

*Human Communication*. A Publication of the Pacific and Asian Communication Association. Vol. 14, No. 3, pp.151 - 170.

**From “Your Window on China” to “Your Window on China and the World”:  
the Transformation of China’s Television Cultural Ideology since 1978**

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**Abstract**

This study examines the transformation of China's television cultural ideology since the Reform and Opening-up in 1978. The results show that the changes in China's economy, politics and socio-culture have encouraged the shift from representation of China to presentation of China and the world. More international coverage has been provided for the viewers to help them understand the life of human population around the globe. Clearly, China's television cultural identity today shows stronger awareness of the great changes in the world. However, it should be noted that when assessing the reformation of China's mass media, all studies must be exactly contextualized.

**Keywords/** television cultural ideology/transformation/China

### **Background: Historical review of China's television broadcasting prior to 1978**

The background information should be given as no one can assess the motive of a transformation without knowing something of its early development.

The transformation of China's television cultural ideology, in particular, the current situation can be best understood with some insight into the history of television broadcasting prior to 1978.

Beijing Television, the predecessor of China Central Television (CCTV) went on the air on 1 May 1958. Prior to the experimental broadcasting, the Central Broadcasting Bureau submitted a series of reports to the Central Government of China concerning the issues such as Television, Nation-Building Agenda, and Ownership. As discussed in the reports, television in China (like all other media) should "have positive function for society by publicizing politics (of the Central Government), disseminating knowledge and enriching the cultural life of people of the entire nation. The programs regularly broadcasted are obliged to report promptly on the important events happened in China's political sphere, above all on the great achievements of socialism" (Zhao, 2008:4-9). The television policy articulated in the patterns of Beijing Television's ownership and control. Therefore, all TV stations including Beijing Television were state-owned and strictly controlled. For example, the programs produced by Beijing Television must receive the censorship from the Central Broadcasting Bureau, especially the television news reports. The strict censorship system not only outlined the main tasks of Beijing Television which were based on propaganda and the Central Government's guidelines but also clearly laid the ground for its television programming. The focus of Beijing Television was almost always on promoting the industrial and agricultural developments in China and reporting on the important events of profound political implications to help the government maintain social stability and ethnic unity. Beijing Television depended on government such that some fabric news coverage such as "Ten-thousand jin per mu (approximately five-thousand kilograms per unit) and "Iron and steel smelter movement" even was broadcasted as highlights under the impetus of "the Great Leap Forward". The Chinese people in the 1950s and 1960s on the screen were invariably robust, energetic and upbeat who all were materially and culturally rich. Also, the representatives invited were undoubtedly model workers who were better able to show the spirit of China's socialism. For example, the first program aired on 1 May 1958 when Beijing Television began launching was entitled "The Model Workers from Industry and Directors of Agricultural Cooperatives Celebrated the Labor Day in Beijing". What is more, many other representatives of this sort were often invited to give talks on television including Wang Jinxi, Shi Chuanxiang, Li Ruihuan, Zhang Baifa and Ni Zhifu and so on. The last three later were promoted to the Central Government.

From the foregoing discussion, one can illustrate that television media in China prior to 1978 when the Reform and Opening-up got started was not expected to develop communication as a window but to follow the Party or Central Government's socioeconomic and sociomoral standards. The television media in China did not enjoy the freedom from state control. As a result of the centrist approaches to television, the

primary object of Beijing Television's international reporting during the period was to "express the friendship of Chinese to people in different countries and to report on achievements, developments and social activities of the countries in the camp of socialism" (Zhao, 2008:15). The first television program produced by foreign TV station was broadcasted on 8 May 1958 in China. The International Group of Beijing Television in charge of collaborations with television companies abroad started to work in 1963 to assist in international program exchange. Only were programs produced by countries of socialism served except for Britain and Japan. The Chinese viewers irregularly had access to the television news or documentaries such as "Russia News", "Romania News", "Poland News", "German Democratic Republic News", "Czechoslovakia News" and "Bulgaria News" and so on. However, the international reporting had to comply with the changes in China's diplomatic policies. For example, Beijing Television stopped the exchange with Russia in 1963 when the clash between the two countries broke out. In terms of documentaries shown, one of the common features they possessed was anti-Western, more importantly anti-America. The Chinese audiences were only familiar with a few documentaries like "Awakening of the Blacks in America", "The Anti-America Wave around the Globe" and "Rise up, Dominica". As noted earlier, the television cultural ideology in China before 1978 was of strong sense of defense and avoidance in order to fulfill its main tasks that prevent the beliefs, values and attitude of individual viewers from being affected by foreign television exposure. In keeping with the intensive cultural avoidance, nearly all types of programs broadcasted on television were devoted to battle for ideology. For instance, the first sports report released by Beijing Television on the spot was from Jakarta, Indonesia in November 1963 on "Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEF0)". A total of over 2,000 athletes from approximately 51 nations in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America participated in the first edition of GANEF0. China also sent a delegation to the Game. Actually, GANEF0 was a product of the ideological battle. President Dirgahayu claimed the role of sport was to play in the Cold War that politics and sport were intertwined and therefore the newly independent socialist states should join hands in every one of the fields (2010). GANEF0, however, was only held in 1963 because of its constitution against the doctrine of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) which insisted in separating politics from sport.

