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THE CONTRADICTORY CHINESE MEDIA  
IN THE NAME OF “SOCIALISM WITH CHINESE  
CHARACTERISTICS”

By  
Weimin Yu

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through Communication Studies  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts at the  
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada  
2009  
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## **Abstract**

For the past 30 years, the Chinese communication system has experienced tremendous changes, which have brought it from the ultimate “propaganda machine” to a striking contradictory mix of capitalist neoliberalism and socialist authoritarian ideological indoctrination. Since the central hypothesis of my research focuses on the fact that socialist Chinese media are undergoing capitalist neoliberal operations, the American communication system, a very typical capitalist neoliberal corporate media system, is contextualized. The thesis intends to explore the current Chinese communication system, media phenomena, and media practices that have manifested contradictions. I also attempt to find out the underlying drive to propel the historical transformation of the Chinese media. I will employ political economy of communication to theorize and ground my research. In order to lend further support to my argument, I will delineate a case study: *Xinwen Lianbo*, a national news program on China Central Television (CCTV). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be used to investigate the TV news discourse- *Xinwen Lianbo*.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

For decades, Schramm's "Soviet Communist Theory of the Press" was widely employed as a theoretical framework and guideline to investigate press systems in the communist world in general and China in particular (Huang, 2003; Yin, 2006). In the Soviet Communist model, media are treated as the ultimate "propaganda machine" (Herman and Chomsky, 1988) which is regarded as an apparatus of ideological control and political manipulation. China did originally imitate the former Soviet Union model to centrally control its communication system in Mao Zhedong's (the first president of new China) era (1949-1976). It is noteworthy that Chinese media have experienced tremendous changes since China's reform. The opening up policy was launched in 1978 and as a result the media are by no means the same propaganda machine as they used to be. David Harvey (1995) looks upon the years 1978-1980 as "a revolutionary turning-point in the world's social and economic history" (p.1), stating that the China has transformed "from a closed backwater to an open centre of capitalist dynamism with sustained growth rates unparalleled in human history" (p.1). In this historical context, one would never achieve a satisfactory and compelling analysis by employing the Soviet Communist model to investigate the contemporary Chinese media system.

Media in democratic societies are supposed to, as Ehrenreich (2000) suggests, bring the public "a wealth of diverse opinions and entertainment options", provide the "information we need to function as informed citizens", and offer a platform for people to "have a chance to voice their concerns" (p.10). Put another way, democratic media can play the significant role of "the Fourth Estate", acting as protectors of the public interest and guardians of the "public sphere". The Chinese media system also is far from meeting

the requirements for a democracy.

On the contrary, I hypothesize that the current Chinese communication system is a striking contradictory mix of capitalist neoliberalism and socialist authoritarian ideological indoctrination. It is no better than a pure Soviet Communist model in that the current Chinese people have to endure socialist ideological indoctrination saturated with material commercialism. Therefore, it is necessary to problematize the current Chinese communication system.

Since the central hypothesis of my research is concerned with this contradiction, there is a need to foreground a typical capitalist neoliberal communication system. I believe that the American communication industry is a very typical, if not the most representative, corporate media system. My research will thus first contextualize the current American media environment, which is arguably an advertising saturated, highly concentrated, and entirely profit driven communication system, and then explore the reasons and myths behind it. Then, I will investigate the Chinese communication system and reveal its contradictory combination of *capitalist* neoliberalism and *socialist* ideological control. Political economy of communication will be employed as both a theoretical framework and primary theoretical method to explore and examine the two communication systems. A case study will be presented here to lend further support to my theoretical outlook on the Chinese media environment. A Critical Discourse Analysis will be carried out to investigate *Xinwen Lianbo* (*National Network News*), the most important daily news program for both China Central Television (CCTV), China's largest and most prestigious state-run TV network, and the Chinese government.

### **1.1 Research questions and the significance of the research**

Since my thesis intends to examine the contradictions of the Chinese communication

system, the major research questions of my thesis are how the socialist Chinese communication system, like its American counterpart, impels capitalist neoliberalism on one hand, and while also serving to indoctrinate authoritarian socialist ideology on the other hand. I will also explore how the Chinese government both brings in and constrains the market's influence, and how *capitalist* commercialism and neoliberalism both benefit and challenge the *socialist* Chinese government. In addition, I will try to examine how the Chinese government and its media organs use the myth, "socialism with Chinese characteristics", to skillfully explain and justify these contradictions. Further, I will also attempt to find out the underlying impetus for the historical transformation of the Chinese communication system from Schramm's "Soviet Communist" media to today's media environment.

Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) point out that exposing the contradictions, which are generally accepted by the dominant culture as natural and inviolable, will lead the researchers to the source of emancipatory actions (p.306). Smythe and Van Dinh contend that critical research can help to re-shape the "established order" to better serve the majority of the public (cited in Hamilton, 2006). Habermas casts the relationship between critical theorists and society as analogous to the relationship between psychoanalysts to their patients, and thinks that critical theorists possess power to help emancipate a problematic society (cited in Miller, 1995). Also, Jansen (2002) claims that the mandate of "media-critical theory" is able to "link critical scholarship to struggles for meaningful forms of social and political freedom" (p.18). As Hackett, R. & Carroll (2006, p. 12) put it, "democracy is neither a final and permanent state of affairs, nor a gift handed down from elites; it requires continual renewal from below and from the margins". China, a dominated and controlled by the Communist Party, requires a more democratic and much

more open communication system. The Chinese people are struggling for a more democratic environment in the long run. Therefore, my main purpose for this work is not just to be critical and fussy about the some problems associated with both the American and Chinese communication systems, I hope this research will help to motivate the transformation of the Chinese media and social system.

While the literature that is attentive to the problems of both American corporate media and the Chinese communication system is broad and expansive, this work is significant in at least the following three aspects. Firstly, this thesis will systematically analyze the historical transformation of the Chinese media and investigate the current contradictory Chinese mediascape and will contribute to the existing literature on the Chinese media and democracy. Secondly, this work connects American media and Chinese media and invites attention to be paid to the fact that the communication systems of both the world's strongest *capitalist* economy- the United States and the largest *socialist* country- China value, spur, and impel neoliberalism, and stand as symbols for the comprehensive proliferation of neoliberalization on the world stage. Finally, for a more detailed perspective, the case study of China Central Television's *Xinwen Lianbo* (*National Network News*), which is the party's most significant news "mouthpiece", will demonstrate how the Chinese media function as the ultimate "propaganda machine" to advance the agendas of ruling powers. By performing a critical discourse analysis on this program, I will provide a more vivid picture of the political economy of the Chinese media environment.

## **1.2 Thesis outline**

The political economy of communication, which is employed as theoretical framework and primary theoretical approach for my research, is mainly based on the

work of Vincent Mosco (1996). *Chapter Two* introduces and conceptualizes the political economy of communication and the three entry points of Vincent Mosco (1996). The origins, philosophical assumptions and intellectual lineage of the political economy of communication will be delineated to give a full explanation of the theoretic paradigm. *Chapter Three* uses the three pillars, including commodification, spatialization, and structuration, to de-center American communication system and to expose some major problems hidden in the political economy of American media. Theories and concepts about deregulation, myths, ideology, and neoliberalism are discussed to help to demystify the problems underlying the American mediascape. *Chapter Four* examines the recent historical transformation of Chinese media from a historical perspective. Basically, I divide this part into two periods of time: Mao Zhedong's era (1949-1976) and the post-Mao period (1978-now). The two contradictory aspects of capitalist neoliberalism and socialist ideological indoctrination will be separately delineated by demystifying "socialism with Chinese characteristics". *Chapter Five* focuses on the methodology incorporated in my research. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is introduced and elaborated to serve as a guide to carry out my research about Chinese media. *Chapter Six* introduces general news discourses on CCTV and performs a CDA of Xinwen Lianbo. CDA will help me to reveal how Chinese media use discourses that reflect the political manipulation of the government. *Chapter Seven* will provide analyses and conclusions from this research.

## **Chapter 2: Political Economy of Communication as Theoretic Framework**

McChesney (2000) argues that “the political economy of communication is uniquely positioned to provide quality analysis of the most pressing communication issues of our era” (p.110). As Calabrese (2004) contends, the political economy of communication has made important contributions to a variety of theory and practice relating to media industries, policies, and political and cultural theories about “the institutional pressures and constraints on public discourse and the public sphere” (p.10). Equally important, “political economy has an historic commitment to praxis, or the unity of research and social intervention” (Mosco, 1999, p. 104). That is, it motivates scholars to work with commitment to social change. Therefore, my thesis will use political economy of communication perspective to theorize and ground my research.

### **2.1 Political Economy in the Historical Perspective**

Mosco (1996) provides an overview of definitions of political economy. According to Mosco (1996), before political economy became a science, it meant the social custom, practice, and knowledge about how to manage the household first, and, later, the community (p.24).

Specially, the term ‘economic’ is rooted in the classical Greek *Oikos* for ‘house’ and *nomos* for ‘law’, hence, economics initially referred to household management. [...] ‘Political’ derives from the Greek term (polis) for the city-state, the fundamental unit of political organization in the classical period. Political economy therefore originated in the management of the family and political households (Mosco, 1996, p. 24).

In 1913, as the original *Palgrave* (1913, p. 741) suggested, ‘although the name political economy is still preserved, the science, as now understood, is not strictly political: i.e., it is not confined to relations between the government and the governed, but deals primarily with industrial activities of individual men’ (as cited in Mosco, 1996). In 1948, the *Dictionary of Modern Economics* defined political economy as “the theory and

practice of economic affairs”, noting that emphasis has been shifted in economics, such as market values and questions of equilibrium of the individual firm, without stressing the political (Mosco, 1996). More recently, economics and political economy have emerged as separate, almost oppositional, approaches. Economics has become a technical science which does not question the underlying assumptions about capitalism. Political economy exists to question those assumptions.

Literature in contemporary field of political economy of communication is expansive, many prominent and influential scholars such as Nicholas Garnham, Dan Schiller, Herbert Schiller, Robert McChesney, Ben Bagdikian, Robin Mansell and Vincent Mosco define the field. Before diving into the definition of the contemporary political economy of communication, I firstly address the origins, philosophical assumptions and intellectual lineage of the theoretic paradigm.

## **2.2 The Origins of Contemporary Political Economy of Communication**

Dan Schiller (1999) argues that the origins of contemporary political economy of communication bear distinctive anti-fascist characteristics. By revisiting the contributions of the economist Robert A. Brady, Schiller (1999) provides an orienting picture of the origin of the political economy of communication. As Schiller (1999) points out, throughout 1930s and 1940s, Brady, along with Max Horkheimer and Robert Lynd etc, warned against the danger that big business had gained increased external influence throughout society and discerned a frightening potential of authoritarianism in the ability of big businesses to manipulate people’s mind. The fact that big businesses had interwoven with each other, with state agencies, and even with military and religion organizations lends substantial credence to Brady (1937, pp.83, 84, 362), who relates the Nazi propaganda machine of Germany to the spirit of advertising and American “public

relations counselors” and contends that fascism represents the most “politically conscious phase” threatening the industrialized world (as cited in Dan Schiller, 1999).

Within this larger historical context, the communications media were one key channel, among others, all of which were exploited by an increasing consciously antidemocratic command structure committed to maintaining its own rule. This galvanizing insight, and much of the problematic within which it was encased, was carried over by the forerunners of the political approach to communication. (Dan Schiller, 1999, p.97)

Some other pioneers and central figures such as Dallas W. Smythe and Herbert I. Schiller, carried over the anti-fascist framework that Brady established, and helped to frame a tradition of political economy of communication (Dan Schiller, 1999).

### **2.3 The Philosophical Assumptions of Political Economy of Communication**

In her book of *Communication Theories: Perspectives, Processes, and Contexts*, Miller (1995) summarizes the metatheoretical framework of critical theories. Although critical approaches have taken various ontological positions, most critical theorists take a more subjective stance of the ontological scale, which is informed by the German idealist perspective. Miller (1995) contends the epistemological stance of critical theorists is the critical-emancipatory cognitive interest of Habermas, in which he regards knowledge as “serving the interests of change and emancipation” (p.73). In contrast to the value-free axiological commitment of positivists, critical theorists insist that “values should guide scholarship” and “theorists should work as change agents in supporting those values” (Miller, 1995, p.74). Also, as Slack and Allor (1983) note, critical research approaches including political economy of communication “address the role of communication in the role of the exercise of social power” and “have developed in opposition to liberal/pluralist social theory” (p.270).

To better understand the metatheoretical framework or philosophical assumptions of political economy of communication, and of critical theories as a whole, it is necessary to



explicate Marxism and cast light on the threads between “Orthodox Marxism” and “Hegelian Marxism” (Kellner, 1989, p.11; Miller, 1995), which is also called “neo-Marxism”. Orthodox Marxism, at its core, tends toward a reductionistic ‘economism’, which believes that economic base determines the superstructure and laws of history, embedded in the economy, determines the trajectory of all social life (Kellner, 1989, p.11). This version of Marxism is scientific because it claims “the status of a science of social development” and tending to “be dogmatic as it congealed into a rigid system of categories, laws and positions” (Kellner, 1989, p.11). In contrast, Hegelian Marxists regarded the capitalist society as a system and emphasize the importance of subjective factors in historical development. Their “more philosophical, more sophisticated view of history” rules out “a scientific, determinist model” and stresses “contradictory sets of social relations and struggles in a specific historical era, whose trajectory could not be determined with certainty in advance” (Kellner, 1989, p.11). Drawing on Morrow (1994) and Burrell & Morgan (1979), Miller (1995) also contends that the Frankfurt School did not follow the school of scientific Marxism which employed positivistic methodology and instead adhered to Hegelian Marxism in advocating a “revolution of consciousness” (p.69). Also, Jansen (1983) uses “vulgar (mechanical) Marxism” to refer to orthodox Marxism and contends that “‘critical’ theorists sought to distance their perspective from vulgar (mechanical) Marxism and to establish kinship with the Hegelian and philological roots of Marx’s conceptions of alienation, consciousness, and ideology” (p.344).

Therefore, the political economy of communication, like most of the other critical theories, informs a social constructionist ontology, epistemologically believes in its critical, emancipatory potential, and axiologically focuses on revealing alienating power

relations.

Additionally, political economy of communication has intellectual roots in the Frankfurt School. As Bettig (2002) concludes, “contemporary critical approaches to the study of the political economy of communications continue in the Frankfurt School tradition by seeking to put the media within a broader historical, economic, and normative context” (p.84). For my proposed thesis, I mainly draw on Nicholas Garnham (1990), Robert McChesney (2000), and Vincent Mosco (1996) to conceptualize the contemporary political economy of communication.

## **2.4 The Definition of the Political Economy of Communication**

Nicholas Garnham (1990) argues political economy is “always concerned with analyzing a structure of social relations and of social power. But it is particularly concerned to analyze the peculiarities of that system of social power called capitalism” (p.7). Garnham(1990) argues political economy of communications and culture rejects methodological individualism and argues that human beings are essentially social. He contends that human social actors should be considered in the process along three dimensions, such as “interaction with the material environment-the process designated with Marxist theory as labour”, “interaction with other human actors for the purposes of social coordination”, and “interaction with the self – the identification and maintenance of self identity through projection” (p.9). Garnham (1990) also manifests the interrelationship between these dimensions in the process called “structuration”.

McChesney (2000, 2004a) argues the political economy of communication entails two main dimensions:

First, it addresses the nature of the relationship between media and communication systems on the one hand and the broader social structure of society. In other words, it examines how media and communication systems and content reinforce, challenge or influence existing

class and social relations. It does this with a particular interest in how economic factors influence politics and social relations. Second, the political economy of communication looks specifically at how ownership, support mechanisms (e.g. advertising) and government policies influence media behavior and content. This line of inquiry emphasizes structural factors and the labor process in the production, distribution and consumption of communication. (McChesney, 2000, p. 110; McChesney, 2004a, p. 43)

A more general and ambitious definition is that “political economy is the study of control and survival in social life” (Mosco, 1996, p.26). Specifically, Mosco (1996), in the very much same way as Garnham (1990), conceptualizes political economy as “social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources” (p. 26). Mosco (1996) emphasizes the issues of power relations, and is significantly concerned with how the media entities, elites, and “those who govern” interact to exercise and circulate the political economy of power.

