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China's Traditional Acceptance of Information from the Perspective of Contemporary Communication Theory

Shao Peiren*

Abstract

Language is unique to mankind, it is the manifestation of human's intelligence and ways of communication. Through language, what an audience accepts is his self-portrait and we can analyze and understand the state, rules and characteristics of Chinese audiences through the concept of the traditional acceptance of information and its interpretation. Analysis of textual research, discrimination and organization of various concepts of acceptance of information on one hand and analysis and reflection on relevant information and contemporary research results on the other, show that "Guan", "Wei" and "Wen" are characteristic Chinese concepts of acceptance. These three concepts reflect the ancient Chinese nature of acceptance and the spirit of the Chinese culture heritage which impact China till now. This paper also discusses five main characteristics: (1) piety and seriousness; (2) mulling and repetition; (3) subtila and depth; (4) hierarchy and progress; (5) contact and peeping.

"It is language that makes a human being what he is. Whoever cannot use a language cannot be considered a true man". Language, original and unique to humans, is the element and code of information dissemination; it is the hallmark of mankind. At the same time it is a psychological weapon used by men to understand the world, reflect on the world and remold it. Therefore, we will apply embryology, semiology, communication and the acceptance theory along with their methods to explore the emergence and evolution of Chinese concepts of acceptance, in turn guiding and inferring the state and features of ancient Chinese audiences and showing the world another asset of traditional Chinese culture.

In traditional Chinese culture, many concepts and words are used to represent and reflect on the activity of information acceptance. These concepts can be grouped as follows: on vision there are "Jian", "Kan", "Shi", "Guan" and "Du"; on hearing there are "Ting" and "Wen"; while on taste there are "Pin", "Chang", "Wei" and "JuJue". However, no matter the time of emergence, frequency or identifiable degree, "Guan", "Wei" and "Zhi" best reflect and express the primeval and consistent mental state and operating characteristics in information acceptance and showing that the ancient Chinese Wistom still have its influence in nowadays communication, knowledge and acceptance. The uniqueness of the ancient Chinese is demonstrated also in the latest research findings.

Guan: accepting information in detail and elegantly

Guan means to watch carefully. "To watch and listen without understanding is no better than not knowing". [2] However, watching is not Guan because it is less scrupulous and attentive. Guan is always detailed and serious. The word "Kan" in Chinese does not only represent the acceptance of information but also visiting, treating, looking after and guarding it while "Guan" means generally accepting information. "Be on the lookout", "go sightseeing", "view and admire" and "view" seems at the first sight to have nothing to do with acceptance but these words are all about accepting information from the outside world. So "Guan" is more frequently used than "Kan" to describe outside information received through vision.

Although both relate to acceptance of textual information, in the ancients' view, "to Guan a book" is different from "to read". "To Guan a book" means to browse silently, accept without disseminating, with a clear duty. "To read" means to read aloud, accepting and disseminating at the same time, with no clear duties. It is single-channel information-acceptance which uses only the eyes, thus it is easy but the memory can be solid.. To read with dual-channel information-acceptance using both the eyes and the ears is rushed and muddled. "To Guan a book" is elegant. Reading appears to be bright. Whoever reads seems to be in a process of evolution. Accordingly, ancient scholars used "to Guan a book" far more frequently than "to read" it.

When referring to "Guan" in ancient books and records, "to Guan a book" or to appreciate an article, the ancients highlighted that observing and examining the diversity and contradictoriness of facts or objects should be uniform and holistic. The book ZhouYi XiCi says that "the sage sees the changes taking place in the world and observes them carefully to find the rules". Whoever accepts information by way of consolidation and integrity will not be plagued by too much and disorganized information. Only in this way, in accepting information, can we proceed from the easy to the difficult, from the outside to the inside, to understand its charm and real knowledge along with the graceful bearing of the Jin dynasty in their calligraphy and painting and the behavior and rules of the Tang dynasty in appreciating and enjoying their poems. ChengYi taught us this.

In Guan, we have to start from reality and continue to seek truth in facts without stereotypes while at the same time we should not offer farfetched or dubious explanations, measuring another's corn by one's own bushel. [5] Although every text contains abundant connotations, the Guaner should not interpret it insatiably. Any interpretation beyond the limits will not sit well with the text itself. Liu Kezhuang, a poet during the NanSong Dynasty, advocated that to appreciate a poem, we should not give labored interpretations but be easy-going. About poems he said that "the finest men of past centuries were always relaxed about enjoying poems and never tried to be distinctive or individual. If the fine men in the following centuries give interpretations, no word will be left without doubt". Every reader will certainly have his own interpretation of the text but it is unacceptable if this interpretation goes beyond the text itself or the merit.

"Wei": a typically Chinese concept of acceptance

"Wei" is a notion of eating and drinking but in traditional Chinese it was widely used as process, feature and standard of acceptance. "Wei" is even more Chinese than "Guan".

It is Lao-Tse who uses "Wei" in acceptance. In his book, <The Wisdom of Lao Tse>, he said that "Accomplish do-nothing; Attend to no-affaires; 'Wei' (Taste) the flavorless". The "Wei" here obviously does not mean "Wei" in the sentence "When the Master was in Ch'i, he heard the Shao, and for three months did not know the "Wei" (taste) of flesh". "Wei of flesh" means some particular sort of sense that can be captured by the tongue or nose (taste or smell, etc) while "flavorless" means the features of the text, allowing people to gain pleasure from vision, hearing, mentality. The flavorless also interpreted as "Tao" is mild to the taste. If looked at, it cannot be seen; if listened to, it cannot be heard; if applied, its supply never fails. "Flavorless" does not mean tasteless but indifferent. What is "Wei"? Leisurely and carefree. "Wei" likes gas, flavorless is indifferent. Xu Shangying also gave his interpretation of Wei in his book On Guqin: never search for taste, the taste will appear; never search for a scent, the aroma will appear, like scented flowers. Enjoyed in this way, the flavorless comes true.

The first Wei in Lao-Tze's word "Wei wu Wei" is a verb, to taste, and the second Wei means flavor, the whole phrase means to taste "flavorless" to get the flavor. Those two "Wei" are the process of acceptance which means chewing, tasting, enjoying, discriminating and exploring, as in the words: "Wan Wei", "Ti Wei", "Jue Wei" and "Xun Wei". Wang Chong in the Han Dynasty said: Articles should be magnificent and beautiful; Languages should be reasonable and clever. The words should be pleasing; the story should be flavored. Wei no longer means the behavior of the nose and mouth but is something psychological; the object of Wei is no longer the substantial smell but mental information. To men, beautiful and meaningful information is more attractive and more worthy of cherishing. This is similar to Zhong Rong's comments on Zhang Xie's poem: his poem, like luxuriant plants growing wild or beautiful music, grasp people's attention.

Wei as a covert process in the depth of the reader's mind, an unrecordable process is not only a process of acceptance through digesting, chewing, decoding and understanding but a process of reaction to differences in the mind, sense and taste, and this reaction is varied and daedal.

Accepted by traditional Chinese culture, on the one hand, the Wei reaction is sometimes related to the characteristics of the text. Generally speaking, emotional texts arouse interest; philosophical texts arouse taste; humorous texts arouse gusto; habitual texts arouse relish. On the other hand, the Wei reaction also associates features with the text. Often, metrical texts arouse lingering charm and a

magical touch arouses inspiration. Moreover, some Wei reactions, of course, are aroused by the state of their acceptance and perception. Chewing and digesting superior works always leaves an aftertaste; prolonged thinking about the elegant aesthetics always leaves a lasting and pleasant impression. As for inferior works, they were criticized as “tasting like wax”, ‘difficult and dull’ and “vapid and pointless”. What Wei values is the meaning between the lines, the unexpected gist but based on the text and, at the same time, beyond the text. The concept of Wei; that is, focus on subjective feelings, has great significance in modern communication practice.

