

Table of Contents

Chapter One	
Introduction	1
1. Research Questions and Research Background	3
2. Literature Review	15
3. Hypothesis, Originality, Methodology and Framework of Chapters	27
Chapter Two	
Environmental Agendas and the institutional Predicaments	45
1. Environmental Agendas: for Development Sustainability and Social Stability	45
2. Upgrading Environmental Concern in Political Agendas: the State-led Progress	49
3. Systematic Predicaments: Paradox between Consciousness and Institutional Guarantee	62
4. Demands of Informal Politics: Mobilization and Encouragement of Multiple Participations	76
Chapter Three	
“Social Units” for Embeddedness: Environmental NGO Activism and the Case of Wild Conservation	84
1. Fringe NGOs participate in fringe political agendas	84
2. Environmental NGO Efforts to Shape the Subjectivity of the Civil Society	91
3. Analysis	109
Chapter Four	
Environmental Department Initiatives and Normalized Channel to link Politics and Society:	115
The Case of Yuanmingyuan Anti-seepage Project	
1. The Case Happening At the Climax of the 20005 “EP Storm”	116
2. Entry of the Antiseepage Project into Media Coverage	119
3. Intervention of SEPA and the Official Orientation of mass media	123
4. Environmental Departments, NGOs and Mass Media United: against Original Policy Makers	133
5. Public hearing: Orientation for Symbolic Meaning rather than Substantive Meaning	138
6. Maintaining SEPA Pressure until Final Resolution	149
7. Analysis	156
Chapter Five	
Clash between Informal Environmental Politics and Institutional Vested Interest Group:	161
The Case of “Nu River Defense Battle”	
1. Controversy on Dam Projects in China	162
2. Governmental Fragmentation Triggering Nu River Project (NRP) Controversy	174

3. Mobilization of Environmental NGOs	183
4. Social Risks of Environmental NGOs: a Different Angle to Understand the Dual Identity	192
5. End to “Nu River Defend Battle” and Analysis of the Issue	216
Chapter Six	
Confirming Central Orthodoxy in Embedded Mobilization: The Case of Tai Lake Crisis	228
1. Case Background and Process	230
2. Media Framing with Political Censorship: Local Control and Remote Supervision	239
3. Bias of “Remote Supervision” Along With the Central Intervention	247
4. Analysis	253
Chapter Seven	
Conclusion: De facto embedded mobilization and the implication of Political Modernization	257
1. Two Dilemmas	257
2. Composition of De Facto Embedded Mobilization in the Field of Environmental Governance	259
3. Political Meaning of “Embedded Mobilization”: Institutionalization and Democratization	279
Glossary of Chinese Media in the Thesis	288
Biography	291

The Embedded Mobilization in Environmental Protection of China

Party-state-societal Interactions, Informal Politics and Issue-oriented Political Development

Chapter One

Introduction

From the late 1990s, we have seen the gradual rise of the environmental protection (EP) in ranks of China's **political agendas**, and, the rapid rise of environmental **social movements** and green **public sphere**. Not only for environmental activists with clear stance, even in most authoritative official statement, the EP agenda has made a main factor to maintain the political legitimacy of the leading Communist Party, and a main criterion of "good governance". With the consensus across political and social sphere, it may be very interesting to explore the **Party-state-societal interactions** which have brought positive environmental policies and active civil society in China, especially when the political restrictions and the mandatory objectives of industrialization are concerned.

Researchers have found in China's EP realm the active public participation, and, the findings have linked EP issues with civil societal growth and democratization, and further, an important breakthrough point of political development in China, because, the appeals of public participation in solving certain EP problems have always contained contents of political change, such as the construction of pluralistic policy-making regime, the improvement of people's right of knowing and participation, strengthening the authority of law, and so on. All the appeals, in theory, are taken to accordingly weaken the Party-state authority. And, a more radical idea expects that – with the enigmatic gap between the rapid growth of economy and the political system without fundamental change on the contrary China during the more-than-30-years reform – EP-related public participation demonstrates the dissatisfaction of educated middle-class who may bring broad social movements to topple down the government and establish a new political system which resembles, at least in theory, what had happened in some transforming

countries, like those ex-communist countries in East Europe and Soviet Union territory.

According to this interpretation framework, we are demonstrated the prospect that: with shortage of resources, Party-state reduces its control on problem realms which are not so politically sensitive on one hand, and on the other hand, modernized social factors filled in the “power vacuum” left with habituating and finally institutionalizing new regimes of public participation. This interpretation may be not perfect without paying enough attention to initiatives of Party-state, to speak specifically, the strong and clear national willingness and initiative orientation of social mobilization with regard to EP according to its substantial importance for the rapidly industrializing country with the largest population and their poor per-capita quantity of natural resources.

With the consciousness of the researching deficiency, **this research tries to change the point view from “Party-state withdrawal and public entry” to the integration of both political and social initiatives and takes an area study in environmental realm in its theorizing efforts on Post-Reform China’s Party-state-societal relations in aspect of political development.** It focuses on the interaction between the Party-state system and the growing civil society in the environmental policy process. And in addition, this research notices, under the strict restrictions to formal pluralistic participation regimes, China’s special mass media system has played a key role in integrating the political and civil activism, through its unique duality of Party-line and mass-line.

From the very beginning of the research on China’s modern civil society growth and its political implications, its “interaction <*hu dong*>” with the Party-state has been a most important topic. And, in this research, the “interaction” is framed as “**embedded mobilization**” in accordance with the environmental issue-oriented “political mobilization (which literally called “social motivation” <*she hui dong yuan*> but totally different from the concept in Western countries)” process. Rather than the point view of taking environmental activism as the chance of bottom-up democratization movements, the focus on integration of institutional resources and informal politics in environmental activism bring this research originality. To speak specifically, in first place, despite of the succession of a traditional measure for the Party-state to implement the national

willingness, today's "political mobilization" in dealing with environmental problems has gradually been deprived of its totalitarian color and been more embedded in the increasingly complex and pluralistic social structure. Secondly, the environmental activism at the civil-society-level has been also beneficial from the political measures, utilizing the institutional resources to achieve their certain purposes, especially through the network among political and intellectual elites. And lastly, the national willingness and civil targets achieve the integration through the mass media issue framing, to influence the environmental policymaking, and further, bring a gradual change to the political system in accordance with pluralism, democracy and modern institutionalization.

1. Research Questions and Research Background

This research started by raising **the questions that: is there any interpretation framework to integrate the initiatives of both political and social sphere? Does Party-state "withdraw" from the EP domain or just be changing the mode of implementing its authority, with mobilizing both institutional and non-institutional resources through positively changing certain methods or even the state system? What is the power source of the great activeness of green civil society? And, may it be possible to link the activeness to some special factors of Chinese politics, besides only framing it as a natural reflection of social modernization according to the paradigm of green politics in those developed democracies?** And, there are three main factors leading to them as the research background.

1.1 Environmental Protection as An Important Political Agenda

The first factor is the special position of the EP issue in China's political agenda ranks. **To speak specifically, the Party-state initiated even most strict green standards throughout the world, with the official environmental consciousness getting ahead of the public.** As we know, the environmental concern had been kept in the sub-political sphere until the 1980s, and the "green politics" arose along with the emergence of green parties throughout the developed democracies in West

Europe. This new form of political movement didn't only mean the upgrade of environmental issues in political agendas, but also meant the challenge to the existing political organization and governance. In other words, the emergence of green politics has generally been observed as indicating the well-developed democracy and the mature civil society¹. However, in China, the concern of natural ecology and resources has become an important political agenda and actually influenced the governance, despite of the even outmoded political system without enough institutionalization or growth of civil society.

Like in all the advanced countries, the massive industrialization has brought corresponding ecological environmental deterioration to today's China. In fact, to catch up with or even surpass advanced world industry levels, the impressively rapid economic increase in China is based on an extensive growth mode² at the expense of severe environmental pollution and waste of natural resources. According to the Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI) and its precedent, the Environmental Performance Index (EPI), made by the collaborative research of Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and Columbia Center for International Earth Science Information Network from 2001 to 2010, China ranks 108th out of 122 countries in 2001, 129th out of 144 countries in 2002, 133rd out of 146 countries in 2005, 94th out of 133 countries in 2006, 105th out of 131 countries in 2008, and 121st out of 163 countries in the newest 2010 index³. Today's China has grown more and more stressed by natural resources shortage and ecological environmental deterioration resulted from massive industrialization and wealth accumulation for a population of more than 1.3 billion.

However, different from "green politics", China's Party-state, without enough

¹ See for example: Michael O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, Ashgate, 1997; John Barry, *Rethinking Green Politics: Nature, Virtue and Progress*, Sage, 1999; Jon Burchell, *The Evolution of Green Politics: Development and Change Within Europe*, Earthscan, 2002; and James Radcliffe, *Green Politics: Dictatorship or Democracy?* Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

² Extensive growth is an economic development mode. It refers to the increase of overall wealth, coming from the expansion of ordinary inputs of labor, reproducible capital and natural resources. There is also a concept on the contrary called intensive growth, referring to increase of per capita wealth driven by productivity growth and technological progress. Commonly, pre-industrialization economy grows extensively and, modern economy relatively grows intensively.

³ Among the developing countries with the large territory and population, China has been ranked in the middle, worse than Brazil and Indonesia but better than India and Nigeria, and it was the poor air quality and sustainable energy among 25 indicators to make the main factors leading to the low ranking. See more details of the Index in: <http://epi.yale.edu/> and <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/es/esi/>

effective democratic mechanisms, has been strongly pushing forward its strict green policies. The initiative can be understood from two respects. On one hand, the destructive influence of environmental problems is more severe to not only China, but all the developing countries than the developed ones. Judged from the history, most of the industrialized countries attained their development without severe anxiety of natural resources shortage and ecological stress, as World's undeveloped "virgin soil" had seemed very vast before the 20th Century and there were only minimum number of competitors. But on the contrary, China, like all the other developing countries established after the World War II, would be more suffering from competition for limited natural resources and more vulnerable to ecological deterioration. On the other hand, in the Post-Mao Zedong era, economic growth has become an, possibly the most, important resource for the Party-state to maintain the political legitimacy, but this rapid increase brought possibility that it might exceed the environmental capacity and ruin the sustainability of economic development. In that situation, CCP will fail in achieving national industrialization, which means losing the basis for solving problems like wealth distribution, insurance system, further political reform and maintenance of political and social stability. The management of environmental problems, being a most prominent public issue, has been testing the governance capability of the Party-state and its achievements of the announced political modernization and institutionalization, and further, the accumulating environmental justice, growing voices of the green civil society and the pressure from the international environmentalist regimes has been demanding for the political response in relation to a more fair distribution system of power and resources¹. In the next chapter, the political importance of the EP agenda will be discussed through more detailed data, with regard to the **development sustainability** and **social stability**.

1.2 The Rise of Environmental Grass Root NGOs and Social Movements

The rise of environmental NGOs has made a figure in China's public environmental

¹ Just according to the four dimensions of Robert Dahl's theory to interpret "politics" as "the art of government", "public affairs", "compromise and consensus", "power and the distribution of resources"; the respects of "public affairs" and "power and the distribution of resources" may mostly indicate the political implications of China's environmental agendas. See: Robert Alan Dahl and Bruce Stinebrickner, *Modern Politics Analysis (6th Edition)*, Prentice Hall, 2002.

issues and caught the eyes of researchers. However, there is also an enigma that, in contrast to the restrictive political ecology without any fundamental systematic change, how could the young environmental NGOs play such an active role in a wide range of “environmental education, nature conservation, species protection, policy advocacy and other activities”¹? Or, to think about it from another aspect, doesn’t it the entanglement with the political system promote, to some extent, the achievements of environmental NGOs? And, what does it mean for the prospect of environmental NGO development and China’s environmental democratization? These questions make the second factor leading to this thesis.

Along with the process of economic reform, especially from the early 1990s after the failure of political revolution-oriented campaign in the late 1980s, it has been believed that there had formed the modern civil society figured mainly by the rise of NGOs focusing on various event domains. It’s just different from the civil society composed of the industrial associations or fellow provincial associations in the late Qing dynasty and Republic of China², or that before Tian’anmen Movement based on the networks in intellectual circles³. It seemed to be that the NGOs had the potential to fill the social space that the Party-state and profit-oriented sector couldn’t or wouldn’t fill, offering the public services or even, taking the role as an independent and subjective component to limit the political intervention in the social autonomy⁴. Within the surprisingly rapid increase of NGO quantity⁵, the first local environmental NGO in China was registered on

¹ Guobin Yang, “Environmental NGOs and Institutional Dynamics in China,” *The China Quarterly*, 2005, pp. 46-66. p. 46.

² See: Timothy Brook and Michel B. Frolic, (ed.), *Civil Society in China*, Armonk, N. Y.: Me. Sharpe, 1997.

³ See for example: Thomas B. Gold, “The Resurgence of Civil Society in China,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter, 1990, pp. 18-31; Arthur Lewis Rosenbaum, *State and Society in China: The Consequences of Reform*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992; and Yijiang Ding, “The Conceptual Evolution of Democracy in Intellectual Circles’ Rethinking of State and Society,” in Suisheng Zhao, (ed.), *China and Democracy*, NY: Routledge, 2000, pp. 115-129.

⁴ See in reference to: Rosenbaum, *State and Society in China: The Consequences of Reform*; Zhenglai Deng and J. C. Alexander (ed.), *State and Civil Society*, Beijing: Central Compilation and Translation Press, 1998; and Yimin Lin and Zhaoqing Tu (ed.), *Reform and Opening Up and Chinese Society*, Hong Kong: Oxford University, 1999.

⁵ According to the statistics of Ministry of Civil Affairs’ statistics, the number of registered NGOs had been increased from 4,544 by 1989 to more than 354,000 by 2006. And moreover, a 2005 report even radically judged that 90 per cent of NGOs operating in China were not registered. See: Clement Chu S. Lau, “The Roles of NGOs in China,” *Quarterly Journal of Ideology*, Vol. 31, 2009 [<http://www.lsus.edu/Documents/Offices%20and%20Services/CommunityOutreach/JournalOfIdeology/NGOsInChinaarticle.pdf>]. And, a moderate number was believed to be near 410,000 by 2008. See: Ying Xu and Litao Zhao, “China’s Rapidly Growing Non-Governmental Organizations,” *EIA Background Brief No. 514*, March 25, 2010. [<http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/BB514.pdf>]

March 31, 1994, commonly known as the Friends of Nature (FON) by now¹. By 2005, there had been 2768 registered environmental NGOs in China, with 224,000 members². At the early stage, different from the environmental NGOs in industrialized democracies mainly fighting with industrial pollutions, China's environmental NGOs pioneered in the domain of wildlife protection, which had less political risk without conflicting with the mainstream political agendas of industrialization. However, the attempt of the new-born weak social activism only supported by underprivileged intellectuals and university students quickly produced unexpected effects according to its first larger-scale campaign to protect the Yunnan snub-nosed monkey, the national-level protection species, which will be discussed in details in the third chapter. This campaign was then clearly welcomed by the political leadership. In 1996, at the Fourth National Conference on Environmental Protection, the State Councilor and current head of the State Environmental Commission (SEPC), Song Jian, stated, "As for various environmental protection mass organizations which are concerned with environmental protection undertakings, we should actively support them, strengthen leadership, and guide their healthy development"³. And, the statement was echoed, in a more formal occasion as the fifteenth CCP Congress, by the current Party general secretary, Jiang Zemin, highlighting the necessity of "cultivating and developing social intermediary organizations"⁴.

Into the 21st century, environmental NGOs had gradually changed their role of, from the passive actor to fill the space where the state had "intentionally abandoned its commitment to the 'iron rice bowl', in which the state provided for all the basic needs of the society"⁵, to the active actor to promote the "de-politicalized politics"⁶ in China. To speak specifically, the NGO activists, through the issue-oriented movements in the

¹ It was originally named as the Academy for Green Culture to emphasis the color of "intellectual study" rather than "social movement".

² All-China Environment Federation (ACEF): *China environmental protection NGO status report*, published on April 22, 2006. p. 61.

³ Qing Dai and Eduard B. Vermeer, "Do Good Work, But Do Not Offend the 'Old Communists'," in Robert Ash and Werner Draguhn (ed.), *China's Economic Security*, NY: St. Martins, 1999. p. 144.

⁴ Tony Saich, "Negotiating the Sate: The Development of Social Organizations in China," *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 161, March, 2000. p. 128.

⁵ Elizabeth C. Economy, *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004. p. 130.

⁶ See: Peter Ho, "Self-Imposed Censorship and De-Politicalized Politics in China," in Peter Ho and Richard Louis. Edmons (ed.), *China's Embedded Activism: Opportunities and Constraints of A Social Movement*, London; New York : Routledge, 2008. p. 20.

environmental fields permitted by the Party-state, caught the political opportunities to open the political access in favor of their independent appealing, such as public participation, related legislation, human rights protection, and so on. This change would not be surprising even according to the global view. Generally, while social activists in industrialized democracies have tended to address environmental degradation and human rights as separate, even conflicting problems, activists in less developed countries have rarely dwelt on such distinctions, but commonly linked the environmental issues to human rights, public accountability, and civic justice¹. And further, the lessons that environmental movements had factually triggered the color revolutions in ex-socialist nations ranged from East Europe to former Soviet Union Territory had encouraged the environmental activists in China. All the environmental movements in such countries resembled on the point that environmental protests appeared as a relatively safe outlet for expression of more general discontent with the whole existing system², and activists who started by fighting pollution then became leaders in a more general battle for a wide range of cultural, economic and political independence³. However, the growth of the new generation of environmental activists had been also important for the change. In comparison with the pioneers who had contained the more unsophisticated “love to the nature” and, which was more crucial, been sensitive to the political bombs according to the sad memories of Tian’anmen movement, the new generation who were better educated in aspect of the environmental democratization paradigm had greater dynamics to express their political appeal and interact with the international civil society. Therefore, the first several years of the 21st century witnessed the social movements such as the Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage membrane controversy, the Anti-dam movement, the urban movement of anti-chemical plant construction in Xiamen, and so on. Those environmental movements were all featured that: a) the appeals focused on the public right to know, public participation and environmental justice, beyond the simple

¹ Judith Shapiro, “The Political Roots of China’s Environmental degradation,” in Lionel M. Jensen and Timothy B Weston (ed.), *China’s Transformations: the Stories Beyond the Headlines*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. pp. 50-67. p. 53.

² Susan Baker and Petr Jehlicka, *Dilemmas of Transition: The Environment, Democracy, and Economic Reform in East Central Europe*, Frank Cass, 1998. p. 9.

³ Murray Feshbach and Alfred Friendly Jr., *Ecocide in the USSR*, NY: Basic Books, 1992, p. 22.

environmental priority; b) the event were mainly promoted by environmental NGOs located in economically advanced cities – like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Xiamen, along the east coast – backed by the participation of university students, young white-colors, urban bourgeoisie, journalist, and other intellectuals; c) the movements shaped the green public sphere and linked to the global attention in a wide range.

However, when observers are excited by the surprising activeness and achievements of environmental NGOs in contrast to the annoying stability of the fundamental political system despite of the economic metamorphosis, the more attention paid and more related research resources spent have led to a somehow pessimistic conclusion. Factually, the living conditions of environmental NGOs cannot be judged as good. It's no doubt that the political restrictions to limit the NGO effectiveness, especially according to the strict registration limitation to prevent many NGOs from attaining the legal status. The “Provisional Regulations on Civil Non-enterprise Institutions Registration Management <*minban fei qiye danwei dengji guanli zanxing tiaoli*>,” published in 1999 is the main legal principle for NGO registration, however, the complicated registration procedures, high standards for applicants and the strict examination rules have made it inoperable for most NGOs¹. According to one of China's liberal media stand-bearers, *South Weekend*, in 2002, some NGOs might have been denied even with several years of application efforts only due to that they couldn't find a “responsible department <*zhuguan bumen*>” in accordance with the regulations², with nobody being willing to assume this responsibility for the fear of any problems they might be taking on³. Therefore, until the end of 2005, only 23.3% of NGOs completed their registration procedures in various levels of Civil Affair Departments, and 63.9% of them registered as branches of existing institution, enterprises and student associations, with the rest having undergone no

¹ Even though, as mentioned before, thousands of “illegal” NGOs are still working today, it means more limitations to and vulnerabilities of their actions if they don't have some other measures to keep contact with political power.

² According to the provisions, the establishment of an NGO needs to be examined by a “responsible department <*zhuguan bumen*>” (article 3, 8) – responsible departments should be “relevant departments of the State council and governments at or above the county level; and other authorized organizations of the State council and governments at or above the county level” (article 5) – and, a “responsible department” need take supervision on the daily activism of the NGO (article 20).

³ Wu Chengguang, “China's environmental NGOs,” *South Weekend*, July 13, 2002.

formal procedure¹. And, even among the registered 2768 environmental NGOs by 2005, 49.9% of them were sponsored and directly controlled by the government (GNGO), 40.3% were students associations, and 2.5% were branches of International NGOs². In other words, the data implied only 8 per cent of the environmental NGOs were actually meaningful for the active “social movements”. And moreover, environmental NGOs are also faced with financial problem. A comprehensive investigative report published in 2005 indicated that the most common fund source of environmental NGOs was member fees, followed by the volunteer contribution, appropriation from government or sponsoring department, and corporate donations. Only 23.9% of environmental NGOs had stable fund source, and, the percentage for true grass-root NGOs was even only 20%. In the whole year of 2005, 81.5% of environmental NGOs each couldn’t raise funds more than 50,000 yuan RMB (about 6,000 US dollars at that time³).

However, the problem of China’s grass-root environmental NGOs also comes from themselves, or, we may say, the surprising activeness of environmental NGOs had been formed at the expense of their own soundness. On one hand, as that will be discussed in details in next chapters, their fabulous effectiveness might largely rely on the key members, who were mainly well-known public intellectuals, celebrities and popular representatives or governmental consultants. Different from the social activists in general according to the western democratic paradigm, these key members had the mature network in the elite circle and even special links to the leadership. Therefore, they took the responsibility of channeling the Party-state-societal exchange. The irreplaceable position of the key members further strengthened the reliance on them in NGO operation. The same 2005 report showed the personal element in the decision-making of Chinese environmental NGOs: with regard to making main decisions, 38% of the environmental NGOs depended on council of organized key members, 34.5% on the key members, 13.5% on the plenary session, 8.3% on the leading leaders, and 5.7% on the full-time staff⁴. The

¹ All-China Environment Federation (ACEF): *China environmental protection NGO status report*, published on April 22, 2006. p. 62.

² ACEF, *China environmental protection NGO status report*, pp. 61-63. However, some influential environmental NGOs with effective achievements hadn’t registered. For example, the Green Earth Village (GEV), who had been among the most active in anti-dam movements.

³ ACEF, *China environmental protection NGO status report*, p. 62.

⁴ ACEF, *China environmental protection NGO status report*, p. 62.

personal element inclination not only brought the potential instability of a certain NGO's development, but also unconsciously reduced its independence from the Party-state, and in addition, obstructed the NGO institutionalization. On the other hand, we may observe a phenomenon that environmental NGOs in China can draw the most attention according to their success in expressing the appeal of democratization or pluralization and taking the political opportunity to open the political access through the environmental activism, rather than the gradual and invisible improvement of environmental quality. Factually, there have already been evidences to indicate the alienation of environmental NGOs, located in advanced cities, from the really interested local community, especially those in less developed areas¹. And, in certain issues, NGOs even "conflicted" with the local community to enforce their ideal of environmental priority and the standing point to disobey the governmental decision². In the next chapters, the thesis will further, with specific case analysis, cover the NGO-community relations, to see whether the alienation only happened in special cases or commonly indicated a potential risk of environmental NGOs to deviate from the fundamental meaning of the concept of "civil society".

1.3 The Mass Media and the Green Speak

Like the activeness of NGOs, the prominent role of mass media is taken as an indicator of civil societal growth and democratization prospect. Especially when NGOs publicly praise the mass media contribution to their achievements, their collaboration seems to strengthen civil independence from Party-state. Thus, like to NGOs, this thesis has the question what regimes of the Party-state-societal relation have formed the prominence of mass media in environmental issues.

The mass media attention to environmental issues demonstrated a remarkable shift in the late 1990s, reflected in respects of reporting quantity and reporting contents. The leading environmental NGO, Friends of Nature, took an independent survey in 1999 to investigate the reporting quantities of China's main print media with regard to environmental issues during the latter half of the 1990s, in order to reflect the general

¹ See: Chuanjin Tao, "Solving Environmental Problems and the Ideal Structure of a Civil Society," in Dayong Hong (ed.), *Environmental Sociology: An Academic Discipline under Construction*, Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2007, pp. 326-341.

² Tao, "Solving Environmental Problems and the Ideal Structure of a Civil Society," p. 338.

environmental awareness of the mainstream media. According to the annual results integrated in Figure 1-1 and 1-2 with the total quantities of all the newspapers and magazines surveyed from 1997 to 1999 and the average quantities of each one surveyed from 1994 to 1999, although the data of 1998 was hard to define, it's quite clear that the quantities of related reports had kept increasing during the several years, and the quantities had twice doubled respectively from 1995 to 1996 and between 1997 to 1999. And especially, the average number of 512.2 reports for one print media surveyed means that there had been, on average, nearly two environmental reports, indicating the fact that there were several concentrated reporting climaxes during this year. And the real meaning may be that the environmental topic had already become a main focus of the mass media.

Figure 1-1 Quantity of newspaper reports with regard to environmental issues from 1996 to 1999.

Source: *Friend of Nature:1999 Newspaper Environmental Awareness Survey*

*sample No.=70(1996), 76(1997), 75(1999)

Notes: no data of 1998.

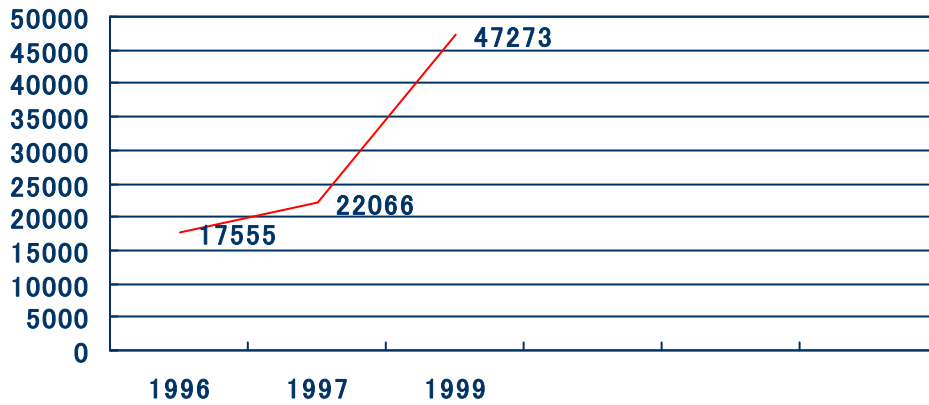
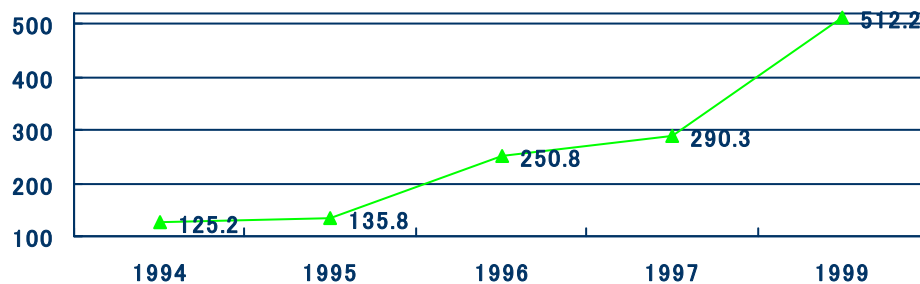


Figure 1-2: Average reporting quantity with regard to environmental issues for per newspaper investigated

Source: *Friend of Nature:1999 Newspaper Environmental Awareness Survey*



The other aspect of the media shift was the reporting contents, from the simple coverage of objective information to the vehicle of subjective advocacies. According to a investigation conducted in 1996 by an official English weekly, *Beijing Review*, only 10.3% of the current environmental reports contained the criticism, with the rest being objective circulations of happenings, policies, and official propaganda of environmental awareness¹. However, only until 1998, the mass media attitudes had already made Liang Congjie, the leader of the leading FON to announce that “China has the greenest media in the world”², to indicate their unequivocal stand to take the environmental priority, and also, the NGOs’ pride of having many media professionals to stand with them to pursue the environmental democratization. From the late 1990s, it seems that the potential energy of Chinese mass media to framing the environmental issue and influence the agenda-setting have been excited, according to the observation of the objective outcomes – let us suspend the analysis of causes. It has been believed that Chinese media, deviating from its role as the simple mouthpiece of Party-state, shaped the green public sphere. The public sphere, with mass media being the vehicle, was defined by Guobin Yang and Craig Calhoun to have the characteristics as³,

In the first place, the public debate addressed policy. By contrast to the more common pattern, it was not simply the exposure of corruption or the suggestion that local official deviated from the goals of the Central Party and government. Second, a broad range of participants was involved in public discourse. This differentiated from the “reportage” literature through which criticism flourished in the 1980s, for example, which typically required a strong individual personality.