Vincent Mosco’s *The Political Economy of Communication: rethinking and renewal* (1996) is “the most detailed and accessible introduction” to the subject of the political economy (Calabrese, 2004, p.1). Calabrese (2004) continues, explaining that “of more importance at this historical moment is the attention Mosco pays to the *political* in political economy, noting how the discipline and language of contemporary economics have evolved to profess value neutrality” (p. 2). Significantly, three entry points, such as commodification, spatialization, and structuration, which Mosco (1996) precisely defines can be used to investigate the political economy of American communication system. Therefore, my analysis of both *capitalist* American and *socialist* Chinese communication systems will mainly adhere to the theoretical core of Mosco (1996)’s political economic of communication. More specifically, I draw from the work’s treatment of commodification, spatialization, and structuration to describe the American media.

### **Chapter 3: Political Economy of American Media: Myths and Neoliberalism**

Currently, five media conglomerates, what Bagdikian (2004) calls as “the big five”, control the media operated by the fifty media corporations twenty five years ago or so. The five most influential and powerful media giants are Time Warner, Disney, Viacom, News Corporation, and Bertelsmann, which “hunger for the \$236 billion spent every year for advertising in the mass media and the approximately \$800 billion that Americans spend on media products themselves” (Bagdikian, 2004, p.29). This transformation from the big fifty to “the big five” typically symbolizes the processes of American media concentration and convergence. Now “the big five” operate “perfectly” as oligopolies. McChesney (1999) identifies two benefits for the media oligopolies: first, a bigger share of the market allows them to lower overhead and gain more bargaining power with suppliers; second, a larger share of market permits a handful of conglomerates to gain more control over the prices for their products (p.16). In addition, it is extremely hard for a new player to enter the oligopolistic media market.

As Mosco (1999) notes, North American political economy has traditionally paid considerable attention to media concentration. Political economy of communication can be used to expose how media ownership, political powers, policies, economic factors, social relations and media content etc interact to define the current American mediascape. I spotlight Mosco (1996)’s three pillars to expose the mechanisms and operational logic of the current U.S. media.

#### **3.1 Commodification**

Mosco (1996, p. 140) regards commodification as “the way capitalism carries out its objective of accumulating capital or realizing value through the transformation of use

value into exchange values.” Baker (2002) also suggests that “market exchange commodifies the good exchanged” (p.64). Specifically, the process of commodification in the context of communication concerns “transforming messages, ranging from bits of data to systems of meaningful thought, into marketable products” (Mosco, 1996, p.146). Literally, commodification transforms every single item in “culture industry” (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1977) into a commodity possessing market value. Commodification is overwhelmingly saturated in the hyper-commercialized, neoliberal, and highly converged American media environment. “Most mass media are products generated by the economic order” (Baker, 2002, p.65). Herman (1995) states every single aspect of culture involves a process of commodification and links to the sale of goods. For example, sports have become the apparatuses for marketing and are totally commercialized. “Pauses in the game are dictated as much by advertising needs as by the demands of the participants” (Herman, 1995, p. 6). Advertising is presented in everywhere in the stadiums and on players’ attire as well.

Wasko’s(2004) analysis of sources of revenues of the film industry delineates the different marketable products and markets. Briefly, these products/markets are theatrical exhibition, home video (VHS/DVD), cable television (pay cable/ pay per view), TV programs (broadcast TV/ advertiser-supported cable), foreign markets, non-theatrical markets (airlines in-flight entertainment), merchandising (video games/ music/ publishing), and new media outlets (Internet/ video-on-demand/ mobile sets). Through commodification, Hollywood’s “same old stuff” (Meehan, 2007, p. 25) can realize profits through various platforms and outlets years after their initial release.

To borrow Mosco’s (1996) line, the process of commodification incorporates “the media industries into the capitalist economy not primarily by creating ideologically

saturated products but by producing audiences” (p.149). Gandy Jr. (2004) illustrates the relationship between advertisers and audiences in the value chain of the media industries, stating that “advertisers are consumers of audience attention, not content”, and “advertisers think of audiences as markets, but they purchase access to them as commodities” (p.329). Audience members are treated more like commodities and consumers rather than citizens who are entitled to enjoy the comprehensive, accurate, fair reporting of the news rather than low quality journalism aiming to generate profit. As Wittebols (2008) puts it, the American news media “serve the interest of profit over citizen education” (p.18).

It has to be stressed that social values and roles are often perverted by overwhelming commodification. Baker (2002) contends that “commodification changes, sometimes worsens, the experience of receiving access to culture and entertainment”, insisting that cultural resources should be available through “social interactions”, which are defined by “solidarity, honesty, giving, and willingness to search for answers”, rather than “market transactions”, which are based on people’s “ability to pay” (p. 66).

### **3.2 Spatialization**

Mosco (1996) defines spatialization as “the process overcoming the constraints of space and time in social life” (p. 173). In Mosco (1999), spatialization is depicted as “the process of transforming space with communication” (p.103). Spatialization is not a recent concept or theory. Over a century ago, Karl Marx suggested that the power of capitalism could “annihilate space with time” (as cited in Mosco, 1999, p. 105). Mosco generalizes two reasons why spatialization is of importance for the political economy of communication. The first reason is that communication processes and technologies play a central role in the spatialization process, and second, spatialization is of particular

significance in the communication industries (Mosco, 1996, p.173). Herman (1995) responds to the first reason that Mosco (1996) poses, saying that “[the] development of the computer and new telecommunications technologies has allowed markets to expand more rapidly: *spatially*, into new product-service areas, and in new applications in traditional sectors” (emphasis added, p.3). That is, new innovations in information technologies and telecommunication fields have accelerated the process of spatialization and expanded the market in the field of communication.

American global media conglomerates, with strong economic power and cutting-edge technological advantages, can easily overcome “the constraints of space and time” to realize global operations. Digital technologies such as high-speed Internet and communications satellite transmission further facilitate spatialization processes. Hollywood blockbusters can simultaneously be released in multiplexes in different countries across the world. Examining the process of spatialization can reveal how media conglomerates freely monetize audiences across all media outlets on the world stage.

Through spatialization, Time Warner, the world’s largest media conglomerate, is a leader in creating digital content and pioneering in digital distribution across all media platforms, including internet, cable, motion pictures, home video entertainment and mobile phones. As Richard D. Parsons, Chairman of the Board and CEO, and Jeffery L. Bewkes, President, COO, recently stressed, “there’s no more important strategic priority for our businesses’ future success than making the most of the growing digital opportunities” (Time Warner, 2007). The strategy aims to build branded media content for consumers whenever and however they access news, entertainment, animation, games and whatever other information the company produces. Spatialization brings great benefits for Time Warner. According to the company’s website, 114 million domestic

internet users log on to the AOL network of web properties and 1.8 billion messages were sent across AOL's messenger networks every day; CNN.com is the number one news and information site in its share of the online news audience; TNT and Adult Swim are both number one in their respective markets.

Thanks to the digital technologies, Clear Channel takes "fake local broadcasting to new levels" (Klinenberg, 2007, p.65). Clear Channel has centralized its studios and has been accused of staging "local news" for different cities from far away those studios. In order to cut costs and become more profitable, the radio company feeds listeners very much the same content across a geographically wide region with scarce local community news, few voices, and sparse "hometown's offerings."

Synergy speeds the process of spatialization and allows for more "efficient" forms of commodification- recirculation, repackaging, revisioning, recycling and redeployment- to fatten the profits of media behemoths (Meehan, 2005). Quality journalism is expensive, therefore, corporate media fill program holes with inexpensive recirculation, repackaging, and revisioning of programs. "The same old stuff" is made to appear new by redefining creativity (Meehan, 2007, p. 25). In earlier work, Meehan (1991) analyzed the synergistic practices of Time Warner's *Batman*, uncovering how the company utilized the character throughout a wide variety of media outlets, including cable network, books, music videos, animation, theme parks, and soundtracks (as cited in Bettig, 2002). The American big media players all, to some extent, recirculate, repackage, revision, and recycle their content across their own different media outlets.

Digitization and spatialization have thus enabled media conglomerates to have a global reach and to reap globally generated profits.



### 3.3 Structuration

Mosco (1996) describes structuration as a “process by which structures are constituted out of human agency, even as they provide the very ‘medium’ of that constitution”, emphasizing that “social class is real as both a social relationship and instrument of analysis”(p.215). Therefore, structuration centers on social class and highlights how a communication system can reinforce class relations.

American media were supposed to be public utilities or public domains which could provide informative content and democratic debates representing issues of common interest. Thanks to structuration, mass media institutions distinguish “between desirable and undesirable audiences that are correlated with ethnicity, race, and class” (Gandy Jr., 2004, p. 330). Herman and McChesney (1997) note media corporations focus only on affluent audiences which are the target of advertisers. In the same way, Baker (2002) notes that “a market distributes goods based on people’s willingness and ability to pay” and “it ‘weights’ preferences on the basis of the money placed behind them” (p.71). As Hackett and Carroll (2006) suggest, in the profit-oriented commercial media environment, “access to media services and information which enable full political and economic participation is limited to those who can afford it” (p.6). Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), the American media watchdog group, conducted a study on the guest list of forty months of *Nightline*’s programming in 1989 that still stands today as a demonstration of media criticism (Hart, 2005). Overall, 80 percent of the program’s guests were government officials, professionals, or business representatives, and only 5 percent represented public interest groups, in addition, all of the top nineteen guests were men and all but two were white (Hart, 2005, p. 52). Of course, the concerns of those who have power and money will always be addressed most vigorously.

It is not new that American mainstream media exert implicit pressure on editors and reporters to shape content to cater to advertisers, the rich, and the elite. This means media practitioners must produce more consumer friendly content to attract “more people who have money and who live in the suburbs” (McChesney, 1999, p.55). In Detroit, the “last full-time labor reporting position at the Detroit Free Press was eliminated in 1998, while the newspaper added fifteen new editorial positions in the suburbs” (McChesney, 1999, p.55). Media content targeting African Americans are likely to be characterized by lower editorial quality and production values, because African American audiences are not valued as highly as rich white ones and they have less consuming capacity (Gandy Jr., 2007).

The interaction of commercialism and structuration deeply affects programming in ways that favor primarily the elite class and advertisers, while marginalizing minorities, the old and poor, and undermining the democratic discourse. Examining class divisions helps to find out how the deeply commercialized American media serve mainly the elite class and political incumbents, but neglect the marginalized.

The three political economy entry points, very much interlocking and meshing with each other, present a problematic and undemocratic American media environment.

To understand the current American communication system, we must look at its larger historic and political contexts. Arguably, deregulation results in media concentration and convergence. Understanding how deregulation was executed in the US also requires a discussion of myths and neoliberalism. I will thus map the origins of deregulation and two important concepts- myths and neoliberalism, which are also key to understanding the Chinese media system. Briefly, myths and neoliberalism help to rationalize deregulation and maintain the corporate dominated American media system.

### **3.4 Deregulation**

American media policy has long been the centre of great public concern. The U.S. Congress and Federation Communications Commission (FCC), along with other regulatory departments, have enacted a series of regulations over the years to try to maintain the significant industry.

For decades, the American media industry had been regulated by the 1934 Communication Act (Horwitz, 2005). In this Act and subsequent legislation and court decisions, communication was to serve the public interest and was obligated to contribute to democratic functions (Kellner, 2004). But “a combination of the growth of new technologies, administrative irrationalities, and tough corporate lobbying and legal challenges from large users and would-be entrants, prompted the FCC to relax some regulations and permit new communications services to blossom” (Horwitz, 2005, p.30). Horwitz continues, stating that the new services in turn spotlighted the inadequacy of existing communication regulation and “made communications an industry open to the ideology and practice of deregulation” (p.30). The first major break in the traditional regime was the 1982 Consent Decree, which hastened technological convergences and effaced the regulatory separations between the different parts of media industry. The 1996 Telecommunication Act was the second bold shift and also the first comprehensive revision of Communications Act of 1934. The act redrew the policy map by changing the goals and mechanisms of U.S. media regulation. The major change was that the public interest would be maintained by competition rather than by regulation (Horwitz, 2005).

Wilson (2000) comprehensively analyzes the deregulation of telecommunications in North America and brings up the three reasons that drove Reagan to reform “big government”: First, in the 1970s the yearly rate of inflation rose to 7.5 percent; some

years it even reached double-digit levels; Second, social welfare expenditures by the American government comprised 57.9 percent of government spending, and were 19.9 percent of the gross national product (GNP); the third reason is the rise of consumerism. In the United States “by the Reagan administration and subsequent regimes, much of the broadcasting regulatory apparatus was dismantled” (Kellner, 2004, p.30).

The 1996 Telecommunications Act lifted regulations, dramatically loosened ownership limits or restrictions from commercial media, and was supposed to encourage market competition (McChesney, 2004b; Horwitz, 2005; Wilson, 2000). A company could now own radio licenses that cover the entire United States for the first time, a single company may own broadcast TV licenses offering services to 35 percent of the national market (Wilson, 2000, p.167). As its core, the act presumed the “market could regulate media more efficiently and fairly than ownership policies could” (McChesney, 2004b, p.53). But the notion that the 1996 Telecommunication Act could promote fair competition was under serious doubt from the outset. The deregulated communication system seemed not to “generate thousands of programs targeting highly variegated cultural tastes and made available through media venues that would compete fiercely to serve us” (Meehan, 2007, p. 26). Instead, deregulation greatly encouraged cross-platform integrations, mergers, and acquisitions. The U.S. media industry has become significantly more concentrated since 1996 (McChesney, 2004b; Horwitz, 2005; Kellner, 2004).

American corporate powers, thanks to the continuous efforts to promote deregulation, have come to dominate media and become increasingly powerful. Media conglomerates took over the airways to advance their business agendas rather than to serve the democratic purposes of mass media.

### 3.5 Myth matters

Myth, as Barthes (1972) notes, “has the task of giving an historical intention a natural justification, and making contingency appear eternal” (p.155). Myth works well with ideology and discourse to establish hegemonic power relations in a neutral way. Mosco (2004b) suggests that value of myths is not determined by whether they are empirically true or false, but by whether they are living or dead. Myths are kept alive by “social practices that involve the leadership of storytellers whose accomplishments in one arena give them a platform to promote myths” (Mosco, 2004b, p.215). It can be seen that the power of political leaders and business elites enables them to proliferate myths beneficial to their own interests. Chair of the Board of Directors and CEO of Time Warner Richard D. Parsons, who personally has been friendly with former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and his son Michael K. Powell, the FCC chairman (Ruterberg & Lyman, 2001), has the ability to mythologize about deregulation and neoliberalism and to lobby the regulators to permit the AOL and Time Warner merger. In the same way, the Chinese media, under the instruction of the political powers, propaganda the mythological “socialism with Chinese characteristics” and use the same tactics to rationalize capitalist neoliberal operations in a “socialist” system. Therefore, neoliberalism is a living myth in both the U.S. and China.

Myths about deregulation and neoliberalism are well circulated in the discourse of American mainstream media. It is never hard to discern the mythological implications embedded in the deregulation of the telecommunication field and the corporate media system.

Mosco (1990) assesses the mythological dimensions of deregulation in the telecommunications industry. Specifically, Mosco addresses five myths of deregulation:

1. Deregulation lessens the economic role of government.
2. Deregulation benefits consumers.
3. Deregulation diminishes economic concentration.
4. Deregulation is widely supported.
5. Deregulation is inevitable (Mosco, 1990, p.37).

Although this work was completed in 1990 before the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the logic of deregulation, which commenced from Reagan administration, can be discerned in Mosco's (1990) analysis. By addressing the myths, Mosco (1990) reveals the misleading implications, challenging the notion that government non-intervention can be good for the public and efficient and neoliberal market competitions would take good care of people's needs with lower costs.

McChesney (1997) contends the current corporate media is sheltered by several powerful myths that impede media reform.

These myths include: that an advertising-supported, profit-driven media system was ordained by the Founding Fathers and the First Amendment; That professionalism in journalism will protect the public interest from private media control; that the Internet and new digital technologies with their billions of potential channels eliminate any reason to be concerned about corporate domination of media; that the market is the best possible organization for a media system because it forces media firms to "give the people what they want"; that a commercial media system was selected historically in public debate as the best possible system for a democracy, and the matter has therefore been determined for all time; and that the media are not dominated by corporate interests but, instead, have a liberal or left-wing anti-business bias (McChesney, 1997, p.8).

Clearly, some dominant myths about both deregulation and the American corporate media system buttress free market notions and neoliberalism by mythologizing that media functions best in a free market environment. In China, dominant myths such as "socialism with Chinese characteristics" disguise China's capitalist and neoliberal operations in all aspects of China.