Zhi: a deeper and higher level of acceptance

“Zhi” is an acceptance concept on a deeper and higher level. Master Xun said that “Jian (to see) is better than Wen (to hear), Zhi (to know) is better than Jian(to see) “Jian” and “Zhi” are both concepts of acceptance but on different levels: “Jian” means having seen, reflecting the first level of acceptance, the level of watching and discerning; “Zhi” means “knowing”, reflecting the final level of acceptance, the level of understanding and appreciating. The relationship between them is that “Jian” is the basis and premise of “Zhi”; “Zhi” is the development and sublimation of “Jian”; having “Jian” may not mean having “Zhi”, but having no “Jian” means not having “Zhi”; they interact, go hand in hand.

Since Zhi is a higher level of acceptance, it is a difficult state to enter. Liu Xie realized this a long time ago, and said that commenting correctly is difficult; a good commentator is hard to find, just one or two in the past ten centuries. Tao Qian also made similar affirmations; he said that knowing men is hard but knowing each other is even more difficult. Cao Xueqin even thought that getting 1,000 pieces of gold is easy while finding even just one good friend is difficult. Liu Zhou, a contemporary of Liu Xie, wrote in *Liutse* that the reason why a good commentator is hard to find is not because contemporary men underscore the present rather the past, the heard rather the seen or the fame rather the fact but because they lack the power to understand the superior works. Because of this, the writer’s contemporaries will not follow their heart and give a precise comment. This condition would fail to distinguish between fact and falsehood.

What happens is that in traditional Chinese, Zhi is recognized as being deeper and higher, and advanced to the level of knowledge construction and culture formation. And it helps us to understand the essential function of communication: social culture construction.

The basic characteristic of acceptance in traditional ancient Chinese

From what has been said above about Guan, Wei and Zhi, the three traditional Chinese concepts of acceptance could tell us a lot about the laws and rules of acceptance in China through summarization, conclusion and exploration. And this is a form of long-history ancient wisdom. Based on this, we can continue to explore and summarize some features of acceptance in ancient Chinese (especially the refined scholars).

First, piety and seriousness. The ancient Chinese were pious and respected the text, serious about acceptance. China is a land of reading; the Chinese respect books like Christians do classical masterpieces. Lin Ytang has said that the worship of scholarship has taken the form of a popular superstition that no paper bearing writing should be thrown out or used for indecent purposes, but should be collected and burned at schools or temples. Whoever reads must be open-minded, intent, and attentive. Many stories written by scholars are still classic material used by parents to teach their children, such as “Suqin Piercing to His Thighs”(Suqin Zhui Ci Gu), or “ boring a hole in the wall in order to get some light from the neighbor’s house and reading by the light of fireflies”.

Such kind of piety and seriousness may come from ancient Chinese worship and the fear of letters and symbols. According to *Huai South Son*, it rained when Cang Jie created writing. The invention of writing was seen as something incredible by the ancients. Indeed, letters were seen as something miraculous and were worshipped and feared by the ancients. It was the privilege of wizards, and there was a magical power in writing; it was controlled by the authorities, so there was a special authority in words. When words were used to name people and things the ancients thought that the words were the name, the name was a man’s soul and the soul was the man. So, Zhang Guifang, a character in

Apotheosis of Heroes, could make a man fall from his horse by calling out his name; YinJiao King, a character in pilgrimage to the west, could turn a man into his magic calabash by calling out his name. When Huang Feihu was called, he fell off his horse and Sun Wukong turned into the calabash when he was called. Couplets written in words were used to end disasters and pray for fortune; the praying slogan which was also written in words was used to wish all the best and help from God. We can see that there is a magical color and a magical power in words in the ancient Chinese mind. So it is not strange for a reader to read in an open-minded and intent state.

Second, mulling and repetition. The ancient Chinese always mulled over and enjoyed the books they read. In the ancients' opinion, reading was once denied, to read ten lines at a glance was even more so. The Chinese characters are different from the western alphabetic writing and their particular form, structure and significance also need to be enjoyed repeatedly and mulled over slowly. According to modern psychology, there is no information difference in the form and length of Chinese characters to trigger off the foveal vision so Chinese readers have to concentrate on smaller groups of meaning; that is, Chinese readers stare at the characters for longer and this slows down reading. And what the words "Jiu Shi", "Xiang Shi", "Di Guan", "Hui Wei", "Ju Wei", "Xun Wei", "Yan Wei" and "Wan Wei" represent and accentuate in the Chinese classics is the mulling over and repetition of acceptance.

Third, subtila and depth. As regards reading, the following attitudes are always opposed: reading like dragonflies skimming over the water, stopping after obtaining just a little knowledge, negligently and half-comprehendingly. In ancient China, to be an educated man was unrelenting and strenuous, a great number of books were written in a classical style and scholars often forewent sleep and meals to read them. And the educated man had to explore and mull over the source of the meaning and words deeply and subtly and this needed an exceptionally good memory and special skills. For them, this activity was entertainment and enjoyment.

In the meantime, Chinese scholars tend to research on their own and one who searches in an encyclopedia will be look down on. For this reason Lin Yutang said that good scholars did not need encyclopedias as we had many such walking encyclopedias in flesh and blood. In the spirit of intensive personal heroism, the ancient scholars compiled many masterpieces, such as An Analytical Dictionary of Characters (Shuo Wen Jie Zi), Dream Stream essays (Meng Xi Bi Tan) and Compendium of Materia Medica (Ben Cao Gang Mu). One could study for years and never write anything irrelevant.

Fourth, hierarchy and graduation. Ancient Chinese scholars always insisted that reading should go from the easy to the difficult, from the outside to the inside, from one point to another and from the article to the meaning. From one small clue one can see what is coming. After observing a person's faults and failings, one will understand who he really is. One can know men by listening to their words and looking at their conduct. And these are the ideas of Guan. There is hierarchy in Wei. From "Wei Xiang" to "Wei Shen", from "Zhi Wei" to "Yu Wei". And according to Zhi (to know), which comes after Jian (to see), "Zhi Sheng" comes before "Zhi Yin" and "Zhi Ren" comes after "Zhi Yin".

Acceptance of hierarchy and graduation is not only established in the laws but also in the way to avoid the improper response by reputation, position, appearance. There are many records of improper responses in that knowing men comes before knowing articles, the halo effect. Zhang Shuai was good at writing poetry at the age of twelve and he wrote a poem a day; he wrote were almost two thousand in his lifetime. Yu Na, an authoritative source, pulled his poems to pieces. Zhang Shuai rewrote some of them and asked others to take his poems to Yu Na pretending that the poems were written by the famous poet Shen Yue. Yu praised the poems. Zhang told Yu that those poems were all his own works and Yu went away ashamed. Huan Tan also said that once the audience knew the appearance of the disseminator, he would like him more or abhor his works. So, acceptance in the way of going from the works itself, going step by step and with careful analysis and objective comment is the correct acceptance. Such a concept of acceptance for the ancient Chinese is still full of vitality in our media society with information explosion.

Fifth, contact and peeping. The ancient Chinese always went from the article to the writer, from the Shi Pin to Ren Pin. They were sure that the article is the poem, the poem is the article and the poem and the article is the man. Shi Pin is the Ren Pin. Calligraphy is his learning, his ability and his

aim, himself at last. This kind of contact comes from the audiences' strong desire of peep at the disseminator. It was recorded in the Book of History that loving a person means loving the crow in his house. There is a saying that whoever loves a garden loves a greenhouse too.

Ou Yangxiu said that loving his book meant loving himself. The introduction and the following talk in Chinese is filled with the desire to pry into one's life. To a Chinese man, if eggs are delicious he wants to taste the hen. So the amateur, the amateur of Mei Lanfang, movie fans, music fans and admiring fans come forth. And the text is puffed discretionally, expounded randomly and is associated with anything—And this provides reasons for the farfetched interpretation, and thrusts the may-not-be-true explanation on the author. In acceptance, if the audiences are indulgent in flattering, a gift may be ruined while baleful interpretation may introduce literary persecution. It is sad that there have been more than twenty pieces of literary persecution, the authors were dismissed, sentenced or killed.

So, nowadays, responsible Chinese readers must control the creative explanation and the peeping, not letting it spread to the improper state of ignoring the norm to the detriment of the disseminators' pre-existing positions and purposes.