However, like NGOs, the developing role of mass media is still influenced by the political restrictions and self-defects. Even though the economic reform have freed the

¹ Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998, pp. 152-153.

² Friends of Nature Newsletter, No. 3 (1998).

³ Guobin Yang and Craig Calhoun, “Media, civil society, and the rise of a green public sphere in China,” in Ho and Edmons, *China’s Embedded Activism*, pp. 69-88. p. 69.

mass media from the financial dependence on Party and government according to the commercialization, the process was factually initiated by the Party-state on the purpose of reduce financial burden. The Party-state never had the willingness to loose the control, as mass media is the indispensable element for the Chinese political system to channeling the official orthodoxy (Party line) and the general mass demands (Mass line)¹, and, it has been exactly that Chinese journalists, with their institutional identity to be part of the political system, are also authorized to criticize wrongdoings of officials. In other words, on one hand, the mass media, as a whole, may be “restricted” and vulnerable to the general political system, but on the other hand, individual journalists can rely on the Party-state as their power source. Thus, mass media in environmental issues has the similar paradox to NGOs: the duality of pursuit for independence from and entanglement with the political system.

Not only the media entanglement with political system complicates its role in public environmental issues, its exceptional prominence in comparison with their counterparts in developed democracies and ex-socialist countries in Europe may also remind us of re-thinking about the application of the environmental democratization paradigm. It should be admitted that the significance of mass media may be the common international experiences as it can “voice the opinions” of public and is indispensable for the modern environmental protection movements of the informational age². And, it may not be strange for “almost all the NGOs” to “give media interviews and provide environmental information to the media in order to draw public attention to environmental problems”³.

¹ According to the journalistic consciousness succeeded from Soviet Union system, journalists are also a kind of “politicians” and part of the whole political system. Mass media transferred political orthodoxy (Party line) to common people, so as to frame their awareness of a wide range from self interests to national policies in accordance with the Party-state’s directives. That would be a great assistance to the compellent power for a communist Party-state’s transformation of social structure and implementation of certain policies. However, the media system would not be a uni-directional channel. It also took the responsibility of informing the leadership of common people’s appeals, in order to make directives more adaptative to influence individuals. That’s the “mass line”. See more details in: Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998.

² Chatham House investigation project: *Strengthening the Cooperation between Chinese Environmental NGOs and the Media*, implemented by Green Earth Volunteers, December, 2006, p. 5.

³ Ibid. And, for more details on the media strategy of western environmental NGO, we may see in reference to the research on the typical case of the Greenpeace in: Alison Anderson, “Environment activism and news media”, in Simon Cottle ed., *News, Public Relationships and Power*, Sage Publications Ltd., 2003. pp. 117-132. Anderson Hansen, “Claims-making and framing in the British newspaper coverage of the Brent Spar controversy”, in Allan Stuart, Barbara Adam and Cynthia Carter, ed., *Environmental Risks and the Media*, London: Routledge, 2000. pp.55-72.

However, the Chinese phenomenon still seems quite theatrical according to media's exceptionally close relations with NGOs. Mainstream academic explanations attributed the relations to NGOs' initiative "greening" of mass media – we will discuss it more in the literature review – because it was an effective tool to deal with political restrictions and public shortage of environmental awareness. Therefore, it's not difficult to find that the media coverage just inclines in favor of those NGOs taking more active media strategies. And, the inclination, conversely, has oriented NGOs to emphasis more on the media communication, for example, providing the exaggerative information to externalize negative environmental effects in certain issues, or exhausting their limited resources to hold press conference. However, NGOs' possibly excessive attention to media strategies may also bring the worry about strengthening their alienation from interest-related community, and, weaken media's ability of voicing public opinion.

2. Literature Review

What kind of Party-state-societal relations can be reflected according to the three prominent phenomena in China's environmental politics? Existing researches bring us a one-direction process of social movements challenging existing political organization and governance. This process is judged to be targeted at a prospect of environmental democratization. The orthodox paradigm of European green politics offers a framework of well-developed democracy and mature civil society¹, in aspects of political moral promotion², development approach choice³, pluralization of policy entrepreneurs⁴, and changing the implication of democracy⁵. However, this prospect may be linked more to the "color revolution" in ex-communist countries partly influenced by the civil environmental movements⁶. And further, it's generally believed that globalization of civil

¹ See for example: Michael O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, Ashgate, 1997; Jon Burchell, *The Evolution of Green Politics: Development and Change Within Europe*, Earthscan, 2002; and James Radcliffe,

² See for example: John Barry, *Rethinking Green Politics: Nature, Virtue and Progress*, Sage, 1999; Michael Maniates, *Encountering Global Environmental Politics: Teaching, Learning and Empowering Knowledge*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

³ See: Sumi Krishna, *Environmental Politics: People's Lives and Development Choices*, Sage Publications, 1996.

⁴ See: Norman Miller, *Environmental Politics: Stakeholders, Interests and Policymaking*, Taylor and Francis, 2009.

⁵ See: *Green Politics: Dictatorship or Democracy?* Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

⁶ See details of the pattern in: John David Nagle, Alison Mahr, *Democracy and Democratization:*

activism will bring consciousness of citizenship to people under an authoritarian regime, ultimately making the shift to a pluralistic, liberal-democratic polity¹. Environmental NGOs in China are at the vanguard of nongovernmental activity, and therefore, the question is not only whether nongovernmental actors can shape the future of environmental protection in China but also whether they may play a role in effecting broader political change in the context of the ongoing transformation of Party-state-societal relations². Existing literatures indicates this bottom-up process supported by multiple dimensions as: the utilization of “grey zone < *huise didai* >”³ for the grass root to participate in less politically sensitive agendas; social movements as “political opportunities” to get political access; and, the reciprocity between NGOs and mass media to shape the green public sphere.

2.1 “Grey Zone”: Room for Civil Growth

An obstacle to applying ex-communist experiences into China’s practice may be that environmental movements in those countries had made part of the whole fundamental transformation, social and political. On the contrary, China’s environmental movements seem to have developed separately. To explain this paradox, researchers utilize the concept of “grey zone”, according to which, initiatives of the Party-state to loosen its restrictions to some sub-political agendas are paid attention. Along with the failure and decay of totalitarian system, “central and local institutions have been privatized or disbanded altogether, opening up social spaces for voluntary civic action that were formerly in state hands”⁴. It makes the important background for NGOs’ rise and their

Post-communist Europe in Comparative Perspective, Sage, 1999; Adam Fagan, *Environment and Democracy in the Czech Republic*, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2004; and Pavol Demes and Joerg Forbrig (eds.). *Reclaiming Democracy: Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe*. German Marshall Fund, 2007.

¹ See for example: Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998; John A. Guidry, Michael D. Kennedy and Mayer N. Zald (ed.), *Globalizations and Social Movements: Culture, Power and the Transnational Public Sphere*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000.

² Economy, *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future*, p.131.

³ The concept of “grey zone” can be found in Chinese discourses with regard to various social realms. It generally refers to that, along with economic reform and the decay of totalitarian system, China’s political authority has drawn from social problem realms less political sensitive. Such problem realms get very poor financial support due to the cost retrenchment from state to society, and moreover, there rarely is modern governance mechanism established to fill in the space left by decay of totalitarian system. Thus, such realms may demonstrate some kind of “power vacuum” and provide room for civil activism. That’s the point of “grey”: not completely politically controlled (black) because the power has initiatively withdrawn, while not completely to be filled by civil society (white) because the political power still maintains supervision.

⁴ Peter Ho and Richard Louis. Edmons (ed.), *China's Embedded Activism: Opportunities and*

strategy formulation and implementation.

“Grey zone” depends on realistic considerations of China’s leadership during the 1990s. Elizabeth Economy believes they have been “forced”, for they have comprehended that “failure to protect the environment incurs significant social and economic costs”¹ beyond national financial ability, but they never wanted to give up their “eager to find a means to reconcile their desire to achieve both unimpeded economic growth and improved environmental protection”². This change, “represents a much more widespread phenomenon in state-societal relations” as, “the emergence of nongovernmental associations and organizations to fill roles previously occupied by national or local governments and state-owned enterprises”³, indicating shift of some social welfare burden to nongovernmental sectors. Jonathan Schwatz notices another dynamics that decentralization process during the reform era has forced the central authority to initiatively encouraged NGO activism. Schwatz pays attention to the dilemma of central environmental policies at sub-national level⁴, which makes the central authority turn to NGO assistance as an alternative to direct state intervention, especially, to represent the “attentive public” to strengthen pressure on local officials and draw international financial support⁵.

However, not only the leadership’s considerations alone, but some kinds of institutional factors have also supported the “grey zone”. Andrew Mertha, according to its analysis of China’s hydropower policymaking, utilizes the “fragmented authoritarianism” model of Kenneth Lieberthal⁶ to indicate that, the weak position of environmental

Constraints of A Social Movement, London; New York : Routledge, 2008. p. 3.

¹ Elizabeth C. Economy, *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004. p. 129.

² Economy, *The River Runs Black*, p. 129.

³ Economy, *The River Runs Black*, p. 130.

⁴ And Schwatz attributes it to the more attractive economic dynamics of local officials rather than the costly environmental responsibilities. See: Jonathan Schwatz, “Environmental NGOs in China: Roles and Limits,” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 1, Spring, 2004, pp. 28-49.

⁵ Schwatz, “Environmental NGOs in China: Roles and Limits,”

⁶ The fragmented authoritarianism model bases on the recognition that the political system in China consists of many vertical lines (“tiao”) and horizontal pieces (“kuai”), and, focuses attention on the effects of the interactive process among the constituent elements of the Chinese polity. According to this model, the three dimensions of China’s structural centralization and decentralization –value integration, structural elements, and policy process – makes China’s decision making/implementation require negotiations, bargaining, exchange, and consensus building in order to link the top and the bottom of the system, which is different from an “authoritarianism” model with overwhelming centralism. See: Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution through Reform*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995; and also Kenneth Lieberthal and David Lampton (ed.), *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China*, University of California Press, 1992.

department as “veto player” inside bureaucracy has become its incentives to squeeze room in the policymaking process for civil activism by leaking information to environmentalists, holding public hearing, sponsoring academic symposium, and so on¹. Besides the bureaucratic fragmentation at the central level, the central-local relations may also be crucial. According to Benjamin van Rooij, the central authority and environmentalists often find themselves partners in the same struggle against local stakeholders with regard to enforcing certain laws or policies. In cases he analyzes, political motivation of campaigns may be more effective than environmental laws which are short of local legitimacy².

These institutional factors indicate that the “grey zone” may not be a separate space from but embedded exactly in the political system, highly reducing political risks. And, a crucial point is the elite network among social activists and reformist officials. Despite of a dearth of formal political participation, through environmental activists’ informal ties such like personal networking, social structures can develop that are capable of effectively mobilizing resources, appealing to citizens’ newly perceived or desired identities, and building up a modest level of counter-expertise against state-dominated information and social cleavages and problems³. And further, this phenomenon may also mean that leadership’s expedient measures is possible to trigger an unconscious political transformation, like Arthur Mol argues that this process is “providing more room for citizens to organize themselves, express their environmental concerns and set new public agendas for environmental reform”⁴. The local scholar, Jia Xijin of Tsinghua University NGO Research Center even judges withdrawal from certain social realms to be beyond an expedient measure of the Party-state to temporarily reduce burden, but a great step of the long-term reform, which even can be called “the third reform” as important as the marketization of economic reform and political restructuring⁵.

¹ See: Andrew C. Mertha, *China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008. pp. 155-159.

² Benjamin van Rooij, “Implementation of Chinese Environmental Law: Regular Enforcement and Political Campaigns,” *Development and Change*, Vol. 37, no. 1 (2006), pp. 57-74.

³ See more details in Ho and Edmons (ed.), *China's Embedded Activism*. And, the elite networking in environmental realms will be talked more in next chapters.

⁴ Arthur PJ Mol, “Urban Environmental Governance Innovations in China,” *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, No. 1, 2009, pp. 96-100. p. 98.

⁵ Xijin Jia, *The Third Reform: Nongovernmental Sector Strategy Research in China*, Beijing: Tsinghua

The analysis of “grey zone” to make space for grass root environmental activeness may indicate observers an optimistic prospect of the “social movements” development; however, the “grey zone” also implies that the grass root activeness cannot develop without the Party-state priority gives their environmental activism the certain legitimacy. As Merle Goldman points, “political rights (granted by the Party-state) are to enable citizens to contribute to the state rather than to enable individuals to protect themselves against the state”¹. In comparison with the decay of existing system according to social movements in other ex-communist countries, China’s political authority doesn’t seem to lose the control on environmental policies and related institutional reform. On the contrary, environmental activists, who take the cooperation with national willingness a shortcut to realize their effects on certain policies, initiatively adapt themselves into the existing system. Then, we may say existing researches leave us a critical question that whether the active environmental movements in China can really be meaningful for China’s political development, as the utilization of “grey zone” seems to deviate from the traditional paradigm.

2.2 “Social Movements” and “Civil Society” with Political Opportunities

With the “grey zone”, fabulous growth of civil society and social movements becomes more understandable. As the two crucial concepts to frame the bottom-up initiatives in the Party-state-societal relations, “civil society”² emphasizes the objective conditions of movements, and “social movements”³ emphasizes the actions of a grown civil society. Since the innovationist came into power in the late 1970s, observers on China’s political

University, 2005.

¹ Merle Goldman, “The Reassertion of Political Citizenship in the Post-Mao Era: The Democracy Wall Movement,” in Merle Goldman and Elizabeth J. Perry (ed.), *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 159.

² This thesis uses the definition of Larry Diamond that “civil society” is “the realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules”. It is distinct from “society” in general in that it involves “acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions, preferences, and ideas, to exchange information, to achieve collective goals, to make demands on the state, to improve the structure and functioning of the state, and to hold state officials accountable”. See: Larry Jay Diamond, *Developing Democracy: toward Consolidation*, JHU press, 1999. p. 221.

³ The definition of social movement in this thesis is sourced from Donatella and Diani as: “social movement, especially those involved political content, (1) Informal interaction networks, (2) based on shared beliefs and solidarity, (3) which mobilized due to some conflicting issues, through (4) the frequent use of various forms of protest. ...Moreover, participants of such event must feel a sense of belonging and linkage with the supporters of similar movements. From a local protest with specific aim, gradually developed into a national social movement with collective force, concern the relationships between the nature and society and contains delicate cultural content”. See: Della Porta Donatella and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, NYSE: John Wiley & Sons, 1999, pp. 16-19.

democratization have been depressed by the several failures of streets movements with obvious political appeals, making they turn to other profound changes in China's polity and society¹. And, social movements during economic reform, as a bottom-up political change, have gradually got increasing concern. With regard to the social movements, environmental NGOs activism might be the earliest and most active².

With regard to characteristics of environmental movements and civil society, Shui-Yan Tang and Xueyong Zhan, pays special attention to the participants, in general, the "urban middle class": many are government officials, company managers, business owners, intellectuals/technicians, and employees of government-sponsored service organizations. The weakened citizenship consciousness, liberal thinking and practical interests are judged to bring urban middle class dynamics of breaking political restrictions through environmental participation³. However, linking the rise of middle class to social activism may rather be a theoretic reasoning⁴, thus, more practical studies have been taken on NGOs, the obviously active players whose specific actions have influenced practical political operations and policymaking process. Especially, the success of NGOs' anti-dam activism in reversing an established hydropower policy in 2005 has

¹ Such as the People's Congress [see for example: Kevin J. O'Brien and Laura M. Luehrmann, "Institutionalizing Chinese legislatures: trade-offs between autonomy and capacity," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1998), pp. 91-108. Roderick MacFarquhar, "Provincial people's congresses", *The China Quarterly*, No. 155 (1998), pp. 656-667. Melanie Manion, "Chinese Democratization in Perspective: Electorates and Selectorates at the Town-ship Level," *The China Quarterly*, No. 163 (September 2000), pp. 764-782.]; the village democracy [see for example: Zhenyao Wang (ed.), *The Frontier of Chinese Village Self-Governance <Zhongguo Cunmin Zizhi Qianyan>*, Beijing: Zhongguo shehui chubanshe, 2000, pp. 90-97; Björn Alpermann, "Institutionalizing Village Governance in China," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 18, No. 60, May 2009; Kevin J. O'Brien and Rongbin Han, "Path to Democracy? Assessing Village Elections in China," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 18, No. 60, May 2009.]; and the identity and perception increase of citizenship [see for example: Merle Goldman and Elizabeth J. Perry (ed.), *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2002. Edward Gu and Merle Goldman (ed.), *Chinese Intellectuals between State and Market*, London: Routledge Curzon; New York: Routledge, 2004.].

² Environmental practices in western and northern Europe demonstrated how the environmental movements with non-institutional nature and grass root constituencies played a critical role in promoting better governance in existing developed democracies. See for example: Andrew Jamison, Ron Eyerman, Jacqueline Cramer and Jeppe Laessøe, *The Making of the New Environmental Consciousness: A Comparative Study of the Environmental Movements in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990; Albert Weale, *The New Politics of Pollution*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992; Timothy Doyle and Dough McEachern, *Environment and Politics*, London: Routledge, 1998.

³ Shui-Yan Tang, and Xueyong Zhan, "Civic Environmental NGOs, Civil Society and Democratization in China," *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 44, Issue 3, 2008. pp. 425-448.

⁴ It may be commonly accepted by scholars to link rise of middle class to democratization, see for example: Lucian W. Pye, "Political Science and the Crisis of Authoritarianism," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 84, No. 1, 1991, pp. 3-19; Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991; Gordon White, Jude Howell, and Xiaoyuan Shang, *In Search of Civil Society: Market Reform and Social Change in Contemporary China*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996; and Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

incurred the climax of related researches. To interpret the great success in boycotting the dam construction over Nu River in Yunnan Province, Kim-man Chan and Yan Zhou utilized the concept of “political opportunity structure”¹. With examining the factors to influence the anti-dam movements according to this analytic framework, Chan and Zhou point that the successful activism was not accidental, but owing to the elite allies between the environmental department and environmental NGOs. The allies then formed the political opportunities of environmental NGOs to open up the political access with regard to their green appealing under an authoritarian system². With similar consciousness to Chan and Zhou, Andrew C. Metha ranges his research view from the independent event of Nu River to all the hydropower controversies and anti-dam activism in China during the recent years, taking the empirical study to analyze how and to what extent the civil society has exerted effects in various policymaking processes. The fight of environmental NGOs, mass media and other intellectuals with political obstructions set by local governments and electricity departments is highly emphasized in the research. And finally, the comparative study of anti-dam cases leads to the conclusion as, Chinese hydropower politics is a type of pluralism in which very real and substantive participation by actors hitherto forbidden to enter the policymaking process – NGOs, the media, an disgruntled opponents inside and outside of the government – are now increasingly able to do so³.

Rather than simply examining the growth of civil society and the quality of environmental movements in China in accordance with the criteria in developed

¹ Here, the concept of “political opportunity” is not an all-encompassing fudge factor for all the conditions and circumstances that form the context for social movements, but specifies the degree of openness of a political system on how it facilitates or constrains the emergence of social movement or other forms of insurgency in the four-dimension structure as: a) the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system; b) the stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity; c) the presence or absence of elite allies; d) the state’s capacity and propensity for repression. For more details on the concept, see: Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald (ed.), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 27.

² See: Kim-man Chan and Yan Zhou, “Political Opportunities and Anti-dam Movement in China,” paper presented in the International Conference on Non-profit sector in Asia-Pacific Region organized by National Central University of Taiwan on 16th and 17th November, 2007 [<http://www.istr.org/conferences/barcelona/WPVOLUME/Chan.Zhou.pdf>]; and also see: Kim-man Chan, “The Development of NGOs under a Post-Totalitarian Regime: The Case of China”, in Robert Wellner (ed.), *Civil Life, Globalization, and Political Change in Asia: Organizing Between Family and State*, NY: Routledge, 2005, pp. 20-41.

³ Andrew C. Metha, *China’s Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008,

democracies – for example, written legal provisions, NGOs’ development, middle class situation, campaign scale and so on – the framework of “political opportunity” may be significant to explain the dissymmetry between the small scale of NGOs and their activism and the actually visible effects on polity. To speak specifically, the traditional picture of “social movements” naturally brings the decay of authoritarian system, however, the researches on “political opportunity”, with admitting the powerful network among social and political elites, just implies the mutual embeddedness between grass root activism and the existing political system. In other words, the prospect of “social movements” in China’s environmental realm may deviate from the democratization paradigm illustrated in other ex-communist countries. And, this implication can be made clearer according to the researches on environmental NGOs’ utilization of the “grey zone” left by political authority during reform era, which further indicate the profound connections between the success of Chinese environmental movements and the existing political system.

2.3 Reciprocity between NGOs and Mass Media: Shaping Green Public Sphere

Even though China’s NGO-mass media relation is part of NGOs’ specific actions to create “political opportunity”, it also seems to have an independent position in the literatures. Mass media may generally play an indispensable part in green civil society globally for the necessity to proliferate and construct the environmental discourse or green speak¹, but especially for China’s environmental NGOs – faced with great political obstacles and resource shortage² – it may be a most important “social movement” to shape a “green public sphere” with assistance of mass media.

To speak frankly, the utilization of “public sphere” is too popular in various

¹ As a post-modern consciousness, the environmental value and its discourse are quite different from the “increase ethics” rooted in industrial society. Therefore, mass media is important to proliferate and construct the subjective status of “ecology”, rather than simply taking it an object which should only be “conquest” by human beings according to the “development”. See more details of environmental ethics and the discourses, see: Rom, Harré and Brockmeie, Jens and Mulhausler, Peter. *Greenspeak: A Study of Environmental Discourse*, Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999; and John S. Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*, Oxford University Press, 2005; and Takis Fotopoulos, *The Multidimensional Crisis and Inclusive Democracy*, English translation published on: *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 1.5, Special Issue, August, 2005.

² It should be mentioned that NGOs’ actions are restricted by not only political obstacles, but also the intellectual identity of activists, which limits their entry into directly-interested local community.

researches, media discourses and NGO announcement, that it doesn't seem to be academically precise, far beyond its original implication defined by Jürgen Habermas¹. With regard to the “green public sphere”, Guobin Yang and Craig Calhoun re-interpret the definition by removing the bourgeois color of Habermas². It consists of “discourse, publics engaged in communication, and the media of communication”, including the basic elements of “an environmental discourse or greenspeak”, “publics that produce or consume greenspeak”, and “media used for producing and circulating greenspeak”³. It's quite clear that, although the “green public sphere” doesn't seem to exclude any citizens in principle, the “publics” in reality “refer specifically to individual citizens and environmental NGOs directly engaged in the production and consumption of greenspeak”⁴. With this recognition, Yang and Calhoun found that the ability of environmental NGOs to create dominant discourse highly depended on their capability of launching campaigns which were media-attentive enough⁵. That further specifies the “public”, and, demonstrates the outline of NGO-media alliance in China's environmental issues.

However, the campaign, despite of many successful cases, is after all the “tactic”. Accidental success in making attractive news is not enough to explain the reality of close and profound NGO-media relations in China. In 2006, Chatham House⁶ published a special report to analyze the cooperation between Chinese environmental NGOs and the

¹ Habermas defines “public sphere” as a domain mediating between “private sphere” and “sphere of public authority” [see: Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Thomas Burger, Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press, English Translation 1989, p. 305.], in which “such a thing as public opinion can be formed” with all citizens assembling and publicizing their opinions “freely” [see: Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere”, in Steven Seidman (ed.), *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1989, p. 231.]. However, the opinion expression is not optional but oriented to “discuss matters of mutual interest...to reach a common judgment” [see: Gerard Hauser, “Vernacular Dialogue and the Rhetoricity of Public Opinion”, *Communication Monographs*, Vol. 65, No. 2, June 1998, pp. 83–107, p. 86.]. And further, the “medium talk” in the public sphere is generally linked to political participation being enacted in modern societies [see: Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy”, in Nancy Fraser (ed.), *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy, Habermas, and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge Mass.: MIT press, 1992, pp. 109–142.].

² According to Yang's comprehension, the “public sphere” of Habermas is a bourgeois sphere that in reality excluded certain categories of people and was fraught with problems of social, economic, cultural, even linguistic inequality”. See: Yang and Calhoun, “Media, civil society, and the rise of a green public sphere in China,” pp. 70-71.

³ Yang and Calhoun, “Media, civil society, and the rise of a green public sphere in China,” p. 71.

⁴ Yang and Calhoun, “Media, civil society, and the rise of a green public sphere in China,” p. 71.

⁵ Yang and Calhoun, “Media, civil society, and the rise of a green public sphere in China,” pp. 73-76.

⁶ It's also known as the Royal Institute of International Affairs, located in London and regarded as one of the world's leading organizations in this area.

media, especially their reciprocal exchange of actual necessities, so as to bind them together. On one hand, the report points the greater importance of mass media to environmental NGOs than in other countries, as a main and or even the only effective method for social mobilization, assistance for NGOs' access into political process, and the channel for them to reach social resources and legitimacy¹. On the other hand, besides being a good choice of information source for journalists², reporting NGOs can make mass media seem to be neutral and balanced, according to that "the media often needs to present a 'people's view', and environmental NGOs represent the views of the common people"³.

Chatham House report judges China's authoritarian system as the solid foundation for the mutual necessities rather than tactics of media campaigns. And, Guobin Yang attributes them to an element rooted in the Party-state-societal relations, defined as the "structural homology" of both NGOs and mass media to "please and serve two masters": "the Party supervisors who have political authority over the press and the market which puts economic constraints on it"⁴. The structural homology implies that, NGO-mass media reciprocity is not just the exchange of specific interests, but the reflection of their real nature. Environmental realm, as a "grey zone" for social movements, also provides opportunities for mass media to get freedom from strict political censorship, as long as

¹ In details, the importance is summed up as in the four aspects: a) Chinese environmental NGOs have few social mobilization tools at their disposal, making mass media the main or even the only effective method; b) mass media, according to the communist system, has administrative ranks, which can help NGOs channel related information or petition to the governmental leaders, as the shortcut to achieve environmental problem solution; c) mass media can publicize the NGOs' work to increase their influence especially at their early development stage, and, as the result, secure financial and other resources; d) environmental NGOs needs mass media to send out their opinions and messages, which has better effects than NGOs themselves transmitted it directly, so as to establish the legitimacy of NGOs. See: Chatham House investigation project: *Strengthening the Cooperation between Chinese Environmental NGOs and the Media*, p.10, 12, 14, 17.

² Journalists need sources of information to deal with the intense competition in the media market, and, besides the governmental agencies whose information resources are usually monopolized by the few powerful and privileged media organizations, environmental NGOs can be a good choice. See: *Strengthening the Cooperation between Chinese Environmental NGOs and the Media*, Ibid, p. 11.

