local administration of the radio, film, and television to be extremely careful in handling live coverage of key political and social events. Permission was required for the live broadcast of any key events with the presence of the top leaders.[251]

6.4 Summary

As demonstrated by the television regulations, the television industry is increasingly serving three needs in China. As mouthpiece of the Party-State, it continues to should political responsibilities for making sure that the correct political lines remain unchallenged. As a rapidly developing profit-making industry, it is forced to respond to new developments in the field of technology, programming, content, management, and foreign investment to maintain order and stability in the industry. Finally, as an information provider for the public, it is expected to protect public interests from being harmed by pursuit of profit.

---

[250] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2006* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2006), p507-508.
[251] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2006* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2006), p516.

Although overt political control was dwindling in the television industry in the period covered for this study, the restrictions on political content remained in place throughout the period. The only difference might lie in the tendency for the government to adopt more disguised and sophisticated control over political content. As illustrated in the research findings, the government applied encompassing control over television content in recent years. This grip on content reflected the continued official efforts and goals to create political consensus in China. In contrast to the findings that there were very few restrictions for television coverage of economic and social life in recent years, the control over political content was all too evident. The precautious official attitude toward political topics bespoke the pressure felt on the Chinese government's part in an ever complicating and unruly socio-political environment in China. If history is any guide, the new generation of leadership will definitely create new symbols, official rhetoric, and mechanisms to legitimize and sustain its political rule in China. Mao's revolutionary goals and efforts in bringing a new life to the Chinese people that had been long suppressed by the feudal and imperial powers automatically gave the first generation of the CCP leadership legitimacy and support to rule in China. By outlining the blueprint for a prosperous and strong China, Deng was also able to sustain the legitimacy of the CCP and gather strong pubic support for Party economic and foreign policies adopted in 1978. Likewise, Jiang also successfully established his legitimacy through the impressive GDP achieved in the 1990s and his skillful use of nationalist sentiments under various circumstances such as NATO's bombing of Chinese embassy in 1999. In absence of both the above glory revolutionary experiences and the economic achievements, Hu's leadership faced severe challenges in practicing effective and efficient governance when Hu took office in 2003. As an initial effort, Hu picked up the "three closes" discourse initiated by the reform-minded party leader Zhao Ziyan in 1987 as the guideline for Party work in today's China. In March 2006, he also released the "Eight Dos and Eight Don'ts"[252] as a new moral yardstick to measure the work, conduct, and attitude of the CCP officials and all Chinese people,

---

[252] It is also referred to as "Eight honors and eight disgraces". For details, see e.g. Sohu.com. "On the Eight honors and eight disgraces" available at the following link: http://news.sohu.com/s2006/rongruguan/.

including television industry personnel. Chinese television stations, as a whole, have actively responded to these official guidelines in their program design, editing, and production.

Despite the remnants of political control over content, the government has adopted an encouraging and supportive attitude toward the commercialization and industrialization trends in the television industry. Driven by the pursuit of efficiency, the government has sponsored the upgrading and spreading of new television technologies, authorized the formation of both national and provincial broadcasting groups, encouraged Chinese television's exploration in the international market, permitted foreign investment, and decentralized television management. The state-sanctioned application of the market logic in the industry not only resulted in the rapid industrialization of the Chinese television system, but also led to the rise of new television program formats and enriched content. From the economic perspective, it is undoubtedly in the interests of the government to embrace the television industrialization trend, which will not only reduce the government's burden in subsidizing the media outlets but also increase the possibility for Chinese media to generate huge profits from the upcoming fierce international competition in Chinese media market. Upon China's entry into the WTO, all international media conglomerates were lining up to enter Chinese media market. Despite the frequent backlash of Chinese regulations on the foreign investment in the period between 2001 and 2005, the Chinese media market has remained largely open for foreign investment in 2006. Consequently, different forms of foreign money have been allowed to enter the Chinese television industry as long as the state-owned capital is no less than 51%. The separation of production from distribution and the separation of management from ownership have also been promoted nationwide to speed up the transformation of Chinese television from a state institution to an industry. Furthermore, in order to facilitate cooperation with international media conglomerates, the Chinese government has gone full force into communicating with the large international media conglomerates. The companies that have been received by Chinese senior officials since 2001 include Viacom, Disney, and American Data Corporation. As the result of these interactions, all top six global

media conglomerates have entered Chinese market so far. Among them, News Corporation, AOL-Times Warner, and Viacom have established offices in China so as to best adjust their strategies according to China's media policy or regulation changes.[253] The domestic regional restrictions for forming broadcasting groups were also relaxed at the beginning of 2007. Consequently, media outlets can seek cross-province and cross- region cooperation to maximize their advantages. If, as one prediction goes, "the media industry will offer the last huge profit making opportunity in China,"[254] the government's efforts to liberalize its media management in China will definitely be further reinforced in the years to come.

Finally, formal rules and regulations have been developed to protect the public interest of the audience. On the one hand, this separation of public interests from the political interest indicated the further de-emphasis on ideology in Chinese society. When the Party-State was claimed to be the representative of the interest of the public, the public interest and political interests of the Party-State were blended together. Therefore, any act to promote political interest would be automatically considered as conducive to the population. It was the withdrawal of the state from the society and the deepening of the market-oriented economic reform that have made the emergence of the public interests possible.

In short, the "politics-based, grassroots-oriented, and efficiency-energized picture of China's television regulations"[255] reflected the logic of the socialist market economy. As market and professional logics were allowed onto China's television landscapes, the CCP leadership worked hard to retain the "socialist" nature of the medium by imposing political control over its content. Although the task of maintaining the control over television content will become ever more challenging when market and public values become further entrenched in Chinese society, it is predictable that the Chinese government will search for new methods and mechanisms to achieve its political goal. The successful integration of MTV

---

[253] See e.g. J. S. Lang, *Zhongguo xinwen zhengce tixi yanjiu (The Study of Chinese Journalism Policy System).* (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2003, p140)
[254] See e.g. J. S. Lang, *Zhongguo xinwen zhengce tixi yanjiu (The Study of Chinese Journalism Policy System).* (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2003 p119)
[255] See e.g. Xi Chen, Dynamics of News Media Regulations in China, *Journal of Comparative Asian Development*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring 2006), p58.

format in the propaganda model of a female official in 2005, the active state-sponsored exploration of international markets by CCTV whose ultimate goal is to shape international public opinion, and the implementation of the Xi-Xin (Tibet and Xinjiang) Project designed to compete with the influence of foreign media in these two autonomous regions, all point to future developments in the Chinese television industry.

CHAPTER SEVEN: TELEVISON IN EVOLUTION: TOWARDS A

HYBRID OF SOVIET AND LIBERAL MODEL

The analysis of Chinese television practices and regulations in the reform era depicts a picture of overlapped and entangled liberal and control tendencies in Chinese media industry. Efforts to promote journalist professionalism, commercialization, industrialization, and programming innovation, and diversification of content coexist with continued and renewed political control and censorship. This symbiosis of the old and new signifies the rise of a hybrid of the Soviet and liberal model of the media in China. By accommodating and coordinating multiple factors that are pushing and pulling Chinese media towards different directions, this model enlarges the space of media freedom within the orbit set by the Party-State.

Market has entered Chinese media industry as a liberalizing force to certain extent. As demonstrated by the CRT Awards winner news reports and television regulations, there has been increased volume of news, more balanced reports, more diversity in topics and program formats, increased professional influence on journalist behaviors and management, and rising cooperation and integration with the international media market. However, none of these exciting developments was free from Party-State interference or influence. They were all subject to state monitoring and management to certain extent. Overall, the hybrid model of Chinese media can be generalized as commercialization and industrialization with state

monopoly, technological and programming innovation with political restraints, and professionalism with party influence.

7.1 Commercialization and Industrialization with State Monopoly

As buzzwords in Chinese media industry, commercialization and industrialization represent the most outstanding trends of media development in today's China. The commercialization of the Chinese media industry was a direct result of a relaxed socio-political environment in the reform era. With the withdrawal of state subsidy in the early 1990s, the media turned desperately to market competition for profits and audiences. This liberalization of the media management was further reinforced by the official decision to promote the industrialization of the media sector in recent years. Driven by the pursuit of efficiency and profit, the CCP made the decision to gradually industrialize China's media system in the late 1990s. As demonstrated by both official efforts to establish national, provincial, cross-provincial, and cross-regional broadcasting conglomerates,[256] the Party-State was eager to merge with the power of market in strengthening its legitimacy and governance. This state-engineered industrialization tendency was also reinforced by the national policy to deepen the reform of China's cultural system in 2006.[257] By the end of 2006, the total revenue of Chinese radio, film, and television industry had reached 109 billion RMB, representing an 18.04% increase from 2005, which far surpassed the growth rate of China's GDP.

Despite the market-driven rapid growth of the media industry and the official promotion of commercialization and industrialization, the fate of the media industry is still under the thumb of the Party-State. First of all, the state continues to monopolize the ownership of Chinese media, which represents the remnants of the Soviet model. Although diversified management has been allowed on a gradual basis, the state owned nature of Chinese media industry has not been challenged at

---

[256] By 2001, twenty-six newspaper groups, eight radio, film, and television conglomerates, six publishing groups, and 4 distribution groups have been established.

[257] Start the beginning of 2006, Hu's administration began to initiate a comprehensive plan to promote Chinese culture both domestically and internationally. for details, please refer to the link of http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2006-01/12/content_4044535.htm

all. Differing from the experience of Middle East countries such as Egypt,[258] neither domestic nor global competition has altered the structure of media ownership in China. After more than two decades' market-oriented reform, the Party-State remains to be the supreme authority on media policy, management, and practices. The Party-State continues to practice a policy of differentiation in managing the media system, according to which, the Party and national media outlets are expected to enjoy greater financial support and favorable treatments. The spirit of this differentiation policy continues to be embodied in the newly promulgated regulations and rules targeted at the newly formed media conglomerates. As one of the 2001 regulations states, "the national media groups will continue to enjoy favorable policies and treatment originally reserved for the Party media outlets".[259]

The official promotion of the state-engineered conglomeration and market consolidation is also a reflection of the state's attempts to fortify political control over the media in the context of increased global competition. According to the *Rules for Actively Promoting the Development of Radio, Film and Television Conglomerates* promulgated by the SARFT in December, 2001, the further industrialization of the broadcasting industry is expected to "lay the ground for further improving the Party's cultural and ideological propagandas."[260] The huge official investment in the national media outlets in recent years is to modernize the industry by enhancing the competitiveness of Chinese media in both the domestic and international market. The ultimate goal, however, is to consolidate the CCP's propaganda front in the face of grim domestic and international threats. Domestically, the state's active nurturing of media conglomerates as platforms of an information economy effectively marginalized the small and independent media outlets in the market. Internationally, the newly formed media conglomerates were beefed up quickly to the extent that they were able to compete with the international players financially and technologically. As part and parcel of "socialism with

---

[258] See e.g. Hussein Amin and James Napoli, "Media and Power in Egypt", in James Curran and Myung-jin Park, eds., *Dewesternizing Media Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p178-187.
[259] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2001* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2001), p165.
[260] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2001* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2001), p165.

Chinese characteristics," the status and future fortune of China's newly formed media conglomerates are inextricably linked with the evolving structure of the Chinese political system.[261] Just as there is no return for China's capitalist reform, the reversal of the industrialization and marketization tendency of the media industry is also unlikely. Given the existence of continued government control over media ownership and management, however, the possibility for further marketization and industrialization alone to level the media industry and ultimately lead to the emergence of a market place of ideas is small, if not nonexistent.

7.2 Technological Innovations with Political Interference

In addition to enlarged freedom in media management, there have been rapid technological innovations in China's media industry. Take the television industry as an example. The application of the satellite technology in television broadcasting has dramatically boosted the industry. Due to complicated geographic landscape of Chinese territory, China's terrestrial broadcasting was very limited to the major cities in the eastern coastal area before the 1980s. This situation was forever changed with the launching of five telecommunicates and broadcasting satellites in the 1980s, which make made it possible for television signals to be sent from Beijing to all parts of the country. In the 1990s, China also imported a high capacity communication satellite, ChinaSat 5, to advance its broadcasting media. As the first imported communication satellite, it began relaying broadcasting in 1993. Carrying 22 transmitters on multiple bands, the satellite signals covered China's total territory, as well as some neighboring countries.[262] Since 1997, satellite technology has been applied to the television stations at provincial level, and by 1999, 30 provincial

---

[261] see e.g. Yuezhi Zhao ,The State, the Market and the Media Control in China, in, Pradip N. Thomas and Zaharom Naim, eds., *Who Owns the Media: Global Trends and Local Resistance* (New York: Zed Books, 2004), p196.

