

The view from China

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In this special guest-blog posting by [POLIS Summer School](#) student *Zhang Di* we are given a view of the Chinese media direct from a young Chinese citizen.

Although in the last two decades, China has achieved a great development in economy and technology, there are still many aspects that need to be improved, such as the journalism as well as the media. The most crucial reason, which lead to the current imperfect situation of journalism, as far as I am concerned, is the stern censorship by the government. The media and journalism is not as independent, unbiased and objective as it supposed to be in China in the 21st century. I would argue that the strict censorship by government is the biggest barrier for the development of the journalism, even for the freedom of expression.

Media can be used as a supervisor of the government in many of the western countries, whereas in China it is more likely a tool for the government to dominate and control the nation. The government takes charge of all the information and decide what can be accessed to by the public. They would not like to let people be informed, if the news is negative and would hurt the image of the party. And sometimes they even block the broadcast of TV programmes in order to protect its control of information. For instance, last Friday I visited the BBC Bush House, and one of the staff there, who in charge of the Asian service, told us that Chinese government block their Mandarin language programme in China for political reasons. They won't allow too much criticism and radical comments about the politics published through the mainstream Chinese media.

How could we explain the present media condition in China? I think the most influential reason is the special Chinese political system. There is only one party, the Communist Party, which govern the whole country. That means, firstly, the power is so centralized, that it is hard to accomplish the democracy in the real sense. Besides, there is no competition, which means there is lack of the supervision. Information is a kind of power and whoever possess it gains power over others. Although it is really hard to change the political system in a short time, I am not so pessimistic. Thanks to New Media, for example, the internet, which offer us a platform to debate and also an easy access to the different resource of ideas and thoughts. With this means, many original ideas and objective reports can bypass the strict censorship and become available to the public. It can help us to achieve the transparency and the freedom of speech – at least to a degree.

By Zhang Di POLIS Summer School, 2007  



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