### **3.6 Neoliberalism proliferates**

Neoliberalism is a very significant concept for my research in that my thesis intends to argue that neoliberalism, which typically represents capitalist logic, is now saturated and pervasive in the Chinese communication system.

Harvey (2005) defines neoliberalism as “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (p.2). According to the theory, government intervention must be kept to a bare minimum, and a free market can maximize the social good.

Neoliberalism can date back to the early 1980s, when Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan came into power (Horwitz, 2005; Hartwick and Peet, 2003). Margaret Thatcher managed to curb trade union power and cease the miserable inflationary stagnation of Britain. Across the Atlantic, Ronald Reagan, along with Paul Volcker, former Chairman of Federal Reserve, revitalized the U.S. economy by deregulating industries and liberating the powers of finance. Neoliberalism then became a doctrine and was transformed into the “central guiding principle of economic thought and management” (Harvey, 1995, p. 2). Neoliberal ideology became hegemonic not only among Republicans but also in the Democratic Party, both of which agreed that free market was the rightful ruler over society (McChesney, 2004b, pp.49, 50).

Neoliberalism has always been rendered as an infallible and perfect theory or method to regulate media. The media industry argues free market competition can satisfy the public interest and regulation of media “violated the free press and free speech clauses of the First Amendment” (McChesney, 2004b, p.50). As Hartwick and Peet (2003) note, neoliberalism views markets as “optimally efficient means of organizing economies” (p.189). Any form of interference, which would disturb fair and free market competition, is thus inappropriate and unacceptable. McChesney (2004a) adds the ideology of neoliberalism is “the notion of the competitive media market ‘giving the people what they

want” and that “the market can do no wrong” (p45). Therefore, neoliberalism in the field of communication has been mythologized as a guideline or standard for fair competition, small government, free press, free speech and, of course, democracy. Harvey (2005) suggests neoliberalism is as distorted as a “freedom” that all of us want and cherish. It seems that neoliberalism has been closely associated with individualism and freedom since it was born. It is worth noting that in this framework, neoliberalism equals the “freedom” which allows corporate giants to dominate the business world and neglect the common interest. Also, neoliberalism has nothing to do with individualism. “The idea that the market is the best and most rational manner to regulate affairs is the philosophical justification for the wave of deregulation, privatization, and commercialization that has swept U.S. and global media and communication system” (McChesney, 2004 a, p.45). Also, as Harvey (2005, p.3) says, neoliberalism has become the hegemonic discourse “incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world”.

The triumphs of dominant myths, neoliberalism and deregulation have accelerated the concentration of media ownership. A few media groups now control most media outlets and promote their business interests and agendas. Instead of serving democratic purposes of informing the public, offering diverse voices, and encouraging grassroots participation, corporate media work to “advance the interests of the wealthy few” (McChesney & Nichols, 2002, p.47).



#### **Chapter 4: China's Media: History and Context**

China, the world's most populous and largest developing country with more than 5000 years history, possesses distinct culture, economy, history, ideology and politics. Research on the current Chinese media environment should be set in historical, cultural, social and, of course, political economic contexts.

Although both Mosco (1996) and Garnham (1990) particularly stress that political economy of communication is primarily used to analyze *capitalist* societies and commercial media systems, a lot of Chinese and overseas scholars, such as Yuezhi Zhao (et al. 1998, 2000, 2005), Chin-Chuan Lee (2000), Zhou He (2000), and Stanley Rosen etc, have been using a political economy theoretical framework to illuminate their research on *socialist* Chinese media. In their works, I do not find an adequate rationalization for applying the theory of political economy of communication to a socialist communication system. I will also use political economy of communication to investigate socialist Chinese communication system, but will also try to present better rationales for this application. They are: 1) The interactive impact of politics and economics on media structure, content and operation, and the manifestations of power relations, which are the main concerns of political economy of communication, can be clearly discerned in the today's Chinese communication system. 2) To some extent, the current socialist Chinese media are employing capitalist operations, and most of the money comes from market operations such as advertising, sponsorship and other promotional activities, although a few media entities are still partially subsidized by the government. 3) Although the Chinese government controls ownership and exercises full editorial control, it always greenlights or even supports a market orientation, by which I

mean the capitalist neoliberal free market and hyper-commercialism. Of course all these are based on the premise that there are no anti-communist and anti-socialist connotations in the commercial activities and media content. 4) Putting aside the government's censorship and involvement in some media content, the current media industry is commercially operated in almost the same way as its Western counterpart.

#### **4.1 The Transformation- New China's Communication System, yesterday and today**

My research commences from the idea that the American capitalist communication system is not alone in its use of the neoliberal free market ideology to commodify "the culture industry" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1977) and to maximize its profits. Like their American counterpart, Chinese media also promote commercialism and globalization, boost neoliberalism and market economics, and serve the ends of dominant power. My central hypothesis is that government ownership and editorial control and the market economy with "Chinese characteristics", along with WTO membership and new media technologies result in a Chinese media system characterized by a contradictory mix of capitalist neoliberalism and socialist ideological indoctrination.

A number of scholars have addressed the contradictions of the current Chinese media environment. Zhou He (2000), after investigating the newspaper *Shenzhen Special Zone Daily*, calls this tension a "tug-of-war." Stanley Rosen (2000) characterizes it as a "duality", by which he means includes both Chinese authoritarian control and a capitalist-market system. Bin Zhao (1999) views it as "a double life." Harvey (2005) names it as neoliberalism with authoritarian centralized control. Significantly, Harvey (2005) provides a definition of "socialist with Chinese characteristics" by which he means "capitalist dynamism" in a *socialist* society and Zhao (1998) generalizes it as "economic liberation without political democratization" (p. 3). Other scholars also focus their studies

on this special media phenomenon in China. Most of their conclusions were reached by examining one single industry such as the print media or television. In my thesis, I try to use political economy of communication as theoretic framework to figure out a more general media landscape which involves broadcasting, press and new media.

#### **4.2 Mao Zedong's Era (1949-1976)-Media of Soviet Communist Model**

The relationship between media practices and sociopolitical structures has been well documented since 1949, when new China was established. Mao Zedong, one of the founders of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the first Chairman of new China, governed China from 1949 to 1976. It was Mao who launched Cultural Revolution, a social, political and economic chaos which persecuted millions of intellectuals and lasted ten years from 1966 to 1976, namely to eradicate all capitalist elements in the brand new republic and actually to undergird his political power. During these ten years the economy was stagnant and even retreated due to a prioritized political agenda. Mao claimed four tasks for the new Chinese media: to propagate the policies of the Communist Party, to organize the masses, to educate the masses, and to mobilize the masses (Bishop, 1989). Mao (1961) emphasized the principle of top-down communication between the party and people: "the role and power of newspapers consists in their ability to bring the CPC program, the CPC line, CPC general and specific policies, its tasks and methods of work before the people in the quickest and most extensive way" (p.241). The media at that time was the ultimate apparatus for the party to realize and strengthen its governance.

The media practices of Mao's China can be put in Schramm's Soviet model or "Soviet Communist Theory of the Press" because, as Bishop (1989, p.92) notes, "[i]n many ways the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) has imitated the Soviet Union, including its system of communication". After critically analyzing the Marxist basis of the Soviet

idea, Schramm (1978, p110) points out that “the Marxist concept of unity and the sharp distinction between right and wrong positions, would not permit the press to function as a Fourth Estate, independently criticizing government or serving as a forum for free discussion”. Rather, the Communist press is “an instrument to interpret the doctrine, to carry out the policies of the working class or the militant party” (Schramm, 1978, p. 110). The Soviet communication system had only “a single purpose”, that is, to serve the party and state. In the same way, Bishop (1989) suggests, “[t]he main purpose of [Chinese] communication- indeed, of life itself- is to build up the socialist state” (p.92).

During first years of new China, the CPC’s main job was to quickly set up the government’s authority and to establish new political attitudes by utilizing radio, newspapers, books and films (Bishop, 1989). Newspapers were used to transmit Party instructions and “published both self-criticism and concrete criticism of local Party activities”, while most books published in this period focused on ideology, world communism, and mass campaigns (Bishop, 1989, p. 66).

After the Korean War (1955-1958) was over, the function of media was switched from agitation to mass education because Communist authority had been firmly established (Bishop, 1989). Economic successes were stressed in the media in an effort to demonstrate that “any gains in production stemmed from Communist ideology” (Bishop, 1989, p.68).

During the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960), an unrealistic economic ambition aimed at making China a major industrial power overnight, wired radio systems, newspapers, books, and films were thoroughly mobilized to promote the political campaign.

During the period of Cultural Revolution, radio was used for airing revolutionary

songs and for live broadcasts of mass rallies (Chu, 1994). Local stations would routinely rebroadcast programs from Beijing concerning how the Chinese people could learn Chairman Mao's work. Newspapers often echoed papers published by the army and films were confined to newsreels and documentaries about the army (Bishop, 1989). As Bishop (1989, p.75) puts it, "[the] Cultural Revolution broadcasting became extremely propagandistic, strident, and chauvinistic [...]".

Therefore, in the Mao's era, mass media were deeply incorporated into the wider political system and became an integral part of the ideological apparatus to best serve the state's political need (Liu, 1971). The communication system at that time was used by Chinese authorities as a total mouthpiece and propaganda machine to fulfill full-scale ideological indoctrination.

#### **4.3 Changing to a Paradoxically Mixed Mediascape**

In the late 1970s, Mao's successor, Deng Xiaoping, one of the most respected senior leaders among the Chinese people, initiated an "opening up" policy and economic reforms. Briefly, the result of the reforms "has been the construction of a particular kind of market economy that increasingly incorporates neoliberal elements interdigitated with authoritarian centralized control." (Harvey, 2005, p.120)

Deng, who seriously suffered during the turmoil of Cultural Revolution, systematically criticized the ultra-leftist ideology and wrongdoings of Mao and made a strategic decision to concentrate on economic development at the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Communist Party Central Committee in December 1978. The slogan "take class struggle as the key link" was discarded, and socialist modernization became the first priority of new China. This Session is considered a turning point in contemporary

Chinese history, prospectively ushering a new era in all aspects of China.

Deng (1982)'s notion of "socialism with Chinese characteristics", which was first brought forward in his speech at the twelfth national congress of the CPC in 1982, became one of the guidelines for the party to operate the nation. Deng emphasized that the 1980s would be an important decade in the history of the party and the State. Deng (1982) announced three tasks for the decade: to accelerate socialist modernization, to strive for China's reunification and particularly for the return of Taiwan to the motherland, and to oppose hegemonism and work to safeguard world peace, stressing that "economic development is at the core of these tasks". The speech was a milestone for the party to build "socialism with Chinese characteristics", the term which I argue is a "myth" for the party to rationalize capitalist neoliberal free market operations in most sectors across the country. From then, Chinese media became open to capital and the logic of market, also in the name of "socialism with Chinese characteristics".

#### **4.4 Capitalist Neoliberalism Trajectory**

The economic reforms brought market forces into the Chinese economy to stimulate competition among formerly state-owned enterprises (SOEs), which "dominated the leading sector of the economy" (Harvey, 2005, p.125). Private companies were established to compete with SOEs to seek innovation and growth of the economy. In addition, the opening-up policy, which ended China's isolation from the world economy, greatly encouraged foreign investment. Agendas, such as "to realize Xiaokang society", a moderately prosperous society that offers well-being life for all Chinese people, and "to realize four modernizations", which are industry, agriculture, national defense, and education, became the top priority of Deng's administration. In general, the economic reforms have resulted in remarkable economic growth and have raised the living

standards of twenty percent of world's population for 30 consecutive years. However, economic reforms can never just transform an economy without altering its class relations, institutional arrangements and operational mechanisms (Harvey, 2005). Rather, the reforms had a tremendous influence on the political economy of industry, agriculture, finance and, of course, the communication system.

Under this circumstance, Chinese media have experienced a significant transformation and now operate along capitalist neoliberal logic. First and foremost, Chinese media witnessed very rapid expansion during 1980s. Chang (1989, p.ix) cites a set of statistics: a newspaper was founded every 36 hours in China in the 1980s, bringing the number of newspapers from 1240 to 2191; “[t]he total newspaper circulation exceed 200 million in 1985”, increasing 200 percent over 1978. Further evidence of rapid growth in media can also be seen in statistics about the broadcasting system:

By 1984 China had 161 broadcasting stations that were on the air a total of 2767 hours a day. The country also had 595 radio transmission or relay stations and 104 television stations. There were 466 television transmission or relay stations with power exceeding one kilowatt. The China Central Station aired 454 TV dramas in 1984.

The Chinese media in 1983 had 259,940 employees. Among them 48,531 were reporters, editors, anchor persons, and translators [...] (Chang, 1989, p. ix, p. x)

Importantly, the functions of Chinese media and its operational logic saw a fundamental transformation. Robinson (1981) points out that the functions of media “have been expanded to include advertising, entertainment, and coverage of news which is decidedly more Western in approach” (p.58). She continues, stating that the changes “are in response to and reinforce new economic and political priorities” (p. 58). Chang (1989) also stresses that the role that Chinese media play has experienced “a marked change” and is not just “the mouthpiece of the party” anymore (p. x).

As the economic reforms and opening-up policy deepened, enormous changes in all sectors have swept across the nation moving steadfastly away from the near total

politicization and regimentation that characterized Mao's era (Chu, 1994). Especially since 1989, the party has accelerated market reforms in part to save itself from the brink of a legitimacy crisis following the Tiananmen crackdown (Lee, 1994), and the substance and dynamics of domestic politics have changed significantly (Zhao, 2005).

In early 1992, after visiting the city of Shenzhen, which used to be a fishing village and was singled out to be the first special economic zone (SEZ) of China, Deng Xiaoping, who was deeply impressed by the economic achievements of the SEZ, called to "be bolder than before in conducting reform and opening to the outside and have the courage to experiment" (Deng's speech, 1992). Reforms across all sectors have since been raised to an unprecedented level. Deng's encouragement for further reform and opening in 1992 ushered in a comprehensive commercialization of the Chinese news media (Huang, 2003; Pan, 2000).

The State General Publishing Administration under the governance of the party Central Committee's Propaganda Department oversees the print media. The Chinese press for many years was government financed and its production and distribution were centrally planned by the government, however, the economic reforms spurred a press boom and resulted in the formation of a market-oriented and financially independent press. Meanwhile, the party actively pushed the press to the market with the diminishment of direct subsidies and the creation of "encouraging" mechanisms such as performance-related bonus, operational freedom and tax breaks (Zhao, 2000). In other words, the party turned "media outlets into public units under business management", and media organizations would get a "limited amount of state support for infrastructural investment" and be "responsible for additional financial resources needed for their normal operations" (Pan, 2000). Many newly established news outlets were market-oriented or



reader-oriented (Huang, 2003; Pan, 2000), and even some traditional party newspapers have increased their coverage of entertainment to attract commercial advertisements (Huang, 2003). “A market-driven distribution” emerged (Pan, 2000, p.73), and some local papers, such as *Beijing Youth Daily*, *Yangcheng Evening News*, and *Southern Weekend*, competed for the nationwide market share and became influential across the country. Advertising revenues for the newspapers reached 3.77 billion Yuan (Chinese currency) by the end of 1993, four times of the figure in 1991, and advertising industry revenues grew from 234 million Yuan to 13.4 billion Yuan between 1985 and 1995 (Pan, 2000). In the earlier 1990s, China had over 3000 advertising entities and almost all the top advertising agencies established branches in China (Pan, 2000). As a result, the term “marketization of media industry” began to appear in the official vocabulary of journalism reforms (Pan, 2000).

Changes in the broadcasting industry, which is under supervision of State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), are never inconspicuous. In the late 1980s, the party first permitted broadcasting media to rely on multiple forms of financing including advertising, sponsorship, and other forms of financing to supplement the government subsidy, which had become a burden to the party (Yin, 2006). The Chinese TV industry started from China Central Television (CCTV), which was established in 1956 as Beijing Television. Television has seen speedy development since then. In 2001, 1293 TV stations, 1272 of which were rural TV stations, were established to operate 1206 channels across China, covering 93.65 percent of whole population (Pavlik, 2002). The average growth rate of commercial income of Chinese radio, television and film industry from 1993 to 2003 was 23%, much higher than the GDP (SARFT, 2003).