China's television cultural ideology emphasized over again its identity as a guardian of government, public opinion and culture when the Cultural Revolution began sweeping around the state since 1966. During the ten years, Beijing Television was controlled by military management and ordered to stop broadcasting education programs and service programs and so on. The central element of China's television media was to "speak politics (political propaganda)" and promote "proletariate politics" (Zhao, 2008:72). The influence of Cultural Revolution was reflected in television programming so that Beijing Television began its broadcasting on a daily basis with a fixed "prelude", namely "Quotations of Chairman Mao". And, all its air time was devoted to study of Mao Tsetung's Spirit and criticism of Western capitalism. Therefore, international reporting was forced to suspend and even stopped

for a couple of years. A visiting British broadcaster reported that “18 minutes of the entire 26-minute broadcast were nothing but ‘rolling captions’ of Mao Tsetung’s thoughts against the background music of ‘The East Is Red’” (Chung, 2001:115)

This historical review illustrates that China’s television cultural ideology prior to Deng Xiaoping’s reform claimed that television media must engage in nation-building which was also ideological. Television in China was run and controlled by the Government. It is in essence a propagandist to support the Central Government and the Party to maintain established ideology, social order, norms and just as importantly culture.

### **Ideology, Cultural Ideology and National Image**

#### **Ideology**

The impact made by ideology on media and society is of deep and profound implications. Ideology means “the influence of ideas on people’s beliefs and actions”. (Giddens, 2001: 464 ) The word refers to a “science of ideas” when Destutt de Tracy, a French writer first used it. Ideology, however, got used more critically. John B. Thompson argued that there are two conceptualizations of ideology, that is Tracy’s and Karl Marx’s. Tracy’s view is the neutral conception of ideology, which is the most common. Marx’s view is a critical conception of ideology. In the hands of later scholars, this second conception of ideology was extended to conception of hegemony. Gramsci in his study of ideology argued that the dominant social group has a more powerful capacity to control moral and intellectual direction and to control institutions including schools, churches and the mass media. As a consequence, it is necessarily important for the dominant social class to organize social alliances and build, maintain a system rarely challenged to support its aims. The state “is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes”(Gramsci,1971:258). In critical studies of ideology, Gramsci’s notion of hegemony became a major influence in conceptualizing mass media and national building. In other words, the mass media are forced to act as the agent of the dominant ideology despite literal existence of freedom of press, freedom of speech or of expression. More recently, Thompson argued that the critical notion of ideology is to be preferred compared to the neutral conception because it “conveys a negative, critical or pejorative sense” (Thompson, 1990:53) which “is primarily concerned with the ways in which symbolic forms intersect with relations of power. It is concerned with the ways in which meaning is mobilized in the social world and serves thereby to bolster up individuals and groups who occupy positions of power”.(Thompson, 1994:135). The conception of ideology employed in this study is the critical conception.

#### **Cultural Ideology**

When sociologists illustrate the notion of culture, they concern about the aspects we learned rather than that we inherited. Culture, in general, consists of two aspects, tangible aspects and intangible aspects. The intangible aspects form the content of culture while tangible aspects represent that content. The conception of cultural ideology used in this study draws on the conception of ideology and culture. This

ideology is sort of continuation of a state's political ideology. Cultural ideology promotes the dominant cultural values and norms which become the fixed and inflexible image of the distinctive cultural characteristics of an ethnic community or a country. The effort is to form the socio-cultural identity fit in nation-building project which is also ideological and then maintain a harmonious society.

Edward Said illustrates how dominant culture above all the Western culture affects the representations of that of developing countries through the nineteenth-century imperialism. He argued:

Western cultural forms can be taken out of the autonomous enclosures in which they have been protected, and placed instead in the dynamic global environment created by imperialism, itself revised as an ongoing contest between North and South, metropolis and periphery, white and native. (Said, 1993:59)

In sociological interpretations of globalization, the notion of culture is of primary importance. Therefore, governments in developing countries have concerned about the protection of native culture against the invasion by alien cultural influence, in particular, the Western culture. The claim of cultural ideology to these countries is one that the maintenance of native culture is necessary for cultural identity construction. In the meantime, some of so-called "emerging states" also have introduced political and economic reform and begun involving in the process of globalization (Liu, 2007). The focus of new cultural ideology is on modernization and limited manifestation of liberalization.