[262] See e.g. Junhao Hong, China's satellite technology: Development, policies and applications. in Paul S. N. Lee, ed., *Telecommunications and development in China* (Cresskill, NJ.: Hampton Press, 1997), p171-199.

television stations had all been transformed into satellite stations, which put them on the equal footing with the CCTV in competing for audiences nationwide.[263]

The technological improvements in the television industry enlarged the television market, resulting in more timely delivery of information and diversified content. It also made live coverage possible. 1997 was known as China's live broadcast year. The live broadcast of the grant ceremony of the transfer of sovereignty of Hong Kong from Great Britain to China in 1997 was the formal début of live coverage of news in China. In order to compete with the BBC's influence on international public opinion during the sovereignty transfer ceremony of Hong Kong in 1997, the CCTV invested 8 billion RMB in importing a set of portable live broadcast equipments and two transmission vehicles in 2006, which made the 72 hours' continuous live coverage of the event possible in 1997.[264] Following this historic development, the CCTV began to actively explore the international market. Despite the poor performance of the CCTV's crew in Iraq, the dispatch of journalists to Iraq in 2003 was another showcase of the technological improvement of Chinese television industry.[265]

Following the rise of the satellite and cable television industry in the 1980s and 1990s, China is now endeavoring to promote the nationwide development of digital television. The technological innovation together with huge government investment in the industry has created a new look for the Chinese television industry. As testified by the renowned Chinese media scholar Dai Yuanguan, "China now has the most advanced hardware of television broadcasting in the world." [266] The technological expansion has also taken place in other media sectors. Take the internet as an example. Few Chinese had any experience in surfing the internet in early 1990s. After a decade's development, however, the number of netizens hit 144

---

[263] See e.g. Zhengzhi Guo, ed., *International broadcasting history* (Shanghai: Fudan University Publishing House, 2005), p295-297.

[264] See e.g. Zhengzhi Guo, ed., *International broadcasting history* (Shanghai: Fudan University Publishing House, 2005), p298

[265] See e.g. Ouli Jiang, *Selection of the 2003 China Radio and Television broadcasting awards news reports.* (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2005), p413-414.

[266] Dai made the comments during the panel discussion on Chinese media studies in *the   joint International Conference of the Association of Chinese communication studies (AACS) and Xiamen University*, Xiamen, China, December 28th-31st, 2005.

million by March, 2007.[267] As a consequence of the changes in media technology, there has been an increase in the diversity of media programming. As the review of the television regulations reveals, the program format of Chinese television broadcasting is developing toward increased sophistication in recent years. As television is increasingly integrated with the new media, the boundaries between the traditional media outlets are rapidly breaking down. Instead of working on their own, media outlets are seeking cooperation across multiple fields. As reflected by recently promulgated regulations, television program formats are being enriched by the integration of the Internet and cell-phone messaging in today's China.

From satellite, cable, and digital television to the internet, each wave of technological innovation has inevitably brought about new challenges for the Soviet style of ideological and media control in China. As suggested by regulations on the Internet news, Chinese television regulation has lagged behind the technological development of the industry so far. Only when strong repercussions among the public were aroused, did the government respond with regulations and rules to rein the media back in. The regulation on the display of cell-phone text messages on television screens was another example of this nature of Chinese media regulations. The government made no effort to guide or restrict the development of the participant TV programs that displays text messages from the audience until anti-government comments were found on local television screens.

The technological challenges together with the responsive nature of Chinese television regulation restrain the capability of the government to practice effective and all-encompassing control over the media. This is also true to the development of other forms of mass media in China. Take the Internet as an example, the use of the Internet by dissent groups such as Falungong, the China Democracy Party and the Tibetan Exile community all illustrate the potentiality of the new technology in circumventing traditional control over the information in China.[268] The rise of "we

---

[267] See e.g. China has 144 Million Netizens by March, China Daily (Online Version) (Available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-05/18/content_875334.htm, 05-18-2007).
[268] See e.g. Michael S. Chase, James C. Mulvenon, *You've Got Dissent! : Chinese Dissident Use of the Internet and Beijing's Counter-Strategies* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2002).

media", such as blogs and personal space on the Internet, also posed threats to the existing "mainstream voice", or more appropriately, the "party voice". Although they can hardly compete with the mainstream media in terms of authority and credibility, their free style, individualized and subjective flavor are attracting growing attention from the Chinese Netizens. Moreover, as illustrated by the regulation of the satellite and cable television, communication technologies have created loopholes that kept the SARFT busy in make adjustment to the exiting regulations.[269]

New technology, together with improved programming, enriched both television format and content. However, as the case of commercialization and industrialization confirmed, any kind of optimistic obsession with various forms of determinism could be futile in China's case. Just as market has not necessarily led to the breaking down of the ideological control mechanism, the effects of the technological invocations were also substantially restrained by the state interference. While encouraging technological and editorial innovations, the government not only imposed strict restrictions on content but also increasingly used the advanced technologies to upgrade its control over the industry. Take the television industry as an example, while keeping the foreign investors out of the news production and circulation, the government has actively sought to increase Chinese television industry's share in the international market through the "Stepping-out" Project. Moreover, the satellite technology has also aided the government in its competition with foreign stations in signal coverage over the border areas through projects like "Western Exploration" and "Xi-Xin". The control over the Internet is another example. Due to nonhierarchical, interactive, and global nature of the internet, it has been lauded as a technology that "allowed a democracy of a more participatory nature than at any time since the ancient Greeks".[270] However despite the potentials of the Internet to foster social and political changes, with the assistance from the international corporations from the liberal democratic societies, China was able to

---

[269] The SARFT kept revising its regulations on satellite television ever since their entry into China. The nature of the regulations remains to be responsive.

[270] See e.g. Garry Rodan, "The internet and political control in Singapore", *Political Science Quarterly*. vol. 113, no.1 (1998), p64.

develop the most sophisticated Internet surveillance system in the world within a brief period of time. As investigated by Amnesty International, Microsoft, Google and Yahoo have all complied with government censorship in return for market access in China. Microsoft has shut down the blogs that contained progressive political ideas upon government request; Yahoo has provided the authority with the personal and confidential information of its users, which has resulted the jailing of two journalists; and Google has launched a censored version of search engine in Chinese language.[271] Technology, undoubtedly, has immense potentials in initiating social changes and empowering human beings in their struggles for freedom. Country to the optimistic perception of the information technology as the "greatest democratizer the world has ever seen"[272], which will compromise and undermine the capacities of the authoritarian regimes to blunt the circulation of opposing views, the Internet has been under sophisticated surveillance in China. After all, as a double-edged sword, the impact of technology remains under the control of the power-holders in one society.

7.3 Editorial and Programming Freedom with Political Limits

Compared to the pre-reform era, the editorial freedom and autonomy of the media has reached an unprecedented level in today's China. The increasing number of balanced and diversified CRTB Awards winner news reports during the period of the study is an example. Being instruments of the Party to educate, agitate and organize the public for ideological and political causes, mass media in China were in no way allowed to carry negative news about both the Party-State and the society, for any forms of criticisms against the Party was considered as sabotaging efforts to tarnish the image of the Party and disrupt national unity. This tight control however has been largely relaxed in recent years. Consequently, an increased proportion of news stories of official failures, corruptions, social tensions, conflicts, and natural

---

[271] For information on roles played by international cooperation in Chinese Internet control, please refer to the report title "Undermining Freedom of Expression in China: the Role of Yahoo!, Microsoft and Google", published by the Amnesty International in June 2006.
[272] See e.g. Garry Rodan, "The internet and political control in Singapore", *Political science quarterly*. volume 113, no. 1(1998), p63.

disasters, which were all taboo topics in the pre-reform era, have emerged. The changes of the media face reflected the shift in official stance towards the media. Instead of sticking to the positive propaganda model, the Party tended to incorporate and accommodate some liberal elements into the media industry. At least, the Party ceased to be obsessed with the infallible party image like in Mao's China. This wiliness to admit the imperfection of the Party and accept media supervision authorized the Chinese media a new role to play, that is, the watchdog of the government. The rise of the "investigative news" in the mid 1990s and "minsheng news" (grassroots news) in recent years were all evidence for the strengthening of the watchdog role of Chinese media.

The rise of waves of entertainment programs also bespeaks the increased openness of Chinese media. Driven by the desire to attract public attention, increase advertisement revenue and feed public hunger for light-hearted programs, entertainment programs and shows have mushroomed in recent years. Following the success of the "Super Girl" show, which was a localized version of the "American idol", a wave of television shows including "Super Boy" and "Super Idol" have flooded Chinese television screen in the past several years. The rise of such a mass entertainment culture is shaking the basis of the media control. One of the fundamental conditions for CCP's successful control over Chinese society in the pre-reform era was the suppression of personal freedom. By practicing tight social and political control and bombarding the population with socialist ideology, the Party made it shameful and unacceptable for the public to indulge in personal ideals and pursuits. Since it was believed that entertainment would divert public attention from the noble and solemn cause of socialist construction, to entertain was to degenerate. The rise of the entertainment programs, in this sense, signified the enlarged space of personal freedom and also further erosion of the communist/socialist ideology in China. The landslide success of "super girl" in 2005 has intrigued a nationwide debate on "entertainment democracy." Given that the television show has given the audience the ultimate decision-making power in selecting their idols, there has grown a romanticization of the program as a prelude to political democracy among media scholars in China. According to them, the

exercise of democratic election during the show will eventually awaken people's political awareness, which will, by way of the formation of a civil society, gradually result in a transformation of China's political system. They further argued that "super girl" has resulted in the second wave of cultural ramification in China, which is further reinforcing the tendency towards diversification of Chinese society.[273]

There is very little doubt that the old style straightforward political control over media content is declining in the reform era. However, it is still too early to translate this into the breaking down of the control over media content as a whole. While giving the media unprecedented freedom in covering social, economic, and entertainment news, the SAEFT has continued to give detailed directions on the coverage of political issues. As illustrated in chapter six, the government not only listed the taboo topics for all news programs but also set specific restrictions for the reception of satellite television news programs and broadcasting of the Internet news. Besides the remnants of the Soviet style of political control, there have also emerged new techniques in restricting the free flow of information in China. Just as in the case of the news coverage of official corruption, the control over content actually became more sophisticated. By encouraging the media to expose local official wrongdoings and problems, the Party diverted public attention from questioning the legitimacy of the top leadership and blamed the local governments for policy failures and corruptions. In rare case, when there was exposure of official corruptions at the top level, it was more of a result of factional struggles than a sign of further openness.[274] The permission and official encouragement for increased coverage on social problems was also a technique to indirectly manipulate public opinion. Realizing the declining popularity of rigid political propaganda, the new administration made remarkable efforts to depoliticize news after Hu took office in 2003. For example, the issuance of the *Suggestions for Improving Media Coverage of Political Events* required the media to focus more on the life of the grassroots

---

[273] See e.g. the transcript of dialogues among three media scholars regarding the implications of the super girl show on Chinese culture, society, and politics (Available at http://academic.mediachina.net/article.php?id=4924, 04-06-06).
[274] See e.g. The recent anti-corruption campaigns launched against Chen Liangyu, the former mayor of Shanghai, it was largely a display of the factional politics between the Communist Youth and the Shanghai Gang.

people rather than political routines and leaders. This has resulted in a wave of de-politicization among all media outlets throughout the nation and the rise of social news in recent years.[275] The increased volume of social news both facilitated the implementation of the populist policies and mitigated public sentiments against the incompetence of the Party in addressing the loopholes in the system.

7.4 Journalistic Professionalism with Party Influence

Driven by technological innovations, reforms in the media industry, and the transnational and cross-border interpenetration, there has emerged a tendency towards Western journalistic professionalism among Chinese media practitioners. The professionalization trends in Chinese media can be discerned from several aspects. First of all, there has been rising awareness of Western journalistic values, which resulted in transformation of both Chinese journalist practices and education. The direct influence of the professional values has been on the speed, volume, diversity of news circulations, and balanced portrayal of China's society and politics. These evident changes in journalists' conception about the role of the media indicated the departure of Chinese media from the Soviet model. By emphasizing the functions of the media as disseminators of information, watchdogs of government, and protectors of public interests, the journalists actually developed a competing paradigm with the one dictated by the Soviet media theory and the Party journalism developed by the CCP.[276]

Under the Soviet influence, the concept of the timely delivery of abundant information to the public was irrelevant if not completely obsolete in the pre-reform era. Since the purpose for news reports was to educate, agitate, and organize the public for ideological and political causes rather than inform and empower them with quality information on what was happening around them, there was neither a need nor an incentive to provide timely information. The market competition and

---

[275] In response to this top direction, local governments in Sichuan, Hubei and Guangdong have developed detailed directions for media coverage of political events one after the other.
[276] See e.g. Zhongdang Pan and Joseph Man Chan, Shifting Journalistic Paradigms": How China's Journalists Assess 'Media Examplars', Communication Research, vol. 30, no.6 (December 2003), p64-682.

technological development in the communication industry transformed this practice. To be financially viable, media outlets struggled to attract the attention of the audience by delivering information on a timely manner. The advent of the fourth medium, the internet, further sped up the circulation of information among the netizens in China. The younger generation is increasingly relying on the internet for timely news on both domestic and international affairs. While market and technology paved the way for faster delivery of information in Chinese society, journalistic pursuit of professional values accelerated the process. Driven by a burning desire to be "professional," which in most cases meant to break from the monolithic party-media practices, the journalists began actively searching for information in the reform era.

