

3GJ322: Theoretical MA Thesis

Chinese Journalism in Changing Times: *A Case Study of Southern Weekly Newspaper*

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Abstract

The interplay of political and economic forces in shaping media has been a central discussion in the political economy of communication studies. Scholarly opinions differ from the role of state and market played in influencing media. Political economists mostly take the state and the market as antithetical forces in the media spectrum. This paper presents a content analysis of a Chinese national newspaper, *Southern Weekly*, and gives an examination of its changes in two-time frames, 1993-1996 versus 2013-2016. The evidence demonstrates that when in an unflavored economic status, the market plays as an auxiliary force with the state, rather than a conflicting pole to defuse political intervention. The findings suggest that in a state formation like China, where journalism is facing tightening political control and enormous economic pressure, the theoretical presupposition of the state versus market model in the political economy of communication studies needs to be reconsidered.

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Acronyms

CCP Chinese Communist Party

CAGR Compound Annual Growth Rate

GAPP the General Administration of Press and Publication

GDP Gross Domestic Product

NPC The National People's Congress

PRC the People's Republic of China

RQ Research Question

SARFT State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television

SAPPRFT State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Societal background: the expanding economy with a decaying press freedom

The transformation of China's economy over the last four decades turned the country into the second-largest economy in the world since 2010. At that time, China achieved an average of 10 percent annual GDP growth. Since the global financial crisis in 2008, China has also been a significant contributor to the world economy (The World Bank, 2019). Along with the country's economic growth, China's media industry has grown above 10 percent each year. In 2015 industry revenues grew 12.3%, or about USD100 million (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2018). The country's media and entertainment industry revenue's compound annual growth rate (CAGR) for the coming five years is estimated to be 8.8%, 4.4% higher than that of the world (ibid). In 2017, when China's GDP reached USD 13.12 trillion (6.9% year over year) (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2018), the total output value of the Chinese media industry was about USD 258 billion (Statista, 2018). However, the success of the media industry contrasts with the development of press freedom. In 2019, China was placed 177 out of the 180 ranked countries in the annual press freedom index of Reporter Without Borders, a France based non-governmental organization working to defend the press freedom across the globe (Reporter Without Borders, 2019).

"Mass media reflect the perspective of the power structure and therefore react unevenly to the changing power relations in society" (Lee C.-C. , 2000a, p. 289). The media has long been under the tight grip of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) through a variety of channels. As the country has evolved economically, the CCP has made ideological modifications for adapting to the new economic, which brings different contexts to media reporting. In the 1980s, it was the "Four Modernizations" (the modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science & technology) as the ideology guiding the country's development. It then moved to "Three Represents" (a move to a socialist market system focused on developing China's advanced productive forces, a reorientation of China's advanced culture and

the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people¹) in the 1990s. After China's fifth-generation leadership assumed power in November 2012, the Party's ideology shifted to "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era," which emphasized nationalism (Heilmann, 2016). Noticeably, China's economic growth began to slow from 2018 coming in at 6.6%, the slowest pace since 1990. The slower pace of growth is expected to continue with GDP growth expected to be around 6-6.5 % in 2019².

In November of 2012, Xi Jinping became the general secretary of the Communist Party of China, the highest-ranking official of the country. From the very start of his leadership, Xi addressed the importance of winning the "battle" for public opinion. The media should first and foremost serve the Party³. Under the tightening political control over media, the *Southern Weekly* Incident was breaking out in 2013. *Southern Weekly* (also known as *Southern Weekend*), is a subsidiary newspaper of China's Nanfang Daily media group, known as one of the country's most influential liberal and out-spoken newspapers (Repnikova & Fang, TEA LEAF NATION: Behind the Fall of China's Greatest Newspaper, 2015). Since 1997, *Southern Weekly's* New Year editorial has long been an influential tradition for the newspaper. With a longstanding reputation, that editorial had set forth a vision for press values and social change. In 2013, the newspaper initially published the New Year editorial entitled "China's Dream, the Dream of Constitutionalism" ⁴. It was published to response General Secretary Xi Jinping's signature ideology of the "Chinese Dream", which addresses the "great revival of the Chinese nation" ⁵. The first editorial called for democracy, freedom, and adherence to the Constitution. It wrote, "only if constitutionalism is

¹ Jiang Zemin, CCP's third top leader's ideology is called Sange Daibiao in Chinese, translated as "Three Represents" in western contexts.

² The data is from Li Keqiang, the current Prime Minister of PRC on the annual report to the National People's Congress in Beijing in 2019.03.05.

³ Huang and Zhai 2013; Xi Jinping's speech at the National Propaganda and Ideology Work Conference, 19 August 19, 2013, http://www.cac.gov.cn/2014-08/09/c_1115324460.htm. Retrieved April 3, 2019.

⁴ Bandurski, David, January 03, 2013, "A New Year's greeting gets the axe in China". China Media Project. <http://chinamediaproject.org/2013/01/03/a-new-years-greeting-gets-the-axe-in-china/> Retrieved April 3, 2019

⁵ Xin Hua, November 29, 2012, "Xi Pledges 'Great renewal of the Chinese nation'." http://www.china.org.cn/china/201211/30/content_27269821.htm. Retrieved April 3, 2019.

realized and power effectively checked can citizens voice their criticisms of power loudly and confidently, and only then can every person believe in their hearts that they are free to live their own lives. Only then can we build a truly free and strong nation. . ." ⁶. However, after it was published, it was changed into another piece titled "We are now closer to our dream than ever," a tribute praising the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) and its leadership. The change was without consent from editors. This incident has sparked national strikes and protests against press censorship. In the end, the protests were suppressed by the government (Repnikova & Fang, TEA LEAF NATION: Behind the Fall of China's Greatest Newspaper, 2015).

The Government's crackdown and strict content censorship has led to an exodus of veteran investigative journalists from the press. In 2017, the survey (Zhang & Cao, 2017) showed that there were merely 175 investigative journalists left in the country, in contrast with its 1.4 billion population. The journalism practice is compelled to be loyal to the Communist Party and Government. Political forces limit truthful disclosure and forgo independence of the press. Chinese journalism faces how to do truth-telling, independence, and unwavering loyalty to fit into a hierarchy of values of professional journalism (Thomas, 2018).

1.2 Research objectives and research questions

The primary objective of this study is to explore the changes in Chinese media and journalism since the 1990s in the context of economic development and political control. By examining journalism studies in a highly commercialized and yet politically controlled setting like China, this study aims to contribute a debate in the political economy of communication (media) studies.

The Research questions (RQ) are:

RQ1. How has Chinese Journalism changed between the periods 1993-1996 and 2013-2016?

RQ2. How do these changes in media content reflect the interplay between state and market?

⁶ The original editorial was written by Journalist Dai Zhiyong, https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/chinese_news/2013/01/130104_nanfanzhoumo_newyear.shtml. Translation from China Media Project, <http://chinamediaproject.org/2013/01/03/a-new-years-greeting-gets-the-axe-in-china/> Retrieved April 3, 2019.

1.3 Significance of the study

A considerable body of research has been conducted on the influence of economic reform and the dominant political consensus on press and media in China. However, longitudinal studies probing the dynamic power relations between the state and market and their influence on the media over the past decades in the Chinese context are minimal. Therefore, the study hopes to contribute to discussions on the interplay influence of the state and market forces on the media spectrum.

1.4 Scope of the study

This paper will choose *Southern Weekly* as a case study, one of China's most market-oriented and outspoken newspaper. Based on the research questions, *Southern Weekly* media content in themes of politics, economy, rule of law, and environment from 1993-1996 versus 2013-2016 will be studied. The time frames of 1993-1996 versus 2013-2016 representing periods of differing leadership and political ideology will be compared. This paper will also examine the impact effect of China's newspaper industry transition from a period of fast-growing advertising revenues to a period of sharp decline. [see Table 1.0 China's Newspaper Advertising Revenue and Readership From 1992- 2017]

1.5 Methodological and theoretical frames in the study

This study is a longitudinal research across more than two decades. It will employ quantitative content analysis and comparative study as research methods under the framework of the political economy of communication (media).

1.6 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of six parts: introduction, economy and press reform in China, theoretical framework and research design, findings, discussion, and conclusions. The introduction follows by a review of the economic and press reforms in China. Chapter 2 will provide an introduction to how Chinese media has transformed along with other societal changes.

CHAPTER 2 THE ECONOMY AND PRESS REFORM IN CHINA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the socialist background behind China's press reforms. It builds a fundamental understanding of the societal contexts within which China's press reforms have happened. Associating with the economic changes, media reforms at different times are also discussed. The discussions elaborate on how market mechanisms were introduced to China and how China's media has responded to the battle of propaganda and profit. The chapter thus starts with a review of China's economic reforms and the opening-up policy since the 1980s.

2.2 Economic reform and liberalization in China

2.2.1 Socialist market development- blurred distinctions between socialism and capitalism

The socialist system in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe collapsed in 1989-1991. Following this, the CCP set out to strengthen its leading role in media and ideology amidst its initiatives to create a market economy. It was also motivated by a desire to shift domestic political pressure after the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989 (Zhao, 2011). From November 11 to 14, 1993, the Third Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Fourteenth Party Congress adopted the "Decision on Some Issues Concerning the Establishment of a Socialist Market Economic System" and convened the "Fifty Articles" (Susumu & Stephen, 1999, p. 6). "Fifty Articles" legislatively established China's socialist market economic system and encapsulated China's approach to attain a market economy. There are five major components involved in the economic reforms in "Fifty Articles": a) conversion of State-Owned enterprises into stock companies; b) reform of the financial system; c) reform of the investment system; d) introduction of the value-added tax; and e) establishment of a dual budgetary system (ibid). As a result of this, the state-owned enterprises privatized at a phenomenal rate. Private property rights were also amended in the constitution to

protect private properties⁷. Yet, promoting private ownership and privatization are contradictory to communist ideology (Zhao, 2011). In terms of labor inputs, the call for efficient utilization of capital, wealth distribution, and the market economic system was opposed to the socialist economic system. In other words, despite adamantly maintaining the name of socialism, CCP effectively blurred the distinctions between socialism and capitalism and had adopted the 'private sector driven' economic development of China as its highest policy priority (ibid). In this sense, CCP defined its role as an Economic Development Party (Susumu & Stephen, 1999). Jiang Zemin, the leader of the third generation, forwarded his ideology, "Three Represents," which advanced productive forces, the orientation of China's advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people (Jiang Z. , 2003).

However, though the economic reforms have been implemented in the country, the political system remains the same. CCP remains the ultimate power, and China is still a one Party-state country. When Xi Jinping took power and became the General Secretary of the CCP and President of the country, he forwarded his ideology "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" (Peters, 2017, p. 1299). What has been promoted most by the media of Xi Jinping's thought is the Chinese Dream:

"the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, whereby the party... accomplishes its mission of liberating the Chinese people from poverty and oppression and once again transforms the country into a wealthy and powerful nation" (Heilmann, 2016, p. 84-85).

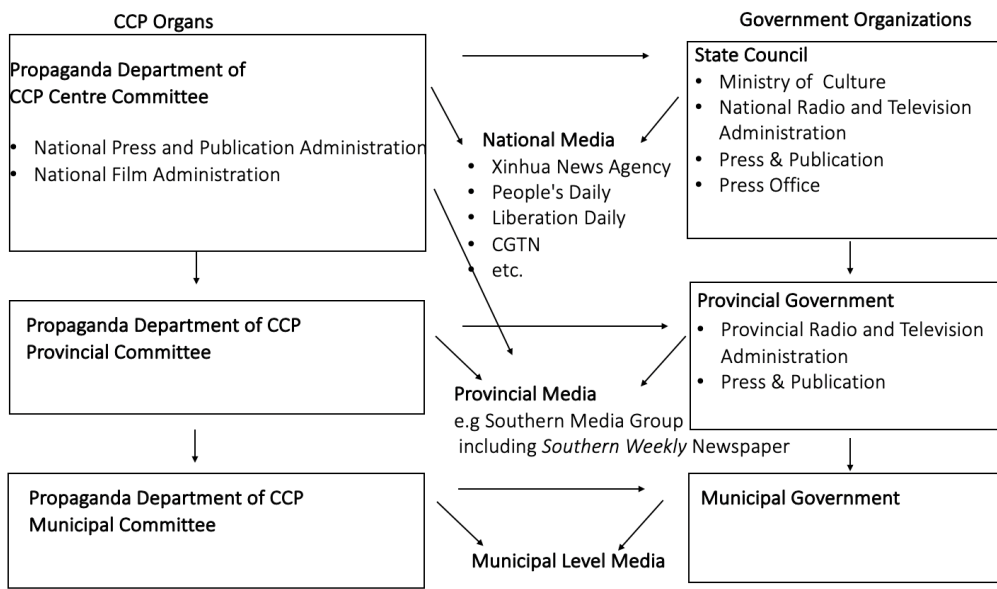
Noticeably, instead of achieving personal self-fulfillment, China's dream emphasizes the prerequisite for collective welfare, and individual happiness is a powerful nation (Heilmann, 2016). Also, Xi Jinping stressed that the Party should be the prerequisite for leading the people to achieve the goals. To bolster confidence, CCP's leadership

⁷ In Feb 2004, the Chinese constitution amended its thirteens article to protect private property., Also, in the 16th, March 2007, NPC (The National People's Congress) has approved the property rights law to consolidate private property. http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2007-09/30/content_766414.htm. abbreviated on 25, April 2019.

has also, since 2013, embarked on an extensive country-wide anti-corruption campaign.

