

Excerpt from thesis

“Chinese State Media Coverage of Climate Change and the Future of China’s Food and Water Security”

Extract includes two chapters from the literature review section. An original qualitative analysis study was performed and is documented later in the paper.

Abstract

This research centers on a summary of scientifically observed current effects of climate change on water security in China. It postulates that climate change has the potential to affect water security, and therefore, food security, at an increasingly rapid rate in the future, and discusses the climatic mechanisms by which these potentialities could occur. Specifically, it focuses on the relationship of water sources in the Tibetan Plateau with meteorological changes brought about by climate change, challenging commonly accepted assumptions regarding the rapid melt of glacial ice there, and instead, suggests that future water scarcity in China will be more heavily affected by changes in precipitation patterns than by decreases in glacial volumes. Finally, this research discusses the role of media in forming the social awareness of populations, adopting from social science the idea that an individual’s perceptions define her reality. In particular, it explores the attitudes of the Chinese state-run media toward the publication of climate change-related news stories, and the effects these attitudes have on the substance and quality of these reports, concluding that the Chinese State considers thorough and accurate information about the causes and effects of climate change to be sensitive and potentially incendiary.

Chapter 7: Media Studies on China

Media is a vital part of the construction of culture, or the perception of reality for a society or nation. In China, where political control is not democratic, the control of media is one of the reins with which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) can “guide” the belief system of its civilian population. While media messages often contain obvious pro-State or pro-Party propaganda messages, they can also exercise a more subtle influence over information dissemination. News reports in particular, which provide for citizens one of their closest connections to events, government processes, and civil issues, can have a great impact on a citizen’s or general population’s perceived relationship with its government. An authoritarian government like China’s has an opportunity to disseminate a very specific epistemology to its civilians; with much of its media as its trumpet, the Chinese government can construct a very careful latticework of knowledge and ignorance on topics that respectively support and undermine its authority. To study media in such an atmosphere, then, is to understand the framework with which a State plans to build not only its domestic control, but its global power base. It is possible to track the policy trends of an authoritarian regime by studying patterns in and styles of reporting in its state-owned media publications – Changing Media Changing China (Shirk 2011) provides evidence that Chinese government officials still follow official press releases in order to stay abreast of these trends for the sake of the security of their own places within the regime. Shirk adds that this “Pekinology” (also called “Kremlinology” when referring to the Soviet practice) – the devotion to analyzing and strategizing using political innuendo gleaned from state-published news stories – has developed into a “high art” among Chinese government officials (Shirk 8). This paper aims to recreate such a “Pekinist” media reading of one of China’s foremost official media outlets, Xinhua News, in order to draw some definitive

conclusions regarding the Chinese State's political stance on the publication of information on China's role in contributing to global climate change, its role in global mitigation efforts, and on the climate effects China's populace will suffer in coming decades

A government with an interest in exerting authoritarian control over its populace would be interested in controlling media message because of the potential for oft-repeated information and ideologies to affect an audience's collective psyche at the most basic level. "The repetition of stories, facts, and values...shapes audience's perceptions of social reality and cultivates cultural values" (Wang 391). Cultivation theorists argue that television viewing can have profound effects on an individual's social reality, beliefs, and values (Wang 393); other media forms, viewed or experienced with regularity, likely have similar strong effects on audiences' relationships with the world. For a government with a leash on its media, the "values communicated to the potential audiences are essential in achieving the goals of national integration, social education, and political propaganda" (Wang 395).

