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– The Impact of the Internet on Chinese Society

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Preface

China, often referred to as the “sleeping dragon”, in August 2002 overtook Japan to become the second largest web audience in the world behind the United States (BBC 07.08.2002) and that number is growing by 6% a month (BBC June 2002). China does not look like a sleeping dragon, more like a dreamwalking one. This book joins the nation’s dreams and uncovers enthusiastic day dreams of the technically possible as well as governmental nightmares of unwanted impact of the Internet on society.

I thank my co-editor Zhang Junhua, who had the idea for this book, and who through his extensive travelling in China and abroad has built up a network of scholars from different disciplines sharing a common interest in the phenomenon of the Chinese Internet. He not only carefully chose the subjects but also integrated many texts of non-native speakers, often leaving a lot of proof reading work. In addition he organized a native speaker for copy editing of the major part. Due to his busy international travelling schedule during the last few months of the final stage of publication, he could not be present to write the introduction together with me, so I have tried to reflect the impressions of both of us in this preface.

For me, it is left to harvest the fruits, to carefully review the texts, to choose the ones to include in this volume, to make them fit into a concept, to suggest slight corrections, but to leave the opinions of the authors untouched. This was sometimes hard, since I disagreed more than once with the view expressed. But in this way, we have a controversial and in some aspects provocative collection in hand.

Nevertheless, it is one of the privileges of the editor to add critical remarks in his introduction and therefore I would like to outline the

special value of the papers and the points from which I encourage a discussion upon from my subjective perspective.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Regarding the East Asian Perspective, I would recommend M. Rao, ed., *The Asia Pacific Internet Handbook: Episode IV Emerging Powerhouses*, New Delhi, Tata McGraw-Hill Publ. Co. Ltd. with one chapter each dedicated to the Internet economies of Japan, South Korea, China, India, Australia, and Singapore. The contributors to that volume have been based in the respective countries for over a decade. The book supplies case studies, statistics, forecasts, roadmaps, tips, trends, first-hand reportage, useful references/resources, and authoritative recommendations for the future. However, our two contributors Shanthi Kalathil and Nina Hachigian have taken a more comparative perspective and come to a general underlying trend of how the internet develops under restrictions applied by semi-authoritarian systems in East Asia, and how this influences society and the political system.

Shanthi Kalathil in his contribution "The Internet and Civil Society in China and Southeast Asia" gives examples and assesses them in respect to the general question "what and how far does the Internet change the respective societies", and "how far can this be proven by facts". I disagree with him on only two minor points; one is that from my experience in China, people are not primarily seeking information relevant to their daily life, but also news information, and that in Vietnam, the internet is available to everybody through 1000s of Internet cafes even in small villages (Tu 2001, for references in the introduction please refer to the lists given at the end of the respective chapters).

Nina Hachigian in her well structured paper "Telecom Taxonomy: How are the One Party States of East Asia Controlling the Political Impact of the Internet?" gives a very profound and detailed analysis of the Southeast Asian countries in question.

However, if one reads the relevant paper on e-commerce (Locelock/Ure) and keeps only the earnings and savings through government-to-business (G2B) purchases in mind, the costs of political control (internet police) she stresses, loose weight in relation. In my own paper I come to a similar hit list of internet restricting countries,

The Internet and Civil Society in China and Southeast Asia

Shanthi Kalathil

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

The information revolution is widely believed to assist in the formation of civil society, thought to be a key component of democratization. Asia, a continent, which has witnessed rapid Internet growth, features a number of authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes, making it one of the more interesting and relevant regions in which to study the impact of Internet use on civil society. This essay addresses the Internet's role, if any, in seeding and/or strengthening domestic civil society, and its links with transnational civil society, in China and parts of Southeast Asia.

Keywords: Internet, China, Asia, civil society.

Introduction

Many believe the information revolution empowers new actors and assists in the formation and strengthening of civil society, defined here in its broadest sense as a political realm of ideas and actors outside and separate from the state. Civil society is widely considered a building block of democracy, and a necessary if not sufficient condition for political transition from authoritarian rule. In the wake of the Sept. 11

attacks on the U.S., the influence of the information revolution on civil society formation in authoritarian states, as well as the power of quickly transmitted ideas and knowledge, has taken on added significance.