2.2.2 Party above all

Figure 1.0 China Press and Media Governance Flow⁸



2.3 Media reform in China - the battle of "propaganda" vs "profit"

2.3.1 Media ownership and the dominant role of the state

The first and foremost important thing to understand about the Chinese media system is that “China is a one-party political system” (Nelson, 2014). According to Hallin and Mancini (2004) ‘s four parallel definitions (structure of media markets, political parallelism, the professionalization of journalism, role of the state) of media systems, Chinese media is the quintessential form of party-press parallelism. However, in Chinese media, the role of the state goes far beyond intervention (Zhao, 1998). Propaganda remains the primary role of the media. The leadership believes that

⁸ Figure 1.0 is developed based on China Media Project (<http://chinamediaproject.org>) at the Journalism and Media Studies Centre at The University of Hong Kong. The author of this paper updated the latest change of media organization and governance in China. In March of 2018, China's State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television (SAPPRFT), the former top regulatory body under the state council, was officially replaced by three different organizations- National Press and Publication Administration, National Film Administration, and National Radio and Television Administration. The former two have been moved to be under the direct control of the Propaganda Department of CCP.

media needs to be tightly placed under Party's power. As Nelson (2014) posits, Chinese media was assigned a significant role in the task of national development. Former Xinhua News Agency Chief Li Congjun once wrote: "We must uphold fully the principle of the Party-nature [of media], adhering to the principle that the politicians run the newspapers, magazines, broadcast stations and websites" (Bandurski, 2015). The concept of "Party-nature of media" has been explicitly proposed when ideological control began to tighten after the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989. Media's Party-nature interprets media to be the mouthpiece of the party and the government. The media should uphold the principles of the Party and be loyal to the Party under any circumstance (Chen & Hu, 2016). However, economic reform in China since the 1980s has phenomenally expanded the private sector and the massive privatization of state-owned enterprises in the overall economy, which includes the media industry. The move towards privatization conflicts with China's state ideological legacies of promoting public ownership and its professed commitment to socialism. If media becomes privatized, instead of being controlled by the Party, private media could, as a product of bourgeois liberalization, essentially go against the Party and the government (Zhao, 2011).

Historically, CCP defined media ownership as being under public ownership – which laid down state ownership and direct control as the foundation for socialist press freedom (Zhao, 2011). As a result, the media outlets, including newspapers and broadcast stations, are mainly monopolized by the state. Meanwhile, the leadership has developed a sophisticated and differentiated policy regime imposing limitations and strict censorship on private capital participation in the media and cultural industries (ibid). Only a few peripheral areas of media and cultural industries, such as the production of the film, television entertainment, and advertising, as well as audiovisual distribution, open up to domestic private and foreign capital. In this way, the state has cultivated the media's entertainment function and accommodated private capital's profit-making in media commercialization. At the same time, the ideological control is retained (Chan,2010; Zhao,1998,2000,2011; Hang&Group,2016).

2.3.2 *Three stages of media reforms*

2.3.2.1 *First stage- Institutional equilibrium under the Party's ideological line*

China's media reforms have been operated as a political and economic project directed by the communist Party-state (Lee C.-C. , 2005). Scholar Chen H. (1998) divides the reforms into three stages. The first stage has been between 1949-1979 when China's media institution remained in a state of "institutional equilibrium" based on the principles of the Party's ideological line. "The newspapers, radio, and public bulletin boards were particularly important transmitters of government information" (Brady, 2008, p. 17). During this period, the turning point for media attempting to break "the rigid Party ideological control for more diversity and flexibility in both the editorial content and the media structure" came in 1976 (Winfield & Peng, 2005, p. 258) when Mao passed away. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution ended. The Cultural Revolution had set back society and culture in the country. In order to rectify turmoil caused by this movement, the economic reform and open-door policy were implemented. CCP called for concerted efforts for the nation's Four Modernizations (the Modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science & technology in China). Media reform shortly began along with the wave of reform. Free expression and press independence re-emerged as part of China's effort to recover from reviving its culture, all in a new economically driven setting (China Policy Institute, 2016). Media also served as "a tool to rectify the dominant previous Party thinking and endorse the legitimacy and authority of the new post-Mao leadership headed by Deng Xiaoping" (Winfield & Peng, 2005, p. 259; Zhao,2000).

2.3.2.2 *Second Stage - The Implementation of market-oriented mechanisms*

The second stage of the implementation of market-oriented mechanisms was first introduced to China's mass media industry at the beginning of 1979 to 1989. Here, the market propelled the state to move toward innovations in media management under a new policy called "managing the public service units as commercial businesses" (Chen & Hu, 2016, p. 7). The Ministry of Finance mandated that news organizations, including the biggest state-owned news agency *People's Daily*, would no longer be fully financed by the state (Lee B. , 2017). Once media organizations did not receive a

state budget allocation as their primary source of revenue anymore, they had to attract capital investment in competitive capital markets. As a result, private enterprise came to the national press. However, all press remained state-owned. Consequently, press reforms started to be realized along with the economic reform, with the market gradually opening up for equipment, paper, energy, and circulation services (Pan, 2009). However, economic factors had not yet become a driving force for the media system transition at that time. For that reason, Chinese media development suffered a severe setback in 1989, when the pro-democracy Tiananmen movement was cracked down on (Winfield & Peng, 2005). Examining the fate of past one-Party states such as Mexico and Japan in the capitalist world for their mistakes and successes, the Party leadership attempted to forge a new consensus, "the logic for maintaining Chinese Communist Party rule" (Brady, 2008, p. 2). Propaganda and ideology have played a pivotal role in the repackaging of the CCP rule (ibid).

2.3.2.3 Third Stage - Advertising industry as the primary financial source of media

The series of important talks delivered by Deng Xiaoping, the "core" of the second-generation leadership, at a South China inspection tour in 1992. It brought major changes to Chinese media. Deng stressed "the primacy and priority of monetary development" and called for "faster economic growth and bolder experimentation" (Winfield & Peng, 2005, p. 259). It led media development to the third stage, the expansion of the advertising industry as the primary source of financing for media organizations. With this development, news media began to change from a Party propaganda instrument to a market-based industry under political interventions (Pan, 2009).

2.3.3 The double-edged sword of media reform- growth as well as challenges in the industry

The economic reforms brought about vitality to the media industry. From 1990 to 2000, the numbers of magazines increased, as long as their content and covers were livened up. Television also developed rapidly. Both domestic and foreign news coverage expanded. Entertainment in the form of soap operas, traditional opera, and foreign feature films became routine (Chu, 1994). The media had completed the transformation to a market economy. Commercialization turned media organs from

government departments into "business entities", of which revenues were depending on advertising, subscription and capital investment rather than governmental financial aid (Winfield & Peng, 2005, p. 260). More importantly, the economic benefits promoted by the introduction of market-oriented reform were obvious. The total estimated advertising revenue in 2000 has increased to around USD 29.4 billion, compared with USD 400 million in advertising income in 1990 (Chen & Hu, 2016). Advertising revenue became the primary income for news organizations. Meanwhile, the government embraced modern communication technologies, theories, and methodologies (Brady, 2008). After joining the World Trade Organization (WTO), there was a torrent of mergers and acquisitions fueled by Party-state authorities in the media space. Media policies were made for media conglomerates to attract capital investment by getting listed on stock markets and other various resources (Pan, 2009).

Regarding China's media ownership and financial support mechanism, commercialization has made the Chinese press "a hybrid of political authoritarianism and capitalism" (Winfield & Peng, 2005, p. 267). When the media's survival depends on the advertising revenue, profit-making becomes the bottom line for the media. However, the market-oriented reform does not match the state-owned model. The state keeps a tight grip on the country's mass media political structure while requiring the media to make a profit under profit-driven market competition. Under the control of political power, the media cannot be truly autonomous (Chen & Hu, 2016). Nevertheless, in order to respond to competitive pressure and make profits, the media requires autonomy to meet the market's needs. However, state ownership in media commercialization is dominant, and private ownership is still "a distant dream" (Chan J. M., 2010, p. 14). Also, the property rights of the media are ambiguous. Property rights are not clearly defined, and the responsibility is not clear for news practitioners. Governmental departments are both media entities owners and the rule-makers for the media industry. Scholar Chen and Hu (2016, p. 8) state the mixed line between owner and policy maker as "making their own rules in their games." As a result of unclear property rights, the industry became the nest of corruption and paid news. Media ethics and practice have been challenged. In order to attract audiences and transfer the traffic into advertising revenues, some news outlets are putting media

ethics at risk in some cases. For instance, citizen's privacy rights have been violated according to some reports. Also, as scholar Chan (2010, p. 13) points out, in a marketed environment, "media content is commodified." Thus, some media outlets have ventured to publish a story for sheer profit. Paid news and corruption in journalism have occurred. In October 2015, *People's Daily* and its subordinate units drew public attention due to a "paid news scandal." The deputy editor-in-chief of *People's Daily*, the present and deputy chairman of *People's Daily Web*, were arrested by the prosecutor office for bribery (BBC, 2015). Also, in order to advertise their products or services reportedly on the news page at a lower price, some companies have paid journalists or media to gain access. Media ethics are in jeopardy (Chu, 1994).

2.3.4 Digitalization- the fall of traditional press and the rise of censorship

With the development of the Internet and the rise of new media, the influence and practice of traditional media are facing severe challenges. The advent of the Internet, smartphones, and other mobile devices has thoroughly changed news production and consumption of the industry. A dramatic decline in paid circulation can be observed in the global media market. Readers are turning to mobiles and tablets for news. More importantly, advertising revenues have been pulled away (SHIH, 2016; Purdy, Wong, & Harris, 2017). China's traditional press advertising revenue dropped by 7.2% in 2012 (Chen G. , 2018). Since then, the diffusion of smartphones has accelerated depression in the printing industry. In 2017, the drop in revenue reached 32.5%⁹. But scholars Wang & Sparks (2019b) found a resurgence in Party-oriented press, in contrast with marketed-oriented entities in the declining environment. What has been argued was that Party presses are more likely to find funding resources when authorities tighten the grip on political ideology. As a result, the commercial-oriented and market-oriented papers went into a more difficult situation than Party-orientated press, especially in the provincial-level press groups. Moreover, the shrinking of readership and advertising revenues ties journalism more tightly to political and economic power. Commercial goals are replacing journalistic ones. As a consequence, the room for independent and critical journalism becomes more at risk than ever(ibid).

⁹. The advertising revenue data in 2017 is from CTR: 2016–2017 report on China's advertising market and future trends, published on April 7, 2017, <http://www.199it.com/archives/579617.html>. Retrieved April 3, 2019.

According to SHIH's (2016) report, at the end of 2015, more than 74% of traditional print newspapers had official microblog (Weibo) account. Over 116 daily newspapers' official microblog attracted over one million followers, respectively. The total number of followers of Sina Weibo of 394 newspapers was 550 million, far outpacing that of traditional newspapers. New communication technologies are expected to promote the democracy of a country by disseminating information. The internet empowers citizens' voices. However, In China, the internet is under heavy censorship and aggressively employed to promote economic development and assist with administration (Romano, 2005). Facebook, Google, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and many other global websites and news media outlets, such as the New Yorker Times, BBC, are blocked in China. Chinese web users are prohibited from accessing overseas websites and social platforms without the assistance of Virtual Private Networks (VPN). Most VPNs are paid services, and the Chinese government cracks down on them at specific dates, such as on June 4th, the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protest. In 2018, the Beijing government issued edicts about the use of VPNs. Individuals and companies are required to register their use of leased web-access lines (Bloomberg, 2017). When the content on the webpage is contrary to the CCP rhetoric, the website will be filtered (BBC, 2018). Online social media platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and Baidu BBS, shut down comment and discussion areas during special events and times of the country. If any post has been considered as a threat to political stability, it will be censored or deleted. For any issues that could incite social unrest, such as official corruption and ethnic strife, the government is particularly keen on blocking the reports. In 2012, the websites of Bloomberg and the New York Times were blocked out after revelations that the national top leader relatives had accumulated billions in wealth during his leadership. Any mentions of the detention of Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo or the Xinjiang province, home to the mostly Muslim Uighur minority group, have been highly censored (Xu, 2014). The Economist Magazine subscribers in China have been informed that the March edition of 2018 is not available for the reason that the cover was a critical voice about China's constitution amendment. Information about the Xinjiang Concentration camp and Hong Kong's protest of Extradition Bill have been filtered or misinformed

in the Chinese context. Moreover, individual or public social media accounts can quickly be banned or deleted manually or automatically if the content has triggered any sensitive words set by the censorship mechanism.

