CHINESE RESPONSES TO AMERICAN MASS MEDIA IN TAIWAN*

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People's knowledge of and attitudes toward another nation and its citizens come from a variety of sources, the various media of communication being the most pervasive. Indeed, mass media function as agents of social, cultural, and educational exchange in a rapidly shrinking world. A Chinese could hardly tell you what he knows

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about the United States and her people without referring to sources such as television programs and movies manufactured in and imported from the United States. While some Chinese come to know the United States first-hand by visiting the country or having personal contact with her people, American mass media nevertheless can serve as their very first sources of knowledge, even prior to schooling at the age of six. This makes the role of American mass media unusually important in shaping the complicated impressions a Chinese may hold toward the United States. Will the media be the message?

The omnipresence and pervasiveness of the American television series/serials and movies have made the flow of global information a one-way traffic. This is true with American books, newspapers, and magazines to a lesser degree. In fact, to live with the American media has become a way of life for most people in the rest of the free world. The Chinese people are no exception.

While the consequence of exposure to the American media is subject to individual interpretation and is difficult to track by empirical means, the behavioral responses to it is not. This paper will discuss the flow of the American mass media into China, with reference to radio technology and printed media content dating back to the era prior to 1949. We will analyze the patterns of influence the American media has had on Taiwan and how people here react to them by focusing on the flow of American information into Taiwan. And finally the interaction between inflow content and local responses will be examined in a broader context known as global information order.

THE BACKGROUND

The first radio station in China was built in 1921 by American businessman P. Osborne’s Radio Corporation of China in Shanghai. Its pioneering operation lasted for two months before it ceased operation because there were no receiving set available at that time. Later the American–owned Electrical Equipment Company set up another 50–watt radio station. Game shows and advertisements were broadcast but the response was cool during its six–month operation, again due to unpopularity of radio receiving sets among the port city residents.

Radio broadcasting grew into a full–fledged business when another American company set up a 250–watt station at its Shanghai office in 1924. It aired business news, opera, church announcements and advertisements. It cooperated with a Chinese daily newspaper Shin Pao for news supply. By the time the station was closed in 1929, the number of radio receiving set in Shanghai and its surrounding area had jumped to 30,000. The station had profound impact on the future of radio broadcasting in China. For one, radio stations soon bloomed all over coastal China. Most of them brought their transmission facilities from the United States. For example, the Ministry of Transportation built the first government radio station “CONT”
in 1927, using a 500-watt Western Electrical Co. transmitter to broadcasting to Tianjin’s 3000 radio sets.

For another, the success of this radio station and the warm response from the audience, including a few Chinese who could own an expensive radio set, caught the attention of K. F. Chen (Tsang, 1966), then Chiang Kai-shek’s senior advisor. He saw radio as a medium for both information and national development, and wanted to use it to get the ruling party’s message across to a great many people who were ignorant of what the ruling party, the Kuomintang, was doing. This was the period when the government was battling with militant separatists in northern China in an effort to reunite the nation. The war ended in 1928 and Chen was asked by the Kuomintang Executive Committee to build a radio station which was named Central Broadcasting Station (technically KMX), using again a 500-watt American transmitter. During World War II it was expanded into a huge network with radio signals covering most of China Mainland and Far East. The network was moved to Taiwan after 1949 and has become a governmental organization for “psychological warfare” against mainland China.

It can be seen that the development of radio industry in China has been associated with American technology. Although there were a few exceptions in which new radio stations were built by other makers such as Telefunken, technological dependency on American makers is a case that can be made clearly for China’s radio broadcasting in the early years.

However, China’s response to American news agencies and newspapers was not as significant, except in the years immediately preceding to the fall of mainland China to the communists.