Meanwhile, the marketization and commercialization of the Chinese television have had encouraged more flexibility and innovation in its programs in an effort to generate more advertising revenue. All kinds of programming, including soap operas, fashion shows, talk shows, popular music, dating programs, documentaries, cartoons, sports and reality shows etc, flourish on different TV channels. Advertising has become the most important revenue since its re-introduction in 1979 (Zhao, 2000; Yin, 2006). In the ever competitive media industry, the masses which were to be educated and mobilized (Bishop, 1989) “have become the audiences to be pleased” (Zhao, 1999).

Many independent TV shopping companies or direct retail television companies affiliated with TV networks have sprung up and established sales networks in major cities across China (Zhao, 1999). Commercials, which overtly promote the spirit of consumerism, have appeared everywhere in and between programs and become much more frequent and lengthy. Jobs in the media section have become among the best paid and most sought, and the television industry in particular is viewed as a rich institution (Zhao, 1999). The economic reforms were credited for unleashing a bonanza of Chinese media and the whole communication system is now on the way to becoming a highly commercial and neoliberal capitalist system.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the booming economy motivated the government to further deepen its economic reform across all the sectors. As Chinese President Hu Jintao said in his opening remarks at the Seventeenth National People’s Congress held in October 2007,

Facts have incontrovertibly proved that the decision to begin reform and opening up is vital to the destiny of contemporary China, that reform and opening up are the only way of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics and rejuvenating the Chinese nation, that only socialism can save China and that only reform and opening up can develop China, socialism and Marxism[...] To sum up, the fundamental reason behind all our achievements and progress since the reform and opening up policy was introduced is that we have blazed a path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and established a system of theories of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Essentially, to hold high the great banner of socialism

with Chinese characteristics means to keep to this path and uphold this system (Hu, 2007).

To paraphrase Harvey (2005), the reforms and opening up, which are portrayed as the “only” way to “develop China” by President Hu Jintao, have resulted in social inequality, shift in class relations, and eventually something that looks like the reconstruction of capitalist class power.

Media organizations were voluntarily engaged in or forced into marketization (He, 2000). Even some of the very important party mouthpieces such as *People's Daily*, Xinhua News Agency and China Central Television have realized financial self-sufficiency through all forms of commercialization. Another important fact, which should not be neglected, is that the Chinese government uses authoritarian sponsorships, such as mandatory subscriptions, exclusive news outlets or special funding to help media organizations such as CCTV, Xinhua News Agency, *People's Daily* and China National Radio (CNR) etc. to become media giants which enjoy oligopoly or monopoly advantages. Meanwhile, these media empires also orient their production to market conditions, that is to say, powerful media organizations exert their efforts to cater to advertisers and sell their audiences to advertisers. As Zhao (2005) generalizes, “accelerated commercialization and state-engineered market consolidation have transformed state-subsidized and single minded propaganda organs into state-controlled, advertising-supported, and self-interested economic entities” (p.66).

The Chinese version of *American Idol*, *Super Voice Girls*, an annual national singing contest reality show organized by Hunan Satellite Television (one of the many provincial broadcasters with national cable distribution) between 2004 and 2006, is claimed to be the most “successful” Chinese TV show in history in terms of commercialization. The show covered both awful and funny performances in earlier rounds and eager fan clubs in later

rounds. It began with regional competitions in some big cities across China to reach as many as possible contestants. The contest shows used the concept of “PK” (short for “Player Kill”), vocabulary from Chinese video games, to create dramatic tension and sensations among both contestants and audiences. Contestants who won on the PK stage would enter into the next round, and “PK” has become fad word among young Chinese since then.

*Super Voice Girls* of 2005 was so popular and commercially successful that CCTV produced an analytical report on the show. According to the data of the report, the sponsor, Mengniu Dairy, an inner Mongolia-based dairy company, spent 280 million Yuan to market its new sour yogurt drink, Suan Suan Ru, and the show was formally called *Mengniu Suan Suan Ru Super Voice Girls*; the price for a 15-second advertising in the final episode is 112,000 Yuan, which exceeded for the first time prime time advertising on CCTV; the total advertising revenue of the show might reach 100 million Yuan. In addition, the show had garnered a 300 million strong audience and for the first time “topped the highest record created by CCTV’s annual Spring Festival programs” (Chang, 2007, p.7); “more than 8 million Chinese paid about 2¢, a sizable amount in local terms, to send a text message by mobile phone in support of one of the three Super Girl finalists” (Madden & Wentz, 2005, p.22), bringing over 30 million Yuan revenue to Hunan Satellite Television (Chang, 2007). As a result, Hunan Satellite Television, advertisers, telecommunication firms, and involved institutions, such as advertising agencies and recording companies which signed contracts with finalists, all gained considerable revenue. Hunan Satellite Television commodified every aspect of the show and even signed recording contracts with finalists to sell them to the recording companies. *Super Voice Girls*, the highly commercialized entertainment show, well demonstrates the

overwhelmingly neoliberal and commercial capitalist nature of media operations in China.

Advertisers are also deeply involved in the news editorial process and advertorials are pervasive. All kinds of awards and events are largely commercialized, and some awards are directly issued to sponsors or advertisers which spend the most money to sponsor the events. For a specific media company, it's never easy to find any negative reporting on advertisers with which it has a business relationship. For example, in 2005 *Communications Weekly*, a leading newspaper focusing on telecommunication industry, fired a journalist who wrote a negative article about Zhong Xing, the big advertiser of the paper. Professional ethics have also been seriously eroded by commercialism and neoliberalism. Journalists have even been found to accept "red packages" (literally a red envelop with bribery money in it), solicit bribes, trade news space for personal benefits and generate paid news. All kinds of product placement advertisements fill sitcoms, dramas, and movies. Advertising is intruding on what was previously "untainted" programming, including the scripts of movies, talk shows, and comedy skits.

In a word, the comprehensive changes in the Chinese media, initiated by the reform and strengthened by the market competition, have given rise to a myriad neoliberal practices in both content and form.

#### **4.5 Transfiguring the WTO and Globalization in the Chinese media**

The World Trade Organization (WTO), a successive organization of the General Agreement of Trade and Tariff (GATT), was founded in 1995 as a result of eight years of negotiations during the Uruguay Round (Ghafele, 2004). Designed to liberalize international trade and lifting trade barriers among nations, the World Trade Organization (WTO) provides a legal and institutional framework for all its member nations. At its core,

the WTO believes that free trade is essential to global prosperity, economic growth and better living standards (Ghafele, 2004).

Herman and McChesney (1997) argue that there is an intimate and mutually constituted relationship between free trade organizations, consumerism and neoliberal elite-serving capitalism. On one hand, The WTO reinforces many aspects of neoliberal agenda, because capital can behave independently of its original nation and navigate freely on the world stage. Briefly, money can be more easily made in the global market under the protection of the WTO. As a result, power is concentrated in the hands of highly profitable and wealthy multinational corporations. On the other hand, neoliberalism rationalizes the operation of the WTO, because they share the same core of logic: free trade.

In 2001, after striving unsuccessfully for 15 years, China officially gained entry into the World Trade Organization. Chinese media positively rendered the WTO as both the only viable path to prosperity and a symbol of a national pride (Yin, 2006), stating China needed to enhance its market economy to better prepare its enterprises for the more fierce competition from the overseas companies. Analyzing mainstream Chinese media discourse on China's WTO entry, Zhao (2003) says press coverage conceals crucial information about some issues to avoid domestic criticism of party's policies. Different Chinese media outlets serve as a "cheerleader for China's WTO membership", and never mentioned "the potential negative impact" of "the WTO membership for China's workers and farmers" (Zhao, 2007, p. 202).

Globalization is a very important theory because of its dual meaning in academic discourse: a descriptive term addressing the changes in the world and, more importantly, "a theory or explanation of the changing character of the modern world" (Ampuja, 2004,

p.64). Giddens (1999) suggests that globalization is more than an economic phenomenon which encourages the proliferation of the free market. To paraphrase Ampuja (2004), the noteworthy thing about globalization is its inclusiveness, which describes not only economic phenomena but also new array of political, social, cultural and technological processes. From a more general perspective, globalization reflects complicated social change. As far as my thesis topic is concerned, I attempt to look at globalization from a somewhat narrower economic perspective and examine how the Chinese media are describing and are affected by globalization. Ohiorhenuan (2000, p.56), defines globalization as “the broadening and deepening of national economies into a worldwide market for goods, services and capital” (as cited in Ghafele, 2004).

Globalization is a buzz-word winning universal applause in Chinese media, which uses globalization to explicate and rationalize the nationwide capitalistic proliferation and renders both globalization and the WTO as bringing economic prosperity and cultural harmony on a global scale. Chinese media connects globalization with the local companies’ expansion of the market share in the global market, hailing the success of some corporations such as Lenovo, Zhong Xing, Huawei (the names of the big Chinese companies) for their global operations. These images of globalization in China signify both the desire for consumerism and the anxiety of the Chinese for modernity (Xie, 2008). As Ghafele (2004, p.442) points out, globalization is “a human artifact that is being positioned as a natural phenomenon” and results from “human views, beliefs and politics”. In essence, globalization results in a worldwide capitalistic system that propels and values the interests of powerful corporations (Ampuja, 2004).

As McChesney (1998) puts it, the global reach of market economics and international trade cannot be realized if there are no global media conglomerates functioning as “the

new missionaries of global capitalism” (p.2). In the same way, Ampuja (2004, p.65) suggests that “media plays a vital, even constitutive role in globalisation debates”. The Chinese media, like the capitalistic global media giants, promote neoliberal ideology, commercialism and capitalism by transfiguring the WTO and globalization. Therefore, under the “aura” of the WTO framework and globalization, the Chinese media skillfully rationalize not only the nationwide capitalization and commercialization, but also its own capitalistic operations.

#### **4.6 Chinese New Media- A Potential Way Out?**

New media, which Scatamburlo-D’Annibale and Boin (2007) define as the “communicative forms that are interactive, digital, Internet-related” (p.236), also contribute to the complicated transformation of the Chinese mediascape. With quick development of the information and communication technologies in China, Chinese people are becoming “wired” at an expeditious rate. By the end of 2008, the number of China’s Internet users reached 298 million and the penetration grew to 22.6 percent, which surpassed the global average of 21.9 percent (MIIT, 2009), making China the largest internet-user market in the world.

Some believe that the democratic potential new media could bring to Chinese society has already taken shape. However, others are not as enthusiastic and optimistic toward the new mediascape of China. Arguably, Chinese new media also embrace neoliberalism and favor elite social powers.

Vincent Mosco (2004a) directly connects digitization and commodification with a political economy perspective, claiming that digitization coincides with the process of commodification or the transformation of use value into exchange value. Digitization “is used first and foremost to expand the commodification of information and entertainment



content, enlarge markets in the audiences that take in and make use of digitized communication, and deepen the commodification of labor involved in the production, distribution and exchange of communication” (Mosco, 2004a, p. 156). Also, as Scatamburlo-D’Annibale and Boin (2007) point out, new media developments tend “to be dominated by business interests that maximized their potential as media of industry, commerce, and economic accumulation and exploitation” (p.235).

By 2007, the market value of the new media industry in China was 114 billion Yuan, and the gross revenue from “commodified” internet media such as advertisements, video, games, and downloading businesses reached 25.2 billion Yuan (SinoCast, 2008). Aiming at expanding their media empires and maximizing their business interests for the “new media cake”, Chinese state-owned “traditional” media, like their American counterparts, drew on the framework of spatialization and the logic of synergy to navigate the new media environment. For example, CCTV and China Mobile and China Unicom, China’s two largest telecommunication operators, joined hands to launch a mobile TV business in 2007. At the same time, CCTV made every effort to convert to digital broadcasting television to expand the means of revenue-making. Interactive digital pay television services provide a wide range of digital channels such as classified advertising, stock market information, health, entertainment, and home shopping etc. Also like the Western media behemoths, CCTV employs more “efficient” forms of commodification-recirculation, repackaging, revisioning, recycling and redeployment- to fatten its profit margins. Therefore, content in new media outlets very much repeats the “same old stuff” (Meehan, 2007, p. 25).

Zhao (2007) argues that China’s information revolution is impelled by not only by state-controlled and market-driven forces but also “the convergent interests of domestic

bureaucratic” and “international corporate capital” (p. 190). In addition, China’s Internet users are disproportionately concentrated in the wealthy urban class, and the digital divide also can be seen across social segments of the society such as the educated rather than the illiterate and the young rather than the old etc. New media and information development have empowered “super-wired” elites rather than the majority of the public (Zhao, 2007).

Moreover, Chinese internet users are blocked from retrieving certain sensitive information because the proxy server filters certain combinations of phrasings and words such as civil rights and democracy etc. Human censors also actively block politically objectionable content from reaching netizens in China. Therefore, it is impossible for the new media to fully realize its democratic potentials or to serve as a healthier public sphere in China.

#### **4.7 Ideological Control of New China**

The central argument of the thesis is that the current Chinese media is living a “double life” (Zhao, 1999): capitalist neoliberal operation and socialist ideology control. In this section, I will spotlight the apparatus of ideological indoctrination of the Chinese media. To paraphrase Lee (1994), no communication systems are totally free from control, but the causes and consequences of control differ significantly. In the post-Mao era, although the state had loosened a little bit its rigid command system, Deng never hesitated to smash any challenges against communist party and socialist society (Sun, Chang, and Yu, 2001).

Mass media are bureaucratic and coercive apparatuses for the Communist Party and the party firmly controls and manipulates the Chinese communication system. Chinese media, along with the Communist Party, represent how the “upper hand” uses the propaganda machine to help maintain political control. Zhao (2005) argues that “the party

state continues to exercise tight political control of the media. The tens of thousands of worker and farmer protests, many of them large in scale and involving violent confrontations with state authorities, for example, simply do not happen as far as Chinese media are concerned” (p. 65). The CPC is concurrently the owner, the manager, and, to some extent, the practitioner of the Chinese communication system, which is staffed by loyal party members (Chu, 1994).

The Communist Party has never doubted that media could “manufacture consent” (Herman and Chomsky, 1988), produce ruling ideology and hegemony, and strengthen governance, thus, the party has always maintained a tight grip over the “ideological state apparatuses” (Althusser, 1971) to maintain a favorable atmosphere for governance. Gilley (2001) describes the party as “moving to reposition itself as a de facto right-wing dictatorship” (as cited in Zhao, 2005), realizing that *capitalist* commercialism and neoliberalism are potentially detrimental to the rationality of *socialism*, the party strives to reinforce the supremacy of its ruling ideology.

I argue that the party uses at least three methods to enhance the *socialist* ideology. First, the party reiterates and mythologizes the slogan “socialism with Chinese characteristics”. This slogan, which was first brought up by Deng Xiaoping who also invented the notion of “one country, two systems”, has become the dominant discourse or myth. For over two decades, this discourse has been repeatedly used by both the Chinese government and media to rationalize the widespread *capitalist* operations in *socialist* China. Second, Chinese media, under the direct control by the party, overwhelmingly foreground and emphasize the achievements, contributions, and economic and social developments that CPC has made. Third, the party skillfully manipulates the people’s nationalism and associates it with socialism.

Decades ago, ideological indoctrination appeared to be entirely explicit. Ideological control in China reached “an absurd level”, and “anyone who dared to express ideas even minimally different from Mao Zedong’s was condemned as a ‘class enemy’” (Su, 1994, p.75). As Zhao (2005) notes, the party cast itself as the “self-righteous impulse of maintaining ideological purity” and the “self-proclaimed status as monopoly holder of truth” (p.65). For instance, students had to learn the “revolution” songs, such as “*Socialism Is Good*” and “*Without the Communist Party There Would Be No New China*” etc, and had to sing these songs in all kinds of singing contests or ceremonies. Take myself as an example, I could still sing those songs more than twenty years later after I first learned them, not because I have good memory, but because I had to sing them scores of times when I was a child. Compared to directly debunking or deprecating the *capitalist* social system years ago, current Chinese media use more implicit tactics to indoctrinate *socialist* ideology by singing high praise for the “socialism with Chinese characteristics” and the party’s achievements in various aspects. As a result, no ideological debates on the nature of Deng’s reforms and opening-up policy have occurred in recent years, and the Chinese people tend to accept the reality of the capitalist operations in the name of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”.

The party, now under the supervision of the fourth President Hu Jintao, further firmly controls the operations of Chinese media by imposing serious censorship. Zhao (2000) contends that the government keeps a firm hand on the central and provincial party papers, which are mandated to spread its ideology and rely on the party’s administrative sanctions to secure office subscriptions.