Moreover, the emergence of diverse and balanced reports bespoke the entrenchment of professional values among Chinese journalists. In the pre-reform era, the instrumental use of the media as tools for social unity and stability rendered diversity undesirable. Instead of being responsible for prompting cultural liveliness and diversity, the media were supposed to be the loudspeaker for the Party policies. Despite the continued existence of taboo topics in the reform era, the media content in the non-political sphere has been greatly diversified and enriched. Topics on natural disasters, environmental problems, local official corruptions, and social tension can all be found on Chinese media today. The principles of balance and impartially have been included as two of the six guiding principles for journalist behavior and reports outlined by the All China Journalists Association. According to the association, journalists should strive to provide authentic and reliable news; be objective in analyzing news events; remain impartial when covering and commenting on news events; stick to right political orientation; and be conscious and moral.[277]

Journalist professionalism has also manifested itself in recent tendencies towards the rise of a watchdog role of the media. This has promoted the development of investigative news, minsheng news (grassroots news), and increased

---

[277] Refer to the website of the All china journalists association at
http://press.gapp.gov.cn/chuanmei/3jizhecongye.php

live coverage. *Focus*, as the first investigative news program in China, emerged in 1994. Since the program exposed and investigated the wrongdoings by local officials, it was widely regarded as the most influential media voice in china. In reality, both the local officials and top officials considered *Focus* as an important information source. For the top officials, *Focus* served as a mirror of grassroots politics in China. Although the top officials did not replying on the television program for acquiring information about the performance of local officials, the timely exposure and investigation of local problems allowed them an opportunity to be aware of the real situation at local governments. Impressed by the muckraking style of *Focus*, Zhu Rongji sang highly of the program and encouraged the journalists to stick to this important journalist practice and be a responsible watchdog of the government. The recognition of the program by the top officials exerted pressure on the local governments. For fear that they will become the target of the *Focus*, local officials paid close attention to the program. Once there were news stories related to their administrative regions, swift response would be made to minimize the influence. Although some critics of Chinese television argue that *Focus* has lost most of its influence, the investigative news format arisen from this program has become an integral part of Chinese journalist practices. The pioneering spirits embodied in the television show has also awakened a sense of responsibility among the journalists to be the active watchdogs of the government. In place of investigative news, minsheng news has dominated Chinese television screen in recent year. The rapid rise of this new program format reflected the reorientation of Chinese media. Instead of being elite-centered, news trends to focus more on the grassroots, who constituted the majority of the news audience. This grassroots orientation showed the tendency for the television to cater to the needs to the general public.

Moreover, the emphasis of professional values has expressed itself in the rapid expansion of the educational infrastructure for media and communication studies. Compared to 1997, when there was only a dozen journalism schools and majors in China, the expansion of journalist education has been remarkable in recent years. The past several years have witnessed the boom of journalism education. As of 2007,

232 universities have set up communication departments.[278] Although the increase in the quantity of the schools does not guarantee improvements in the quality of communication education, the infrastructure of established communication schools nation-wide at least provides the possibility of enhancing professionalism among the younger generation of Chinese journalists. Besides, as an effort to explore the international media market, there have been official efforts to enhance foreign language education among journalists in recent years. The establishment of the mass communication department at the Beijing Foreign Languages University was an example in this regard. One direct reason for this top foreign languages school to be authorized to involve in mass communication education was to "enhance China's competitiveness in the international media market after its entry into the WTO."[279] As a result of the increased input in the media education, professional training has become an indispensable component for the recruitment of media practitioners. In contrast with the Soviet model, which emphasizes a person's ideological orientation, training in party propaganda, and party-sanctioned journalism ethics rather than professional qualifications, the current recruitment procedure puts greater emphasis on professional trainings and liberal arts education.[280] The professorial standards for recruiting the television practitioner have been considerably raised over the years. As for now, a four-year college degree in related fields has become the minimum requirement for television practitioners.[281]

Finally, the reopening of the discussion of the media law represented the enlarged room for professional protection for journalists. Driven by the nationwide de-emphasis on ideology and de-politicization in the mid 1980s, Chinese journalists

---

[278] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2001*(Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2001), p148

[279] See e.g. MediaChina.net, "Beijing Foreign Languages University Establishing Its Mass Communication Department"(news report) (Available at http://chinese.mediachina.net/index_news_view.jsp?id=40359, May 15, 2005).

[280] See e.g. Zhongdang Pan and Joseph Man Chan, "Shifting Journalistic Paradigms: How China's Journalists Assess 'Media Examplars'", *Communication Research*, vol. 30, no.6 (December 2003), p64-682.

[281] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1998* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 1998), p165; and *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook* 2003 (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2003), p161.

began to engage in the discussion of initiating media reform aimed at drafting an independent press law to provide legal protection for journalists. Hu Jiwei, the former director of the People's Daily and China Press Institute, took the lead in this effort. By conducting extensive research on media freedom in developed countries and integrating with china's specific circumstances, he was able to come up with a draft of the law. However, the complete version of the draft was unable to be published due to the conservative blockage within the top leadership.[282] The discussion of the press law was endlessly postponed after the 1989 Beijing Student Movement. It was not until 2004 that open discussion of press law began to reemerge. The state's re-sanctioned revival of discussion signified enlarged space for journalistic professionalism in China.

Despite the liberal signs towards Western journalist professionalism, the impact of professionalism remains within the political orbit set by the Party and the state. For the media practices and education, the influence of Party journalism, which stresses party loyalty, remains strong. The Party membership continues to make big differences in employment with key national media outlets. In practice, although there has been timely delivery of diverse information, they are mostly restricted to non-political topics. Neither investigative news nor minsheng News touches upon sensitive political topics and problems. In reality, the rise of these two forms of news reporting have all been officially sanctioned and sponsored based on strategic calculations on the Party's side. As to the media education, it remains routine for most of the mass communication departments in China to teach about the "part journalism", which defines the media as propaganda tool and mouthpiece of the Party. Professors, party and state officials actually are constantly referring the media as the "throat and tongue" of the Party. [283] Most seem to take this concept as given; however, no one bothers to reflect on its implications. Besides the Party

---

[282] See e.g. Lu Keng, "Press Control in 'New China' and 'Old China'", in Chin-Chuan Lee, ed., *Media's China, China's Media* (Boulder, CO.: Westview, 1994), p147-162.
[283] It is a routine for the head of the Central Propaganda Department to stress the "throat and tongue" role of the media in his annual speech delivered to the head of local broadcasting bureaus in Beijing. See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook* for examples. In academia, the term "mouth and tongue" is also frequently quoted by scholars in their academic works. See e.g. Lang, J. S. 2003. *zhongguo xinwen zhengce tixi yanjiu (The Study of Chinese Journalism Policy System.* (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2003).

influence on the professional codes and education, corruptive practices among the journalists themselves also prevented the Chinese media from playing an authentic watchdog role in Chinese society. Due to widespread money worship in the reform era, increasing number of journalists have embroiled in paid advertisement and paid journalism, which further alienated the public from the public interests.

7.5 Summary

With little doubt, Chinese media is developing towards a hybrid pattern that contains elements of both the Soviet model and the libertarian model outlined by Seibert et al. in their *Four Theories of the Press*. With potential for initiating changes in Chinese society, the trends towards commercialization, industrialization, technological innovation, and professionalization were believed to have posed serious challenges to the Party-State control over the free flow of information in China. However, as the analysis of the CRTB Awards news reports and the study of other media revealed, the power of these liberating forces like market, technology, and professional values have actually been exaggerated.

The increased freedom and autonomy has thus far occurred only in the non-political section and content. In other words, the Party-State has managed to skillfully navigate through the challenges posed by the liberal forces in the media industry. By fusing with the market and technology, the Party was able to develop and incorporate subtle, indirect, and sophisticated control over the political content. While the control has become far less encompassing and ideological, or in other words, less Soviet, their intensity and effectiveness, however, have been beefed up.

The rising need for commercialization and increased international competition pushed the government to authorize and sanction media industrialization, which in turn, further reinforced the Party-State control over the media via media consolidation. Similarly, the technological upgrading and programming innovations in the industry also led to renewed state control over the industry. Moreover, the increased programming and editorial autonomy and freedom facilitated the implementation of the populist policies and the incorporation of disguised control

over public opinion. The opening of Chinese media market for international investment increased the bargaining power of the Party-State in luring the foreign investors into collaboration with Chinese authorities in information surveillance. Overall, the hybrid model that has taken shape in China was congruent with the policy design of "socialism with Chinese characteristics": to allow the market to enter the media industry without giving up the Party's grip over political content.

CHAPTER EIGHT: PARTY-STATE IN TRANSITION: TOWARDS A

SMALLER AND STRONGER STATE

After more than two decades' reform, Chinese media has departed from the old Soviet model and are rapidly developing towards a hybrid of Soviet and liberal models. The burgeoning of liberal media practices and values that are contradictory to the Soviet media theory has not necessarily rendered the latter irrelevant. Through accommodation and compromises, the Party-State was able to find a middle group between the two models, thus making both the further industrialization of the media industry and the political control over it possible. What do these recent developments in the media industry tell us about the country's social and political changes? The following chapter will explore the political implications of the media changes in China. Based on the analysis of television practices and regulations discussed in chapters five, six and seven, several tendencies in Chinese society and politics have been discerned. First of all, there have been enlarged individual and social freedoms with very limited political liberalization. Second, there has been a fusion of the power of the market, technology, and the Party-State. Finally, through coalition building and political compromises, the Party has expanded its supportive

base among the rising capitalist class, which instead of fostering political pluralism, further distanced the Party from the grassroots population and their interests.

8.1 Enlarged Freedom with Political Limit

As demonstrated by CRTB Awards winner news reports, the Soviet style all-encompassing control over the social and political life has been gradually relinquished in the reform era. The salience of social news and the diversity of the actors all bespoke the expanded individual and social freedom in China. This enlarged scope of individual and social freedom, in turn, elucidated the de-politicization trend and the decentralization of power in Chinese politics.

The reform policy adopted in 1978 has caused fundamental changes in China's state-society relationship. To facilitate the implementation of the market-orientated economic reform policies, the central government has taken initiatives to gradually delegate power to the local governments and institutionalize the country's politics. The grassroots popular election, waves of administrative reform, institutionalization of power succession, and gradual incorporation of the rule of law were all examples in this regard.

In November 1989, the standing committee of the National People's Congress in China adopted the Organic Law of Village Committees (revised in 1998),[284] which stipulated that the chairman, vice chairman, and members of village committees should be directly elected by the residents of the village. According to this organic law, the nature of village committees would be autonomous mass organizations through which villages manage their own affairs, educate themselves, and meet their own needs.[285] The law also detailed an impressive array of citizenship rights. First, all registered adult villagers were entitled to vote and to stand for office. The only people kept out of the process were those deprived of political rights by law.[286] Compared to the "class" concept during Mao's era, this eligibility rule reflected the de-emphasis on ideology in Chinese society. Second,

---

[284] See e.g. Ministry of Civil Affairs, "The PRC's Organic Law of Village Committees (No. 9)", (http://www.mca.gov.cn/artical/content/PJCN/2003122290810.htm, November 4th, 1998)
[285] Article 2.
[286] Article 12.

certain efforts were made to protect the rights of women. Both the organic law and the 1998 revision accorded women "appropriate" representation on the village committees.[287] Moreover, to protect voter privacy and guarantee freedom of choice, secrete voting, semi-competitive election, and open counts were required by the law.[288] Finally, mechanisms have been established to empower the villagers to fight abuse of the Organic Law. Villagers can report any election irregularities to local governments, people's congresses, and other offices such as civil affairs offices.[289]

Besides the village election, China has also initiated several rounds of administrative reforms aimed at bureaucratic rationalization, market accommodation, and government efficiency. The first administrative reform was engineered by Zhao Ziyang in 1982. With many purged senior officials returning to the political sciences in late 1970s and early 1980s, an increased number of ministries was created to facilitate the work of the state council. In 1978, the state council had 76 organizations. This number jumped into 100 in 1981. To improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the large state institutions, the leadership restructured the government by dramatically reducing the number of officials and departments. Overall, the 1982 reform reduced the total number of vice premier from 18 to 3, cut organizations from 100 to 61, and trimmed the state Council staff by approximately 17,000.[290] While abolishing great numbers of redundant ministries and commissions, the 1982 reform also gave rise to new ministries such as the state economic commission to further guide and promote economic reform. With the election of Li Peng as the new premier in 1988 and his re-election in 1993, China launched the second and third rounds of administrative reforms. Although compared to the 1982 reform, these two reforms led by Li displayed certain conservative tendencies, they all promoted the institutionalization of Chinese politics one way or the other. Among all the reform decisions adopted in 1988, the transformation of the formerly abolished ministries into state companies, such as China Petroleum and Gas

---

[287] Article 9.
[288] Article 14.
[289] Article 15
[290] See e.g. Yongnian Zheng, *Globalization and State Transformation in China* (Cambridge, UK: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 2004), p85-106.

Company, were considered as the most important efforts to further withdraw the state from society and the economy. Inspired by Deng's 1992 south China tour, the state economic and trade commission was established in 1993 reform, which was later known as the institutional base for Zhu Rongji's radical economic reform.[291] The fourth wave of reform was initiated by Zhu Rongji in 1998. Zhu's reform was radical in all means, he not only reduced the government commissions and ministries by 28% but also cut the number of civil servants by 50%. Furthermore, he also redefined the functions of the existing ministries and broke the military links with business. This institutional transformation at the top level was also replicated at the provincial level in 2000. On national average, provincial bureau were reduced by 20% and civil servants by 47% by 2000. With the rise of the fourth generation of leadership, the current premier, Wen Jiabao, has begun undertaking the fifth administrative reform since 1982. One recent remarkable government move was the establishment of the Corruption Control Ministry on September 13th, 2007.

In addition to village elections and administrative reforms, Chinese leadership also made efforts to improve the legal construction so as to deal with various political, legal, and social challenges arisen from the market-oriented reform. The Fifteenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party convened in September 1997 in Beijing, and proposed for the time since late 1970s that the Party would give its highest priority to rule of law. Two years later, the rule of law was formally incorporated into the constitution via the 1999 amendment.