As a result, Mainland China's web is exclusive. Even China's most high profile social media, Sina Weibo, reached 446 million monthly active users in the third quarter of 2018, outpacing the number of Twitter users (326 million monthly active users in the third quarter of 2018)¹⁰, it barely can challenge the state's regime of information control (Sullivan, 2013). Meanwhile, the media also conducts self-censorship as a response to the system (Chen & Hu, 2016). In 2015, every media organization was required to sign an agreement entitled "Professional Self-Discipline Convention for News, Publishing, Radio, Film, and Television." In the agreement, participants in the professions of news, publishing, radio, film and television shall "carry out the following course of professional self-discipline: Preserving the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the national interest, not publishing or spreading any language that damages the image of the Party or the nation..." (China Alliance of Radio, Film and Television, 2015). The autonomy of the media has been highly restricted under ideological control. Citizens cannot be well-informed. With media autonomy absent, journalism is decreasing. More and more media practitioners landed at cash-rich Internet companies or startups. Some others have abandoned the media industry altogether (Chan Y., 2016).

2.3.5 China's newspaper advertising revenue and readership change after media reform

Along with economic reform, market-oriented mechanisms were introduced to the media industry. The market force has propelled the state to operating media units as commercial businesses. Market-oriented news organizations multiplied (Chen & Hu, 2016). The subscription and advertising revenue became primary incomes for the market-oriented news outlets. As Table 1.0 showed below, China's newspaper advertising revenue reached its peak in 2011 and then dropped sharply. In the latest three years (2016, 2017, and 2018), advertising revenue in the traditional media -

¹⁰Data was from 199IT and Statista, March,6, 2019.<http://www.199it.com/archives/840931.html>. Statista.
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/282087/number-of-monthly-active-twitter-users/>. Retrieved April 13, 2019.

newspaper industry dropped by roughly three-quarters. One of the main reasons for the decrease is the rapid development of digitalization and mobile phones. The developing of the digital market has changed news consumption and shifted consumers and traffic from traditional media to digital media. As a result, both readers and revenue has turned away from traditional media¹¹.

Table 1.0 China’s Newspaper Advertising Revenue and Readership From 1992- 2017¹²

Year	Advertising Revenue (RMB Chinese Currency)	Growth Percentage	Readership
1992	1,618,000,000	68.19	
1993	3,771,000,000	133.06	
1994	3,391,000,000	-10.08	
1995	6,467,680,000	90.73	
1996	7,768,910,000	20.11	
1997	9,682,650,000	24.63	
1998	10,435,460,000	7.77	
1999	11,231,560,000	7.63	
2000	14,646,680,000	30.41	
2001	15,769,930,000	7.67	71.2
2002	18,847,580,000	19.52	70.2
2003	24,301,130,000	28.94	70.2
2004	23,072,420,000	-5.06	69.1
2005	25,604,970,000	10.98	68.8
2006	31,258,940,000	22.08	65.5
2007	32,219,270,000	3.07	66.1
2008	34,267,000,000	6.36	65.1
2009	37,046,000,000	8.11	65.8
2010	43,900,000,000	18.5	65.1

¹¹ CTR Research Report, CTR: 2016–2017 report on China's advertising market and future trends, April 7, 2017, <http://www.199it.com/archives/579617.html> on 3 March 2019.

¹². Advertising Revenue and Readership of 1992-2016 is from China Newspaper Industry Development Report, Chen Guoquan, February 2018, (2017 Zhongguo baoye fazhan baogao) 2017 China Newspaper Industry Development Report, (Bianji zhiyou) Editorial Friend, blanks are not available data.

<https://www.cnki.net/search?keyword=2017%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E6%8A%A5%E4%B8%9A%E5%8F%91%E5%B1%95%E6%8A%A5%E5%91%8A&db=SCDB>.Retrieved April 3 2019.

Data in 2017 draw from 199IT, April 7, 2017, CTR: 2016–2017 report on China’s advertising market and future trends. <http://www.199it.com/archives/579617.html>.

2011	48,816,800,000	11.2	65.7
2012	45,253,170,000	-7.3	57.3
2013	41,587,660,000	-8.1	52.3
2014	33,977,110,000	-18.3	43.3
2015	21,949,210,000	-35.4	38.4
2016	13,454,860,000	-38.7	32.8
2017		-32.5	30.4

In conclusion, China's media reform is driven by economic force under a tight political grip. The social change has promoted changes in media accordingly. Chinese media reform has unfolded different layers in the battle of market force and political control. The introduction of market machines has connected Chinese media with the global market, while state ownership and strict censorship keep China's media mechanism exclusive and not interacting with the external global world. To understand how Chinese media and journalism have been shaped through times, the societal context which has been explicated in this chapter is essential.

CHAPTER 3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the theories adopted in the study as well as a review of related literature. The research is conducted under the framework of the political economy of communication (also known as the political economy of media). The political economy of communication approach to media emphasizes both holistic and historical reflections on media production, distribution, and consumption (McChesney, 2000a; 2000b). In this chapter, section 3.1 will briefly identify the definition and sketch a historical review of the political economy of communication, to explain how the political economy approach is deployed in media studies. Section 3.2 explains how previous research elaborated on the interplay of the state and market in media. It will address how the dichotomy of state and market has been discussed globally and what the difference is within countries. More importantly, it will evaluate how Chinese media in the Party-state regime have been explored from both the perspective of state and the market.

3.1 Establishing a Political Economy Framework

3.1.1 *The definition of political economy of communication*

Mosco (2009) defines the political economy in two ways. In a narrow sense, it is the "*study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources*" (p.24, italics in original). Broadly, it is "*the study of control and survival in social life*" (p.25, italics in original). "Control" in this context means the "*political*" process of how to maintain societal functions and how to shape the relations within a community. "Survival" refers to "*economic*" forces involved in the process of how people produce and reproduce to keep the societies going (p. 3). Graham (2006, p. 494) extends the definition as "the study of how values of all kinds are produced, distributed, exchanged, and consumed (the economic); how power is produced, distributed, exchanged and exercised (the political); and how these aspects of the social world are related in any given place and time in history". Political economists of communication hold the opinion that policies establish the nature of the media systems. The existing media systems and content are the result of collaborative enforcement by "ownership, market structures, commercial supports,

technologies, labor practices, and government policies" (McChesney, 2008, p. 12). The political economy of communication focuses on the links between media systems with economic and political systems. Media reflects how social power, often refers to as economic force and political influence is exercised in society (ibid). Mosco (2009, p. 29) also points out that in this field, the political economy of communication is about understanding "the connections between the political and economic." Theoretically, the connections could be interpreted in many different ways, but in practice, "political" usually refers to the state, and the "economic" embodies the market (Winseck, 2011).

3.1.2 Political economy of communication studies

The scholarship on the political economy of communication entails two main dimensions. First, the political economy of communication studies the nature of the relationship between the media system and content within the social structures of society. It analyzes how structural factors of society affect media content production and consumption. Market mechanisms and existing social and class situations are dynamic. Therefore, political economists believe the existing media systems could be improved (McChesney, 2008). In other words, this field examines how media and communication reflect, reinforce, or challenge existing class and social relations.

Secondly, the political economy of communication looks specifically at how ownership, support mechanisms (subscription, advertising, crowdfund raising), and government intervention (e.g., media policy) influence media behavior and content (McChesney, 2000b). Individually, three primary important objects are mainly examined in media studies by the political-economic approach: 1) Political intervention- in different regimes, the governments regulate media by different policies. In certain countries, media is largely controlled by states, and privatization is not allowed in terms of ownership; or media industries operation be strictly limited in certain areas. 2) Media ownership - the high concentration of media ownership comes as a result of convergence and media conglomeration under the neoliberal economy. The main concern of media conglomeration is media diversity, and democratic discourse would be challenged. And 3) Financial mechanisms - the news

agency and organization revenue resources. Financial subsidies from the government, subscription, advertising, capital investment or even crowdfunding revenues are examples of media organizations' sources of economic support. Financial mechanisms influence media content by deciding what content can be published and what cannot, especially when there is conflict of interest between the content and the financial supporters (Smythe, 1977; McChesney, 2000a; McChesney, 2000b, Guyot, 2009; Mosco, 2009). The political economy of communication takes into consideration how political intervention, media ownership, and financial mechanisms interact with each other (ibid).

3.1.3 A brief historical introduction of the political economy of communication

The press has for been long concerned about interference by political authorities. Journalistic practices have been strongly shaped by political regimes (Holtz-Bacha, 2004; McChesney, 2008; Yüksel, 2013). In the mid - 20th century, media and journalism studies in the United States were mainly carried out by based on factionalist sociology or political science. Economic perspectives were absent. Economic structural factors on news-making and production had been barely taken into consideration (Mattelart, 1994). However, after the news became a prosperous industry, the market forces changed the media landscape. Media commercialization or "the development of media market" (Holtz-Bacha, 2004, p. 213) transformed media into commercial entities. In such a scenario, journalism practices, news production, and media-state relation are no longer decided only by political factors. The media's role in political and economic systems is reshaped (ibid). Graham (1979, p. 129) pointed out in order to understand "the structure of our culture, its production, consumption and reproduction and of the role the mass media in that process," the political economy approach should be stressed. For a compressive understanding of the complexity of the media system, subsequent researchers and scholars made a significant step forward in media studies by setting a theoretical framework of political economy in the 1970s (Guyot, Political-economic factors shaping news culture, 2009). To distinguish political economy approach to communication from mainstream economic approaches, Golding & Murdock (2000) and McChesney R. W. (2000b)

sought to interconnect economy with society, culture and politics as an interdisciplinary exercise rather than a separated dominating force, focusing on the interaction between capitalist enterprise and public intervention.

Thus, the political economy of communication considers both the economic and political contexts in media study. This study pursues the central question raised by the political economy of communication on "whether the media system serves to promote or undermine democratic institutions and practices" (McChesney, 2008, p. 12) with a focus on the Chinese apparatus. Based on the RQs of this paper, the change of Chinese journalism is discussed under the dynamic power relations of economic and political forces. Therefore, in this research, how dichotomous poles of the market and the state influencing media are discussed through the theoretical lens of the political economy of communication.

3.2 Literature review: the interplay of state and market on media

The relations of the state and the market on articulating a democratic media has been a significant theme in global media studies. In North America and Europe, scholars have analyzed a variety of perspectives on the relations between these two dichotomous forces (Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Chalaby, 2005; Benson, Powers, & Neff, 2017). These discussions have varied from how the incentives affect news content (Hamilton, 2004) to whether private ownership of media leads to the degradation and suppression of journalism (Guyot, Political-economic factors shaping news culture, 2009). The views are conflicting about how the role of the state and the market play out. Herman & Chomsky (2002, p. 306) stressed that U.S mass media communication systems were "effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function by reliance on market forces, internalized assumptions, and self-censorship, and without overt coercion." In consensus with the positive role of market forces, Chalaby (2005), who took a comparative study in democratic political countries and noticed the side effect of capitalism and corporate power. His research concludes that "the press might be nominally free in democracies, but the concentration of ownership and the search for

profit enslave newspapers to market forces and put them right back in the hands of the dominant class" (p.288).

Authors who emphasize the decisive role of the state, take public broadcasting as examples to argue that democratic media are well established by the contribution of public media, rather than commercial media (Aalberg, 2015). The decisive role of the state is prominent when media are facing considerable economic crisis (Benson, Powers, & Neff, 2017). Well-funded and robust public broadcasting plays a crucial role in informing the citizenry and contributing to a constructive and coterminous relationship between political journalism and democracy. Moreover, the state plays a critical role in facilitating a public sphere and remedying the market failure, since the government is making policies to regulate private entities and provide public subsidies (Sjøvaag, Moe, & Stavelin, 2012). In Latin America (countries such as Mexico, Venezuela and Ecuador, etc.), governments act as influential roles to promote populism, "a leadership style characterized by charisma and personalism, economic statism and distributionism" (Waisbord S. , 2013, p. 134). Scholarship in those countries show that state-owned or private media entities have been expropriated, or fueled to "discredit rival" (Benavides, 2000, p. 96) and repress opposition voices (Waisbord & Fox, 2002; Waisbord S. , 2013).