### **National Image**

National image has been connected with the soft power and then discussed a lot since Joseph Nye. A handful of scholars have defined the notions of "National Image". Among them, Chinese scholars think that "it does not only refer to the external image of a state. Rather it is the unity of content and representation... ..More importantly, it illustrates the national consciousness which are the sparkles of the national spirit. As a consequence, a positive national image is better able to strengthen the national identity and construct the common consciousness. It is necessarily important for a nation to present a persistent and explicit image to the outside world". (Cheng, 2008:16).

These three arguments verify that government has reasons to control the content of television programs, make television policies and shape television culture. The national policy-makers assume they have the ability to make the cultural ideology of television media contain the ideas preferred by government and promote the ways of behaving which can support the existing organization of power.

China has entered a new stage since the Reform and Opening up started in 1978. The state decided to take more part in the international communication and extend more collaborations with different countries, especially that in the First World. China's television cultural ideology has also launched its transformation. Spurred by the economic reform, the transformation has mirrored the change in China's television culture.

In pioneer studies of China's image on the world's stage, the Western scholars often categorize those images into certain chronological periods, which coincide with

the relationship between China and their country (Isaacs,1958; Jones,1955). Recognizing the importance of historical status on analysis of transformation of cultural ideology, this article also adopts the similar method. At 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenary Session of the 9<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress (NPC) in 2000, the "Going Global Strategy" was formally issued and implemented in the Tenth Five-Year Plan so that the development of CCTV since the Reform and Open-door onwards consists of two major phases in terms of the transformation of television cultural ideology. That is the period of "Your Window on China" (1978-2000) which focused on the presentation and representation of China to the Chinese people and the world. Also, the stage of "Your Window on China and the World" (2000-2010) which has been emphasizing the principle that newscast on the screen should be carried out under a global context and how the country can benefit from active participation in globalization.

### **"Your Window on China"(1978-2000)**

#### **Rationales for the Socialist Spiritual Civilization Construction**

"Generally speaking, changes in China's mass media are in response to and reinforced by the new economic and political priorities".(Hong, 1991:142). The ten-year Cultural Revolution, the Dark Age in the history of China finally came to its end in 1976 and China was back on track again. The Party and Central Government decided to make a nationwide political and economic reform which shifted the focus from planned economy to limited market economy and from Soviet model of highly centralized management to decentralization policy. The Third Plenary Session of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CCCPC) held in 1978 marked the dawn of a new era of reform in this State. The *Communique* of the national convention reads, "China should actively involve in the international community and open its door to the outside world by promoting a wide range of collaborations with different countries around the world. China should launch based on the principle of self-reliance more international economic cooperation featuring equality and mutual benefit and adopt foreign advanced science and technology".(CCCPC Party Literature Research Office, 1986:6) The central Government afterward made important observations that it is necessarily crucial for China's socialist construction drive to make full use of the two-sort resources home and abroad, to develop two-type markets domestic and international and to build two-type competences in organizing national economy and conducting extensive international exchanges and cooperation in economy. The Third Plenary Session of the 11<sup>th</sup> CCCPC recognized the importance of reform and opening up, admitted an actual fact that no country can afford to stand aloof from the international community and isolate itself from the global market. In 1979, it was Ye Jianying, Communist Party chief who for the first time put forward the concept of "Socialist Spiritual Civilization Construction" in his address to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of People's Republic of China, speaking "it is very critical to improve the universe education, enhance our people's standard of science, culture and health, promote a lofty revolutionary ideal and revolutionary moral standard among the population, bolster sublime cultural life and construct high-level socialist spiritual civilization". while developing national economy"(CCCPC Party Literature Research Office, 1986: 234) .

The 12<sup>th</sup> CCCPC in 1986 explained in details the rationales of the Socialist Spiritual Civilization Construction. The Third Plenary Session of the 12<sup>th</sup> CCCPC in 1984 defined the primary objectives of Socialist Spiritual Civilization Construction are to foster and direct in the whole society a positive, healthy and scientific lifestyle and a robust, upbeat and aspiring spiritual attitude. Spurred by the above-mentioned rethinking of national development route, the Sixth Plenary Session of the 12<sup>th</sup> CCCPC in September 1986 further emphasized the significance of opening-up and explicitly demonstrated that it is a basic national development strategy which does fit in not only the Socialist Material Civilization Construction focusing on the improvement of the people's livelihood etc. but also the Socialist Spiritual Civilization Construction"(CCCPC Party Literature Research Office, 1986:15 ). Moreover, the national convention reviewed the accomplishments achieved and problems faced since 1979 when Reform and Opening up was launched and discussed issues concerning the position, overriding objectives and basic guidelines of the Socialist Spiritual Civilization Construction. *The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China's Decision on the Guideline of Social Spiritual Civilization Construction*, a critical documentation for China's Reform, above all, emancipating thoughts was released soon after the Sixth Plenary Session which illustrated the Reform is the self-perfection and self-development of the socialist system and the purpose of Reform economic and political in China is to explore and take a great stride along a road of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

No doubt the changes in China's national development strategy, in particular, in the regard of ideology have been extremely conservative, that is, the big changes are difficult to implement as the Party and heads of State are deeply worried out that any possible "peaceful evolution" may be brought about with the opening to the West. As a consequence, The *Decision* also explicitly pointed out China needs to be vigilant against "Western" or "Western-like" freedom of thoughts as it undermines the basic rights and interests of Chinese people and resists the law of historical development.