³ *Strengthening the Cooperation between Chinese Environmental NGOs and the Media*, p. 11. And, according to Hu Kanping, an influential journalist and well-known activist, participation in environmental activities has enhanced media's reputation and attracted more readers, while NGOs with which they collaborated benefits from better linking to the public. See: Hu Kanping, "Harmony in Diversity: the Relationships between Environmental Journalism and Environmental NGOs in China," in Jennifer Turner and Fengshi Wu, (ed.), *Environmental NGO and Environmental Journalist Forum: A Meeting of Environmentalists from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2001, pp. 30-31.

⁴ Guobin Yang, "Environmental NGOs and Institutional Dynamics in China," p. 56.

environmental protection seeming as one of the least sensitive in political agendas¹. The “structural homology” is further strengthened by that NGOs and journalists share a similar elite identity². Researchers utilize the U.S. critical paradigm of “environmental journalism”³ to interpret journalists’ clear bias to NGOs and environmental priority⁴. The elite identity brings journalists a pioneer consciousness to “be greatly influencing the modernization of China”⁵, according to the belief that, “China’s rise should be started from the rise of people’s right to know; and, to elementarily avoid break of environmental hazard incidents needs to control public authorities”⁶. In 2007, Liu Jianqiang, a most active environmental journalist, published the article “China’s Environmental Crisis

¹ Practical study demonstrates some kind of development of governmental transparency from the late 1990s, at least in the advanced cities. See: Qingjie Wang, “Transparency in the Grey Box of China’s Environmental Governance: A Case Study of Print Media Coverage of An Environmental Controversy from the Pearl River Delta Region,” *Journal of Environment and Development*, Vol.4, No. 2, 2005, pp. 278-232; and Lili Wang, *Green Media: Environmental Communication in China <lv meiti: zhongguo huanbao chuanbo yanjiu>*, Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2005.

² It may be possible that journalists in less developed countries are generally respected as social elites for their better education in contrast to the common mass and ability to frame public issues, rather than being taken as a profession to meet the needs of a mature market. And, in China, the elite identity of journalists is more special according to their direct influence on policymaking through administrative ranks, the history of journalists to be crucial for the “enlightenment” in China’s modernization from the beginning of 20th century, and the Chinese cultural tradition to value knowledge from the ancient era. Therefore, a Chinese journalist is expected to, with the traditional sense of worth, take the elite position and value his/her social responsibility. And moreover, the secretism of China’s policymaking procedures and shortage of authority-control leverages make the investigative efforts of journalists pursuing information transparency usually be faced with risks, which commonly incurs the public sympathy and strengthens the image of social pioneers. See in reference to: Hugo de Burgh, *The Chinese Journalists: Mediating Information in the World’s most Populous Country*, London; New York, NY: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. And see also: Michel Bonnin and Yves Chevrier, “The intellectual and the state: social dynamics of intellectual autonomy during the post-Mao era”, in Brian Hook(ed.), *The Individual and The State in China*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, pp. 149-174; Geoffrey A. Fowler and Jason Dean, “China’s reporters face a back lash over investigations”, *Wall Street Journal*, December 21, 2006. Page A1; and, Jingrong Tong, “Guerrilla Tactics of Investigative Journalists in China,” *Journalism*, Vol. 8(5), October, 2007, pp. 530–535.

³ Environmental journalism believes environmental movements to be a public justice to protect common people from industrial makers’ profit-oriented interests, and therefore, the reporting “bias” and “purpose” in order to awaken the unconscious mass should be crucial. In a masterpiece of environmental journalism, Michael Frome wrote as, “I define environmental journalism as writing with a purpose, designed to present the public with sound, accurate data as the basis of informed participation in the process of decision making on environmental issues. It requires an understanding of the nature and purpose of mass communication, an ability to research and to report findings with accuracy, and a love of language that facilitates expression with clarity. It requires more than learning “how to write”, but learning the power of emotion and imagery, to think not simply of Who, What, When, Where, and Why—but to think Whole, with breath and perspective”. See: Michael Frome, *Green Ink: An Introduction to Environmental Journalism*, Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1998. p. ix- x.

⁴ The elitism of “environmental journalism” paradigm promotes China’s researchers to never grudge their high praise to environmental journalists as they were active pioneers to advocate the environmental ideals, enlighten the mass of environmental awareness. See: Lili Wang, *Green Media: Environmental Communication in China*.

⁵ Wei Zhang, “Environmental Journalism and Rise of Environmental Journalists in China <lvse xinwen yu zhongguo huanjing jizhe qun zhi jueqi>,” *The Journalist Monthly*, May 2007, pp. 13-17.

⁶ Liben Qiu, “Civil Explosive Force in Anti-pollution <fan gonghai de minjian baofa li>,” *Asia Weekly*, Vo. 21, June 17, 2007. Such argument was also resonated by environmental activists. See: Bo Wen, “Greening the Chinese Media,” *Chinese Environmental Series*, Issue 2, 1998, pp. 39-44.

Catalyzes New Democracy Movement <zhongguo de huanjing weiji cuisheng xin minzhu yundong>” as a summary of achievements of him and his co-workers, in which, the pioneer consciousness is “resisting special interest groups and opposing the government’s environmentally ‘unfriendly’ behaviors”, while “more significantly...(indicating) a push toward greater democracy in the country, with the public fighting for its civil rights through protecting the environment”¹. This analytical report was awarded by The Society of Publishers in Asia (SOAP) the Excellence in Reporting on the Environment, and the jury gave the assessment as, “Provocative topic and various angles to cover the issue, careful analysis. The environment report has gone beyond the usual scope within the environment. By elevating the angle to political, the report is able to present a comprehensive coverage on the inter-connectivity of environment, economy and politics”². This comment may be summing up the expectation of international civil society with regard to the environmental journalism in China.

However, either the interpretation of mutual necessities or structural homology may ignore the political identity of mass media, besides its part of voicing the “public”. As generally known, the commercialization of media organizations and the growth of journalists’ liberalistic bias have been still under the supervision of the Party-state. The saying of “politicians managing newspapers (and also other media forms) business <zhengzhijia ban bao>” may outline their profound identity synthesized by political censorship and market orientation³. However, the political censorship may not only be suppression of expression, but the Party-state also encourages mass media to inform political authority of common needs, take scrutiny on or even sharp critics of the government⁴ with regard to less sensitive agendas¹, taking mass media an effective tool

¹ Jianqiang Liu, “China’s Environmental Crisis Catalyzes New Democracy Movement”, *Asia Weekly*, Vol. 21 (14), April 15, 2007.

² See: SOPA official web: <http://www.sopasia.com/awards/2008-winners-c.asp>

³ Zhao Yuezhi, according to its review on the PRC journalism history, makes a clear point of the “dual identity” synthesized by the communist principle of “Party line/mass line” and marketization with liberalistic bias of intellectuals during economic reform. To speak specifically, on one hand, the communist “Party line” and “mass line” demands journalists to keep close with both Party orthodoxy and mass opinion, in order to well socialize political policies and transfer demands of mass to political authority. On the other hand, along with the marketization and growth of liberalistic inclination among intellectuals, journalists generally became to strengthen the social identity similar to their counterparts in western democracies. Then, without apparently challenging the “Party line”, China’s mass media obtains their legitimacy of “representing people” by adapting to the discourse of “mass line”. See: Zhao, *Media, Market, and Democracy in China*.

⁴ Hugo de Burgh summarizes the integration of political censorship and marketization as the principles

to adapt national ability to changing society². That's to say, the dynamics of political encouragement make an important power source for media critics, as well as its public responsibility. And further, journalists' elite consciousness doesn't naturally lead to "citizenship", but possibly leads to co-option with the Party-state³, to serve the "higher calling"⁴. Thus, we may conclude that further researches on "green performance" of Chinese mass media needs to pay more attention to the positive dynamics from the existing Party-state system, as well as its restrictive conditions, which also lead to, a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction between social and political actors according to their practical influence on environmental public sphere.

3. Hypothesis, Originality, Methodology, and Framework of Chapters

3.1 Hypothesis

At the beginning of section 1, this chapter raised the original questions leading to the research; all those concerns may be summarized into – after illuminating the research background and reviewing on literatures with the limitations – the core questions as, **what makes the Party-state-societal interaction leading to the exceptionally active green civil society in China under the visibly restrictive political ecology? & what does it mean for political development?** The core question is based on the originality of this research to observe China's public environmental issues from both the subjectivity of the Party-state and society, in stead of judging public environmental democratization in China a one-direction bottom-top process.

of "three proximities", as proximity to the public, proximity to reality, proximity to day-to-day life. See: *The Chinese Journalist*, pp40-43.

¹ Such agendas include those like environmental problems, accidents, disasters, crimes, price rises, inflation, and so on. See: *The Chinese Journalist*, p. 34.

² Evidences even show that sometimes the government is happy to promote policies assisted by skilled communicators rather than their own official propagandists. See: Zhao Yuezhi, 'Watchdogs on Party leashes? Contexts and implications of investigative journalism in post-Deng China', *Journalism Studies*, 2000, 1:4(November, 2000), pp. 577-98, November. And even further, by seemingly allowing people to articulate their problems themselves and allowing journalists to counsel and sympathize, the Party also reduces pressure upon itself. See: *The Chinese Journalist*, p41.

³ Chinese intellectuals, from the ancient era, vigorously hope to show his or her "usefulness <*jingshi zhiyong*>" in pointing out problems, sketching possible futures and providing the ideas of which the ruling officials are so bereft. See in reference to: Geremie Barmé, *In the Red, On Temporary Chinese Culture*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

⁴ The "higher calling" can be interpreted as some kind of ideal, long-term target, or ideology, which makes journalists somehow identical with elite bureaucrats. See: *The Chinese Journalist*, pp179-80. And, this thesis will later show the reality that how a senior journalist can exert pressure on bureaucrats according to their administrative ranks.

To this question, this research takes the concept of “**embedded mobilization**” to indicate the Party-state-societal interaction in dealing with environmental problems. **It’s the indication of a kind of informal politics, when the political authority initiatively realizes its power through the activism of certain social units (environmental NGOs), in order to mobilize social resources for promoting certain policies (environmental management) or legalizing certain institutional reforms (“rule by law” and “orderly public participation), rather than simple utilization of politically coercive power.** This interpretation of the Party-state-societal relations is composed of four parts.

In first place, this informal politics depends on the motivations of the Party-state to change the form of power implementation from “power over society” to “power through society (embeddedness)”. Under the authoritarian system, the environmental agenda setting of central top authority goes ahead of the institutional capability of the existing political system. The Party-state is faced with environmental threat to development sustainability and social stability, which makes environmental agendas meaningful for its political legitimacy, however, decentralization and governmental fragmentation legalized by the existing system just limit the national ability of environmental problem solution, when local leaders generally prefer economic increase orientation, with profit-oriented departments having the strong position in various levels of governments. “Embedded mobilization” is just practically necessary to deal with the dilemma. Political mobilization (also literally known as “social mobilization” in Chinese discourse) – the traditional communist approach to socialize political orthodoxy, that we’ll discuss more in the next section – is combined with increasingly social pluralization and civil societal growth, helping the central authority steer bureaucratic and local obstacles to environmental protection. The new form of “mobilization” is differentiated from the old one according to that political willingness is not simply enforced by coercive power, but greatly depends on certain social units trusted by the political authority for not challenging its elementary legitimacy.

Secondly, **as the selected social units, NGOs act as the vehicle of power embeddeness, according to their “dual identity” as both “representing**

common people” and having special ties with politics. On one hand, the NGOs are aimed at promoting green priority and environmental democratization. However, self deficiencies and external institutional restrictions limit their independent activism, which provides them the practical needs of cooperation with the Party-state. On the other hand, There special ties with politics shouldn't be ignored according to, a) the formal identity of leading activists¹, allowing them to legally participate in political process and, making them harder to be independent from the Party-state; b) the personal networking among individual activists and officials of the environmental department who are fed up with disadvantages in front of profit-oriented departments; c) the consciousness shared among NGO activists and environmental officials of both environmental priority and political reform; d) the gradual normalization of cooperation between NGOs and the environmental department.

The third part is about the mass media issue framing as the leverage to integrate political and social motivations, institutional and non-institutional resources, and, social activism and political embeddedness. In last sections (1.3 and 2.3), we've discussed the profound identity of China's mass media to cross over political and public sphere. For journalists, market-orientation is combined with political censorship; personal liberalistic thinking is combined some kind of “higher calling”; and, duty of “voicing public” is combined with political encouragement (or even privileges, especially of senior journalist at central-level) for them to scrutinize on and criticize power abuse, and political systematic deficiencies. And therefore, we may find another aspect of the “green public sphere”: on the front stage, environmental NGOs launch media campaigns, make news, and provide scoops to orient media framing in favor of environmental priority and politically democratization discourses; on the back stage, the environmental department utilizes administrative resources to encourage NGOs to speak out and sometimes clear institutional obstructions from them, while the central authority utilizes and encourages the “public opinion” to exert pressure on local leaders and senior bureaucrats who used to take their institutional advantage to disobey the central

¹ Like governmental officials, members of people's congress or political consultative committee, governmental think-tankers, senior journalists, and so on.

environmental priority¹. Thus, the final media framing not only represents the “public sphere”, but also reflect political orthodoxy which get “through” the society rather than juts “over” it.

The last point is the political meaning implied through the embedded mobilization in practice. The orientation of embedded mobilization is not only limited to better environmental governance. According to the issue-oriented informal politics, we may see that the “environmental democratization” in China is not simply a one-direction bottom-up process. On one hand, certain NGOs’ activeness in certain issues depends on the initiative “choice” by the political authority who is selectively distributing public resources to “proper” social units. That means, active social activism doesn’t certainly mean the Party-state is losing control on society or just positively respond to public protest. On the other hand, since environmental NGOs have their own clear status on environmental priority and liberalistic reform, according to the Party-state-societal interaction, the status will also promote these ethics in reforming the authoritarian system, as to institutional modernization and democratization.

3.2 Originality and Limitations

Based on the systematic review of existing researches, this thesis takes an empirical study on comparative cases for theorizing the Party-state-societal relations in environmental realm, rather than pure theoretical reasoning according to established paradigms. Related theoretical concepts of political science are reconstructed to observe and interpret the profound nature of China’s environmental politics. In general, I believe that social activism in China and its political meanings are different from the model in

¹ The concept “public opinion <*qunzhong yijian*>” has the most authoritative rank in China’s political discourses, which is difficult to be simply judged as a prop to defend the willingness of the Party. We may notice that, from the ancient times, all of the “allowable” targets of China’s empire would be elaborated to be in accordance with “public opinion <*min yi*>”, and further, according to orthodox Confucian thoughts, limited participation in and even withstanding with the empire authority, if they had been judged to reflect the “*min yi*”. Such concerns on “public opinion” make China’s totalitarian regimes seem different from their counterparts. For example, if a monarch had launched a war only for his/her own glory and even achieved very great success, such like the Alexandria, there generally would be very bad comments on he/her in China’s history [see: Tongdong Bai, *New Mission of an Old State: Classical Confucian Political Philosophy in a Contemporary and Comparative Relevance Context* <*jiubang xinming: gujin zhongxi canzhao xia de rujia zhengzhi zhixue*>, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2009. And further, the long-time revolutionary experiences of the CCP also have left the lesson of paying attention to what common people want and how to effectively socialize Party’s directives. Factually, to understand the complex implication of “*min yi*” in China’s political discourses will help scholars seize China’s political development more comprehensively.

developed democracies, and also from the lessons of ex-communist communities in East Europe and Soviet Union territory. I attempt to find new elements to frame the good interaction between Party state and society in the country with the biggest population, when China is exactly at the time that traditional agendas of industrialization and modernization hasn't been unfinished, but new post-modern agendas like environmental problem inevitably appears. The **originality** can be as following, in aspects of normative study and empirical study.

In the first place, and the most important, this thesis pays careful attention to the subjectivity of Party-state side during environmental democratization, as well as social actors; and, this thesis takes the “strong state – strong society <qiang guojia qiang shehui>” pattern to interpret their relations. This pattern indicates that, neither the development of state capability nor the increase of social autonomy is realized on the basis of limiting the other, and further, the transformation of political power – from “power over society” to “power through society” – and the formation of mature civil society are both depending on the development of each other, which are integrated in the national modernization progress¹. On one hand, for environmental democratization, the role of Party-state needs to be reexamined; political initiatives are important as China is still on his way to construct a modern political and social system, in aspects of governmental structure, legal system, central-local relations, and governance mode. On the other hand, the independence and actual capability of social actors need to be valued more carefully; according to unfinished industrialization, although increasing power of urban middle class has seemed to be providing conditions for civil society, the main population of large agriculture population cannot be judged as “modern”. Thus, the reality is, Party-state is still taking the main responsibility to supply public goods and services and integrate social resources for industrialization and modernization. In other words, increasing social actors can attempt to influence policymaking by “demanding what to do”, while Party-state is taking the

¹ See for example: Shiqi Tang, Sate-society Relationships: *Comparative Study on Socialist Theory and Practice <guojia yu shehui guanxi: shehui zhuyi lilun yu shijian de bijiao yanjiu>*. Beijing University Press, 1998; and Shaoguang Wang, “Chongqing Experience and Socialism ver. 3.0 <Chongqing jingyan yu shehui zhuyi 3.0 banben>,” *Social Science Weekly*, July 8, 2010.

initiatives of “what factually to do”. And therefore, in the environmental realm, increasing effectiveness of NGO activism indeed reflects the self-improvement of the political state.

Secondly, this thesis links environmental issues to political legitimacy of the Party-state, in order to interpret the upgrade of environmental concern in core political agendas, and further to define its connection with issue-oriented political change. This originality is formed based on the comprehension that existing researches may underestimate the importance of environmental issues for the Party-state. It’s undoubted that the seriousness of environmental deterioration has been fully recognized, and, researchers all agree with its urgency for social governance. However, the serious problems are only taken to bring the Party-state welfare burden at the social-level. Thus, it’ll be natural for observers to think the Party-state inclines to “leave” the social space to nongovernmental sectors who can supplement the governmental incapability. But, this thesis will analyze more about the important position of environmental concern in China’s core agendas, and, with this consciousness, we may have a more comprehensive understanding of the Party-state’s initiative scrutiny on and even active intervention in environmental issues, rather than “creating social space”.

Thirdly, this thesis notices the dual identity of environmental NGOs in China. Existing researches mention that NGOs can get encouragement and material resources from Party-state, but the explanation focuses on their compensation to national ability, with the premise that NGO is the player to “represent common people”. However, as this thesis notices, the NGO identity of representing common people in social dimension may be more a symbol than the fact. As mentioned in section 1.2 and will be discussed more in the third and fifth chapter, NGO actions generally reflect orientation of their elite members¹, and the elite members are mainly public intellectuals who have networks across political sphere and society, further, some of them are formal officials or consultants to Party of government. In other words, **the sphere of NGOs, with its**

¹ An object investigation shows the personal element in the decision-making of Chinese environmental NGOs: with regard to making main decisions, 38% of the environmental NGOs depended on council of organized key members, 34.5% on the key members, 13.5% on the plenary session, 8.3% on the leading leaders, and 5.7% on the full-time staff. See: ACEF, *China environmental protection NGO status report*, p. 61.

elitism, is on the very close position, or even overlapped with political sphere.

On the contrary, according to certain empirical researches, we can find the alienation of NGOs from interest-related local community, with sticking to the elite sense¹.

Lastly, the originality is also reflected in the contents of case study.

Although this thesis chooses cases which have been well studied, the difference is that, besides analyzing “what players did during the whole case” to make the “final outcomes”, I also emphasize players’ actions in different stages, especially the “what action by which player did” to make the turning points of the cases. According to the specific analysis, we may make clearer of the decisive factors in each case, and further to, through comparison, estimate effects of each factor in the embedded mobilization.

Besides the originalities, this thesis also has its **limitations**. The first point is the case selection. Even though cases are selected according to their high extent of being paid attention, and cases cover different problem domains, there still maintains the possibility that the thesis cannot cover all the particular issues. Secondly, this thesis focuses on the environmental realm to theorize Party-state-societal relation, but there have been civic activism ranged in various social fields, such as peasants’ protests, urban conservations, women’s right movements, anti-household-removal movements, and so on. The research on environmental realm may reflect some typical aspects of the nature of Party-state-societal relation, but it should be admitted that it cannot reflect the whole conditions. Lastly, I try my best to be value free, but the study may still be stained with personal feelings and values. However, to farthest reduce the influence of self-values on data collection and analysis, I will conduct the research with clearly-noted scientific evidences, empirical and reliable data.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 The Synthesis of “embedded” and “mobilization”

The research is conducted on the basis of a combination of theories from different disciplines. The study utilizes multi-field method and theory, mainly political science, and sometimes links to sociology and journalism. The utilization of a compound concept, embedded mobilization, is targeted at interpreting the development of “relationship

¹ See: Tao, “Solving Environmental Problems and the Ideal Structure of a Civil Society,”

between strong state and strong society” in China¹, and, is also edified by the framework of “governed interdependence” raised by Linda Weiss to frame state-societal relations and reconstruction of national ability in developed democracies. Governed interdependence indicates an institutionalized relationship of negotiation between the state and societal actors especially sectorally coherent business organizations. In this relationship, the two sides take political exchange while maintaining respective autonomy by: the state sets broad developmental goals and monitor actions of business organizations according to achievement of those goals; the societal organizations provide information to and cooperation with the state; and, in return, the state legitimates such organizations, reduce their social risks of investment, and plays the role of mediator to resolve struggles among societal actors. Weiss argues that such state-societal structure leads to the enhancement of state capacity in front of the globalization which seems to bring the risk of “powerless state”².

Although the “governed interdependence” model of Weiss is supported by empirical study mainly on developed democracies³, its emphasis on the political power enforcement “through” certain social units (embeddedness) may seem somehow suitable to the “strong state – strong society” orientation of China’s Party-state-societal relationship. However, in reality, China’s “society” is not as well-developed as that in developed democracies to support a kind of equal “interdependence” with the Party-state, and therefore, the initiatives of the Party-state need to be paid special attention. To be

¹ Considering the strong centralism of the Party-state system and the vulnerability of developing society, researchers on China’s Party-state-societal relationship incline to play down the liberalistic color of State-societal binary opposition, but turn to exploring some kind of “good interaction <*liangxing hudong*>” between the Party-state and social actors. The “strong state – strong society” model takes the independent “civil society” alienated from the state as just a short-lived historical phenomenon in the rudimentary stage of early capitalism; and, it argues that the expansion of modern state functions inevitably leads to the “permeation” of state power into civil society. And further, the good interaction implies there is no absolutely static line between the two sides, but they take power exchange and then change the power boundary in practice, making some kind of win-win relationship. For a developing country like China in the contemporary era, the interaction between state and civil society is expected to focus on activating initiatives of both state and society sides. See for example: Shiqi Tang, *State-society Relationships: Comparative Study on Socialist Theory and Practice* <*guojia yu shehui guanxi: shehui zhuyi lilun yu shijian de bijiao yanjiu*>. Beijing University Press, 1998; Xiaoguang Kang, *Power Shift: China’s Power Structural Change in Transformation* <*quanli de zhuanxing qi zhongguo quanli geju de bianqian*>, Zhejiang: Zhejiang People’s Press, 1999; and also, Yiyu Li, *Relationship and Trust: Empirical Study on Rural Nongovernmental Organizations of Contemporary China* <*guanxi yu xinren: dangdai zhongguo xiangcun minjian zuzhi shizheng yanjiu*>, Beijing: China Books Press, 2004.

² See: Linda Weiss, *The Myth of the Powerless State*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.

³ Especially, similar institutions and processes in Deutshland, Weden and Japan are paid attention in detailed case study. See: *The Myth of the Powerless State*.

specific, the existing institutional approaches of the Party-state to mobilize social resources have the potential to deal with modernity issues and build state capacity.

Mobilization

The concept of “mobilization” has the complicated implications for modern China’s political practice, and, especially when it is combined with the concepts of “political” or “mass” in Chinese study, it indicated the strong organizational and ideological ability and approach to mobilize the participation in serving certain political purposes, as under the communist system¹. The political mobilization of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) proved its great success during the revolution era². And, after 1949, the communist party played its role to “mobilize the mass” as politicizing the apolitical population to bring the people “into direct and continuing contact with higher levels of government” and “organizing them “for active support of national objectives”, so as to “replace loyalties to the family and other particularistic units with loyal to the political community”³. That means, the political mobilization had been greatly relied by the leading communists to change both the current political consciousness of people and the social structure⁴, which was lagged behind the standards of a modernized country. In other words, the early political mobilization of PRC actually had some kind of meaning of political development as the institutionalization of political organization and procedures⁵. However, the mobilization still emphasized the willingness of the top leadership as “pioneers” to educate “mass” according to the hand-in-hand communication⁶. And therefore, the

¹ See: James R. Townsend, and Brantly Womack. *Politics in China*, (3d ed.) (Series in Comparative Politics: A Country Study), Boston: Little, Brown, 1986. p. 173.

² According to the directives of Mao Zedong to inspire the revolution energy of peasants – through the effective propaganda and the favorable benefits distribution – and integrate the mass power. See in reference to: Edward E. Rice, *Mao's Way*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972; Ilpyong J. Kim, *The Politics of Chinese Communism: Kiangsi under the Soviets*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973; Richard Baum, *Prelude to Revolution: Mao, the Party, and the Peasant Question*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1975; Ralph Thaxton, "On Peasant Revolution and National Resistance: Toward a Theory of Peasant Mobilization and Revolutionary War with Special Reference to Modern China," *World Politics*, 30, No. 1, October 1977, pp. 24-57; and Yung-fa Chen, *Making Revolution: The Communist Movement in Eastern and Central China, 1937-1945*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986.

³ James R. Townsend, *Political Participation in Communist China*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972. p. 211.

⁴ See: Richard H. Solomon, *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971, pp. 171-178.

⁵ See the definition of political development in: Samuel P. Huntington, “Political Development and Political Decay,” *World Politics*, No. 3, Vol. 17, April, 1965. pp. 393-394.

⁶ See: Ezra Vogel, “From Friendship to Comradeship: The Change in Personal Relationships in China,” *The China Quarterly*, No. 21, January-March, 1965; Townsend, *Political Participation in Communist China*, pp. 212-214; Alan P. L. Liu, *Communications and National Integration in Communist China*,

“mobilization” always overwhelms the constitutional regimes of electoral and representative institutions¹, and, the emphasis on ideological integration of mass had led the mobilization to deviate from originally established constitutional institutions to mass campaigns, as “the most reflective of the Communist Party’s strategy of national development”². Thus, the “mobilization” is generally taken as a most important indicator of China’s totalitarian system.

As the symbol of Mao’s revolution era – also judged as depending on and strengthening the totalitarian system – mass mobilization (or specifically, mass campaigns) seems to have been consciously avoided by following generations of leadership³. However, the “mobilization” is still maintained in official discourses, as the “mass mobilization” is replaced by the “social mobilization”, and, more essentially, practical national needs takes the place of highly politicalized agendas to orient the “mobilization”. The more realistic necessities, of mobilizing common people to participate in promoting national development, deprive the negative ideological and totalitarian color of the mobilization, but make it practical for a developing country’s mobilization: on one hand, it implies the premise that when the leadership strongly feels urgently necessary of a certain agenda, but common people don’t have such consciousness and the social structure doesn’t spontaneously promote the process or

Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971; and Xianglin Xu, *Party, Government and Society in Evolutionary Reform* <*jianjin gaige zhong de zhengdang, zhengfu yu shehui*>, Beijing: Zhongxin Press, 2004, pp. 57-58.

¹ At the same time the people was mobilized to participate into the constitutional regimes – like the People’s Congress at various levels and the root-level political practice – the mobilization also played the part to orient the political attitudes of the mass into what the Party elites wished to.