Notably, different from China, media ownership has been discussed frequently in the western media context. To what extent do media ownership structures (the financial and legal status of media companies) shape journalistic cultures (Preston,2006; Ter Wal, 2006a;Ter Wal, 2006b), to how journalists perceive the role of political-economic factor in their work (Zagar, 2006a; Zagar, 2006b; Guyot, Armand, & Gilles, 2006), research findings suggested that the direct intervention from media owners to journalistic practices yet the limitations "do implicitly exist" in terms of economic, organizational, technical terms (Kovacs, Aniko, & Aepad, 2006, p. 21; Preston, 2006; Guyot, 2009). China's unique ownership structure (all newspapers are state-owned) (Zhao, 2008) makes Chinese media studies mostly focus on political control. After market mechanisms were implemented in the media industry, studies began to pay attention to the influence of market forces. With the assumption that the state and the

market are conflicting poles of articulating a democratic media (Winseck, 2011), two significant voices can be observed in previous literature.

3.2.1 The tug of war between state versus market

China's opening-up and economic reform policy in the 1980s superimposed a new analytical framework, a 'state vs market' scenario to the press. The Chinese Communist party-state, with its strict monologue narrative and a tight grip on the country's media and political superstructure, was intended to promote economic reform and introduce the market economy. Deng Xiaoping's pragmatic policies shifted Chinese society to de-ideologization and economic development. The bureaucratic authorities from central to local levels addressed their focus from ideological supervision to entrepreneurial collaboration. Mass media was on the way to media commercialization. Under the economic reform base, Chinese journalism and journalists had to cope with this ideological dissonance. Given the natural media clashes with a burgeoning market economy, Chinese journalism has to deal with the contradictions between a growing market force and tightening political control (Akhavan-Majid, 2004; He, 2000b). Market forces brought financial independence to media, but it did not change the nature of CCP's tightening grip on media. There are two tendencies that have been observed: firstly, in order to attract readership and advertising revenue, the proportion of entertainment content increased in most newspapers; secondly, new business models - more and more media conglomerates emerged (Liu, 1998, p. 31). In a sense, there was a clashing of the role of the Chinese press as a mouthpiece for the Party-state and the role of profit-making. The intersection and collaboration of political and market interests seems to have become an additional authoritative feature for Chinese media. Scholars Winfield and Peng (2005, p. 270) define the media system in this transition as "a hybrid of political authoritarianism and capitalism." This media system challenged CCP's orthodoxy. Nowhere is such a media model more evident, fervent, and profound than in the Party-state China. By nature, the Party press is bestowed with an unambiguous political mission—serving as the Party's mouthpiece to promote its interests, policies, and ideology. However, to survive the fierce market competition and attract capital investment, the Party-press has had to make some compromises with the market. In

such a situation, the interplay of politics and market forces became a significant source of ambiguities and contradictions (Lee P. S., 1994).

Lee C.-C. (2000a) took Hong Kong's press as an example. From British Dominance to Sino-British dual power and Beijing's regime, Hong Kong's press was going through different political transitions. Lee's research argues that as long as the Beijing Government keeps public commitment to Hong Kong, under the political policy of "one country, two systems," economic forces could be used to defuse political pressure and make room for journalists and news organizations. He Z. (2000a) is consistent with the argument that political and economic forces stand off against each other in Party news organizations. Unlike other researchers, He Z. chooses a political-oriented newspaper – *Shenzhen Special Zone Daily* as medium. Six aspects in this newspaper intuition have been examined: management structure, intra-media competition, advertising operation, news-making process, journalist's perspectives, and newspaper content. The researcher drew an analogy that the political force and market forces in the Chinese Party press is a pulling game. Significantly, market forces started even playing a dominating role in advertising operations (ibid). Even in *Shenzhen Special Zone Daily* newspaper content, where the Party press commonly applied blatant political and ideological innuendos, the frames of reality were gradually changing into lower-pitched and softer ideological allusions. What should be pointed out is that the research was based on the scholar's trip to Shenzhen from 1994 to 1999 when Chinese media was operating under the media reforms, along with the country's socialist market economy reform. Traditional media in China back then was the dominant industry and was experiencing rapid growth in advertising revenue [see Table 1.0 China's Newspaper Advertising Revenue and Readership From 1992- 2017]. It was before digital media came into the picture in the 2000s. The market forces were at its peak.

Scholars agree that the market brings dynamism and openness in media (Sparks C., 2008; He, 2003). However, market success demands editorial autonomy and freedom in the newsroom (Zhao, 1998; Lee C.-C. , 2000b, p. 36). There is debate as to what extent market forces bring openness to Chinese journalism. One view argues that China's commercialization has stimulated media diversification to some degree, but economic

reform did not bring political reform (Lee, He, & Huang 2006, 2007; McCormick, 2003; Zhao, 1998, 2004, 2008). The privatization of the media was decided and initiated by the CCP. The Party has always put its agenda over political openness and consolidated the media capital (ibid). Other scholars argue that media commercialization has brought new norms of journalistic professionalism. Market competition provided a strong motivation for the press to erode the CCP's monopoly agenda (Gang & Bandurski, 2011). Journalists have been developing tactics to gain audiences and challenge state censors (Shirk, 2011). Consistent with this view, Stockmann (2013) examined the market influence on Chinese media. The study concluded that "in the long term, these dynamics [of the introduction of the market mechanisms] appear to lead to greater openness of space in news reporting" (p. 5).

Thus, in the tug of war between the state and market, hybrid forms of journalism have emerged. Among them, one, entitled: Yulun Jiandu (Public Opinion Supervision), has been intensively studied. In the Chinese context, Yulun Jiandu, is a means by which "the government uses the press to promote better governance" (Cho L. , 2007, p. 7). The dynamic power reconstruction between state and market has created a public sphere for public opinion supervision. As discussed before (see Figure 1.0 China Press and Media Governance Flow), in China, provincial press groups report to their provincial CCP Propaganda Department. The higher levels of media are empowered to investigate power abuse at lower level media. For example, *People's Daily*, which is directly under the central government governance, is entitled to supervise other provincial-level newspapers. The provincial-level media are empowered to investigate county-level media. Thus, journalists utilize their legitimacy to practice watchdog journalism public opinion supervision for public interest. Different journalistic tactics have been developed to broaden the reporting space (Sun,2010; Cho, 2013; Tai, 2014; Lorentzen, 2014; Repnikova, 2017a; Li & Spark, 2018).

3.2.2 A joint hand of the state and market? Media amidst tightening media control and shifting revenue

As digital media developed, the media market has shifted from traditional media to new media. Power relations in the newsroom have changed accordingly. Unlike it once did to broaden the range of journalism in China (Sparks C. , 2008), market forces have the opposite effect nowadays (Wang & Sparks, 2019b). The diffusions of digital media have provoked a significant crisis for newspapers. Notably, China's newspaper industry has begun to feel the consequences brought by digital media on revenues shift nearly a decade later than Western newspapers. Compared to the United States and other western countries, the drop in advertising revenue is now well documented in China (Sparks, et al., 2016 ; Wang & Sparks, 2019a). Regardless of Party-oriented or market-oriented titles, China's newspapers are coming under financial stress. The loss of advertising and circulation revenues has made news organizations merge editorial and business departments to cut costs. Newspaper coverage has been traded for advertising and "non-news" businesses. The news coverages have also become very vulnerable and highly tied to political and economic power (Wang & Sparks, 2019b). Separately, journalists have had to take on a sales role by advertising. The blurring of the line between editorial and advertorial has eroded journalistic independence and broken the wall between the journalistic goal and business goals in the press (Wang & Sparks, 2019a). Commercial goals are replacing independent and critical journalism (ibid).

Also, the diffusion of digital technologies has changed news production. The impact of digital media offers journalists a higher degree of flexibility and avoid a physical presence in the newsroom. As a consequence, the organizational identity of journalistic culture has been disrupted. Journalist sources have become a higher risk of source dependence. Meanwhile, unsigned paid content from the government or state-owned businesses, solicited by the advertising department, has been folded into the practice of journalism to cope with the revenue loss. The power relationship in terms of newsworthiness has shifted to the source. The significance of journalistic

autonomy has correspondingly been reduced, which has altered the pressures upon news organizations (Wang D. & Sparks C., 2019). Newspapers are forced to shift away from investigative reporting in situations with a hostile political climate and unfavorable economic cultures. Li & Sparks (2016) studied *The Beijing News* (*Xinjing Bao* in Chinese), a newspaper known for supporting critical reporting and investigative journalism. To defuse financial pressure and political censorship, *The Beijing News* has been shifting content from digging up wrongdoing on the ground to advocating policy change from the top down. Consistent with previous studies, Tong (2019) agrees that in a constrained environment (declining revenue and the loss of readership), critical journalism has become more vulnerable. Besides cost-cutting measures, Chinese media has also adopted more political endorsement and financial support from the government, as demonstrated by the Shanghai Media Group (Jiang W. , 2014).

The emergence of digital media has provided a new platform to challenge state power, where it generates a public sphere increasingly integrated with information, debate, and opinions (Xin, 2010; Qiang, 2011; Creemers, 2017). Digital media has the power to decentralize information dissemination and challenge the Party-state propaganda model. Consequently, tensions have intensified in media censorship. In the Chinese context, the internet is conceived to drive political persuasion, working as an instrument to "elicit, respond to and direct public opinion" (Creemers, 2017, p. 27). Not only does state control steers shape public opinion, other actors (e.g., Internet corporations, commercial advertisers) also play a role in shaping the voices (Lagerkvist, 2012; Svensson, 2014). In order to cope with the new challenge to propaganda, the state-sanctioned media model was invented in China. However, the unpredictable results in the sphere of media policy raises questions about the capacity of the party-state to effectively reinvent public persuasion in the digital age (Repnikova & Fang, 2019).

In summary, most studies probe into Chinese legacy media before the year 2012, the year when advertising revenue started to decline sharply. Current studies mostly focus on media digitization. Also, most of the researchers tend to adopt interviews as

their research methods, which means studies are mostly based on informed comments. There is a research gap between how legacy media's content reflects directly in the dynamic power relations of the state and market longitudinally. Therefore, this research will present the direct evidence of how newspaper content reflects the dynamic power relations between political and economic poles, across nearly three decades. Further, this paper tries to contribute discussions on how the foundation of democratic media should be articulated within the dichotomous forces between the state and the market.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Quantitative content analysis and comparative study as research methods

This case study of *Southern Weekly* uses quantitative content analysis as a primary research method. This research method allows a certain amount of longitudinal analysis with relative ease, and the research can track changes in frequency over time (Bryman, 2012). Based on the RQs, the primary focus of this thesis is to analyze media content's change from 1993-1996 versus 2013-2016 in *Southern Weekly* to study how media content was affected under different political climate and economic context. It is a comparison study crossing two periods over twenty years. By comparing *Southern Weekly's* articles in politics, economy, legal and environmental issues in the two-time frames, a clear quantitative picture emerges of how much media coverage has changed during the years.

As one of the most applied primary tools in media and communication research, content analysis is "the systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods" (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005, p. 23). One of the most common definitions of this research method is from scholar Bernard Berelson. He defined content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson, 1952, p. 18). By that definition, one of the most significant advantages of content analysis is it is objective since rules are specified in advance for the raw material (content or documents) to categories. Objectivity resides in the fact that transparency in the coding procedures reduces personal biases in the process, which improves reliability. There is no reactive effect when employing content analysis in studying newspaper articles or television programs, in which the researcher has suppressed the biases. Being systematic means the rules are applied consistently, and the research findings are measured based on numbers (frequency, percentage) and internal relationships of predetermined categories. Thus, the results are not an extension of the analyst's biases (Bryman, 2012). Because of its transparency in the coding procedures, another quality of this research method is replicability. Other researchers, who follow the coding rules and the process of analysis, can achieve similar results (ibid).

As suggested (Bryman,2012), conducting content analysis requires research questions should be clearly and explicitly articulated. If the research questions are not clear and specific, it is hard to direct the research to examine the critical dimensions, and the coding procedure is likely to miss out on the key factors. Based on RQs,

RQ1. How has Chinese Journalism changed between the periods 1993-1996 and 2013-2016?

RQ2. How do these changes in media content reflect the interplay between state and market?

This paper will examine newspaper content for:

- Changes of coverage proportion in specific topics (politics, economy, rule of law and environment)
- Changes within news subjects
- Changes in reporting stances

Comparative study

This paper also employs a comparative study as a research method. By comparing and contrasting subjects, comparative study ascends research from an exploratory case study to an advanced level of theoretical issues such as causality or evolution (Bukhari, 2011). Przeworski & Teune (1970, p. 39) explain it as "the most similar systems design is based on a belief that a number of theoretically significant differences will be found among similar systems and that these differences can be used in explanation." The research objective of this paper is to discover how China's journalism has been shaping and changing by economic development and political climate through times. By analyzing media content in two critical time frames (1993-1996 VS 2013-2016), comparative study helps this research to draw a full picture of Chinese journalism evolution.