By the end of the 1990s, the power and reach of Reform economic and political have been increasingly undeniable. The Party began focusing more on the warning of "Left" influence and emancipating thoughts to a greater depth. The 15<sup>th</sup> CCCPC in 1997 made Deng Xiaoping's Theory a center of Chinese Communist Party's basic principle which illustrated the Overall Party Platform in the preliminary stage of China's socialism. The basic task of the nation has shifted to a better extent from ideological struggle to modernization. The Party convention in 1997 once again ushered China going on toward another new stage more people-oriented rather than Party-oriented.

In short, while the Reform and Opening-up since 1978 onward has exerted a profound and significant impact on the changes in China's national development strategy including the changes in ideology, there are forces within the Party and Central Government that perceive exchange and cooperation with Western countries as a threat to China's cultural identity, national traditions, norms and priorities. However, it should be emphasized that Reform and Opening-up enabled China's



television media to introduce competition, have access to a great deal of outside information and introduce reform in institution and mechanism. Therefore, the new television cultural ideology began to emerge in China's media practice which in large part reflects the overall response of China's television media, above all, CCTV towards the modernization of the State. It was during this period that the basic task of China's television media no longer is to solely propagandize the Party's policies. Instead, the purposes of informing, educating and entertaining people are recognized, accepted and encouraged. Both the Government and television media in China redefined the identity of television as "Your Window on China". The changes in television media's function mirrors the transformation of China's television cultural ideology from cultural monopolist to cultural communicator.

### **Reforms in CCTV's Policy on Cultural Communication**

The great social changes allowed within limits the transformation of China's television cultural ideology. The television media are no longer considered as the agency of the Government. Instead, TV stations at different levels in the country are permitted to increase the circulation of information and broaden the grass-roots participation in State's affairs as though no clear pattern for reformation of television or the mass media in China is set for TV Stations, in particular, for CCTV by authorities. There are three most evident instances to reflect in this period what are the most critical changes emerged regarding cultural communication and how and why China's television screen is considered as Your Window on China.

### **Xinwen Lianbo: China's prime-time newscast**

March 29, 1976, The National Television Work Conference was held in Beijing. The participants suggested that CCTV should launch a new news program reporting on important events happened home and abroad through organizing all TV stations at four levels (national, provincial, municipal and county's ) around the country so as to enrich the programs genres, improve the communication effect and enhance Television propaganda capacity (Zhao, 2008:121). Given the profound changes in China's economic and political spheres, Xianwen Lianbo had been soon scheduled and experimentally broadcasted on 1 July, 1976. It was, however, difficult for CCTV to immediately include international reporting in Xinwen Lianbo. The news released on the first day was arranged in order of "Gong (industry) Nong (agriculture) Bing (military)" :

- 1 *The Party Branch fighting* (i.e. playing an active part) *at the workshop*; 5minutes, Shanghai TV Station;
- 2 *Xiao Jin Zhuang moving forward*; 5minutes, Tianjin TV Station;
- 3 *The brave pioneers vehemently fighting against Revisionism*; 4.5minutes, Wuhan TV Station;
- 4 *A vigorous Party Branch*; 5minutes and 10 seconds, Beijing TV Station;
- 5 *Deputy Premier Chen Xilian Meets Nigerian Youth Delegation*; 1minute and 40 seconds, Beijing TV Station;
- 6 *Deputy Premier Gu Mu Meets Ethiopian Governmental Trading Delegation*; 1minute and 5 seconds, Beijing TV Station;
- 7 *The People's Army Concerto Company of DPRK Performs at Red Star Sino-DPRK*

*Friendship Commune*, 8 minutes and 15 seconds, Beijing TV Station.

Drawing on the central claim of Xinwen Lianbo's agenda prior to the 1990s, it is suffice to say that CCTV has started to act the part of communicator and tried providing more information to the public. However, it is still in its early stage in terms of either its professionalism or its communication consciousness.

On January 1, 1978, Xinwen Lianbo began broadcasting in China which right now has become the most well-known news program produced by CCTV. It took nearly two years to design, discuss and schedule such an epoch-provoking news reform. However, its agenda seemed tedious and even boring until the late 1990s compared to newspapers and radio broadcasting. For example, the placement of newscasts on Xinwen Lianbo's was always ranked:

- (1) The domestic news;
- (2) The domestic economic news;
- (3) The domestic news on culture, sports, science and technology;
- (4) The foreign news.

Also, the news coverage on foreign countries has been always ranked after the domestic news.