Much attention has focused on the Internet, as the newest and most visible component of the information revolution. Asia, which features a number of authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes, has seen rapid Internet growth in recent years, making it one of the more interesting and relevant regions in which to study the impact of Internet use. Even apart from China, which is boosting domestic content and user numbers at a speedy clip, the region features one of the fastest growing user bases in the world, and an increasingly diverse array of locally generated content. Southeast Asia, in particular, has for the most part been quick to embrace the use of the Internet in the political and economic spheres.

Within China and other Southeast Asian authoritarian countries, the mass public, as well as domestic dissidents and groups that criticize the government, are increasingly gaining access to and utilizing technology to disseminate information and organize. Self-publishing on the Internet is on the rise, as are the number of new online media outlets that are further removed from state influence, even if not wholly free from it. At times the web sites of government-controlled media organs will feature news and viewpoints that the original does not.

In addition, well-financed and organized actors outside the country in question, whether human rights organizations, diaspora groups, dissidents, or some combination, are often better able than domestic populations to use the Internet and related technologies to organize and disseminate information. These groups can use the Internet to obtain and widely disseminate information about government repression from within the country that might otherwise never be made public on an international scale. The Internet may also help these groups bolster civil society formation in countries where domestic opposition or even non-political non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are forbidden from forming, although this depends to a large degree on who and how many are allowed to access the Internet inside the country. Finally, they may be able to use the Internet to mobilize international support – such as through email campaigns – that manifests itself in top-level diplomatic contacts or in the flow of foreign direct investment.

Telecom Taxonomy: How are the One Party States of East Asia Controlling the Political Impact of the Internet?

Nina Hachigian

RAND Center for Asia Pacific Policy

As many have observed, the Internet poses a dilemma to leaders of authoritarian states and illiberal democracies. The Internet promises enticing economic advantages. At the same time, it can incrementally shift political power to citizens by giving them greater access to information and a platform for discussion and organization.

East Asia presents a full array of attempts by leaders of one-party regimes to retain their power in the Internet age. This chapter will examine the commercial and political advantages and drawbacks of these different architectures of control, from the highly restrictive approach of North Korea to the relatively lenient structures of Malaysia, with China, Vietnam and Singapore falling in between. Questions of access, content control and costs of enforcement will be examined.

Keywords: Internet policy, government, Asia

INTRODUCTION

As many have observed, the Internet poses a dilemma to leaders of authoritarian states and illiberal democracies. The Internet promises enticing commercial advantages: reduced transaction costs, greater

efficiencies, e-commerce, and facilitated foreign trade. At the same time, it can politically empower populations, and potentially threaten regimes, by giving citizens access to outside information and a platform for discussion and organization. Contrary to popular assumption, the response to this dilemma is far from uniform—not all one-party states simply try to maximize their control. Focusing on the region of East Asia, this chapter will examine the wide and varied range of attempts by leaders of one-party states to retain their power in the age of information technology (IT). North Korea and Burma fall at one end of the spectrum, severely restricting all access to the Internet. Malaysia lands at the other extreme, actively promoting IT and Internet access, even among the poor, and permitting almost all online political content. The regimes of three countries, China, Vietnam and Singapore, have adopted compromise strategies that place moderate restrictions on access, content or both. The following analysis will investigate the choices these six Asian governments have made in attempting to control the political effects of the Internet. This analysis will not join the debate over whether a determinist (the Internet is democratizing) or an instrumentalist (authoritarian governments will use the Internet to retain control) perspective best describes the impact of the Internet. It is clear that both theories have merit, and the binary debate is no longer elucidating.

Rather, this chapter uses country case studies to take a pragmatic look at what range of choices are available to leaders of one party states to address the political potential of the Internet, what political and economic factors drive the choices that leaders make, and what costs and benefits those choices offer to the regimes.

THE PARADOX OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Internet poses a collection of conundrums to one party states that it does not to liberal democracies. Because new information technologies have both the potential to disrupt efforts by ruling regimes to control information that flows to the public, and the power to enhance a regime's stature, leaders of one party states must decide how their governments will negotiate the trade-offs of a networked world.¹ This

¹ For more discussion of these calculations, see Hachigian 2002.

Internet Use in China – A comparative Analysis

Guo Liang Bu Wei

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The Internet use is fast growing in China. The number of world Internet users has doubled each year since the late 80s. The number of Chinese Internet users doubled every half a year in the late 90s. It was reported by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC, <http://www.cnnic.net.cn>) that the Chinese Internet population hit 45.8 million in July 2002.

