

# Chinese-style Public Service Advertising in CCTV: Transfer and Continuance

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# Introduction

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**Observation:** After coming to power of president Xi Jinping, advertisements initiated by propaganda departments of Chinese government and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have been prospered. The increasing use of advertising—usually regarded as a consumer marketing tool—to promote China nation, government and CCP is obviously noticeable both in China and worldwide (Mantesso & Zhou, 2019).

**Definition:** define Chinese-style PSAs by distinguishing initiators & content of PSA

- **Previous studies:**

- PSAs initiated by NGOs: “attempt to promote a specific action or viewpoint toward some institution, issue, or cause in order to serve the interest of the public” (Dessart 1982).
- PSAs initiated by enterprises: usually named corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication when studied. Ultimate aim is to promote business organization.

- **This study:**

- Chinese-style PSAs: “advertisements initiated by state-owned media or propaganda related departments in Chinese government and CCP, and convey values promoted or consented by them”.
  - \*definition of value by Ethics & Compliance Initiative (ECI) : core beliefs that guide and motivate attitudes and actions

**Aim of study:** trace transform and continuance of values conveyed by Chinese-style PSAs and corresponded social context in different periods, and explores the interaction between PSAs and context. Structural functionalism perspective is adopted to understand what were the main problems faced by initiators of Chinese-style PSAs in each period and what function did initiators expect PSAs to have in dealing with the problems



# Literature review

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**Structural functionalism:** Emphasizing the relationship between part and whole, society is regarded as a system from structural functionalism approach. It is constituted with interrelated and interactive subsystems (Kenneth & Bailey, 2001).

- **Auguste Comte:** society is a “**social organism**”; each structural component of society contributes to maintenance of social system as a whole.
- **Herbert Spenser:** introduced “**function**” to analyze social components’ contribution to social system.
- **Emile Durkheim:** argued that analyzing social structure should involve its **historical causes and current functions**.
- **Talcott Parsons:** elaborated “**functional prerequisites**” as necessary conditions for social components to operate and meet functions in social system.
- **Robert K. Merton:** **motivation of actors** in social system should be analyzed to explore “manifest functions” of specific social structure, which is “intended” and “recognized” function.

## Functions of mass media:

- **Harold Lasswell:** surveillance of environment, correlation of parts of society, and transmission of social heritage.
- **Charles Wright:** added “entertainment” function as the forth functions
- **Lazarsfeld and Merton:** narcotizing dysfunction, status-conferral, and enforcement of social norms



# Research questions, method, and data sources

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## Research questions:

- RQ1: What are the main problems in social context faced by Chinese-style PSAs' initiators in each period?
- RQ2: What are initiators' intended functions of Chinese-style PSAs in each period?

## Method:

- Discourse-historical approach of **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)** (Wodak, 2004) (for all periods).
- **Content analysis** (for Xi's period).

## Data and data sources:

- Division of Chinese-style PSAs according to time period of CCP's central leaders: Deng Xiaoping (1978-1992), Jiang Zemin (1993-2002), Hu Jintao (2003-2012) and Xi Jinping (2013-present).
- Data and material analyzed: Chinese-style PSAs broadcasted on China Central Television (CCTV)
- **Data sources:**
  - Chinese-style PSAs in the former three periods (Deng, Jiang, Hu): previous academic studies and secondary materials like documents and reports
  - Chinese-style PSAs in Xi's period: collection of these PSAs from official website of CCTV and video websites (N=100)



# Analysis (1/5)

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## **Deng's period (1978-1992): establishment of Chinese-style PSAs**

### **Social context:**

- Deng criticized ideological ruling idea “taking class struggle as the key link” in Mao’s period, and stopped “great leap forward”, an ultraleft economic activity under planned economy system.
- Deng established private ownership and market-oriented economy under planned economy in China.

### **Social problems:**

- Make ways to “emancipating the mind” and practically developing economy.
- With the development of economy and advancement of private ownership, some new social phenomenon emerged, including individuals’ uncivilized behaviors.

### **Values conveyed in Chinese-style PSAs:**

- Traditional Chinese culture (e.g. respecting the old)
- New values emerged after the Reform and Opening (e.g. civilization)

### **Intended functions of Chinese-style PSAs in Deng's period:**

- Educate and influence audiences to do good for society
- Decrease of ideology control



# Analysis (2/5)

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## **Jiang's period (1993-2002): emergency of political orientation, reflection of social problems**

### **Social context:**

- Socialist Market Economy was officially established.
- With rapid development of economy, diversified values prospered, and new social problems emerged.
- Construction of socialism spiritual civilization was promoted to a national strategy level. Chinese-style PSAs were affirmed as political communication.