The aforementioned top-down efforts to decentralize power all inevitably helped to reduce the size of the state and redefine state-society relations. As the state influence diminished, the power of the economic and social sphere began to gradually expand, which in turn further restricted the power of the government to control society. Since 1978, Chinese people's freedom in the economic, social, and cultural sphere has been dramatically expanded. Private economic activities have become prevailing throughout the country and Chinese leadership has showed enormous tolerance to the various values and lifestyles manifested in culture,

---

[291] See e.g. Yongnian Zheng, *Globalization and State Transformation in China* (Cambridge, UK: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 2004), p93.

fashion, and sex. The largely relaxed state-society relationship and socio-political changes in China, however, resulted in limited political democracy characterized by political pluralism and rule of law.

As direct elections were adopted at the village level, no fundamental changes to the election at upper levels of the government have taken place. The village level elections themselves also have various limitations and problems due to the incomplete nature of the organic law and continued Party involvement in it. Given the widespread migration and population flow between urban and rural areas, the residence requirement for the voters has dramatically decreased the reliability and validity election results. Woman's voices are still largely marginalized in local elections. Their roles in most cases have been restricted to birth control and family planning. For the administrative and institutional reform, it is true that the restructuring of state institutions has facilitated further economic reform. This, however, has not freed the institutions from party influence. The five waves of administrative reform in China were more or less a result of factional struggles. As to the rule of law, despite its formal incorporation into the state constitution, its implementation is yet to be materialized. After two decades of reform, there are still a long list of taboo topics that the media and public can not discuss and debate openly. The people still do not have the freedom to be involved extensively and openly in the country's politics, the dissent groups remained to be suppressed; the Party continued to monopolize the power in a rapidly pluralizing society;[292] the voices of women, senior and ethnic minority groups are still marginalized in national news; and the public remains isolated from the rest of the world due to lack a of information. It is true that increasing social and individual freedom has created more opportunities for political changes in China and made it more difficult for the

---

[292] Despite the recent official efforts to crack down on official corruption, the public is still not allowed to freely discuss and debate on the topic. The most recent example is the closing down of a blog that exposed the extravagant welcoming ceremony for a NPC delegate orchestrated by poverty –inflicted county-level city in Jiangsu province. Realizing the information has aroused great public anger, dissatisfaction, and scorn, instead of punishing the officials involved so as to prevent similar farce from happening in the future, the top leadership responded with directions to close down the blog. For details, please refer to the link of
http://www.globalvoicesonline.org/2007/10/26/china-official-excess-met-with-humor-scorn-death-threats/.

Party-State to manipulate the public mind. However, the potential of these social and cultural changes to foster political changes in China have been mitigated by official efforts to divert public attention away from serious political and social affairs via strategic use of the market.

Take the rise of the consumer and entertainment culture as an example, instead of sticking to the pre-reform Soviet rhetoric that entertainment and consumerism were harmful capitalist phenomenon that will divert the public from serious thinking, the government has acquiesced to their rise throughout China. Although there were moments when the government harnessed its supervision of the entertainment programs and television commercials, they were enacted more out of the consideration of economic interests and public interests. Take the recent restriction on the scope and length of television shows at local levels as an example, the driving force behind this was believed to be the official desire to balance the competition between the local and central television stations and protect the business interests of the CCTV. [293] This shift in the official stance towards consumerism and entertainment reflected the adjustment efforts made by the Party-State in rejuvenating its power and authority in China. The robust consumption and entertainment will predictably energize the economy and increase revenue. And they will also desensitize the public by diverting their attention from issues of fundamental importance to the country's political future. In either case, the Party-State was the beneficiary of the flashy commercials and meaningless entertainment shows in China. According to a recent survey in China, there is a lack of desire for political democracy among the Chinese public.[294] Instead, the majority of them demonstrated a mentality of indifference to the authority. Instead of initiating bottom-up transition, the majority of the public was generally absorbed by the pursuit of material well-being, consumerism, and entertainment culture. The belief that increasing social and individual freedom will automatically result in the rise of a civil society, which will eventually pave the way for the rise of political

---

[293] See e.g. Mediachina.net, "The SARFT Should not Restrict Television Shows" (Available at http://chinese.mediachina.net/index_news_view.jsp?id=85495, February 27, 2007).
[294] See e.g. Xiaoqin Guo, *State and Society in China's Democratic Transition: Confucianism, Leninism, and Economic Development* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p148-149.

democracy in China is more of a myth than reality in this sense. After all, the free discussion of fashion, sex, luxuries, and homosexuality has very little to do with political well-being. When the public's attention is diverted by materialism and hedonism, how strong can their desire for democracy could be? Take the Internet as an example. Despite its potential in fostering a public sphere and civil society, it has mostly been used as a tool for computer games and online chatting among the public.

The lack of political liberalization can also be seen from the Party-State's control over information related to foreign affairs. As revealed by the analysis of the CRT Awards news, the world outside the Chinese territory has been largely marginalized in China's television news, which can be seen from both the small number of international news reports and the strategic selection of the countries included. This omission and selection of coverage about foreign affairs represented the Party-State's domination of power in the field of foreign policy making. By withholding information about what is happening outside the Chinese territory, it not only minimized the public interference in the process but also reserved certain maneuvering room in developing, revising, and adjusting foreign policy without public knowledge.

8.2 Convergence of the Market, Technology, and the Party-State

When the concept of market first landed in China in late 1978, there had been overt optimism that it would become the liberating force to both Chinese economy and politics. This has not come true after two decades of economic reform and the prospect remains dim for the foreseeable future either. As illustrated by the television marketization and industrialization, contrary to the conventional understanding that market would be a disintegrating force to the rule of the communist party, the power of the market and the Party-State was actually converging in the television industry, and media industry in general.

The state-initiated market reform has resulted in the economic miracles in China. At the same time, however, the market has also backlashed with various roadblocks and challenges for the Party-State rule. As the deepening of the market

economy required more autonomy from the Party-State while creating an increasingly plural yet unruly society, the Party-State's legitimacy and capability to rule was being put under severe test in the 1990s. The Party initially tried to rein the market in by ideological and political interferences, such as reshuffling the personnel and launching political rehabilitation campaigns, but the results were very limited. This top-down interference not only harmed the normal functioning of the market but also aroused nationwide cynicism, which put the Party legitimacy under question. The secretive rise and rapid expansion of Falungong in late 1990s was a response to the inability of the Party in addressing the reform related problems and the cultural vacuum. The trial and error experience led to the further adjustments of Party policy and strategy. Instead of positioning itself on the opposite or confrontational side of the market, the CCP actually seemed to come to the opinion that further marketization of the country's economy, if properly managed, would be the best means for improving the state governance and improving its legitimacy.

This change in the mind-set among the top leadership elucidated the fusion of the power of market and Party-State through television conglomerates in recent years. In the early years of the economic reform, Chinese television infrastructure was extremely underdeveloped. The first reform decision, therefore, was to expand the infrastructure of the television broadcasting by "building four levels of television stations."[295] The decision to spread television signals was accompanied with delegation of power to local administrations to fund and develop their own television broadcasting networks. The increased autonomy resulted in meteoric growth of television stations at provincial, municipal, and country levels. This decentralization of media management to lower levels of the state hierarchy and the quick expansion of media organizations nationwide created problems for Party monitoring of media content. Driven by the pressure to be financially independent, the industry began to search vigorously for ways to increase its advertisement revenue, win public attention, and cater to the audiences' preferences. Consequently there was a rise of investigative news reports; increased critical coverage of party

---

[295] This decision was made in the *11th Annual National Meeting on Radio and Television Broadcasting* in 1983. See e.g. Z. Z. Guo, *zhongwai guangbo dianshi shi (International Broadcasting History)* (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2005), p270.

and state officials and work; and open discussion of taboo topics in the pre-reform era such as crime, sex, AIDS, corruption, rule of law, and entertainment. The initial official response to the emerging unruly situation was to resort to the old Soviet style of censorship and punishment such as issuing official directives for editors and journalists, closing down television stations for rehabilitation, banning programs, and removing the journalists from their positions. However, given the size of the Chinese television market and the lack of regulations, these punishment mechanisms proved to be far from adequate. The old style control was not only resented by the local governments, but also activated journalist outcries for further media freedom. Realizing the futility in resisting the development of market in the television industry, the Party-State began to adjust its policy towards the direction of increased accommodation and appropriation of the market development. This policy change was influenced by the control mechanism in the Western liberal media system, which allows the media owners to wield heavy clout over public opinion. By actively authorizing and sponsoring media consolidation at both national and local level, the Party-State expected to achieve the optimal integration of political control and market efficiency in media industry.[296]

The fusion of the Party and the market and technology can also be discerned from the cooperation between Chinese government and the international media giants such as News Corporation, Microsoft, Yahoo, and Google. As a condition for these companies to enter Chinese market, the above-mentioned companies have all agreed to comply with domestic laws and regulations in China, which legitimize the state and party censorship of the media. Compared to the old party mindset, which considers the presence of the international media companies in China as a direct threat to the Party's control over public opinion, the CCP has demonstrated increased sophistication in interacting with foreign media conglomerates. By interacting and collaborating with these foreign companies, the party has tactically upgraded its surveillance over the society while maximizing its economic benefits.

---

[296] See e.g. *China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2002* (Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society, 2002), p165.

The hybrid of the Soviet and liberal model retained the Party control over the political content from the Soviet model but at the same time also adopted the Western management techniques designed to make the media more popular and financially self-supporting. Given that the hybrid model is expected to both satisfy the market demand for information and Party priorities for organizing propaganda, the model itself is an expression of the fusion of the market and the Party-State in China.

8.3 A Special Class in Evolution

When capital and political power converge, there often arises a new special class above the mass. The Communist Party of China is such a special class taking shape now. By encouraging and accommodating market economy, courting the entrepreneurs and businessmen, and rejuvenating its social and political control, the Party is distancing itself further away from the grassroots population, and entrenching the class polarization in China, which is in direct conflict with the communist goal of "wiping out the exploit class" and "building a classless society."[297]

The changes in the nature of the communist party have happened gradually. The adoption of the market oriented economic reform was the first step in the direction. Despite the official rhetoric of building a socialism with Chinese characteristics, it has been made altruism that the CCP was developing a capitalism with Chinese characteristics. It might finally reach communist society, but there is no way for it to avoid the capitalist stage where it is at right now as predicted by Marx. The widespread inequality, alienation of the Party from the masses, lip-service paid to the communist ideology by senior officials, profit-driven production, widening income gap, rampant commercials, mass entertainment and consumer culture, lack of basic health care for the disadvantaged groups of people, and the disguised manipulation of public opinion, altogether depict a picture of a capitalist society in formation. For the media industry, the formation of media

---

[297] See e.g. Milovan Djilas, *The New Class: An analysis of the Communist System* (New York: Praeger, 1957), p37.

conglomerates, the industrialization of the media sector, and the rise of entertainments shows, and the rampant commercials all spelled the word "capitalism."

The formal inclusion of the business elites into the Party was another example of the changing nature of the CCP. The evolution of the CCP towards a special class has also been elucidated by the Party's integration with the rising capitalist class in China. As Bruce Dickens has discovered, instead of promoting the rise of a civil society in which people can debate about and participate in the country's politics, the newly emerged capitalists in China are collaborating with the Party very well out of practical considerations. They are both comfortable with the current political system and are willing to work with the Party to maximize their interests. The immediate benefit for them to cooperate with the Party is that they can both get the protection from the Party-State for their personal property and enjoy favorable treatments in pursuing profits. A more active role in the country's policymaking process gives them a stronger sense of security and more leverage in the country's politics.[298] As for the Party, the rising capitalists represent the most significant force in Chinese economic development. To divorce from them, therefore, would be detrimental to the Party. Driven by the mutual interest and respective calculations, the two sides were able to work something out that legitimized their collaboration. The "Three Represents" put forward by Jiang's leadership is a product of such calculations. According to the "Three Represents," the CCP represented the most advanced productive forces, the most advanced culture, and the interests of the majority population in China. Among these three represents, the first two of them were aimed at legitimizing the inclusion of the former class enemies of the Party, entrepreneurs, and businessmen, into the CCP. Perhaps it goes without saying that the new capitalists represented the most advanced productive forces and culture in today's China. This official decision formally gave rise to a rapidly expanding group

---

[298] For more detailed explanation about the collaboration of the new capitalist class and the Party, please refer to Richard Robinson and David Goodman, "The New Rich in Asia: Economic Development, Social Status and Political Consciousness", in Richard Robinson and David Goodman, eds., *The New Rich in Asia: Mobile Phones, McDonald's and Middle-class Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 1996), p1-16.

called "red capitalists" in China, which is amassing both political and economic power by paying lip service to the communist ideology and being involved extensively in the profit-driven market economy. The official encouragement for the industrialization of the media sector and the state sponsorship of the formation of the national, provincial, and regional media conglomerates demonstrated the ambition of the red capitalists to fuse the power of both market and politics in China.