Although there is heavy Internet use in China, few native survey reports on this area have been released. Understanding the Internet use is not merely a technical thing, it is largely affected by culture, tradition and political environment; we may assume that Internet use in China is different from the West. Even within China, the Internet use in some developed cities like Beijing and Shanghai may also be different from those less developed cities like Changsha and Chengdu. This paper, based on a survey conducted in 2001 by Guo Liang and Bu Wei in the Center for Social Development, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), will try to explain how people are using the Internet in China, what are the demographic differences and the different attitudes toward the Internet between users and non-users.

1. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Being one of the 23 partners in the World Internet Project (WIP, <http://www.worldinternetproject.org>), which started from the Center for Communication Policy, University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA, <http://www.ccp.ucla.edu>), the CASS survey, administratively supported by the Chinese State Informatization Office, is intending to use both the cross-sectional and the longitudinal methods to compare the attitude and behavior of the people who are using the Internet to those who are not familiar with this new technology, and to trace the annual behavior and changes of attitude of the users as well as of the non-users.

Considering the survey by phone is not acceptable to most of the Chinese people, the questionnaire is too complicated for common people to understand via telephone and the Internet online survey is not accurate enough for the academic research, so we decided to do the survey by household based on face-to-face interview.

Survey location and time

Although the number of Internet users has grown rapidly in China, compared with its large population, the percentage of Internet users in the whole country is still very low. Because the survey is basically about the Internet usage, it should be conducted in an area where a higher rate of Internet users can be found. At the same time, middle-sized cities should also be covered in the survey to have a relatively complete picture of the country. Considering the possibility of doing the fieldwork, we chose five cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu and Changsha as the survey spots.

Considering a large number of the netizens in China are college students (about 42.6% were found in this survey), and these students usually live on campus except during vacations, we chose the Chinese Spring Festival – during the winter vacation, when most of the students stay at home with their parents – to do the fieldwork. The actual time the survey was conducted was between January 20 and February 5, 2001.

Sampling

The survey population is defined as the male and female legal citizens between 17-60 years in the urban areas of the five cities. Considering

The Reality and Potential of Online Trading in China

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This article describes the current status of online trading development in China from legal, governmental, technical and market perspectives. Three company models of China's securities industry are detailed. Though the road to the future seems bright, some hurdles impede further development of online trading in China. Through discussions of these problems, possible future directions and areas of emphasis in the development of online trading in China are presented.

Keywords: The Internet, E-commerce, Online Trading, Stock Market

1. Introduction

Despite the recent collapse experienced by the dot-com world, the internet, as a main revolutionary business tool, has changed our ways of living over the past decade. With the spread of internet-related technologies, e-commerce is penetrating into various industries. Online trading, as an application of e-commerce, has proliferated rapidly over the past few years. The recent development of online trading has had a comprehensive influence on various aspects of the brokerage industry in China. With China's entry into the WTO, together with the restructuring and loosening of government policies, the establishment of a sound legal framework, and improvement of the information

infrastructure, online trading will bring China's brokerage industry into a new age. However, as online trading affects many aspects of China's society, it is unlikely the promotion of online trading will be a smooth process. Conflicts between the innovative ideas of online trading and the China's old systems will be unavoidable. There are three models of online trading in China that are the subjects of much debate.¹⁰⁶

2. Online Trading in China

In the US, online trading is growing by 30-35% each quarter. According to recent reports, about 160 online trading companies are active in America, and over 500,000 online trading transactions are completed daily. China's securities companies started operating online trading in 1997. To date, 45 of the 110 securities companies in China are legally entitled to conduct online trading.¹⁰⁷ As of the end of July 2001, there are about 2.9 million people with online trading accounts, amounting to 8.93% of the 323.5 million Chinese investors in the Chinese securities market.¹⁰⁸ The proportion of online trading will amount to 12 percent of China's stock market transactions, in comparison with the current 4 percent.¹⁰⁹ By January 2001, there are about 215 million internet users in China. 31.1 percent of them search for financial information via the internet, and 45 percent see online trading as an alternative means of trading stocks.¹¹⁰

With over 80 million wireless users China now leads the world. Like that in the USA, the Chinese securities industry is very keen and

¹⁰⁶ We thank Mr. T.K. Lin, Mr. James Brock and Mr. Matt Roberts for their valuable suggestions. We are also grateful to Dr. Wang Xinzheng, Mr. Qiao Zhiguan, Mr. Liu Yongjun, and Mr. Liu Ping for their information.