### **Social problems:**

- Diminish disputes about economy policies from both conservatives and more radical reformers.
- Relieve emerging new social problems (e.g. laid-off of workers in former state-owned companies).

### **Values conveyed in Chinese-style PSAs:**

- Emerging political orientation: ruling idea (e.g. promoting policies, achievements by CCP's leadership), patriotism
- New values related to new economic form (e.g. new occupation moral, new social ethics, importance of technology and education in developing of country, etc.)
- Continuance in traditional Chinese value (e.g. respecting the old)
- Connection to social problems (e.g. encouraging laid-off workers to start over)

### **Intended functions of Chinese-style PSAs in Jiang's period:**

- Legitimation of new economy system and polices
- Relieve new social problems by legitimating social reality
- Maintain CCP's stable power



# Analysis (3/5)

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## **Hu's period (2003-2012): increased promotion of political ideology, reflection of historical events**

### **Social context:**

- Economic policies in Hu's period were conservative and favored state-owned companies.
- Contrary to conservative actions in economic related policies, Hu's government took an active part in ideology control by strictly controlling information the mass received.
- Economy grew at highest speed in Hu's period.
- Disasters and historical events.

### **Social problems:**

- Social inequity and social problems continued to expand, which requires relieve.
- Handle frequently happened disaster and historical events.

### **Values conveyed in Chinese-style PSAs:**

- Political ideology: ruling ideas of Hu ("Scientific Outlook on Development", "socialist value of honor" and "socialist harmonious society")
- Traditional Chinese culture and values
- Guiding public emotion and opinion in disasters and events

### **Intended functions of Chinese-style PSAs in Hu's period:**

- The social inequity and social changes are expanding. Thus, unified ideology was promoted more tensely to enhance unity among all social classes.



# Analysis (4/5)

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## **Xi's period (2013-present): strong instill of ideology**

### **Social context:**

- When Xi came to power, social problems in Hu's period continued to expand.
- What is more critical, growth rate of Chinese economy started to decrease.
- Popularized use of SNS allow ordinary citizens to post scandals related to government and express personal opinions online. This already have brought about far-reaching negative attitude to and distrust in authority.
- Xi's personal in-power style is strong.

### **Social problems:**

- Keep CCP and Xi himself in power
- Rebuild people's trust in CCP and Chinese government.



# Analysis (5/5)

## Xi's period (2013-present): strong instill of ideology

### Values conveyed in Chinese-style PSAs:

Table 1 Values conveyed in Chinese-style PSAs in Xi's period (N=100) ↻

Values ↻	Percentage ↻	Values ↻	Percentage ↻
Caring for family ↻	21% ↻	Devotion to society ↻	6% ↻
Core socialist values (Xi's ruling idea) ↻	19% ↻	Combat corruption and promote integrity ↻	4% ↻
Caring for others ↻	16% ↻	Fight Chinese people's way ↻	4% ↻
China dream (Xi's ruling idea) ↻	14% ↻	Civilization ↻	1% ↻
Keep historical events in mind ↻	9% ↻	Others ↻	8% ↻

Table 2 Beneficiary of values conveyed in Chinese-style PSAs in Xi's period (N=100) ↻

Values ↻	Percentage ↻
CCP or Xi's in power ↻	45% ↻
Society ↻	35% ↻
Family ↻	26% ↻
The government ↻	23% ↻
Individuals ↻	12% ↻
Others ↻	1% ↻

### Intended functions of Chinese-style PSAs in Xi's period:

- form atmosphere of public opinion which benefits maintenance of CCP and Xi's power.



# Discussion, limitation and future studies

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## Discussion:

- From structural functionalism perspective, Chinese-style PSAs is a component of Chinese media system. Chinese media system is a component of Chinese social system.
- Based on the analysis, expected functions of Chinese-style PSAs could be concluded into three main aspects:
  - Legitimation: “legitimation” (correspond to “status-conferral function” by Lazarsfeld and Merton) + “de-legitimation” (extension of mass media’s function by this study)
  - Social norm transfer: correspond to both Lasswell’s “transmission of social heritage” and Lazarsfeld and Merton’s “enforcement of social norms”
  - Providing simplified dualistic thinking mode: extension of mass media’s function by this study.

## Limitation:

- Lacks access to archive of Chinese-style PSAs broadcasted on CCTV in the former three periods
- Lack of first hand interview data of the producers of Chinese-style PSAs to explore their motivations more directly.

## Future studies:

- Firstly, since this study mainly explored the intended of Chinese-style PSAs to have, the actual function could be further explored.
- Secondly, the expected function “de-legitimation” and “providing simplified dualistic thinking mode” could be examined in different cultures and media environments.



Thank you