For example, in January of 2006, the publication of *Freezing Point*, a four-page weekly provocative and aggressive news and opinion supplement of the *China Youth*

*Daily*, a daily official newspaper of the Communist Youth League, was suspended by authorities. Party officials ordered *Freezing Point* to be shut down and condemned it for an article that said the Chinese middle schools' history textbooks "soft-pedaled the mistakes of Qing Dynasty leaders in the late 19th century" (Yardley, 2006). Propaganda officials claimed that the article viciously attacked the socialism system. The chief editor, Datong Li, and his deputy Yuegang Lu were demoted because of the incident. Earlier on, *Beijing News*, a joint venture between the party organ paper *Guangming Daily* and the *Southern Daily* newspaper group, boldly covered violent crackdowns on villagers who protested against a construction of a power plant in Dingzhou, a city in Hebei province. Local officials of Dingzhou reportedly hired thugs to thwart the protests and caused six villagers to lose their lives. As a result, Bin Yang, the progressive editor-in-chief of the paper, was fired without notice and any official explanation. According to the China Post website, officials criticized the *Beijing News* and said it "committed errors in the orientation of opinion" and was a 'recidivist'".

In the broadcasting industry, the programming regulations are used to guide national media and their contents, facilitating both content control and ideological control for the party. SARFT commands local television stations (city level or country level stations) to fully relay both CCTV programs and its commercials as well, stipulating that "the local stations shall not switch off the commercials of CCTV; and shall not disturb the full relaying programs either in the form of moving captions or others" (Guo, 2003, p.8). The party controls both TV and radio. The headlines of prime time news programs are always the activities of the party top leaders and big events of the party regardless of the program ratings. The national live prime time CCTV news program *Xinwen Lianbao*, has been mandated to be simultaneously aired on all the other provinces' satellite TV channels for

decades. It is noteworthy that this news program is the ultimate “propaganda machine” for socialist ideology. In addition, all the national and provincial broadcasters are mandated to deliver live broadcasting on some key events, such as the National Congress of the Communist Party of China (NCPCC), and are required to arrange special programs to increase the scope of the coverage. Slogans which sing high praise for the Communist Party can be heard and seen all the time across all the mainstream media platforms. Local stations can only broadcast international news from the national media, and the relaying of cross-border satellite programs is forbidden (Guo, 2003). China International Television Corporation (CITC), a subsidiary of CCTV, is the only organization which has the exclusive right to import the foreign films and television programs (Guo, 2003). Individuals and institutions are prohibited from receiving foreign satellite programming, and hotels rated three-star or above and some parts of Guangdong province are allowed to get access to some foreign satellite channels under real time censorship.

To some extent, Chinese media workers might be the “best” practitioners in the world in regard to the self-censorship. Any reporting of big events, serious domestic disasters, sensitive topics or scandals of senior leaders must be under instruction of the Department of Propaganda, Central Committee of the CPC or other party organs to frame the reporting in correspondence with the dominant socialist powers and ideology. Pavlik (2002) believes that these issues are too sensitive and that reporting on them may lead to some negative perspectives on socialist ideology. *Jiaodian Fangtan (Focus)* is a very influential daily investigative TV program of CCTV. Program topics are under scrutiny of the Department of Propaganda. The proportion of negative reporting to positive reporting is restricted. The program’s critical reporting on public issues and even corruption has helped to develop a sense of public opinion supervision and alleviate public anxieties

(Zhao, 1999). Also, as Zhao (1999, p.259) puts it, “critical reporting is carefully controlled to avoid fuelling social frustration and political upheaval”. Instructions are given to define the meaning of the events and to make sure whether it should have a negative or positive propensity, how serious it should be and how deep it should be. Criticisms are mainly confined to reveal “technical problems at the operational level” (Zhao, 1999, p.259) rather the fundamental policies or ideologies of the party.

## **Chapter 5. Methodology: Critical Discourse Analysis**

Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988) note most societies no longer have to rule by brute force but by “manufacturing consent” among the governed. By this, they mean there is a more subtle, discursive and detrimental form of manipulation, which van Dijk (2006, p.359) defines “as a form of social power abuse”, “cognitive mind control” and “illegitimate domination”, reinforcing all kinds of stereotyped thinking, naturalizing social inequality and power relations into a “common sense.” More specifically, these power abuses, inequalities and injustices are enacted, produced, sustained, naturalized and legitimated by discourse (van Dijk, 1993). “Those who govern” have always been manufacturing consent among “those who are governed” through dominant myths, ideologies and discourses.

Myriad scholars, theorists and researchers in the field of communication inform and employ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to expose and challenge this political manipulation and unequal social relations. At its core, CDA offers “special standing as guides for human action” and aims at “producing enlightenment and emancipation” (Wodak, 2003, p. 4). Blommaert & Bulcaen (2000) argues that CDA is one of the “most influential and visible branches of discourse analysis” (p.447).

My investigation of the Chinese communication system will challenge its contradictory mix of capitalist neoliberalism and socialist authoritarian ideological indoctrination. I hypothesize that “socialism with Chinese characteristics” is one of the biggest myths which have been used to legitimize and rationalize both neoliberal operations and ideological manipulation. I have chosen Critical Discourse Analysis as my research methodology to examine media discourse from a “social justice” perspective. I



believe that CDA is a very effective method to expose such myths, social injustices, and hidden power relations within the so-called “economic booming” and “peaceful and prosperous” socialist society.

In order to generate a holistic picture of Critical Discourse Analysis, I believe it is necessary to delineate CDA from a historical perspective, sketch its metatheoretical positions and intellectual lineage, and draw on some forceful, transcendent, and influential figures in this field such as Wodak, van Dijk, Fairclough, and Kress. In addition, I try to provide an illustrative example to demonstrate how to use CDA. Some of the strengths and limitations about this research tradition are also briefly discussed. I conclude that CDA is a very effective method to investigate and challenge the hidden power relations in contemporary society from a social justice perspective. More specifically, CDA is an ideal fit for my research project which aims to examine media discourse of socialist Chinese communication system.

### **5.1 About Critical Discourse Analysis**

Many key scholars in the field of CDA define this theory and method. Wodak (2001, 2003) defines CDA as “fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (2001, p.4; 2003, p.2). Wodak (2003) also notes that “CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse)” (p.2). Kress (1996, p.15) depicts CDA as a “political project” which aims to alter “inequitable distributions of economic, cultural and political goods” and “bring a system of excessive inequalities of power into crisis by uncovering its workings and its effects through analysis of potent cultural objects—texts—and thereby to help in achieving a more equitable social order” (cited by

Hammersley, 1997). In very much the same way, van Dijk (1993) presents CDA as “the study and critique of social inequality” (p.249) and contends that critical discourse analysts “must be activists” (p.253). Fairclough (1995) declares that CDA strives to challenge non-transparent power imbalances and social inequalities and to examine how discursive practices and power are mutually constituted. Fairclough (1995) defines CDA as follows:

[CDA] often [investigates] opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power. (Fairclough 1995, pp.132-3).

Fairclough (2003) also regards CDA as reflecting “dialectical relationships between semiosis (including language) and other elements of social practices” (p.123). In addition, Huckin (2001) depicts CDA as “a highly context-sensitive, democratic approach which takes an ethical stance on social issues with the aim of improving society”. Wickham & Kendall (2007) contend that CDA, which emerged from other forms of discourse analysis and conversation analysis, offers a commitment to demystifying dominant ideologies and to serve to various forms of emancipation.

From the above definitions, we can state that CDA focuses on social and political issues, chooses the perspective of those who suffer most (Wodak, 2003), challenges those in power, and critically analyzes social injustices. Importantly, CDA reveals not just unequal power relations, but also offers insights to emancipate and make change. As Wodak (2003) points out, CDA sheds light on “human action”.

Wodak (2003) offers a general account of the historical development of critical discourse analysis. CDA developed in 1970s and 1980s at the University of East Anglia.

“It follows on from the ‘critical linguistics’ of Fowler, Kress and others” (Hammersley, 1997). The founders of the research tradition claimed that discourses are ideological and signs are not arbitrary. An interpretation or explanation of text was linked to a wide variety of notions such as ideology, power, hierarchy and gender, and other sociological variables. According to Wodak (2003), development of the CDA network was marked by both a symposium which featured van Dijk, Fairclough, Kress, and Wodak etc in Amsterdam in 1991 and by a variety of works launched by these key researchers in late 1980s and early 1990s. Since then, annual symposia have taken place and indicate the paradigm has been established, which binds together an international, heterogeneous group of scholars, a research agenda and programme (Wodak, 2003).

In terms of its intellectual roots, CDA is an interdisciplinary domain of study that can trace back to a variety of intellectual lineages. Obviously, CDA has roots in the discipline of linguistics. It aims to investigate language use, text, talk, and, more abstractly, discourse. But CDA is certainly not a comprehensive and analytic study of certain language. In the context of the term Critical Discourse Analysis, language use is regarded as a form of social practice instead of a purely individual activity (Fairclough, 1993).

Importantly, CDA also has intellectual lineage in the Frankfurt School (van Dijk, 1993; Wodak, 2003), with its emphasis on neo-Marxist critique. Bettig (2002) insists the critical theory of the Frankfurt School “must serve the purposes of social change and not simply describe the world ‘as it is’” (p. 82). The “critical” perspective of CDA, which Wodak describes as refusing to take things for granted, opening up complexity, combating reductionism, being self-reflexive, and proposing alternatives, corresponds to the “critical” commitment of Frankfurt School. CDA seeks social change, which is also the legacy of the Frankfurt School.

Another noteworthy line of influence is the one going back to Antonio Gramsci and his followers, including most notably Stuart Hall and the other members of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (van Dijk, 1993). CDA draws upon Gramsci's hegemony, which concerns how the dominant class maintains political power and manufactures "popular consent" by manipulating public opinion. Ideology, as Stuart Hall (1982) defines it, concerns how power naturalizes certain meanings and produces taken-for-granted views of the social world. Eagleton (1994) also points out that the study of ideology is about examining the relation between thought and social reality (as cited in Wodak, 2003). CDA challenges the discourses which are saturated with hegemony and ideology that represent the entrenched values of the "bourgeoisie" and the power structure of society.

Finally, one can easily identify the influence of work of Foucault on the pedigree of CDA (van Dijk, 1993). As Fairclough (1993) describes, "Foucault has had a huge influence upon the social sciences and humanities, and the popularization of the concept of 'discourse' and of discourse analysis as a method can partly be attributed to that influence" (p.37). Foucault contends that discourse produces knowledge and constructs social subjects as "objects" and that a power struggle takes place both in and over discourse (as cited in Fairclough, 1993). Although the definition of *discourse* that Foucault offers, to some extent, differs from *discourse* of Critical Discourse Analysis, the contributions of Foucault to CDA can easily be discerned.

CDA thus inherits multiple research traditions and draws on a variety of prestigious scholars. Significantly, CDA's intellectual lineage employs a distinct "social justice" perspective to seek emancipatory potentials to change the unequal status quo.

"All research methodologies rest on some ontological and epistemological

foundation” (Strega, 2005, p.201). Therefore, in order to achieve a full understanding of CDA, attention to its metatheoretical perspective should necessarily be paid.

Ontology concerns “the nature of social world and the people, group, and processes that populate that world” (Miller, 1995, p. 26). It can also be understood as a world view. CDA never appears to take the realist position, because a realist insists “both the physical and the social world as consisting of structures that exist ‘out there’ and that are independent of an individual’s perception” (Miller, 1995, p. 27). CDA, with close intellectual lineage to critical theories, disputes the realist claim. On the contrary, CDA “assumes a social constructionist view of discourse” (Huckin, 2001) and believes that social reality is constructed or constituted intersubjectively through interactive communication.

In terms of epistemology, Miller (1995) says that it “involves ideas about what knowledge is and how knowledge is created and represented in the social world” (p.30). Put another way, “an epistemology is a philosophy of what counts as knowledge and ‘truth’” (Strega, 2005, p.201). By no means do I believe that our knowledge about discourse, ideology, and power relations can be objectively achieved. I believe that knowledge “resides with social participants in specific situations and thus must be garnered through experience or through extended interaction with insiders” (Miller, 1995, p. 30). Therefore, CDA, which has strong commitment to challenge the dominant ideology and discourses, takes the subjectivists’ epistemological position. In addition, Miller (1995) contends that the epistemological stance of the critical research tradition is the critical-emancipatory cognitive interest of Habermas (1971), which regards knowledge as “serving the interests of change and emancipation” (p.73).

Regarding axiology, which is “the study of values” (Miller, 1995, p. 30), I believe

that personal and professional values are “a lens through which social phenomena are observed” (Miller, 1995, p. 58). I insist that values are attached or stuck to the worldviews and it is never possible to eliminate them from research. As Miller notes, “values should guide scholarship” and researchers should “work as change agents in supporting those values” (p.74). Taking the anti-status-quo stance by exposing alienating power relations, CDA can never be value-free. I value a healthy communication system which elevates the public interest, reflects the majority of public voices rather than voices of the few elites, and cares more about the marginalized people instead of those in power. Guided by these values, I intend to reveal the problematic political economy of Chinese media and offer an alternative view for change.

To sum, CDA holds a social constructionist ontological stance, posits a critical-emancipatory potential, and axiologically focuses its role in revealing unequal power relations.

## **5.2 The Approaches of CDA- Methodological Framework**

The objective of challenging unequal power relations through CDA necessarily ushers researchers into the question of how best to go about doing so. There are no set or fixed procedures for performing a CDA due to the distinct and specific nature of each research project. There are definitely some general guidelines. Thomas Huckin (2001) provides a very clear and detailed picture of how to use this methodology to carry out research.

Huckin (2001) identifies two stages in analyzing a text. First, comprehend the text at a manifest, uncritical level. Second, step back from the text and look at it critically for its latent meaning. There are several steps in the second stage which enable a successful CDA project. I then discuss them as follows.

Genre is very important in CDA methodology. Genre manifests linguistic features of a certain text or discourse. Determining the genre of a text allows CDA analysts to understand “why certain kinds of statements appear in the text and how they might serve the purposes of the text-producer” (Huckin, 2001). Genre also enables analysts to critically detect deviations from a text.

Framing is of significance in CDA research because it determines “how the content of a text is presented, what sort of perspective (angle, slant) the writer is taking” (Huckin, 2001). Some more specific tools related to framing should also be reviewed.

Foregrounding refers to the ways how the author emphasizes certain content, while backgrounding means a process of de-emphasizing certain concepts or information.

Omission is an extreme form of backgrounding, which totally ignores or neglects certain relevant issues. Omission can be ultimately ideologically potent, “because if the writer does not mention something, it often does not even enter the reader's mind and thus is not subjected to his or her scrutiny” (Huckin, 2001). Presupposition naturalizes and takes certain ideas for granted without an alternative. Presupposition is often employed to support ideology and unequal power relations.

Genre and framing allow CDA analysts to consider a text as a whole. But, researchers need to proceed through the text in greater detail at the sentence level. Topicalization is a type of foregrounding, which creates topic of a sentence and affects the reader’s perception. Agency can help readers discern certain people who exercise power and initiate actions from others who are passively “recipients of those actions” (Huckin, 2001). Another important tool worth attending is insinuations, which can be a strong element in discourse due to their typical double meanings. Modality affects tone by choosing the words or phrases of different degrees of certitude and authority such as “might”, “must”,

or “it’s possible that” (Huckin, 2001).

In order to give a clearer view of the practical application of CDA, I provide an example to demonstrate how some of its relevant analytic tools have been used.

Phelan (2007) investigated the editorial discourse about Telecom Eireann’s stock market floatation in six Irish broadsheet newspapers. According to Phelan (2007), the floatation of this telecommunication company was the biggest privatization in the history of Ireland. Phelan’s research is based on a sample of editorial columns of the six Irish newspapers throughout 1999 and 2000 (before and after the company’s floatation).

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is no standardized or universal way to utilize the tools of CDA. In this case, Phelan uses the three concepts or tools, which are developed by Fairclough (2003), to perform his CDA analysis: genres, discourses (“ways of representing”), and styles (“ways of being” or identification) (as cited in Phelan, 2007, p.8).