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.csrc.gov.cn>

¹⁰⁸ Zhengjuan Shibao (2001): 'The turnover of online trading is 226.2 billion in the first 7 months in the year 2001', Aug. 30, 2001.

¹⁰⁹ Guangming Ribao (2001): 'What online trading will bring to the stock market', August 9, 2001.

¹¹⁰ Results of research by 30 Chinese companies and institutions (2001): "Establishing the Regulations for Online Brokerage Company and Promoting the Rapid Development of Online Trading".

Accession to the WTO and the Development of China's Digital Media

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The paper first outlines the status quo and development trend of China's Internet media, and then gives an analysis of the impacts of China's access to the World Trade Organization on the country's Internet and traditional media. Confronted with the so-called negative impacts brought about by the Internet media, China is trying to regulate those networks with overall legislation, and encouraging the conglomeration of traditional media so as to stand in a better position in the face of international competition. The paper holds that after its entry to the WTO, China will retain its stance that the media sectors cannot be as open as other services in order to uphold its ideology and national culture. The paper concludes that China should move in the direction in which the media will become more open rather than block information from the outside world.

Keywords: WTO, digital media, Chinese media

After 15 years of efforts, China has become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO hereafter) at the end of 2001. Starting from the assumption that WTO entry will have tremendous impacts on

various sectors in China, and affect and challenge China's Internet and all the other digital media, this paper seeks to review how these impacts will occur, and what changes the Chinese press are undergoing or are likely to undergo with regard to these impacts.

The digital media referred to in this paper are first of all the Internet media, then the traditional media that have already adopted or are going to adopt digital technology. China's Internet media initially established themselves as dependents of the traditional media, and have remained so to this day. Therefore, it is rather hard to discuss the two kinds of media separately.

Status quo and development trend of China's Internet media

The trend for China's news media to go on-line can be traced as far back as December 6, 1993, when the Hangzhou Daily launched its electronic edition. However, the real prelude was the inauguration of China's public computer Internet in 1995. Two magazines, *Chinese Scholars* and *China Trade News*, took the lead in going on-line respectively on January 12 and December 20 that year, thus becoming pioneers of Internet media. By the end of 1996, more than 30 newspapers had launched their electronic editions on the Internet. In December 1996, China Central Television (CCTV) set up its own website. On January 1 and November 7, 1997, the People's Daily and Xinhua News Agency respectively launched their websites. Based on solid funding and authority, these websites have their own reporters, and are able to issue original news information and become major windows through which the world can learn what is happening in China.

In May 2000, nine local news media in Beijing jointly established China's first independent on-line news media – Dragon News Net (www.BeijingNews.com) – through share holding. The news resources from the nine media could be shared and issued on the same website after compilation. Then came the East Net in Shanghai, which is based on a dozen leading news organizations in the city and issues more than 1,000 news items daily. Similar Internet news media include South Net in Guangdong, Press News Net in Sichuan, Zhejiang Online in Zhejiang, Shun Net in Shandong, and more. Varying in forms and

The Internet transforms China into a Western styled information society

China changes its internet policy from open restriction to self-censorship after its WTO entry

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Ever since the Internet has been available in China, access has been restricted by supervision and intimidation, by censorship, and by banning of up to 150,000 websites (BBC 2002). At the same time, the government in its 10th Five Year Plan promoted the web as a means for the new economy and forged ahead with the founding of its own Ministry of Internet Technology. In the late 1990s the internet broke the state monopoly of information and a new public sphere of politically mature Chinese citizens emerged, increasing the pressure on the semi-authoritarian government. This, and the pressure created by the WTO entry helped to lift all direct restrictions of political and news sites, but starting from March 2002 many ICPs and ISPs had to sign a self-censorship pact. Yet, the internet continues to turn China irresistibly into a Western-styled information society.

Keywords: Internet restrictions, censorship, WTO entry, Western-styled information society.

Introduction

Back in 1990, when I taught a German class in a Wuhan middle school, and the pupils asked me how I could survive in a country of unemployed people and junkies, waiting in vain for relief through death by a non-existent God, I answered that I was satisfied to be able to read both Chinese and Western news in Germany. The point I wanted to make clear was the information gap due to the different accessibility of information.