8.4 Summary

Driven by the market-oriented economy and technological innovation, individual, social, and economic freedom in Chinese society has reached an unprecedented level since 1949. However, as the both the study of the television news reports and regulation as well as the above analysis confirmed, market and technology are not transforming China into a liberal democracy. Through making compromises to the market and technology and forming coalitions with the business elites, the Party-State has strengthened its monopoly of power in China. Although the Party continues to legitimize itself by paying lip service to communism, communist ideals have become very little more than an ornament as well as a tool for fortifying the Party-State's legitimacy in the rapidly evolving socio-economic environment. In the process of promoting market economy, the Party has been gradually transformed into a special class that monopolizes both the economic and political power. After two decades' struggles and confrontation, the market and the Communist Party of China finally found a way to reconcile with each other. As "two sides of the same coin," they all invariably serve the interests of the new special interest class, which continues to identify themselves as "Communist."[299]

---

[299] See e.g. Yuezhi Zhao, "The State, the Market and Media Control in China", in Pradip N. Thomas and Zaharom Nain, eds., *Who Owns the Media? Global Trends and Local Resistance* (New York: Zed Books, 2004), p188.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

I started this project amidst many confusing and seemingly contradictory signals gathered about the media and political development in China. As has been made clear from the very beginning, by studying the dynamics of Chinese television practices and regulation, the ultimate goal has been to decipher whether China is developing towards democracy, featured by political pluralism and rule of law. The findings are both disappointing and alarming. Despite the optimism that the marketization of the media industry will finally erode the Party control over the media and bring about democracy to China, the research reveals that the declined Soviet style of all encompassing media control did not necessarily bring about diverse voices to China's political arena, for the Party has managed to renew its control over political opinion through accommodating and compromising to the market force and various social and cultural, and technological changes resulted from the economic reform.

9.1 Current Situation

No doubt that the presence of the Party in the media industry has substantially diminished and the free flow of social, economic, and cultural information has been

considerably improved. The scope and intensity of the official supervision over the political content, however, has not been correspondently weakened due to improved control techniques on the Party's part. From these changes in the media industry, it has become all too evident that that the nature of the CCP as a protector of equality and social well-being of the majority of the Chinese people has mutated in the process of the market-oriented economic reform. By tactically allying with the rising capitalist class and integrating with information technology, the CCP is rapidly evolving into a new class, which continues to monopolize the political power by marginalizing oppositional and alternative political voices.

The CCP's adaptation to the market and socio-economic changes in China can be discerned clearly from the rise of a hybrid media model of both Soviet and liberal elements. Despite the continued state monopoly of media ownership and control over political content, the editorial, professional, and managerial freedom of Chinese media has been dramatically expanded in the reform era. This has given rise to a timely distribution of diversified information about social, economic, and cultural life; critical and balanced news about the country's political life; and further commercialization and industrialization of the media. Evident signs for increased media freedom can be discerned from the current generation of leadership. Since the SARS crisis, Hu's administration has actively promoted media autonomy and freedom. The daily press conference and 24-hour news coverage during the crisis, the directive for television stations to limit coverage of political routines, the encouragement for the media to expose social problems via *minsheng* news (grassroots news), and China's efforts to honor its WTO promises to open its media market gradually were all examples in this regard.

Without doubt, the liberal trends towards a relatively free media created possibilities for bottom-up political changes. These possibilities however, have all invariably been restrained by the renewed efforts of the Party-State to upgrade its domination of both political and economic power. For every new development in the media industry, corresponding strategies have been developed to minimize its impact on the Party rule. When commercialization and marketization began to give

rise to unruly market competition and uncontrollable content that posed serious threats to Party legitimacy, the Party quickly strengthened its control by consolidating the industry via the formation of media conglomerates at different levels. Since the ownership of these conglomerates remained in the hands of the Party-State, the Party had tactically kept its channels for political propaganda open and intact while continuing to extract profits from the marketizatin of the industry. The state sponsored projects such as the "Xi-Xin project" and the "Stepping-out project" were all disguised ways to promote the political and economic interest of the Party while expanding the media market. The same was also true for the control over media content. As commercialization penetrated into very corner of the media industry, the Party's overt and pervasive control over media content become both impossible and ineffective. The Soviet style political propaganda was losing both its support among journalists and the public. To revert the situation, the Party turned to indirect strategies and approaches. As shown by the official encouragement of reports on local official corruptions and social problems, despite the negative coat of these reports, their nature as positive Party-State propaganda remained untouched. After all, the underlining message of these seemingly critical reports was to glorify the image of the top leadership. In addition to commercialization, industrialization, and increased editorial and programming freedom, professionalism is another trend that was believed to pose a threat to party control over the media. To dilute the effects of the rising professionalism among the journalists, the Party-State has tried to blend the Party principles with the professional codes in both media education, journalists' recruitments, and self-censorship among media practitioners. As the example of television and the Internet illustrated, the Party was also able to develop various counter-strategies to regulate the blurred media types and mitigate the effects of the technological development on the official control over media content.

As demonstrated by the analysis of the television practices and regulations, the substantially improved individual, social, and economic freedom in the reform era went corresponded with renewed political control in China. Instead of tearing the Party-State apart, however, the two trends have increasingly conveyed their goals and effects, which is to reinforce the Party-State's domination of power in China.

Under the facilitation by the state, the freedom and autonomy at the individual, social, and economic level worked either to divert people's attention from the country's political affairs or to create illusions about the political situation in China.

In contrast with the early strategies of the Party-State to use administrative and political means to rein the society and market in, China is working to navigate through the challenges posed by the market-oriented economic development and social changes via accommodation, collusion, and collaboration with capitals and the capitalist class. By legitimizing the inclusion of the businessmen and entrepreneurs into the CCP, the Party is mutating into a special class that aims to amass both political and economic power. As a special class, it might be willing to incorporate gradual political reforms.[300] But the scope of these reforms will be determined by the possible benefits they could bring to the Party rather than their relevance to the communist ideology. If the reform can strengthen the power of the Party, it will not only be allowed but also be encouraged; if the reform is more likely to undermine the influence and interest of the Party, it will be terminated, ignored, or taken off the agenda. This provides the key to understand the inconsistency in the party's stance towards media freedom in China. It explains why there has been official authorization and encouragement for critical reports of the social and political crisis while arrests and jailing of the outspoken journalists or individuals persist. It also explains why there has been state sanctioned media industrialization while tight control over content remains.

9.2 Future Challenges

So far, the coalition between the CCP and the rising capitalist class has remained fruitful. It was at least able to create a temporary stability within Chinese society because of the overlapping interests between the two sides. However, how long will

---

[300] The recently closed 17th Party Congress made within party democracy and expanded public participation in domestic politics a goal for the Party. Detailed information available at the link of http://news.xinhuanet.com/comments/2007-10/22/content_6919821.htm   and http://news.xinhuanet.com/local/2007-10/23/content_6926833.htm.

the honeymoon last? How far can this relationship go? The answers to these questions largely depend on the adaptability of the Party to the changing environment. To be more specific, they will be contingent on the Party's capability in addressing the ever-escalating domestic tensions and problems, accommodating the divergent interests within and without the Party, balancing factional powers, and improving its foreign policy.

The unparalleled development of political and economic reform has created insuppressible social tensions and problems while transforming Chinese social and economic life. When regional disparity became too dramatic to conceal or whitewash in late 1990s, mass protests, social unrests, population mobility began to flood the nation with grievances and moaning. The reform of the state-owned enterprises and inadequate employment opportunities turned those who had been laid-off in the big cities of the northeastern China into angry urban mobs. The lack of basic medicare for the rural population and stagnant situation of Chinese agriculture also made the peasants the most disparate group of the Chinese population.

Besides these social challenges, the Party is also faced with the problems of intra-party conflicts and struggles. Although factional politics has become less brutal, there is no evidence that the in-fighting will diminish. The inclusion of the red capitalists, the rise of the princelings and the Communist Youth Clique, the remnants of the Shanghai Gang, and the increased number of foreign educated leaders all add complexity to China's current political landscape. As different factions are vigorously competing for power, the challenges for the Party to balance and resolve the differences will be ever demanding. The ever-diversifying social, cultural, and ideological landscape in China will also constantly test the limits of the government.

Moreover, the monopoly of power by the Party is also contingent on its effectiveness in devising innovative policies in dealing with the rest of the world. Compared to domestic problems, the challenges from the outside are not immediate and intense. However, this does not indicate that they can be shrugged off. Despite

the efforts by the current generation of leadership to practice proactive foreign policy, there are still tensions accumulating and amassing in its relations with Japan and the United States on the Taiwan issue. Due to the strong nationalist sentiments among the Chinese people fanned by the Jiang's leadership, the handling of the foreign relations with Japan and United States is bound to have strong implications for both China's domestic and international politics. Every move made by the government will cause strong repercussions both at home and abroad.

If the Party can meet the aforementioned challenges and dilute all tensions that could possibly lead to violent outbursts, the development of political democracy in China will possibly follow a gradual course as Yongnian Zheng suggested, in which the Party, or the new class, will become more open to democratic ideals and eventually authorize top-down power delegation at different levels. This gradual approach towards democracy is most desirable given the positive implications it will possibly have on both China and the rest of the world. In the worse scenario, if these social tensions and political problems run out of the control of the Party, radical revolution will make its way to the country as what has frequently happened in Chinese history.

APPENDIX I

1. Date of report: month/date/year

2. Number of news stories

3. Time of events/ issues occurred

4. Topics of news: social/ cultural/ political/ economic/ technological/ educational/ ecological/ legal/ other

5. Type of news: domestic news/home news aboard/foreign news abroad/foreign relations/foreign policy news.

6. Length of news story

7. Format of news story: anchor report (no video)/domestic video report/foreign video report/live coverage/commentary

8. Attribution of news: own correspondent or staff/ other domestic medium/other foreign medium/unidentified

9. Primary countries involved (for news involving a foreign country only)

10. Geographical region (news involving a foreign country): Africa/ Australia/ central America/ east Asia/ east Europe/ middle east/ north America/ south America/ south Asian/ western Europe

11. Main Actors in the news story: occupation/gender/age/nationality/religion

12. Types of visual image: Mode of visual image (graphic/video/nonapplicable)

13. Content of the visual image (violence/nonviolence/nonapplicable)

14. Relevant province/municipality in the news story

15. Directional control room logic: the cinematic image flow

16. Physical characteristics of the news anchor: clothing/ hair style/hair color/tone/body language/facial expression

APPENDIX II

A. Interview Questions for Media Scholars:

1) *What are the educational objectives for broadcasting, editing, and journalism major?*

2) *What are the most valued qualities for the future editors, news anchors and journalists?*

4) *Who decide the curriculum for the broadcasting, editing, and journalism majors?*

5) *Will the changes in the employment standard at the CCTV foster changes in the curriculum in the Communication department?*

B: Interview Questions for Media Practitioners at both local (Shandong) and central (Beijing) television stations:

Editors

1) *What are the guiding principles in editing the daily news program?*

2) *How much freedom do they have in choosing the news reports for each day?*

3) *What are the topics that can never be covered in the daily news?*

4) *How do they decide the order of news stories?*

Anchorpersons

1) *How much freedom do they have in reporting news?*

2) *What are the factors that will shape their tones and body language in reporting different types of news?*

3) *What are the restrictions for them in reporting specific news stories?*

4) *What do they consider as the most important professional values?*

Journalists

1) *How much freedom do they have in choosing the topics of the news?*

2) *What do they consider as the most valuable news?*

3) *What are the rules and regulations that hold them back from what they want cover?*

4) *What are the gaps between what they were taught at school and the journalistic practices?*

5) *What do they consider as the most important professional values?*

REFERENCES

Akhavan-Majid R. and Jkotika R. 1998. "Framing and Ideology: A Comparative Analysis of US and Chinese Newspaper Coverage of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women and NGO Forum". *Mass Communication and Society*. vol.1(3/4), p131-152.

Amin, H. and Napoli, J. "Media and Power in Egypt", in James Curran and Myung-jin Park, eds., *Dewesternizing Media Studies*. New York: Routledge.

Amnesty International. 2006. "Undermining Freedom of Expression in China: the Role of Yahoo!, Microsoft and Google" (June). London: The Human Rights Action Center.

Bagdikian, B. H. 1997. *The Media Monopoly.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Baran, S. and Davis, D. 1995. *Mass Communication Theory: Formations, Ferments and Future*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Barnett, A. D. 1967. *"A Note on Communication and Development in Communist China"*. In D. Lerner and W. Schramm, Eds., *Communication and Change in Developing Countries.* Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.

Berelson, B. 1971. *Content Analysis in Communication Research*. New York, Hafner.

Becker, J. 2004. "Lessons from Russia: A Neo-Authoritarian Media System" in *European Journal of Communication*, vol.19, no.2, p139-163.

Bishop, R. L. 1989. Qi lai! Mobilizing One Billion Chinese: The Chinese Communication System. Ames: Iowa State University Press.

Black, E. 1982. *Politics and News*. Toronto: Butterworths.

Blomqvist, A. 2006. "Governments, Markets and Health Care Sector", in Jong Wong and Lai Yongyi, Eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges.* Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd.

Bohrnstedt, G. W. and Knoke, D. 1994. *Statistics for Social Data Analysis (Third Edition)*. Itasca, Illinois: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc.

Boyd, A. 1997. *Broadcast Journalism: Techniques of Radio and TV News*. Boston: Focal Press.

Burgh, H. D. 2003. *The Chinese Journalists: Mediating Information in the World's most Populous Country.* New York: Routledge Curzo

Buscombe, E. 2000. *British Television*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press

Cai, Y. 2006. "Managing Social Unrest", in Jong Wong and Lai Yongyi, Eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges,* Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd, p379-404.