² Liu, *Communications and National Integration in Communist China*, p. 87. For example, just until the late 1950s, the Party-state had mobilized the “three mass campaigns” as the Agrarian Revolution <*tudi gaige*>, the War to Resist U.S. and Aid Korea <*kangmei yuanchao*>, and the Suppression Movement on the Anti-revolutionary <*zhenfan yundong*>. These campaigns might have been truly helpful for the young sovereignty to achieve the national integration and social structure change. However, they had been only succeeded by the more radical movements as the Great Leap <*da yuejin*> setting the impossible industrialization goals to “overtake British and U.S. in 15 years <*shiwu nian nei gan ying chao mei*>, the Anti-Rightist Struggle <*fanyou douzheng*> to eliminate the ideological dissent, and finally – to the peak of the political mobilization – the Great Cultural Revolution <*wenhua da geming*>. That means, the approach of “mobilization” had deviated from its original directives and ultimately served the leadership at the expense of the population, especially when the mobilization of the mass was entangled with the political conflict among the leadership. See in reference to: Lowell Dittmer, *Liu Shao-ch’i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The politics of mass criticism*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974.

³ There have also been some exception in some fields least politically sensitive, such as eliminating pornography and illegal publications, keep the peace of local community, mobilizing volunteers for celebration activities, and so on, which only seemed to be close to people’s daily life. See: Xu, *Party, Government and Society in Evolutionary Reform*, pp. 58-62.

even obstruct it¹; on the other hand, mobilization of common people implies the mistrust of leadership on established institutions to help achieve certain agendas². Thus, “mobilization” means some kind of non-institutional leverage to build the direct bridge to connect central orthodoxy with common people for the sake of: a) reconstructing people’s certain awareness and social structure in favor of certain national objectives; b) reducing hindering factors of established institutions, like localism and bureaucracy; and c) integrating social resources to supplement the less capability of Party-state. It’s practical for dealing with China’s environmental predicaments.

Embeddedness

Along with the social pluralization making it impossible to directly mobilize common people through the hand-to-hand approach as in Mao’s revolutionary era, combination with “embeddedness” is the critical point to prevent the “mobilization” from disobeying its practical needs, and further, to maintain political and social stability. As a concept firstly raised by economists³, the “embeddedness” is then widely utilized in other fields of social science, indicating a certain identification of a subjective sphere with an object sphere according to ties of long-term establishing network. With such ties, some elements or actions which seem to belong to the object sphere factually equals to the corresponding elements or actions of the subject sphere, only in another form.

¹ In Mao’s era, the agenda was industrialization, but the traditional culture and structure of an agricultural society wouldn’t be naturally adapted to the necessity. And, with regard to today’s environmental agendas, the whole social regimes has been established to meet the target of economic increase, with the common profit-orientation of common people, in contrast to the Party and governmental concern on environmental deterioration which critically influenced the nation’s future in development sustainability and social instability.

² For environmental agendas, it means especially that of bureaucrats and local authorities who were doubted to distort the central orthodoxy. However, of course, today’s China will not replay such deviant behavior of nationwide attack to established institutions that, at the climax of Cultural Revolution, when the institutional and legal processes were broken and most bureaucrats were replaced by young people absolutely “loyal” to their leader.

³ The concept of “embeddedness” was firstly raised to interpret the modern market economy and society in the early 1940s. Karl Polanyi judges economic actions to be embedded in the long-term social relationships with trust, so as to reduce the contrariety nature of economic actions [see: Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, Beacon Press, 1971 version; and also Jens Beckert, *The Great Transformation of Embeddedness: Karl Polanyi and the New Economic Sociology*, Max-Planck-Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung, 2007]. And then, Mark Granovetter applies the concept to a broader field that all social factors linked to modern market had even decisive effects on economic activities, and all economic actions embedded in certain networks [see: Mark Granovetter, “Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 91, No. 3, November, 1985, pp. 481-510]. And moreover, Brian Uzzi further pointed the special functions the “embeddedness” could offer – for social ties to affect economic outcomes – as the trust, transition of effective information and promotion of mutual problem solution [see: Brian Uzzi, “The Sources and Consequences of Embeddedness for the Economic Performance of Organizations: the Network Effect,” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 61, No. 4, August 1996, pp. 674-698].

The “embeddedness” used in this thesis to analyze China’s Party-state-societal relations is targeted at the social actions which reflect the political orthodoxy, according to special organizations, bias, culture and non-institutional ties between political and social players. During the economic reform¹, the Party-state has generally loosened the totalitarian control, and further, the elimination of “unit system <*danwei tizhi*>” in the late 1990s finally broke the traditional structural ties inherited from Mao’s era. In addition, the accumulation of private wealth and the tendency of social pluralization have brought the image that the political power had withdrawn from the society – or even being forced to be – and, some kind of public sphere like that in developed democracies was expected to replace the political factors. However, there may be a confused comprehension of the “political power”. According to Michael Mann, the state power can be distinguished in two types: the despotic power and infra-structural power according to the state-society relations. The former is also called “power over society”, requiring that only elite class can impose its willingness on society without any legal or institutional communication. And, on the contrary, the latter is also known as “power through society”, entailing a cooperative relations between citizens and their government, in other words, political decisions can be smoothly implemented in the society according to certain laws and institutional arrangement embedded in the society, despite of the visible power form². Thus, from the aspect of China’s Party-state, the withdrawing of visible despotic power during reform era is also very likely to be accompanied with the growth of infra-structural power. And in addition, when we mention the phenomenon of civil society, we can see that, civil society in China has appeared according to the Party-state power transformation during marketization reform to construct social space, which has made

¹ Factually, some researches have even mentioned some kind of “embeddedness” in the mass campaigns of Mao’s revolutionary era. As announcing to construct the “people’s nation” and modernize the ancient culture as quickly as possible, the mass mobilization of Mao’s revolutionary era might have constructed structural ties between political and social sphere to make individuals and social organizations spontaneously reflected the leadership authority and central orthodoxy, which can be seen as a “strong embeddedness” with absolute political control over social sphere. See for example: Arthur Dosk Barnett and Ezra Vogel, *Cadres, Bureaucracy, and Political Power in Communist China*, NY: Columbia University Press, 1967; Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist in China*, University of California Press, 1968; Lowell Dittmer, *China’s Continuous Revolution: the Post-liberation Epoch, 1949-1981*, University of California Press, 1987; and Lawrence R. Sullivan, “Leadership and Authority in the Chinese Communist Party: Perspectives from the 1980s,” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 4, 1986-1987, pp. 605-633.

² See: Michael Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State: its Origins, Mechanisms, and Results,” *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 25, No. 01 November 1984, pp 185-213.

China's civil society naturally weak and vulnerable to the Party-state¹. In other words, both the process of the Party-state's power transformation, and the nature of China's civil society indicates the necessity of "embeddedness" of political authority in society. And, the embeddedness of political authority and orthodoxy has been paid academic attention, whether researchers choose to use the concept of "embeddedness" or not².

3.3.2 Research Methods

The specific research methods include:

- a) Case Study: this research chooses several most well-known environmental public issues from 1998 until recent years respectively in different problem domains. The case choice is owing to several considerations: these cases have drawn great academic concern to prove the importance; hypothetical factors are all visible for observing; characteristics of different problem domains leave space for comparison; each case has its emphasis of respective factors to complete the jigsaw of "embedded mobilization".
- b) Text study: text data for this research comes from newspaper reports, governmental documents, public letters and unpublished documents. The analysis on text is from the aspects of both quantity and quality. The observation on mass media focuses on mainstream print media. Comparing with broadcasting media, information searched from print media is more complete and concentrated, providing us more credibility of result; and, comparing with internet media, with much more information from uncertain sources and personal expressions, print media is more beneficial for analyzing the political

¹ Zhenglai, Deng. *State and Society: Study on China's Civil Society*, Sichuan: Sichuan People's Press, 1997, pp. 129-130.

² For example, Kang Xiaoguang, in his writing *Power shift*, indicates the fact that how certain political agendas are applied into actions of social organizations [see: Xiaoguang Kang, *Power Shift: China's Power Structural Change in Transformation <quanli de zhuanqi: zhuanxing qi zhongguo quanli geju de bianqian>*, Zhejiang: Zhejiang People's Press, 1999]; Chen Mingming tries to use the framework of "orienting Party-state-society cooperation" to interpret the new function of CCP's traditional approaches of propaganda, root organizations, education, modeling and hand-with-hand communication in today's China [see: Mingming Chen, *Politics and Modernization in Post-revolutionary Society <hou geming shehui de zhengzhi yu xiandaihua>*, Shanghai: Dictionary Press, 2002]; and, Luo Feng, clearly utilizes the concept "embeddedness" to frame the ongoing reform of CCP's power transformation and leading strategy [see: Feng Luo, *Embeddedness, Integration and the Reconstruction of Party Authority: A Survey on the Relationships of China's Ruling Party, State and Society <qianru, zhenghe yu zhengdang quanwei de chongshu: dui zhongguo zhizhengdang, guojia he shehui guanxi de kaocha>*, Shanghai: People's Press, 2009].

influence on media contents. And, among the mainstream media, analysis is mostly based on authoritative Party papers (like *People's Daily*, Central Television Station, newsletters of *Xinhua* News Agency, and local Party papers according to cases), local best sellers (like *Yangtze Evening*, *Xiandai Kuaibao*, *Beijing News*, etc.), and those as opinion leaders for certain view fields (like *South Weekend*, *Nanfang Dushibao*, *Liaowang*, etc.)

- c) Interview and participant observation: I have been a volunteer and experienced internship in several environmental NGOs, and had formal and informal communication with many activists, related officials and journalists. According to the communication, I'm able to apply more comprehensive knowledge to the research. Especially, to observe closely and participate in the circle, I can more understand the combination of the factors to frame embedded mobilization, because it's the informal politics, which more depends on practice but cannot only be judged through theoretical frameworks. For example, the self deficiencies of environmental NGOs, especially some radical views and action map to obstruct their further development, would not be easy to pay enough attention, because – if the comprehension is only based on literature review – formal academic writings inclined to emphasize more on the political pressure as obstacles.

3.4 Framework of Chapters

This thesis is composed of seven chapters. The first chapter is the introduction to research background, research questions, literature review, core hypothesis and methodology.

The second chapter focused on analysis of the upgrade of environmental issues in China's political agendas and the institutional predicaments to obstruct related policy enforcement, which indicate **the inherent dynamics of the Party-state to take mobilization** – the informal dynamics – in environmental realm¹. The upgrade of environmental agendas has followed the developing trace of orientating environmental

¹ The setting of a separate chapter is targeted to make more clear of the subjectivity of political authority in environmental realm, for strengthening the originality of this thesis.

problems as: from the side effects of economic increase to the necessary dimension of comprehensive “sustainable development <*ke chixu fazhan*>” and “scientific development <*kexue fazhan*>”. And therefore, directives on environmental management has been upgraded from “pollute-firstly-manage-later <*xian wuran hou zhili*>” to applying environmental standards into economic development measures. However, the national directive has been obstructed by established institutions – being developed during reform era in favor of rapid economic increase – especially the decentralization emphasizing local economic autonomy and economic achievements of local leaders, and the strong position of profit-oriented departments in bureaucratic fragmentation. In this case, to speak specifically, it’s the central leadership and non-profit environmental departments to practically need the informal mobilization.

From chapter three to chapter six, four well-known cases in typical problem domains were analyzed from the point of embedded mobilization. These cases are selected both for comparison and for indicating different factors to support “embedded mobilization”. The third chapter frames characteristics of China’s environmental NGOs through study on their early activities of wild life conservation, with focus on their initiatives to utilize mass media and their special ties with political actors, and try to make clear that **why and how Chinese environmental NGOs make the “social units” for the embeddedness of political power**. Three factors are important. In the first place, the identity of earlier activists demonstrated their elitism and political aspiration of promoting event-oriented democracy in environmental realm, in other words, the de-politicalized politics. Secondly, environmental activists had been willing to utilize institutional resources as shortcut to influence policies. And lastly, activists’ efforts to pursue subjectivity in policymaking, with clear opposition to political orthodoxy, failed and taught NGOs to shift to more cooperative attitudes with the Party-state. Then, further study on cases in following chapters will indicate us the shift in reality according to their development.

After analyzing the “social units” and Chinese NGOs’ special ties with politics, this thesis turn to **certain political actors in response to NGOs’ cooperative attitudes, who also have their own initiatives to promote environmental**

priority and pluralistic participation. The case we study in the forth chapter – the Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage membrane project <*yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng*>, a water management project within the relics of China’s one old imperial garden, which was questioned of environmental influence and procedural legitimacy – demonstrates that reformative officials of State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), the top environmental watchdog, exactly play the role. The case study focuses on two aspects to shape their interaction. On one hand, environmental officials and NGOs shared the same targets of upgrading environmental concern in policymaking, and they also preferred to democratizing policymaking procedures as well as strengthening legal leverages to withstand profit-oriented departments. On the other hand, although environmental officials seemed to act just in response to the “public question to the project” framed by NGOs and mass media, this chapter will tell us how they initiatively utilize their institutional resources to orient the event process which create great convenience for the expression of activists and journalists, who were keeping close communication with the officials. In other words, the opinion and power of SEPA was embedded in civil activism, which mobilized social resources to support SEPA’s decision to change the original policymaking which ignored SEPA’s legal authority.

After the two chapters of focuses on initiatives of NGOs and environmental department respectively to set up the “ties” for embedded mobilization, the fifth chapter further analyzes their combination to **outline rounded form of the embedded mobilization** according to “Nu River defense battle”, the best-known anti-dam activism. And moreover, this chapter emphasizes on the situation when embedded mobilization was faced with really powerful confrontation and when the “selected social units” were challenged by non-official intellectuals. In this case, SEPA initiatively opened the political access to environmental NGOs and mass media, in order to strengthen effects of environmental consideration in hydropower policymaking. And, environmental NGOs and mass media, being in correspondence with SEPA and utilizing the institutional resources, brought the social movement and finally influence the policymaking through drawing attention of top leadership. However, the famous story had its subsequence that along with the dam plan was suspended for further environmental impact assessment

under the authority of SEPA, the ties between NGOs and SEPA were broken, and NGOs were left into the dilemma: they were challenged by both local governments, with profit-oriented departments, and other public intellectuals who preferred industrial ethics rather than environmental priority. The dilemma reduces NGOs' social legitimacy as "representing common people", indicates the indispensability of political players in environmental protection.

The sixth chapter adds the last piece to the jigsaw of "embedded mobilization", that is, to define **effects of the central orthodoxy**. In last cases, the central leadership hadn't seem to initiatively gone up to the front stage, except their response to petition from NGOs and SEPA according to the "public opinion". However, it shouldn't be ignored that NGOs and SEPA depended on the central orthodoxy, which valued the environmental quality, in order to dwarf their rivals. This chapter makes clear the initiatives of central leadership, according to their active intervention in the Tai Lake water crisis in 2007. The water crisis fully exposed the deficiency of China's extensive economic increase pattern, but had been attempted to concealed and framed as an inevitable natural disaster by the local government. The counteraction between the center and local government was reflected by the contradictory issue framing respectively of local mass media and central mass media with remote mass media. The public opinion was mobilized by central leadership to criticize the local government and promote environmental management system reform.

The last chapter is the conclusion, divided into two parts. The former part analyzes the main factors to construct the embedded mobilization process and influence the effects limited to environmental realm, including: a) "sustainable development" as the orthodoxy of central authority; b) coalition of SEPA and NGOs as the channel for embedding institutional resources in social activism; c) media framing as the approach to mobilization of social resources; and d) external interventions to weaken the effects of mobilization. The latter part extends to more deep-seated political meanings of the nature of institutionalization and democratization in China. The embedded mobilization demonstrated in environmental realm, with combining existing institutional resources and informal politics applying limited pluralistic participation, can be taken as a balanced

according to the dilemma of dealing with industrialization and post-industrialization problems during the same period, and in addition, reflect the priority of modern institutionalization to democratization in political development.

Chapter Two

Environmental Agendas and the Institutional Predicaments

1. Environmental Agendas: for Development Sustainability and Social Stability

A series of data may illuminate the serious negative effects of environmental degradation on development sustainability, human health and even the social equity and justice. World Bank used to estimate that during the 1990s, only the air and water pollution had cost between 3.5 to 8 percent of the country's whole Gross Domestic Product (GDP)¹. According to the special report on China's environmental governance by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), until the beginning of the 21st century, there had "been a serious toll of environmental damage, mainly due to under-priced natural resources", which was "costly in terms of health problems" and "reduced productivity of labour and land" in "one of the poorest and most polluted countries in the world"². The survey pointed that early in 1993, the water pollution by industrial chemicals during the beginning of China's policies to develop Township-and Village Enterprises (TVEs) could cause an agricultural loss of at least one million tons. And the report believed that there had been "premature deaths of 178,000 people in major cities each year due to pollution...and the 7.4 million working days that are lost to health problems related to air pollution", and, "only 6 of China's 27 largest cities" had drinking water quality "meet state standards"³. And, along with the top political authority had paid a special attention to the environmental degradation from the beginning of 21st century, the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), the top environmental protection and the National Bureau of Statistics jointly issued an accounting report on China's "national green economic" to admit that only in 2004, the environmental pollution directly caused a loss of 511.8 billion RMB yuan, equaling to 3.05% of that year's GDP, among which, the water pollution led to the loss of 286.2 billion yuan as 55.9% of the total, air pollution led to 219.8 billion yuan as 42.9%, and the solid waste and urgent incidents led to 5.7 billion

¹ Johnson Todd, Liu Feng and Richard S. Newfarmer, *Clear Water, Blue Skies: China's Environment in the New Century*, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1997.

² UNDP, *China Human Development Report 2002*, p. 34.

³ UNDP: *China Human Development Report 2002: Making Green Development to a Choice*, p. 33-34. [http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/asiathepacific/china/china_2002_en.pdf]

yuan as 1.2%, with the rest being the virtual governance cost¹. And Pan Yue, the deputy general of SEPA at that time even pointed that one quarter of Chinese people had been drinking the water without meeting the quality standard and one third had been suffering from the seriously polluted air².

And moreover, the general negative effects on development sustainability and human health are compounded with the accumulating social inequity such like rural-urban disparity, inter-regional disparity in income, educational level, medical services, life expectancy and other social insurances, and so on. Environmental problems had strengthened the existing inequity of deteriorating wealth gap. For example, A research of the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS) pointed that according to the market-orientation of the resource distribution without effective regulatory regimes, the natural resources – under the communist State-owned system, the natural resources belong to all the people of the nation theoretically – had been gradually concentrated to the economically or politically powerful groups, but on the contrary, the disadvantaged groups, especially the rural and urban poor, had been much more vulnerable to the environmental deterioration brought by the abuse of natural resources³. Another phenomenon of the environmental inequity to draw attention is the special problem derived from the ecological resettlement <*shengtai yimin*> according to the loss of historical agricultural environment caused by construction projects or sudden natural disasters. There is also evidence to demonstrate that the ecological migrants unaccustomed to the new life in a strange area, especially those young people difficult to find jobs, have made the potential instability of the society, and even factually led to the conflict incident with the native inhabitants⁴. The environmental problem has already

¹ SEPA and National Bureau of Statistics, “China’s Green GDP Account and Research Report 2004 <*zhongguo lvse guomin jingji hesuan yanjiu baogao 2004*>,” published on September, 2006. pp. 8-9. [http://www.mep.gov.cn/plan/gongwen/200609/P020060908545859361774.pdf]

² Pan Yue, “The environmental friendly society according to the orientation of harmonious society construction <*hexie shehui mubiao xia de huanjing youhao shehui*>,” *People’s Daily* online, July 15, 2006. [http://finance.people.com.cn/GB/1037/4594021.html]

³ Zhang Shiqiu, “Analyzing the Phenomena of Inefficient Resource Allocation and Natural Asset Capture by Powerful Groups <*huanjing ziyuan peizhi di xiaolv ji ziran ziben “jufu” xianxiang pouxi*>,” in Environment and Development Research Center: *China Environment and Development Review*, Vol.3, Beijing: China Academy of Social Science Press, 2007. pp. 285-294.

⁴ Elizabeth C. Economy, *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China’s Future*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004. pp. 18-19, 81-84.

become “the new incentive of social riots <*qunti xing shijian*>”¹. And in addition, the resource shortage along with both the national sponsored urbanization and the spontaneous economic-oriented population flow from rural to urban areas, or from under-developed west to the advanced east, have been a factor to intensify the pressure on the social stability².

And further, the environmental quality has become an indicator to influence people’s satisfaction degree, and, to improve environmental quality has gradually become a key criterion to measure the governance ability. According to the special sector of SEPA to receive environmental complaints³, there had been a obvious jump of the number of complaints from the late 1990s and to the beginning of the 21st century (Table 2-1). It may be more critical that the increasing complaints not only indicated the increasing frequency of environmental incidents, but also reflected that there had been very limited institutional resources to protect the equity for environmentally vulnerable groups, mostly rural and poor. One point is that, poverty had forced the rural people to depend on TVEs which were the double-edged sword to provide jobs and create environmental deterioration⁴, without multiple choices unless the government could afford them. And the other point is, legal approaches to maintain the environmental justice were absent, in consistence with China’s whole governance system lacking “ruling by law”. Generally in China, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, the concentration of natural resources has always made people benefit significantly from activities that cause ecological damage more advantaged than those who are subjected to the environmental costs of the damage. Usually, it’s hard to depend on formal administrative approaches in the local territory, since that local administration is difficult to make the decision of strict punishment on enterprises with illegal pollution emission, for the temptations of tax, profit and job

¹ Tong Zhifeng, “Reflection on Mass Disturbance Derived from Environmental Pollution,” in Yang Dongping (ed.), *FON Green Paper Book 2008: Crisis and Turning of China’s Environment*, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2008.

² See: UNDP, *China Human Development Report 2002*, p. 40-41.

³ The complaint system, including that through letters <*xinfang*> or that through direct visits <*shangfang*>, is a special institutional regime of China to guide the people, who feels a certain problem to be difficult to solve under the local administration, to complain directly to a higher-level authority, so as to push the progress of solution according to the intervention of the higher administration. See: Anna Brettell, “Channeling Dissent: The Institutionalization of Environmental Complaint Resolution,” in Peter Ho and Richard Louis Edmons, ed., *China’s Embedded Activism: Opportunities and Constraints of A Social Movement*, London; New York : Routledge, 2008, pp. 69-88.

⁴ See: UNDP, *China Human Development Report 2002*, p. 45.

creation. But on the contrary, “it is very difficult to correct things through enacting environmental justice”¹. Wang Canfa, a pundit on environmental law interpreted the pessimistic justice enactment situation as “compound difficulties in suing, taking evidence, winning and enforcement of judgment” leading to “(even until 2011) less than 20 per cent of the victims willing to safeguard their interests through legal means”². Thus, appealing to the higher or directly the highest administration becomes the preferring choice. According to the comparative investigation on people’s tolerance of inequality by UNDP in 2005, people in China and the former socialist countries were judged to be have “a lower tolerance for inequality”, with more than 90 percent of people believing income inequality to be too great and about 80 percent taking their governments to have “the responsibility to reduce income inequality”³. Thus, the increasing complaints have resulted in more serious challenges to the governance ability, along with the better expectation of and greater trust on the administration. And further, the leading Party’s has announced the “governance mode transformation <*zhuanbian zhizheng fangshi*>”, turning to emphasize on the “service-oriented government <*fuwuxing zhengfu*> rather than ideological legitimacy”⁴. Thus, governments at various levels have been forced to engaged itself in achieving the compound goals, covering political, economic, and social fields, to achieve the common prosperity of all members of the country <*gong fu*> with balanced development between urban and rural areas, between regions, and between people and nature. To speak generally, the dynamics of environmental management in China have not only been from the domestic public opinion or the modern environmentalist regimes of the international society, but also from the initiatives of the national willingness. And, the next part will discuss the upgrade of environmental issues in the ranks of China’s political agendas, to demonstrate that it has been exactly the national policies to head the environmental management progress.

¹ See: UNDP, *China Human Development Report 2002*, p. 47.

² See: “The mystery and truth of environmental lawsuit <*huanjing susong de fuyun yu zhenxiang*>,” *Liaowang*, May 23, 2011.

³ UNDP and China Development Research Fundation, *China Human Development 2005: Development of Equity*, p. 16. [http://www.undp.org.cn/downloads/nhdr2005/NHDR2005_complete.pdf]

⁴ See: Wang Changjiang, *Construction of Leading Party Governance Ability in the Prospective of China’s Political Civilization* <*zhongguo zhengzhi wenming shiye xia de dang de zhizheng nengli jianshe*>, Shanghai People’s Press, 2005; and Lin Shangli (ed.), *Political Construction and Nation Growth* <*zhengzhi jieshe yu guojia chengzhang*>, Encyclopedia of China Publishing House, 2008.

Table 2-1 Increasing environmental complaints through “*shangfang*” channels from the middle 1990s to 2006

Year	Number of environmental incidents	Number of complaint letters	Statistics of direct visits
1995	1966	58678	94798 persons-times
1996	—	67268	47714 batches
1997	—	106210	71528persons-times/29677 batches
1998	—	147630	93791 persons-times/40151 batches
1999	—	230346	89872 persons-times/38246 batches
2000	—	247741	139424 persons-times/62059 batches
2001	1842	367402	80329 batches
2002	1921	435020	90746 batches
2003	1843	525988	85028 batches
2004	1441	595852	86414 batches
2005	1406	608245	142360 persons-times/88237 batches
2006	842	616122	71287 batches

Source: Tong Zhifeng, “Reflection on Mass Disturbance Derived from Environmental Pollution,” in Yang Dongping (ed.), *FON Green Paper Book 2008: Crisis and Turning of China’s Environment*, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2008. p. 151, table 1.

2. Upgrading Environmental Concern in Political Agendas: the State-led Progress

The last section exactly demonstrates the connection of environmental problem with political interests and will help us to comprehend its upgrade in political agendas. However, it’s also to be noticed that the “upgrade” doesn’t mean the concern on environmental deterioration prevails over industrialization and life modernization which exactly lead to it. This common dilemma of a developing country, compounded with nationalism which greatly cares “the right of development” in the global inequity, directly leads to the orthodoxy of “sustainable development” in China¹. This orthodoxy then makes a paradox in the “upgrade” of environmental agendas: political authority vests legitimacy to environmental agendas on one hand; but it maintains the institutional setting beneficial for economic-increase-orientation. The dilemma is also the point to help us comprehend the importance of paying more attention to “informal politics”.

¹ Yisheng Zheng, “On China’s Environment and Economism <lun zhongguo de huanjing yu jingji zhishang zhuyi>,” *21st Century* (Net Journal, Hong Kong University), Vo. 87, No. 2, 2005. [<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/21c/issue/articles/0411038.pdf>]

2.1 Until Early 1990s: Marginalized Agendas to Serve the Economic Increase

Until the early 1970s, China's ruling Communist Party and the government had little concern on environmental problems. It would be easily understood that China was at the beginning for large scale of modern industrialization, which was absolutely prior to environment issues in both governmental and social agendas, and in addition, the political leadership had been satisfied with the "vast land and rich resources <*dida wubo*>", which had brought the ancient power the absolute advantage in the agricultural civilization, and also made it underestimated the resource pressure in the large-scale industrialization. However, we may also find that during a very short time, from the middle 1950s, some statutes for dealing with sporadic environmental problems had been formulated¹. And, in the same year, the political directive of "comprehensive utilization" <*zonghe liyong*> was introduced². The early environmental concerns had derived from two crucial aspects. On one hand, the negative results of modern industry³ on environment and human health had begun to be acknowledged by the political authority. On the other hand, in the commanding economics period, how to rationally utilize limited resources was an important governmental duty. Thus, the early environmental policies had been nothing but to serve the state's general economic development under the directive view of "beating the nature <*ren ding sheng tian*>"⁴, and been designed to either reduce side negative impacts of industrialization as the passive means or adapt environmental factors to make a more comprehensive economic plan. In other words, the environmental issue hadn't been taken as an independent factor in the political agendas.

However, the early environmental normatives met the continuing pan-political

¹ Among them the comparatively important were the 1956 Regulations of Protecting Mineral Resources and the 1956 Regulations on Factory Safety. The former involved a stipulation to forbidden local water pollution through exploitation of mineral resources, and the latter paid attention to the waste materials and liquids to endanger the health of workers or local inhabitant.