China's growing economic prowess and communicativeness with the outside world over the last decades has created a complex dialectic with its continuing authoritarian regime, which favors social stability, slow social evolution, and the tenacity of traditional cultural values along with the continuation of its booming economic growth trajectory. While allowing the rapid development of a highly successful, modern, globalized economy, China's relatively static governmental regime has been faced with an onslaught of foreign cultural values, availability of information from external news sources to its citizens, and the challenge of maintaining its thumb over its media, which must perform both as a mediator of traditional cultural values and as a sophisticated, responsive, and trustworthy information source. Furthermore, the commercialization of China's media, which was allowed in order to catalyze China's new market

economy, has driven, in part, the development of independent news agencies and Internet news resources that cannot be so carefully censored. The Chinese government must strike a balance between allowing sufficient freedom for these economically influential agencies to function as capitalist mouthpieces, and preventing them from co-opting the particular positions of the State (Shirk 5). This has resulted in a) forced improvements in transparency in the official State press, and b) the ever-presence of a race between the free press to publish and the Chinese state to deny and efface (Shirk 5). In 1998, China joined the “international convention on citizen’s right and political right,” which included the “citizen’s right to know,” presumably a principle advocating for the indiscriminate transmission of domestic and foreign news information to its populace. Yet, this commitment was not paired with any law, and ultimately, the information that is filtered through the official Party propaganda machine still often falls prey to the most important media agenda in China: the maintenance of social stability (Zhang 545).

This section will detail the history of the development of state media in post-revolution China, from the 1950s to the present day. The ideology supported by the State has not changed, but the fashion of transmission of its ideals has adapted in response to ethnographic observations of the shifting levels of efficacy of its propaganda campaigns among its citizens, due both to the modernization and rising education levels of its population, and the Chinese people’s newfound access to non-State sanctioned news resources. Currently, the propaganda method employed by the Party-State is less brash and more delicate than in the past, yet not necessarily less impactful. “Unlike the traditional persuasion attempts, entertainment-education or propaganda (e.g., using national pride and traditional values...) are more subtle and less likely to elicit psychological reactance, making persuasion easier and more effective” (Wang 404). Wang suggests that further research into modern Chinese media styles in the context of cultivation theory, as

developed by George Gerbner and Larry Gross, and social cognitive theory, as developed by Albert Bandura, might reveal further how media programming can affect viewers' perceptions of social reality, and the beliefs and attitudes that shape their worldview (Wang 404).

Chapter 8: Media's History in China

The use of written media in China began with the invention of the printing press in the early eleventh century, when it was developed and used by imperial Confucian scholars, whose societal role was, in part, to create works in support of imperial rule. The press was primarily used for the promulgation of official Confucian philosophy for those within its scholarly society, and for the formation of examinations to certify new government officials from within Confucian ranks. In China, media technology, therefore, was from the very beginning used to ossify the power of Emperors and the scholar class who supported them (Yang 6942). Yang points out that the materials printed and used for certifying imperial officials were concerned neither with knowledge nor truth (6942); in fact, they could be viewed as the earliest ancestors of propagandist media.

It is significant that media in China were developed by Confucians. The Confucians are credited with the genesis of the three bonds concept of society: the figures of ruler, father, and husband as the lords of the ruled, the son, and the wife (Yang 6942). Because of the Confucians' monopoly on the press and its products, and their emperors' interest in maintaining the ruler/ruled status quo from dynasty to dynasty (Yang 6945), the three bonds concept has been long lived throughout Chinese history, and its ideology has been printed and reprinted over the centuries of imperial rule there. In fact, despite the cultural and economic revolutions of the twentieth century, and Chinese society's move away from the imperialistic model, the Chinese state remains authoritarian and paternalistic in relation to its citizens; it is unsurprising that its

official media should continue to function on behalf of the state, which is today a socialist version of a three-bonds society, although its citizens do have freer access to information, education, and opportunities for upward socio-economic mobility. In other words, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) functions as the ruler, father, and husband in modern-day China; the state-controlled media function as its trumpet.

Much of the literature on news media in China has focused on the development of television. However, much of the political history of the development of China's official television programming parallels the development of other media forms, such as State-owned print, radio, and internet news outlets. Although much of the literature review discusses the development of the television media form, which has been widely studied and well documented, the data in this study will originate from a case study of state-owned electronic newsprint.