The British Reuters dominated sources of news flowing in and out of China for 60 years. It started its news service business in Shanghai as early as 1872. Wires were supplied solely to North China Daily News, a British-owned English newspaper, and soon to other Shanghai English and Chinese newspapers as well. It was in 1937 when Reuters signed a contract for news exchange with the Central News Agency (CHA), a Kuomintang creation in 1924 and the only national news service to be the mouthpiece of the nation at a time of crisis. Other foreign news agencies, including the United Press that came to Shanghai in 1929, followed to give CNA exclusive right to distribute news in Chinese to the nation. The United Press (later the United Press International) nevertheless was able to play a greater role after the Chinese government moved to Taiwan. We will come back to this later.

Similarly, both Chinese newspapers and foreign language newspapers published in China seemed to be little affected by the American influence. Modern Chinese language newspapers looked closer to their Japanese counterparts because most of the early journalists were trained in Japan. For example, there were no “society pages” or “society columns” commonly found among western newspapers. Instead, society news was a synonym for crime and/or other sensational items which were
usually jammed into the third page of a newspaper as found among Japanese newspapers (Ma, 1984).

But the American mass media did influence Chinese journalism in a peculiar way unmatched by other big powers.

For example, journalism education in China was, and still is, American in miniature. So was the conception of news. The persons most responsible for bringing American journalism to China were Hollington Tong and Walter Williams. Tong was the first Chinese student to study in the United States. He was graduated in 1912 from the College of Journalism at the University of Missouri and went to the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University the same year. In 1913 when Tong was heading for home on a steamer from Yokohama to Shanghai, he met Dr. Sun Yat-sen who overthrew the Ching Dynasty a few months earlier to become the founding father of the new Republic. Tong not only interviewed Dr. Sun for an article he promised to a New York newspaper, but also became deeply involved in Dr. Sun’s career thereafter. It was with Dr. Sun’s assistance that Tong was able to get his first job as an editor in a Shanghai English newspaper named China Republican. A few years later he worked for Millard’s Review, a Peiking English magazine owned by his Missourian classmate Thomas Millard who was invited to be a consultant to the Chinese government in 1923 (Tsang, 1966; Tong, 1973).

During the early years of his career, Tong worked for, or co-owned, a few more English newspapers, mostly associated with his Missourian alumni and thus bringing into China the American newspaper practice and style. It is appropriate to say that Tong was probably the most significant Chinese journalist in China’s English press community for about one and a half decades. No less significant was the visit to China by Walter Williams in 1921. Although Saint Johns University in Shanghai started its department of journalism in 1920, chaired by D. D. Patterson, managing editor of Millard’s Review, to become the first university-level journalism education program in China, William’s visit “made great impact upon early journalism education in China. From then on, the Chinese journalism educators were mostly graduates of the University of Missouri, and the curriculum and instruction methods were a copycat of it” (Tsang, 1966: 677). In fact, the College of Journalism at the University of Missouri helped set up a journalism program at Yenking University with financial assistance and an educational exchange program for visiting journalism professors. Other American institutions of journalism education followed to provide similar programs to some other Chinese universities henceforth.

Later, U.S. correspondents in China reporting on General Joseph Stilwell’s mission to China and the Chinese communist activities induced furious reaction from the Chinese government near the end of the World War II. The issue in question centered around news censorship imposed upon the U.S. press corps in Chungking. Some reports were considered unfavorable, sometimes distorted, from the standpoint of the Chinese government. Tong was the person in charge.
This, then, is the background against which the relationship between R.O.C. and U.S.A. can be properly dealt with insofar as the flow of information through the mass media is concerned. The more novel a medium is in terms of technology, the more likely the Chinese will depend upon the American. The development of radio industry in China in early years is a case in point. However, for the older medium, the newspaper, the pattern of interaction is mainly related to the know-how or the content of the medium. U.S. reporting of China in the years preceding to the fall of mainland China to the Communists is seen by the government and the intellectual community as deadly detrimental to the country. It has had spillover effect, as we shall see.

NEWS AFTER 1949

Thereafter the lesson was said to have been learned. Censorship of foreign publication flowing into Taiwan has continued under National Mobilization Law of 1942, Martial Law of 1948, and other related ordinances such as Ministry of Defense’s Regulation of Publication Control during Martial Time in Taiwan Area, an ordinance based on Martial Law. Besides listing the kind of conditions under which the publication will be prohibited, the Regulation specifies that Taiwan Garrison Command is the authority in charge of suppressing freedom of speech, including free flow of news, and that prior censorship of publication will be enforced accordingly.