Conclusion

Experience and careful analysis of the features of "Guan", "Wei" and "Zhi", can not only inspire modern communication research and practice, but do us good in finding a profound and modern eastern wisdom in the level of knowledge and acceptance. This is an international cultural view and specific Chinese communication ethnology. In this sense, in the past, "Yan" points to objects but more than the object itself. A reader must glean the meaning between lines through "Guan", "Wei" and "Zhi". The meaning is still based on the object and Yan and is the presentation of the object and charm of Yan. In acceptance, the Chinese are not only finding themselves, but what is more important is Guan objects by Yan, and associating all the works of God to reach a supreme cultural level: the introjection of objects and men, the unity of heaven and human beings. And it subtly reflects the perspective of dissemination-acceptance. From the object to the Yan and finally to the meaning, this process cannot be separated but Yan points to the object, the object points to meaning, the meaning returns to the object and the meaning comes before Yan. And this process can be achieved through Guan, Wei and Zhi, and was united in the ancient Chinese artistic state. This fully interprets the concept and mind-set of common relations. And it is different from the material-psychological dichotomy mechanical mind-set in the West in modern times but is in line with contemporary cultural ecology and cultural anthropology. So it is reasonable and valuable in practice.

Finally, I have to point out that we can analyze Chinese ancient acceptance concepts in communication, semiotics and aesthetic reception and we can apply it to sociology, psychology and anthropology. The form of ancient Chinese acceptance is not multi-dimensional and stereoscopic but one-dimensional and flat. Only by combining the images in a multi-dimensional field of vision can we draw an objective and all-round conclusion. Therefore, I have just mentioned a few aspects of the ancient Chinese concept of acceptance, and I know that there is much work to be done to explore and integrate the rules and laws in Chinese acceptance because traditional Chinese culture is extremely profound.

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To Live or To Die

The struggle of Chinese Film Productions' International Approaching

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China's film industry is the third largest in the world, behind India and the US, both in terms of the number of films produced and box office takings. According to the latest data, takings in China reached RMB13.1 billion (\$2.1 billion) in 2011, a growth of 29% over 2010. The number of films produced also increased, from 612 to 791 in one year (gov.cn, 2012). Since the structural reform of the film industry in 2003, on average the box office revenue has increased at the remarkable annual rate of 30% and there is still great potential for growth (Tang, 2011a).

Alongside the impressive growth of the domestic film market, in recent years China has promoted its films in overseas markets under the so-called 'going out' (zouchuqu) policy of culture and media products. This has become a priority for China as it steps up its attempts to export its view of the world, recognizing the "soft power" prowess that US films and television shows wield. Indeed, Chinese filmmakers and the Chinese governmental groups that oversee the film industry believe that film and story-telling can be a powerful tool to introduce the Chinese people and culture to the outside world. However, with a few high-profile exceptions, such as Ang Lee's 2000 *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and Zhang Yimou's 2002 *Hero*, Chinese films have not made an impact on the world stage, especially with western audiences, and have struggled to meet the challenge of Hollywood productions at home since the first Hollywood blockbuster, *The Fugitive*, was screened in China in 1994, despite the current quota system of just 20 foreign films allowed for import per year.

Chinese films encounter problems of financing, production, distribution, and screening when they are exported and in being recognized in foreign mainstream theaters. It is clear that when Chinese films take to the global stage they are hampered by a bottleneck created by factors that have their roots in the Chinese film industry itself.

In this paper we adopt the case study approach and critical/historical analysis to explore and discuss the obstacles that Chinese film productions face as they go abroad. Firstly, we will provide an overview of the changes China's film industry has undergone in the past 30 years and its role in China's soft power strategies. Secondly, we will discuss the barriers that could hinder Chinese films as they try to conquer the international and, in particular, the western audience, when released in the US film market. Besides a deficiency of artistic creativity, an inadequate professional marketing strategy, and cultural difference and stereotype barriers, political involvement is another important factor that needs to be taken into consideration when looking at the export of Chinese films and, especially, when considering the trend of film theory which is moving from "understanding the relationship between the moving image and the social world as privileged towards seeing this automatic relationship as politically suspect", a relationship that "may be understood in retrospect with reference to a great world divide." (Gaines, 2008).

Chinese film industry between propaganda, marketization and soft power

Film productions have deep political, ideological and cultural connotations in Chinese society. They inform cultural policies, which in turn shape the cultural environment in general and market structure in particular. Film production in China is seen as one of several “culture markets” and has always been deemed a product of “the political, economic, military and cultural invasion of the West”, and thus viewed as carrying with it “a deep colonial branding” (Wang, 2003:61). It has therefore always been the government and Communist Party’s mission to indigenize and nationalize the film industry. Following the Communist revolution in 1949, China started to build its own “independent national film system” and banned US films entirely in 1950. Consequently, the protection of the film industry still has a high priority in China’s cultural policies. From the 1950s to the late 1970s films served as the Party-state’s propaganda tool, responding to the Party’s political agenda. In these years film policies were deeply informed and managed by a specific concept of Chinese cinema and Chinese nation. The Ministry of Culture and an entire administration were tasked with overseeing the nationalization of the studios in order to maintain better state control in terms of content and economic production. Mainly targeted at a domestic audience, Chinese films in this phase typically focused on the figure of the gongnongbing (worker – peasant – soldier); this is one of the clearest examples of how the Ministry of Culture communicated a broader policy: the endorsement of clear moral plots, in which figures such as workers, peasants and soldiers were positive while landlords and capitalists were portrayed negatively. In this period the cinema was a medium which conveyed the message that in the People’s Republic of China not all of the citizens were of the “people” (Berry, 1998).

During the reform era in the 1980s, the artistic function of films was exalted by the creative Fifth Generation directors (e.g. Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige). As the industry began to face economic pressure, Chinese cinema policies also moved from a planned economy to a more market-oriented one; consequently, entrepreneurs began to invest new resources in this sector which had become profitable. The film industry’s high profit margins and ideological importance meant that the sector was subject both to commercial investment and state control (Wan&Kraus, 2002). The consequence for Chinese filmmakers in this second phase was that creativity could be expressed better also thanks to the easing of political control over culture but some problems also emerged: thanks to the economic reform Chinese consumers had more entertainment choices and the role of films as the leading form of entertainment was significantly eroded. However, with the launch of ‘Main Melody’ films on a large scale after the 1989 Tiananmen Incident, the function of films as the conveyor of official ideology came to the fore once again.

Although the Chinese government has embraced market reforms since the open doors policies were introduced in the late 1970s, these reforms did not extend to the political or cultural arena until the early noughties. In 2002-2003, one year after China joined the World Trade Organization, the Chinese government undertook a wide range of reforms in the film industry. The first move was to end the 50-year monopoly of the state-owned China Film Group, which was transformed into the China Film Group Corporation. At the same time, private film production and distribution companies were allowed to operate. The reforms also allowed foreign film production companies to set up joint ventures and partnerships in China, albeit not independently as they had to forge partnerships with state-owned film production companies and were not allowed to own more than 49% of a joint film production

corporation. On the distribution side, in June 2003 the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) granted a trial distribution license to six private companies, breaking the state monopoly of the China Film Group in film distribution. These distributors are the only companies authorized to distribute films in China and only distributors authorized to distribute films nationwide are allowed to distribute foreign films too.

All these reforms came into effect in an attempt by the government to reorganize a disastrous distribution system that had been in place for two decades. Indeed, the market had to find solutions to the absence of the old distribution system which was extremely important until the late 1970s because it allowed workplaces and unions to buy blocks of tickets to distribute to workers. After the market reforms, group tickets sales declined dramatically from 70% of the total in the early 1980s to just 20% in 1988. The number of filmgoers in China kept on dropping too, decreasing by more than 30% in 1993. With the aim of boosting the domestic film market, the first Hollywood blockbuster *The Fugitive* was released in China in 1994 under a revenue-sharing based agreement between the China Film Export and Import Corporation and Warner Bros, and other blockbusters were screened in the following years. Hollywood films quickly made up for the poor performance of the domestic film market, to the detriment of Chinese films which were mostly propaganda-oriented and therefore recorded low box office takings. The nine American films screened in 1995 represented a tiny share of the 269 films screened in Beijing, but they accounted for 40% of the city's box office takings of \$11.4 million. Still today, Hollywood blockbusters hold a lion's share in the Chinese film market, accounting for between 40% and 45% of the total domestic box offices, despite the quota system of just 20 foreign films on a revenue-sharing basis authorized in China under the WTO agreements.