Since its birth in 1958, broadcasts from China's state television network, which soon became China Central Television (CCTV), have adhered to the Soviet TASS (Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union) style, which focused less on information and events, and more on highly ideological messages and the dissemination of state policies and rules (Chen 167). Messages largely included introductions to new, and dismissals of old, institutions/officials/policies, and the garnering of mass antipathy for political enemies (Wang 393-4). Other early media campaigns focused on subjects of public welfare such as public health, acceptable social behaviors, and etiquette (Wang 394). In fact, for over three decades, China's state television network's live news coverage depicted only the activities of political leaders, sporting events, and staged cultural performances. Until the late 1980s, no live news coverage, domestic or international, was ever broadcast (Zhang 538).

China's modern-day approach to journalism, as it applies to managing media outlets, was developed under the direct leadership of the Communist Party's paramount Politburo members in the 1950s, and was balanced on a three-part party principle, much as Soviet journalism was (Wang 392). The three principles operated under the premise "that the news media must accept the party's guiding ideology as their own; that they must promulgate the party's programs, policies and directives; and that they must accept the party's leadership and stick to both the party's organizational policies and press policies" (Chen 168). The CCP's three-part principle was a twentieth century parallel to the Confucians' three bonds; clearly the State's media was designed only to function as a servant to the state for the purpose of maintaining the ruled/fathered/shepherded status of its citizens.

The ideology promoted by the State through its media was both intrinsic and extrinsic. The state sought to develop "values, customs, and cultural practices between regional and local communities through common experiences and shared symbols and meanings" while simultaneously "promoting or imposing symbolic resources and nationalism to bolster their argument that the Communist Party represents the Chinese nation" (Wang 394). In other words, State media were expected to create a feeling of wholeness within and among local communities, and a feeling of adhesion from the citizenry toward the Communist authority. Although the role of Chinese state-run media outlets has evolved since the 1950s, they still function in large part to promote a socialist ideology and moral standards, and to support government actions and policies (Wang 394).

China's state-owned media remained highly ideological and political through the late 1970s. Even until its intentional reformatting in the early 1980s, issues and events such as natural disasters, accidents, political upsets, failed Party policies, and citizen dissent were

completely untouched by news coverage (Chen 169). However, during the Great Cultural Revolution of the early 1980s, the State began to make changes to its media formats and messages in response to its perception of citizens' interests and changing impressionability. During this era, Chinese society underwent profound changes; its economy was opened to the world, and its people were for the first time truly susceptible to a certain level of enculturation spurred by globalization. The State felt the need to readdress the form and its use of its official media apparatus. In 1982, it sponsored a national television conference for the directors of television stations across the country and for key Party members. To confront the novel modern-day conflict between economic openness and a continued desire for authoritarian political and social control, the Party leaders and television personnel present officially re-defined television as "first and foremost an institution of propaganda" (Zhang 537). It should be assumed that other forms of media, such as newspapers and radio programs, would be held to the same standard during that era.

In 1989 the June Fourth Incident (as it is known in China), or the Tiananmen Square massacre, reemphasized for Communist leaders the gravity of upholding a servile role for the State media (Zhang 539). Later that year, Party Secretary Jiang Zemin, and the Party leader in propaganda work, Li Ruihan, met with the Propaganda Department and issued a statement blaming the Party-State's failure to properly influence public opinion for inciting the political chaos of the Tiananmen Square events (Chan 548). It is clear that the Party feared that without sufficient control of public opinion, another incident like Tiananmen Square could occur. Since the Party blamed a failure to guide public opinion for the political turmoil leading up to that event, it is clear that the CCP believes perception to be more impactful than reality in shaping public opinion. This is the ideology that has shaped, and continues to shape, Chinese media

expression; in the eyes of the Party, the media can enhance the furtherance of the Party-State, or left unchecked, can play into the process of government overthrow.