² Under the directive, some national-level administrative regulations, including 1957 State Council Provisional Program on Water and Soil Protection, 1962 State Council Directive Concerning the Active Protection and Rational Use of Wildlife and Natural Resources, and the State Council Instructions on Strengthening the Work of Purchase and Utilization of Waste Products in the middle 1960s.

³ Especially the "three wastes" <*san fei*> of gaseous emission, water discharges and industrial residue, which began to be formally introduced in State Council Directive on Strengthening the Work of Purchase and Utilization of Waste Products.

⁴ See details in: Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War against Nature: Politics and Environment in Revolutionary China*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

movement peak during the Great Leap and Cultural Revolution, when the new constructed legal system of China had been completely broken down, and totalitarianism through the period had completely eliminated the existence of society. During that period, the rapid industrialization and economic increase had been taken not only the natural necessity of any developing countries but also a proof of the “socialist superiority <*shehui zhuyi youyuexing*>” for the political legitimacy. Thus, under the leading slogan of “human power can defeat nature <*ren ding shengtian*>”, “exceed Britain and America <*ganyin chaomei*>” and some other concepts similarly emphasizing the high speed economic increase and utopian ideal, immoderate extracting of natural resources without any environmental considerations had been greatly encouraged¹. Even after the Great Leap, new development policies in 1960s and early 1970s had paid little attention to basic natural conditions². In the official perception of that time, environmental pollution was “the vicious consequences” of capitalist societies in their drive to achieve wealth and, according to the propaganda, would not become a problem in China. In accordance with the line, the call to preserve environmental qualities and natural resources had been kept mute³.

However, during the domestic irrational industrial production, there had also been domestic and international dynamics to push the environmental agendas. In 1972, two serious environmental issues⁴ forced the Premier Zhou Enlai himself to direct the investigation and treatment, which made “the first top-level state acknowledgment of widespread pollution problems”⁵. And in addition, the reaction to the progressing international environmental protection regimes of the Chinese government had become

¹ For example, a large scale of disafforestation had been implemented during the Great Leap period for fueling the great steel making <*dalian gangtie*>, which had seemed like an insanity.

² such as extension of wet rice in area where water was scarce, excessively disforest, integration of industries with high contamination in residential and agricultural areas, and irrigation with polluted, often toxic industrial wastewater leading to severe pollution of water sources and soils. See: UNDP: *China Human Development Report 2002: Making Green Development to a Choice*, p. 11.

[http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/asiathepacific/china/china_2002_en.pdf]

³ Changqun Duan and XueQing Yang and Fayuan Gao, “Fifty Years of Political Ecology in Mainland China,” *Sinosphere*, vol. 3 (1), 2000, pp. 6-13

⁴ In 1972, a red tide in the Bay of Dalian caused substantial shellfish and aquatic production losses, and in the same year, fish sold to the capital city of Beijing from Guantian reservoir, were found to have high levels of toxic chemicals in their flesh because of massive industrial pollution of the reservoir.

⁵ Joshua Muldavin, “The Paradoxes of Environmental Policy and Resources Management in Reform-Era China,” *Economic Geography*, Vol. 76, No. 3, (Jul., 2000), pp. 244-271. p. 252.

another dynamics to push environmental issues into the political agendas. From the early 1970s, along with the efforts of Chinese government to enter the United Nations, the compliance with the international norms had become an important process in China's environmental protection history¹. Especially, there had been the argument that the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Health and Environment (UNCHE) in Stockholm had been the decisive factor to develop China's environmental protection dependent on the global trend of modern environmentalism, because that was one of the earliest important international conferences with the globally broad representation to accept the People's Republic of China, thus it was naturally expected by the Chinese government to be a channel to demonstrate their will of taking responsibility for the international society, to change the image of a stubborn and uncooperative power². The Chinese delegation to the UNCHE "returned from the conference with concrete recommendations for the leadership, and the State Council responded with a series of decrees"³. In 1973, the next year after UNCHE, the first National Conference on Environmental Protection was held in Beijing by the State Council. In the same year, the draft of Several Rules on Environmental Protection and Improvement <*guanyu huanjing baohu yu gaishan de ruogan guiding zanxing caoan*> was decreed, which marked the revival of legal system for environmental issues in China. And, along with the calming down of the utopian pan-political movement, the Party-state had begun to plan a set of governmental configurations for practical implement of the law rules. In 1974, the Environmental Protection Leading Group of State Council <*guowuyuan huanjing baohu lingdao xiaozu*> to make general policies with State Council Environmental Protection Office <*guowuyuan huanjing baohu bangongshi*> under its leadership to take implementation was established with its membership from a wide range of governmental departments and special commissions at the national-level. This organizational configuration had been in charge of environmental protection, having introducing a number of correlative

¹ Lester Ross, "China: Environmental Protection, Domestic Policy Trends, Patterns of Participation in Regimes and Compliance with International Norms", *The China Quarterly*, No. 156, Special Issue: China's Environment. (Dec., 1998), p. 809-835.

² Michael Palmer, "Environmental Regulation in the People's Republic of China: The Face of Domestic Law", *The China Quarterly*, No. 156, Special Issue: China's Environment. (Dec., 1998), pp. 788-808.

³ "The Paradoxes of Environmental Policy and Resources Management in Reform-Era China," p. 252.

regulations¹, before its promotion to Environmental Protection Bureau in 1982.

But still, the policy change in early 1970s cannot be taken as the upgrade but only the revival of environmental protection in the political agendas. On one hand, in the UNCHE, regarded as the origin of international environmentalist diplomacy, China was still taken as a laggard participant, who demanded principal responsibility for pollution control to the advanced industrialized countries and insisted on the right of independent exploitation of internal resources without external interference². On the other hand, the domestic dynamics had derived from the change in the central leadership, rather than an initiative awareness of the environmental pressure³. In fact, we may find the regulations and practice in early 1970s seemed to have no difference with the existing policies in 1950s. At that time, the whole propaganda was still showing such a crazy emotion for political movement that the policy change in economic development, including environment improvement, had not been well interpreted to the public, until the pan-political wave faded with the end of the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s.

From 1978, when Deng Xiaoping basically excluded the dogmatists sticking to the pan-political movement from the leadership and launched the economic reform, the possible environmental degradation sided by economic development had been expected. In accordance with the consideration, the state responsibility to protect environment and natural resources, with preventing pollution and other dangers to the public was clearly expressed in the 1978 Constitution⁴. And further in the 1982 Constitution, the concepts of “environment” and “natural resources” were improved to “environment for people to live and ecological environment”, and added by more details as pollution control, afforestation, rare animals and plants, and so on⁵. But the importance of environmental issues had still been reflected only in the written rules without the substantial effects during the whole 1990s, for the environmental concern had got to yield to the urgent

¹ They included 1974 Provisional Regulations on the Prevention of Pollution of Coastal Waters, and a number of environmental standards for such objects as industrial emissions drinking water and food. Michael Palmer, 1998, pp. 790-791.

² Lester Ross, 1998, pp. 810-811.

³ Along with the fall of Lin Biao, both the vice Chairman at that time and one of the greatest sponsors of Cultural Revolution, a new plan for economic recovery was started by Premier Zhou Enlai and his assistants.

⁴ Article 11, PRC Constitution, 1978.

⁵ Article 9, Article 26, PRC Constitution, 1982.

economic increase, since the negative effects of the pan-political movement during Mao's era had weakened the power of the political belief to integrate the nation which had forced the Party-state to upgrade the economic development-oriented value in policymaking, in order to maintain the political legitimacy through improving people's material living quality. As Karl Hallding interpreted as below¹,

“China is a developing country. Its financial resources are limited in the face of the heavy task of full-scale economic reconstruction. Therefore the state cannot afford to make lavish appropriations for environmental protection for some time to come.” This 1988 statement from Qu Geping, then head of China's National Environmental Protection Agency speaks tellingly to the level of ambition of Chinese environmental policy-makers—it should be done, somehow, but it must not cost anything, at least not now. Throughout the reform period a tendency has prevailed among Chinese leaders at different levels to see environmental problems as an unpleasant side effect of economic development, a necessary evil that one has to live through as the nation grows rich, and only then can start thinking about cleaning up.

During the 1980s, the Chinese government hadn't demonstrated its willingness to go beyond the model of “increase-firstly—clean-up-later” which had been experienced in most industrialized countries, thus, the environmental concerns had got to maintained the marginalized political agenda, greatly depending on the demand of the economic growth².

2.2 “Sustainable Development”: Official Change in Valuing Environmental Issues

Into the 1990s, there had been new domestic and external dynamics to upgrade the

¹ Karl Hallding, *Water Resource Problems in China*. Stockholm University: Department of East Asian Studies, 1991. Referenced in UNDP: *China Human Development Report 2002: Making Green Development to a Choice*, p. 42.

² State environmental protection plan must be brought into the whole economic and social development plans; State takes economic and technological policies and measures favor environmental protection in order to co-ordinate it with economic construction and social development. See: *Environmental Protection Law of China*, 1989 version.

rank of environmental issues in the political agendas. In the early 1990s, the concept of “sustainable development (SD)” had been introduced to China, promoting the environmental issues to be reconsidered, beyond its traditional meaning as only a dimension of economic development¹. In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, and as the outcome, the global action plan “Agenda 21”² signed in the conference adapted the SD concept to the areas in which human actions would directly affect the environment. For this concept commonly familiar to today’s Chinese people, the most widely recognized definition may be the 1987 Brundtland Report released by UN as³:

(S)ustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- *the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and*
- *the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.*

Factually, it’s not difficult to understand that the concept of SD had been purposed on the compromise between the developed countries exceeding the industrialization where the modern environmentalism had been derived, and the developing countries who had been appealing for their right of the development with the inevitable environmental degradation and resources waste. The concept both emphasized the necessity of environmental and social care as well as the economic increase, and didn’t clearly limit the development right without strict rules or punishment regimes for mandatory environmental protection responsibilities. The concept even can be taken to frame the field in which interest groups with totally different purposes can set their own agendas

¹ Palmer, “Environmental Regulation in the People's Republic of China.” p. 791.

² See the full text in: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21toc.htm>

³ See the full text in: <http://worldinbalance.net/intagreements/1987-brundtland.php>

according to the different needs, and further the concept itself can be framed by different players in their favorable styles¹. According to David Pearce, the SD concept has at least four policy forms according to technique-oriented and ecology-oriented as scientific and technical optimism, environmental and technical coordination practice, local autonomy practice and deep green ecological practice². And in political and social practice, the governmental and civil society has also chosen the focus dimensions according to their own preferences to set the special action agendas.

After signing the Agenda 21, in 1992, the Chinese government formulated the “Ten Countermeasures to Environment and Development” to support the international regimes. On March 25 1994, China’s State Council passed the “China Agenda 21 <zhongguo 21 shiji yicheng>” also named “White Paper Book on Population, Environment and Development for China’s 21st Century <zhongguo 21 shiji renkou, huanjing yu fazhan baipishu>”, which marked the formal adaptation of SD concept into the official discourses as the “highest-level ideology”³ in respect of development. It might have been the passive reaction to the international environmentalist pressure, because China had been urgent on its way to be accepted by the broad international regimes after the temporary block according to 1989’s political movement, especially while the national plan to enter the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) and its precedent World Trade Organization (WTO) had forced China to meet the environmental protection provisions⁴. It would be unreasonable to ignore the active efforts of Chinese central authority according to the domestic demand of upgrading environmental agendas.

Besides the accumulating negative effects of economic increase, along with the fading out of the charismatic politicians, the new generation of authoritarian leaders⁵ had been more impressed by the “intensification of the environmental degradation found in

¹ John S. Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*, Oxford University Press, 2005. p. 165.

² David Pearce, *Blueprint 3: Measuring Sustainable Development*, London: Earthscan, 1993. pp. 18-19.

³ Guang Xia, “Judge the national willingness of environmental protection from the State Council ‘decision’,” *China Environment News*, February 20, 2006.

⁴ See: Palmer, “Environmental Regulation in the People’s Republic of China.” and also Petra Christmann and Glen Taylor, Globalization and the Environment: Determinants of Firm Self-Regulation in China, *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3. (3rd Qtr, 2001), pp. 439-458.

⁵ The President Jiang Zeming and other top officials during the 1990s were generally known as “the third generation of core leadership <di san dai lingdao hexin> to distinguish from the charisma leaders of Mao Zedong as “the first generation” and Deng Xiaoping as the second.

prerevolutionary and Maoist China”¹ led by the policies of decollectivization, decentralization and privatization. That’s not only because privatization have encouraged individuals to pursue maximum profit at the expense of environmental degradation, but also because decollectivization and decentralization have weakened the actual effectiveness of Central policies or guidelines on environmental issues. Since that the authoritarian leaders depended more on the institutional system than the charisma leaders like Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping to implement the national plan through the vast land with great regional differences. Thus, the poor practical management in dealing with environmental problems had made an indicator to demonstrate that the central authority had “little control” over the social relations and conflicts associated with different “local actors”, including peasant farmers, forest officials, entrepreneurs, local officials, and so on, who all had their own agendas, along with the rapid social transformation and political change². In other words, the central authority had been faced with the dilemma that they couldn’t abandon the economic increase-oriented national strategy and the corresponding regimes of decollectivization, decentralization and privatization to encourage economic achievements of the local government or individuals, but the intensification of ecology and resources pressure challenging both the long-term national plan and the central capability of governance. Thus, we may conclude that the SD concept, which had been expected by the international society to apply into the national policies of populous country in a rapid economic increase, had also provided the Chinese central authority with the idea to balance the economic increase-orientation and the environmental concern, since the SD concept had left a great flexibility for agenda setting. And further, we can also judge from the adaptation of SD concept that the environmental concern of the government had led the public, which had been different from that in the developed democracies.

Along with legislation of environmental agendas — during the 1990s, the general Environmental Law and several special laws on dealing with the water pollution, air

¹ Joshua Muldavin, “The Paradoxes of Environmental Policy and Resources Management in Reform-Era China”, *Economic Geography*, Vol. 76, No. 3, (Jul., 2000), pp. 244-271. p. 244.

² Muldavin, “The Paradoxes of Environmental Policy and Resources Management in Reform-Era China”, p. 245.

quality, toxic chemicals, species conservation and so on had been formulated in China¹ — the central authority had been also playing a active role in cultivating a capable special watchdog to integrate the environmental governance throughout the country, as part of the personnel reform and recentralization to strengthen the central control both launched in 1998². During the great central personnel reform of that year, the Environmental Protection Bureau (EPB) established in the early 1980s had been promoted into the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA <*guojia huanbao zongju*>) as a semi-ministry sector to take the duties of “covering brown and green issues, policy making and monitoring, and co-ordination of environmental affairs across ministries³. SEPA then became the first sector to have “a clear mandate and incentive to protect the environment”⁴, according to the first director and vice director of SEPA. And further, a dialogue mechanism was established in 1999 to make the President, Premier, and other cabinet members to sit down annually to discuss the nation’s sustainability strategy, which clearly demonstrated the political support from the central authority, and implied the fundamental change in the position of environmental issues in the political agendas.

2.3 “Scientific Development” and “Harmonious Society” Strategy

During the 1990s, we had been demonstrated the change of environmental quality into a independent indicator of China’s development beyond purely a dimension of the economic growth, through the official adaptation of “sustainable development” into the national long-term plan, but it was still not enough to say the national willingness had really preferred to the “balance” between economic growth an environmental improvement. Because along with the economic reform of adapting some capitalist regimes for economic growth and the official reflection on past political movements, the Communist ideology which used to be the solid foundation for the legitimacy of the

¹ See details in: Chinese State Council: “The White Paper Book on Chinese Environmental Protection,” published in June 2006. [http://www.gov.cn/zwgk/2006-06/05/content_300288.htm]

² The recentralization had been taken in respect of both normative reform of the intergovernmental fiscal system to increase the central share in tax distribution, and the practice to weaken the deep-rooted local political gangs. See for example: Zheng Yongnian, *De Facto Federalism in China: Reform and Dynamics of Central-Local*, Singapore; Hackensack, N.J.: World Scientific, 2007. pp. 229-230, 258-263. and Ehtisham Ahmad, Li Keping, Thomas Richardson, and Raju Singh: “Recentralization in China?” IMF Working Paper of the Fiscal Affairs Department, IMF, October, 2002. [<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2002/wp02168.pdf>]

³ UNDP: *China Human Development Report 2002: Making Green Development to a Choice*, pp. 75-76.

⁴ Xie Zhenhua and Song Ruixiang, Speech at the Working Conference of the 1999 National Environmental Protection Affairs, document HF, no. 79. Beijing: SEPA. 1999.

Party-state had obviously become vulnerable from the late 1970s, thus, the second and the third generation of leadership had got to depend greatly on economic growth to upgrade people's material life. And further, the economic growth had been believed to be the only "hard truth <*ying daoli*>" with the expectation that, so long as the continuing growth, all problems and public issues could be solved automatically¹.

Being faced with the wide range of problems from the systematic risks like the wealth gap, rural governance, poor social insurance or environmental degradation, to the complaints about slow improvement of living quality most by the urban people, like traffic, public security or residential conditions, the fourth generation of leadership headed by Hu Jintao have set the concepts of "scientific development" and "harmonious society" to symbolize the new direction. The concepts had been prepared and formed during the first five years of the 21st century. In July 2003, Hu Jintao for the first time interpreted his view of development as "people-oriented <*yiren weiben*>" and "comprehensive, coordinating and sustainable <*quanmian, xietiao, ke chixu*>". Fourteen months later, in the Third Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of CCP, Hu formally used the concept of "scientific development" to interpret the policy platform of the fourth generation leadership as insisting on: a) development as the first prerequisite for the Party's career of governing and rejuvenating the nation-state; b) the people orientation; c) comprehensive, sustainable and coordinating developing mode; d) the integration of development and other social interests. And, on February 2005, at the Central Party School of the CCP Central Committee, Hu firstly elaborated on another concept to make the whole policy frameworks of "harmonious society". From then, the importance to build the "harmonious society" had been paid great attention on the Chinese National People's Congress (NPC) at the same year. The concept of "harmonious society" has been taken as an extension of "scientific development", "in contrast to the 'economics growth in

¹ See: Chen Weixing, "Statecraft in an Era of Change: Building a Harmonious Society," in in Hua Shiping and Guo Sujian ed., *China in the Twenty-First Century: Challenges and Opportunities*, Association of Chinese Political Studies. Meeting (19th: 2006: University of Louisville), 2007, pp. 13-24. And also see: Susan L. Shirk, *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993; Chen Weixing, "The performance Criteria of Legitimacy: the Transformation of the Chinese Communist Party from Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao," *Cross-Strait and International Affairs Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2004; Sun Yan, "Harmonious Society and the Approbation of the Legitimacy of the CPC's Political Authority," *Journal of Huaihai University*, Vo. 3, 2008; and Yang Kaihuang, *New Deal: Political Change in the Hu Jintao Era <xinzheng: hujintao shidai de zhengzhi bianqian>*, Haixia Xueshu Press, 2007.

command' of the Jiang Zemin era", and placing "emphasis on social justice and development for people", as "a response" to the "eroded social solidarity and lack of harmony between the government and people, between the central government and local government, between the rich and the poor, between urban and rural residents, and between money-making institutions/organizations and consumers"¹. It has been targeted at building the "democratic and law-based, fair and just, honest and fraternal, full of vigor and vitality, secure and orderly, and in which man and nature co-exist in harmony"². In 2007, "scientific development" and "harmonious society" was written into the CCP Constitution, formally making a crucial criterion to standardize behaviors of political elites.

Environmental issues have been, as a critical factor, applied in the interpretation of "scientific" and "harmonious" owing to the terrible degradation situation and its wide influence on not only the economic sustainability but also the people's welfare and social justice, which may lead to a social instability even to challenge the political legitimacy. Under the direction of "scientific and harmonious", the leadership even established the special concepts of "resource-saving society <*ziyuan jieyue xing shehui*>" and "environment-friendly society <*huanjign youhao xing shehui*>", to frame the environmental agendas as a "strategic" task of the long-term planning on national economic and social development.

Under the set agenda framework, material measures have also been taken. The investment of the environmental protection has got a gradual increase — although the increase has been still slight to catch up with the degradation speed — during period of the Tenth Five Year National Plan on Economic and Social Development (2001-2005), the investment had firstly exceed 1% of GDP, in comparison with 0.93% of GDP during the Ninth Five Year Plan, and, it had grown to more than 1.5% during the Eleventh (2006-2010)³, especially, the investment of the central government had tripled that of the

¹ Weixing Chen, "Statecraft in an Era of Change: Building a Harmonious Society," p. 14.

² See the interpretations of "scientific development" and "harmonious society" in reference to: Zhongyang Wenxian Research Center: *Selection of Important Literatures from the Sixteenth Central Committee* <shiliuda yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian> I, II, III," Zhongyang Wenxian Express, 2005, 2006, 2008.

³ See: the answer of Zhang Lijun, Ministry of Environmental Protection, to the reporter on the press conference of the Forth session of the Eleventh NPC. [<http://www.zijing.org/2011h/html/126207.html>]

Tenth to achieve the historically best record¹. And further, mandatory administrative approaches had been taken to decrease the energy consumption per unit of GDP, to both save the insufficient natural resources and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, China has put special efforts to develop the potential of multiple clean and renewable energies, and, actively applied energy-saving and emission-reducing techniques. With the strong national will, coherent policies and little system cost to exclude the short-term market-orientation, China has made a high-speed increase in new energy development especially on wind, solar and new energy vehicles, while being a most active player of taking use of related international regimes to reduce emissions and update the technology. For example, China has been with the most accepted applications for the Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM) programs—it is one of the "flexibility" mechanisms defined in the Kyoto Protocol to make developed countries to exchange the emission right from developing countries with the clean technology transfer—for greenhouse gas emission reduction and taken as the most beneficiary according to the strict government-led procedures².

And moreover, more radical measures have been included to imply the consistency of the environmental management with the political change. In 2008, SEPA, the quasi-ministry sector, was formally upgraded to the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) to be entitled with more authority. And, in addition to the institutionalization of the environmental watchdog, another main modern element of "ruling by law" has been also applied into the environmental agendas. One of the most influential legislation might be the 2003 Environmental Impact Assessment Law (EIA Law), which has armed the environmental watchdog with the power to approve construction projects, as the weapon to counteract with profit-oriented departments and the local government³. And in addition, the Chinese government even took steps radical than developed countries, such like the pilot adaptation of green GDP to assess the

¹ "Central governmental investment on environmental protection had achieved 156.4 billion yuan RMB during the Eleventh Five Year Plan <*shiyiwu qijian zhongyang huanbao touru da 1564 yi yuan*>," People's Daily, January 14, 2011.

² See details in: Chen Gang, *Politics of China's environmental protection: problems and progress*, World Scientific, 2009, pp. 110-112.

³ This law has also been the trigger of several influential public issues, which will be discussed in details in next chapters.

achievements of local officials, in some counties and municipalities of the advanced east areas like Guangdong Province and Zhejiang Province¹. Another even challengeable practice is the “Great Western Development Strategy” (*xibu da kaifa zhanlue*), the central development activity taking market-oriented approach to develop the underdeveloped western provinces, which has planned to offer the balanced merging growth and environmental protection beyond the pollute-firstly-clean-later development mode.

3. Systematic Predicaments: Paradox between Consciousness and Institutional Guarantee

However, the high-key announcement of “sustainable development” cannot hide the factual unbalance between the degree of concerns on “development” and “sustainability”. It’s critical to be point that, although the history of the upgrade of the environmental agendas have been in accordance with China’s adaptation of the modern environmentalist frameworks derived in the developed democracies, it shouldn’t be over-interpreted that China’s has agreed to free the space of the economic growth to environmental concern. Early in the 1992 Rio de Janeiro UN Conference, China already strongly demonstrated its status of an “inflexible obstructionists” to the interpretation and policy frameworks of SD of the developed countries as sacrificing economic growth for the sake of environmental priority and insist that environmental protection only be effective under the attainment of development². And, 17 years later, in the 2009 Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change, China, allaying the developing counties, continued to boycott the advanced industrialized countries’ policy frameworks of put the mandatory emission reduction responsibility on both developed and developing countries, which was taken as equaling to deprive the developing countries of the possibility to achieve the same development achievements as the developed nations. It’s clear that, as long as China announces to be still in the “primary stage of socialism <*shehui zhuyi chuji jieduan*>” until the nation indentifies itself to achieve “the level of medium developed

¹ See: Xu Hongwei, “Green GDP: What It Can Do and Can’t Do <*lvse GDP, neng zuodao de he buneng zuodao de*>,” in Wang Yongchen (ed.), *Change: Investigation Report of Chinese Environmental Journalists <gaibian zhongguo huanjing jizhe diaocha baogao>*, Beijing: Sanlian Sac, 2007. pp. 6-38.

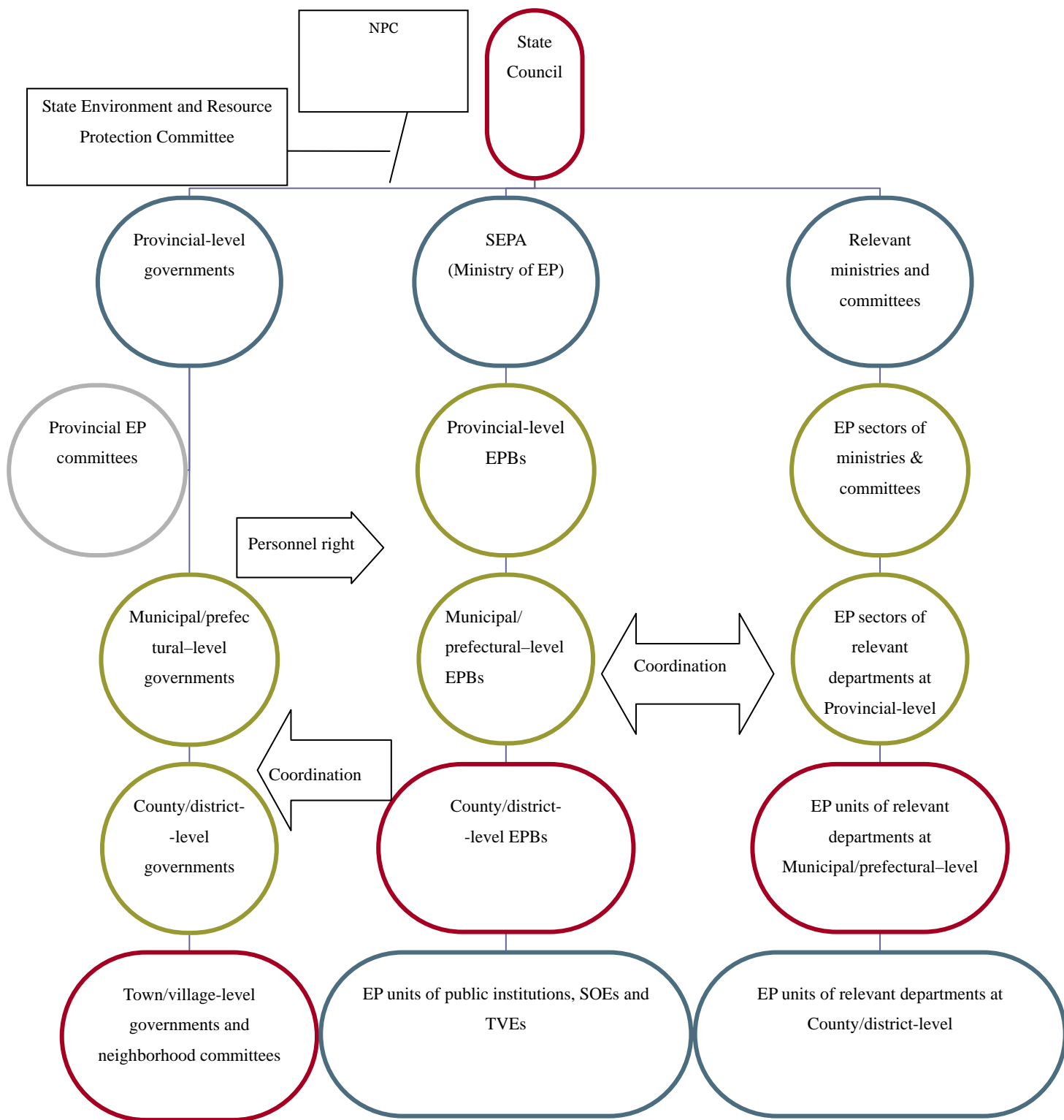
² See: Elizabeth C. Economy, *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China’s Future*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004, pp. 98-99.

countries <*zhongdeng fada guojia shuiping*>”, the economic development is the core the whole political agendas. In other words, the upgrade of any political agendas has been limited under this principle.