The responses to foreign mass media are of two categories. Bad news or any item critical of the nationalist government in the foreign press are ignored since they are regarded inconsistent with national interest and therefore a deaf ear is turned. Although these items may be adapted and classified as “reference materials” for circulation among a small size of high ranking government and political leaders, the public is totally unaware of the changes occurring outside the the Island throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

On other occasions, the items were met with blackening, deleting, cutting or complete banning of the whole issue. All in-going newspapers and magazines were subject to censorship for different reasons. Even Henry Luce’s Time, once considered as an objective and friendly newsmagazine, was placed under suppression. The editorials of the New York Times were given enormous attention all the time because it was seen as an elite newspaper whose editorials tended to reflect U.S. official points of view, or the ones held by the American leaders.

Taiwan’s newspapers would give space on the news page for favorable reporting by the foreign press but commented on the unfavorable ones in the editorial columns. Many more were suspended and never made available to the general public. As a result, what really was happening in the United Nations and U.S. went unreported or distorted. Consequently, the public was shocked to a great extent when
the United Nations voted to seat mainland China in 1971, and again when the United States, perceived as a long time ally and faithful friend, decided to sever her diplomatic relations with Taiwan and to recognize mainland China instead. These developments were comprehended as out of the context by many people because, by and large, our local newspapers did not carry adequate information about the real picture of the changing scenario of international politics.

This is not to say that Taiwan Garrison Command should be credited with sole responsibility for a lack of public knowledge. Nor is news censorship a weapon against the American mass media alone. The provision of Martial Law did not go as far to enforce prior censorship to local mass media. What has affected the media content most is self-discipline or self-restraint of the press that runs counter to provocative reporting by some newspapers just before the fall of mainland China into the Communist’s hands. Provocative or not, it is true that self-restraint of the local press is a norm governing the responses to content of imported foreign media in general, and the ones from mainland China in particular.

Censorship of imported or domestic media remains effective after the dissolution of Martial Law in summer 1987, but the power of censoring is given back to the Government Information Office (GIO) of the Executive Yuan. The National Mobilization Law prevails again. To be fair, strict censorship of the imported foreign media has been somewhat loosened in recent years to allow a freer flow of information through the mass media. For example, pictures of the mainland China leaders on the cover of major newsmagazines such as Newsweek and Time used to be torn up or marked with “bandit chief” in black ink before going to the newsstands, now they are kept intact most of the time.

It can be seen that the restrictions have more to do with politics than culture, and there is no doubt that Taiwan depends on American mass media for most of her information around the world. There are few newspapers which can afford to send their own correspondents abroad on regular basis, except China Times and the United Daily News. The big two keep about half-a-dozen correspondents each in major Asian cities and the United States, leaving much of the world reporting to foreign news agencies. Central News Agency (CNA), the largest news agency set up in 1924 in Canton by the Kuomintang to represent the nation's interest, can now extend its news coverage to little more than a dozen cities worldwide. This leaves our local editors no choice but to fill up foreign news pages with wire stories dispatched by world major news agencies, an experience similar to that of many developing countries struggling toward a more balanced flow of world information (MacBride, 1980).

Numerically speaking, foreign news in Chinese newspapers is not as visible as it is in some of the world elite newspapers. In a study of selected world newspapers in 1970, foreign news content as percentages of total news space was 43.7 percent for the German Die Welt, 38.0 percent for the Soviet Pravda, 28.7 percent for the Christ-
ian Science Monitor, 22.4 percent for the London Times, and 16.4 percent for the New York Times (Gerbner and Marvanyi, 1984). In Taiwan our major newspapers devoted between 15 to 20 percent of the total news hole to foreign news, with little variation from year to year and from paper to paper since mid-1970s (Lee, 1976; Liao, 1980).