The reforms of film industry are part of a wholesale program for transforming cultural industries that China started in 2003. The state called for emancipating the cultural productive force and developing a 'socialist advanced culture'. It later borrowed Harvard Professor Joseph Nye's concept of 'soft power' in 2006 to refer to the significance and influence of Chinese cultural industries. The government, indeed, hoped to enhance Chinese cultural power and to facilitate China's strong global presence by expanding its cultural influence, compatible with China's economic power. Under the 'go out' policy, Chinese media and cultural organizations have been encouraged to go global thanks to huge state economic incentives and investments.

The reforms in the film industry are part of a broader program to transform the culture industries implemented by China in 2003. The state called for the emancipation of culture productions and the development of a 'socialist advanced culture'. It later borrowed Harvard Professor Joseph Nye's concept of 'soft power' in 2006 to refer to the significance and influence of Chinese culture industries. The government, indeed, hoped to enhance Chinese cultural power and facilitate China's strong global presence by expanding its cultural influence, compatibly with its economic power. Under the 'going out' policy, Chinese media and cultural organizations have been encouraged to go global thanks to huge state economic incentives and investments.

The huge effort the Chinese Government has put into its soft power strategies in recent years is clearly demonstrated by the Twelve-Year Plan issued after the 2011 National People's Congress that confirmed a new economic development model for Chinese economic development. In 2009, China began to implement its economic reform to free itself from its dependence on cheap bulk export productions. In that same year the State Council issued a plan to rescue ten industries, including the "Plan to Boost the

Culture Industry” in which the culture industry is seen as one of the most important for China’s economic growth, along with other strategic sectors such as the creative industry, publishing, advertising, cultural exhibitions, digital animated cartoons, filmmaking and entertainment. Moreover, the Twelfth Five-Year Plan officially recognized for the first time the culture industry as a “pillar” industry; however, to accomplish this result the culture industry must grow at a double digit rate and contribute 5% to the country’s GDP by 2015 (Guo, 2010).

The internationalization of Chinese films is not a recent trend, nor a characteristic of the ‘going out’ policy. It is acknowledged that the most important period for the Chinese film industry’s internationalization dates back to the so-called Fifth Generation, to which Zhang Yimou belongs, and which undertook a rigorous artistic experiment where the political codes are divorced from the ideological practices of the state and are transformed into signs of cultural identity. Hero’s success comes under the umbrella of what Chen Xiaoming defines “postpolitics” in the Chinese film industry, where “everything is political and nothing is political at one and the same time. Politics is everywhere, and yet it subverts itself at any moment” (Chen et al., 1997). If in the past art served politics, today politics serves art; this is what Chen Xiaoming really means by “postpolitics”, a concept which, according to the author, should be reviewed if China intends to implement a successful and comprehensive soft power strategy, also in the international film industry arena.

Barriers to Chinese films going abroad

In this section we will discuss the three main broad categories of barriers that hinder the entry of Chinese films into international markets: cultural/artistic, economic and political. These three factors are certainly intertwined and overlap each other but, for the purposes of this study, we will analyze each one separately.

Cultural and artistic barriers

One characteristic of film - and of media products in general - is that it suffers a cultural discount when traded across international boundaries (Hoskins et al., 2000:127). Cultural discount happens when viewers of one territory or culture find it difficult to understand or identify with the content, themes, or values of the imported cultural goods due to different culture, language, or other such elements. For instance, bad translations and dubbing surely jeopardize the understanding of foreign movies. Differences in cultural values and social norms may therefore lower the appeal of foreign film products to a local audience. These differences include also technical features such as the narrative, the storytelling, which reflect the cultural values intrinsic to local films. The cultural discount, when it is significant, reduces the revenue-generating potential in the foreign market and hence acts to hinder trade.

From the narrative point of view, Chinese films are typically characterized by long sequences of dialogue, long silences and stills, all elements foreign to Western films whose target is an all-embracing audience. For instance, the latest 2011 Zhang Yimou blockbuster *The Flowers of War* attempted to meet the international audience’s taste by using a style which is very close to the western one and starring the Oscar-winning actor Christian Bale as the main character. Although from an aesthetic point of view the film follows the artistic evolution of the well-known Chinese director (frames created with care, close-ups used patiently to analyze the characters’ feelings, and the presence of dark places in the

interior scenes to highlight an atmosphere of uncertainty and claustrophobia), it is nevertheless characterized by long silences and stills.

Feng Xiaogang's blockbuster *Aftershock* (Tang Shan Da Di Zhen, 2010) is another interesting film in artistic and technical terms. This film, the first in IMAX, broke the box-office record for a Chinese film in the domestic market (before the success of Zhang Yimou's *Flowers*), taking RMB532 million (\$78.6 million) in two and a half weeks of screening in mainland China. However, its commercial success was poor even in countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and New Zealand where it was released. The story is about a family's reunion after the terrible earthquake in Tangshan, Hebei province in 1976. This was one of the most painful pages of Chinese history in the 1970s as the earthquake killed 2.4 million people and completely destroyed Tangshan city. It is because of this background that the film can easily attract the attention of the Chinese audience as most Chinese (including Chinese living overseas) know the story; however, the need for this background knowledge created a barrier for foreign audiences who do not share the same memories as the Chinese and who know nothing about that period of history. Another cultural barrier of this film is created right at the outset of the story: when the mother had to choose which of her twins should be saved from the rubble, she gave up her daughter and chose her son. This was a brutal choice, but it is understandable for Chinese as the son-favored society has been rooted in Chinese culture for thousands of years; the plot of the "family reunion" is also understandable for Chinese as Chinese culture is based on family roots. But for foreign audiences who do not belong to this culture it is difficult to be persuaded or become involved in the film and the story of the long-awaited reunion of this broken family.

In a 2002 book entitled *Globalization and the Fate of Chinese Film and Television* about possible strategies that China's film and television industries could adopt to fight Hollywood hegemony under the WTO conditions Chinese scholars agreed that multiculturalism and universality were the main cultural reasons for Hollywood's global success. It was argued that one key for Chinese films' success could be the adoption of universally appealing themes and the common concerns of human beings such as life and death, love and hatred, humankind and nature, war and peace, etc. (Su, 2011:196).

Economic factors

The success of a global strategy hinges on a stable distribution system and Hollywood's early emphasis on distribution and exhibition has largely contributed to its dominance of the global film industry (Wang, 2003:1). The central role held by the distributor is due to the fact that it is the distributor who controls the flow of information to both the consumers (through marketing, promotion, branding, and positioning) and the investors (Hoskins et al., 1997). This role is especially significant in a global economy as it links the global and the local and brings about major cultural, economic, and political implications and consequences.

From this perspective it is understandable why Chinese films face obstacles when they approach international (Western) audiences in a distribution and exhibition system which is presently dominated by the Hollywood majors. Moreover, China lacks distribution channels overseas and the existing ones have little influence over the majority of the western audience.

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From this perspective, it is understandable why Chinese movies face obstacles when they approach to international (Western) audiences in a distribution and exhibition system which is presently dominated by Hollywood's majors. Additionally, China lacks of distribution channels overseas, and the existing ones have scarce influence on the majority of western audience.

To overcome these obstacles the Chinese government has adopted two parallel strategies. The first is to form specific organizations aimed at facilitating the entry of Chinese films into foreign markets. One of these is the state-run China Film Export & Import Corporation under the SARFT-controlled China Film Group Corporation, which was established in the late 1990s with a view to promoting and distributing Chinese films overseas according to the guidelines and aims of the Chinese government. The other is China Lion Entertainment, a Sino-Australian joint venture which was established in 2010 to promote and distribute Chinese language films in North America, New Zealand and Australia. China Lion has distribution agreements with a number of China's leading producers including Huayi Bros, Shanghai Film Group and PolyBona, in addition to an exclusive exhibition agreement with leading US cinema chain AMC theaters in the US and Toronto and Cineplex in Vancouver (China Lion, 2012). At the time of writing, AMC is said to be talking about selling the company or a significant stake in it to Wanda Group, one of China's largest theater owners. If the deal goes through a new phase will begin in China's push into the global film industry, greatly increasing its leverage with Hollywood and creating the first theater chain to have a commanding presence in the world's two largest film markets, as well as creating a pipeline for Chinese films in the United States (Entgroup, 2012).