As demonstrated in figure-1, apart from the strong national willingness of EP at the central level, the eventual responsibilities are devoluted to different governmental departments and local officials, thus the decentralization and bureaucratic fragmentation have made the most serious institutional predicaments of China’s environmental governance, especially when the institutional mechanisms to obstruct EP career are originally designed to promote the economic growth. On one hand, with the decentralization, the degree of the law enforcement and central EP policy implement have been highly depending on the proclivities of individual officials according to the political culture of “rule by man <*ren zhi*>” and the resources the local government wishes to or can devote to¹. On the other hand, the environmental department, as the non-profit sector, just lacked both administrative and legal leverages to coordinate with or counteract to the powerful development-oriented agencies.

¹ See for example, Economy, *The River Runs Black*, 2004, pp. 117-121; and Chen, *Politics of China’s environmental protection*, 2009, pp. 22-28. However, there are also researches trying to find the positive meaning of decentralization in environmental governance in the respect of democratization, but it should be pointed that, according to the fact, under the existing political system, the decentralization has been playing a negative role, in comparison with the central activity, in protecting the environment. The efforts on pursuing the positive meaning can be seen in: Jesse Craig Ribot, Anne Jarson, European Association of Development Research and Training Institute, *Democratic decentralization through a natural resource lense*, Routledge, 2005; and Wu Changhua and Wang Hua, “China: Seeking Meaningful Decentralization to Achieve Sustainability,” in Albert Breton (ed.), *Environmental governance and decentralization*, pp. 397-435.

Figure 2-1: Vertical and Horizontal Institutional Settings of China's Environmental Management System



3.1 Decentralization and the National Willingness of Anti-means

3.1.1 Decentralization for the Sake of Economic Growth and Recentralization

The policy implement of local officials may be the weakest link in the chain of China's environmental protection according to the vested autonomy to local Party and government during economic reform, or decentralization. As Qi Ye, professor of Beijing Normal University, points out that the local Party and government, as a "reason behavior", chooses to prefer economic increase to environmental benefits, because their political career depends greatly on it. And further, decentralization also means the local responsibility to deal with increasing burden of providing public services, which is challenging their financial ability. Thus, non-profit career, like environmental protection, is easy to be excluded from local important planning¹.

Different from the separation of warlords in ancient dynasties, Republic of China and even today's many developing countries, the decentralization in contemporary China had been not derived from the powerlessness of the central authority, but was initiatively selected—at least approved and accepted—and even encouraged during certain periods by the central government, for the sake of economic growth. During Mao Zedong's era, the feudal separation as the remains of ancient agricultural society was replaced, through the radical political approaches, by a wide network of hierarchically organized institutions, with centering on unchallenged power of several core leaders of both the Party and government, and strict limitation to the local freedom. This high-level centralization had brought the surprisingly development of heavy industry and modern infrastructure to China, but after completing its historical responsibility, the central planning, command economy and bureaucratic control had not only become a heavy burden for the center, but also repressed the economic and social vitality for further development. Thus, the decentralization "became the breaking point of China's economic reform"². Thus, the decentralization began in the area of fiscal system, special development zones especially the foreign trade system, real estate, land purchases and so on, which, to speak generally,

¹ Ye Qi, *Research on Environmental Supervision and Management System in China*, Shanghai: Sanlian Bookshop Press, 2008. pp. 131-146.

² Jia Hao and Lin Zhimin, *Changing Central-Local Relationships in China: Reform and State Capacity*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. p. 3.

were all the factors for the sake of the “socialist market economy system construction <shehui zhuyi changchang jingji tizhi jianshe>”. Such reform actions, presented from the 1980s to the middle 1990s, had shifted part of the control over resources to the local government and other local players, allowed the local government to share more of the economic growth fruits with the reduction of central intervenes in policy details, and strengthened the local financial capability¹, making the decentralization process go far beyond the original economic intent into the political field with the decline of central authority on rule-making, policy enforcement and bureaucratic management. Until the middle 1990s, not only the increase of revenue sharing of the local government had been gradually changing the balance of central-local power², but also the decline of comprehensive central control on the local political entity had been embedded in the political system beyond only incidental issue-oriented problems in certain places³.

To stop the power decline and consolidate the central authority, the third generation of leadership headed by Jiang Zemin launched the recentralization means in Post-Deng era. As we mentioned in the section to look back the evolution of the national EP willingness, the application of “sustainable development” had been purposed on calm down the extensive form of economic exploitation of local governments, which used to be encouraged through decentralization during the initial stage of reform. It seemed very difficult because it was impossible for the central leadership to take the revolutionary approaches of Mao Zedong to centralize the authority, neither, the CCP, at that time, was

¹ See more details in: David Bachman, “Implementing Chinese Tax Policy,” in David M. Lampton (ed.), *Policy Implementation in Post-Mao China*, Berkley: University of California Press, 1987; Shang Hong, “Tuidong Woguo Zhengzai JIngli zhedi Tizhi Bianqian <Promoting the On-going Institutional Changes>,” *Jingji Yanjiu <Research on Economics>*, No. 5. 1992; Jiang Xiaojun, “Shichang Yunzhuhan Yu Zhengfu Zhineng Zhuanhuan <The Operational Efficiency of the Market and The Changes of Governmental Functions>,” *Gaige <Reform>*, No. 1. 1993, pp. 62-67; Wang Shaoguang, “The State, Market Economy, and Transition,” [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/gpa/wang_files/state.pdf]; Jean C. Oi, “Fiscal Reform and the Economic Foundations of Local State Corporatism in China,” *World Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 1. October, 1992, pp. 99-126; Jia and Lin, *Changing Central-Local Relationships in China*, 1994; Zhang Leyin, “Chinese Central-Provincial Fiscal Relationshipss, Budgetary Decline and the Impact of the 1994 Fiscal Reform: An Evaluation,” *The China Quarterly*, No. 157. March, 1999, pp. 115-141; and Amako Satoshi, *Structural Change of Modern China IV: Political Map of Central-Local relationships*, Tokyo University Press, 2000, pp. 78-92.

² See for example: Wang Shaoguang, “The Rise of the Second Budget and the Decline of State Capacity: The Case of China,” in Andrew G. Walder (ed.), *The Political Consequences of Departures from Central Planning: Economics Reform and Political Change in Communist States*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995; and Barry Naughton, “The Decline of Central Control over Investment in Post-Mao China,” in Lampton (ed.), *Policy Implementation in Post-Mao China*.

³ Amako Satoshi, *Structural Change of Modern China IV: Political Map of Central-Local relationships*, Tokyo University Press, 2000. p. 89.

unable to reconcile the growing localist tendency through “rule by law”, but China was still a unitary country, with its institutional hierarchy of the government and the Communist Party, making the approval of the central authority ranked the highest in a political elite’s career. Thus, the recentralization had been an institutional paradox, especially with regard to the consolidation of central personnel management on provincial leaders—as Bo Zhiyue mentioned, the public localism of provincial leaders had been rarely tolerated in comparison with that of lower-level officials identified with their birthplaces¹—according to the elite politics of China and the growing importance of provincial leaders for the constant concern with regional economic development and coping with daunting challenges such as unemployment, economic issues, political instability and social welfare needs².

During the Jiang era, the fight with corruption used to be taken as the punishment to strike the localist and factionist tendency³, however, the approval of achievements had been the main point of the recentralization. On one hand, the avenues for various provinces to influence national policies in their favor had been legitimized by the representation in the Central Committee (CC) of CCP. The representation ratio of provincial leaders in the CC and its core organization, the Politburo, had increased along with the decentralization⁴, and, in the 16th CC in 2002, the last one of Jiang’s era, all 62 provincial chiefs—Party secretaries and governors or mayors—secured full membership, with the Politburo including 20 members who have currently or previously served as top provincial leaders⁵. And further, the representation in Politburo demonstrated a sharp rise of the provincial share from 55 percent in 1992, to 68 percent in 1997, and then, to 82 percent in 2002⁶.

¹ Zhiyue Bo, *Chinese Provincial Leaders: Economic Performance and Political Mobility since 1949*, Armonk, N. Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2002. pp. 7-9.

² See: Cheng Li, “After Hu, Who? Provincial Leaders Await Promotion,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 1. Winter 2002, pp. 1-20.

³ See: Lowell Dittmer, “Leadership Change and Chinese Political Development,” Chu Yun-han, Lo Chih-cheng and Ramon H Myers (ed.), *The New Chinese Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities after the 16th Party Congress*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 10-32.

⁴ See: Bo, *Chinese Provincial Leaders*, 2002, pp. 19-27; and, Li Cheng and Lynn White, “The Sixteenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: Hu Gets What?” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 43, July/August, 2003, pp. 572-573.

⁵ Cheng Li, “Political Localism Versus Institutional Restraints: Elite Recruitment in the Jiang Era,” in Barry J. Naughton, and Yang Dali (ed.), *Holding China together: diversity and national integration in the post-Deng era*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 29-69. p. 32.

⁶ *Ibid.*

But, the recentralization indicated an imbalanced distribution of political power between rich and less advanced provinces, which had also institutionalized the development orientation. As Bo Zhiyue pointed, when the CC representation had showed the gradual growth of even distribution among all provinces, the provincial political power in the Politburo classified into elite and non elite provincial units, according to the economic resources, leading to the phenomenon that the larger and richer were more likely to have representation in the Politburo with a limited number of members, as well as they tended to produce more members of the CC¹. And further, the economic condition diversity was compounded with the concrete economic performance — indicated by, for example, GDP growth, infrastructure construction, income level, debt ratio, and so on — of individual provincial leaders, to determine the revenue contributions of provinces to the centre, and have the close relations with provincial leaders' political mobility². Factually, the recentralized institution could be taken as the variant form of the cadre evaluation system on political achievements <*ganbu zhengji kaohe*>. Having been carried out from the revolutionary ear to determine the political career of CCP cadres, the evaluation system had turned its focus from the ideological and political loyalty to the economic indicators. Besides the evaluation on provincial leaders, there have also been abundant researches on the application of this system in controlling the lower and grass-root level officials, with the institutional promise for them to share economic benefits and to maintain the stability of their bureaucratic position³.

This paradoxical institutional design of central-local relations and cadre achievements evaluation system led to — from the behavioral prospective rather than the constitutional respect — the characteristic of “de facto feudalism”⁴, or, we may say that

¹ Bo, *Chinese Provincial Leaders*, 2002, pp. 11-12, pp. 24-27.

² Ibid, pp. 136-143. And also see: Li Hongbin and Zhou li-an, “Political Turnover and Economic Performance: the Incentive Role of Personnel Control in China,” *Journal of Public Economics*, 2005, vol. 89, issue 9-10, pp. 1743-1762; and Zhang Xiaobo, “Fiscal decentralization and political centralization in China: Implications for growth and inequality,” *Journal of Comparative Economics*, vol. 34(4), December 2006, pp. 713-726.

³ Susan H. Whiting, “The Cadre Evaluation System at the Grass Roots: The Paradox of Party Rule,” in Naughton and Yang, *Holding China together*, pp. 101-119.

⁴ See: Zheng, Yongnian: *De Facto Federalism in China: Reforms and Dynamics of Central-Local*, Singapore; Hackensack, N.J.: World Scientific, 2007. pp. 32-72. And, for international comparison, see: Pranab Bardhan, “Decentralization of Governance and Development,” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 16, No. 4. Autumn 2002, pp. 185-205; and Jonathan Rodden, “Comparative Federalism and Decentralization: On Meaning and Measurement,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 4. July, 2004, pp. 481-500.

was like the central-local factual privities of fiscal recentralization and political centralization. It implied that according to the passes of huge mass mobilization and ideological stimulation of Mao's era for industrialization, the successors seriously depended on the initiative efforts of local officials, instead of the "people's power <renmin de liliang> of Mao's ideal. The local officials had been allowed to have substantial influence over the local economy by not only controlling key economic resources, but also the high freedom of making economic policies such as taxation, government spending and so on. And moreover, for the sake of economic growth, the centre even, as the case might be, tolerated the wrongdoings such as rent-seeking, corruption, crazy resource exploitation without considerations of consequences, and so on. However, when the central government considered it necessary to upgrade the rank of non-profit-oriented problem domains in the political agendas, the contradiction between the centre and the local government would certainly be given highlights.

3.1.2 Reform of Cadre Evaluation System for the Environmental Protection

Into the late 1990s, with the growing national willingness of EP, SEPA was established, but its factual capability to enforce policies and take effective supervision had been greatly limited according to the decentralization. And, SEPA officials have seemed not to be willing to hide their complaints. In an interview with a most active environmental journalist, the deputy general of SEPA, Pan Yue, clearly pointed the "main reason for the durative environmental deterioration" as the result of "the corruptive deal between some officials and enterprises" in accordance with "local officials' wrong hunger for economic development as achievements to help their political career"¹. In details, as Pan Yue Judged, the "corruptive deal" meant that²,

On one hand, some local governments have viewed the crazy construction of large-scale heavy industrial projects as the easiest approach to obtain political benefits in the short term, and on the other hand, some enterprises,

¹ Jianqiang Liu, "The 'special interests' destroying China's environment," *Dialogue* (Net Journal), January, 2007.
[<http://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/ch/715-The-special-interests-destroying-China-s-environment>]

² Liu, "The 'special interests' destroying China's environment,"

with the approval of the officials, have occupied the resources and environment belonging to the public for their selfish interests, in the rude mode of exploitation without the consideration of bad consequences. This phenomena not only has interference with the exercise of the national macro adjustment and control of policies, but also infringe the public rights, which may lead to the social instability”.

But no matter how the “deal” was disgust by SEPA officials, it was hardly possible, only within the ability of the environmental watchdog, to bring any changes. Because, besides the poor institutional resources of SEPA to influence the local policies—it will be discussed in the next section—it had to be admitted that although the decentralization and privatization encouraging individuals to pursue maximum profit at the environmental expense had led to the “intensification of the environmental degradation found in prerevolutionary and Maoist China”¹, it had been commonly recognized as the “necessary badness” for rapid economic growth. That means, the non-profit-oriented environmental priority of SEPA couldn’t get enough legitimacy until the central government made the decision to break the traditional privities between the center and the local government based on economic growth, in other words, to reform the contents of the recentralization regimes.

The years from 1999 to 2005 had witnessed the national efforts to improve the cadre evaluation system, which used to mainly encourage the local economic achievements during the reform era, with the addition of environmental indicators into the evaluation criteria to influence the political career of local officials, in order to integrate the national will and local enforcement. After the long-time preparation and examination from 1999, the State Council, in December 2005, published the “Decision on Carrying out Scientific Development Concept and Promote Environmental Protection <*guanyu luoshi kexue*

¹ Joshua Muldavin, “The Paradoxes of Environmental Policy and Resources Management in Reform-Era China”, *Economic Geography*, Vol. 76, No. 3, (Jul., 2000), pp. 244-271. p. 244. This article also pointed central policies had “little control” over the social relationships and conflicts associated with different “local actors”, including peasant farmers, forest officials, entrepreneurs, local officials, and so on, who all have their own agendas. Thus, The social transformation has been too profound, rapid and contradictory that it’s quite difficult to identify the root structural causes of environmental vulnerability.

fazhan guan jiaqiang huanjing baohu de jueding>,” to emphasize the EP achievement indicator as¹,

To adapt environmental protection into the important contents of achievement assessment on local leaders, as a foundation for the choice, appointment, rewards and punishments of cadres. To stick to and improve the responsibility system for EP accomplishments at various governmental levels and establish the regular system for annual EP goal setting, assessment and the transparency of assessment result. To make EP accomplishment the indispensable requirement in choosing the excellent. To offer special commendation and rewards to those individuals or units with prominent contributions to EP, to set up the system of EP accountability so as to manage the obstacle to environmental law enforcement derived from regional protectionism, and call to the account of the cadres and officials who are responsible for heavy environmental accidents according to decision-making errors, or have the serious interference with valid law enforcement.

This reform was placed high hopes at its birth, for the contents, at the least, created the possibility that an official's political career would be vetoed by the one note of EP effects. Thus, it was even described by the Central Party Paper as “a milestone in China's environmental protection history”². Even though, according to the Premier Wen Jiabao in a high-level government meeting on April 17, to actually force the EP efforts to be factored into the performance assessment of governmental officials would still be in “future”³, we can also see the environmental indicators have already been accepted by local governments who are economically advanced and without seriously-polluted industries. For example, the Shenzhen Municipal Government, who has abundant

¹ State Council Document No. 39 (2005), “Decision on Carrying out Scientific Development Concept and Promote Environmental Protection <*guanyu luoshi kexue fazhan guan jiaqiang huanjing baohu de jueding>,”* Article 31. [http://www.gov.cn/zwggk/2005-12/13/content_125680.htm]

² “Wen Jiabao says the environmental protection should be place as a more important strategy <*wenjiabao: ba huanjing baohu ba zai geng zhongyao de zhanlue weizhi>,”* People's Daily, April 19, 2006.

³ Ibid.

economic resources to manage environmental problems with the will to share the EP criteria and experiences of developed countries and areas¹, or cities depending on the tourism resources, like Hangzhou Municipality².

3.2 Bureaucratic Fragmentation and the Predicaments of Environmental Watchdog

The environmental department has been much late given the formal status of the political system, and its rise within the bureaucratic hierarchy “mirrors the rise in the importance of environmental protection within the Chinese government”³. In 1973, the State Council set the environmental protection leading team and the office firstly to specialize the EP concern. Despite of its being directly guided by Premier Zhou Enlai, it was only a temporary institution out of formal establishment. The institution was replaced, in 1982, by the formal Environmental Protection Bureau (EPB) under the Ministry of Urban-rural Construction. Two years later, the State Council added another ad hoc committee for EP, with the members of a vice Premier in charge and the relevant ministers. In 1988, EPB was separated from the Ministry of Construction to become a vice-ministerial department directly under the State Council supervision. And, after a decade in 1998, with the disestablishment of the State Council EP committee, EPB was upgraded to a semi-ministerial department named State Environmental Protection Administration. The SEPA had experienced the decade of fighting for factual influence, and in 2008, was given the ministerial status to be Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP).

According to the evolution of the environmental department, we may find that as in charge of the non-profit area of EP, either the establishment of formal status or the upgrade progress had always been posterior to the evolution steps of Development-oriented departments, making its lower rank and weak power in the bureaucratic hierarchy. The establishment of SEPA might be the turning point, for

¹ The details of the adaptation of EP achievements evaluation in Shenzhen, see in reference to: Report of ASH Center, Harvard University, “Environment Protection Performance Evaluation in Shenzhen, China,” [<http://www.innovations.harvard.edu/cache/documents/17522/1752207.pdf>]

² Dai Guoqing and Teng Weili, “Performance Evaluation at Local Government Department Level in china: A Case of People’s Municipal Government of Hangzhou,” [<http://www.ceauk.org.uk/2008-conference-papers/Weili-Teng-China-government-performance.doc>]

³ Economy, *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future*, p. 106.

entitling the environmental watchdog political legitimacy, as a semi-ministry, to coordinate the fragmented environmental governance system and compound interests among governmental departments between the center and the locality¹. But it doesn't mean the environmental department had obtained the factual capability to counteract with the economic orientation for several institutional factors. Since the eventual effects of "Ministry of Environmental Protection" only established in 2008 are still to be examined, what we can make sure is that during the decade from 1998 to 2008, there had been a number of institutional factors, especially the poor staffing and policy instruments, to limit SEPA's capability.

3.2.1 SEPA as Newcomer without full fledge

Apart from the administrative upgrade of EP department, the environmental responsibility was still shared by relevant agencies and players according to the fragmentation, depending on the issue. In other words, the setting duty of SEPA was mainly the "coordination" in accordance with the initiative cooperation of the others, rather than the authority to force environmental priority. For example, under the pressure of WTO membership negotiation including questions regarding China's environmental protection and related legal system for the international trade surrounding, not only the legislation of EP regimes had been accelerated, but also the development-oriented agencies, such as the State Economic Trade Commission (SETC), Ministry of Commerce and other special industrial agencies, had initiatively, while cooperating with SEPA, contributed to setting strict industrial standards, supervision on local enforcement and promotion of cleaner technologies². In contrast, there were also failure instances. From 2004 to 2006, according to the directive of central leaders, SEPA and the National Bureau of Statistics held a joint research on "Green GDP Accounts" and published the *Chinese Green GDP Account Report 2004 <zhongguo lvse guomin jingji*

¹ See: Abigail R. Jahiel, "The contradictory impact of reform on environmental protection in China," *The China Quarterly*, No. 149, (Mar., 1997), pp. 81-103. and also see in reference to: Qi, *Research on Environmental Supervision and Management System in China*.

² See details in: Ross, "China: Environmental Protection, Domestic Policy Trends, Patterns of Participation in Regimes and Compliance with International Norms,"; Richard J. Ferris Jr. and Zhang Hongjun, "The Challenges of Reforming an Environmental Legal Culture: Assessing the Status Quo and Looking at Post-WTO Admission Challenges from the People's Republic of China," a paper presented at PACE, 2000; Richard J. Ferris Jr., Wu Changhua and John Barlow Weiner, "Environmental Implications of China's Accession to the WTO: Preliminary Policy and Law Considerations," *Bridges Between Trade and Sustainable*, December 3, 2000; and also Economy, *The River Runs Black*, p. 106.

hesuan yanjiu baogao> in September 2006. But the two agencies conflicted “in antagonistic interests”¹ in the further adaptation of this indication to evaluate environmental cost and development quality. SEPA demonstrated much greater activeness, rather than the Bureau of Statistics who took SEPA as “ignoring the complexity (of factual enforcement)”². As a result, although some advanced prefectures in Guangdong and Zhejiang Provinces had some tests of the pilot indicators, it finally hadn’t developed into the government mandate. Besides the “technical immaturity” even admitted by SEPA — there even hadn’t been precedents of wide applications in industrialized democracies — the difficult coordination among the bureaucracy was also an impressive factor. As an administrator of the Bureau of Statistics complained to mass media, he thought it “unfair” to take promoting the green GDP indicator only as “the achievement of one department (SEPA)”, but ignore its characteristic of “comprehensive program” to involve the “cooperative efforts” of “relevant agencies including statistics, agriculture, forestry, water resources, EP and so on”³. The statement clearly implied the failure of bureaucratic coordination, which SEPA was designed to achieve in the system.

3.2.2 Shortage of Administrative Leverages as an Understaffed Department

Another factor to limit SEPA capability is the poor staffing and the shortage of administrative levers at both central and local level. At the central level, as the cost for the administrative upgrade, the 1998 organization reform reduced half of the staff of SEPA, from 600 to 300⁴, with only 240 being stationary⁵, in comparison with the 6000 employees of U.S. EPA headquarters during the same period⁶. And in addition, the disestablishment of the State Council EP committee deprived the environmental department of an important channel for regular communication among political leaders and ministers, although a dialogue mechanism among the leaders was established in

¹ Hongwei Xu, “Green GDP: What Can Do and What Cannot,” in Yongchen Wang (ed.), *Change: Chinese Environmental Journalists Investigation Report 2006 <zhongguo huanjing jizhe diaocha baogao 2006>*, Beijing: Sanlian Shidian Press, 2007. pp. 6-38. p. 23.

² Xu, “Green GDP: What Can Do and What Cannot,” p. 23.

³ Xu, “Green GDP: What Can Do and What Cannot,” pp. 24-25.

⁴ Economy, *The River Runs Black*, p. 107.

⁵ UNDP: *China Human Development Report 2002: Making Green Development to a Choice*, 76.

⁶ Zhang Hongjun and Richard J. Ferris Jr., “Shaping an Environmental Protection Regime for the New Century: Environmental Law and Policy in the People’s Republic of China,” *Asian Journal of Management*, Hong Kong University, May 1998.

[http://www.sageonlinelibrary.com/protected/documents/china_RT_english/Publications/Shaping_Environmental_Protection_Regime_Asian_Journal_Mgmt_05.1998.pdf]

1999 to compensate for the defect.

On the other hand, at the local level, to deal with the decentralization and devolution of environmental governance, as mentioned in the last section, there were Environmental Protection Bureaus ranged from provincial level governments to county/district-level governments to implement SEPA directives according to the national integration and coordinate relevant local agencies. But SEPA hadn't had effective control over its local branches, because it was not SEPA but the local government to provide the EPBs with their "annual budget funds", approve "institutional advancements in rank", determine "increases in personnel" and allocate "resources such as cars, office buildings, and employee housing"¹, among which, the lack of personnel decision power—SEPA was only permitted with limited participation in the selection of EPB heads²—had been judged as the most critical obstacle³. Thus, as the environmental priority was originally not welcome by development-oriented local officials and the SEPA even had been criticized ironically as "an environmental policeman"⁴ trying to limit economic growth, when a certain EP directive contradicted with local development policies or other federal interests, it would be natural for EPB officials to suspend or even abandon the enforcement.

3.2.3 Difficult Promotion of Legal Leverages

Finally, when SEPA tried to break the bureaucratic limitation which obstructed its medium-and-long-term plans and even implement of routine duties with the under staffing, especially to take the "ruling by law" beyond weak administrative approaches, it was then confronted with strong resistance from the development-oriented agencies. A very clear instance may be the legislation and implement of "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Environmental Impact Assessment" (EIA Law). This bill draft was submitted to National People's Congress for consideration, on the purpose of mandatory assessment on the environmental impact of industrial development and natural resource utilization through legal leverages, and further to evaluate the "general policies and

¹ Chen, *Politics of China's environmental protection*, 2009, p. 22.

² UNDP: *China Human Development Report 2002: Making Green Development to a Choice*, p. 76.

³ See: "As SEPA deputy general Pan Yue pointed, environmental problems will be solved when the problem of bureaucracy being solved <panyue: guan de wenti jiejie le, huanbao wenti jiu dou jiejie le>," *News Morning*, July 4, 2007.

⁴ *China Human Development Report 2002*, p. 77.

planning having environmental impacts”¹. In other words, this law, if with the full implement, would legalize the determination power of the environmental sector in the program policymaking, limiting the power of economic development-oriented departments, and in addition, change the position of SEPA from defense to initiative attack. Thus, as expected, except the support from two departments, all the other relevant ministries and committees of the State Council demonstrated the clear opposition, who insisted it “too radical in China to take environmental impact assessments on developing land, river and sea, on urban construction, on tourism, and on utilizing natural resources, even with undergoing the (complex) public hearing procedure”². The strong opposition from economic-oriented departments had “forced the draft consideration to be interrupted even for 20 months”³ until the great pressure of the national will intervened. However, the formal enforcement in September 1st 2003 didn’t naturally bring reversal, and SEPA then had to take great efforts, with both institutional and informal resources to realize its effectiveness, which will be discussed in details in later chapters.

4. Demands of Informal Politics: Mobilization and Encouragement of Multiple Participations

In accordance with the disadvantaged position in the bureaucratic system, it would be natural for SEPA to become a most active advocator of absorbing the mature participation regimes of developed democracies into China’s policymaking procedures, partly in order to dilute the power of profit-orientation. The deputy general, Pan Yue, who was both the power-holder and the representative innovationist, used to write an article in a most important academic journal of CCP to discuss and strengthen the ideological orthodox to say⁴,

¹ The interpretation of the Vice director of Environment and Resource Protection Committee, NPC, on the *Environmental Impact Assessment Law (draft)*, in “*Environmental Impact Assessment Law (draft)* is submitted for deliberation <*huanjing yingxiang pingjia fa (cao'an) tiqing shenyi*>,” *China Environment News*, November 23, 2000.