When I visited China in June 2002, I registered a phone line and internet access anonymously with an ISP within days and without any supervision, and my cell phone number was activated anonymously within minutes. So I can tell now, that this main difference of access to information - and we are living in an information society - has diminished finally through the internet.

This paper suggests a clear position among scholarly discussion about the true impact of the internet on China. It is not just another standpoint in the discussion, but an attempt to analyze the relevance of the different viewpoints in the debate.

We can see the following positions in the debate:

1. The system destabilizing role of the internet in (semi-)authoritarian systems is overestimated from the position of determinism of technology or modernization
2. The Internet has finally brought enlightenment to China, the Chinese people have woken up to
 - formation of civil society
 - change in quality of information
 - the internet has broken down the boundary between Western and Chinese information society: all, domestic and international, media is available in China now
3. The Internet has stimulated the emergence of a politically aware public, even in the official bulletin boards and chat rooms of the *People's Daily (Renmin ribao)* or *Peking Youth (Beijing Qingnian bao)*.

Assessing China's Efforts in Constructing an e-government

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China, like other countries, has found generating commercial benefits from its early National Information Infrastructure (NII) drive more difficult than anticipated. It is not just a matter of building infrastructure; tangible broad policy guidance, and active government intervention is also necessary. However, in China this urge to develop an online presence has been both tempered by and driven by the government's contradictory relationship with its citizenry. It is tempered because of its ongoing wariness of what a medium such as the Internet may introduce, and because the Internet may prove itself to be beyond the control of the government. And it is driven because the Internet may very well prove to be a tool for further government (and Party) consolidation and, perhaps more importantly, to be a significant tool for sustaining economic growth.

As a result, China's leaders have launched a series of online programs to accelerate the government's pace of implementing and using the information economy by improving China's current government information management systems and to help promote the country's economic development. The government has a history of doing this, even as it has continued to open the economy to outside involvement and less-centralized planning. The telecommunications industry provides perhaps the most successful contemporary example of China's interventionist economic strategy, and this means that (a)

informatizing (as it is known in China – xinxihua) the government as a driver is extremely important; and (b) such intervention is unlikely to disappear even after the country formally accedes to the WTO.

Therefore, to find proof of the government's support for Internet development in China, one simply has to look to the aptly named Government Online Project (GOP). To find proof of the government's commitment to building a strong online presence, one needs to put such developments in context. In this short paper we take each of these in turn.

GOVERNMENT ONLINE

The Government Online Project is a three-stage initiative: Stage One focused upon connecting 800-1,000 government offices and agencies to the Internet; Stage Two focuses on having government offices and agencies move their information systems into compatible electronic form; and Stage Three – planned to occur sometime late in the decade – will see government offices and agencies becoming paperless. The purpose of the GOP is to create a centrally accessible administrative system that collects and transports data to and from users; *users* being the public and the enterprise system, as well as government departments.

On January 22, 1999, the Government Online Project was formally launched by China Telecom and the State Economic and Trade Commission's (SETCs) Economic Information Center along with the Information Offices of more than 40 central government departments. The project interconnects government offices of *every* province, autonomous region and municipality. The network will promote the establishment of formal government websites to provide information and services and then (in theory) also facilitate collaboration between the government and the nation's growing number of IT enterprises (ISPs, ICPs, software and hardware manufacturers). By developing the basic infrastructure and encouraging government agencies at all levels to incorporate Internet technologies, the government hopes to set the tone for online development and, ultimately, e-commerce.

In other words, the government's strategy for driving the 'information economy' is to first launch the Government Online Project by setting up formal government websites so that the public can acquire information and procure specific government services via the Internet.

Development of E-government in China – Present status, problems, and future

Xinjiao Tan

Like other countries in the world, China embraced the technological revolution and considered the Internet as a powerful tool to reform government. Since the launching of the “Government Online Project” in 1999, China has made its first step toward an e-government. The paper outlines the present status of e-government development since 1999, it then analyzes the challenges and opportunities posed by e-government to public sectors. Through reviewing the present status, the author examines the problems that exist in the development of e-government, and finally looks into the future prospects. Through examining the development status and analyzing the problems, the author shows that smooth development of e-government in China relies on ongoing political reform and continuous economic growth. China’s continuous opening up to international society is critical for the successful construction of e-government.

Keywords: e-government, public administration, China

I Introduction: Chinese government embraced the digital revolution

Since the emergence of the Internet in the 1980s in America, there has been rapid development of the Internet around the world. In the face of the information technology revolution, and changes that are brought by Internet, the Chinese government chose to allow the development of a regulated Internet rather than controlling and limiting its development.