The second strategy is international co-production which involves partners from other countries. The fact that international co-productions have become increasingly important is not surprising since the major advantage of co-production is the financial pooling that enables the partners to rely on a large budget and thus diversify and reduce the economic risk of film production, as well as facilitate access to partners' and third-country markets (Hoskins et al., 1997).

Since Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the 2000 martial-arts movie and most internationally commercially successful Chinese film to date, for Chinese filmmakers co-productions have become an increasingly powerful instrument for homemade films not only to enter overseas markets but at the same time to import and assimilate foreign experience and results (SARFT, 2007:79). There are two main reasons for the boom in co-production. Firstly, China's movie market is growing rapidly. Domestic box office revenues hit a new high of RMB13.1 billion (\$2.1 billion) in 2011 and foreign filmmakers are finding new opportunities in this expanding market. Secondly, China has further relaxed rules and regulations on film cooperation. For example, movies can now receive subsidies from both China and their home countries and also be distributed as domestic films in both markets. "Co-production is the best way to create business value for films," says Han Sanping, Chairman of China Film Group Corp. "Co-production can provide more distribution channels for a film. Chinese companies can distribute the film on the mainland, in Hong Kong and in Taiwan while foreign partners can sell the film to international markets. So co-produced films bring more profit and gain for both sides. In addition to commercial films, many directors of artistic films are trying to attract investment and produce with the help of overseas partners" (Tang, 2011b).

Although the learning curve of Chinese filmmakers has been significantly accelerated by partnerships and co-productions, according to film industry experts the scarcity and lack of influence of marketing and promotion tools are other challenges Chinese films have to face when they attempt to go overseas. As Ryan (1991) argues, one important role of marketing in the management of cultural goods is to

reduce the uncertainty associated with the audience's reaction to creative efforts in the consumers' recognizable conceptual space of stars and styles. Brand loyalty may to a greater or lesser extent be attached to the actor, or director. In China there is a lack of commercial directors and a shortage of younger Chinese film stars that travel internationally, are bankable and that can act as a 'brand' of China (Hunt, 2011).

The "political factor"

As Chinese productions attempt to win over the international audience, they face a strange political dilemma because of "political implications" which impedes and at the same helps to promote Chinese films' awareness and reputation worldwide. From this point of view, Zhang Yimou's latest production *Flowers of War* provides interesting insights into how the "political" factor stopped Chinese films from entering overseas markets. This "political" dilemma is, indeed, not new to Chinese films when they go abroad as it characterizes, albeit with different patterns, the early films of the Fifth Generation directors and underground productions (Sixth Generation directors).

Flowers of War set several records for production in mainland China: it is the film with the highest budget (\$94 million); it is the first Chinese film starring a big Hollywood star; and it is a Chinese story in which 40% of the dialogue is in English. All these factors led the media to consider it an international film production: mainland Chinese films have struggled to catch on in Europe and America but this wartime epic, with its sense of spectacle, its schmaltzy story of redemption and its classic Hollywood feel, may offer one of the better chances for success. Indeed, "it's not the only film that's a collaboration of the East and the West, but in none of the other films is the collaboration as organic," Zhang (Weiping, the producer) said of the film (Zeitchik, 2011).

The makers of *Flowers of War* asked DDA Public Relations, the leading provider of international marketing services to the film industry, to be the PR agency for the film's marketing in North America and promotion in Hollywood before the Academy Awards. The makers were so optimistic about the success of *Flowers of War* worldwide that Zhang Weiping said "We would like to take the chance to make it the most influential and top-grossing Chinese film in the world" (Zeitchik & Pierson, 2011). Everything was seemingly going in the right direction - towards this predicted success - until the "political" factor was dragged into the interpretation of *Flowers of War* by the media.

According to producer Zhang Weiping, the media reaction in North America was fairly good at the beginning but suddenly all the voices turned negative and dwelt mainly on two aspects: 1. It denied that the Nanking massacre took place; 2. It denied the commercial interests of the film and treated it as a national propaganda production (Zhang Weiping talk about, 2012). DDA explained to Zhang Weiping that the thing they worried about most was that *Flowers of War* would ignite political debate, since the theme of the film is obviously anti-Japan and, when Japanese film companies began to manipulate the Hollywood media by playing the card of politics, DDA warned Zhang Weiping they were running a huge risk.

As a result of all this, *Flowers of War* was a failure; it was quickly eliminated from the Academy's long list and had to change its marketing strategy: from focus on North America to Southeast Asia and other international markets. Data from IMDB shows that at April 8th, 2012 the total box-office takings of *Flowers of War* in the US market was just \$6.4 million, just 1/9 of *Hero's* takings in America in 2005 (\$53.5 million). "Politics eventually influenced the market of *Flowers of War*, as well as the possibility of

winning an award.” (Flowers of War suffered, 2012) This is the latest but also the most strident case of how “politics” hampered a Chinese film’s international success even although the film embraced “international” factors in its production and marketing plan: once it was associated with political factors, all the previous efforts turned to ash.

When Zhang Yimou’s Hero set the record for Chinese films’ foreign box office takings (\$155million) there was also a lot of discussion about its political implications in addition to the recognition of its aesthetic achievement and cultural representation. “Despite online discourses that have criticized Hero for serving as propaganda for the People’s Republic of China, satisfying both political requirements and the need for global expansion, a national discourse arose that corresponded to the state’s agenda without undermining the movie’s market potential. The film in this case represents a popular text that the state can harness for propaganda purposes. But such a text has to be carefully packaged, so that it appears non-confrontational on the one hand, and shows no obvious signs of pandering to authority on the other” (Larson, 2010). This “careful package” is not easy to achieve, no matter how hard Zhang Yimou tried to raise the theme of Flowers of War to the universal question of how human beings respond in situations of crisis instead of anti-Japan propaganda, nationalism and patriotism, as it shows too many obvious signs and these signs drew people’s attention and prevented them from believing and understanding the real theme the director wanted to express.

Zhang Yimou has always been aware of the use of the “political” factor as he is one of the most important representatives of the so-called Fifth Generation directors who began to attract the attention of western audiences in the 1980s. As the first batch of college students graduated after the turmoil of the 10-year Cultural Revolution, early productions of the Fifth Generation directors (Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige, Tian Zhuangzhuang, etc.) were all concerned with how they saw and responded to that unique era, inspiring them to explore China’s national culture and its political/social structure using different forms of expression. Although film commentators and scholars have subscribed to the idea that the Fifth Generation directors, with Zhang (Yimou) arguably its most famous member, are less concerned with politics than their predecessors and are more interested in aesthetics and experimenting with the medium (Chen, Liu and Shi, 1997; Zhang, 2004), the Fifth-generation directors’ early success worldwide is inevitably linked to the political/social criticism in their storytelling. Other two films by Zhang Yimou won nominations at the Academy Foreign Film Awards besides Hero: Ju Dou and Raise The Red Lantern, which were both stories about paternity and the old social order of China. “Even although the setting in both films is China in the twenties before the rise of Communism, both films very much annoyed the ageing leadership of Communist China and were censored (Ju Dou was actually banned), ostensibly for moral reasons, but more obviously because of the way it depicted elderly men in positions of power.” (Littrell, 2002).

