

# Navigating Globalization: An In-depth Analysis of China's Media Regulation in the Face of Economic and Technological Transformation

**Bernika Yustisiana Narang**  
Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia  
Email: nika.narang@gmail.com

## Keywords

*Navigating Globalization, Media Regulation, Economic, Technological Transformation.*

## ABSTRACT

The research investigates the intricate interplay between globalization, the dynamics of the media industry, and regulatory frameworks, with a specific focus on China. Employing the literature review method, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how globalization influences media law, regulation, and governance. It explores the repercussions of economic global integration and technological advancements, with China as a case study. Special attention is given to the multifaceted impact of globalization on the complex fabric of media regulation in China. Economic globalization and technological progress are identified as pivotal factors shaping regulatory frameworks. The research not only examines challenges but also explores potential opportunities for synergy between global forces and national regulatory structures. The findings, including globalization's significant impact on the media industry, especially in the Chinese context, especially in the Chinese context, contribute to the existing knowledge by shedding light on how nations navigate the delicate balance between global interconnectedness and the preservation of distinctive media regulatory landscapes. This study holds significance for scholars, researchers, and policymakers grappling with the evolving global media landscape.

## INTRODUCTION

Most people often use globalization as the easiest way to illustrate the spread and connectedness of a process of production, communication, and technology among countries around the world (Economic & Commission, 2019). There is a strong relationship between the globalization and the media industry. It can be seen how globalization can help the media industry to unify the diversity in societies (Debnath et al., 2021; Fang et al., 2023; Li et al., 2023; C. Liang et al., 2024).

There are two significant impacts of globalization on the media industry (Cullen & Fu, 2013). Globalization makes the world become an integrated market in capitalist economics (Liu et al., 2020; X. Zhang & Dai, 2021). As a result, this situation forces the government to reform the media system to become more commercial. There are several ways to create this condition: through advertising and altering ownership from government-owned to private or foreign companies (T. Liang et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2024; H. W. Zhang & Xie, 2024).

Another major aspect of globalization related to the development of the media industry is the development of new technology (Jie & Jiahui, 2023; Z. Zhang et al., 2023; Z. Zhang & Chen, 2022). Almost all nations worldwide have access to the Internet and satellite television. Furthermore, it helps the media disseminate information globally through its international network, which can circulate general information about politics, culture, conflict, and economics (Flew, 2007).

Among the issues of globalization in the media industry, there is an assumption that the impact of globalization could decrease the function of the national form of media law, regulation, and governance in a country (Blanco-González-Tejero et al., 2024; Hong & Zhu, 2023; Liu et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2022). Many media law practitioners and scholars have recently recognized that media law has increasingly become internationalized (Economic & Commission, 2019). This situation has happened due to the advance of economics and technology in the third world.

However, this assumption is not universally applicable, particularly concerning the relationship between national media regulations and globalization in China. Despite the Chinese government's adjustments to media policies, China stands out for effectively managing the flow of information and preserving its national forms of media law. Unlike the anticipated erosion of national media regulations in the face of globalization, China maintains a robust track record of upholding its domestic media laws as foundational principles governing the media industry.

## **METHODS**

The research methodology utilizes a literature review with a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative analysis of existing literature and regulatory documents with a case study methodology (Onwuegbuzie & Weinbaum, 2017; Paré & Kitsiou, 2017). The primary data sources include academic publications, government reports, and analyses of the media industry. The case study centered on China, thoroughly examines media regulations, policy changes, and industry responses over time. Interviews with media practitioners, policymakers, and scholars may also be conducted to gain nuanced insights into the regulatory landscape.

## **RESULTS**

### **Media Regulation in China**

Recently, the picture of media regulation in China is not good compared with China's media regulation before 1979. At that moment, The Chinese media policy was clear enough as embodied in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Since the growing need for the media industry to become financially independent, the CCP lost its ideological control to them (Chan, 2002). The economic reform had an important impact on the content of the media. This condition leads to decentralization, a huge range of content diversity and a higher degree of journalist professionalism. Consequently, China's media industry ignored media regulation, especially where economic gains were to be made (Cullen & Fu, 2013).

Another pressure for change comes from the development of electric media, such as the Internet and mobile phones. It triggers a liberalization of the mass media in China (Cullen & Fu, 2013). Recently, the electric media have improved the quality and quantity of the exchange of information between China and other countries in the world. One of the results of this condition is that the Chinese government has become more difficult to protect the forbidden information from the public.

The road for Chinese media to become closer to freedom, independence, and transparency has not been smooth. This is because the government has started reasserting the media industry's political control. The Chinese government worries about the international influences on society, making them try hard to revise the regulations regularly.

### **Globalizing economy**

Globalization in terms of the economy refers to the rapid movement away from the national market toward the global market to increase the spectrum of goods (Cullen & Fu, 2013). The decision of the Chinese government to become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) might be considered a starting point for China to be involved in globalization. Moreover, it helps to reduce the state's controls and interventions in the system of the media industry. The first breakthrough was the transformation from the market socialism model to the state-controlled capitalist corporation model,

which meant the media corporation could operate as a venture. At the same time, the state was a majority stakeholder. The second breakthrough is that the Chinese government divided the model of “state ownership and commercial operation” into two parts, the first part, media organizations’ editor remains unchanged and still under state control. The other part, business operations, which includes advertising and business circulation, were allowed to be fully under private ownership (Wang & Ang, 2010).