In March 1993, China made its first Internet connection with the Chinese Academy of Science (IHEP) connecting with Stanford University through the 64K specialized line.

Since 1993, the Chinese government considered the use of the Internet as a powerful engine to push forward economic growth. Driving industrial growth through the development of the Internet has become part of the national strategy. Chinese government realizes that the digital revolution across the world poses both an opportunity and a challenge for all the countries in the world. Having lost many development opportunities in history such as during the cultural revolution, this time, China did not wait aloof and watch the opportunities passing by. Instead, it took active initiatives in driving the development of the Internet. From the beginning there wasn't a unanimous opinion on among Chinese party officials on how to manage the arrival of the Internet, some officials embrace it as an experiment in limited democracy and others say that the Internet will erode their power. Fortunately, it is very wise of the Chinese government to choose to embrace the new technology and try to make use of the Internet for its own benefit. Otherwise the scenario of Internet development we see today in China would be totally different.

The rapid development of the Internet after 1993 reveals that the Chinese government actively promotes the development of the Internet, and regards it as a driving force for economic growth. Since 1993, the Chinese government has been making great efforts in promoting the Internet infrastructure. 13 Golden Projects form some of the initiatives to build the backbone of infrastructure of the information highway. The Golden Bridge project built the first national public communication network for economic information, aiming to connect ministries and State Owned Enterprises and to build the infrastructure backbone over which other information services will run. This project was funded with US\$ 3 million, approved by former Premier Li Peng. The Golden Card project aimed at setting up a credit verification scheme and an interbank, inter-region clearing system. The Golden Gate project built a foreign trade information network, aimed at improving export-import trade management. The Golden Intelligence project set the goal of building a Chinese education and research network. The Chinese government also made great efforts to improve the hardware facilities available. It upgraded the national backbone capacity of total

Technology, Markets and Nation-Building in Chinese Cyberspace

Christopher R. Hughes

London School of Economics

The belief that the Internet erodes states and nations is based partly on a belief in technological determinism that ignores the ways in which political and cultural contexts shape decisions about usage and architecture. Such assumptions can be shown to be unfounded when the impact of the Internet on the PRC is understood in the context of the Chinese nationalist tradition and policies designed to enhance integration into the global economic and technological system while preserving the power of the state. By looking at the way in which the state uses a combination of regulation and market manipulation, it is possible to conclude that while nationalism and Realist international relations may be challenged by the information age, they are being replaced by a kind of 'virtual Realism' and nation-building in cyberspace rather than by the decline of the nation-state.

Keywords: Internet, nation-building, nationalism, virtual Realism, globalization, security

Nationalism and the Technological Revolution

At first sight it might seem like something of an irony that the scientific and technological progress commonly assumed to be one of the driving

forces of globalization has also been seen as one of the keys to successful nation-building in Chinese political thought since the nineteenth century. However, as theories of globalization have moved beyond belief in the decline of the state that is central to what has been called the 'hyperglobalist thesis,' they have begun to develop a more sophisticated understanding of how states survive through the successful mediation of international transactions in ways that can actually enhance their power (Held et al., 2000, Shaw 2000).

This would not have been news to the Confucian scholar and administrator Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909), who advocated using Western functional knowledge (*yong*) to preserve Chinese cultural essence (*ti*), often referred to as the '*ti-yong*' formula. Nor would it have surprised Chen Duxiu, one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), who called on 'Mr Science' and 'Mr Democracy' to 'save China'. Deng Xiaoping, too, made 'Science and Technology' one of the 'Four Modernisations' for which the nation should strive, after he returned to political life in 1973. When his successor as paramount leader, Jiang Zemin, made a speech in July 1991 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Party, history turned full circle when he proposed the formula 'take the ancient to serve the modern, the foreign to serve China' (*gu wei jin yong, yang wei zhong yong*) (Jiang 1998: 380).

It is important to bear in mind this relationship between nationalism and science and technology in the thinking of the Chinese political elite when we discuss the impact of the Internet on the PRC. This is especially true during the period of 'reform and opening' that began in the late 1970s, when CCP leaders have actually been very keen to adopt foreign technology for the sake of economic development. When Deng Xiaoping talked about the tasks facing the PRC at the beginning of the 1980s, he stressed the need to become competitive in the world economy by making use of new developments in science and technology and international exchanges of personnel and information (Deng 1984: 255). His attitude is encapsulated by the slogan 'Face Modernisation, Face the World, Face the Future' (Deng 1993a: 35), proposed by Deng in 1983 and since then hailed as a new kind of thinking developed to respond to the world technological revolution (Jia 1993: 99-100).

