

## Beyond the Market Myth

A Research on the Dual Broadcasting System and its Inspirations for China's Ongoing Television System Reform

von  
Li Zeng

1. Auflage

Nomos Baden-Baden 2014

Verlag C.H. Beck im Internet:  
[www.beck.de](http://www.beck.de)

ISBN 978 3 8487 0371 5



ZENG

Li Zeng

Media, market, propaganda ... Today Chinese television is carrying a dual role as official mouthpiece and cash cow. The author, nevertheless, attempts to discuss the possibility of restoring the gradually vanishing public remit in Chinese television by integrating the dual broadcasting system into the current reform scheme in her book "Beyond the Market Myth".

**The Author:**

Dr. Li Zeng studied English for tourism at Nankai university in Tianjin and journalism at Renmin university in Beijing, China. Furthermore, she received a Master in British Studies as well as a Ph.D. from Humboldt university Berlin. She worked in China as a journalist and editor for Beijing Cable Television and CCTV. Currently, Dr. Zeng is head of the German-Chinese association for media and culture in Berlin.

Beyond the Market Myth

# Beyond the Market Myth

A Research on the Dual Broadcasting System and its Inspirations for China's Ongoing Television System Reform



33



Nomos

Schriften zur Medienwirtschaft und zum  
Medienmanagement

herausgegeben von  
Prof. Dr. Mike Friedrichsen  
Prof. Dr. Robert G. Picard  
Prof. Dr. Elena Vartanova

Band 33

Li Zeng

# **Beyond the Market Myth**

**A Research on the Dual Broadcasting  
System and its Inspirations for  
China's Ongoing Television System Reform**



**Nomos**

The philosophical faculty III of Humboldt University Berlin accepted this thesis as a dissertation in the winter term of 2012/2013.

© Coverpicture: fotolia.de

**Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek** lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>

a.t.: Berlin, Humboldt University, Phil. Fak. III, Diss., 2012/2013

ISBN: HB 978-3-8487-0371-5  
ePDF 978-3-8452-4680-2

**British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: HB 978-3-8487-0371-5

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Zeng, Li

Beyond the Market Myth

A Research on the Dual Broadcasting System and its Inspirations for China's Ongoing Television System Reform

Li Zeng

254 p.

Includes bibliographic references and index.

ISBN 978-3-8487-0371-5

1. Edition 2014

© Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, Germany 2014. Printed and bound in Germany.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, re-cording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers. Under § 54 of the German Copyright Law where copies are made for other than private use a fee is payable to "Verwertungsgesellschaft Wort", Munich.

No responsibility for loss caused to any individual or organization acting on or refraining from action as a result of the material in this publication can be accepted by Nomos or the autor(s)/editor(s).

## Contents

List of Abbreviations	9
List of Figures	11
Introduction	13
I. Subject of Research	13
II. Conduct and Methods of Research	16
III. Significance of Research	18
Chapter 1 Some Related Theories to the Transition of Chinese Television System	21
1.1. The model of the gradual transition of Chinese economy from plan to market	21
1.2. Kops' geometric exposition of broadcasting systems	25
1.3. McQuail's media policy change model	28
Part 1 Market as a Myth: the Transition of Chinese Television System	31
Chapter 2 A Historical Review of the Transition of Chinese Television	33
2.1. The Starting Position and the Basic Philosophy	35
2.2. The Experimental Years (1958-1977)	36
2.2.1. The advent of Chinese television	36
2.2.2. The structure of Chinese television system	38
2.2.3. Chinese television under the planned economy	39
2.3. The Proliferation of Television (1978-1991)	41
2.3.1. The "four-level system" policy	41
2.3.2. Advertising and the funding of television	45
2.3.3. The germination and a prolonged setback of the public logic in television	49
2.4. The Rule of the Market Economy (1992-2000)	52
2.4.1. Television "reform" with market mechanism at all levels in the multi-channel era	53
2.4.2. The commercial reality of Chinese television	59
2.4.3. The triumph of the market logic on the eve of China's accession to the WTO	64
	5

Contents

2.4.4. A state-led “supervision by public opinion” and the absent public in television reform	68
2.5. At the Crossroads (since 2001)	72
2.5.1. The restoration of “public service”: television institutions redefined as shiye unit?	73
2.5.2. Fair play or closed market?	76
2.5.3. Television and the “public”: an emergence of fan democracy, the reflection on vulgarisation of television, and the establishment of “public” channels	83
Chapter 3 Assessing the Transition of Chinese Television	88
3.1. A Working Model of the Transition of Chinese Television	89
3.1.1. Four stages of the extrinsic transition of Chinese television	89
3.1.2. Peculiarities of the transition of Chinese television	92
3.2. Reasons, Consequences and Bottlenecks of the Self-commercialisation of Chinese Television	95
3.2.1. Reasons of the self-commercialisation of Chinese television	95
3.2.2. Consequences of the self-commercialisation of Chinese television	99
3.2.3. Bottlenecks in the ongoing reform process	103
3.3. In Search of an Alternative	107
Part 2 The Dual Broadcasting System and its Inspirations	111
Chapter 4 The Purely Public Service Broadcasting System: the predecessor of the dual broadcasting system	113
4.1. The principles and characteristics of the public service broadcasting	114
4.2. The understandings of broadcasting in the PSB: the BBC as the prototype	117
4.2.1. Broadcasting as a public utility	118
4.2.2. Broadcasting as culture	119
4.2.3. Broadcasting and market	122
4.2.4. Broadcasting and state	124
4.2.5. Broadcasting and audience	128
4.3. The British model of PSB after WWII: domestic criticism, international imitation and European consolidation	131
4.3.1. Domestic criticism and change of the PSB	132
4.3.2. The international imitation of British public service broadcasting and its consolidation in Europe	135

Contents

4.4. Theoretical development of public service broadcasting: the case of West Germany	139
4.4.1. Freedom of broadcast	141
4.4.2. Broadcasting as a cultural matter	144
4.4.3. The organisational form of the public service broadcasting	146
Chapter 5 The Dual Broadcasting System in Britain and Germany	155
5.1. Dual broadcasting system: the advent of the market logic and its impact	157
5.1.1. The first encounter with the market logic in Britain: from the 1950s to the 1970s	157
5.1.2. To redefine broadcasting with the market logic: from the 1980s onwards	161
5.1.2.1. Britain: Mrs. Thatcher's reform and the demise of public commercial broadcasting	162
5.1.2.2. British dual broadcasting system in the post-Thatcher eras	168
5.1.2.3. West Germany: the introduction of private broadcasting in 1984	172
5.1.2.4. German broadcasting in the era of the dual broadcasting system	177
5.2. Co-existence, conflicts and coordination in the dual broadcasting system	185
5.3. Beyond the market myth: the criticism of the American purely commercial broadcasting by the dual broadcasting system	193
5.4. Is the dual broadcasting system an anachronism in the era of Internet?	198
5.5. The failure and success of imitating the dual broadcasting system: the cases of post-Communist Europe and Eastern Asia	204
Chapter 6 Theoretical Analyses of the Dual Broadcasting System and the Inspirations for Chinese Broadcasting Reform	213
6.1. Some theoretical analyses of the dual broadcasting system	213
6.2. The theoretical significance of the dual broadcasting system	220
6.3. What can Chinese broadcasting learn from the dual broadcasting system?	227
Bibliography	237
Index	247