There is a similarity between Fifth Generation directors and Sixth Generation directors in China in that their early productions all became internationally well-known because they were politically sensitive and were banned in mainland China. While for the Fifth Generation, Zhang Yimou’s *Huo Zhe* (To Live), Chen Kaige’s *Ba Wang Bie Ji* (Farewell My Concubine), Tian Zhuangzhuang’s *Lan Fengzheng* (The Blue Kite) were all stories about the cultural revolution (one of the most politically sensitive topics in China); for the Sixth Generation, Jia Zhangke’s *Xiao Wu*, Wang Xiaoshuai’s *Shi Qi Sui de Dan Che* (Beijing Bicycle), Zhang Yuan’s *Beijing Za Zhong* (Beijing Bastard) and Dong Gong Xi Gong (East Palace West Palace) were stories about grass-roots groups of people and their struggles in real life which was set and controlled by political power. All these films won international film prizes but have all been banned from

theaters in mainland China. Thus, we can find two ironic equations here: politically sensitive/offensive (against the government/social order) Chinese films = internationally acknowledged/acclaimed Chinese films; politically implicated/supportive (pro-government/social standards) Chinese films = internationally slighted/disliked Chinese films. One genre of Chinese films has been created on the basis of the two equations: underground films, which are mostly made by the Sixth Generation directors together under the belief that all new and interesting talent in the Chinese film industry must necessarily be 'underground' (Donald & Voci, 2008). "The 'underground' quality appears in many cases to be a question of style rather than substance, and again skeptics allege that some young filmmakers are not actually censored by the Film Bureau, but elect to bypass its official approval processes so that they can claim the status of being banned, dissident or underground and so enhance their recognition and credibility abroad. Selling a 'banned' film to a non-Chinese-speaking audience is easier than trying to persuade people that a mainstream film with subtitles might be educational and entertaining." (Donald & Voci, 2008).

These "underground" films in some way dominate the international stage because they always reflect the negative side of Chinese society which is considered to appeal to the international audience, while other "above-ground" film productions¹ with a different type of storytelling have to struggle and use narration to persuade the international audience. And during this struggle the political factor becomes the weakest link. To examine the "political" relationship of "above-ground" Chinese films, Hu Ke (1998) said that "it is difficult for Chinese film producers to forget the "political" meaning of their films as their chronological overview has shown why 'serving the nation' has been the main concern and how cinema and nation can hardly be separated in the Chinese context." Similar comments are made by Chen Xihe, one of the first scholars to use contemporary theory to analyze Chinese cinema, who declared that "the social and instrumental values of films have been the main concern for the majority of directors. The realism that Chinese films strive to achieve has been conditioned most of the time by ideological and educational purposes which lie behind the faithful reproduction of reality" (Chen, 1990).

For complete access to the article follow [this link](#).

¹ "above ground" films here is defined as films that can be distributed in mainland China compared to "underground" films which cannot be released in mainland China.

Press

National Qualification Exam for Journalists in China

The General Administration of Press and Publication announced in October that all journalists, reporters and editors from different press units in China must have professional training and pass the qualification exam before obtaining the renewal of their press card in 2014. This is the first time national qualification exams will be held in China and has the aim of improving the quality of news reporting teams, enhancing "professional ethics", and promoting a meaningful development of the news industry. Training includes: "The Chinese model of socialism", "Marxist views of news", "News Ethics", "News Laws and Regulation", "Regulation of News Collection and Editing" and "Preventing False News". The 18 main press units (Central level, 中央级) have been called on to start the training process; a total of 250,000 Chinese journalists will take the forthcoming National Test.

Source: people.com News, 10 October 2013, <http://hi.people.com.cn/n/2013/1011/c231187-19672049.html>

Broadcasting

SARFT New data published about TV-Series Production in China

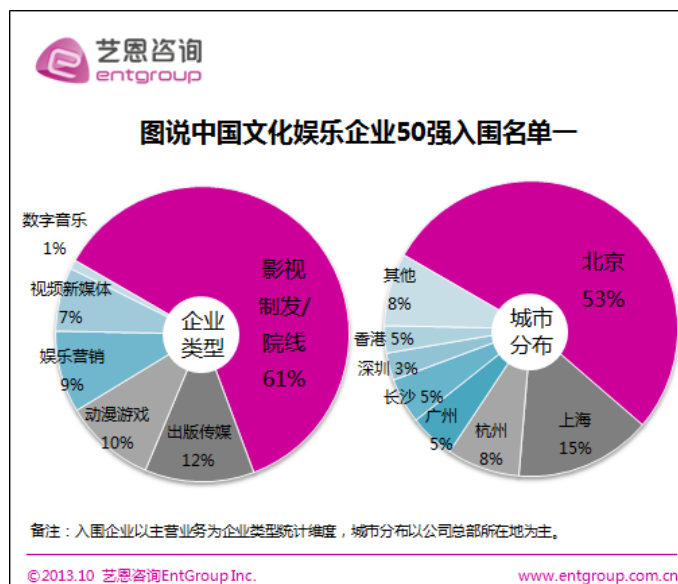
The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) published the number of TV-series productions that obtained distribution authorization between April and June, 2013. There are a total 96 TV series, 3292 episodes, including: 51 TV-series about contemporary themes (1602 episodes), which contribute 53.13%; 43 TV-series about historical subjects (1589 episodes), which contribute 44.79%, of which stories about ancient history account for 8.33% while modern history stories account for 36.46%. Another two key-theme (with great meaning for the nation or the Party) TV series contribute 2.08%. Compared to the data for 2012, there is a slight increase in historical-themed TV series and a decrease in contemporary-themed stories (2012: 51 contemporary-themed stories contributed 56.13%, historical-themed stories contributed 42.69%, and Key-theme stories 1.19%).

Source: The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television website, 24 July 2013 :

<http://www.sarft.gov.cn/articles/2013/07/24/20130724164257420236.html>

ENAWARDS discovers the map of China's culture industry

The Entgroup published the ENAWARDS - Top 50 Culture/Entertainment Companies for the first time, in order to show the current situation and characteristics of China's mainstream culture industry.



From the figures provided by Entgroup, 61 percent of the companies are in the film theater industry and Film/TV production industry followed by the publication industry (12%), the animation Gaming industry (10%) and the entertainment marketing industry (9%), while there was no significant difference between the video sharing news media industry (7%) and digital, and the digital music industry has just 1%. Also, 53% of the companies are located in Beijing, 15% in Shanghai, 8% in Hangzhou followed by Guangzhou, Changsha, Shenzhen, Hong Kong and other cities. 32% of the companies are listed on the stock exchange, 23% of them on the domestic stock exchange and 9% on the foreign stock exchange.

Source: Entgroup News, 9 October 2013 <http://news.entgroup.cn/a/0918078.shtml>

Film industry

Domestic Chinese film won the film market in the first half of 2013

The total box office takings of China's film industry reached 11 billion yuan (\$1.78 billion), an increase of 35% compared to the previous year. The box office of Chinese domestic films contributed 6.8 billion yuan (\$1.1 billion) which made it the first year that Chinese films surpassed imported foreign films (mainly Hollywood productions) in the market. Chinese movies are getting better, and with \$50+ million grosses now routine, they're becoming much more profitable. Capital is attracted to ventures that offer profits, and Chinese movies, though wise investments, are becoming increasingly attractive.

Source: China Daily, 8 July. 2013. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqgj/jryw/2013-07-18/content_9617015.html;
<http://chinafilmbiz.com/tag/china-box-office/>

Wanda Group builds China's "Universal Studio"

On September 22 2013, Wanda Group, which bought the AMC theater chain last year, launched the Qingdao Oriental Movie Metropolis which will become the "Universal Studio" in China. Wanda group will have a total investment of 50 billion yuan (\$8.2 billion) to transform China's movie industry into the world's biggest within 5 years. The facility will comprise a 10,000-square-meter film studio and 19 smaller facilities, along with a theme park similar to that of the Universal Studios franchise. The project will also include a permanent auto show, a yacht center, an international hospital, hotels and bars. More than 50 Chinese film production companies will enter and have property in this metropolis, to guarantee no fewer than 100 movies productions every year from 2017. Wanda also announced that it will organize the "Qingdao International Film Festival" from 2016, and each year 30 international super stars and directors will be invited to Qingdao in September.

Source: Tencent News, Sept. 23 2013, <http://ln.qq.com/a/20130923/008348.htm>

Internet

CNNIC released the 32nd Statistical Report on Internet Development

On July 17 2013, the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) released the 32nd Statistical Report on Internet Development ("the Report"). The report shows that at the end of June 2013, Chinese netizens numbered 591 million, with Internet penetration standing at 44.1%. During the first half of this year, mobile phones as Internet terminals made an eye-catching play, because they not only became an important source for new netizens but also performed well with other network applications such as instant messaging and e-business.