By utilizing the framework and tools (such as framing) of CDA, Phelan (2007) uncovers three discursive frames that have key neo-liberal assumptions. The first discursive frame that Phelan (2007) uncovered is that the editorial treatment of the full privatization is depicted as desirable and preferable. For instance, one of the columns describes that “[in] the bad old days, [the country] was forced to live with very high prices from a communications monopoly”, and another editorial reports that Telecom Eireann will “face the full rigour of fair competition [after full privatization]” (cited by Phelan, 2007, p.13). The insinuation is that a liberalized telecommunication market symbolizes a more professional operation, equal competition and high efficiency, while government involvement is insinuated as undesirable. The second frame is that direct state involvement in the telecommunication industry is archaic (Phelan, 2007). The third



frame that Phelan (2007) discerned is that public participation in the stock market is a wise choice and should be encouraged. One of the editorials declares that “the [investment] risk is almost non-existent... This floatation is surely on the way to success” (cited by Phelan, 2007, p.15). One report portrays the floatation as “an opportunity that can be shared by all” (cited by Phelan, 2007, p.15). Insinuated throughout the discourse is that neo-liberalist telecommunication market benefits the public financially and people should participate in the stock market.

By employing CDA, Phelan (2007) exposes the embedded neo-liberal ideology in the discourse of Irish media. Phelan (2007) concludes that the neo-liberalism is clearly embedded in the media discourse and the three discursive frames play an important role in legitimizing, naturalizing, and projecting the authority of “order of discourse” of the dominant power in Ireland (p.24).

### **5.3 The Strengths and Limitations of CDA**

The interdisciplinary nature of CDA results in a number of strengths. There are two particular merits I would like to highlight, which more or less relate to the definition of CDA itself. First, with a commitment to social justice, CDA challenges power relations from a distinct perspective or angle: discourse. In CDA, discourse is scrutinized as a site of power and struggle (Wodak, 2003, p.6). The micro-level, specific and detailed perspective of CDA can certainly lead to a more convincing argument and help build a more effective “bottom-up” resistance. Second, rather than just revealing and exposing unequal social relations and power abuses, CDA creates “awareness in agents of their own needs and interest” and aims at “producing enlightenment and emancipation” (Wodak, 2001, p. 4). This is quite significant, because CDA has the conscious intention to serve the purpose of social change which possesses agency or power to alter the *status*

*quo*. Third, CDA is a set of “handy” tools. Both its theoretical and methodological perspectives are very straightforward.

However, CDA is not free from critique. As Wodak (2001) emphasizes, CDA is not “a closed and ‘finished’ theory”, and is characterized by “a large heterogeneity and scholarly openness” (p.2). Hammersley (1997) even poignantly notes that “CDA is far from being an unproblematic enterprise” (p.245).

As Blommaert & Bulcane (2000) note, one of the criticisms of CDA centers on issues of interpretation. CDA has been criticized for being partial, selective, highly interpretive, and ultimately prejudicial. People who hold this position are probably positivists and post-positivists. They stick largely to realist perspective, tend to “search for regularities through the scientific method” (Miller, 1995, p. 49), and assert a value-free axiology. However, I believe this criticism is being far from reasonable and convincing. Axiologically, CDA never takes a value-free position. Critical researchers who employ CDA as methodological perspective are very self-reflexive and socially responsible. Another criticism or limitation of CDA is about the mutual neglect and ignorance among its different approaches (van Dijk, 1993, p. 279). This is partly because there are many ways to do CDA by drawing on different paradigms, philosophies, theories and methods. International, theoretical and methodological integration is urgently needed to benefit the achievement of a common objective, namely to analyze, reveal and combat inequality and injustice (van Dijk, 1993).

## **Chapter 6: A Case Study *Xinwen Lianbo* (National Network News) on CCTV**

Thus far I have set the stage for examining a case study which will demonstrate how Chinese media propagate a belief system about “socialism with Chinese characteristics.”

Fortunately, as a person who has eight years work experience with China Central Television, I have had a good opportunity to observe this institution from different angles. CCTV, the state television network, which is under the direct administration of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), is China’s biggest, most authoritative and most prestigious national television network, and *Xinwen Lianbo* (National Network News) is the most “reliable” and “popular” national daily news program on CCTV. *Xinwen Lianbo* is one of the most authoritative information channels that the party uses to release important news and provide guidance to the party members and the public.

CCTV stands at the absolute forefront in China’s television industry in regard to influence, popularity and profitability. According to the inside data, CCTV realized revenue of 13.98 billion Yuan in 2006, nearly 65% of which came from advertising. The *2009 CCTV New Year’s Gala*, the five-hour or so evening gala of the drama, dance, comedy skit, acrobatics and song on the eve of Chinese Lunar New Year, brought more than 600 million Yuan to CCTV! For the first time, program scripts and comedy dialogues used product placement advertising. The network’s auction of prime time slots of 2009 brought in 9.3 billion Yuan of advertising revenue alone, almost 16 percent higher than that of 2008. It is worth noting that a majority of the revenue comes from the time slots right before and after the news program *Xinwen Lianbo*.

For many years, this exclusive national television station has been the most important

propaganda machine for the Chinese government to indoctrinate or persuade the Chinese people that only the CPC can save China and usher in a new era of better life (the party's decades-old mantra, also the lyric of the most popular song for decades– *Without the CPC, There Would Be No New China*). In addition, *Xinwen Lianbo* is the most important vehicle for the CPC to justify its preeminence in the eyes of Chinese people. At the same time, marketization and commercialization are also broadly pervasive in the national mouthpiece of the Chinese government. Making money is the top priority right after the goal of indoctrinating socialist ideology. CCTV is carefully balancing the propaganda machine and the apparatus of maximizing monopoly profit.

### **6.1 News Discourse on China Central Television**

Decades ago, the ideological indoctrination fostered by the Chinese media in general and news in particular, was entirely explicit. News played very important role in constituting the social knowledge among the Chinese people that socialism was a superior system. For example, one could not find coverage of crimes and disasters on Beijing television in 1977 (Chang et al., 1994), and news coverage at that time mainly dealt with the party lines and policies. Nowadays, it is not possible for the party to overtly indoctrinate the Chinese people as it did decades ago. Today, ideological indoctrination through news discourse is much more implicit. News on CCTV is concerned mainly with China's national development and economic growth while insinuating that "only the CPC can save China". The news does cover some crime and disaster stories representing "a reasonable presentation of events in the real world" (Chang et al., 1994, p.58), but it mainly casts its spotlight on the relief effort the party has made during these disasters. Through content analysis, Chang (et al., 1994) found "national development and economic reform themes significantly outnumbered all other themes and appeared mostly

in domestic news” (p.59). I argue that the shift to more reports of news about economic achievements, the superiority of the party’s governance and the positive issues about China serves the needs of promoting socialist ideology and the party’s agenda. Although news content on CCTV today is more subtle and discursive than that of decades ago, it clearly indicates “politically tainted” manipulation and “cognitive mind control” (van Dijk, 2006, p.359).

## **6.2 *Xinwen Lianbo* and CDA approach**

*Xinwen Lianbo*, the half hour daily live news program aired on CCTV-1 (the highest rated TV channel in China) and CCTV-News from 7 pm to 7:30 pm, has been broadcasting since 1978 and is reportedly the news program with the largest audience in the world, approximately 728 million. The program presents stories in the form of video footage accompanied by the presenters’ narration, sometimes the reporters’ explanations or interviews. Unlike the hosting style of hosts or anchors in other programs, which is more flexible and interactive, the style of presenters of *Xinwen Lianbo* tends to be more official, serious and rigid, which represents the official style of the party. The first couple stories in the news program tend to focus on the important activities of the party leaders, who are members of the Political Bureau Standing Committee of the CPC Central Committee. The running order of these news stories is based on the political rankings of the leaders concerned.

Almost all Party members and Party leaders in various levels watch the program and view it as an official window into the newest Party concerns and propaganda trends. The program is required to be aired at the same time on all the other 31 provinces’ satellite TV channels. Therefore, the program is the undisputed ratings leader among all Chinese daily programs and the advertising price for the time right before and after the program is the

most expensive in the Chinese media market. The general assumption here is that the news discourse of this program serves to entrench the dominant socialist ideology and seeks to sustain the current power relations in China.

The analysis is based on a sample which consists of two weeks programming from April 16 to 29, 2008. This time period was chosen to avoid the extremely intense coverage of the Olympics in June and July, but the sample does include many stories about the torch relays of the games. The sample also evades the extensive special news coverage of the severe earthquake in May, the extensive reporting on the Lhasa riots in March, and the Olympic torch relay incidents in Paris and London in early April. Although the programs during the sample period did cover relatively more news about the Tibet issues, they represent the standard discourse or normal programming of *Xinwen Lianbo*. The sample also allows me to demonstrate how Chinese media generally manufacture the news, how it channels the direction of public opinion, and how the media, directed by the party, produces and disseminates a hegemonic ideology.

Tools, such as framing, foregrounding, backgrounding, omission, presupposition, insinuation, and topicalization (Fairclough, 1989; Huckin, 2001) will be employed to analyze these programs. These concepts will help reveal the ideological nature of the following key assumptions and frames: 1) Under the leadership of the CPC, China has achieved and has been achieving remarkable success in all walks of life such as industry, agriculture, the rule of law, and other economic or social sectors; 2) China participates in a friendly international environment to build up a moderately prosperous socialist country with Chinese characteristics and is always concerned with maintaining good relationships with different countries; 3) The party attaches great importance to sovereignty. and have gained international support for the Tibet and Taiwan issues; 4) manifest ideological

indoctrination. I intend to structure the analysis in terms of the above mentioned themes by critically analyzing all the relevant pieces of news of *Xinwen Lianbo* (designated as *XWLB hereafter*) during the sampling period.

Since the assumptions of the project are concerned with how *XWLB* indoctrinates socialist ideologies, it is necessary to briefly introduce ideological and theoretical basis of the CPC.

### **6.3 Ideological and theoretical tradition of the Communist Party of China**

In October 2007, the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (NCCPC) amended and adopted a Party Constitution. The CPC takes Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents of Jiang Zeming as its ideological basis and guide to action (NCCPC, 2007).

According to the new Party Constitution, Marxism-Leninism serves as the preliminary theory for building the proletarian party. The thought of Mao Zedong, which integrated the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism with Chinese conditions, “consists of theoretical principles concerning the revolution and construction in China.” It relates how the CPC won victory in the new-democratic revolution and founded the People’s Republic of China. Deng Xiaoping theory contributed “the line, principles and policies concerning building socialism with Chinese characteristics.” The important thought of Three Represents, the new theory which Jiang Zemin set forth, asserts that the CPC always “represents the development trend of China’s advanced productive forces, the orientation of China’s advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people” (NCCPC, 2007).

Another “important guiding principle for China’s economic and social development”

and “major strategic thought” is the Scientific Outlook on Development:

Since the Sixteenth National Congress, the Central Committee of the party has followed the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents and, by pooling the wisdom of the whole Party to meet new requirements of development, formulated the Scientific Outlook on Development, which puts people first and calls for comprehensive, balanced and sustainable development. The outlook is a scientific theory that is in the same line as Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents and keeps up with the times. (NCCPC, 2007)

Conducting ideological battles is a kind of tradition for the party. Decades ago, especially during the Cultural Revolution, almost every adult Chinese was required to study and recite *Quotations from Chairman Mao* to follow his teachings and instructions. Since the opening up and reform started in 30 years ago, it has been perceived by the party that the communist ideology is declining among both the party members and ordinary Chinese people. Because of China’s theoretical adherence to socialism, party members at all levels are always required to attend events, seminars and conferences to thoroughly study the ideological theories by integrating the theories with their work. The media promotes it through ideological slogans such as “Three Represents”, “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”, and “Scientific Outlook on Development” etc. These slogans and the illustrative quotes used in the analysis below are “official” translations and may not reflect standard English. Because this is a study of ideological indoctrination, it is important to work from official translations in order to reflect the Party’s world view.

#### **6.4 Revealing the party’s ideological control**

##### *General economic progress*

An April 16 news report on an executive meeting of the State Council presided over by Premier Wen Jiabao stated “China has made great success in fighting the snow devastation and in restoration work in disaster areas” and that China’s economy “is maintaining stable growth momentum” and “is on the desired track of macro-economic



control”. The news also suggested that all economic sectors have maintained rapid and steady growth so far in 2008 and that “the overall economic situation is better than expected”, despite the worst winter snow storm in half a century and a harsh global economic environment. The news story asserted that China’s economic restructuring has made new progress due to the opening-up policy and reforms. In terms of the severe snow and ice storm, Wu Bangguo, China’s top legislator, on another occasion claimed the party Central Committee and the State Council “promptly adopted effective measures” and described the disaster combating and relief as “a great victory” (April 24). A critical look at the story reveals that the news was infused with ideologically motivated content without detailing the fact that skyrocketing food prices caused by the disastrous winter snow made it hard for low income groups to afford pork and vegetables. It is not hard to see that news discourse skillfully foregrounds the positive information that rationalizes the government’s political power. In addition, when *XWLB* covers disasters or other negative stories, it always foregrounds the relief efforts the government has made while backgrounding and omitting the details or aftermath of the catastrophes themselves.

*XWLB* produced a long story to cover the celebration of 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the largest special economic zone (SEZ) in Hainan Province (April 26). The news highlighted a set of statistics, such as 7.6-fold increase in Hainan’s GDP, a soaring ten-fold increase in disposable income for urban dwellers and a 6.6 times jump in net income for farmers, to show “the great overall economic progress” it has made within the 20 years, emphasizing that “following the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of Three Represents, and the Scientific Outlook on Development, the Hainan SEZ continues to reform and open up in the road of building socialism with Chinese characteristics”. Vice Premier Li Keqiang, who “represented Central Committee of the CPC and State Council

to participate in the celebration”, delivered “an important remark”, stressing that “Hainan should hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics and rally closely around the CPC Central Committee with comrade Hu Jintao as the General Secretary to maintain speedy and quality economic development”. Li also added that “setting up SEZs was an important measure of China’s great undertakings of reform and opening-up” and fully confirmed “the historical achievement” of the party’s policy. The news not only insinuated that under the leadership of the party, Hainan made such great economic progress, but also reiterated the socialist theoretical basis of China.

China’s economic growth was previously thought to be overheated. The government therefore implemented a series of macro-control measures to slow down the red-hot growth. An April 16 story covered a set of statistics released by National Bureau of Statistics of China. The statistics presented verified “the Chinese economy maintains steady and fast growth with 10.6% growth to 6149.1 billion Yuan in the first quarter of 2008, 1.1% lower than the same period of 2007”, and that “the country’s macro-control measures are effective”.

Growing tax revenues are also seen as contributing to the prosperous picture of China’s economy. Tax revenue in the first quarter of 2008 grew to 1510.2 billion Yuan, 33.8 percent higher than the same period of last year (16 April). Also, a stable labour market is said to be key for the party to maintain “a stable and harmonious society” to which the party always attaches great importance. Covering a trans-ministries meeting on employment hosted by Vice Premier Zhang Dejiang, a story stated that “after years of concerted efforts, the unemployment rate in urban areas have seen a steady decline” (April 24). The news foregrounded “the proactive policies” on job creation and unemployment reduction, while omitting the serious employment problems faced by the

thousands of the college graduates each year and unfair treatment of “farmer workers”.

As Fairclough (1989) puts it, power is exercised “more particularly through the ideological workings of language ... [which] has become perhaps the primary medium of social control and power” (p. 2–3). In this case, by foregrounding the overall economic success the party has made and ideological theories of the party, the media discourse confirms “the superiority of the party”.

### Industry

In dealing with news about industrial sector, *XWLB* mainly casts its light on major breakthroughs made by some companies, improvements in energy, resource, and environmental conservation, and advancement of giant projects, etc. Achievements are foregrounded, with emphasizing certain words such as “the largest”, “the most advanced”, “successfully” or “the best” in the news. Presuppositions embedded in the discourse illustrate that, to borrow from President Hu (October 15, 2007), “China’s overall strength grew considerably” and its “international standing and influence rose notably”, of course, “under the leadership of the CPC”.

In reporting on a newly manufactured gantry crane by DHI-DCW Group, a state-owned enterprise based in the city of Dalian, the story said the crane was the “currently largest crane in the world” and able to lift three times as much as the previously largest crane in the world (April 18). The significance of this was that “the newly made gantry crane will drastically change the manufacturing process of deepwater offshore drilling rigs”.

An April 18 story on Chinese steelmaking giant Sinosteel Jilin Corporation praised it for “stimulating technological innovation, implementing industrial restructure, and successfully conserving energy and reducing emissions” while reporting on

environmental dust control equipment used by the company. “By conserving the energy and recycling industrious wastes, we realized 110 million Yuan in 2007”, said Zhenyue Chang, Chairman of the company. The news singled out one company and foregrounded its improvements in energy conservation, while omitting the serious problems of pollution from numerous factories. Lake Tai, one of the major previous tourist attractions and famous for its beauty, was seriously hit by the algae blooms in 2008 and in a panic people in that region bought bottled water as drinking water. Qingdao, the coastal city for Beijing Olympic sailing regatta, was also hit by the algal blooms six weeks before the 2008 Games. Chinese heavy industry relies mostly on the dirtiest energy, coal, keeping industrial cities wrapped in a gray shroud.