However, China's economic and political reforms have been an established guiding principle since the 1980s and brought about the new demands of the public for information and knowledge. In other words, the more deepening the social reforms are, the more likely they are to watch television for news and information they need to be free and self-governing. "This change has required more quality news, both print and broadcast, and, as a consequence, has inspired the improvement of China's media practice"(Hong, 1991:145). Following the general social changes, Xinwen Lianbo began concentrating more on news quantity, news quality, news efficiency and news effects that the Chinese viewers could be exposed to a much wider coverage of events and issues. As far as content is concerned, there are two striking changes:

First of all, the quantity of news broadcasted is increased dramatically from the 1980s to late 1990s. For example, the total number of pieces of factual news is up by 60 per cent (domestic) and by 50 per cent (foreign). Also, more series reports which addressed serious issues such as great events domestic or international, natural disasters, news policies and the common Chinese peoples' concerns are aired. The news on Da Xing'an Ling Bushfire (1987), on social changes since the reform (1987), on great accomplishments achieved since 1949 and the 11<sup>th</sup> Asian Games in Beijing (1990) are some good instances of this sort.

With the increase in quantity of news, Chinese viewers can directly receive more sufficient and satisfactory information service through the news broadcast on the screen. The remarkable advances happened during this period in Xinwen Lianbo illustrated the fact that CCTV started to recognize its primary responsibility is to provide the Chinese people with news they need. The profound and deep change in ideology should be admitted and given commendation. However, there are also a number of problems. The most evident one is the asymmetry between domestic coverage and foreign news in terms of total numbers of hours. The former generally took more than two thirds of show time. It is very clear that regarding the cultural

ideology, what Xinwen Lianbo had most wanted to throughout 1978 to 2000 was to introduce China to the audience home and abroad. However, the word “window” is not in the widest possible sense. Instead, it aims in the first place to highlight and preserve China, in particular China's positive image, political, economic and cultural and therefore the audience can only be provided with much more essential information and knowledge about China rather than the world's.

### **CCTV's English programming**

Both the Party and Government since 1978 have been highly recognized about the effects that a seemingly ever-increasing power of television has had on a State's image and branding. Television is able to perform various functions of image presentations primarily including legitimation (Clark,1972; Signorielli, 1983), maintenance of established authority and mainstream cultural values and construction of a certain image or even stereotype (Gerbner& Gross,1976). Baudrillard (1988) pointed out hyperreality is created on the television screen. It often lulls the viewers into a sense of reality by providing simulacra composed of the intermingling of people's practice and media images. The world of hyperreality constructed by television media is good at portraying a state's image and cultural identity and might influence the audience within their own context. China unveiled the impact of television media towards a country going global and thus has determined to reiterate the important significance of international propaganda. In the 1980s, the primary focus of CCTV's international programming, above all its English was definitely on the promotion of “a unique image of China” (He,2010:99-100) so as to attract foreign investment and advance national tourism. The overriding object is shifted to the presentation of “a righteous image of China” from the 1990s to the new millennium which aims to offer the international audience a real China and more importantly attack blasphemies on China's modernization (Zhu, 1995: 335).

Paralleling the change in China's international propaganda, the Overseas Center of CCTV was established to produce, distribute and serve first-class multi-language programs and make the audience in different countries see China through the unique perspective of CCTV International. However, there is a similar and fixed repertoire of television cultural ideology namely making the television media in China “Your Window on China” that has been repeatedly beheld, repackaged and exploited on CCTV's screen from 1978 through 2000. The Overseas Center of CCTV is another good instance of this sort. To sum up the 16 English programs reached the audience:

**Table 1**

**The English Programs Broadcasted by CCTV (1978-1997)**

Program	Start of program	Language	Length	Frequency
The English News	1987	English	15-20mins	6/week (1987-89);7/week (1989-97)
China investment Guide	1993	Chinese, English	30mins	3/week
China Today	1992	English	30mins	5/week

China's Performing Arts(中华艺苑)	1991	English	30mins	1/week(1991-97);7/week(1997-2010)
Huaxia Culture (华夏风情)	1992	English	10mins	2/week(1992-97);7/week(1997-2010)
Around China (中国各地)	1997	English	30mins	7/week
Topic on Sunday(周日话题)	1997	English	30mins	1/week
China in Foreigners' Eyes (外国人看中国)	1992	English	15mins	2/week
Shenzhou Highlights (神州风采)	1997	English	5mins	7/week
Learning Chinese (学汉语)	1991	Chinese/English	15mins	3/week
China Music (中国音乐电视)	1997	English caption	10mins	7/week
Kong Fu (中华武艺)	1997	English	10mins	6/week
China's Cookery (中国烹饪)	1997	English	10mins	1/week
Theater for TV Drama (电视剧场)	1992	English caption	50mins	2/week(1992-97);7/week (1997-2010)

**Note: China Today in French version was broadcasted in 1991, 30minutes each time. It was shown on French Television-3 for a few years.**

**Source: The History of CCTV's Development (1958-1997) (2008), P. 443-4**

In essence, the content analysis of every one of the English programs shown by CCTV of this period illustrate that the television cultural identity centers on Chinese characteristics, China's development and traditional Chinese culture. CCTV's programs for foreign viewers, either regular or special aim to support a Chinese-ethnicity oriented definition and represent a nearly perfect national image. The notion of such sort of cultural identity meets the demand of the Party and Government who call for the domestic television media to "introduce China systematically, comprehensively and vigorously to the world and publicize China's accomplishments of modernization and its foreign policy as well"(Zhu, 1995: 236).