However, quantitative content analyst and comparative study may not be the only methods to approach the research objective in this study. An alternative way, for example, qualitative interviews of journalists, editors, and managers from news organizations, can also help to understand the change of Chinese journalism during the decades. However, considering the study scale and time structure of this project,

it was seen as too ambitious to do interviews as well as content analysis. Thus, this study primarily employs content analysis for empirical evidence.

4.2 Research design

4.2.1 Reasons for choosing *Southern Weekly* newspaper for case study

Among Chinese 1,871 newspapers (General Administration of Press and Publication, 2019), *Southern Weekly* (also known as *Southern Weekend*) is the most significant weekly circulation of any newspaper on the mainland of China, with more than 1.6 million copies circulation, on average (*SouthernWeekly*, 2019). It is also known as one of China's most influential watchdog press institutions and outspoken newspapers (Cho L. , 2007). This section will discuss the historical and economic context of *Southern Weekly*, along with its newspaper content reforms over the decades.

4.2.1.1 A Brief History of *Southern Weekly*

As discussed in Chapter 1, China is one-party state ruled by CCP, and all newspapers are Party-state owned. In the context of the Chinese press, "Party-state" here refers to both CCP and the government (Liebman, 2005). *Southern Weekly* is no exception; it is a weekly newspaper that comes under the Guangdong Province Communist Party Committee, but at the same time, a subsidiary of Nanfang Daily media group (Shirk, 2011). *Southern Weekly* launched in 1984, a time that the government called for economic development. The newspaper is based in Guangzhou, China's pioneering region for opening up to the outside world. Initially, it started as a supplementary weekend newspaper for *Southern Daily*. In 1993, *Southern Weekly* has implemented a corporate structure, which meant that the editorial team came to be in charge of management and operations while the ownership remains party-state owned¹³. This system has expanded this newspaper's marketing potential greatly. In 1993, its advertising revenue reached RMB 4.8 million a growth rate of 66.7%, compared with advertising revenue in 1992¹⁴. In order to meet the demand of readers and pursue market success, *Southern Weekly* was moved from tabloid reporting to focusing on

¹³ *Southern Weekly* founding editor-in-chief Zuo Fang's explained how it the contract system transformed *Southern Weekly* in his autobiography "How the Steel Was not Tempered", published by Cosmos Books Ltd Hong Kong in 2014.

¹⁴ 1992, and 1993 revenue figures are from scholars Cho Li-fung's (2007) PhD dissertation "The emergence, influence, and limitations of watchdog journalism in Post-1992 China".

social problems, law violations, government official corruption, and malfeasance. As a result, *Southern Weekly* became a household name and built its national reputation and credibility as a stalwart for moral authority and advocacy (Cho L. , 2007).

Southern Weekly Content Page Reforms Over the Years

In order to meet the needs of the market, *Southern Weekly* newspaper has expanded its page size by five times [see Table 2.0 *Southern Weekly* Page Expansion as below]. It went from four pages to eight pages in 1992, then from eight pages to 16 pages in 1996. In 1998, it expanded from 16 pages to 20 pages, and by 2000, the paper became 24 pages. In 2004, for the first time, it reached 32 pages.

However, from 2002, the advertising market began to shift from traditional media to digital media. From 2012, new media and media digitalization changed the media landscape. The printing industry has been declining ever since. In the same year, for the ever first time, China's Newspaper advertising revenue dropped by 7.3%. [see Table 1.0 China's Newspaper Advertising Revenue and Readership From 1992- 2017]. According to CTR Market Research¹⁵, in 2015, 2016, and 2017, China's newspaper advertising revenue dropped by 35.3%, 38.7%, and 32.5%, respectively. In 2013, *Southern Weekly* launched a paid-content digital subscription for Internet consumers, trying to fill the advertising revenue loss on printing platforms. However, the dramatic revenue decrease of traditional media made newspapers have to cut their costs and shrink their operations. In 2016, *Southern Weekly* newspaper pages varied from 28-page to 32-page accordingly. In 2017, it fixed at 28-page, in response to advertising revenue decrease.

¹⁵ Data draw from Table China's Newspaper Advertising Revenue and Readership From 1992- 2017

Table 2.0 Southern Weekly Page Expansion

Year	Pages	Pages After Expanded
1992	4	8
1996	8	16
1998	16	20
2000	20	24
2004	24	32
2017	32	28

Along with its size expansion, *Southern Weekly* newspaper has updated its content sections and reformed accordingly. In 2002, *Southern Weekly* issued a special city-feature with an additional 8-page in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, before it expanded to 32 pages in 2004. The page expansion is not only for accommodating the readers' needs for content but also for increasing advertising revenue. For instance, the third page and eighth page on December 19th, 2009 (1344th issue), are exclusively advertising pages. Besides, nine half-page placements are reserved for advertising sponsorship. The content sections of the 28-page issue are not much different from that of the 32-page issue, after deducting advertisement contents [see Appendix 4.0 *Southern Weekly* Page Sections Revise].

4.2.2 Timeframes of 1993- 1996 VS 2013-2016

Based on the research objectives, timeframes of 1993- 1996 versus 2013-2016 were chosen for study for the reason of 1) the critical political shift happening; 2) the significant economic transitions in the newspaper industry

- 1993-1996. The first presidency of Jiang Zemin, China's third-generation leadership was established in this period. Jiang's political ideology - "Three Represents" (Jiang, 2003), became the country's guiding doctrine. China's economy shifted into a socialist

market economic system and a market economy (Yabuki & Harner, 1999) at that time. The country's economy began to take off, gaining global attention.

- 2013-2016. The first presidency of Xi Jinping, "Xi Jinping's Thought" was amended into Constitution to guide the country in all respects. After more than three decades of rapid development, China's economy started to slow down, and the ideological control tightened its grip nationally. 2017 would also be the last of the presidency with limits, after the Constitution was amended, removing the provision that the President and Vice President "shall serve no more than two consecutive terms" (PRC.Const.art.LXXIX, 1982).

The NPC (The National People's Congress) is the national legislature of the People's Republic of China, which decides the state's leadership in every five years. In the first session of the 8th NPC, Jiang became the President of PRC and Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the CCP and served as the Commander-in-chief of the People's Liberation Army. In March 1993, "Three Represents" was interpreted as CCP represents China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of China's advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people. It was amended to the Constitution in 2004. Xi Jinping became the President of PRC at the first session of the 12th NPC in 2013. Xi has served as the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CCP and Chairman of the Central Military Commission. In 2018, "Xi Jinping Thought" (to achieve rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and realizing the Chinese dream by all-around and more in-depth reforms (Heilmann, 2016). "Xi Jinping Thought" was amended to the Constitution in 2018.

4.3.3 Field work

This part is about how this research's raw materials and data have been collected. For a better understanding, unlike other parts of this thesis, the writer will use the first person.

I went to China in December of 2018 to conduct fieldwork. Based on my previous study, *Southern Weekly* newspaper is a pure print media until it established a digital newspaper in 2013. The content in the digital platform is as same as the print. Since

my research involves newspaper materials of eight years, crossing twenty years longitudinally, materials accessed electronically are the ideal choice for carrying out this study. *Southern Weekly* news agency became my primary choice for raw materials. However, I got a reply from their publication department and new media subscription center that electronic newspapers are available only by subscription. Mobile phones and tablet devices can only access it. They did not provide electronic newspaper files separately. Moreover, the subscription is only valid for the current issues, from the subscribed date. For instance, if a customer subscribed to *Southern Weekly* on December 25, 2018, the issues from December 25, 2018 are accessible, but the previous issues are not available. Then I turned to *Southern Weekly* official online shop, where it claims that it can provide any issue of the newspapers. After briefing about my request, the customer service responded that readers could purchase any current issues of this year (2018), but not the previous issues.

Then I turned to University libraries. In China, the university's internal online database is only open to registered students and internal working staff. A contact at Central South University of Forestry and Technology in Hunan and another at Peking University in Beijing, helped me to search their library resources. Only a few articles of *Southern Weekly* Newspaper have been archived in library digital databases. At the same time, I searched on internet resources and found that most Chinese research institutions cooperate with CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), an integrated knowledge resources system, where have journals, doctoral dissertations, theses, proceedings, newspapers, yearbooks, statistical yearbooks, electronic books are stored. I accessed the CNKI database through its official online platform. *Southern Weekly* newspaper articles from 2003 to 2012 have been archived in its database. However, it is hard to identify if the database included all articles every year. For example, in 2006, it has only 728 news articles, merely the only half number of 2007 (1549).

After trying various channels, I noticed that *Southern Weekly* news agency once issued a CD in 1999 for its 15th anniversary. The CD has recorded *Southern Weekly* newspaper articles from 1984-1998. The search of the CD linked me to an online magazine shop, where not only electronic news articles from 1993 to 1996 but also news articles from

2013 to 2016 were in stock. Unlike the CNKI database, the news articles are archived per each issue, which makes it clear for comparative study. Noticeably, the format of the raw material of the 2013-2015 raw material is text format, which photos, pictures, and photographic images are not included. Thus, the raw material for this research has been drawn from these sources.

4.2.4 Sampling

The issue of appropriate sample size in quantitative research is widely discussed (Holsti, 1969; Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005; Bryman, 2012), and the sample size varies with the type of information one seeks. For content analysis of weekly newspapers, scholars Lacy, Robinson, & Riffe (1995) explored various sampling techniques. By using content measures and three sampling techniques: simple random sampling and two constructed year samples, the first stratified by month and the second by quarter, the sample size of weekly newspapers in content analysis, suggested by them, should either “randomly select fourteen issues from a year, or pick twelve issues, one from each month” (p. 344). This research employs stratified sampling by month, picking twelve issues of one year, one from each month, ninety- six issues from eight years in total. [see Appendix 2.0 Samples of Coding Issues] Also, *Southern Weekly* is a weekly newspaper and published on every Friday, so the dates picked from each month in each year is equivalent. [see Table 3.0 as an example]

Table 3.0 Sample dates in 1994 VS 2014

Date/Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1994	07- Jan	11- Feb	18- Mar	29- Apr	10- May	15- Jul	26- Aug	2- Aug	2- Sep	14- Oct	25- Nov	30- Dec
2014	09- Jan	13- Feb	20- Mar	10- Apr	01- May	12- Jul	24- Aug	28- Aug	04- Sep	16- Oct	20- Nov	25- Dec

Also, this research is a longitudinal study comparing eight years of news articles across more than twenty years from 1993-2016. Based on the research subject, identifying units of sampling is necessary (Neuendorf, 2016).

4.2.5 A pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to go through each news article (headline, lead, body, and conclusion) in 1993, 1996, and 2013. Detail notes have been remarked. The purpose of the pilot study is to specify study areas and decide which content themes should be categorized and how many of them should be included in the research. The pilot study helped to list out four news article themes of this research: 1) politics; 2) economy; 3) rule of law; 4) environment. There are three reasons for choosing the four themes. First, "politics" and "rule of law" news reporting is often involved in political ideology. The subjects of these two news reporting topics are mainly the authorities (the Party or the state). As discussed earlier, China is a one-Party political system, and CCP is the ruling Party leading the government. In this scenario, the relationship between media and state can be examined through this news reporting. Second, "economy" based on China's economic development and reform is the driving force of social change, which has much media coverage. Thirdly, the "environment" is an area of intersection of economic expansion and regulatory governance. Environmental issues are mainly caused by economic expansion, and environment protection calls for government policy. In the pilot study, a few articles about the environment were identified in 1993 and 1996, and the numbers surged in 2013.

After examining the headlines, leads, bodies, and conclusions of all news articles of samples in the time frames of 1993-1996 and 2013-2016, a total of 1,201 articles were identified that fitted this research. [see Appendix 2.0 Samples of Coding Issues and Appendix 3.0 Samples of Coding Dates]

4.2.6 Coding- defining the variables

Variables are divided into the units of analysis based on criteria: (a) the substantive message of what is communicated, (b) the medium of how it is communicated.

(1) What is communicated – which included:

Variable A: Title of article.

Variable B: Issue number.

Variable C: Date the story was published.

Variable D: Theme of the news article.

Variable E: Subject of the news article – key figure addressed by the article.

Variable F: News resources

Variable G: Reporting stance

(2) How it communicated- which included:

To develop specific variables and their definition for this study, the author took three factors into account: (a) How does the variable serve for this research objective? (b) Are the variables mutually exclusive? Also, (c) How doable of categorizing variables? The final coding system of variables as follows.

Variable A: Title of article: headline banner assigned to the article

Variable B: Issue Number: the issue number assigned to each week's paper located under in *Southern Weekly* newspaper banner on the front cover.