² “*Environmental Impact Assessment Law (draft)* is submitted for deliberation,”

³ Shixin Liu, “Qu Geping says, Public hearing for environmental protection is to limit unscrupulous abuse of power sectors <*qu ge ping: huanbao tingzheng jiu shi yao xianzhi quanli bumen weisuoyuwei*>,” *China Youth Daily*, April 13, 2005.

⁴ Yue Pan, “Public Participation in Environmental Protection,” *Theory Front*, No. 13, 2004, pp. 12-13.

The insufficiency of public participation and supervision regimes is a main cause of the disobedience to and the bad enforcement of EP laws...The government has the responsibility to promote the public participation through taking steps on the disclosure of environmental information to the public, the democratization of environmental policymaking, the construction of environmental litigation mechanisms, and the cooperation with non-governmental organizations.

Coincidentally, pan's superior, the SEPA leader, Zhou Shengxian, also expressed the similar opinion to the Party's paper, *People's Daily* that¹,

The governmental supervision on environmental protection must be combined with the public participation...The information on environmental quality, environmental management and environmental-related actions of enterprises should be publicized to protect citizens' right to know. With regard to the development planning and the construction program which may influence the public environmental interests, it's the governmental duty to hold the hearing and the public notification, in order to listen to the citizens' views and accept the supervision of public opinion.

The power structure of the reform era has become greatly different from that of Mao's totalitarian system (Table 2-2 and 2-3), and the result is the formation of the "market society". The political monopoly of resources has been replaced by the gradually formalized political control and the market-oriented resource distribution.

¹ Shengxian Zhou, "To actively construct ecological civilization <jiji jianshe shengtai wenming>," *People's Daily*, December 14, 2007.

TABLE 2-2: China's Power Structure before 1978

Objects of power	Political realms	Economic realms	Public realms
Subjects of power			
Political realms	+++	+++	+++
Economic realms	—	—	—
Public realms	—	—	—

TABLE 2-3: China's Power Structure of the transformed society in reform era

Objects of power	Political realms	Economic realms	Public realms
Subjects of power			
Political realms	+++	+	++
Economic realms	—	++	+
Public realms	—	—	—

Source: Kang Xiaoguang, *Power Shift: Change of China's Power Structure During the Transformation Period* <quanli de zhuan yi: zhuanxing shiqi zhongguo quanli geju de bianqian>, Zhejiang People's Press, 1999.

Since the adaptation of public participation had been not only the general demand of the modern environmental governance, but also the special requirement of breaking through China's institutional dilemma, it's then necessary for us to analyze the practical conditions with regard to whether the society has contributed enough dynamics to improve the governance. Table 2-4 includes the national surveys sponsored by SEPA of the public awareness and participation practices with regard to the environmental protection respectively on 1999 and 2007, during the period of SEPA's existence and continuous upgrade of governmental EP willingness, which implied the extent of the potential social support for SEPA.

Table 2-4 Main indicators of public environmental awareness in 1998 and 2007.

Source: SEPA, Ministry of Education, *China Public Awareness Survey 1998 <zhongguo gongzhong huanjing yishi diaocha 1999>*, Beijing: China Environmental Science Press, 1999; and China Environmental Awareness Program, “2007 China Public Awareness Survey Report <2007 gongzhong huanjing yishi diaocha>,” sponsored by SEPA and practiced by Institute of Sociology, CASS, published on April 3, 2008. [<http://www.chinaceap.org/download/8.pdf>]

	1999 Public Awareness Survey (7879 samples covering 31 provincial regions)	2007 Public Awareness Survey (3001 samples covering 20 provincial regions)
Environmental Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 56.7% of the interviewees took the environmental deterioration as “very serious” or “quite serious”. ● But besides the feeling of the general environmental deterioration, only 24.9% of the interviewees took the local environment conditions as being worse during the last five years, and only 11.6% thought the conditions would get even worse. ● The environmental deterioration was ranked in the fifth among 10 social problems of China, below social order, education, population control, and employment. ● The most serious problems to draw interviewees’ attention were water pollution and air pollution. And, even 34.8% of interviewees simply took the “environmental pollution management” as the “maintenance of clean and health environment”. ● 45% of interviewees disagreed with the argument of “slowing down the economic growth for environmental protection”, and 46% thought environmental deterioration was inevitable according to economic development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 77.4% of the interviewees took the environmental deterioration as “very serious” or “quite serious”, and 63.9% consider the environmental deterioration to have become the serious obstruction to influence China’s further development. ● 41.8% of the interviewees took the local environment conditions as “very” or “quite” serious. ● The environmental deterioration was ranked in the fourth among 13 social problems of China, below medical care system, employment, and income gap. ● 81.5% of interviewees indicated their concern on at least one environmental indicator, including water pollution, air quality, chemical rest, forest degeneration, and so on, while showing little awareness of concepts seemingly without the direct relations with the daily life of public, like greenhouse gas emission or biodiversity. ● 56.8% of interviewees considered environmental deterioration as inevitable according to economic development, 50% disagreed to lower the public living standards for environmental concern, and 32.7% took the upgrade of living standards prior to environmental protection.
Willingness of participation in EP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As the “passive participation” of information reception, 79.2% of the interviewees mentioned watching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As the “passive participation” of information reception, 82% of the interviewees mentioned watching

related TV shows and radios, 41.4% mentioned the print media, 42.1% mentioned the channel of governmental propaganda (such as leaflets, public billboards, and so on), and 27.8% mentioned the propaganda in working units (mostly in accordance with the governmental orders).

- In comparison with the low “active participation” ratio of only 8.3%, most of the interviewees considered the EP career simply as the governmental responsibility. And among them, as many as 64% of interviewees had very few information of the governmental EP measures. 86% of interviewees considered the main cause of pollution as the lax law enforcement, and 66% mentioned the responsibilities of enterprises. However, 49% felt satisfied with governmental EP measures.
- In comparison with the complaints about law enforcement, fewer than 4% of the interviewees expressed the willingness of directly complaining to the government or appealing to juridical procedurals. However, 44% chose to directly negotiate with the polluters.
- Only 25% of interviewees had thought about EP factors in shopping, 35% agreed to accept the higher prices for the environmental concern, and, 30% had consider the environmental moral in the waste disposal.

related TV shows and document films, 47.3 mentioned the print media, 25.3% mentioned listening to the radio, and 17.9% mentioned the acceptance of EP leaflets.

- As the “active participation”, only 18.1% of interviewees had experiences of participating in related public service activities, 4.2% had experiences of EP propaganda, and 2.1% was or had used to be NGO members at that time.
 - When the EP responsibility was mentioned, interviewees ranked, from high to low, as local governments, enterprises, the central government, individuals, mass media and NGOs. 59.9% felt satisfied with the central governmental measures, in comparison with the 66.3% feeling unsatisfied with the local governmental measure and the 67.3% unsatisfied with the enterprises’ legal offenses leading to pollution.
 - The environmental protection had also become a concern of interviewees’ daily life. And, the daily EP actions were mainly those with the direct relations with the decrease of living expenses and the health, included saving water/natural gas/electricity (89.6%), abandoning the use of paper festival cards (84.1%) and smoking cessation in public places (53.4%). On the other hand, those without the direct relations had drawn less attention, such as abandoning the use of plastic shopping bags (22.1%), abandoning the use of disposable tableware (32.8%), use of recycle paper (37.2%), putting used batteries into special recovery containers (38.6%), choosing the organic food despite of the higher prices (39.3%), and so on.
-

According to the comparison of several similar indicators of the two surveys, we can see the obvious upgrade of the public environmental awareness. Firstly, the ratio of interviewees who recognized the serious environmental deterioration had jumped from 56.7% to 77.4%, with an approximate multiplication of those who worried about the local conditions. Secondly, the environmental problem had maintained as an important factor for the public to judge the quality of governance. And moreover, the surveys demonstrated the public's growing knowledge of environmental protection. from the limitation to "environmental pollution management" as the "maintenance of clean and health environment" to covering the extensive indicators of water pollution, air quality, chemical rest, forest degeneration, and so on, while showing little awareness of concepts seemingly without the direct relations with the daily life of public, like greenhouse gas emission or biodiversity. But under the general economic orientation of the market society, the public commonly disagreed with the priority of environmental protection to economic growth, and the attitudes hadn't changed during the decade. It might imply that neither the state nor the society had found the better industrialization approach rather than the "pollute-firstly-manage-secondly" mode.

On the contrary to the promoting environmental awareness, the surveys showed us the insufficiency of the public's participation in environmental protection. While passively receiving the relative information mainly through the mass media, most of the interviewees had been willing to judge the environmental protection as mainly the governmental responsibility, and the 2007 survey, with more detailed survey indicators, showed more public complaints to the local governmental rather than the central government. On one hand, the surveys showed a great leap of people's actions in caring about the environmental factors directly related to the family health and daily living surroundings, such as saving water/natural gas/electricity, abandoning the use of paper festival cards and smoking cessation in public places, with paying less attention to those having fewer direct relations. But on the other hand, the positive actions to defend people's environmental rights—such as juridical procedures, affording public services, participating in NGO activities, and so on—had been quite rare.

Judged from the two aspects — the upgrade of public concern on environmental

quality and the shortage of participation willingness and practice — of the analysis, there are two crucial points for this study. On one hand, the increasing environmental demands of the public led to increasing pressure on the government, but also constructed the validity of strengthening policymaking and enforcement. Especially, the specialized design of the 2007 survey—it divided the “public satisfaction with the government” indicator into that with “the central government” and “the local government”—demonstrated the majority of satisfaction with the center, in comparison with the 66.3% ratio of interviewees unsatisfied with the local government, which corresponded the strong EP willingness of the centre and the relatively poor enforcement of most local governments. Such result undoubtedly confirmed the justice of the environmental department to fight the economic orientation, according to the orthodox of the Party-state to “serve the people”. On the other hand, the surveys indicated that common people had rarely taken EP actions mainly for the private life rather than participating into the public sphere, and preferred to leave the main responsibility to the government. It means, the political structural change, as the unconscious effects of the marketization, hadn’t naturally led the people to get aware of their real power and responsibility to reconstruct the reality, and more important, led the Party-state to timely develop and formalize the public participation channels for the problem resolution. In other words, the resources of the public realms hadn’t been fully developed for environmental governance. Thus, it would be both the challenge and opportunity for the environmental department to mobilize the resources for the environmental priority. However, the political structural change had made it impossible for the direct mass mobilization—for example, the campaign against four pests <*si hai*> launched in the 1950s to eliminate rats, bedbugs, flies and mosquitoes seriously troubling people’s health and the agricultural industry at that time—through large-scale campaigns based on the political organizations from top to bottom. As the substitute, the mobilization of the modern state to integrate social resources should be “embedded” in social factors, and, as will be discussed in the next chapter, the growing civil society, with the special characteristics different from its counterparts in developed democracies, will become another piece of the “embedded mobilization” jigsaw, when they are trying to take their

political ties as the shortcut to apply environmental priority and democratic ethics into policymaking while they are “selected” by political authority as the “social units” to embed power.

Chapter Three
“Social Units” for Embeddedness:
Environmental NGO Activism and the Case of Wild Conservation

During the 1990s, although the environmental degradation had already made a big problem of China, it hadn't been given a high rank in the political agendas, as introduced in last chapter. The direct financial investment in environmental governance had only been 0.69% to 1% of the annual GDP, in comparison with the 1.5% average in developed countries¹. And, the gap between the serious environmental pressure and the absence of effective governmental measures had then created the space for the new-born environmental NGOs, who attempted to invoke the social mobilization just as the non-governmental entities had been doing in the developed democracies. Of Course, the great efforts of these weak NGOs, with little resources under the authoritarian political system to play the active role as policy entrepreneurs in environmental issues, can be interpreted as the fabulous growth of China's civil society to challenge the control of the political authority. However, we may also see that, although the environmental NGOs had taken foot into fringe agendas where the governmental ability was not enough, they hadn't set their purpose beyond the general line of the Party-state, and further, the practical effects of their activities on related policies had greatly depended on the attitudes of the government, or even benefited from their formal identity in the political system. And, on the other side, the governmental attitudes had depended on what the environmental NGOs could have done to supplement the governmental insufficiency in dealing with environmental problems, for example, the financial difficulty and the shortage of supervision on the local governmental misdoings. Thus, the formation of environmental NGOs had also made the windows of opportunity for the “embedded mobilization” by the political authority and the environmental watchdog.

1. Fringe NGOs participate in fringe political agendas

1.1 New-Born environmental NGOs and Their Discovery

It was commonly accepted that the first environmental NGO of China is Friends of

¹ Huansheng Lu and Honggui Gao, “The Status of Quo and Analysis of Environmental Protection in China <zhongguo huanbao touzi xianzhuang ji fenxi>,” *Journal of Zhongnan University of Economics and Law*, 2004 (6).

Nature (FON)¹, started in 1993 (some argued in 1994). The organization was established by Liang Congjie, both a historian and member of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), with his parents, Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin, being well-known architects of great consequences and grandfather, Liang Qichao, a most famous innovationist and thinker in the end of Qing Dynasty. Liang and his comrades, Yang Dongping, Liang Xiaoyan and Wang Lixiong, made the first core group of FON. Among them, Yang Dongping is an experts on education and social culture; Liang Xiaoyan used to be a college teacher but lost the job after participating in the Tian'anmen movement in 1989 and then became active in press and mass media; and, Wang Lixiong is a radical free-lancer whose ideas, especially those on the central government-Tibet relations, are difficult to be accepted by the main stream opinion of China.

By judging from the establishers of the first and most influential environmental NGO, we may find the differences of their identity from that of their counterparts' in developed democracies. On one hand, quite before the establishment of FON, they all had early been political dissidents with liberalistic thinking under totalitarian and the following authoritarian system, rather than specific environmentalists. Liang Congjie, who carried the literary family tradition by becoming a historian, had suffered like other intelligentsia during the long political movement from the 1950s to the 1970s, and he, like his well-known father, had always sorrowed for damages on historic relics caused by the rapid industrialization in China. Yang Dongping, with his numerous social titles, was an active critic of China's existing educational system, arguing it to be obstacles to independent thinking. Liang Xiaoyan's democratic consciousness was a sufferer of 1989 Tian'anmen tragedy, only 4 years before the establishment of FON. Among them, Wang had been the one to go the farthest beyond environmental protection from then on. According to his books banned in the mainland of China, his interest in environmental protection might be closely related with his desire to keep Tibet—for the environmental surroundings, for the religion or for the people's original living style—far from modernization. His stubborn attachment to “Tibetan independence” had made him

¹ Another green NGO, Larussaundersi Protection Association, located in Liaoning Province, also claimed to be the first green NGO in China (established in 1991), but, for the comparison of influence, FON is commonly accepted as the first one.

ranked in the most radical and unacceptable dissidents of China. And in addition, before the establishment of FNO, none of the founders had set foot in environmental protection area. According to Liang Congjie, who is respected of the “spirit guider” of China’s public environmental protection, all his related knowledge had been learnt since FON was put into work¹. But what had made them transform into environmentalists? The answer might be, also according to Liang Congjie, because in China, the public was forced to accept “policies and ruled well done by the government only”, but “the experience of democracies (on environmental problems)” would be “pushing governmental policies by the public”². Thus, FON was expected to, by utilizing the experiences of social environmental movement in developed democracies, “to promote governmental policies and supervise them outside the system”³. We may read from his implication that, after the radical liberalistic conflicts with the political system from the late 1970s, especially after the Tian’anmen tragedy, some dissidents had turn to more moderate and self-possessed approaches, by promoting public participation in some fringe policy agendas like environmental protection, to achieve their set target of democratization and liberalization. However, their target had also become mature, from emphasizing severe change limited in political sphere to advocating an integration of “small government and big society”. The unconscious change of dissidents might also indicate that the Party-system had gradually loosened its control on society⁴.

On the other hand, leading persons of the early root NGO were not so “root” as their counterparts in developed democracies. Despite of the injury in the political struggles, the liberalistic dissidents fringed or banished by the political system could still be respected as social elites for their identity of intelligentsia, especially in the early 1990s when even college students were rarity. Early NGOs’ works had commonly depended on the capability of leading elites. That’s because, from one aspect, in the early 1990s, China was far less than a competitive country, the few educated people playing the important role

¹ Record of the interview by a TV series, “City Online,” Guangzhou Television Station. [http://news.dayoo.com/dszx/200802/27/73758_3313890.htm]

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ When Liang and his comrades held a conference to discuss the establishment in 1993, he still worried that the “assembly” would be interrupted by sensitive police, but fortunately, it resulted to be smooth. According to Liang Congjie in an interview, reference to: Wang Lili, *Environmental Communication in China*, Beijing: Tsinghua University press, 2005. p. 231.

inside or outside the system had their close networks, such as that among teachers and students, college mates, or comrades in arms, and so on. Thus, under a shortage of institutional resources for the public participation, only a leading social elite could find a way to achieve political or social resources for their personal relations. And, from another aspect, although early NGOs had just set foot in fringe policy agendas in which governmental policies might have failed, they still needed the governmental acquiesce to weaken the political risk¹. As in FON, Liang Congjie was the member of Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee (CPPCC). The organization is China's highest political advisory body consisting of delegates from political parties who had cooperated with CCP through the establishment of People's Republic of China, a range of governmental-set social organizations and the independent members having high social reputation. According to the Chinese Constitution and the political practice, proposals raised by CPPCC members should be respected, although it usually doesn't influence material policies directly. In other words, as a CPPCC member, the FON leader had been on the fringe of the system, but not factually outside the system. In addition, his respectable wisdom of a well-known historian, and the networks made by him and the intelligentsia family also made FON led by Liang Congjie achieve a higher starting point.

In accordance with the special quality of earliest environmental NGO core members and elite-led operation, the rudiment of its action mode was made on this basis. We may get an outline of it by simply analyzing FON's first influential movement, to save black snub-nosed monkeys, an endangered species endemic to China's Yunnan Province. As living in one of the most extreme environments of any nonhuman primate in high altitudes, the species was almost completely unknown until the 1990s. In 1995, 40 square miles of virgin rainforest in Deqin county of Yunnan Province, was sold to timber companies whose environmental impact studies failed to even mention the monkeys. But the fact was, of the 1,000 black snub-nosed monkeys that remain in the wild, about 200

¹ Jia Xijin, "Civil Society in China and the Development and Current Situation of NGOs <zhongguo gongmin shehui he NGO de fazhan yu xianzhuang>," in Li Fan (ed.), *Report on the Development of China's Grassroot-level Democracy <zhongguo jiceng minzhu fazhan baogao>*, Xi'an: Northwest University Press, 2003. pp. 92-131, p. 102. And also see: Sun Liping, "The Evolution of the Interactive Relationships Among the State, Civil Elites and the Common Citizens in Chinese Mainland <gaige qianhou zhongguo dalu guojia, minjian tongzhi jingyi ji minzhong jian hudong guanxi de yanbian>," *China Social Science Quarterly*, No. 1, 1994, pp. 37-53.

of them live in the Deqin forest. The deal between companies and local government angered a wild animal photographer named Xi Zhinong, and he immediately wrote a letter to FON to report the dangerous situation in December.

FON immediately took positive actions which had not been unusual for their counterparts in developed democracies: they launched social campaigns like organizing university students into candle-light “Save the Monkey” demonstrations, and got touch with media professionals—editors and journalists—who were also included in the intelligentsia network, utilizing detailed and lasting reports to arouse public attention. However, the most effective approach of FON was their characteristic direct reaching to governmental officials, especially those ranked high in the bureaucratic hierarchy. By interpersonal relations of a member, FON conveyed Xi’s letter to Song Jian, State Councilor at that time. And further, Liang Congjie wrote a petition letter to Jiang Chunyun, Vice Premier at that time, which transferred a demand for supporting Xi’s actions to protect primeval forest and the biodiversity in Southwest area. At the same time, FON sent 80 copies of this letter to mass media. As reaction the petition of Liang Congjie, 16 officials above minister-level made hand-writing instruction (pi shi) on the letter to support the species protection. And, the Central governmental decision was transferred to Yunnan Province, making the local officials to halt the timber business.

After more than one year’s small-scale bird observation and voluntary trash collecting, the Yunnan black snub-nosed monkey case was FON’s first successful attempt to influence the policy making of a specific public issue¹. The success obviously demonstrated an action mode with both adaptation to political restriction and utilization of state controlled resources. This case proved the importance of the leading NGO members, who were also “social elites” with the position, although at the fringe, of the political system, because they had the institutional channel as the nearest road to participate in policy-making process.

The success, which hadn’t seemed to experience much difficulty, brought environmental NGOs more confidence. And, it also established the reputation for FON, helping the organization achieve aid resource from Chinese public and even international

¹ *Environmental Communication in China*, p. 226.

civil society, making it possible for FON to pursue greater career. As a result, it had come a most influential public issue of China's environmental protection history, the Tibetan antelope protection which had lasted from 1998 to 2001. In this case, FON and other smaller environmental NGOs which had been established later, with the assistance from the international social civil society such as World Wide Fund for Nature (WWFN) and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), had done their utmost to utilize the media and other institutional resources to influence the policy making and to develop the civil society. But, different from the famous victory of Yunnan monkey protection, the last result became the complex of achievements and cruel lessons, and indicated the limit of Chinese root NGOs' capability of the radical actions and the natural dependence on institutional resources, to make them to reconsider the role they needed to play in the comprehensive modernization of China.

1.2. National Predicaments of Protecting Tibetan Antelope

Tibetan antelope (chiru, in local accent) are sole species in the genus pantholops, native to the Tibetan plateau including China's Tibet Autonomous Region, Qinghai province, and Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region; India near Ladakh, and, formerly western Nepal, spreading mainly on the high mountain steppes and semi-desert areas of the Tibetan plateau, mostly concentrated in Kekexili of China's Qinghai Province, where they feed on various forb and grass species. Tibetan antelope are listed as the endangered species by the World Conservation Union and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service—its numbers have dropped accordingly from nearly a million at the turn of the 20th century to less than 75,000 in the later 1990s, and the numbers continue to drop yearly¹—mostly due to serious poaching for their underwool, known as shahtoosh, warm, soft and fine². Although, according to the 1979 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the poaching was to be fined 100 thousand US dollars or sentenced one year in jail, and, in China, as Tibetan antelope is the first class national protect animal, according to the 1988 State Wildlife Protection Law, poaching on more

¹ See: Tibetan Environmental Watch: "Bloody shawls exterminating chiru," [www.tew.org/archived/antelope.trade.html]

² The competition with local domesticated herds, and the development of their rangeland for gold mining were also the reasons—writer.

than three is to be a specially important criminal case, leading to at least life imprisonment. The Law also symbolized Chinese Government formally vowed its determination to crack down wildlife poaching.

That the strong criminal punishment on Tibetan antelope poaching started in the late 1980s was not accidental, but forced by the crazy poaching oriented by economic interest since China's economic reform. During China's transformation from totalitarianism to authoritarianism since the late 1970s, the limited withdraw of the state from society had inevitably weakened the pressure on criminal offence, because the traditional totalitarian political approaches to integration the society—such as militarization management, strict Party rules or other small bottom-level units (i.g. the neighborhood committee, or “*ju wei hui*” to make people to supervise each other's actions during Mao's era)—had been gradually abandoned or transformed, when the new legal system hadn't been established. Thus, the social governance and integration system became the most vulnerable. In addition, factually, the consumer demand of shahtoosh was from outside of the territory beyond the Chinese Governmental measures, and, the side effects of opening up policy (*duiwai kaifang zhengce*) linked Chinese poachers to the international black market. Especially when the lady's shawl made by shahtoosh became a fashion symbol in the late 1980s, the price of the underwool of Tibetan antelope had been continuously promoted higher and higher, which achieved US\$ 1115 for one kilo in 1992, and even US\$ 1715 in 1996, comparing with the US\$ 43-86 for one kilo common mutton¹. Under the stimulation of great profit, and the withdraw of totalitarian pressure and the shortage of legal enforcement during national transformation, although China had indicated its national will to protect the endangered species by stipulating strict criminal punishment and establishing several national and provincial reserves—Mount Arjin Reserve from 1983, Qiangtang Reserve from 1992, Kekexili Reserve from 1995², and Three Rive Source Reserve from 2000—the poaching was still difficult to be prevented. According to the estimation of Chinese Forestry Administration in 1999, some 20,000 Tibetan antelopes,

¹ See: Sun Danping, “Expose the mystery of an amice (*jie kai shen mi pi jian zhi mi*)”, Beijing Youth Daily, October 29, 1998. Page 3.

² The Kekexili Reserve was established in 1995 as a provincial reserve, and, promoted into national-level in 1997—writer.

living in a hostile habitat on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau some 4,500 meters above sea level, were being slaughtered each year¹. Even though, in the 1990s, Chinese forestry police had caught about 3,000 poachers, confiscated more than 17,000 chiru hides and 2,425 pounds of Tibetan antelope fur², poachers had become more organized and some of them better armed than local police³, deriving from the comparison between the great profit of selling the shahtoosh to international fashion market and the poor investment in local police by the Chinese government. It had decreased the crime cost of poaching, but it also had increased the risk of anti-poaching.

We may conclude that Chinese government-dominated wildlife protection was limited by factors both subjective and objective. Objectively, the protection had been faced with triple difficulties: the formidable natural conditions of Tibetan plateau with the broad no-man land, insufficient oxygen and the constantly changing weather, the crazy consumer demand outside the ruling territory, and the high risk and cost of anti-poaching. And subjectively, an underlying reason might be that, different from today, Chinese Government during the 1990s factually was being driven mad of investing its limited resources into dealing with serious economic risks such as state-owned enterprises loss, bad debts of banks, foreign attacks to agriculture and the unemployment (“let-off” or “*xia gang*”) according to the radical progress to sell SOEs to the private capital. That means, the government couldn’t rank environmental problems in a high level of the policy agendas, therefore the problem had stayed in fringe until discovered by some the fringe NGOs.

2. Environmental NGO Efforts to Shape the Subjectivity of the Civil Society

2.1 Cooperation with Government as Shortcut to Obtain Original Legitimacy

To be strictly, the same as in the Yunnan black snub-nosed monkey case, for the public antelope protection, it was not formed organization like FON, but the individual environmental activist firstly to take actions. However, the protection actions had only

¹ “Bloody shawls exterminating chiru,”

² State Forestry Administration: “White Paper in Tibetan Antelope Protection,” released in 1998 December. Source: <http://www.qh.xinhuanet.com/old/qinghai/kkxl/zlybhxz.htm>

³ “Expose the mystery of an amice”.

become effective after the individual activists reached for organizational resources, and, they all then joined the organization. The process had indicated us an outline of the early development of China's public green activism from individual to integrated actions.

The individual environmental activists began to pay their attention as early as in 1995, when Yang Xin, an explorer and environmental volunteer, submitted his personal antelope protection scheme to the local Qinghai Provincial government. In this ambitious 5-year scheme, Yang planned to cover 4 main points: a) to bring experts, journalists and volunteers into the careful field investigations; b) to build a nation-level natural reserve for Tibetan antelopes in Kekexili, Qinghai Province, under the cooperation with the Provincial government; c) to develop international cooperation for research; d) to build the comprehensive volunteering regimes¹. At first, without precedents to cooperate with the new-born public power in environmental governance regimes, the local governments at all levels of Qinghai province didn't try to trust the personal activist. But Yang didn't give up and he, breaking the formal procedures, presented his scheme at the door of Secretary of Qinghai Provincial Party Committee, the top provincial leader at that time, and, persuade the top official of local place to support his plan. According to Yang, it was not only his passion but his promise to raise money in those advanced places in East China for establishing a natural reserve in Qinghai to achieve success. Eventually, under the responsibility of species protection, the Qinghai Provincial Government had much earlier found it necessary to build a natural reserve, but, as one of the poorest provinces of China, the government had hesitated to squeeze the limited fiscal budget². Thus, Yang's promise of funding support became a good attraction, and, before long, Yang was given formal governmental permit, which authorize him to raise money for the establishment and drew public attention³.