Based on the chronological study and content analysis the primarily striking feature of China's television cultural identity from 1978 the start of Reform and Open-door can be best summed up by a two-layer module:

(1) China does admit the important part played by television media in national image construction and cultural communication that hopes to provide a source for the world to get to know about the country and its transformation. Thus, the communication agenda since the Reform is not the same as the traditional structure that the mass media are no more than eyes and ears of government. The change in the notion of television cultural ideology reflects China's media reformation is on track.

(2) On the other hand, the definition of "Your Window on China" which determines China's television programming and then its cultural contents reflects explicitly the focus of "international communication" from 1978 through 2000 is on representation of a very positive and harmonious China. In view of CCTV's international reporting, it concerns above all with government-to-government information exchanges rather than a widespread and multi-layered coverage. It seems quite difficult to change the existing routines or formulas that are long-term recognized and adopted.

However, it should be pointed out the fact that China's television culture has started moving toward a more scientific and media-oriented direction since 1978. From a number of studies about quality of CCTV's programs, it is very clear that (Chang, 2002 :211):

From 1992 to 1998, only a core of very few select countries or entities consistently makes up the list of foreign policy news on CCTV. It is a world that differs significantly from that of foreign news in both quantity and quality. Quantitatively, the CCTV news net tends to be cast wider and farther in foreign news, whereas it is narrower and closer to home in foreign policy news. Qualitatively, a nexus of network of countries is configured around different sets of national or international concerns in the realm of foreign news or foreign policy news or both.

### **"Your Window on China and the World" (2000-2010)**

#### **Going Global Project**

The television media in China had achieved a rapid growth when entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is reported that CCTV issued agreements of corporation with 60 countries and areas and signed import-and-export contracts with more than 300 television companies from 45 countries. (Zhao, 2002) Due to the concerns with the great changes home and abroad and the requirement of China's modernization drive, the Party, the Government and just as importantly the television media industry are willing and committed to readdress the ideology of mass media in China.

At the 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenary Session of the 9<sup>th</sup> NPC in 2000, former President Jiang Zemin expressed some very important ideas and put forward the schema of "Going Global Project". He addressed that it is critical for China to participate more actively and widely in international competition, which is a premise to sustain the country's development (the Central Government of China, 2000). At the 5<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of the 15<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in October 2000, *The Guideline of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Tenth Five-Year Plan* finally articulates the enforcement of the "Going Global Project". In

the meantime, the Party and Government include the new strategy in the Greatest Four National Development Strategies equal to “Go West Strategy”, “Urbanization Strategy” and “Talents Strategy”.

The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) in charge of the electronic media in China has carried on a series of campaigns under the impetus of the “Going Global Project”. In 2004, the SARFT specifically issued the policy to encourage the international coverage, international cooperation and international involvement. *The Guideline of SARFT on the Industrialization of China’s Radio, Film and Television* reads “the development of China’s radio, film and television needs to upgrade coverage of the world’s affairs, obey the principle of international corporations and attract audiences around the globe” (SARFT, 2004).

Based on this demand, China’s television cultural ideology began shifting its identity from “Your Window on China” to “Young Window on China and the World”.

It is evident that “international communication is now considered as a critical comparison to evaluate one TV station’s capacity that whether it is able to launch international channel. Moreover, it is a well-recognized criterion to assess the TV station’s communication power that whether it can run multi-language and multi-version international channels... ..it is the responsibility CCTV should take to introduce China to the world in tune with China’s position in the international community”. (Zhao, 2007)

#### **CCTV- 4 : China’s first international television channel**

CCTV4 was launched on 1 Oct., 1992 which is an international channel broadcasted in Chinese. In 1995, CCTV4 extended its covered area from Asia, East Europe and East Africa to North America, Europe, Oceania and Africa. In the meantime, it became a 24-hour channel. In May 1995, CCTV4 was named as CCTV International. In 1997, CCTV 4 succeeded in launching around globe that became accessible in Asia, Australia, Europe, Africa, North America and Latin America.

The launch of CCTV marks China’s television media entered a new era, that is, the Reform and Open-door has made China be more aware of the vast and direct impact of television on China’s image and more importantly, the unity of Chinese home and overseas.