Variable C: Date Published: date of the newspaper issue.

Variable D: Theme of the news article.

The variable was divided into four sub-variables:

1. Politics 2. Economy 3. Rule of Law 4. Environment

Subsections of Variable D.1-Politics:

1. Government Governance: politics related governmental governing and management, such as policy making and implementation and resource distribution etc.
- 2.: Bureaucracy Watch and Commentary: bureaucracy and official observation.
3. National Defense: national armed forces, military power and strength, national defense strategy.
4. Ethnic and Religious affairs: ethnics groups and areas affairs; religious affairs.
5. Nation Union: national union issues, especially related to Hong Kong and Tai Wan
6. Diplomacy: China's diplomatic approach to the world; international relations with other countries.
7. International Politics: global political issues, international political situations in other foreign countries.
8. Others (not fit in any of the above categories).

Subsections of Variable D.3 - Rule of Law:

1. Criminal Case: murder, violence, drug trafficking.
2. Civil Dispute: legal cases about neighborhood dispute, inheritance disputes, intellectual property dispute.
4. Citizen Rights: individual legal rights protection such as private property; digital data privacy.
5. Official Malfeasance and Corruption: legal cases are reporting about officials' power abuse and corruption.
6. Legislation and Law Enforcement: news articles about the importance of independent judiciary and judicial justices; call for adequate protection of law and legislation; law-based governance.

7. Others (not fit in any of the above categories)

Subsections of Variable D.4 - Environment:

1. Naturel Disaster / Catastrophe: earthquakes, floods, drought.

2. Environmental Degradation and Pollution: environmental issues related to nature pollution and degradation, exposing environmental problems in air, water, soil, and others.

3. Natural Resource Protection: natural resource-saving and protection: water conservation; afforestation.

4. Energy conservation and emission reduction: sustainable development concerned with renewable energy, energy consumption and emissions.

5. Environment Protection Governance: environmental affairs with government environment governance, such as garbage classification and recycle.

6. Others (not fit in any of the above categories).

Variable E: Subject of the news article

1. Authority Department/Official (including judiciary and law enforcement)

2. Business Enterprises /Personnel

(1) State-owned/Monopoly Enterprise;

(2) Joint-share Company/Private-owned Enterprise;

(3) Publicly Traded Company (Internet Enterprise excluded);

(4) Internet Enterprise (5). Foreign Company;(6). Others (not fit in any of the above categories)

3. Public institutions

4. Individual Citizen
5. Public Figure or Celebrity
6. Foreign Government or Politician
7. Others (not fit in any of the above categories).

Variable F: News resources

1. Journalist/media
2. State officials/ Authority department
3. Enterprise or Company personnel
4. Expert or Scholar
5. Reader
6. Others: not fit in any of the above categories

Variable G: Reporting stance¹⁶

1. Praise
2. Neutral: fact-based reporting devoid of opinions and feelings
3. Criticize

¹⁶ Scholars Thomas Hanitzsch and Tim P. Vos (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018) identified 18 different roles such as disseminator, curator, storyteller, analyst, access provider, monitor, etc. from the perspective in journalists' role in news reporting. In the case of China, the media are state-owned and primarily used as propaganda tools. The journalist roles have been well discussed in Chinese journalism, especially in instigative news. Research can be found in Haiyan, Wang (2016), " the transformation of investigative journalism in China from journalists to activists. Thus, this study approached news reporting from a different perspective: the reporting stance to the authorities and established power, which is to examine the change of "praise," and "criticize" voices. In the pilot study, the researcher of this paper noticed there was a distinct difference in critical voices. In the reporting stance, this research divided into three categories, 1) praise; 2) neutral (fact-based reporting devoid of opinions and feelings); 3) criticize

4.2.7 Pretesting and intercoder reliability testing

All materials of this research were coded by the author of this paper (Coder A). For the pretesting and intercoder reliability test, another coder (Coder B) was trained. Coder B is from mainland China, doing his master study in Norway. During the three-hour orientation session, Coder A and Coder B discussed the research purpose, research design, and variables definitions. The coding sheet, detailed definitions of the predetermined variables, and coding sheet were provided. Four issues from January, February, March, and April in 2013 were selected from *Southern Weekly*. Coder A and Coder B's coding results were compared for pretesting. There are two modifications made. First, it is the definition of "bureaucracy watch and commentary" in politics and "official malfeasance and corruption" in the rule of law. "Bureaucracy watch and commentary" in politics is about bureaucracy and official observation, for example, the gifting culture and anti-corruption campaign in bureaucracy. It is also included news coverage about official stories. But when a news article is about an official went on the trial of power abuse and corruption, it should be coded in the category of "official malfeasance and corruption" in the rule of law. Secondly, it is the definition of "environment degradation and pollution" and "natural resource protection" in the environment. The coding rule is "environment degradation and pollution" is about exposing environmental problems, for instance, air pollution. "Natural resource protection" focuses on natural resource-saving and protection of natural resources such as afforestation.

Reliability and validity are the main concern for content analysis (Bryman, 2012). An intercoder reliability test was conducted to test intercoder reliability. Coders A and B independently coded three issues from 1993, 1995, and 2015 of *Southern Weekly* newspaper. Cronbach's Alpha by SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was applied to test the degree of agreement over the coding of items by two raters. The results for Coder A and Coder B showed that the inter-agreement of this study is good.

4.2.8 Limitations of quantitative content analysis

There are some limitations of the research method should be considered. First of all, though content analysis helps researchers to interpret the intricate inter-relationships

of categories (Bryman, 2012), it cannot directly present causality. Therefore, this paper also employs a comparative study as a research method to present the causalities and evolutions of Chinese journalism. Also, since the raw material of newspapers obtained in 2013-2015 did not include photographic pictures, it demands a higher understanding for the researcher to decode materials from this period. Moreover, the beneath connections between categories cannot present merely by statistics. Thus, it is essential for the researcher to draw examples from the content and background information to illustrate the meaning of the figures.

CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Findings

Finding 1: Media Coverage shifts to Politics

Table 4.0 Media Coverage in Politics, Economy, Rule of Law and Environment

<i>Year * News Article Theme Crosstabulation</i>							
			<i>Article Theme</i>				<i>Total</i>
			<i>Politics</i>	<i>Rule of Law</i>	<i>Economy</i>	<i>Environment</i>	
<i>Year</i>	1993-1996	<i>Count</i>	70	105	156	7	338
		<i>% within Year</i>	20.71%	31.07%	46.15%	2.07%	100.00%
	2013-2016	<i>Count</i>	359	125	285	94	863
		<i>% within Year</i>	41.60%	14.48%	33.02%	10.89%	100.00%
<i>Total</i>		<i>Count</i>	429	230	441	101	1201

The content analysis identified 1,201 articles about politics, economy, rule of law and environment, from *Southern Weekly's* news reporting in the period of study from 1993 to 1996 versus 2013 to 2016. A total of 338 articles were identified from 1993 to 1996, and 863 articles were from 2013 to 2016. Table 4.0 showed that in 1993-1996, news reporting of the economy and the rule of law were dominating content about 46.15% and 31.07%, respectively. Politics in media coverage took another 20.71%. Environment news reporting was rare, with only 2.07%. From 2013 to 2016, the number of news reporting of politics increased significantly. A distinct increase can be observed in politics, with a significant leap from 20.71% to 41.60%. Another noticeable growth was environment news, climbing to 10.89%. The prominence of the rule of law and economy declined to 14.48% and 33.03%, respectively. The data showed a decline in the prominence of the rule of law and economy reporting. The news proportion of the rule of law dropped to 14.48%, and the economic news reduced to 33.02% throughout the study. Since China is a one-Party state, these data were significant as it showed *Southern Weekly's* increased emphasis on political news, which involved in political governance and Party leadership, by contrast with the

decline of the rule of law news, which involved in direct connection with official power exposure.

Findings 2. Politics news emphases more on government governance and national defense, with much less in bureaucracy watch and commentary.

Table 5.0 Politics News Reporting

<i>What is the theme in politics * Year Crosstabulation</i>		Year	Year
		1993-1996	2013-2016
<i>Government Governance</i>	<i>Count</i>	15	132
	<i>% of Total</i>	21.43%	36.77%
<i>Bureaucracy Watch and Commentary</i>	<i>Count</i>	18	35
	<i>% of Total</i>	25.71%	9.75%
<i>National Defense</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	60
	<i>% of Total</i>	1.43%	16.71%
<i>Nation Union</i>	<i>Count</i>	2	6
	<i>% of Total</i>	2.86%	1.67%
<i>Ethnic and Religious affairs</i>	<i>Count</i>	-	1
	<i>% of Total</i>	-	0.28%
<i>Diplomacy</i>	<i>Count</i>	-	29
	<i>% of Total</i>	-	8.08%
<i>International Politics</i>	<i>Count</i>	33	74
	<i>% of Total</i>	47.14%	20.61%
<i>Others</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	22
	<i>% of Total</i>	1.43%	6.13%
<i>Total</i>	<i>Count</i>	70	359
	<i>% of Total</i>	100.00%	100.00%

As shown in table 5.0, the data in politics news reflected the different prominence of political news in the study of two-time frames. From 1993 to 1996, international politics were in a significant proportion of content at 47.14%. National politics news from 1993 to 1996 mainly focused on bureaucracy watch and commentary at 25.71%, and government governance at 21.43% in 1993 to 1996. Nation union and national defense issues were reported with a coverage of 2.86% and 1.43%, respectively. From 2013 to 2016, government governance reporting was highest at 36.77%. Bureaucracy

watch and commentary declined sharply from 25.71% to 9.75%. Meanwhile, national defense news reports jumped from 1.43% to 16.71%. Also, a notable change was the emergence of news articles of ethnic and religious affairs (0.28%) and diplomacy (8.08%) in 2013-2016. These data clearly shows how newspaper coverage shifted from global politics and official domestic observation to national defense, government governance, and diplomacy, where these categories are showing a growing and strengthening nation image.

Findings 3. Criminal case reporting becomes much less, with a significant growth in official malfeasance and corruption news.

Table 6.0 Rule of Law News Reporting

What is the theme in rule of law * Year Crosstabulation		Year	Year
		1993-1996	2013-2016
Criminal Case	Count	35	13
	% of Total	33.33%	10.40%
Civil Dispute	Count	11	6
	% of Total	10.48%	4.80%
Citizen Rights	Count	11	6
	% of Total	10.48%	4.80%
Official Malfeasance and Corruption	Count	24	44
	% of Total	22.86%	35.20%
Legislation and Law Enforcement	Count	19	47
	% of Total	18.10%	37.60%
Others	Count	5	9
	% of Total	4.76%	7.20%
Total	Count	105	125
	% of Total	100.00%	100.00%

Table 6.0 (N1 (1993-1996) = 105; N2(2013-2016) = 125) reflects the different prominence of the rule of law news reporting in the study time of two periods. From 1993 to 1996, criminal case reporting was the dominant item at 33.33%, followed by official malfeasance and corruption at 22.86%. From 2013 to 2016, legislation and law enforcement reporting became prominent and increased from 18.10% to 37.60%. Official malfeasance and corruption news reporting became the second prominent at 35.20% along with the political anti-corruption campaign swept over the country. Criminal cases reporting dropped to 10.40%. As a result, the sum of media coverage in official malfeasance and corruption and legislation and law enforcement reporting rose to 68%, overwhelmingly dominating the pages. Reporting of civil dispute, and citizen rights both declined from 10.48% to 4.80%.

Findings 4. State Owned and Monopoly Enterprises are still the central in economic news reporting.

Table 7.0 Company ownership in economic news

<i>Company ownership in economy * Year Crosstabulation</i>		Year	Year
		1993-1996	2013-2016
<i>State-owned / Monopoly Enterprise</i>	<i>Count</i>	10	43
	<i>% of Total</i>	27.78%	28.48%
<i>Joint-Share Company/Private-owned Enterprise</i>	<i>Count</i>	14	23
	<i>% of Total</i>	38.89%	15.23%
<i>Publicly Traded Company (Internet Enterprise excluded)</i>	<i>Count</i>	-	42
	<i>% of Total</i>	-	27.81%
<i>Internet Company / Enterprise</i>	<i>Count</i>	5	24
	<i>% of Total</i>	13.89%	15.89%
<i>Foreign Company</i>	<i>Count</i>	4	5
	<i>% of Total</i>	11.11%	3.31%
<i>Others</i>	<i>Count</i>	3	14
	<i>% of Total</i>	8.33%	9.27%
<i>Total</i>	<i>Count</i>	36	151
	<i>% of Total</i>	100.00%	100.00%

In economic news, the researcher coded the news subject, namely business enterprises, which is presented in Table 7.0 *Company ownership in economic news*. The aim here was to examine how media content in this category changed over time. As can be seen, state-owned and monopoly enterprises are still in the center of news, with an increase from 27.78% to 28.48% in the two-time frames. Joint share company/private-owned enterprise dropped to 15.23%, becoming the fourth-placed type with an initial proportion of 38.89%. Publicly traded companies (Internet enterprise excluded) became prominent, with a significant proportion of 27.81%. The number of Internet enterprise media coverage rose from 13.89% to 15.89%. Noticeably, foreign company media coverage dropped from 11.11% to 3.31%.