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<th>Source of Foreign News in Four Chinese Newspapers</th>
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<tr>
<td>1979*</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPI</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
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<td>Reuter</td>
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<td>CNA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Writers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Source: * Liao, 1980  ** Lin, 1987

It should be noted that the proportion of foreign news to total space, advertisement space, or other non-news space such as literary supplements has been decreasing over the decades. Although the number of pages allowed to be printed each day has been increased from 4 to 12, the added space was, more often than not, given to support advertisement and other non-news items. As a result, the proportion of foreign news to the total space has been kept down for most of the papers.

Further examination shows that the structure of foreign news, i.e., the sources of news item, has been also undergone parallel transition. Table 1 shows that while American AP and UPI continued to dominate the sources of foreign news in Chinese newspapers, their combined percentage decreased from 55.0 percent in 1979 to 45.0 percent in 1986.

Interestingly, the shrinking share of the two American news agencies was not proportionately accompanied by an increase from the European counterparts, AFP and Reuters. Even CNA suffered a loss in competing for its share in local papers. However, remarkable gain was found in categories of Staff Writers, including foreign correspondents and guest columnists, and other suppliers such as syndicated features and cartoons and copyrighted special reports authorized to the local press. Together these sources of news items made great stride in gaining a foreign news
share from 10.6 percent in 1979 to 21.7 percent in 1986.

Still, the United States is the country reported most often in the local press. News about the United States occupied 27.2 percent of foreign news hole in the four Chinese newspapers under study, a ratio higher than that appeared in the Arab press (Lin, 1987; Dajani and Donohue 1973; El Sarayrah, 1986). Other countries given substantial coverage were the Communist China 7.3 percent, the Soviet Union 6.5 percent, Japan 5.4 percent, the Philippines 3.9 percent, and South Korea 3.8 percent, all lagging far below the number of items devoted to the United States (Lin, 1987).

Structurally, the analysis amounts to the question of the definition of news as far as international reporting is concerned. Clearly, the construction of news has to do with, first, relational proximity and, second, geographical proximity. Tops on the ranking list are those countries close to Taiwan relationally and/or geographically. Proximity predefines how the news map will be constructed. And when proximity takes up new dimensions, the news map will be reconstructed accordingly. Thus when Taiwan decided to reintegration its foreign relationship with the rest of the world by reducing its dependency on the United States, the percentage of news devoted to it decreased from around 30 percent in late-1970s to 25 percent in mid-1980s (Lin, 1987). And, as mentioned earlier, AP and UPI still are the major sources of foreign news in the Chinese press here, they nevertheless are playing a less significant role than the years before.

To be sure, the changing national interest is but one of the factors that accounts for the restructuring of foreign news flow into Taiwan in the last ten years or so. Another factor has to do with competition for domestic market among rival newspapers. Major papers have been trying to diversify their sources for international news by (1) increasing own correspondents to foreign cities, (2) contracting with specialized suppliers for syndicated feature stories, by-line columns, and cartoons from foreign sources, (3) inviting more guest writers from overseas Chinese communities, (4) using more European wires, and (5) creating task forces within the organization to provide background information or to do analysis on current foreign affairs. The name of the game as it is said is to “enhance a global perspective in international coverage” and to “localize foreign news reporting”. The big ones are doing remarkably well on these, at the expense of reducing the number of news releases from American news agencies. The only one news service that promised to bring news on international affairs to its citizens is CNA which has failed in its effort to gain a larger share on foreign news in the Chinese press. It’s the big newspapers themselves, not CNA, that have succeeded for the first time in their attempt to decrease the degree of dependence on the American news agencies.
MOTION PICTURES

The changing pattern of relationship between the Chinese newspapers and the American press/news agencies has gone unnoticed by the general public. Whatever the responses may be, they are reflected at the institutional level and therefore beyond the comprehension of ordinary Chinese newspaper readers. The motion picture industry seems not to follow the same pattern of response. Any transition relating to the presence of American motion picture industry in Taiwan is a matter of both institutional and individual adjustment, and hence is more likely to draw the public's attention on a variety of issues.