Another story on the same day asserted “Premier Wen Jiabao attended the ground-breaking ceremony of the construction of high-speed railway line linking Beijing and Shanghai”, and stated that the railway line would be “the world’s first-rate project” once completed. The story also stated “the designed speed for the 1,318-kilometer-track for the rail service is 350 kilometers per hour” and it “will be both the longest and the fastest railway line in the world”. What was foregrounded here was “technological innovation”, “self-designed” and “domestically produced”. An April 17 story on the upcoming Olympics titled “Good Luck Beijing- Shooting Sport Testing Match” claimed “the Beijing Shooting Range Hall is best one in the World” (April 17). Another story on “the world’s longest” cross-sea bridge -Hangzhou Bay Cross-sea Bridge, would be open to traffic, and it would “bring about the economic integration of the Yangtze Delta area”, a major powerhouse of China’s economy (April 23). The story foregrounded the benefits of the project such as lowering the transportation costs and boosting economy of the region.

The editorial voice was similarly grounded in a discourse of “self-designed”, “self-innovated” and “domestically produced”, as *XWLB* reported China’s construction machinery industry, claiming the sales revenue of the industry in 2007 “ranked second in the world” (April 23). The news was blithely confident about the industry, as it anticipated “more and more enterprises are on the path of self-innovation” instead of merely adapting and assimilating the technology of other countries.

The party initiated a propaganda campaign on the theme of “self-innovation” and “self-design” of Chinese enterprises to show off the achievements they have made. According to an announcement of *XWLB* (April 23), other national news outlets such as Xinhua News Agency, People’s Daily, Guanmin Daily, Economic Daily News, and CCTV.com would intensively report on China’s “self-innovated” industry.

“The first self-designed and domestically produced composite shield machine was finished”, a story asserted while covering the construction of a tunnel (April 26). Entitled “Self-innovated Products Dominate China Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machine Tool Fair”, the story continued to focus on “self-innovation” and promoting “domestic brands”, claiming that “some of Chinese self-innovated machine tools represent most advanced in the world” (April 23). “With 123,000 CNC Machines manufactured in 2007, China has become the world’s largest CNC machine producer”, the story stressed.

“By technological innovation, Wuxi Suntech Power Co., Ltd, a previous small private company, has become one of the world’s top three photovoltaic cells and modules producers”, according to a news report presented on April 24. The story also stressed the high conversion efficiency of the company’s solar cells, claiming that the solar cells “possessed highest conversion efficiency in the world among the same kind of products”. The news claimed Suntech as a model company which “holds high the great banner of

socialism with Chinese characteristics, thoroughly applies the Scientific Outlook on Development, and carefully implements guiding principles of the 17th NCPC”. Actually, Suntech, a private company, which went public on the New York Stock Exchange in 2005 and is leading the industry in providing innovative solar energy solutions, has nothing to do with the socialist ideologies.

China’s aerospace program has long been the focus of enormous national pride since it successfully launched its first man-made satellite in 1970. News in the field of aerospace can often be seen. An April 24 story on the Global Space Development Summit Held in Beijing claimed “China will launch a large carrier rocket, which has a capacity to carry 14 tonnes and the capacity of our current carrier rocket is 5.1 tonnes”. China’s first data relay satellite “Tianlian 1” was “successfully launched” and would be used “for the first time during the Shenzhou VII manned spaceflight” to “greatly” monitor and track the spaceflight, an April 26 story asserted. “The launch is the 105th successful mission in a row of China’s Long March series of rockets since 1996, and the continuous successful launching rate ranks the first in the world”.

### Agriculture

For a long time, Chinese agriculture has been the foundation of the national economy. China’s rural population accounts for a majority of its total population. To maintain the overall political and social stability of China and to realize “agricultural modernization with Chinese characteristics” (Hu, 2007), the party needs to generate a promising and prosperous agriculture sector. *XWLB*, as the most important mouthpiece of the party, plays important role in addressing the party’s agenda. Therefore, news on *XWLB* about agriculture and rural farmers is always positively rendered. The agriculture sector always sees favorable growth and lives of rural farmers enjoy continuous improvement, but the

problems and the difficulties in the field of agriculture are not even broached.

As a news story on 17 April puts it, “steady progress was made in wheat production due to the effective measures implemented by major wheat-producing provinces” and the “central government increased the direct subsidies to all grain farmers to 78.9 billion Yuan this year”. The news also foregrounded that the subsidies were “largest ever” and how the government enthusiastically addressed the concerns of rural farmers, however, without detailing the fact that the cost of purchasing agriculture machinery, tools and fertilizer had drastically increased. *XWLB* never mentions that rural farmers are “the least privileged” and are denied “many welfare benefits and rights” by “a residency permit system” (Harvey, 2005, p.125). China’s urban-rural gap is a serious social phenomenon. The rural population lags far behind urban residents in such areas as income, education, employment and social benefits etc. *XWLB* never reports those problems.

The campaign to build “ecological civilization villages” in Hainan province, the largest special economic zone in China, “has made key progress to create the new socialist countryside” (April 26). The story asserted the agricultural products made by such villages were more “ecologically friendly” and more “safe to consume”.

#### *China’s Efforts and Achievements in Promoting the Rule of Law*

Coverage of how Chinese legislators handle complaints made by individuals or groups through letters and visits used phrasings such as “excellent improvement” and “delightful changes”, to generalize the current situation in this field (April 23). The recent decrease from 2005 in the number of petitions submitted was seen as a contrast to the 12 years continuous increase and was cited as the sole piece of evidence for the effectiveness of Regulations on Letters and Visits enacted in 2005. The story even did not address one possibility that the regulations frighten off some petitions.

An April 23 story covered proposals for assisting disabled persons issued by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council. The story asserted “the undertakings for the disabled persons are the main parts of the undertakings of socialism with Chinese characteristics;” “the party and the government concern and attach great importance to the undertakings for the disabled persons for a long run”; and “the environment and conditions for disabled persons to participate in social life have been greatly improved”. The story went on to state that “the lives of disabled persons have been constantly bettered” and “the development of the undertakings for disabled persons in China has gained unanimous international recognition and praise”.

The Standing Committee of the 11th National People’s Congress (NPC) adopted the amendment to the Law on Protection of the Disabled, according to *XWLB* (April 24). Wu, Bangguo, chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC, said that “boosting development of undertakings for the disabled and improving the environment for them are one of main tasks of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and a harmonious socialist society.” The recent attention paid to the disabled by the CPC was to set up a sound environment for the upcoming Paralympics right after Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. Additionally, the politically hollow words of the party are highly foregrounded to demonstrate “the excellence and superiority of socialism with Chinese characteristics,” while the problems and details of the situations of disabled persons are omitted. In China discriminatory employment practices toward persons with disabilities are never ending. Both public and private employers are accused of rejecting people with physical disabilities, neglecting the regulation that the disabled should comprise a minimum of 1.5 percent of all employees, and “there is little evidence of official efforts to enforce that quota” (HRW, 2007). In most cities or towns except some big cities such as



Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou etc, it is difficult for the disabled to go out in public because of the lack of physical access. Students with physical disabilities are often rejected by universities.

An April 17 story reported that “the protection of intellectual property right has realized leaping development”. By foregrounding this kind of information, including statements such as China “has processed 100 million patent application cases in one and a half year” and “the amount of captured pirated products was more than 75 million” while omitting the serious situation of infringement of intellectual property in China. The news effectively thwarts any critical or contradictory facts which would allow viewers to generate a more nuanced perspective.

*A “friendly” international environment, the Tibet issue, and the national pride*

In framing China’s foreign ties with other countries, and with its important economic partners in particular, *XWLB* tries to project that China maintains pleasant, strategic, and reciprocal relationships with its trade partners and plays a positive role in the world arena.

Covering President Hu Jintao’s meeting with a delegation of Japan’s two primary parties, *XWLB* cited Hu’s remarks that Sino-Japanese relations are “developing” and “exchanges and cooperation have enhanced” by “continuing consultations about regional and international affairs and major issues of both concern” and that “China values Sino-Japanese relations, and developing long-term and good-neighborly relations has been our consistent guideline” (16 April, 2008). The report continued with the two visiting party leaders’ favorable assessment of the relationship of the two countries and Japan’s commitment of supporting the Beijing Olympic Games.

Another story on April 25 reporting Hu Jintao’s meeting with the European Union (EU) Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso asserted that both leaders “committed

to developing a strategic partnership” and agreed that “robust China-EU ties were vital to the international society”. Barroso also expressed his good wish for a successful Beijing Olympics. When covering a joint press conference between Premier Wen Jiabao and visiting Barroso on the same day, *XWLB* foregrounded that “the Sino-EU start high-level economic and trade dialogue” and “all member countries of EU respect China’s sovereignty and integrity and admit Taiwan and Tibet are parts of China”. “Trade tensions”, such as “trade surplus, product piracy and currency controls” in China, were areas in which the EU stepped up pressure on Beijing for this visit (AOL, 2008), but were never mentioned in the story.

On another occasion, Jia Qinglin, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), China’s top advisory body, met with Tran Van Hang, member of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee (April 23). Jia said that the two countries “have enjoyed a sound growth of bilateral relations” and “views the relations from a strategic viewpoint”. He also “applauded Vietnam’s support of China in Tibet and Taiwan issues”. Tran Van Hang said “the Beijing Olympics are a grand event for all people in the world”, and he “wished success for the Beijing Olympic Games”.

In reporting the Chinese Vice President’s meeting with Dick Ebersol, US broadcaster NBC’s Olympics chief, *XWLB* stressed that NBC would “continue to spare no effort to support” the games’ preparatory work and wished for a “a great and successful games” (April 23).

When meeting with visiting South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping commented that the “strategic” Sino-South African relations had “comprehensively developed”, and said that cooperation

in such fields as politics, trade, consultation in international affairs, and education was “fruitful” (April 23).

In an April 18 story on Xi Jinping’s meeting with former Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and Ikuo Hirayama, president of Japan-China association for friendship, Xi said that the cooperation between the two countries was “stable” and “healthy” and contributed to “the peace and stability of Asia and the world”, while Tomiichi Murayama expressed support for the Beijing Olympic Games from the Japanese side and wished for their success. When meeting with visiting Yoshinobu Ishikawa, governor of Shizuoka Prefecture of Japan, Xi said that President Hu Jintao’s upcoming trip to Japan was “a great event” in Sino-Japanese relations “in the new period” (April 23). They both regarded the mutual understanding and friendship as “the fundamental interests of the two peoples”. All these stories foregrounded the reciprocal and strategic Sino-Japanese relationship. However, historical confrontations, difficulties and even animosity which the two countries have experienced can never be neglected. The bitterness began with Sino-Japanese War (Jiawu War) from 1894 to 1895, which resulted in an imposed Treaty of Shimonoseki. In addition, many Chinese people still bear a grudge against Japan because of the brutal and inhuman genocidal war crimes committed by the Japanese military in China during the World War II. More recently, the Japanese government approved a new textbook that glossed over or minimized its wartime atrocities, fanning feverous anger among the Chinese people against Japan and resulting in protests vandalizing the Japanese embassy in Beijing and consulate in. Disputes over territory in the East China Sea have long been a sensitive issue between the two countries. Positively rendering the Sino-Japanese relations, while omitting the difficulties between the two nations, apparently adds legitimacy to China’s opening up policy and to its

commitment for economic development.

An April 26 story covered the meeting between Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and “reiterated their resolve to improve bilateral ties to a new level”. “Pakistan will always stand with China on the Taiwan and Tibet issues and wish Beijing Olympics a great success”, the story quoted the Pakistan leaders as saying. Reporting on Yang’s visit to Bangladesh on April 24, *XWLB* stressed that the country “accords great importance to the relationship with China” and “Bangladesh has extended support to One-China policy”.

The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games were viewed as one of the most important events for both the party and the Chinese people. For the people, it marked country’s arrival on the world stage, and for the party, the games were viewed as the great chance to demonstrate the unprecedented economic success China has achieved.

When dealing with the torch relay of Beijing 2008 Olympic Games in Islamabad Pakistan, the news (April 16) showed the footage of Musharraf, the president of Pakistan, who spoke during his visit in China from April 10 to April 15 that “there is no one in Pakistan who would do anything against the interest of China” and that “we will take all measures to ensure the security of the torch relay”. Both President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani attended and spoke at the opening ceremony of the torch relay, which signifies the deep friendship between two countries. The news also covered an interview with one of Pakistan torch bearers who said “we are very excited to have the torch come to Islamabad and thank you guys (for) giving us the opportunity”. The news foregrounded the strong relationship between the two countries without mentioning that the relay route was drastically changed and “confined” “in the limited

space” due to the security concerns (BBC news, April 16, 2008). The torch relay in New Deli, India, was rendered as “successful” and “harmonious” (April 18), omitting the shortening of the relay route and the extremely heavy security along the relay route over the fears of the disruption from protests. In reporting the Thai (April 19), Indonesia (April 21), Australian (April 23), Japanese (April 26) and South Korean (April 27) of the torch relay, *XWLB* routinely used lengthy video portraying the torch as being welcomed by numerous Chinese national flags and loud cheers, such as “Go China! Go Beijing! Go Olympics!”, and by warm smiles in an overall festive mood, without covering any protests or different voices. *XWLB* also reported on how the leg cities attached great importance to the torch relays and how the cities were well prepared for the events. The news program exerted great efforts to filter any negative information about China and the Beijing Olympics.

However hard it tried, China’s desire to project “a favorable international environment” as it builds the Xiaokang Society (a moderately prosperous society) and as it was striving to hold the most successful Olympics ever, many Western media distorted reporting on Tibetan Lhasa riot in March by using photographs of Tibetan demonstrators clashing with riot police in Nepal; French President Nicolas Sarkozy openly threatened to boycott the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games; the protests and chaos disrupted the torch relay in such international legs as London, Paris, San Francisco and Nagano etc; Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoe awarded honorary citizenship to the exiled Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader Dalai Lama; In addition, on April 9, 2008, CNN commentator Jack Cafferty overtly offended the Chinese people by claiming “the same bunch of goons and thugs they’ve been for the last 50 years” on *Situation Room*. For the most of the Chinese people, the 2008 Beijing Olympics meant far more than an

international sport event, and hosting the games was associated with nationalist pride and was meant to signify the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation from its image as a disastrous and humiliated semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. All these incidents happened several months before the Beijing Olympics and helped to fan a nationwide nationalistic fervor in China.

The party usually restricts all kinds of demonstrations and protests. Anti-western demonstrations, which were reportedly tacitly allowed by the party, happened in some big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Wuhan etc. People started to boycott French products and refused to shop at Carrefour, the French supermarket chain. The website [www.anti-CNN.com](http://www.anti-CNN.com), which was spontaneously created by a few patriotic young men in March 2008 to reveal the media biases of the Western media, once became one of the hottest websites in China. “Don’t be too CNN” became a fad phrase in China. Overall, the patriotic fervor and nationalistic temper hit a fever pitch right before the Games.

However, the eruption of nationalist sentiment in China was also a source of concern to the party. The party feared that the protests might “spill out of control” and that the feverous patriotic tempers would “scare away Western investors and even threaten the communist regime” (Kommersant, 2008). In addition, it was not easy for the party to successfully hold the forthcoming Beijing Olympics in such an uneasy environment. Critically looking at *XWLB* during the sample period found that the program played a key role in calming the ardent patriotic fervor and promoting “rational patriotism”. *XWLB*, the most important ideological apparatus of the party, on the one hand initiated an extensive propaganda campaign on Tibet issue to rationalize its governance on this region, and on the other hand, projected a “rational patriotism” under the direction of the party to insure the anti-West protests did not harm China’s international image.

Because the Tibet issue is one of the most sensitive issues for the party, *XWLB* takes the party's line and mainly foregrounds the following frames: 1) Economic progress and improvement of Tibetan people's well-being. 2) Freedom of religious belief. 3) The thriving of Tibetan culture and language. 4) The Lhasa riot and Dalai Lama's conspiracy to separate Tibet from China.