Because no television channel broadcasted by CCTV focused on the viewers in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan prior to CCTV4, the Central Government demanded CCTV to organize an international channel to help with the great task of reunifying the motherland and promote the principle of “one country, two systems”. Unlike that on other channels, the programs on CCTV4 are to a large extent designed to reify the integrity of news, knowledge, entertainment and service. The first program introduced by the channel was Sharing the Moon (天涯共此时, a stanza quoted from a very famous poem in Tang Dynasty, which means a silver bright moon rises slowly above the sea. Looking the same moon overhead, you’re far-away from me.). The half hour programs primarily concerns with the Taiwan viewers. It has become a very popular programs since 1991 when first shown on the screen. Sharing the Moon has been

regarded as a bridge between Mainland and Taiwan. In 1995, CCTV4 produced a 12 sequences documentary, *Stories of Hong Kong* which became a huge success. The large-scale documentary is evaluated as “a great encyclopedia of patriotism” by Hong Kong audience (Zhao, 2008:441). On 1 July 1997 when China finally resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong, CCTV4 broadcasted a total number of 72 hours programs from 27 June to 2 July to the overseas Chinese around the globe. 68 countries and 125 TV Stations purchased and relayed the programs. Moreover, CCTV-4 is responsible for broadcasting the important speeches delivered by the predominant leaders of the Party to respond efficiently and promptly changes in the world's political situation. For instances, former President Jiang Zemin's address on “The Eight Stand Points towards Taiwan Question” and Ex-Premier Li Peng's speech on the same issue, both given on 30 January 1995 were reached to the overseas audiences through CCTV-4. What is more, CCTV-4 elaborately designed and produced a series of follow-up news and features reporting on the response from China's multi-nationalities, overseas Chinese organizations and non-Communist Parties. It can be seen through the subjects of CCTV-4's programs that the primary purpose of CCTV-4 at a time of profound social reform is to show the positive image of China, disseminate the great accomplishments of its modernization and attack the anti-Party and anti-government rumors and coverage.

In summary, CCTV4 throughout the years from 1991 to 2000 has shown a distinctive cultural ideology that is introducing, promoting and maintaining national Chinese culture. Given that it is launched to help the Government to elaborate the principle of “one country, two systems”, a basic point of departure on the return of Hong Kong and Macau and Taiwan Question and to explore mutual understanding and to affect the world opinion, CCTV 4 gives priority to a conscious selective presentation of China to the overseas Chinese that prefers a certain kind of cultural image from China's reality, thus a body of knowledge of observation and understanding.

The Central Government started the “Going Global” strategy in 2000 which ushers the changes in CCTV4. The reformation of CCTV consists of two major shifts: (1) Increasing consciousness of “international”: In 2000, CCTV-4 began its reform by framing in an international-oriented structure. A prime time news program News 60 Minutes, the first one-hour newscast on CCTV screen was introduced to the viewers. The scenario obtained is that the news reports should no longer be dominated too much by domestic information. Instead, the international news must be given more chances. As a result, viewers in or outside China can have more accesses to the world's news and information. They can feel they are participating in a single information order. For instance, in 2003 CCTV-4 delivered a one-month reports on War in Iraq which fill with a great deal of live coverage and exclusives. Rating for CCTV-4 soared No.1 in China (Zhao, 2008:56). In 2004, CCTV-4 addressed for the first time the importance of audience research. While utilizing the outcomes of relevant studies, the programs produced by the channel are obliged to redesign their contents to fit in the demand of Chinese, in particular foreign viewers. The changes speak the fact that China's television cultural landscape begins highlighting the

international orientation.

(2) A shift from sheer propaganda to communication: In January 2006, CCTV-4 introduced the second reformation in tune with its new scheme “fit in (the world’s) reality, (the audience’s) demand and (viewing) habit”. The new guideline inspires a nearly earthshaking change in the channel’s programs.

First of all, the news programs are further strengthened.

**Table 2**

**The Major News Programs Broadcasted by CCTV-4 since 2006**

Four Major CCTV -4 News Programs after 2006 Revision	
Time	Major News Programs
06:00-09:00	Breaking News; Chinese World; Around the Globe; News 60 Minutes
12:00-13:00	China News; Hong Kong News
21:00-23:30	China News; Focus Today; the World of Chinese
00:00-02:30	Biz News; XinWen LianBo

In the meantime, there has been a trend toward programs international-oriented, information-focused and self-production-dependent.