At the institutional level, the most prominent issue relating to foreign films in recent years is protectionism. American films have dominated Taiwan market since the government moved to Taiwan. It was estimated that during the years between 1950 to 1954, some 70 or 80 percent of the films were originated in the United States. In order to protect the local film industry from foreign competition, an Allocation of Import Quotas for Foreign Movies was introduced in 1954. Based on the total number of imported films that particular year, quotas were then allocated to foreign countries to set the maximum amount of films that can be imported to Taiwan for the next year. For the first time in 1954, total number was set at 444, among that 349 or 78.6 percent were allocated to American films, 59 or 13.3 percent to European films, and 34 or less than 8 percent to Japanese films (Bureau of Culture Affairs, 1971).

The bottom row of Table 2 shows that ratio of the American film quota had been declining over the last 30 years since the quota system was put into effect. Notice that the number of imported American films allocated to Chinese companies (the second row) remained steady while that allocated to the Eight Major Companies of the United States (the third row) was reduced to a nominal 50 in 1985. The proportion of American films was down to 29.1 percent of the total quotas, indicating that other countries were importing more and more films into the market formerly dominated by Hollywood.

Table 2 also shows that the number of local film production has increased significantly over the years following the inception of quota system on foreign films. On the surface it seems that the protectionism works. In fact, this may not be the case.

Firstly, the local films are mostly of poor quality. Many of them were kept in the storage and never got a chance to go to the screen. In terms of audience size, foreign films as a whole has outstripped local films by a large margin. Overall American films tend to win the largest share from the foreign film market in Taiwan. For instance, among the top ten box offices for foreign films in Taipei area in 1983, very much like the years before, nine were imported by the Eight Major Companies
### Table 2: Number of Chinese Movies and Quotas for Foreign Movies

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<tr>
<td>Local Movies Produced</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>186</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Quota to C(1)*</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Quota to A(2)**</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Quota (3)=(1)+(2)</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Quotas (4)</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% American Quota (3)/(4)</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>29.1</td>
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Source: Compiled by the author, based on: (1) various issues of Cinema in R.O.C. Yearbook, and (2) personal communication to GIO.

Notes:  
* Number of movies allocated to Chinese import companies.  
** Number of movies allocated to American companies, known as the Eight Major Companies.

(Wang, 1985). And six out of the top ten in 1985 were of American origin but the number distributed by the Eight Major Companies was reduced to three. The other three went to independent Chinese motion picture importers who distribute foreign films to local market (Wang, 1986). This was the year the Allocation of Import Quotas for Foreign Movies was abandoned, and the local importers were set free to compete for importation of American films with the Eight Major Companies for the first time in thirty years. The lifting of import quotas applies to other countries too. Thus the market can possibly be loaded with foreign movies if local ones were unable to draw a lion's share of the audience by upgrading film quality in the next few years.

Secondly, American film producers are in better position than others to play a major role. When the quota was imposed in 1954, American movies in Taiwan were virtually unchallenged and a quota of 78 percent was given, leaving 22 percent to all other countries on an unequal footing. If it were not due to the depression in the movie industry which caused Hollywood to reduce its yearly production, the Eight Major Companies would have been able to meet the quota at 277 per year since 1955, thus edging away competitors from other countries including Japan. Historically, the Japanese movie was most welcome by a portion of segmented audience who had learned to speak the Japanese language in a time when the Island was placed under Japanese occupation. The Japanese movie was banned for political reasons when formal relations between the two governments was severed. This was a period in which the American movie was a synonym of foreign movies to the Chinese audience, and good European films were kept out (Huang, 1987). In 1985, the GIO requested all foreign film importers to pay an NT$ 200,000 tariff for each film im-
ported for raising a fund to assist the local film industry, the Eight Major Companies took no time to bring the issue to the U.S. Congress. The issue was finally called off in the 1985 Sino–American trading negotiation, together with the then thirty–year–old Allocation of Import Quotas for Foreign Movies. At last, the protectionism for local films came to an end amidst a rising attitude of the same from the other side—this time it is the U.S. trading deficit that calls for protectionism.