Is the “wolf” coming?

An empirical study on cultural information spread on Chinese websites

Peng Lan

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The development of the Internet in China has aroused concern about the invasion of foreign culture. This chapter aims to find out whether the threat of foreign cultural invasion via Internet exists and if so, how strong it is. A number of surveys have been made on information relating to foreign movies and literature mentioned on Chinese websites. The results of these surveys indicate that Internet is playing a more and more important role in the spread of foreign cultural products. However the power of the Internet depends on the nature of the product.

Keywords: Internet, foreign culture, cultural product, movie, literature

The development of the Internet in China since the 1990s' has rapidly changed the lives of many Chinese individuals. At the same time, there is growing concern about the invasion of Chinese culture. Some people cry out that the “wolf” is coming. One argument is based on the fact that more than 90% of information transferred through the Internet is written in English. However, in my opinion such argument is too weak

to support the conclusion. The fact that the Internet is dominated by information written in English doesn't necessarily mean that the Chinese Internet surfers will use them. In reality a lack of familiarity with English means that many Chinese are prevented from obtaining access to information written in English. Furthermore, the interests of most Chinese Internet surfers focus on topics they are familiar with, which are mostly written in Chinese.

However, this doesn't mean that Chinese will be immune to the influence of foreign culture. Without research, we cannot tell whether Internet will speed up the penetration of foreign culture into Chinese society, nor can we draw any conclusions about the impact it will have on native culture. This paper thus constitutes pioneering work to reveal the facts. Far from being perfect, the research waits for revision by further studies.

1. RESEARCH GOAL AND METHOD

The research is based on a series of surveys, which aim to find out what kind of cultural information is available on Chinese websites. It gives a rough picture of how the information on Chinese websites is constructed, i.e. how much information is based on Chinese culture and how much is related to foreign culture.

Three well known Chinese portal sites and a couple of Chinese 'vertical sites' (specialised sites) are chosen as samples of the surveys. Also, Yahoo! and Amazon are surveyed in this comparative study.

Movies and literature are chosen as representatives of cultural products in the surveys. These two were selected since they represent two different kinds of cultural products. Movie, as a visual art, is easier to be understood since it is less restricted by literate ability and cultural backgrounds. Music and painting are similar to movies. Literature, on the other hand, is much dependant on knowledge. Therefore we can assume that movies will be more easily distributed via Internet while literary works will not. If the surveys can prove this, we conclude that the influence of foreign culture via Internet depends on the nature of the cultural product.

The surveys are divided into Survey A for movie information and Survey B for literary information, each with following steps:

Internet censorship focus: 'Human Rights not found' in the Chinese web

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Every semi-authoritarian country with its governing party in the region has to find a way between the promotion of the internet in regard to the economic development and the restriction of the internet in regard to maintaining the political power. China is a good example, showing what happens to a country trying to restrict the internet, fearing lose of control and giving up the power of one-sided information: Because of the very nature of the internet, the restrictions finally fail and the internet not only promotes economic development, but also maturity of the people and freedom of thoughts. Therefore, the internet sooner or later opens up societies and turns them into Western styled information societies.

Keywords: Human Rights, internet censorship.

Introduction

Following the shift in the Chinese internet policy during its WTO entry, the Chinese massive restriction of the internet is history. Some politically dissident and news sites are now freely accessible, China only asks the ICPs to sign a self-censorship pact. And also the blocked sites are easily accessible using a proxy server (p. 259). This last

chapter of history tells us about the power of the information society to change semi-authoritarian systems. At first sight, China lifted its internet restrictions due to its WTO entry. But reading this new chapter carefully, there seems to have been a second reason, the nature of the internet itself. Retelling the events of the battle of censorship and reaction, we discover a second major player in the battlefield, the internet itself.

The next stage of sites to be unblocked will be human rights ones, since the news sites broadly refer to these sites and information about them is spread now all over China. So this coming chapter of history is an important one. This could turn out to be the first victory of the internet over a semi-authoritarian regime. Thus in this paper, I will retell the story of human rights on the Chinese net.

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