Cao, Q. 2000. "Journalism as Politics: Reporting Hong Kong's Handover in the Chinese Press." *Journalism Studies*, no.1, p665-678.

Carragee, K. M. and Roefs, W. "The Neglect of Power in Recent Framing Research." *Journal of Communication*, vol.54, issue 2 (June 2004), p214-233.

Chan, J. M. and Lee, C. C. 1991. Mass Media and Political Transition: The Hong Kong Press in China's Orbit. New York: the Guilford Press.

Chan, J. M. 1992. "Mass Media and Socio-political Formation in Hong Kong, 1942-1992." *Asian Journal of Communication*. vol.3, no.2, p106-129.

Chan, J. M. 1996. "Television Development in Greater China: Structure, Exports and Market Formation." In J. Sinclair Et Al., Eds., *New Patterns in Global Television: Peripheral Vision*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chan, Gerald. 2006. *China's Compliance in Global Affairs*. Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd.

Chang, M. 1969. The People's Daily and the Red Flag Magazine during the Culture Revolution. Hong Kong: Union Press Limited.

Chang, W. H. 1989. *Mass Media in China: History and the Future*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.

Chang, T. K. 1989. "Access to the News and Foreign Policy: The Case of China, 1950-1984." *Newspaper Research Journal*, no.10, p33-44.

Chang, T. K., Wang, J., and Chen, C. H. 1998. "The Social Construction of International Image in the Post-Cold War Era: A Comparative Analysis of U.S. and Chinese National TV News." *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, no.42, p277-286.

Chang, T. K., Wang, J. and Chen, Y. 2002. *China's Window on the World: TV news, Social Knowledge and International Spectacles*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton.

Chang, X. Y, Zhang, J. C. and Ruan, G. R. 2001. *zhenghuo xinwen jiang zhinan: xinwen pingjiang lilun he shijian (Competing for News Awards: Theory and Practices).* Beijing: China Radio and Television Press.

Chase, M. and Mulvenon, J. 2002. *You've Got Dissent!* Santa Monica, CA: RAND

Cheek, T. 1997. *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chen, J. M. 1993. "Commercialization without Independence: Trends of Media Development in China." *China Review*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press. 25.1-25.21.

Chen, X. 2003. *Mass Media as Instruments for Social and Political Control in China*. M. A. Thesis, Virginia Tech.

Chen, X. 2007. "Media Lens Revisited: Television and Socio-Political Changes in China", in *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, vol. 12 no. 2, (Summer, 2007), p167-184.

Chen, X. 2006. "Dynamics of News Media Regulations in China: Explanations and Implications", in *Journal of Comparative Asian Development*, vol.5, no.1 (spring, 2006), p49-64.

Chen, X. 2007. "China's Foreign Policy: Dynamics and International Order", in Yannis A Stivachtis, Ed., *International Order in a Globalizing World*, Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Chen, Y. 1998. "Setting a Nation in Action: The Media and China's Bid for Year 2000 Olympics." In D. R. Heisey and W. Gong. Eds., *Communication and Culture: China and the World Entering the 21st Century*. Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V.

Chen, Y. 1999. "Creating A New Model, Creating A New Nation: The Media and the Making of Role Models in China's Market Economy Era." *Journal of International Communication*, no.6, p90-105.

Chen, Y. 1998. "Setting a Nation in Action: The Media and China's Bid for Year 2000 Olympics.' in D. R. Heisey and W. Gong, Eds., *Communication and Culture: China and the World Entering the 21st Century.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, B.V.

Chiang, L. M. 1985. "Women and the Media in China: A Historical Perspective." *Journalism Quarterly,* no.62, p45-52.

China Daily. China has 144 Million Netizens by March, China Daily (News report) (05-18-2007). (Available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-05/18/content_875334.htm,

China State Administration of Radio, Television and Film. 2003. *Guangbo dianshi fagui cuanbian (Selections of Broadcast Regulations).* Beijing: Beijing Guangbo Xueyuan chubanshe (Beijing broadcasting Academy publishing house)

China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1988. Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society.

China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 1999. Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society.

China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2002. Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society.

China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2004. Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society.

China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook 2006. Beijing: China Radio and Television Broadcasting Yearbook Society.

Chinoy, M. 1999. *China Live [electronic resource]: People Power and the Television Revolution.* Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Chomsky, N. 1997. *Media Control: the Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda.* New York: Seven Stories Press.

Chong, D. and Druckman, J. N. 2007. "Framing Theory", in *Annual Review Political Science*, no. 10, p103-126

Chu, G. C., Hung, F., Schramm, W., Uhalley, S., and Yu, F.T.C. 1976. *Communication and Development in China.* Honolulu, HI: East and West Communication Institute.

Chu, G. C.. 1977. *Radical Change through Communication in Mao's China*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.

Chu, G. C. Ed. 1978. *Popular Media in China: Shaping New Cultural Patterns*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.

Chu, G. C. and Hsu, F. L. K. Eds. 1979. *Moving a Mountain: Cultural Change in China*. Honolulu, HI: University Press of Hawaii.

Chu, G. C. and Hsu, F. L.K. Eds. 1983. *China's New Social Fabric*. London: Kegan Paul International.

Chu, G. C., Ju, Y. A. 1992. *The Great Wall in Ruins: Communication and Cultural Change in China*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Chu, L. L. 1994. "Continuity and Change in China's Media Reform". *Journal of Communication*, no.44, p4-21.

Collins, R. 1990. *Culture, Communication and National Identity*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Comstock, G. 1980. *Television in America*. Beverly Hill, CA: Sage Publishers.

Conley, J. and Tripoli, S. 1992. "Changes of line at 'China Daily': fluctuating party policy or fluctuating control." In R. Porter, Ed., *Reporting the News from China*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Curran, J. and Park, M. J. 2000. *De-Westernizing Media Studies*. New York: Routledge.

Dahlgren, P. 1995. *Television and the Public Sphere*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Damm, J. and Thomas, S. 2006. *Chinese Cyberspace: Technological Changes and Political Effects*. New York: Routledge

Debrix, F. 2003, Ed., *Language, Agency and Politics in a Constructed World*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharp.

Deng, X. 1979. "We can develop market economy under socialism" delivered on available *The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Volume II)*. Available at the link of http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol2/text/b1370.html

Des Forges, R. V. 1993. *Chinese Democracy and the Crisis of 1989: Chinese and American Reflections*. Albany, NY: NY State University of New York Press.

Dewey, J. 1990. *Public and Its Problems*. Athens, OH: Swallow Press.

Dial, R. L. 1976. "The New China News Agency and Foreign Policy in China". *International Journal*, no.31, p293-318.

Dickson, B. 2003. *Red Capitalists in China: The Party, Private Entrepreneurs and Prospects for Political Change*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Dickson, B. 2004. "Dilemmas of Party Adaptation: The CCP's Strategies for Survival", in Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen, Eds., *State and Society in Twenty-First Century China: Crisis, Contention and Legitimation*. New York: Routledge.

Dimitrova, DV.; Kaid, LL; Williams, AP; and Trammell, KD. 2005. "War on the web: the immediate news framing of Gulf War II, in *Press/Politics*, no.10, p22-44.

Djilas, M. 1957. *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System*. New York: Praeger.

Diehl, P. F. 2001. *The Politics of Global Governance: International Organizations in an Interdependent World*. Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Dittmer, L. 2005. "Chinese Political Reform" , in T. Y. Wang, Ed., *China after the Sixteenth Party Congress*. Ontario, Canada: De Sitter Publications.

Djilas, M. 1957. *The New Class*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger.

Donald, S. H. Keane, M. and Yin, H. eds.. 2002. *Media in China: Consumption and Crisis*. London: Routledge

Dong, Q. W., Tan, A. and Cao, X. "Socialization Effects of American Television and Movies in China", in Ray, R. Heisey and Wenxiang Gong, eds., *Communication and the Culture: China and the World Entering the 21st Century*. Atlanta, GA: Rodopi.

Edgerton, G. R. and Rollins, P. C. 2001. *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memories in the Media Age.* Lexington, KY.: University Press of Kentucky.

Entman, R. M. 1993. *"Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm"*. *Journal of Communication*. vol.43, no.4, p51-58.

Entman, R. M. 1991. "Framing US Coverage of International News: Contrasts in the Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Accident" , *Journal of Communication*, vol.

41, no. 4, p6-27.

Entman, R. M. and Herbst, Susan. 2001. "Reframing Public Opinion as we have known it", in W. Lance Benett and Robert M. Entman, Eds., *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Entman, R. M. 2004. "Framing: Towards Clarification of A Fractured Paradigm" (*Journal of Communication*, 43:4, 51-58; and his *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Entman, R. M. 2004. *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Faison, S. 1989. "The changing role of the Chinese media", in T. Saich eds., *Perspectives on the Chinese People's Movement*. Armonk, NY: Sharpe, p145-163.

Fairclough, N. 1995. *Media Discourse*. New York, NY: Edward Arnold

Farmer, E. 1994. "Frost on the mirror: an American understanding of China in the Cold War Era." in C. Lee, ed., *China's Media, Media's China*. Boulder, Colo.:Westview press.

French, D. and M. Richards, Eds., 2000. *Television in Contemporary Asia*. New Delji: Sage.

Fung, A. Y. H. 1998. "The Dynamics of Public Opinion, Political Parties, and Media in Transitional Hong Kong". *Asian Survey*, vol. 38, no. 5. (May, 1998), p 474-493.

Gamson, W. A. , Croteaum, D., Hoynes, W., and Sasson, T. 1992. Media Images and the social Construction of reality. *Annual Review of Sociology*, no.18, 373-93.

Garry Rodan. 1998. "The internet and political control in Singapore", *Political Science Quarterly*. vol. 113, no.1.

Gergen, K. J. 1999. *An Invitation to Social Construction*. London: Sage Publishers.

Gilley, B. 2004. *China's Democratic Future: How It Will Happen and Where It Will Lead*. New York: Columbia University.

Gillin, T. 1980. *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left.* Berkley: U of Chicago Press.

Goffman, E.1974. *Frame Analysis*. New York: Harper.

Gorman, L. 2003. *Media and Society in the Twentieth Century: A Historical Introduction.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Gramsci, A. 1973. *Prison Notebook.* London*:* Lowrence and Wishart Ltd.

Green, D. M. 2002. *Constructivism and Comparative Politics*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Gries, P. H. and Stanley R., Eds., 2004. *State and Society in Twenty-First Century China: Crisis, Contention, and Legitimation*. New York: Routledge.

Guo, Z. Z. 1986. "A Chronicle of Private Radio in Shanghai." *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, no.30, p379-392.

Guo, Z. Z. 2005. *zhongwai guangbo dianshi shi (International Broadcasting History).* Shanghai: Fudan University Press.

Guo, X. Q. 2003. *State and Society in China's Democratic Transition: Confucianism, Leninism, and Economic Development.* New York: Routledge.

Habermas, J. 1991. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society.* Boston: The MIT Press.

Hachett, R. A. and Zhao, Y. 2005. *Democratizing Global Media: One World, Many Struggles*. New York: Rowman and Littelfield Publishers. Inc.

Hafez, K. 2001. *Mass Media, Politics and Society in the Middle East*. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press, Inc.

Hamelink, C. J. and Linne, O.1994. *Mass Communication Research: On Problems and Policies.* Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Pub. Corp..

Hazelbath, T. 1997. *The Chinese Media: More Autonomous and Diverse, Within Limits*. Langley, VA: Central Intelligence Agency.

He, Z. 2000. *Mass Media and Tiananmen Square*. New York: NOVA Science Publishers Inc.

He, F. C. 1994. "Liantong: A quantum Leap in the reform of China's telecommunications" in *Telecommunications Policy*, no.18, p206-210.

Heisey, D. R. and Gong, W. 1998. *Communication and Culture: China and the World Entering the 21ˢᵗ Century*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodop

Hedebro, G.. 1982. *Communication and Social Change in Developing Nations: A Critical View*. Iowa City, IA: Iowa State University Press.

Heisey, D. R. and W. Gong. 1998. *Communication and Culture: China and the World Entering the 21ˢᵗ Century.* Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi.

Hilmes, M. 2004. *The Television History Book*. London: Gildford Press

Hinton, C.; Barmé, G. R. and Gordon, R. Directors. 2003. *Morning Sun* (Video). Brookline, Mass.: Long Bow Group.

Hoffmann-Riem, W. 1996. *Regulating Media: The Licensing and Supervision of Broadcasting in Six Countries*. London: Guilford press.

Hong, J. 1998. *The Internationalization of Television in China: The Evolution of Ideology, Society, and Media since the Reform*. Westport, CT.: Praeger.

Hood, Marlowe. 1994. "The Use and Abuse of Mass Media by Chinese Leader during the 1980s," in Chin-Chuan Lee, *China's Media, Media's China*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Hopf, T. 2002. *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities & Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Howkins, J. 1982. *Mass Communication in China*. New York: Longman.

Hsieh, John Fuh-sheng. 2005. "Democratizing China", in T. Y. Wang, ed., *China after the Sixteenth Party Congress*, Ontario, Canada: de sitter Publications.

Huang, J. 2000. *Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Huang, Y. and A. Green. 2000. "From Mao to Millennium: 40 years of television in China (1958-1998)' in D. French and M. Richards, Eds., *Television in Contemporary Asia*, New Delji: Sage.