As the 1990s began, and the turmoil of Tiananmen Square was still fresh, the Chinese State began again to reshape its media's scope and message. The Party realized that since the end of Mao's era, audiences had become increasingly desensitized and less responsive to hardline propagandist messages. In addition, since the social and economic opening of the country, younger generations especially looked toward the outside world, other Asian countries in particular, for cultural queues (Wang 395). Independent, more commercialized news sources began to pull attention away from the old State media outlets, foreshadowing the Internet's far-reaching networking capabilities and anonymity which would, in the coming decades, begin to lure the young, increasingly urbanized sectors of the population away from more traditional, less interactive media forms (Shirk 2). So, although China's most awarded news reports during that decade still aimed toward presenting positive accounts of the State and its leaders, and ultimately continued to adhere to the TASS reporting style (Chen 174), the Chinese State Council in 1997 stated that the objectives of the government-owned press should shift weight away from pure propagandist social emphasis toward a more balanced, complementary relationship with economic emphasis; however, it was specified that social emphasis should continue to carry the heaviest load (Wang 392). This pre-twenty-first century popularization of China's state-owned media required

a balance between fulfilling the party organ function and appealing to a mass audience. As a result, the Party started to rely more on using national pride and economic growth and achievements to legitimize their claims of the importance of the Party leadership and to help foster a national identity. (Wang 395)

So, the pure propaganda model of the 1950s through the 1980s began to fade from explicitness toward implicitness. Loyalty to the CCP began to be promoted through optimistic news reports on China's economy and rising status of influence on the world stage.

Additionally, for the first time, the 1990s brought broadcasts of negative reports involving State policies or Party officials in state-sanctioned news reports. Reporters now more frequently publish stories that shed unfavorable light on government officials or the Party, detail instances of fraud or dishonesty among local officials, and discuss difficult living conditions for populations in remote areas of the country.

Chen states, however, that these reports were limited to discussing only small events concerning minor, local officials - a clear indicator that the central Party still wields a major yet "disguised control" over its various media branches (176). Obviously these reports on the activities of local officials pale in importance compared to the impact that criticism of central Party officials would have. In addition, there are still arrests when journalists express excessively democratic ideas, and newspaper shut-downs for "political mistakes" (Chen 177). In fact, much of the relaxation of Party control in the Chinese State media appears in the limited sphere of entertainment news, and in other areas of light-hearted social content (Chen 177), seldom in coverage of more sensitive issues such as political conflicts, domestic affairs, economic challenges, or issues associated with the environment or climate change, which will be the topic of discussion for this paper.

The 1990s did bring, however, a rise in the interest of the Chinese State to commercialize the media industry in China, in part to spur economic growth, but also to rival the communications and infrastructure development of other countries (Gang and Bandurski 38). Media industry revenues in the late 1990s doubled and tripled over the following decade; in

2005, the media industry had earned 40.5 billion USD, and by 2009, the country had 384 million Internet users (Gang and Bandurski 38). Gang and Bandurski detail the dramatic rise in sales and reception of publications by the commercial news media that began in the 1990s, and the saturation of the Chinese media market by these publications that continues today (41-43).

Since the turn of the 21st century, China's media objectives have continued to build on the agenda last updated in the 1990s. As China's economic prowess and modernization progress rapidly, the Party-State seeks to strike a fine balance between relative informational freedom and continued authoritarian control. The State has realized it must confront a better educated, sophisticated, and informed audience with a propaganda style that is ever less direct and more refined (Zhang 538) in order to compete in a globalized informational age. While CCP leaders continue to balk at reducing the State's hold on the media, "media commercialization, developing norms of journalistic professionalism, and the growth of new media are combining to erode the CCP's monopoly over the public agenda and to open a limited public sphere" (Gang and Bandurski 39).