Findings 5. Southern Weekly newspaper widens its range on environmental news.

Table 8.0 Environment News reporting

<i>What is the theme in environment * Year Crosstabulation</i>		<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>
		<i>1993-1996</i>	<i>2013-2016</i>
	<i>Count</i>	-	5
<i>Natural Disaster / Catastrophe</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	-	5.32%
	<i>Count</i>	4	29
<i>Environment Degradation and Pollution</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	57.10%	30.85%
	<i>Count</i>	3	4
<i>Natural Resource Protection</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	42.90%	4.26%
	<i>Count</i>	-	25
<i>Energy conservation and emission reduction</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	-	26.60%
	<i>Count</i>	-	19
<i>Environment Protection Governance</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	-	20.21%
	<i>Count</i>	-	12
<i>Others</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	-	12.77%
<i>Total</i>	<i>Count</i>	7	94
	<i>% of Total</i>	100.00%	100.00%

Table 8.0 presents how environmental news reporting changed over time. Only seven articles of environment barely have been identified in 1993-1996, and in 2013-2016, the number grew into ninety-four. Also, media content in the environment became more diversified. Besides categories of environmental pollution and natural resource protection, news reporting in the environment also covered natural disasters, energy conservation and emission reduction, and environment protection governance. Notably, the category energy conservation and emission reduction is business-oriented, where newspaper attracts sponsorship and gain advertising revenue. The expanding and diversified media content can be seen as an example of exploring new areas to defuse economic pressure.

Findings 6. News are away from individual citizens and underprivileged group, turn to elite groups.

Table 9.0 News Subject

<i>News Subjects * Year Crosstabulation</i>		Year	Year
		1993-1996	2013-2016
<i>Authority Department/Official</i>	<i>Count</i>	62	271
	<i>% of Total</i>	18.34%	31.40%
<i>Business Enterprises /Personnel</i>	<i>Count</i>	47	188
	<i>% of Total</i>	13.91%	21.78%
<i>Individual Citizen /Underprivileged group</i>	<i>Count</i>	76	44
	<i>% of Total</i>	22.49%	5.10%
<i>Public Figure or Celebrity</i>	<i>Count</i>	3	4
	<i>% of Total</i>	0.89%	0.46%
<i>Public Institutions</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	5
	<i>% of Total</i>	0.30%	0.58%
<i>Foreign Government or Politician</i>	<i>Count</i>	33	61
	<i>% of Total</i>	9.76%	7.07%
<i>Others</i>	<i>Count</i>	116	290
	<i>% of Total</i>	34.32%	33.60%
<i>Total</i>	<i>Count</i>	338	863
	<i>% of Total</i>	100.00%	100.00%

The significant change can be identified in Table 9.0 that news subject shifted from individual citizens to the elite. News subjects of authority departments and officials grew from 18.34% to 31.40%. News subjects from business enterprises and personnel have also been seen to grow from 13.91% to 21.78%. There was a sharp decline in individual citizens reporting from 22.49% to 5.01%. News subjects among public figures and celebrities, public institutions, foreign government and politician changed slightly, from 0.89% to 0.46%; 0.30% to 0.58%; 9.76% to 7.07% respectively. So, it can be concluded that media exposure is shifting from focusing on common individuals to the elite.

Findings 7. Media become much milder to the established power.

Table 10.0 Reporting Stance

<i>Year * Reporting Stance Crosstabulation</i>					
<i>Year</i>		<i>Reporting Stance</i>			<i>Total</i>
		<i>Praise</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Criticize</i>	
<i>1993-1996</i>	<i>Count</i>	39	122	177	338
	<i>% within Year</i>	11.54%	36.09%	52.37%	100.00%
<i>2013-2016</i>	<i>Count</i>	88	606	169	863
	<i>% within Year</i>	10.20%	70.22%	19.58%	100.00%
<i>Total</i>	<i>Count</i>				1201

Table 10.0 represents how the news reporting stance changed over time. Compared with 1993 -1996, news reporting in 2013-2016 became much milder, with any critical stance dropping considerably from a percentage of 52.37% to 19.58%. The critical voices moved to neutral reporting (fact-based reporting devoid of opinions and feelings), which grew to 70.22%. The voices of support changed slightly, from 11.54% to 10.20%. In general, news reporting critical to the established power became much milder.

5.2 Implications and discussions

The data reviewed of the research demonstrates media content in response to market forces and political pressure has altered the political economy of media in significant ways. The findings directly link to RQ1. *“How has Chinese Journalism changed between the periods 1993-1996 and 2013-2016?”*. Amongst the four examined news items: politics, economy, the rule of law, and environment, media coverage can be observed became more politically oriented to promote political ideology. Political and criminal News increased in demonstrating national strength and building Party’s leadership. Economic News reporting still focused on state-owned and monopoly enterprises. Media turned away from individual citizens and underprivileged groups to elite groups and became much milder to the established power. Moreover, newspapers widen news range to increase advertising revenues. To answer RQ2. *“How do these changes in media content reflect the interplay between state and market?”*, the societal context should be incorporated into elaborating the changes. As discussed, when Xi Jinping took over as the Party's general secretary, the Party's ideology coined as “Chinese Dream”, which is repeated exhortations for the development of strength and military power (Hughes, 2010; Mohanty, 2013). The political ideology has reflected directly in media content by the increasing coverage of national defense and government governance. News articles, such as "the army of the great powers must have international responsibility" (1531st issue, 2013) and "the expedition of the aircraft carrier "(1708th issue, 2016) were demonstrating the state's rising military power at the global stage. As mentioned, scholars (Mohanty, 2013; Heilman, 2016) examined the Chinese Dream and pointed out that it addresses the strength of the nation rather than individual personal achievement and fulfillment. Media content responded to it in the way that news drove away from individual citizens and underprivileged groups. Instead, the media content of government governance, legislation and law enforcement were addressing governmental progress and achievements in implementing public policy delivering public services and constructing law-based governance of the country.

Meanwhile, Xi has launched a national anti-corruption campaign, driving as a significant policy initiative (Mohanty, 2013; Fiol-Mahon, 2018). Media coverage in

exposing official malfeasance and corruption increased accordingly. The change of media coverages is not only reflecting the tightening of political pressure but also showing the change of the market. In 1993-1996, when advertising revenue of newspaper was at the peak, the proportion of criticizing reporting was much higher than in 2013-2016 when the market shifted its advertising revenue away from newspapers (see Table 3.0 China's Newspaper Advertising Revenue and Readership From 1992- 2017). Scholar Wang H. (2016) discussed China's investigative journalism transformation and suggested that Chinese investigative reporting was a mix of journalism and activism. Journalists were "not distance from reporting, but actively participate in the events "(p.158). The facts in social reality and juxtapose facts with views, opinions, or advocates were commonly seen in investigative reporting (Wang H. , 2016). However, in the comparative study of this paper, the finding presented fact-based reporting devoid of opinions and feelings was increasing. With the background, it can be interpreted as a strategy of newspapers employed to tackle the tightening of ideological control and the decreasing advertising market. Wang & Sparks (2019b) also mentioned that how news reporting be affected by the market. When newspapers were doing well financially, the editors were able to negotiate with the government propaganda department for political censorship content. However, when the market turned away, "there is no room for negotiation "(p.111-112).

As a newspaper that is market-oriented and famous for its out-spoken, media coverages change of *Southern Weekly* shows amidst a climate of tightened ideological control and unfavorable economic situation, newspapers are coerced into taking the initiative and participate actively to promote Party ideology and thoughtful works. On the national Propaganda and Ideology Work Conference in 2013, Xi Jinping delivered the message that one of CCP's key objectives was to win the battle for public opinion. The renewed ideology campaign tightened its grip on journalism immediately. The press was demanded to take the initiative to lead the public opinion under the guidelines of the Party's ideology. In the same year (2013), State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT) and the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) were merged as one institution - the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT), top

regulatory body under the state council. The merger is to minimize the overlap of duties and collaborate resources to increase institution efficiency. As a result, press, print, and digital publications, and the radio, film, and television industries came under the supervision of one institution. The power and authority gaps between different sectors and organizations have been significantly reduced, to maximize the consistency in political discourse (Jia & Wei, 2013). In March of 2018, National Press and Publication Administration and National Film Administration moved from State Administration of SAPPRFT, which came under the direct control of the Propaganda Department of CCP (Xinhua , 2018).

Meanwhile, the press also has to respond to the declining market. The diversified media content in the environment is the evidence of newspaper are exploring new areas to defuse economic pressure. In the comparative study of this paper, findings demonstrate that in 1993-1996, news articles in the environment were barely being reported. In 2013-2016, the environment subject was incorporated into its feature page entitled " Green." The new feature can be interpreted in two ways. First, the new feature of the environment is more easily to attract business cooperation and sponsorship. Content such as energy conservation and emission reduction are business-oriented to attract sponsorship and advertisers. Business titles that claim to be environmentally friendly are eager to raise brand awareness and increase exposure. As Zhao (2004, p. 207) analyses, some content such as "mass entertainment, the mobilization of consumption, and stock analysis are politically safe and financially more rewarding." It became a method to gain advertising revenue. Secondly, unlike the Central Politburo or the Supreme People's Procuratorate, the environment department of the country is not in the central power circle. In other words, the exposure of environmental issues cannot challenge or question the authorities from the central power circle of the country. On the opposite, the central government benefits from those reporting by exposing the local situation and supervising the officials of local governments. Thus, in highly tightening political climate and unfavorable economic status, media content needs to serve both for economical-rewarding and political safe in censorship.

In the comparative study of this research, the market force reflected on media content in different ways. As discussed, in 2013-2016, media content was business targeted to attract advertisers and sponsorship to raise advertising avenue. In contrast, during 1993-1996, media content was readers targeted. Media coverage of the criminal case in high proportion demonstrated *Southern Weekly* to attract readers. Examples of “Black Hand Reaches for Secret Phone,” “Young Worker Ma’s Death at the Detention Station,” and “Guangxi Explosion Case Report” were put into headlines. Many stories mostly were from the individual’s perspective, adapted the bottom-up model to question the authorities, and expose societal illness. The founder of *Southern Weekly* mentioned in an interview:

*“Those stories (people from grass-rooted or underprivileged groups class stories) are appealing. Readers are sympathized with them and feel attached... The headline must be particular and attractive... Those help us to win readers and the market”.*¹⁷

As a result, *Southern Weekly* has built up its media credibility. It has been seen as speaking for the individual citizen and representing underprivileged groups. More importantly, *Southern Weekly* has achieved enormous market success in the 1990s.

In the political economy of communication(media) studies, state and market are taken as antithetical forces and conflicting poles in shaping media. Political economists argue about how state and market remedy or ameliorate each other in articulating a democratic media. In some developed countries, for instance, Norway, the government is making policies to regulate and provide public subsidies. The democratic state role is crucial in facilitating a public sphere and remedying the market failure for media (Sjøvaag, Moe, & Stavelin, 2012). In some eastern European countries and China, the market once had been seen as a positive force to defuse political pressure (Sparks C. , 2008). Along with the economic prosperity and market reform in the 1990s, Chinese media indeed had a certain openness and critical voices brought by market forces. However, newspapers nowadays are facing numerous

¹⁷ Zuo Fang, the founder of *Southern Weekly* talked about the launch of this newspaper and how it won the market success in 1990s in an interview. Hong Bing, September 16, 2003 <http://m.kdnet.net/share-473730.html> abbreviated on May 2019.

economic pressures after the advertising revenue and readership shifted to digital media. The empirical evidence of this study demonstrates that market forces are no longer a supporting force for media to confront and defuse state intervention. Instead, market forces work as an impetus to work with the state to suppress the reporting room and critical journalism. Media titles, even the market-oriented, become more politically driven, which damaged journalism in China. Thus, this study proposes a theoretical question to the political economy of media studies that whether it can still take the state and market as the antithetical forces in China's media current context. The case study in this paper shows that in an authoritarian society where the state has the ultimate power, the state versus market model cannot adequately explain and verify the 'cause-and-effect' relations of the state and market in the media spectrum. Moreover, the relation between the market and state is dynamic. Based on this study, one can only generalize that in China's current context, the market and state, for now, act as auxiliary forces to push the media away from an open and democratic public sphere.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS

The paper has conducted a case study to examine how media content can be affected in the interplay between political and economic forces. Based on two research questions: *RQ1. How has Chinese Journalism changed between the periods 1993-1996 and 2013-2016? RQ2. How do these changes in media content reflect the interplay between state and market?*, this thesis has sought to discuss whether the state and the market can be taken as antithetical forces in China's media spectrum. By comparing with media content in two-time frames under the theoretical lens of the political economy of communication(media), the paper sheds light on how the commercialization of Chinese media has allowed some room for experimentation in journalism. Market forces were expected as the driven force for media vitality in the economic transformation of society in China. However, the findings demonstrate that economic development does not necessarily lead towards a liberal media or guarantee press autonomy, where the authority has the ultimate power. Indications show that when financial support from market drops, media would be in a predicament under the twin pressures from the political control and financial difficulties.