Huang, Y. and Lee, C. C. 2003. "Peddling Party Ideology for a Profit: Media and the Rise of Chinese Nationalism in the 1990s," in Gary Rawnsley and Ming-yeh Rawnsley, Eds., *Political Communication in Greater China the Construction and Reflections of Identity*, London: Routledge Curzon, p41-61

Hughes, C. 2003. *China and the Internet: Politics of the Digital Leap Forward*. Oxford, London: Routledge.

Hughes, C. R.. 2006. *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era*. New York: Routledge.

Jenkins, H. and Thorburn, D. 2003. *Democracy and New Media*. Boston, MA: The MIT Press.

Jensen, L. M and Weston, T. B. 2007. *China's Transformations: The Stories beyond the Hardliners*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Polishing Inc.

Jiang, Ouli. 2005. *Selections of the 2003 China Radio and Television Broadcasting Awards News Reports*. Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House.

Kielbowicz, R. B. and Scherer C. 1986. "The Role of the Press in the Dynamics of Social Movement." *Research in Social Movement: Conflicts and Changes*. no.9, p71-96.

King, G. and Keohane, R. O. and Verba, S.. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Klinenberg, E. 2007. *Fighting for Air: the Battle to Control America's Media*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Kobland, C. E., Du, L., and Kwon, J. 1992. "Influence of Ideology in News Reporting: Case Study of New York Times' Coverage of Student Demonstrations in China and South Korea." *Asian Journal of Communication*, no.2, p64-77.

Konard, G. and Szelenyi, I. 1979. *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*. Sussex, England: The Harvester Press

Krippendorff, K. 1980. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Kubalkova, V, Nicholas G. Onuf. And Paul Kowert, Eds., 1998. *International Relations in a Constructed World.* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Kuhn, R. 1995. *The Media in France*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Lai, H. 2007. *Reform and Non-State Economy in China: The Political Economy of Liberalization Strategies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lai, Y. 2006. "Income inequality, limited social mobility and remedial policies", in

Jong Wong and Lai Yongyi, Eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy initiatives and Challenges.* Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd.

Lam, W. W. 2006. *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao's Era: New Leaders, New Challenges*. New York: M. E. Sharpe.

Lang, J. S. 2003. *zhongguo xinwe zhengce tixi yanjiu (The Study of Chinese Media Policy*. Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House.

Lawson, C. H. 2002. *Building the Fourth Estate: Democratization and the Rise of a Free Press in Mexico*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lee, C. C., Ed., 1990. *Voices of China: The Interplay of Politics and Journalism*. New York: The Guildford Press.

Lee, C. C. 1994. *China's Media, Media's China*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Lee, C. C.. 2002. *Power, Money, Media: Communicaiton Pattern and Bureaucratic Control on Cultrual China*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Lee, C. C., Ed., 2003. *Chinese Media, Global Contexts*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.

Lee, P. S. N. Ed. 1998. *Telecommunications and Development in China*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.

Lent, J. 1986. "First Cultural Revolution, Now The Media Revolution", *Media Development*, no. 1, p23-25.

Lewis, J. W. and Xue, L. 2004. "Social Changes and Political Reform in China: Meeting the Challenge of Success", in Yun-han Chu, Chih-Cheng Lo and Ramon H. Myers, Eds., *The New Chinese Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities after the 16th Party Congress,*The China Quarterly Special Issues New Series, no. 4, p107-123.

Li, Xiaobing. 1991. "Chinese Television System and Television News", *China Quarterly*, no. 126 (June, 1991), p340-355.

Lione, Jensen M. and Timothy B. Weston. 2007. *China's transformations: the stories beyond the hardliners*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Liu, H. 2005. "Misinterpretations of Communism in his Soviet Communist Media theory" (in Chinese) in *Hunan Mass Communication Journal*, vol. 5, No. 6 (November, 2005), p26-29.

Lin, Y. T. *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China*. New York: Greenwood Press Publishers

Lippmann, W. 1922. *Public Opinion*. New York: Free Press.

Liu, A. P. L. 1964. "Growth and Modernizing Function of Rural Radio in Communist China." *Journalism Quarterly,* no. 41, p572-577.

Liu, A. P. L. 1971. *Communication and National Integration in Communist China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Liu, A. P. L. 1981. "Mass Campaign in the People's Republic of China." In R. Rice and W. Paisley, Eds., *Public Communication Campaigns*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Liu, A. P. L. 1983. The Politics of Corruption in the People's Republic of China. *The American Political Science Review*. vol. 77, no. 3. (Sep., 1983), p602-623.

Lu, X. 2004. *Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture and Communication*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press.

Luke, T. W. 1989. *Screens of Power: Ideology, Domination and Resistance in Informational Society*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Luhmann, N. and Cross, K. (Translator). 2000. *The Reality of the Mass Media (Cultural Memory in the Present)*. CA: Stanford University Press.

Lull, J. 1991. *China Turned On: Television, Reform, and Resistance*. New York: Routledge Publisher.

Lynch, D. C. 1999. *After the Propaganda State: Media, Politics and "Thought Work" in Reformed China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Ma, S. Y. 1996. "The Role of Power Struggle and Economic Changes in the Heshang Phenomenon" in China." *Modern Asian Studies*. vol. 30, no. 1.(Feb., 1996), p29-50.

Ma, E. K. 1999. *Culture, Politics and Television in Hong Kong*. New York: Routledge.

Ma, E. K. 2000. "Rethinking Media Studies: The Case of China." In J. Curran and M.J. Park, Eds., *De-Westernizing Media Studies*. London: Routledge.

MacKinnon, S. R. 1994. "The Role of the Chinese and U.S. Media." In J.N. Wasserstrom and E. J. Perry, Eds., *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Madsen, A. 1984. *60 Minutes: The Power and the Politics of America's Most Popular TV News Show*. New York: Dodd, Mead.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. 1999. *Designing Qualitative Research (Third Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Martin, J. and Chaudhary, A. G. 1983. *Comparative Mass Media Systems*. New York: Longman.

Maxwell, B. W. 1936. "Political propaganda in Soviet Russia". In Harwood, L. Childs, ed. *Propaganda and Dictatorship*. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press

McAnany, E. G., Schnitman, J. and Janus, N. 1981. *Communication and Social Structure: Critical Studies in Mass Media Research*. New York: Praeger.

McChesney, R. W. 1999. *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

McComb, M. E and Shaw, D. 1972. "The Agenda-Setting Functions of Mass Media". *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 36 no. 2 (Summer 1972), p176.

McComb, M. 1979. *Using Mass Communication Theory*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

McCombs, M. and Shaw, D. L. and Weaver, D. 1997. *Communication and Democracy*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, In., Publishers.

McCormick, R. 1986. "The Radio and Television Universities and the Development of Higher Education in China." *The China Quarterly*, (March, 1994), no.105.

McCormick, B. L. 2000. "Conclusion: Points of Agreement and Disagreement and Thoughts on US-China Relation" in Edward Friedman and Barrett L. McCormick, Eds., *What If China Doesn't Democratize? Implications for War and Peace*. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe.

McLeod, J. M. and Blumler, Jay G.. 1989. "The Macro-social Level of Communication Science" in Charles R. Berger and Steven H. Chaffee, Eds., *Handbook of Communication Science*. California: SAGE Publications.

McQuail, D. 1994. *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction (3ʳᵈ edition).* Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage.

McIntyre, B. T. 1998. *Mass Media in the Asian Pacific Monographs on Asian Pacific Communication*. Clevedon: Philadelphia Multilingual Matters.

MediaChina.net, "Beijing Foreign Languages University Establishing Its Mass Communication Department" (news report), (May 15, 2005). Available at http://chinese.mediachina.net/index_news_view.jsp?id=40359.

Mediachina.net, "The SARFT should not restrict television shows" (News Report) (February 27, 2007), available at http://chinese.mediachina.net/index_news_view.jsp?id=85495.

Mediachina.net. "The implications of the super girl show on Chinese culture, society, and politics" (April 6ᵗʰ, 2006). Available at http://academic.mediachina.net/article.php?id=4924.

MediaChina.net. "Beijing Foreign Languages University Establishing Its Mass Communication Department" (May 15, 2005). Available at http://chinese.mediachina.net/index_news_view.jsp?id=40359.

Mengin, F. 2004. *Cyber China: Reshaping National Identities in the Age of Information.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ministry of Civil Affairs. 1998. *The PRC's Organic Law of Village Committees* (News Report) (November 4ᵗʰ, No. 9). Available at http://www.mca.gov.cn/article/zwgk/fvfg/jczqhsqjs/200709/20070900001715.shtml.

Moran, A. and Keane, M. 2004. *Television across Asia*. New York: Routledge.

Mueller, M. and Tan Z. 1997. *China in the Information Age: Telecommunications and the Dilemmas of Reform.* Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Mulligan, W. A. 1988. "Remnants of Cultural Revolution in Chinese Journalism of the 1980s." *Journalism Quarterly*, no.65, p20-25.

Murphy, C. N. 1994. International Organization and Industrial Change: Global Governance since 1850. New York: Oxford University.

Nathan, A. 1990. *Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Nathan, A. "China's Constitutionalist Option", in Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu, Eds., *Domestic Politics in Transition: China's Deep Reform,* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, INC.

Neuendorf, K. A. 2002. *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Nip, J. Y. M. "Clash and Compatibility of Journalistic Cultures: Mainland China and Hong Kong. Ray, R. Heisey and Wenxiang Gong, Eds., *Communication and the Culture: China and the World Entering the 21*st *Century*. Atlanta, GA: Rodopi.

Nordenstreng, K. and Varis, T. 1974. *Television Traffic- A One Way Street? A Survey and Analysis of the International Flow of Television Programme Materials*. Paris, FranceL: Boudin

Nye, J S. and Donahue, J. D., Eds., 2000. *Governance in a Globalizing World*. Cambridge, Mass.: Visions of Governance for the 21st Century.

O'Brien, K. 1994. "Implementing Political Reform in China's Villages", in *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, (July, 1994), p33-59.

O'Brien, K. 2006. "Villagers, Elections and Citizenship in Contemporary China" in Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu, eds., *Domestic Politics in Transition: China's Deep Reform*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers p381-404.

Ostini, J. and Ostini, A. Y. H. 2002. "Beyond the Four Theories of the Press: A New Model of National Media Systems", in *Mass Communication & Society,* vol. 5, no. 1, p41-56

Pan, Z., and Kozicki, G. M. 1993. "Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse." *Political Communication*, vol.10, p55-75.

Pan, Z. and Chan, J. 2000. "Building a Market-Based Party Organ: Television and National Integration in China." In D. French and M. Richards, Eds., *Television in Contemporary Asia*. New Delhi: Sage.

Pan, Z. and Joseph M. C. 2003. "Shifting Journalist Paradigms: How China's Journalists assess 'media exemplars'". *Communication Research*, vol. 30, no. 6 (December 2003), p649-682.

Pang, L. 2002. *Building a New China in Cinema: The Chinese Left-Wing Cinema Movement, 1932-1937*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Pei, M. X. 2000. "China's evolution toward soft authoritarianism". In Edward Freidman and Barret L. McCormick, Eds. *What If China Doesn't Democratize? Implications for War and Peace*. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe.

Pei, M. X. 2006. *China's Trapped Transition: the Limits of Developmental Autocracy*. Cambridge, Mass.. Harvard University Press.

Peoplenet. "Three Closes" (May 20, 2003).
http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/16/20030516/996308.html.

Pettman, R. 2000. *Commonsense Constructivism or, the Making of World Politics*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe.

Peerenboom, R. 2006. "Globalization, Path Dependency and The Limits of law" in Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu, Eds., *Domestic Politics in Transition: China's Deep Reform*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Pei, M. 2006. China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press

Polumbaum, Judy. 1994. "striving for predictability: the bureaucratization of media's management in China, in Chin-Chuan Lee, Ed., *Media's China, China's Media*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Porter R. 1992. *Reporting News from China*. London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Price, M. E. 2002. *Media and Sovereignty: The Global Information Revolution and Its Challenge to State Power*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT press.

Pettman, R. 2000. *Commonsense Constructivism or, the Making of World Politics*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

Pye, W., Ed., 1963. *Communications and Political Development*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press.

Pye, L. W. 1992. *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pye, L. W. 1999. "Civility, Social Capital, and Civil Society: Three Powerful Concepts for Explaining Asia." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. Spring, vol.29, issue 4, p763(2).

Qian,Yingyi. 2006. "The Process of China's Market Transition, 1978 -1998: The Evolutionary, Historical and Comparative Perspectives", in Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu, Eds., *China's Deep Reform: Domestic Politics in Transition*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Redl, A. and Simons, R.. 2002. "Chinese Media One Channel, Two Systems". In Donald, S.H., Stephanie Hemelryk. D., Keane, M., Yin, H.. Eds., *Media in China: Consumption, Content and Crisis*. London: Routledge Curzon.

Reeves, G. W. 1993. *Communications and the 'Third World'*. New York: Routledge.

Renwick, Neil and Cao, Qing. 1999. "China's Political Discourse towards the 21st Century: Victimhood, Identity, and Political Power" in *East Asia*, vol. 17, no. 4 (December, 1999), p5-163.

Right, K.. 1990. "The Political Fortune of Shanghai's ' World Economic Herald'." *The Austrialian Journal For Chinese Affairs*. vol. 0, issue 23(Jan, 1990) p121-132.