It goes without saying that the U.S. government assistance to business has facilitated the global flow of American motion pictures and television programs and helped perpetuate American media dominance around the world (Guback, 1984). According to Guback, the Webb Act of 1918 permits companies supposedly competitive in the American market to combine as a cartel for foreign trade, as well as to fix prices and allocate customers in overseas markets. The act qualified exemptions from antitrust laws were the basis for the incorporation in 1945 of the Motion Picture Export Association of America, which allowed joint action to market their products in certain foreign countries.

The counter–action taken by the Chinese government was of several folds. Chinese films are encouraged to export with relatively little support from the government. The flow of Chinese films into the United States has been limited in number and restricted to be circulated in small Chinese communities. In addition to Allocation of Quotas discussed above, there were Procedures for Foreign Film Import Control of 1954 and Criteria of Movie Censorship of 1946. The content of foreign movies is put under constant surveillance for the same reason given elsewhere. In Taiwan it is the young and the educated components of the population who make up foreign film audience, and American television audience as well. In the case of television in Taiwan where foreign programs are solely monopolized by American distributors in its early years, the medium seems to be American—if not the message.

TELEVISION

The development of television broadcasting in Taiwan constitutes a model that can not easily fit into any existing social theories. To begin with, the equipment and technology are Japanese. At the inception of Taiwan Television Company (TTV), Taiwan’s first television network, four Japanese companies held 40 percent share of the investment, and six out of fifteen board members were Japanese. Much like many other industrial ventures in Taiwan, TTV turned to Japan for hardware without prior assessment of the likely consequences in the future. It seemed a natural and uncontroversial choice for the planning committee not to do otherwise, given the fact that the two countries were closely related in culture, economics, and industry, and that most Chinese committee members were either businessmen or politicians long associated with the Japanese.
However, Japanese television programming was shut out completely because a strong anti-Japanese sentiment prevailed during and before World War II, and because the colonized Island was culturally separated from its homeland for decades and therefore it was imperative to keep Japanese television programs out of Taiwan. This is different from the way American motion picture distribution is controlled. Briefly, a limited number of Japanese-produced movies were allowed to flow in under the quotas before 1973. When Japan established its diplomatic relations with mainland China, Japanese movie importation was abruptly halted until 1985. Recently, the government is cautiously reintroducing Japanese film to the market again.

It can be seen that the nature of media makes a huge difference in transnational flow as far as the reactions from the targeted market is concerned. Whereas motion pictures may be richer in carrying cultural materials than any television program, the latter is nevertheless greeted with caution presumably because of its popularity and immediacy. This seems especially true if the two countries are politically at odds with each other. Apparently, foreign television is more likely to be made the scapegoat for indigenous culture dilution than imported motion pictures.

The story was quite different for American television programs, though. They were met with open arms from the beginning of Taiwan's television business. It was estimated that a total of 40 percent TTV's programs were imported American film serials after the network went to the air in 1962. When CTV entered into the market in 1969 to put an end to TTV monopoly, the average proportion of the imported programs dropped to around 30 percent of the total broadcasting time. In 1981, the three networks averaged 17 percent (CTV, 1982). The imported television programs are all American with but a few exceptions. If it were not due to an experimentation with a public television network which is bringing in some BBC serials and series in the last three-and-a-half years, our audience would have watched no non-U.S. foreign television programs at all.

Hwang (1984) identified five factors that led to a reduction of imported American programs over the now one-fourth century of Taiwan's television history: (1) that the 1976 Broadcasting and Television Law restricted imported programs to no more than 30 percent, (2) that they were levied by the government, (3) that rental fees were increased and that video tape technology made local production cheaper than before, (4) that advertisers preferred to support local shows, and (5) that local television workers fought for job opportunities.