Netizen Growth has Entered a Steady State, Mobile Phones Become No. 1 Source of New Netizens

The report shows that at the end of June 2013, the number of netizens in China reached 591 million, increasing by 26.56 million compared to the end of 2012. Internet penetration was 44.1%, increasing by 2% compared to the end of 2012. Up to 70.0% of new netizens used mobile phones to surf the Internet, outnumbering netizens who use other equipment to surf the Internet. It is worth mentioning that Internet penetration was quite fast in the rural areas of China. Of the new netizens in the semiannual period, rural netizens accounted for 54.4%. Meantime, the number of mobile phone netizens in China reached 464 million at the end of June 2013, increasing by 43.79 million compared to the end of 2012. Netizens using mobile phones rose to 78.5%. The popularity of the 3G, development of wireless networks, and innovation of mobile phone applications greatly facilitated the rapid growth of mobile phone netizens.

Mobile Phone Applications Become a Developing Highlight, Growth of PC Applications Tend to Slow Down

By the end of June 2013, the number of instant messaging netizens hit 497 million, increasing by 29.31 million in a half year. Of all applications, the instant messaging application grew the most rapidly. With a usage rate of 84.2%, it rose by 1.3% compared to the rate at the end of 2012. Its usage rate remained no. 1 and continued to rise. The development of the mobile phone terminal, in particular, was even faster. In instant messaging via mobile phones, the number of netizens was 397 million, an increase of 45.2 million compared to the end of 2012, with a usage rate of 85.7%. Both the growth rate and the usage rate have exceeded the overall level of the instant messaging application. The Report shows that, compared to 2012, there was no significant growth in online entertainment applications. These applications changed very little in terms of the usage rate, and their development slowed down on the whole. Mobile phones became an important breakthrough point for the scale growth of each type of application. Compared to the end of 2012, the number of users increased by 14.0%, 18.9%, 15.7% and 12.0% respectively in the mobile phone network music, mobile phone network video, mobile phone network game and mobile phone network literature, maintaining a high growth rate.



Figura 1 Growth of mobile Internet users

As the Internet application with the most rapid rise in recent years, the e-business application developed rapidly at the mobile phone terminal. Specifically, the number of netizens in the mobile phone online payment sector grew significantly. The report shows that the number of online payment users reached 244 million, increasing by 23.73 million in six months, with a growth rate of 10.8%. Specifically, the number of mobile phone online payment users rose by 43.0% over 2012. In addition, large-scale growth was seen in mobile phone shopping, mobile phone group purchasing and mobile phone online banking.

Source: CNNIC 22 July 2013 http://www1.cnnic.cn/AU/MediaC/rdxw/hotnews/201307/t20130722_40723.htm

China's National Development And Reform Commission Urges End To Broadband Oligopoly

Recent machinations in China suggest that the Chinese telecommunications companies may be close to the full monopolization of their sector.

Xu Kunlin, director of the bureau of price supervision and anti-monopoly at the National Development and Reform Commission, revealed to local media that the commission has been urging China Telecom and China Unicom to continue to rectify their monopolistic activities and end their oligopoly in the broadband sector within five years.

In 2011, the National Development and Reform Commission announced an anti-monopoly investigation against China Telecom and China Unicom, due to their suspected monopolistic behaviors in the Internet access market. After that, China Telecom and China Unicom both published announcements admitting that they have problems in price management and that there are large pricing differences in the provision of access to Internet service providers. Both companies promised to lower their broadband fee levels.

Xu said that China Telecom and China Unicom have increased their broadband capacity from the formerly planned 10G to 100G. The commission will continue to urge the two companies to make additional modifications and improvements over the coming five years.

Xu added that an anti-monopoly investigation will not treat Chinese enterprises and foreign ones differently. If there is monopolistic behavior, the commission will take action in accordance with the law.

Source: National Development and Reform Commission 14 October 2013 http://xwzx.ndrc.gov.cn/http://www.chinatechnews.com/2013/10/14/19799-chinas-national-development-and-reform-commission-urges-end-to-broadband-oligopoly?utm_source=The+Sinocism+China+Newsletter&utm_campaign=725c8d2fea-Sinocism10_14_131&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_171f237867-725c8d2fea-24573061

New media and the market

China August mobile phone users grow to 1.196 billion, says MIIT

China had 1.196 billion subscribers to mobile communication services at the end of August 2013, growing 0.88% month on month and 11.51% year on year. Of the subscribers, 351.29 million (29.38%) were 3G users and 827.79 million (69.24%) mobile Internet-access users, according to China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT).

The number of subscribers accounted for 87.1% of the country's population.

China also had 271.34 million subscribers to fixed-line telephone services in August, accounting for 20.2% of the population.

In August, China's mobile phone users sent 77.5 billion text messages, averaging 2.1 messages per phone per day, and mobile access to the Internet resulted in total traffic of 117,584Tb.

Source IResearchChina 26 September 2013 <http://www.iresearchchina.com/news/5183.html>

4G licenses to come by year-end: SSNMIIT to release 4G licenses by year-end

A new round of competition is about to hit China's telecommunications industry as regulators prepare to issue fourth-generation (4G) mobile networking licenses, the Shanghai Securities News (SSN) reported on September 25.

The official paper cited Miao Wei, China's minister of industry and information technology, who reportedly announced Tuesday at an industry event that 4G licenses would be given out before the end of the year. No specific details pertaining to these licenses were provided.

During March's two sessions meetings in Beijing, Miao said that the development of China's 4G sector had been suppressed by a lack of base stations and terminal products, according to Xinhua News Agency reports filed during that time. Over the following months, China Mobile responded to these statements by building 20,000 stations, say local media outlets. The State-owned telecoms giant is also said to be trialing its 4G TD-LTE network in 16 major Chinese cities, including Guangzhou and Shanghai.

TD-LTE is an indigenous mobile telecommunications standard developed by China Mobile in conjunction with several domestic and foreign telecoms equipment manufacturers.

"The time is ripe to issue 4G licenses. Actually, China is still far behind the rest of the world in terms of advancing its next-generation networks," Liu Dalong, a senior communication analyst from Beijing-based market research firm iResearch, told theGlobal Times.

"The issuance of these new licenses will spark more competition among the country's mobile operators, but it will also create opportunities and challenges for mobile equipment makers as well," Liu went on to remark.

In anticipation of the eventual arrival of 4G service in China, many of the world's leading device and hardware makers - including Apple Inc - have created products compatible with the country's TD-LTE technology.

Liu went on to say that domestic manufacturers need to accelerate development of related products in order to keep pace with their foreign rivals.

Investment into the communication industry will likely surpass 300 billion yuan (36.1 billion Euro) over the next three years, according to the SSN report. Over the long-term, analysts say that projected capital inflows into the sector will greatly benefit shares related to base construction, data transmission and network optimization.

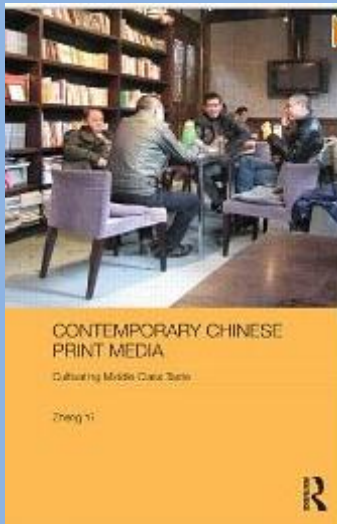
Source Global Times 25 September 2013 <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/813958.shtml#.UlvIsINXAc>

Contemporary Chinese Print Media: Cultivating Middle Class Taste

Author: Zheng Yi

Publisher: Routledge
2013, September

This book examines the transformations in form, genre, and content of contemporary Chinese print media. It describes and analyses the role of post-reform social stratification in the media, focusing particularly on how the changing practices and institutions of the industry correspond to and accelerate the emergence of a relatively affluent urban leisure-reading market. It argues that this reinvention of Chinese print media vis-à-vis the creation of a post-socialist taste (class) culture is an essential part of the cultural and affective transformations in contemporary Chinese society, and demonstrates how the reinvention of such taste culture effectively creates, through new kinds of reading materials and carefully demarcated target audiences, a middle-class civility that serves as the locus of the new niche media market.