*XWLB* emphatically supports the claim that the Chinese government makes every effort to protect and promote Tibetan cultural heritage. "Tibetan government at all levels strives to foster education in both Tibetan and Chinese", and news reports continued to stress that "Tibetan is a required course for the students in the region" and that "education in Tibetan language has become one of the priorities of the regional government" (April 16). Xiang Chuchengjiangchu, Vice President of the Buddhist Association of Yunnan province and famous doctor of traditional Tibetan medicine, said in an interview with *XWLB* that "Tibetan culture has made tremendous development under the leadership of the CPC" (April 23). A story on April 25 spotlighted "the new Tibet's fantastic and colourful religion culture" (April 25) by interviewing Luosang Cicheng, the leading sutra reciting master at Sera Monastery of Tibet. Qiabai Cidanpingcuo, a Tibetan culture researcher and also a former member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said in an interview with *XWLB* that "Tibetan culture is well protected and developed by the Chinese government" and "more Tibetans can read and write Tibetan" (April 26). All of this news discourse is directly aimed to refute the West's allegations about the party's "cultural genocide", signifying how the media discourse advanced the party's political agenda.

A story concerning the Tibetan religion (April 22) used a video footage of ongoing Tibetan Buddhist activities in the Potala Palace, Lhasa and interviewed Caidan Banjue,

Chief of the Administration Office of Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs of Tibet, who said “the Tibetan people fully enjoy the right to the freedom of religious belief”.

Another news story headlined “I Saw a Different Tibet” presented an interview with Paul Dubrule, a former French senator and chairman and founder of the multinational hotel group Accor Group. In 2002, he made a 15,272 Kilometers journey by bike from Fontainebleau, France to Tibet, China and stayed in Tibet for three months, which “gave him a chance to see a different Tibet from what he had learnt in France” (April 22). Dubrule also said “I saw that Chinese government constructed roads, airport, schools and hospitals, which represent the economic development”. Immediately following the two pieces of Tibet related news, *XWLB* introduced a newly published bilingual book, *Tibet: Past and Present* and said that it “demonstrated the remarkable progress in the new Tibet’s economy, politics, and culture under the leadership of Chinese central government” and “described the miserable and wretched life of serfs under the feudal serfdom system of old Tibet” (April 22). Throughout the news discourse, “new Tibet” was used to insinuate an advance in the development and improvement of Tibetans’ well-being under the leadership of the CPC, while “old Tibet” was used to insinuate backwardness, cruelty, and pain.

*XWLB* aired an interview with Amos Gelb, an associate professor in communication at the George Washington University on April 23 to demonstrate the Western media’s biased reporting on Lhasa riot and torch relay protests. Gelb said that “the camera can lie, and the camera can give you a snapshot, a little picture that makes you think something is happening that isn’t.....the camera doesn’t give an exact representation of everything.”

Salong Pingla, living Buddha of Gelug and Standing Director of the Buddhist Association of Tibet, said on April 24 with an interview with *XWLB* that the “Dalai Lama



clique have been abusing power of religion to separate Tibet from the motherland. Their conspiracy will never succeed, because China is under the great leadership of the CPC". The living Buddha also condemned the "Dalai clique's separatist activities in the 3.14 Lhasa riot", saying "the violent sabotage acts run counter to the Buddhist tenets".

Reporting on visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi' meeting with Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee Nong Duc Manh and Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, *XWLB* foregrounded Vietnam's support of "China's great cause of the reunification and China's handling of recent riots in Lhasa to protect national stability" (April 24).

In an interview with former Japanese Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka in Tokyo on April 24, *XWLB* quoted Makiko Tanaka as saying that "interfering with Tibetan affairs is interfering with Chinese internal affairs", and Dalai Lama's real intent is to seek independence of Tibet rather than to ask autonomy of Tibet.

An April 25 story announced the party's statement about resuming talks with the Dalai Lama. "The policy of the central government towards Dalai has been consistent and the door of dialogue has always been open" presented the anchor, continuing that "the Dalai side should take credible action to stop splitting China, stop plotting violent riot, and stop sabotaging the Beijing Olympic Games".

*XWLB* interviewed the Tibetan party leaders who by no means stand in a different position from the party. The program foregrounded the remarks of leaders of foreign countries which have diplomatic relations with China on the premise of supporting China's territorial integrity. It omitted all the details of criticism from outside China and only rendered the criticism as "creating difficulties for China on Tibet issue". The reporting on Tibet issue can be seen as one of the typical examples of what happens when

Chinese media team up with the Chinese government to “manufacture consent” among the Chinese people.

Regarding the party’s propaganda campaign for “rational” expressions of patriotism, *XWLB* skillfully made efforts to fulfill the party’s agenda. An April 21 story presented the commentary titled “Patriotic Enthusiasm and National Interests” on People’s Daily, an official paper of the party. “As individuals, we have the right to express our patriotic sentiments. As citizens, we have the responsibility to bear in mind the country’s overall interests and rationally express patriotic aspiration...In the current situation, taking actions to maintain social stability, boosting economic development, and successfully holding the Beijing Olympics are best means to smash the conspiracy of containing China and tarnishing China and are also best way to express patriotism,” the anchor said.

An April 22 story extensively covered how students and professors at different universities effectively expressed rational nationalistic sentiments. A professor at the Beijing Normal University said in an interview with *XWLB* “the way to express patriotic sentiment should comply with China’s economic development agendas”. The news anchor asserted “many universities set up forums on the university websites to discuss rational nationalism”. A student at Tsinghua University said “irrational patriotism and extreme actions would play into the hands of Western anti-China group and those wishing to separate China, while rational patriotism would smash their conspiracies”. The story went on to interview students and professors and to present a couple of similar thoughts made by students of different universities. Finally, the story generalized “students should transfer their strong patriotic sentiments to their studies and enhance their ability to contribute to build a more powerful country in the future”. Another story on the same day also tried to calm down the patriotic fever pitch, but in a more implicit way. The story

quoted an official of Ministry of Commerce as saying that “Carrefour employed more than 40,000 local workers, accounting for 99 percent of its headcounts in China”, and “it has annual sales volume of nearly 30 billion Yuan”. “95 percent of the products it sells are made in China”. The story also stressed that the “French government and companies have taken positive actions to repair Sino-French relations” and “some companies, including Carrefour, have issued statements to oppose Tibetan independence and support the Beijing Olympics”.

During the sample period, there were four stories highly praising Dou Tiecheng, a model worker at China Railway First Group. One story asserted “Dou has made outstanding contribution to reform and opening-up”, calling for the working class to learn from “Tiecheng Spirit” to express patriotism in a rational way. Three other stories foregrounded how workers in all walks of life learn from Dou to build the country. “We Chinese people should channel our patriotic fervor into a rational track and transform it into actions to do our work well” said a worker interviewed by *XWLB* on April 24. Aiming clearly to advance the party’s agenda of maintaining social stability, *XWLB* unexpectedly produced four stories to publicize and foreground the advanced deeds of Dou Tiecheng.

As anger at France and the consumer boycott campaign against French products continued, Paris sought to soothe the tensions between the two countries. *XWLB* conducted immense reporting on France’s effort to repair diplomatic relations, aiming to both relieve the patriotic fervor among Chinese people and illustrate China’s rising international influence.

During a meeting with Hu Jintao, visiting French Senate President Poncelet said that “the French government respects China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity” in terms of

the Tibet and Taiwan issues (April 24). Poncelet said that “he felt sad and regretful for the disturbance of the Beijing Olympic torch relay in Paris” and that “French people nourish deep and special feelings towards Chinese people and the French government cherishes the strategic ties with China.”

An April 25 story also reported that Jia Qinglin, Chairman of NPPCC, met with Poncelet. Poncelet said that “the disruption of torch relay in Paris is the extreme activity of a small group” and the incidents “made Parisians in distress and regret.” He also said that “the French people opposed relating sports with politics” and wished the “Beijing Olympics a tremendous success.” “Jia expressed appreciation for France’s support to the one-China policy and its rigid opposition to ‘Taiwan independence’ and ‘Tibet independence.’” Another story on the same day dealt with signing a pact on a parliamentary exchange mechanism between Wu Bangguo and Christian Poncelet. Both sides believed that “the exchange and cooperation between the National People’s Congress and French senate entered a new stage”. Similarly, news discourse repeatedly stressed the French people’s deep feelings toward Chinese people and France’s regret for the torch relay incidents in Paris.

*XWLB* covered Premier Wen Jiabao’s meeting with visiting former French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin (April 24). “France attaches importance to the comprehensive strategic partnership with China” said Raffarin, stressing France’s support for a “one-China policy”. “Raffarin expressed sorrow for the incidents of the torch relay in Paris” and “wished a success for the August Games.”

Stories that France took initiative to improve the recently damaged Sino-France relations appeared very frequently. An April 27 story broadcast Xi Jinping’s meeting with Jean-David Levitte, French President Sarkozy’s top diplomatic envoy, to discuss the

restrained ties. Xi called for “concrete actions” to be taken by French side to promote relations. Levitte said the French government and President Sarkozy “were ready to do all they could” to “strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership with China”.

*Leadership superiority/ Manifest Ideology Indoctrination*

He Guoqiang, member of the Political Bureau Standing Committee of the CPC Central Committee and Secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) of the CPC, toured the Hunan province to inspect the work of newly elected leaders at the first plenary session of the 17th CPC Central Committee in 2007 (16 April). He stressed that leaders in all levels should “carefully study and thoroughly implement the spirit of the 17th National Congress of Communist Party” (NCCP), “ensure the decisions of the Central Committee of the CPC are carried out without fail” and “improve the party’s style of work”.

CCID initiated the party’s ideological campaign, which was named “Be Loyal Guardians of the party and True Carriers of the People’s Interests”, He Guoqiang stressed CCDI officials should “hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, follow the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents, thoroughly apply the Scientific Outlook on Development” (22 April). He continued to say that “CCDI officials should be utterly loyal to the party and country”, “set up an amicable, trustworthy and respectable image among the people” and “keep up with the times and work hard with a pioneering and innovative spirit”.

*XWLB*’s thorough April 24 reporting on the second meeting of the 11th National People’s Congress (NPC, China’s top legislature) Standing Committee and gave a special focus on the statement made by Wu Bangguo, China’s top legislator, who called all party members, “under the leadership of the CPC”, to “implement the party’s line, principles,

and policies...and to serve the purpose of building socialism with Chinese characteristics”. Wu also required all the lawmakers to “strengthen their studies and research on the Scientific Outlook on Development”.

Li Changchun, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, made the “important remarks” at a work conference of the Marxism Theory Research and Construction Project held in Beijing on April 25. *XWLB* extensively covered Li’s remarks, most of which are hollow ideological words repeatedly used by different senior Chinese leaders. Li required Marxist scholars to “thoroughly study and implement guiding principles of the party’s 17th NPC and intensively enhance research and education on the application of Marxist theory in socialism with Chinese characteristics”. The senior Chinese leader also asked Marxist scholars to “keep up with times to provide theoretical support and spiritual momentum for the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics”. In addition, Li said that “with the great concern and important direction from the CPC Central Committee led by Comrade Hu Jintao, the project has made substantial progress, cemented the main theme of Marxism with the field of philosophy and social science, solidified the party’s base for theory, and become a strategic project regarding building socialism with Chinese characteristics”. Finally, Li stressed that “all scholars should hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, follow the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents, thoroughly apply the Scientific Outlook on Development, emancipate the mind, seek truth from facts, keep up with times, greatly pursue innovation in theory, and make great headways in establishing the theoretic framework for building socialism with Chinese characteristics...”

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

In the first three decades beginning with the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949, a top-down communication system served as the ultimate apparatus for the party to mobilize, educate, organize the masses and strengthen the party's political control. Of course, the media during that period of time never served the public interest or addressed public concerns.

Economic reforms and the opening-up policy, which were launched in 1978, represent a watershed moment for China's economic development. The neoliberalization introduced by the economic reforms happened to coincide "with the turn to neoliberal solutions" in the United States (Harvey, 2005, p. 120) which initiated by Ronald Reagan. The communication system in both the world's strongest capitalist economy, the United States, and the largest socialist developing country, China, are distinctly wedded to neoliberalism. Neoliberalization has thus proliferated on the world stage. "Neoliberalism with 'Chinese Characteristics'", as Harvey (2005) names it, has been sweeping and permeating all sections of China since the economic reforms. Chinese media have been transformed into a contradictory system which is both party-controlled and market-oriented.

### **7.1 Mediascape: "In the name of Socialism with Chinese characteristics"**

The preceding analysis in *Chapter Four* outlined the historical transformation of the Chinese media system and delineated its current "ambiguities and contradictions" (Lee, 1994) caused by the dual forces neoliberalism and "authoritarian centralized control" (Harvey, 2005, p. 120).

As it perceived that the communist ideology is declining among both the party

members and ordinary Chinese people, the party has continued to impose its firm control and serious censorship on the Chinese media. The media under the socialist command model of control first and foremost serve as “the mouthpiece” of the CPC. As illustrated by the case study of *Xinwen Lianbo*, the Chinese media are controlled and used by the party to indoctrinate the party lines, principles and ideologies and to advance the agendas of ruling powers. The case study vividly demonstrates how consent was manufactured and how the Chinese masses are mobilized and organized. What should also be stressed is that the party does not show any mercy to those who challenge its ideology or its superiority. In Chapter Four, *Freezing Point* and *Beijing News* are typical examples in this regard.

When the party introduced the market economy and decreased or canceled the subsidies to the media, the media unleashed by the market forces have undergone a process of “neoliberalization,” favoring of free market operation and capitalizing the audience. What is also noteworthy is that WTO membership and globalization simplify and rationalize the proliferation of free market in the Chinese communication industry. Furthermore, the political economy of Chinese new media, like the traditional media, serves both political powers and commercial interests, and can hardly realize its democratic potential. The media are providing a wide range of content, formats and programming to respond to market demands and to cater to the advertisers, the business elite, and the wealthy urban Chinese. Almost all media platforms are now entirely relying on advertising revenue or other commercial operations.

Therefore, I conclude economic reforms, ownership and editorial control of Chinese government, along with WTO membership and new media technologies, interplay and interact to produce a new Chinese mediascape, a contradictory combination of *capitalist*



neoliberalism, which is concerned with advertisers and business interests, and a *socialist* propaganda machine, which firmly promulgates the party's ideological indoctrination. Significantly, the contradictory mix sings sweetly in the name of the powerful myth- "socialism with Chinese characteristics." As Huang and Ding (1997) put it, "marketization does not necessarily lead to a loss of control; the existence of control does not necessarily impede the development of mass media on their own terms" (p. 19). We can see that a neoliberal communication system does not necessarily lead to social and political freedom and ultimate democratization, although it might make the party more difficult to sustain its authoritarian control. Unfortunately, democracy, "social justice", and the participating "public sphere" are not promoted in China's contradictory media environment. Chinese people have to endure both the psychology of socialist ideological control and materialistic commercialism.

## **7.2 Where to go?**

Both the political economy theoretical perspective and CDA methodology have "an historic commitment to praxis" (Mosco, 1999, p. 104) and provide guides for human action. Keeping their emancipatory potential in mind, I do hope to find out the inspiration for resistance and directions in future research.

In the foreseeable future, the party will continue to deepen the reforms and opening up policy, which means the Chinese communication system will go on to conduct capitalist neoliberalist operations. At the same time the party will never relinquish its control of the media, because the party believes that the media are the most effective apparatus to both realize and rationalize its political manipulation. The struggle over equality, free speech, and, ultimately, democracy has to be both anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist (Yin, 2006). But in an authoritarian society, where protests and any other

meaningful opposition are forbidden, overt activism aimed at anti-authoritarian governance can itself be dangerous and thus ineffective. One way to create more space for the public sphere would be to have academia call on mainstream media to provide more alternative perspectives and informative content to serve the majority of the Chinese people rather than political elites, business interests, and the wealthy urbanite. It will be a long, hard, and indirect way to go, but at least it is not a dead-end.

**Appendix: List of Abbreviations**

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CCTV	China Central Television
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CITC	China International Television Corporation
CPC	Communist Party of China
CNR	China National Radio
EU	European Union
FAIR	Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting
FCC	Federation Communications Commission
GATT	General Agreement of Trade and Tariff
HRW	Human Rights Watch
NCCPC	National Congress of the Communist Party of China
NCPPCC	National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
NPC	National People's Congress
SARFT	State Administration of Radio, Film and Television
SEZ	special economic zone
SOE	state-owned enterprise
WTO	World Trade Organization
XWLB	<i>XinWen Lianbo</i> (National News Network)

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