One might add two more factors to the list. For one, the imported television programs were regulated by Allocation on Import Quotas for Foreign Movies, because there was no special rule to control the flow of foreign television programs. All television serials and series were treated as theatrical films and were therefore subject to the same governmental procedure. In its first year in operation, TTV was lucky enough to be given all it wanted in filling up necessary broadcasting logs. Although the quotas had been expanded several times in subsequent years following
extensions of daily broadcasting time, the number of programs earmarked in 1970 was only half the number TTV expected. It was only after TTV promised to import programs not exceeding 40 percent of its broadcasting need that the quota became no longer a problem (TTV, 1982). It must be remembered that that was the time six years before the Broadcasting and Television Law became ex post facto to impose a 30 percent ceiling on foreign television program importation. Still, to what extent did the quota system cause a reduction in the number of American programs, or to put it differently, an increase in the number of indigenous programs, was not entirely clear.

A second factor leading to a reduction in American films was the competition for bigger audience shares among the three networks. The desire to achieve higher advertising revenues has direct effect on the distribution of program types. Generally, the trend is toward more local productions and less imports as mediated by a free market law. The history clearly illustrates this. “I Love Lucy” is the first American TV serial ever be shown on the Chinese television screen. No sooner had it become a hit than TTV began to air two additional imported serials each day of the week. Whereas the imported shows were mostly scheduled to be broadcast at prime time, the local ones were then at their infant age and not as popular as the imports. This was an era when TTV had monopoly over the television business.

By the time when two more networks were added to share a growing audience pie, CTV in 1969 and CTS in 1971, there was great demand for American serials and series to fill up daily time slots. Needless to say, the quality of local programs had been improved substantially over the years, and each a new network would try its best at the outset to dominate the market with locally–made variety and song and dance shows. Never again had foreign programs appeared to satisfy the audience, not even “Dallas” which had been taken seriously by audiences elsewhere. And, as might be predicted, the advertisers withdrew their commercials formerly allocated to Hollywood productions (TTV, 1982). The networks reacted quickly. New programming and scheduling strategies were soon on the board. The ratio of foreign programs to total broadcasting time was down to less than 20 percent by mid–70s. As a result, Taiwan is now one of the few newly industrialized countries with indigenous TV output higher than 80 percent.

The changing pattern of Taiwan’s response to American TV shows can further be examined in another way: the broadcasting language. Much like foreign motion pictures, the imported TV programs were as usual broadcast with original American sound together with Chinese subtitles. But unlike some countries such as Japan and France where foreign programs are commonly dubbed with local languages to make TV viewing easier. The networks did try in vain to familiarize our viewers with dubbed foreign programs. The exceptions are cartoons which are aimed at children who can read no Chinese subtitles at all. This does not hold true any more. In fact, programs dubbed in Chinese are gaining ground gradually, and the viewers seem to be
more patient with them, if not in favor of them. Against this trend is a highly selective group of audience, mostly the young and the educated, who ranks foreign programs their favorite television category (Chung and Lo, 1987) and are unhappy with the dubbing practice.

And finally television news. Again, AP and UPI are the major news agencies that serve the three networks for news around the world. For visual materials, the British video film agencies UPITN and Visnews formerly supplied what was needed here, overtaking the American WTN. This year sees for the first time daily direct news transmission by CNN, the Atlanta-based American television news service, supposedly due to freer satellite traffic between the United States and Taiwan.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

This paper is tailored to analyze Chinese responses to major American mass media in the last 40 years or so. Patterns of response were depicted through a historical account of each of the American media as they were presented here. The way they have encountered the Chinese media system during their interaction was documented from local social and cultural perspectives. Major events that altered the process of change both at institutional and individual levels were taken out to characterize patterns of interaction for each medium. No attempt was given to discuss any cognitive change that might have incurred within an individual since there has been abundant literature available on this topic. Information flow across national borders surely will do something to, and something with, individuals who are constantly exposed to it. But this would take quite a few focused studies to demonstrate in empirical terms that the impact of American mass media on knowledge and attitude is there.