Evidence in the study presents that media content became much politically oriented to promote political ideologies. The growing political media coverage of national defense and government governance is demonstrating a powerful nation image, which is the core value in the ruling Party 's ideology. Also, in the rule of law news reporting, the growing news articles in official malfeasance and corruption responses to anti-corruption campaigns served for political purposes. Meanwhile, critical voices are suppressed mainly. News is turning to the elite, driving away from individual and underprivileged citizens. At the same time, economic pressure has also altered the industry. Evidence demonstrated in environment news that Newspapers expanded its content to tackle the financial crisis. Notably, the expansion of media content is business-targeted to accommodate business titles' demands and attract commercial advertisers. In conclusion, in authoritarian regimes like China, media must and still be under political obedience, especially when the press is in an unfavorable economic status.

6.2 Further studies

For further studies, it would be valuable to draw the case from other countries which have similar political apparatuses like China, a highly- commercialized market environment yet an authoritarian political regime. The comparative studies between countries will contribute to the debate of the interplay of state and market in the framework of the political economy of communication(media).

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CHAPTER 8 APPENDIXES

8.1 Appendix 1.0 Coding Sheet

1. Article Title. 2. Publish Date 3. Issue Number

4. Theme of Article

A. Politics

4-01 What is the theme in Politics

1. Government Governance 2. Bureaucracy Watch and Commentary 3. National Defense 4. Ethnic and Religious affairs 5. Diplomacy 6. Nation Union (Hong Kong and Tai Wan Political Issue) 7. International Politics; 9. Others (not fit in any of the above categories).

B. Rule of Law

4-02 What is the theme in Rule of Law

11. Criminal Case; 22. Civil Dispute; 33. Citizen Rights ;44. Official Malfeasance and Corruption; 55. Legislation and Law Enforcement ;99. Others (not fit in any of the above categories).

C. Economy

D. Environment

4-03 What is the theme in Rule of Law

111. Naturel Disaster / Catastrophe; 222.Environmental Degradation and Pollution;
333.Natural Resource Protection; 444.Energy conservation and emission reduction;
555.Environment Protection Governance; 999.Others (not fit in any of the above categories)

5. Subject of News

- 1). Authority apartment / officials:
- 2). Enterprise organization/ personnel:
- 3). Individual citizen/ underprivileged groups
- 4). Public Figure /Celebrity
- 5). Public institution
- 6). Foreign government or politician
9. General or others

5-02 What is the ownership of the business enterprises

501. State-owned/Monopoly Enterprise
502. Joint-share Company/Private-owned Enterprise
503. Publicly Traded Company (Internet Enterprise excluded)
504. Internet Enterprise
505. Foreign Company
999. Others (not fit in any of the above categories)

6. News Resource

- 1) Journalist/Media 2) Officials/Official apartment 3) Enterprise personnel/
Organization 4) Reader 5) Others

7. Reporting Stance

- 1) Praise 2) Neutral 3) Criticize

8.2 Appendix 2.0 Samples of Coding Issues

Year/Issue No.	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1993	461	470	475	481	482	487	492	497	499	504	510	516
1994	517	522	527	533	534	539	544	550	551	557	563	568
1995	569	574	579	585	586	591	596	602	603	609	614	619
1996	621	626	631	637	639	644	649	655	656	661	666	672
2013	1507	1513	1517	1521	1526	1531	1535	1541	1542	1547	1553	1558
2014	1560	1565	1570	1573	1576	1583	1588	1593	1594	1600	1605	1610
2015	1611	1616	1621	1627	1628	1633	1638	1644	1649	1650	1656	1662
2016	1663	1668	1673	1679	1680	1686	1691	1696	1697	1703	1708	1713

8.3 Appendix 3.0 Samples of Coding Dates

Date/Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1993	01-Jan	12-Feb	19-Mar	30-Apr	09-May	11-Jul	16-Aug	20-Aug	03-Sep	08-Oct	19-Nov	31-Dec
1994	07-Jan	11-Feb	18-Mar	29-Apr	10-May	15-Jul	26-Aug	2-Aug	2-Sep	14-Oct	25-Nov	30-Dec
1995	06-Jan	10-Feb	17-Mar	28-Apr	05-May	09-Jul	14-Aug	25-Aug	01-Sep	13-Oct	17-Nov	29-Dec
1996	05-Jan	09-Feb	15-Mar	26-Apr	10-May	14-Jul	19-Aug	30-Aug	06-Sep	11-Oct	15-Nov	27-Dec
2013	06-Jan	15-Feb	15-Mar	11-Apr	16-May	20-Jul	18-Aug	29-Aug	05-Sep	10-Oct	21-Nov	26-Dec
2014	09-Jan	13-Feb	20-Mar	10-Apr	01-May	12-Jul	24-Aug	28-Aug	04-Sep	16-Oct	20-Nov	25-Dec
2015	06-Jan	05-Feb	19-Mar	30-Apr	07-May	11-Jul	17-Aug	27-Aug	04-Sep	16-Oct	20-Nov	25-Dec
2016	07-Jan	11-Feb	18-Mar	29-Apr	10-May	15-Jul	26-Aug	2-Aug	2-Sep	14-Oct	25-Nov	30-Dec

8.4 Appendix 4.0 *Southern Weekly* Content Sections Revise

	8- Page Issue January 03 ,1992	16-Page Issue ¹⁸ January, 05,1996	24-Page Issue ¹⁹ September,17,1999	28-Page Issue January,05,2017
Page 1	Cover Page mainly about entertainment news and literature works	Cover Page [touban yaowen] [头 版要闻] in-depth current affairs topics and news reports	Cover Page [touban] [头版] in-depth current affairs topics and news reports	Cover Page [touban] [头版] in-depth current affairs topics and news reports
Page 2	Family Life [jiating shenghuo] [家庭 生活] family domestic issues and advice	Current Affairs [shishi zhongheng] [时 事纵横] new edition, the page is divided into Section A - a series of op-ed articles written by <i>Southern Weekly</i> editors and outside contributors; Section B -reprinted abbreviated news stories picked up from other Chinese publications with additional commentary by <i>Southern Weekly</i> editors.	The Second Page [dier ban] [第二版] Debuted November 20, 1998. in-depth feature stories on current affairs and investigative reports	In-Depth Report [zongshen] [纵深] In-Depth reports on social issues
Page 3	Art & Entertainment [wenhai xieying] [文海撷 英] abbreviated news stories picked up from other Chinese publications	Economy and People [jingji yuren][经济与 人] new Edition news reports and op- ed content covering China's economy as well as profiles of the emerging rich	World News [tianxia] [天下]	Feature [tegao] [特稿] soft news

¹⁸ *Southern Weekly* 16-page was debuted on January 5, 1996. Scholar Cho Li-fung has elaborated this issue's content section in her research "The emergence, influence, and limitations of watchdog journalism in Post-1992 China", 2007.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

Page 4	Art & Entertainment [yilin] [艺林] art and entertainment news	Consumer Square [xuaofei guangchang][消费广场] debuted on July 5, 1996, the consumer square page consists of concise news reports and commentaries advocating consumer rights through exposing consumer fraud and abuse of business powers, rising education fees and overcharging for electricity fees.	This Week [yizhou] [一周] highlighted hot topics around the world featuring news coverage by domestic and international papers and magazines.	Figure [renwu] [人物] focus on the stories of those who have made significant achievements in their field subtitled as " Chinese Dream Practitioner."
Page 5	People and Law [ren yufa] [人与法] From crime stories of the wrongfully accused and victims of unjust treatment. The page also featured expert opinion editorials advocating for rule by law. It offered exciting tidbits on the Western legal system as a roundabout way of engaging readers in a discussion of China's legal reform.	People and Law [ren yufa] [人与法] crime stories of the wrongfully accused; unjust treatment cases; rule by law advocating by experts; China's legal reform compared with the Western legal system.	People and Law [ren yufa] [人与法]	Rule of Law [fazhi] [法治]
Page 6	World News [huanyu] [环宇] international news.	People [zhong shengxiang] [众生相] ordinary people profiles stories	Reporter Observations [jizhe guan cha] [记者观察] originally called Social Observations placed on page 7, renamed as Reporter's Observation on November 20, 1998	
Page 7	Serial Novel [lianzai] [连载] popular novels instalment	Social Observation [shehui guan cha] [社会观察] Social trends observation. The title of the page on January 5, 1996 issue was, "1995: How Are the Ordinary People Doing ?" a series of seven articles discussed topics ranging from investment, public's interest, social security, ageing,	Economy [jingji] [经济] New edition, focus on economic reform and development	The World [tianxia] [天下] Op-ed articles are written by <i>Southern Weekly</i> editors and outside contributors. Focus on other countries' politics and worldwide political situations

		inflation, urban crime and people's needs		
Page 8	Literature [fangcaodi] [芳草地] Chinese literary work	Photo-Essay [xiezhen] [写真] featured photos of ordinary people and the changes wrought on their lives by economic reform.	<i>Southern Weekly</i> Investigations [benbao diaocha] [本报调查] enterprise investigative reporting feature	
Page 9		Fashion [shishang] [时尚] latest fashion trends	Arts [yishu] [艺术] New Section	Politics [shiju] [时局] state governance; On Jan.05,2017 issue, the page is about local government term shift
Page 10		World News [huanyu] [环宇] international news	Decoding Secrets [jiemi] [解密] retraced history to unveil unknown truths	National Defense [fangwu] [防务]reports about national security and defence; armed forces; bilateral or multilateral relations
Page 11		Serial Novel [lian'ai] [连载]popular novels instalment	The People's Journal [baixing jishi] [百姓记事] short nonfiction story from <i>Southern Weekly</i> readers contributions	Green [lüse] [绿色]New section since Oct. 2009 about environment pollutions and challenges on Jan.05,2017 this page is about how Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster 's threaten remains to the world
Page 12		Literature [fang caodi] [芳草地] Chinese literary work	The People's Columns [baixing chafang] [百姓茶坊]	Photo-Essay [xiezhen] [写真]
Page 13		Sports [tiyu tian'di][体育天地] sports news	Current Affairs [shishi zhongheng] [时事纵横]	Economy [jingji] [经济] New section since 2002, covers 3 or 4 pages, focusing on economic-related issues: housing market, medicine; enterprise, currency, finance reform and so.
Page 14		New Technology [xinxi tiandi] [信息天地]information technology, cyberspace, computer gadgets	People [renwu] [人物]	

Page 15		New Technology [xinxi tiandi] [信息天地] information technology, cyberspace, computer gadgets	Literature [fan gcaodi] [芳草地]	
Page 16		Family Life [jiating shenghuo] [家庭生活] parenting advice; family issues, one reporting of this page in January 5, 1996 issue was, is a family member who has AIDS	Photo Essay [xiezhen] [写真]	
Page 17			New Life [xin shenghuo] [新生活] focused on the life of urban workers and professionals, covering everything from career building to life development.	Philanthropy [gongyi] [公益] Unfixed edition. It varies accordingly. Stories about community outreach and charity activities for the public good.
Page 18			Columnist [zhuanlan] [专栏]	Review [zi youtan] [自由谈] Op-Ed articles are written by <i>Southern Weekly</i> editors and outside contributors. People from different fields express their opinions and commentary, from social phenomenon to national policies. Also, the third page is op-ed articles contributed by scholars.
Page 19			Sports [tiyu] [体育]	
Page 20				
Page 21			Computer [diannaoy] [电脑]	Culture [wenhua] [文化] This section is about culture-related all forms, film, TV, music, novel, painting and entertainment
Page 22			Consumer Square [xiaofei guangchang] [消费广场]	
Page 23			Consumer Square [xiaofei guangchang] [消费广场]	
Page 24			Reading [yuedu] [阅读]	
Page 25				Sidepages [fukan] [副刊]
Page 26				Columnist [zhuanlan] [专栏]

Page 27				<p>Science [kexue] [科学] the latest scientific study report</p>
Page 28				<p>Geography [dili] [地理] unfixed section, is about ancient China or foreign countries' geographical and cultural introduction</p>