About the author

Yi Zheng is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Humanities and Languages at the University of New South Wales, Australia. She is the author of *From Burke and Wordsworth to the Sublime in Modern Chinese Literature* (2011) and co-editor of *Travelling Facts: the Construction, Distribution, and Accumulation of Knowledge* (2004).

Political Communications in the Great Leap Forward Movement

Author Xu Jing
Publisher Hong Kong Press For Social Sciences Ltd
February, 2004

Many books have been written about the Chinese Great Leap Forward Movement of 1958, which led to the famine in Mao's era and was thought to be the origin of the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). This book argues that understanding the characteristics of Chinese political communications which were mainly reflected through Chinese political movements during the Great Leap Forward could be important. By adopting an historical approach and critical discourse or rhetoric analysis of mainstream publications in that period, the author provides new interpretations on communication models and mechanisms during the Great Leap Forward Movement.

In the introductory chapter, the author provides an overview of overseas studies on Chinese communication before the 1980s. First of all some renown scholars such as Frederick Yu, Alan Liu and Goldwin Chu are presented. The author then frames the book in three sections. In chapter one, the author reviews the concepts of communication, politics, political communication and propaganda, and defines their meaning and significance within the Chinese context of that time. In chapter two the author examines three principles of Chinese political communication: nationwide political thinking, cohesive mass campaigns (rather than media campaigns) and the CCP's media policies. In chapter three the author describes the nationwide political communications networks which were gradually established after 1949.

Another three chapters follow and focus on the political communication process during the Great Leap Forward Movement in 1958. In chapter four, by reviewing the historical expressions from maojin (abrupt rush forward) to anti-maojin and finally to the Great Leap Forward, the author shows us how situations were defined in words and symbols by the political powers through political communications.

In chapter five, reviewing the nationwide movements of zhenfeng (correcting the thinking and working style) which continued throughout the Great Leap Forward Movement, the author clarifies how farmers, laborers, intellectuals and even social celebrities were mobilized to support the Great Leap Forward and how irrational behavior was rationalized through political rhetoric and communication.

In chapter six, by reviewing some historical events during the Great Leap Forward, such as the launch of agricultural satellites, people's communes and backyard furnaces campaigns, the author attempts to demonstrate how visual public rhetoric affected nationwide social



practice.

The final three chapters evaluate the structural functions of different political communication agents. Chairman Mao's communication strategies and skills, such as personal-cult, political speeches, nationwide inspections and media appeals, are analyzed in chapter seven. The CCP's organizational communications are given more attention. The author explains how party documents were delivered not only through communication channels inside the Chinese Communist Party's bureaucratic pyramid **but** also published in national and local newspapers for public reading and discussion in nationwide political study groups. Officials had to gain mass mobilization skills which were typically reflected in the Working Methods 60 (a central document for local cadres).

Chapter nine focuses on the Chinese mass media, including newspapers, magazines, radios and even posters and billboards, etc. The author examines the party's manipulation of the mass media, news production process and Chinese media campaigns at that time in order to provide a picture of the role of mass media during the Great Leap Forward.

About the author

Xu Jing is Professor at Peking University, School of Journalism and Communication. She obtained her Ph.D from the same university. Her main research interests are new media and public opinion. She was an academic visitor at the Hong Kong Chinese University and at the Loyal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm; she is senior associate member at St. Anthony's College, Oxford University. She is author of *Political Communications in the Great Leap Forward Movement* in 1958, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Social Science Press, 2004; *General Introduction to Communication Theories*, Tsinghua University Press, 2007; *Public Opinion: an Introduction*, Peking University Press, 2009.

CFP – 12th Chinese Internet Research Conference

Call for Papers – 12th Chinese Internet Research Conference (CIRC) 19-21 June 2014

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

ABSTRACTS DUE BY JANUARY 1, 2014

Situated Practices on China's changing Internets:
From the users of mobile ICTs and Apps to Weibo posters and Social Networkers

Website: <http://myweb.polyu.edu.hk/~circ12/>

Introduction

CIRC was started in 2003, when less than 25 million people had access to the Internet in China, to study the impact this new technology might have on China's still somewhat isolated society, culture, and politics. By July 2013, the Internet in China had grown to almost 600 million Chinese Internet users whose activities have influenced Chinese society and culture in many different ways. Meanwhile, the CIRC continued to investigate and discuss these exciting developments in annual conferences held most recently at Peking University (2010), Georgetown University (2011), University of Southern California (2012), and the University of Oxford (2013).

As an interdisciplinary conference, CIRC has profited from the exchanges between researchers from diverse academic and disciplinary traditions, as well as the inclusion of experts from outside academia. Academics, journalists, market researchers, industry analysts, legal practitioners, business leaders and others come together at the conference to discuss the latest developments of the Internet in China.

In June 2014, the Chinese Internet Research Conference will return to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, a place both inside and outside China, with the world's fastest broadband Internet next to the world's most openly censored one. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University will host CIRC 12 (June 19-21) as well as a related postgraduate student pre-conference (June 18 and 19), in the centre of the Hong Kong and just 45 minutes by train from the physical and digital borders with Mainland China.

CIRC 12 wishes to continue the proud tradition of past Chinese Internet Research Conferences in challenging researchers to take a fresh look at the Chinese Internet by recognizing the complexity of the Chinese digital media ecology and focusing on the lived practices of Chinese Internet users and the embedding of the Internet into their lives. CIRC 12 encourages papers that go beyond studies of the interactions between netizens and the state to look more closely at the rich variety of practices that have evolved on China's digital media platforms in its enforced distance from the global Internet.

Some of the many questions papers could address in this context are:

- How are different people in China using their mobile phones or computing devices to access networked services, and how is this affecting their work, leisure, relationships, families, studies, etc?
- Where and when are people in China accessing the Internet and what is it they are accessing?
- How are mobile phones and computing devices affecting businesses and the work or study environment in China?
- How do people in China describe 'the Internet' and their online practices, as well as their feelings and attitudes towards cyberspace?
- How have individual social networks in China been affected by the rise of networked services?
- How has the Internet affected China, and how has China affected the Internet?
- How has the Internet affected Chinese culture and vice versa?

- What is Chinese about the Internet in China?
- Who are the users of the Chinese Internet?
- What are the differences, if any, between Internet use in China and elsewhere, in particular in different parts of the Chinese-speaking world, e.g. Hong Kong, Taiwan, overseas Chinese?
- How do everyday practices on the Chinese Internet intersect with discourses – circulating both inside and outside China – on the Internet?
- How are practices on the Chinese internet related to policy?

Paper and Panel Proposals

The organising committee invites proposals for paper presentations or panels that address one or more of the questions above or related issues concerning the Internet in the Chinese-speaking world. Proposals should be written in English and should not exceed 500 words for individual papers, or 1000 words for panel proposals. Proposals and enquiries should be sent to circ12@polyu.edu.hk

Deadlines

Proposals for panels and papers should be submitted by 1 January, 2014. The organising committee will provide feedback on the proposals and full versions of the accepted papers of up to 8,000 words including references should be prepared by 1 May 2014 and sent via email to the organising committee.

Graduate Student Pre-Conference and Paper Competition CIRC 12 will include a graduate student pre-conference 18-19 June 2014 that will focus on methodology and ethics of Internet research in the People's Republic of China, both of which pose particular problems, which are often not discussed in sufficient depth. It is hoped that the pre-conference will promote a greater discussion of some of the difficulties new researchers face in analysing the Internet in China.

The pre-conference will consist of two master classes and postgraduate students are encouraged to submit paper proposals of up to 500 words focussing on methodology and/or ethics to the pre-conference, while papers for the main conference should focus on thematic issues.

The main conference continues to welcome graduate student papers, and submissions FOR THE MAIN CONFERENCE will be considered for CIRC's annual graduate student paper competition. Please note that only papers without faculty co-authors are eligible for the competition.

Organising Committee

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David Kurt HEROLD, Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Social Sciences (APSS), HK Polytechnic University

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China Media Observatory is oriented to develop a strong academic network among Professors, researchers, PhD from Europe, China and other countries, who are focusing on China Media studies, with interdisciplinary approaches. Any academic contributions and suggestions from your side are always welcomed.

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