At the core of the issue is the idea of free flow of global information advocated by the United States and condemned by the third world as "media imperialism" (see, for example, MacBride, 1980). The U.S. policy was succinctly summarized in a recent report by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Department of Commerce, as to "promote an international environment for the provision of telecommunications and information facilities, services, and equipment——and for the production and dissemination of information itself——in which maximum reliance is placed on free enterprise, open and competitive markets, and free trade and investment with minimum direct government involvement or regulation " (NTIA, 1983:12). The third world sees the idea as a U.S. conspiracy to dominate, or to colonize foreign mass media markets because there exists no equal footing for competition between the two in the first place, therefore the term "media imperialism" was coined.

In examining the Chinese response to American television, Lee (1980) concluded that media imperialism in Taiwan "has been resisted with considerable suc-
cess amid a heavy political and economic dependence. The American media influences have been kept deliberately restrained, whereas the Japanese media influences are insignificant” (Lee, 1980:165). In his analysis of media autonomy and media self-sufficiency in Taiwan, the internal political-economic structure functions not only as a buffer but also as a brake to check the infusion of imperialism syndrome whenever and wherever possible.

In the area of transnational flow of information, another theory widely used by the third theoreticians is “dependency” theory. Under this broad umbrella, media relationship between any two countries can be explained in terms of their absolute positions along a center–peripheral, or core–marginal positioning. Those who are advanced in media technology and media software are centers or sub-centers. Others positioned near another extreme are countries with scarce mass media resources. The marginals rely upon the cores for information from the genesis. To be better off, one has to get involved further to develop a system proliferating from the core country, thus making the dependency an everlasting relationship.

This, then, is the so-called dependency theory widely disseminated around the turn of 1970 by a group of radical Latin American social scientists. Hwang (1984) looked at Taiwan’s television programming and admitted that the television industry has clearly demonstrated a pattern of dependency, yet “the cause of dependency is not reflected in the assumptions of the dependency perspective. It was because of internal needs and emulation rather than foreign pressures that Taiwans television industry developed a dependent, asymmetric, and unreciprocal relationship with the U.S. and Japan” (Hwang, 1984:187).

It seems to us that Lee and Hwang are inconsistent in their conclusions. Both take television industry as their focal point of research. The frameworks they have adopted to analyze the same settings—one is media imperialism and another dependency—are but two versions of a developmental perspective, to run the risk of being oversimplification. Lee seemed to be more interested in long-range, holistic observation while Hwang was more obsessed with periodic usage by local networks of both authorized and pirated American television formats and materials. It is no surprise that they have come to somewhat different conclusions for their studies. Nevertheless, they both attributed internal character embedded in the society as sources of deviation from their theoretical frameworks. For Lee it is political-economic; for Hwang it is social-structural.

Whatever the explanations may there be, the indigenous social system is a good point to start with, indeed. Two levels of analysis in order: one systemic and another behavioral.

At the heart of system is government regulations in the area of mass communications. These include censorship of printed materials, quotas for motion pictures and television programs, and prohibitions of mass media ownership and advertising control. They set constraints to the flow of American mass media into Taiwan
and help shape local market into a mediated rather than a free marketplace which is
the basis needed for media imperialism or dependency theory to work.

At the behavorial level, the market mechanism works only to the the extent the
oligarchical monopoly can afford to. In fact, both newspaper and television indus-
tries are monopolized oligarchically, and they react to American mass media in iden-
tical ways but with different outcome. The competition between big newspapers has
helped reduce significantly their reliance on U.S. news agencies for international
news coverage. Quality of news is enhanced as more materials with "local angle" is
added. Although competition among the three television networks also works to-
ward the direction of reducing American TV serials and series, mass entertainment
with little relevance to local culture emerges to the front. It can be seen that the na-
ture of media does play a role with regard to the way they react to foreign media
flow.

The Chinese resposes to American mass media can only be discussed in a con-
text vis-a-vis other countries, developed or underdeveloped. The point is that once
commercialism is a system in force, television language is American. It forecloses an
expression of indigenous culture regardless of the number of foreign programs
shown on the television screen. The same can be said of movie and radio industries.
It may not be the content that counts. It may be the format, the plot and the genre.
Thus the impact of American mass media might be more real than apparent, and
more subtle than what the empirical evidence has been able to suggest. Perhaps the
media are the messages.

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