China’s decision to open the media market for private and foreign investment did not eliminate the control of the China Communist Party over the media content (Shirk, 2007). Nevertheless, the Government does not try to stop people from following the news from other countries. However, they are concerned about the media content related to political subjects because the main role of media in China is to play specific roles on behalf of the government. Therefore, every publication in China must have a government license, which is limited. It depends on the credibility of the media organization (Shirk, 2007). Moreover, most of the chiefs of magazines and newspapers in China are headed and supervised by government officers or party members.

Despite experiencing several kinds of change, these reforms do not bring any fundamental revision to the media policy. One of the examples of the WTO's impact on media regulation in China is allowing western movies to enter the Chinese film industry market. However, there is still a strict limitation regarding the amount of the movie. Under the new regulation, only 20 movies per year can be shown in the cinema. In addition, the content of the movie will also be censored through the China Film Group (Economic & Commission, 2019). This situation happened to protect the local movie production and avoid Western influences on society.

### **Technological pressure**

The coming of new media has been growing faster than the economic sector (Tan et al., 1997). Moreover, Zhang (2006), in her article, Behind the ‘Great Firewall, ’ shows her agreement with Eko’s argument (2001) that it is complicated to produce Internet regulation because the regulator should consider political and cultural values before deciding. Because the Internet regulation should reflect an interaction of societies, communities, and governments.

The most interesting thing is how the changes in technology in new media have affected reshaping media law, regulation, and governance. A few scholars argue that the Internet will transform China become a democratic nation and would lead to the loss of control from the government to the flow of information (L. L. Zhang, 2006). However, there is much evidence that shows different things about the use of the Internet and the regulation of the Internet in China.

The Internet is a growing factor in the flow of information in China. Many people in China and worldwide believe that the Internet could bring openness and a freer flow of information to China (Hachigian & Peng, 2010). Since there is difficulty in controlling the Internet, the government attempts to use a combination of old and new regulation methods to control the Internet. According to Liang in Zhang's (2006) article, she found that china had shown a significant result in controlling the content of the internet while at the same time increasing economic development and political power.

The other thing the Chinese government did to regulate the flow of information in China is by filtering and blocking a few sites on the Internet to deny users access to those kinds of foreign news, human rights organizations and any sites that could lead society to object (Hachigian, 2001). This action aims to avoid the influences of the United States on Chinese society.

The Internet regulation in China forced all users to register with the Ministry of Public Security (MPS). The individual users must fill out the police report form, which goes to MPS to set up an Internet account, although they use computers in an Internet café. The new users must sign a Net Access Responsibility agreement; the other words, they swear they will not do something endangering the

state, obstruct public safety or access pornography sites. Finally, the dial-up account must have an ISP with information and the permission number from MPS in their modem (Tan,1997).

Recently, the development of technology in new media has impacted the restriction of content and Internet access in China, which is more flexible than in the former era. First, fewer than four government agencies have legalised the interconnection with the international Internet. Second, there are four administering organizations of Internet services, which are recognized as diverse and competitive. Third, the blocking site is mostly attempted at windows dressing, and the last change is the monitoring by MPS as a primary warning. Recently, China unblocked several international news sites, such as CNN, although the political site remains on the blocking list (Tan, 1997).

However, the changes in Internet regulation do not mean that the form of the regulation is ineffectual. There are four examples of people the Chinese government arrested because of the content of their writing on the Internet. First, the AIDS activist Wan Yanhai was arrested for writing related information about AIDS on the internet; second, Du Daobin was Jailed for posting a call for democracy. Moreover, four students were imprisoned for posting political essays for eight to ten years. Finally, Zang Shengqi, along with his two other friends, were arrested because of his report about government repression of members of the catholic church.

Another rapidly growing media technology in China is the mobile phone. In January 2004, the statistic shows that China has more users of mobile phones compared to the United States. Text messaging is used extensively in China for interpersonal communication. During the huge case in China, The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) text message was the most effective medium for Chinese people to share the important and often uncensored source of information (Economic & Commission, 2019). However, the government has the technical capability to monitor the text message. SARS in China was a turning point for the relationship between the government and media as a problem of tightly controlled media content. Moreover, Apple had to remove the WI-FI hardware on their famous iPhone for China unicorn to comply with the government standard and enter the Chinese mobile market (Chen, 2011). It is one of the Chinese government's ways to protect and control society's access to the Internet by using Wireless Authentication and Privacy Infrastructure (WAPI). WAPI is the Chinese government standard for wireless encryption and a mandatory security measure (Chen, 2011).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Globalization has a significant impact on the media industry. Many people believe that Globalization has greatly impacted the national form of media law; regulation and governance become more ineffective. In China, for example, the globalizing economy and the development of new technologies have a greater challenge to a national form and even overwhelm a nation politically. Globalization, politics, and society are the main factors in policymaking. As a capitalist nation, joining the WTO is the starting point to enter globalization. However, China had to face several problems regarding the changes in the media industry. WTO forced China to become more open to the world by allowing the foreign and private to own the media companies.

The development of new technologies is another factor in the changes in the media industry. Some scholars predict that the coming of the Internet will bring China to become a democratic nation. The Internet is the infrastructure for society to access information worldwide better than traditional media. Nonetheless, the Chinese government is working to develop better regulations to control the flow of information on the Internet.

However, China has successfully controlled all media content, systems, and organizations through its media law while simultaneously increasing economic and political power development. The Chinese government still has the power to control all the media, and those changes do not change the fundamentals of media regulation.

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