The Chinese State undoubtedly recognizes this shift: in response to a 2002 survey which indicated a 5-year decline in reception of State-published news stories among Chinese audiences, Hu Jintao and other central Party leaders prescribed an improvement in news reports and a limit to the number of words and amount of time a news report was allowed to use, for the purpose of redefining the Party's and government's image (Zhang 539). In the same year, Hu Jintao released a policy called The Three Closenesses, which was "about creating more savvy, lively, and believable media products. The policy reiterated the imperative of party control, or 'guidance,' but also underscored what had already become obvious—the media now had two masters, the party and the public" (Gang and Bandurski 43) Wang reports that the Chinese

government had determined that the nation's cultural values had changed in the past few years to reflect more individualism and materialism and less self-restraint. Along the lines of their response to the 2002 survey, the Communist Congress's reaction to these findings "explicitly stated" that the State's media must improve their utilization of traditional Chinese cultural practices in news broadcasts to compete with cultural influences from independent and foreign media (Wang 396).

For example, the national broadcast of the Spring Festival Gala events (or Chinese New Year) is emphasized strongly by the State because it is an opportunity to promote traditional Chinese cultural values to a great number of viewers and to bolster support of the central government (Wang cites A.C. Nielsen Media Research in China having rated the 2008 Spring Festival Gala at 68% viewership in several cities [392-3]). The Spring Festival Galas allow the Party to publically underscore its focus on social harmony, based on four core principles of Confucianism – humanism, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom (Wang 395) – from which the Communist Party draws the public face of its morale in governance. Wang's analysis of Spring Festival Gala (SFG) programming indicated that messages promoting "patriotism (e.g., love and work for the country)" appeared in 12.2% of the SFG performances, and that messages in "promotion of social behaviors" appeared in 31.2% of SFG performances. Wang considered the latter category to reflect a "social education theme or agenda" (400). "New cultural values (e.g., individualism and materialism)" appeared in 10.7% of the performances ("environmentalism" was associated with this last category) (Wang 401). Government-sponsored media events, like the Spring Festival Gala, and news reports alike are thoughtfully performed to elucidate and transfer Party sanctioned behaviors and values that will maintain the socio-political status quo.

Ultimately, despite the changes in format and in the directness of ideological posturing in the Chinese state-run media since the 1990s, the outlets - television, newspapers, radio, and websites – remain largely controlled by the Communist Party, and continue to be used for the dissemination of pro-party messages or to direct public attention away from sensitive information or topics which are often omitted or reported on superficially. As recently as 2003, a special visit by the Politburo’s heads of propaganda to the CCTV headquarters the day before the launch of its 24-hour news network yielded special instructions that the network must always uphold “correct guidance of public opinion, unity, stability and the cultivation of propaganda art” (Zhang 538). In fact CCTV’s regular daily National News Broadcast is routinely previewed by a vice-minister from the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT), and over the last decade no international news reports have ever appeared in the first 20 minutes of the program broadcast (Zhang 537-8). The latter speaks to the level of national insularity the CCP strives to uphold even in China’s modern and increasingly globalized society. “The message behind these vicissitudes of China’s attention to the international community is that the focus of the government is still on the domestic front. The interaction with the world is the tool rather than the goal for the government” (Chen 179).

In turn, the Chinese state-owned media have begun more and more to permeate foreign news markets, through foreign broadcast and non-Chinese language newspaper stories. The domestic and foreign broadcasts and reports function to “provide timely and accurate news services to demonstrate [the government’s] authoritativeness” and to continue to advance its ideologies even for overseas audiences (Zhang 540). CCTV, for example, now broadcasts over four domestic and foreign networks in Chinese, English, Spanish, and French (Zhang 540). In the year from late 2009 to late 2010, Xinhua News, the focus of this project,

launched a 24-hour English-language news station, colonized a skyscraper in New York's Times Square, and announced plans to expand its news-gathering operation from 120 to 200 overseas bureaus and as many as 6,000 journalists abroad. Not to be outdone by its Western peers, Xinhua has also released an iPhone app for "Xinhua news, cartoons, financial information and entertainment programs around the clock." (Fish and Dokoupil par. 2)