**Table 3**

**The Major Programs Broadcasted by CCTV-4 since 2006**

New Self-produced Programs	New Programs Borrowed from Other Channels	Programs canceled
Around the Globe; Chinese World;	China’s Music;	HuanJu Yitang;
		Meet China;
		Changes in China;
Express to Hong Kong ;	Acting Art Contest;	Tell it like it is;
		Oriental Horizon;
		Min Nan Hua Time;
the Beijing Olympic Games;	Happy Ten Minutes;	the World News;
		Science and Technology;
Taiwan Kaleidoscope;	Fashion Music;	Huaxia Overview;
		The Senior Citizens in China;
	Life;	Life;
Shenzhou Theatre;		
Our Chinese Heart	Talk	Huaxia Culture;
		Face-to-Face with Audience

As we have seen throughout the reformation of CCTV-4 since 2000, the afresh understanding of China’s television cultural identity is one of the main contributors to the current process of globalization of China’s television media. The acceptance of “going global” is also transforming the production, distribution and marketing of



television programs of CCTV-4. The transformation can be felt in almost every country which the channel reaches.

### **CCTV- 9 : China's first English international television channel**

CCTV9 began broadcasting on 25 September 2000 which is the first 24 –hour English television channel in China. This is a basically news channel with a primary focus on news, features and documentaries. Another important element is entertainment programs. The principle and purposes of CCTV-9 defined from the very start is to help Government to “promote brilliant Chinese culture, disseminate the great accomplishments achieved in socialist construction, publicize the basic point and consistent stand of China, present positive national image and create an international opinion environment featuring mutual benefit, mutual support and common development” (Zhao, 2008:61).

The topics of CCTV-9 first and foremost centered on China's social development and prosperity. As a matter of fact, economic prosperity and political harmony have become the exclusive dominant official discourse on the channel's screen. CCTV-9 always report on the major events related to the Party and Government as they occur such as the NPC, the CPPCC, Shanghai APEC and son on. However, one can argue that CCTV-9 is an English international channel that there are many other topics related to the world outside, which are as newsworthy as, if not more worthy, than the chosen topic(s), but which are rarely covered by CCTV-9.

May 8, 2004, CCTV-9 started its deep and profound reformation which shifts its identity from “Your Window on China” to “Your Window on China and the World”. The most striking highlight is the reorientation of the channel. CCTV-9 prior to 2004 was required primarily to build up a bridge between China and the world, that is let the international community learn about China, facilitate China's participation in the process of globalization. Therefore, CCTV-9 is to “open a window for people in different countries to understand China”(Li, 2008) . After the 2006 reformation, the primary purpose of CCTV-9 becomes “a global perspective, Chinese viewpoint and a window on the world” so that the channel has attempted to open two windows namely a window for the world to understand China and also a window for the international community to know the world. CCTV-9 begins concentrating on news, above all report on the international issues under the impetus of reorientation. There are two major genres of CCTV-9's programs, namely news and documentary. The former is up to nearly two thirds of the total program hours. In 2010, CCTV-9 received its second important change that it is renamed as CCTV International News.

With more than 60 per cent of programs on the world's events focusing on highlights around the globe, domestic scholars argue that it is virtually possible for viewers home and abroad to develop an understanding of China and the lives of the human population who live in other countries (Hu, 2010). Suffice is to say that China's television cultural identity shows stronger awareness of the great changes in the world in which we live in. Also, China's television culture is permitted to represent and present its country in a more sophisticated, reasonable and rational way.

### **Conclusion**

As what we have discussed, China's television media's main impulse is not to enable the audience to see the outside world on the screen from 1978 to 2000 but to effectively deliver China, in particular, a robust, prosperous and harmonious state to the audience. The main tasks outlined by the Party during the reform period are to "help the Party and the government to run the society, or prevent anti-Party and anti-government coverage and reinforce the standards based on Marxism-Leninism and Maoism" etc. (Hong, 1998). The notion of China's television cultural identity remains propagandist, government-centered and ideological despite reform in economy and politics. Under the guise of greater sophistication, China's television culture staged by programs on the screen is more or less a deceptive game as "it is simply a reinvention of the traditional form of passing messages from the speakers, to the listeners, from the instructors to the pupils and then to the pupils of the pupils"(Zhong, 2004).

The shift from "Your Window on China" to "Your Window on China and the World" speaks the transformation of China's television culture ideology toward recognition and acceptance of the rooted principle of mass media. Many critics argue that the changes are to a large part in the tangible aspects or the forms (Chang, 2002; McDowell, 2003; Hong, 1998). However, as Fiske has claimed:

form is just as much a bearer of meaning and culture as is content...as a bearer of ideology, form is considerably more effective than content...it is the form that they are given that produces the point of view from which we look at them, and thus the sense we make of them, and paradoxically, the sense they make of us. (Fiske, 1987: 23)

In a world of quite stunning technological change, no one can be sure what the future holds. The paramount position of the industrialized countries, above all the United States in the production and diffusion of media has led many observers to speak of media imperialism. China and many other Asian countries have begun their journey of going global. As a consequence, the original cultural ideology has to adjust itself to the profound changes throughout the world. However, we all understand that China's culture regarding its history, content, values and norms is dramatically different from that of Western countries. It speaks a matter of fact that an objective and impartial assessment on the transformation of China's television media cultural ideology should be conducted within China's specific context (Hu, 2010).

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