Robert, F. A. 1989. "Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation." *China Quarterly*. no. 120. (Dec., 1989), p893-946.

Robinson, D. C.. 1981. "Changing Functions of Mass Media in the People's Republic of China." *Journal of Communication*. vol.3, issues 4 (autumn), p58-73.

Robinson, Richard and David Goodman. 1996. "the new rich in Asia: economic development, social status, and political consciousness, in Richard Robinson and David Goodman, Eds., *The New Rich in Asia: Mobile Phone, McDolnald's and Middle-class Revolution*. New York: Routledge.

Roden, Garry.1998. The Internet and political ontrol in Singapore. *Political Science Quarterly*, vol.113, no.1.

Roman, J. W. 2005. From Daytime to Primetime: The History of American Television Programs. Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press.

Rorty, R. M. 1992. Ed. *The Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ryan, C. 1991. *Prime Time Activism*. Boston: South End Press.

Sartori, A. 2002. "The Might of the Pen: A Reputation Theory of Communication in Disputes." *International Organization*. vol. 56, no.1, p121-49.

Schell, O. and Shambaugh, D., Eds., 1999. *The China Reader: The Reform Era*. New York: Vantage Books.

Schramm, W., Chu, G. G. and Yu, F. T. C. 1976. China's Experience with Development Communication: How Transferable It Is? *Communication Monographs*, no.1, p85-101.

Schwarz, H. G. 1966. "The Ts'an-k'ao Hsiao-hsi: How Well Informed Are Chinese Officials about the Outside World?" *China Quarterly*. no. 27. (Jul. - Sep., 1966), p54-83.

Searle, J. 1995. *The Construction of Social Reality*. News York: Free Press.
Searle, J. 1998. *Mind Language and Society: Philosophy in the Real World*. New York: Basic Books.

Seibert, F. S. 1956. *Four Theories of the Press*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Seymour-Ure, C. 1974. *The Political Impact of Mass Media*. Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage Publications.

Shah, D.V.; Watts, M. D.; Domke, D. and Fan, D. P. 2002. "News framing and cueing of issue regimes: explaining Clinton's public approval in spite of scandal", in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, no.66, p339-370.

Shandong Television Station. 2004. *shandong dianshitai guanli guizhang zhidu huibian (the collection of regulatory rules for Shandong television station)*. Jinan, Shandong: Shandong Television Station Press.

Shen, T. 1990. *Almost a Revolution*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Shi, T. 2006. "Village Committee Elections in China: Institutionalist Tactics for Democracy" in Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu, eds., *Domestic Politics in Transition: China's Deep Reform*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, INC.

Shirk, S. 2007. *China: Fragile Superpower*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Slyke, L. P. V. 1968. *The Chinese Communist Movement*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Smith, A. 1995. *Television: An International History*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sohu.com. "eight honors and eight disgraces". Available at the following link:http://news.sohu.com/s2006/rongruguan/

Solinger, D. J. 2004. "State and Society in Urban China in the Wake of the 16th Party Congress". In Yun-han Chu, Chih-Cheng Lo and Ramon H. Myers, Eds., *The New Chinese Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities after the 16th Party Congress*. Melbourne, Australia: University of Cambridge Press.

Sommerland, E. L. 1981. "Communication in the New China". *Media Information Australia*, no.22, 23-29.

Spark, C. 2000. "media theory after the fall of communism", in James Curran and Myung-Jin Park, Eds., De-Westernizing Media Studies. New York: Routledge, p35-49.

Stevenson, R. L. 1988. *Communication, Development, and the Third World: The Global Politics of Information*. New York: Longman.

Strauss, A. and Gorbin, J. M. Eds. 1997. *Grounded Theory in Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.

Stross, Randall. 1990. "The return of advertising in China: a survey of the ideological reversal." *China Quarterly* (September 1990), no.123.

Swanson, D. L. and Mancini, P. 1996. *Politics, Media and Modern Democracy: An International Study of Innovations in Electoral Campaigning and Their Consequences*. Praeger.

Sun, X., Michael, E.C., and Easton, E. B., Eds., 2000. *An Orchestra of Voices: Making the Argument for Greater Speech and Press Freedom in the People's Republic of China.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Swidler, A. 1986. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review,* vol.51, no.2, p273-86.

Tai, Z. 2006. *The Internet in China: Cyberspace and Civil Society*. New York: Routledge, 2006

Tan, A. S. 1981. *Mass Communication Theories and Research*. Columbus, Ohio: Grid Pub.

Tan, Z. 1999. "Regulating China's Internet: Convergence towards a Coherent Regulatory Regime". *Telecommunications Policy*, no.23, p261-276.

Tang, W. 2005. *Public Opinion and Political Change in China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Taylor, C. 1985. *"What is Human Agency?" Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Paper(* vol. 1.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thibodeau, J. 1998. *The River Dragon Has Come! : The Three Gorges Dam and the Fate of China's Yangtze River and its People*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc.

Tian, Z. C. 2005. *xinwen shijian yu zhengzhi kongzhi (Media Practice and Political Control)*. Jinan, Shandong: Shandong renmin chubanshe (Jinan, Shandong: Shangdong People's Publishing House).

Ting, H, L. H. 1974. *Government Control of the Press in Modern China, 1900-1949*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Toulouse, C. and Luke, T. W. 1998. *The Politics of Cyberspace: A New Political Science Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Tsou, T. 1986. *The Cultural Revolution and Post-Mao Reforms: A Historical Perspective*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press

Tuchman, G. 1978. *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: The Free Press.

Van Slyke, L. P. 1968. *The Chinese Communist Movement*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Volkmer, I. 2006. *News in Public Memory*. New York, N. Y.: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Waldron, Arthur. 1998. The End of Communism. *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 9, no.1, p41-47.

Wang, J. and Chang, T. K. 1996. "From Class Ideologue to State Manager: TV Programming and Foreign Imports in China, 1970-1990". *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, no.40, p196-207.

Wang, S. 2003. *Framing Privacy: Globalization and File Distribution in Greater China.* Boulder, CO: Rowman and Littlefield.

Wang, Y. L. 2003. *China's Economic Development and Democratization*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Wang J. and Chang, T. K.. 1996. "From Class Ideologue to State Manager: TV Programming and Foreign Imports in China, 1970-1990", *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, no. 40, p196-207.

Wang, S. 2006. "Openness and Inequality: The Case of China" in Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu, eds., *China's Deep reform: Domestic Politics in Transition*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Warren, J. 1988. "Foreign and Domestic News Content of Chinese Television". *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, no.32, p219-224.

Washington Street Journal. 2007. "Labor Rules Force Layoffs at China's Main TV Broadcaster". Thursday, (August 23), pD8.

Webber, M., Wang, M. and Ying, Z. 2002. *China's Transition to a Global Economy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wei, R. and Pan, Z. 1999. "Mass Media and Consumerist Values in the People's Republic of China." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*. no.11, p75-96.

Wells, A. 1972. *Mass Media and Society*. Palo, Alto, CA: National Press Books.

Wilnholds, H. D. B. 2000. *Transition of the Role and the Structure of Mass Media in China and Some Implications for Advertising Strategy*. Emerald Group Publishing, Ltd.

Wimmer, R. D. and Joseph R. D. 2000. *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. Sixth ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Wong, J. and Lai, Y. 2006, Eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges.* Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd.

Womack, B. 1986. *Media and the Chinese Public: A Survey of the Beijing Media Audience*. Armonk, N. Y.: M. E. Sharpe

Wright, K. 1990. "The Political Fortunes of Shanghai's World Economic Herald." *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 23, 121-132.

Wu, G. G. 1994. "Command Communication: The Politics of Editorial Formulation in the People's Daily". *China Quarterly*. No. 137. (Mar., 1994), pp194-211.

Wu, X. 2007. *Chinese Cyber Nationalism: Evolution, Characteristics and Implications*. Lanhan: Lexington Books.

Wu, Y. 2006. "New Patterns of Economic Growth" in John Wong and Lai Hongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges*. Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd.

Wu, E. 2006. "From Social Insurance to Social Assistance", in Jong Wong and Lai Y., Eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges,* Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd.

Wu, G. G.. 1994. "Command Communication: The Politics of Editorial Formulation in the People's Daily", *China Quarterly*, no. 137 (March 1994), p204

Wu, Y. 2006. "New Patterns of Economic Growth" in John Wong and Lai Hongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: policy initiatives and challenges*. Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd.

Xinhuanet. The Electronic Version of the 1999 Constitution (March 15, 2007). Available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2004-03/15/content_1367387.htm.

Xinhuanet. "Three Represents" (January 21, 2003). Available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2003-01/21/content_699933.htm.

Xinhuanet. "On Cultural Reform" (January 12, 2006). Available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2006-01/12/content_4044535.htm.

Xu, X. and Parsons, P. 1997. The Image-Making News Flow between China and the United States. *Mass Communication Review*, no.24, p57-70.

Yang, D. 2004. *Remaking the Chinese Leviathan: Market Transition and the Politics of Governance in China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Yanovitzky, I. 2002. "Effects of News Coverage on Policy Attention and Action: a Closer Look into the Media-Policy Connection". *Communication Research*. vol.29., no. 4 (August, 2002), p422-451

Yu, F. T. C. 1979. "Communication and Politics". In Y. Wei, ed., *Communist China*. Columbia, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.

Yu, J. 1990. "The structure and function of Chinese television, 1979-1989" in C. lee, Ed., *Voice of China: The Interplay of Politics and Journalism*. New York: the Guildford press.

Yu, X. 1994. "Professionalization without Guarantees: Changes of the Chinese Press in Post-1989 Years". *Gazette*, no.53, p23-41.

Zha, J. 1995. *China Pop: How Soap Operas, Taboids and Bestsellers are Transforming a Culture.* New York: New Press.

Zhang, J. 2002. "Will the Government 'Serve the People": The Development of Chinese E-Government". *New Media and Society*. vol. 4, no. 2 (June, 2002), p163-184.

Zhang, X. 1993. "The Market Versus the State: The Chinese Press Since Tiananmen". *Journal of International Affairs*, no.47, p195-221.

Zhang, W. W. 2000. *Transforming China: Economic Reform and Its Political Implications.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Zhang, Y. Ed. 1999. *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922-1943*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Zhao, D. 2001. *The Power of Tiannamen*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Zhao, L. 2006. "Labor Market Reforms under Hu-Wen", in Jong Wong and Lai Yongyi, Eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy initiatives and Challenges,* Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd. p351-378.

Zhao, Y. 2000. "Caught in the Web: The Public Interest and the Battle for Control of China's Information Superhighway". *Info*, no. 2. p41-66.

Zhao, Y. 1998. *Media, Market and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Nottom Line.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Zhao, Y. 2003. "Lapdogs and Watchdogs: Journalist and the Public Sphere Problematic in China". In Gu Xin and Merle Gorldman, Eds., *Chinese Intellectuals between the State and the Market.* London: RoutledgeCurzon.

Zhao, Y. 2004. "The State, the Market and Media Control in China", in Pradip N. Thomas and Zaharom Nain, Eds., *Who Owns the Media? Global Trends and Local Resistance*. New York: Zed Books.

Zhao, Y. 2003. "Falun Gong, Identity and the Struggle over Meaning Inside and Outside China". In Nick Couldry and James Curran, Eds., *Contesting Media Power: Alternative Media in a Networked Society*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Zheng, Y. 2000. "The Rule by Law vs. Rule of Law" in Guangwu Wang and Zheng, Y., Eds., *Reform, Legitimacy and Dilemmas*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Zheng, Y. Ed. 2004. *Globalization and State Transformation in China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zheng, Y. 2004. *Will China Become More Democratic?* Singapore, Marshall Cavendish International

Zhou, Y. 2005. *Historicizing Online Politics: Telegraphy, The Internet and Political Participation in China*. Palo alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Zhu, D., Wang, F., and Zheng, M. 1988. China. In P. Rosen, Ed., *International Handbook of Broadcasting Systems*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Zita, K. 1987. *Modernizing China's Telecommunications: Implications for International Firms.* London: Economist Publishers.

Zou, K. 2006. "Rule of Law and Governance", in John Wong and Lai Hongyi, eds., *China into the Hu-Wen Era.* Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd.

VITAE

Xi Chen is now working as a lecturer at the University of Texas, Pan American. She grew up in a loving extended family in Jinan, Shandong province of the People's Republic of China. Ever since she joined Virginia Tech in 2001 to pursue her Master's degree in Political Science and PhD degree in Planning, Governance, and Globalization, She has been researching different aspects of Chinese politics. Her research on the political development in China has led to the acceptance of several book chapters, conference papers and refereed academic journal articles. Her publications include "Chinese Foreign Policy and Its Implication for International Order" (Book Chapter) in *International Order in a Globalizing World* (2007) , "Framing and Politics in Chinese Television News Reporting" in *Journal of Chinese Political Science* (2007), and "Public Administration" in *Introduction to Contemporary Western Political Studies* (in Chinese)(2006)*,* and "Dynamics of News Media Regulations in China: Explanations and Implications" in the *Journal of Comparative Asian Development* (2006). Before she joined the PGG program at the School of Public and International Affairs, She has obtained her M.A. in Political Science from Virginia Tech in 2003, M.A. in Applied Linguistics from China Foreign Affairs University (Former Foreign Affairs College) in 2001, and B.A. in Scientific English from Shandong University (Former Shandong University of Technology) in 1998. Xi Chen is expected to get her PhD degree in fall 2007.