Why is maintaining the central government's authority such a pivotal goal of media structure in China? One of the cardinal tenets of Chinese politics since the inception of Communist rule has been the continuation and advancement of social harmony and stability. Deng Xiaoping, famous Chinese statesman and leader of the CCP largely responsible for vaulting China's economy into the modern age in the 1980s and 90s, was known for "consistently advocat[ing] for stability as the foremost condition for China's economic growth" (Zhang 541). Today the Party-State continues to expend tremendous energy toward maintaining social stability for the purpose of retaining the political authority of the CCP, and also for the continuance of the rise of the Chinese economy. It has "steadfastly adhered to Deng's line and attached great importance to political and social stability in the nation-building agenda" (Zhang 542). Of course, control of media message is central to this effort. In a reciprocal relationship of censorship, the government strictly controls which problems are discussed and how, while media outlets must tailor their messages to what is perceived to be deemed appropriate by the State (Zhang 542). As a result, the media's saturation with issues of a certain type lies in stark contrast to the infrequency in appearance of topics which are intentionally neglected. Issues deemed complimentary to the Party-State are reported generously, while those viewed as having the potential to incite civil unrest or dissatisfaction with the Party-State are largely absent from

State-sanctioned news broadcasts and articles (Zhang 541), and also from commercialized, more independent outlets which are still subjected to government censorship. Despite China's novel yet relative "freedom of the press," the news media, both independent and state-owned, are heavily censored.

As of 2008, China stood close to the bottom of world rankings of freedom of the press—181 out of 195 countries—as assessed by the international nongovernmental organization (NGO) Freedom House. Freedom House also gives a low score to China's Internet freedom—78 on a scale from 1 to 100, with 100 being the worst. The CCP continues to monitor, censor, and manufacture the content of the mass media—including the Web—although at a much higher cost and less thoroughly than before the proliferation of news sources. (Shirk 2-3)

As an example of the selectiveness of story coverage in China's State media, a comparison can be drawn between two issues of global concern from late 2002 to early 2003 – the beginning of the Iraq war and the advent of the spread of the SARS virus in China. Already in autumn of 2002 certain outlets in the Chinese State media had begun planning for extremely thorough coverage of the Iraq war (Zhang 541). Zhang reports that one CCTV channel, in the spring of 2003, was allowed to drive its broadcast time for Iraq war-related news to thirteen hours per day (540). On the other hand, although the SARS virus first appeared as early as November 2002, no news broadcast reported on its spread in any way until February of 2003, and that report consisted only of a blanket reassurance that the Chinese government was well prepared to deal with any kind of disease epidemic (Zhang 542). By May 2003, SARS had spread rampantly across the country; yet still, the main topic of news broadcasts in China focused on the Iraq war, with the extenuation that "people are concerned [about it] as it has

implications for mankind's existence and development, and media has the duty to satisfy people's right and desire to know" (Yang Weiguang qtd. in Zhang 543¹). This contrast is an exemplary case of the Chinese State media's subjective use of the "citizen's right to know." Zhang also suggests that among other motives for reporting so extensively on the Iraq war, a main motivation was to inspire respect and appreciation among Chinese civilians toward the State for the stability and peacefulness of life in China (543). On the other hand, while reports on the SARS outbreak finally began to appear more frequently, most were saccharine and unswervingly optimistic (Zhang 544).

Zhang's comparison of the Chinese media's coverage of the contemporaneous Iraq war and Chinese SARS outbreak illustrates in stark relief the inconsistencies in thoroughness with which topics are discussed there, and that even including reports provided by independent media outlets, the availability of accurate information is nebulous at best. The Party-State allows its media to inform civilians about topics that can be used to highlight the merits of the CCP's regime, like the Iraq war, yet quashes stories that reveal any lack of control on the part of the government, or more generally, that discuss topics that could cause civilian distress and unrest, like the uncontrolled spread of SARS.

The maintenance of the social harmony and stability that underscores the CCP's political authoritarianism rests on the manner in which information is mediated to China's citizens; control of media message, its powers of social guidance, and its adherence to Party-approved ideologies are absolutely paramount in the eyes of China's Party-State for the continuation of the Communist Party's regime. *Wang concluded from the analysis of the world's most widely viewed entertainment program, the Spring Festival Galas, that the Chinese State media "after many*

¹ Zhang quotes: Yang Weiguang. "Bu fu dang he renmin zhongtuo, fengxian gengduo genghao jiemu" ['Be worthy of the great trust from the party and the people, offer more and better programmes']" *TV Research* 10 (1996): 4-7.

years of media commercialization...still largely work for government propaganda or for social impact” (404). Zhang states that the Chinese State media’s “central and ultimate task is to shape public discourse, or, as the official term puts it – ‘correctly guide public opinion’” (538). Chan’s determination is that “guidance of public opinion (yulun daoxiang) became the buzzword of the Chinese government’s media policy from the 1990s...The media need to guide public opinion ‘correctly’, so as to promote political unity, social stability, and boost morale” (547). Finally, Chen predicts, “The possibility is high for China to continue to develop its market economy and at the same time have systematic control over the political coverage of the media” (181).

I will argue that climate change, specifically China’s role in contributing to it and its likely severe local repercussions from it, exemplifies the kind of message the Chinese government would consider dangerous, likely to inspire civil unrest, and at the very least, represent a liability for the continuance of China’s incredible economic and political proliferation on the world stage. But those consequences of climate change, such as injury to water and food security in China and across its international borders, will eventually impact China’s populace, whether the Party-State allows the media, state-owned or independent, to publish this information or not. China’s options in the face of such a situation are few: in an optimistic scenario, it might publically confront the nation’s role in contributing to global climate change and its people’s likelihood to suffer from its effects.

By using its media trumpet to garner public support for programs that would address practices that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, China could break ground on a transition toward a more wholly sustainable economy and society. On the other hand, it is possible that China’s New Media -- which is capable, at least to some extent, of

disseminating messages to very large audiences before censorship can take effect (Shirk 2) -- could pique popular interest in rectifying the State's slow response to the threats of climate change, eventually influencing a regime shift. Or possibly, China will only continue to tighten its censorship of independent media sources, restrict its own media messages, and allow climate change to remain unaddressed both in policy and in the public eye. Whether change in China's climate change mitigation policies will come from government action which is, in part, supported by state-sponsored pro-environment media campaigns, from pressure on the State exerted by Chinese citizens educated and spurred to action by environmental information from the independent media, or, finally, whether change will not come at all is difficult to predict. But, says Chen, "...a dual system, which can accommodate both the control over the political news and the commercialization and liberalization of the mass media in covering social and economic issues, is very likely to emerge in China" (181). In the case of its coverage on issues surrounding climate change, the Chinese government will have to become more accountable if it is to compete with independent news agencies for readership/viewership and for the public respect that comes with conscientiousness of informational accuracy and thoroughness. It must be hoped that in the future, climate change mitigation will be included in the liberalized coverage of social and economic issues in China, whether that coverage comes from the Chinese State or from more commercial media outlets.

The following content analysis study of climate change-related articles from one of the Chinese State's most prolific news agencies, Xinhua News, seeks to illustrate the fashion in which information on sensitive issues is presented in nationally broadcast, State-run media in China. Given the breadth of the body of scientific work that has been conducted on the likely effects of climate change in China and the widely accepted factual information that does exist on

that topic (a sample of which was discussed earlier in this paper), clear conclusions about the Chinese State's attitudes toward public access to that information may be drawn upon examining the patterns revealed by the analysis of the items used in the study sample. This analysis is not meant to make a statement about media as a whole in China; rather its aim is to better understand the mode and style adopted by the Chinese State of communicating climate change-related news and the promotion of an important understanding of its historical and scientific causes and effects.