But when Yang began his work with the unbounded confidence, he immediately found himself powerless. On one hand, he failed in mobilizing people in advanced places

¹ See: Xin Yang, *Ten years of Self-Experiences in Kekexili (qinli kekexili shinian)*, Shanghai: Sanlian Bookstore, 2005. Source: http://vip.book.sina.com.cn/book/index_39087.html

² Although Tibetan antelope is under first-class state protection entitled for state-level natural reserve funded by Central Government, but according to related rules, a state-level natural reserve must be build on the basis of a formed provincial reserve funded by provincial government. –writer.

³ Yang, *Ten years of Self-Experiences in Kekexili*

to support his career in remote Qinghai Province. When he firstly began to raise money in cities of Shenzhen and Hong Kong, where his works and networks located and the public had advanced environmental awareness, he got a lukewarm response, because the public naturally preferred to invest their resources to protect their own community, and thought the antelope protection should have been left to their local community¹. On the other had, although mass media issue framing was an important approach of Yang's plan, he couldn't provide enough news dynamics to mobilize East China's market-oriented mass media to carry out investigative reporting, with risking the ill natural conditions, language barriers in communication with ethnic natives, and possible life danger from armed poachers, in a middle of nowhere. After encountering setbacks in Shenzhen and Hong Kong, Yang turned to Beijing, trying to raise money by selling his book on the exploring experiences including stories on local anti-poaching heroes, where he got an active message from FON.

FON, to speak strictly, Liang Congjie, who had encouraged by the Yunnan Monkey success, took Yang to give lectures on popularizing Tibetan antelope protection and raise money in universities—for the Yunnan monkey, FON had succeeded in making news and expanding public influence from campaigns in universities—the warm help had make Yang get his first fund. And further, in June 1996, Liang Congjie introduced Yang Xin to officials of State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), the top watchdog of China's green career, and Shenzhen Municipal Government, speeding up their embeddedness in governmental actions. This integration quickly had effects several months later, when SEPA and Shenzhen Municipal Government funded Yang to lead a group of 24 members composed of experts, journalists and volunteers, with FON members being core participants, to go to Kekexili for an in-depth investigation. In the same year, SEPA entitled Sonan Dorjay, a local police official who died at his anti-poaching post—Yang Xin had heard his heroic stories according to the local habitants' dictations and then written them into his book—with the honor of “environmental protection hero”. Yang's efforts finally brought a natural resources protection station in Kekexili for observation on the antelope ecology—he didn't achieve

¹ Yang, *Ten years of Self-Experiences in Kekexili*

his ambitious targets we mentioned in his four-point scheme—and he then riveted all his attention on the small station and faded from the public view.

Even though it was Yang to trigger the start of the public participation, its achievements had from the start to the finish severed the established target of Qinghai Provincial Government to build up the National Reserve, which was achieved in 1997. That's why his independent attempts beyond the institutions without precedents had been permitted or even encouraged by the local political leader or the officials of the environmental watchdog. However, when his work was then relayed to FON, the social activity had not only been promoted into its climax, but also turned to the attempt for the subjectivity of the civil society, which led to the break of relations between NGOs and the local government.

2.2 From passively being mobilized to positively mobilizing: Media Promotion of the Public “Hero”

In 1998, FON, with international organizations of World Wide Fund for Nature (WWFN) and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and several NGOs located in Hong Kong, gathered Beijing's environmental activists to discuss on a uniform action plan for Tibetan antelope protection. And, they sent messages to related departments and officials they knew well, demanded for their participation into the plan initiated by nongovernmental sectors. Without positive response from governmental departments, the attempt reached no feasible achievements. Confronted with setbacks, FON with other environmental NGOS hadn't chosen confrontation actions, but temporarily returned to their original status as the favorable supplement to governmental policies: they determined to focus their resources on funding a local anti-poaching police agency. But there was a crucial difference from earlier actions. The local police agency, despite of its governmental identity and brilliant records of fighting poachers, was embarrassed with a shortage of resources distribution owing to being shunted aside by the local bureaucracy. Thus, FON had tried to channeling the public donation for antelope protection to the police agency, rather than to the local government for internal distribution, and further, bringing the embarrassed police agency a new identity as the symbol (or “brand”, according to Liang Congjie) of the public species protection.

2.2.1 Met the Hero: The Predicament of a Local Police Agency and Its Interaction with NGOs

The formal title of the antipoaching agency was “West Worker Committee <xibu gongzuo weiyuanhui>”, and, through later lasting media reports, well known as “Wild Yak Team” by the public. The following texts will use the “Wild Yak Team” as researchers commonly do. The agency was founded in 1992 by Zhiduo county of Qinghai Province, given a limited autonomy with an original purpose to govern local natural resources. And, the first person in charge, named Jiesang Sonan Dorjay, began to take anti-poaching on Tibetan antelope as the agency’s key emphasis in work. But, in his twelfth time of enterings Kekexili—the largest depopulated area in China—in 1994, the arrest of 20 poachers with over 1600 hides¹ led to his death. After that, his brother-in-law, Zhaba Doje, resigned from his own official service and reorganized the “West Worker Committee” in 1995, beginning to rivet all the attention on anti poaching. From then, their respectable records had brought them awards honored by Qinghai Province and Chinese State Forestry Administration (SFA), a top watchdog for natural resources governance, respectively in 1996 and 1997. The Wild Yak Team also had got touch with public environmental activists early since Yang Xin, also a friend of Zhaba Doje, propagated their performance for raising money. From 1996 to 1998, FON had continuously donated cash and vehicles for anti-poaching to the team under the name of a cooperative operation with several international NGOs.

The donation from FON to the Wild Yak Team was not occasional but pointed at the police agency’s practical dilemma and further crisis of identity. Despite of being under ruling of Zhiduo county government, Of the 60 to 70 members, including Zhaba Doje, only 3 to 5 were regular governmental employees, and the rest were all without formal employment contract, of who most were veterans and local unemployed youth. For this reason, the Wild Yak Team hadn’t had a strong sense of identity with local government, but just followed their leader Zhaba Doje, who had recruited them, out of personal feelings, which brought Zhaba Doje the absolute authority in the team. In addition, consisting mainly of temporary workers also demonstrated their difficulty in drawing

¹ Some other reports gave the data of 15 poachers and 1300 hides. –writer.

financial support from the local government, a state poverty county only able to spare the team RMB ¥10,000 (about US\$1,250) one year. According to a media investigative report, until 1998, despite of brilliant anti-poaching records, the team had been only equipped with three pistols, a old submachine gun and three outmoded pick-up vehicles, but burdened with a debt of RMB ¥110,000 (about US\$13,750) ¹. As a result, the financial predicament and crisis of identity forced Zhaba Doje to pursue for sponsorship, which led to his communication with FON and its cooperative activists. And, for the NGO, the heroic stories of the Team to fight with poachers had greatly moved them. In 1997, FON and IFAW became the first NGOs to sponsor the Team, donating two jeeps and US\$10,000 in cash². However, the communication between NGOs and the Wild Yak Team had developed far beyond it. The Team then became faced with its real risk of being stripped of the political legitimacy, and, when the NGOs began to offer help for this, they located themselves in the independent activism from the local governmental purposes, demonstrating the attempts for the subjectivity of civil society.

2.2.2 Media Campaign to Gift the Team Political Legitimacy through Constructing its Social Legitimacy

Along with the increasing state sponsorship and environmental activists' efforts, in 1997, the Kekexili state-level natural reserve was established mainly for Tibetan antelope protection. But the seemingly happy ending for both state and civil society brought a problem for Wild Yak Team, the marginalized local police agency and close friend with environmental activists: the team was ordered to disband under the name of local governmental reorganization for the state-level natural reserve, in other words, it was deprived of the political legitimacy. According to the local government, exactly the Qinghai Provincial Forestry Bureau, this disband order was due to the temporary workers' misuse of authority to make money, such as privately released the poachers, occupied plunders, or permitted illegal mining in or around the reserve, and so on. But, the official interpretation couldn't prevent environmental activists from taking the order

¹ Sun Danping, "Dissolve the mystery of shatooth <*jiakai shenmi pijian zhi mi*>," Beijing Youth Daily, August 29, 1988. Page 3.

² See: Katherine Morton, "Transnational advocacy at the grassroots: benefits and risks of international cooperation", in Ho, Peter and Edmons, Richard Louis (ed), *China's Embedded Activism: Opportunities and Constraints of A Social Movement*, London ; New York : Routledge, 2008. 203.

as rooted in the “jealousy” of local officials to the brilliant records¹ of marginalized Wild Yak Team. Thus, it then became a turning point of the long-time brewed transformation of FON and their cooperating activists: from being mobilized by governmental policies as “favorable supplement” to positively mobilizing social resources for their independent targets, even possibly in conflict with governmental policies. In this case, it means to support Wild Yak Team to get back their deprived political legitimacy in Kekexili natural reserve, denying the local governmental arrangement. And, the most advantageous approach of the young civil society was carried on from the successful experiences in Yunnan Monkey issue: media campaign. But the critical difference was that the media campaign for Yunnan Monkey was not in conflict with the government but only transfer the officials’ concern to the peripherized agenda while the media campaign for Wild Yak Team was expanding the team’s influence in public, establishing kind of “social legitimacy”, so as to force the local government return the political legitimacy to the team. As an active reporter said, “propaganda was the most effective support”². For this reason, Wild Yak Team should have been framed as a “brand (pin pai, or symbol)”³ of Tibetan antelope protection.

With the concern that the far distance and severe natural conditions might prevent public of advanced areas from paying attention to Tibetan antelope and Wild Yak Team in remote Kekexili—according to the forthgoer, Yang Xin, at the time he started the work, even environmental activists had no sense of Tibetan antelope⁴—FON and their cooperating activists determined to invite Zhaba Doje to Beijing, the advanced capital where located a plenty of Party’s mouthpiece, influential commercialized media or branches from the whole country, and the branches of foreign news agencies, preparing to make a bigger and more lasting news event.

In Zhaba Doje’s visit to Beijing in 1998, FON, his friend and sponsor, arranged the

¹ According to the retailing of mass media, the records included solving 43 theft and hunt cases, catching 188 criminals, capturing 42 arms and 39 vehicles, and seizing 2914 hides including 2805 of Tibetan antelopes from September 1995 to November 1997.

² “Tibetan protection: the information propagation is the best support <*baohu zang lingyang: xuanchuan shi zuihao de shengyuan*>,” *China Youth Daily*, May 25, 2000.

³ See: Interview with Liang Congjie in “To Tibetan antelope: what will you future be <*zang lingyang: ni de mingyun jiang hui shi shenme*>?”, *ChinaNet*, January 16, 2001. [http://www.china.com.cn/zhuanti2005/txt/2001-01/16/content_5017101.htm]

⁴ See: Interview with Yang Xin by *China Radio International*. [<http://gb2.chinabroadcast.cn/1015/2002-12-26/98@131172.htm>]

agendas of not only meeting the environmental activists and potential financial sponsors including NGO members, entrepreneurs and university students, giving speeches on the team's moving stories of antipoaching, but also being introduced to SFA and SEPA officials, with the identity of a local police official, to make a "work report"¹, which indicated the acquiescence of the Central governmental watchdogs at their social campaigns. Besides these small-scale activities, FON also used their personal networks to arrange Zhaba Doje to directly access to mass media, accepting interview from multiple mainstream media organs both from China and abroad, including the Chinese Central Television (CCTV), Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) of United States, Voice of America (VOA) and Nihon Housou Kyoukai (NHK) of Japan, and a number of local large-circulation newspapers such as *China Youth Daily*—Party paper of Chinese Communist Youth League—and *Guangming Daily*—a mouthpiece mainly representing the voice of intellectuals serving the political system—and *South Weekend*—a most famous critical paper of China². To mobilize the mass media, FON and Wild Yak Team made an adequate preparation of an elaborate speech draft and more than one hundred films on their brave antipoaching both for public exhibitions and media interview. And, for mass media, FON added a special explanation meeting for mass media on October 28, after Zhaba Doje left Beijing, to reaffirm their attitudes. In this meeting, according to FON, the journalists demonstrated their "heartfelt concern" to "actively raise questions" to FON staff and "emulatively borrow pictures (provided by Wild Yak Team) for reporting"³.

Under the positive access to well-developed mass media in advanced areas, Wild Yak Team was ensured to be the only first-hand information source of Tibetan antelope protection in remote Kekexili. Scholars found that the materials provided to mass media had given prominence to "artistic style of emotional sorrow" in telling their stories to

¹ "Records of orientation meeting on Tibetan antelope situation," Friends of Nature *Newsletter*. No. 3, 1998.

² Another reason why FON can mobilize so many influential mainstream media organs, especially those from abroad, might be the letter Liang wrote to Tony Blair, British Premier at that time, which had made a big news from 1998 October during Blair's official visit to China. In this letter, Liang appealed to the western community to boycott the black market of the much-desired Tibetan Antelope fur, and received positive response. —writer.

³ "Records of orientation meeting on Tibetan antelope situation,"

“shape heroic idols¹, which was easier to inspire sympathy of common audience. Zhaba Doje’s visit started a continuous report lasting for three years until the its formal disband, with reporting number and quality being “without parallel in history” and making Wild Yak Team in Kekexili, which was rarely known by the public, become a symbol of China’s wild conservation “even as famous as the panda”². In addition to the a shortage of pluralistic information sources — for example, national legal system enforcement and antipoaching actions taken by both Central and local government — Wild Yak Team had been naturally given the public impression as the “only actor to actually protect Tibetan antelope”³ through media framing. In other words, it was the Wild Yak Team sponsored and propagated by non-governmental NGOs and mass media, rather than any governmental sector to draw the social legitimacy. As a result, on one hand, Wild Yak Team obtained the backup — financial support and public pressure on local government—from civil society to deal with their survival crisis. From 1998 to 2001, Wild Yak Team had received donations valuing more than RMB ¥ 800,000 (about US\$100,000) both in cast and necessary equipments, and application of participation from hundreds of volunteers from more than 20 Chinese provinces⁴. On the other hand, the NGOs and active journalists successfully framed a social identity for the governmental agency and mobilized public resources to support the agency’s antipoaching — without the Wild Yak Team, there had been no formal channel for civil society to participate—which developed the capacity of the young civil society.

2.2.3 Hard Work of Civil Society and the Local Governmental Resistance

When the social energy following Zhaba Doje’s visit to Beijing seemed to indicate to environmental activists and journalists an optimistic prospect of a capable civil society which was comparatively independent from the government, a breaking news changed the situation, leading to their head-on confrontation with local government, and further

¹ Zeng Fanxu, “Media Agenda Building and Public Expression in NGO: A Case Study of Tibetan Antelopes Protection in China <*huanbao NGO de yiti jiangou yu gonggong biaoda: yi ziran zhiyou jiangou zanglingyang baohu yiti wei ge’an*>,” *Journal of International Communication*, No. 10, 2007. pp. 14-18, p. 17.

² Sun Danping, “What’s most needed in Kekexili <*kekexili zui xuyao de shi shenme?*>” *Beijing Youth Daily*, July 8, 2002.

³ “Media Agenda Building and Public Expression in NGO,” p. 17.

⁴ Ding Pin, “Five years of gathering and the lessons <*wunian shengju wunian jiaoxun*>,” *Friends of Nature Newsletter*, No. 2, 2000.

to lose the acquiescence of Central governmental watchdogs.

On November 11, less than two months after Zhaba Doje returned home, FON's Beijing office heard the death of Zhaba Doje through an anonymous phone call. Then, under the public pressure and after criminal investigation, the local government announced his death to be committing suicide after a family dispute, but the public was hard to accept the conclusion. One reason was, in all the main stream media, Zhaba Doje had been a hero, brave, wise, creative, selfless, calm, direct, and friendly, who obtained great respect especially university students, and, such a hero shouldn't have been died for family dispute. And the other reason was, as a framed symbol of non-governmental antelope protection, the "suicide" of Zhaba Doje might have reduced the persuasiveness of civil society to mobilize the public. Therefore, despite of the official explanation, proofless suspect that the hero might have been murdered by armed poachers or local officials for revenge or jealousy had been discussed for a time, privately among activists or on anonymous internet webs. However, at that time, environmental activists and journalists were still calm enough to avoid publicly challenging the official conclusion, but they still tried to express their doubt by implication. An investigative report written by a journalist of *Chendu Business News* (chengdu shangbao), a well-known critical newspaper located in the capital of Sichuan Province who had close relations with Zhaba Doje, might have reflected a consensus of the civil society. In this report, the journalist reaffirmed the hero image of Zhaba Doje by interviewing his relatives and Wild Yak Team members, and announced, without directly denying official conclusion, that "it's hard to believe such a brave, aggressive and optimistic man to shoot himself", and, "despite of the suicide, his fact as a hero shouldn't be doubted" ¹. Despite of facing with such a serious setback, in order to avoid head-on confrontation with local authority, young civil society at that time still chose to commit self-control². For example, a friend of Zhaba Doje and

¹ Miao Xi, "He fled away with the eagles <ta sui yingbei cangmang er qu>," *Chengdu Business News*, November 30, 1998.

² Along with the contradiction had been intensified, the suspect was also brought into open. For example, a most influential local English newspaper, took the hero's death as "being revenged by poachers" half a year later, see: China Daily, "Heeding a call of the wild," June 28, 1999. And, FON leader, Liang Congjie, told www.china.org.cn that as he himself had phoned Zhaba Doje several hours before his death, it was "difficult" for him to accept the official explanation of "suicide". See: www.china.org.cn, "Chiru's Guardian Angels Shedding Blood, Tears," uploaded on January, 16th, 2001. [<http://www.china.org.cn/english/2001/Jan/6643.htm>]

experienced reporter for *China Youth Daily*, stood up to relieving her peer by writing that “(Zhaba Doje) committed suicide under excessive pressure from both his work and family...some mass media had mistaken his death cause before”¹. In addition, the local government then also indicated positive attitudes to continue cooperation with activists and journalists from advanced areas, by highly praising the brilliant achievements of Zhaba Doje².

By judging the following development, we now can conclude that the local government, after Zhaba Doje’s death had planned to orient the public resources used to channeling to Wild Yak Team to the politically legal agency of government, named Administration Committee for Kekexili National Natural Reserve. That’s why they indicated positive attitudes to the sad activists who had lost Zhaba Doje. But the civil society gave them negative response by continuing to support Wild Yak Team led by an assistant of Zhaba Doje. For example, from 1998 to 1999, Team members were sponsored by NGOs to give speech and hold exhibition in Beijing and Tianjin, for further propagating their saga and raise financial donations. In 1999, when the top watchdog for natural resources protection, SFA, organized all the armed forces under its ruling to launch a major operation against antelope poachers, generally known as “Kekexili Action No. 1”, and, as a local police agency, Wild Yak Team was included in this action. Through this chance, FON mobilized its journalist members to accompany with Wild Yak Team into the front-line. Therefore, in this massive action involving 170 police, with achievements of crushing 17 poaching groups, arresting 66 poachers, taking over 1658 hides and freeing 545 antelopes, Wild Yak Team still played the leading role to attract public attention. We may judged from the examples that, from the death of Zhaba Doje, the social legitimacy of Wild Yak Team had not been reduced while the civil society for antelope protection had been still taking the team as a core image to mobilize public resources. And, to say from another aspect, it must have further challenged the political legitimacy of local governmental arrangement, making the governmental entitled Administration Committee evitable faced with an embarrassment of very little public

¹ Deng Congcong, “The forever hero: mourn Zhaba Doje <*yongyuan shi yingxiong: tong dao zha ba duo jie*>,” *China Youth Daily*, November 26, 1998.

² “He fled away with the eagles,”

recognition and access to donations. Liang Congjie used to tell a story about how an influential foreign foundation gave up their donation plan when they heard the disband of Wild Yak Team because they had no idea of “who” were actually “doing anti-poaching” apart from Wild Yak Team¹. Efforts of the civil society on Wild Yak Team might have potentially brought a sense of a “capable public”, independent from the Party-state regimes. But it also had made the contradiction between local government and the civil society gradually develop into resistance.

Also in 1999, the Central Government determined to add a financial investment of RMB ¥600,000 (about US\$75,000) into Kekexili Natural Reserve, and the distribution of this investment might have become the primacord of the rupture between local government and the civil society. In August, the local Yushu Autonomous prefectural Government finally made sure the official decision to disband Wild Yak Team. According to the government, it was to centralize the isolated antipoaching agencies into a standardized Kekexili Natural Reserve Administration Bureau. In other words, all the staff and responsibility of Wild Yak Team was demanded to under the ruling of the uniform governmental control, to lose its independence especially the relations with the civil society. Further, at the same time, the local government demanded the Administration Bureau to carry on the name of “Wild Yak Team”, because the government took the “great influence of the ‘brand’ at home and abroad” would “help the bureau at work”². We can conclude from the official determination that the government aimed to compete with the civil society to dominate the powerful symbol of “Wild Yak Team” to mobilize public resources necessary for the problem solution. In other words, the local government denied the validity of social mobilization beyond political control, which basically threatened the efforts of NGOs and active journalists to frame public policies from bottom to top.

When the civil society got aware of the aggressiveness of local government which

¹ See: Interview with Liang Congjie in “To Tibetan antelope: what will you future be <*zang lingyang: ni de mingyun jiang hui shi shenme*>?”, *ChinaNet*, January 16, 2001. [http://www.china.com.cn/zhuanti2005/txt/2001-01/16/content_5017101.htm]

² Tang Yu, “It’s of great urgency to protect the chiru, Qinghai Provincial government will close the Kekexil Reserve <*baohu zang lingyang keburonghuan, Qinghai jiang jinfeng kekexili*>”, *China Youth Daily*, August 19, 1999.

made their independent campaign seem vulnerable, they had got to turn to the traditional approach which use to bring them success in Yunnan Monkey case but be tried to avoid in this antelope case: appealing to top-level political leader in Central Government through personal activists with formal identity in the system. Several days after the local government issued their decision, Liang Congjie, as a CPPCC member, with the co-sign of 17 journalists—most of them were serving crucial Party mouthpieces—wrote to Wen Jiabao, the vice Premier in charge of environmental issues and candidate for the next Premier at that time. In this letter, Liang tried his best to persuade the powerful leader that Wild Yak Team had been “the only police agency to regularly take antipoaching responsibility in Kekexili Reserve” during the past years, and its disband would be doomed to “give a handle to the poachers”. Basing on the description, Liang admitted that NGOs and mass media had tried to put public pressure on the local government, but failed, thus, he was forced to raise “an earnest, solemn appeal” to the vice Premier for a Central order to “maintain Wild Yak Team as a whole and further make sure their core function in the Kekexili Natural Reserve administration system”¹. The emotional letter somehow had drawn concern of the busy political leader. He transmitted the letter to Qinghai Provincial Government for an “appropriate handling”². The leader’s concern might have been effective, because, judged from the result, the order to disband Wild Yak Team hadn’t been carried out until 2001.

As discussed in the former chapters, some senior journalists and prestigious figures are privileged with the special channel to directly make the top leaders know certain problems they considered important, and it is always the last instrument for the civil society to influence the policy-making. Wen’s positive response to Liang and his alliances might have demonstrated a limited intervention in this issue, but it was rather a message of concern of the central authority than a certain compulsory policy. However, it still transferred a message of the civil society challenge the governmental political legitimacy.

¹ Liang Congjie and others, “The letter on the attention paid to the endangered Tibetan antelope crisis and the dilemma of the ‘West Work Committee (Wild Yak Team)’ of Zhiduo county in Qinghai province <guanyu guanzhu woguo binwei dongwu zang lingyang muqian suo mianlin de weiji, yiji Qinghai sheng zhiduo xian xibu gongzuo weiyuanhui (ye maoniu dui) kunjing de xin>,” publicized in August 18, 1999. [<http://www.qh.xinhuanet.com/old/qinghai/kkxl/zrzy4.htm>]

² Ibid.

2.2.4 Local Governmental Methods to Handle Media Resources and the Recession of Civil Society

The appealing to Central authority had brought hope for the civil society to undermine the political legitimacy of the local government—the social legitimacy of Wild Yak Team had moved the Vice Premier—but it also had teach the local government a lesson: pure political pressure and administrative approach against Wild Yak Team would only brought them into conflict with public opinion if they didn't try to frame their own social legitimacy; and, conflict with public opinion in the Party-state system meant to violate the mass-line, which would lead to intervention from higher political authority. The Yushu local government in remote Qinghai province then changed their action mode: they had temporarily withheld the direct political pressure, but turned to strengthen their public communication. From 1999, the local government began to transfer negative information of Wild Yak Team—for example, according to the local government, under the shortage of living funds, members of the team had used to receive bribes from personal poachers—to undermine the “hero” image, while arranging their recognized staff of Kekexili Natural Reserve to accept interviews from media mouthpieces to frame their own social legitimacy by propagating their “achievements” in anti-poaching, trying to undermine the “irreplaceable” status of Wild Yak Team¹. The combination of traditional administrative approaches and media communication policy imitated from the civil society had made the local government more advantageous in the conflict. But it might have been more significant to demonstrate a tendency in the mobilization mode of China's Party-state: as the pressure of a new-born civil society possibly made traditional administrative approaches to mobilize public resources malfunction, the government would be forced to be beyond tradition and communicate with and respect more the public opinion in a more moderate and negotiable way, or even follow mobilization approaches of the civil society, even though they would still suppress the independent civil society.

The aggressive policy change of the local government finally led to a head-on confrontation with the civil society. On 2000 June 18, a local newspaper under Qinghai

¹ Zeng, “Media Agenda Building and Public Expression in NGO.” p. 16.

Provincial ruling issued a speed dispatch announcing that an antipoaching group of the Kekexili Nature Reserve Administration was trapped in the no man zone of Kekexili, risking their lives, for the shortage of petrol and vehicle damage. Under a nationwide passion to Tibetan antelope protection at that time, this news was worthy of attention from mass media and considerable journalists were sent to Qinghai to cover the rescue operation. And, the local government took advantage of the chance to strengthen their own social legitimacy. Under the conduct of Yushu local government, the named “KeKexili Great Rescue Operation” lasted for six days—two days of search and rescue in Kekexili and four earlier days of waiting owing to “bad weather and insufficient material supply”¹—which had made this event remain a hot topic in the mass media for more than one week. During the operation, seven journalists from influential mouthpieces in Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu followed the rescue team into Kekexili to cover the whole process at local governmental invitation, like FON’s journalist members did in 1999 “Kekexili No. 1 Action”, but at this time, the media “hero” was changed from Wild Yak Team to the Natural Reserve Administration supported by the local government. Further, high-level local officials threw off their airs to positively become information source for mass media, and as a result, their names were given prominence in the following reports. By judging from the media reports, we may find that, like the reports to extol Wild Yak Team, most of the articles described a lot risk and tough conditions in Kekexili, to shape a brave and persistent image of the local antipoaching squad, but, the hero was not the Wild Yak Team but the Natural Reserve Administration. It was obvious that the original media strategy favorable for the Wild Yak Team was copied by their opponents to undermine their social legitimacy, which naturally irritated the resistance of the civil society.

Supporters of Wild Yak Team quickly indicated their suspect that the “incident” had just been forged by local government for news sensationalization. Sun Danping, a FON member and pioneer journalist to have long-term experiences of deep investigation in Kekexili and have just finished a series of tracing reports with Wild Yak Team in a patrol in April, firstly stood up to question the truth in a environmentalist website for Tibetan

¹ See: “‘KeKexili Great Rescue Operation’ is suspended to tomorrow <*kekexili jiuyuan da xingdong tui zhi mingri kaishi*>,” *News Morning*, June 22, 2000; and also see: “‘KeKexili Great Rescue Operation’ is postponed once again <*kekexili jiuyuan da xingdong zaici tuichi*>,” *News Morning*, June 23, 2000.

antelope protection. Sun quoted words of a journalist from Tianjin Cable Television Station who had entered Kekexili with the Wild Yak Team exactly from June 14 to 22 to raise several “doubtful points”¹. For example, firstly, on June 18, they met the Administration group, whose fuel reserve seemed redundant. Secondly, Wild Yak Team even drew a map for the Administration who were “not familiar with this area”, enough to prevent them from getting lost. And finally, according to the rich experiences of Wild Yak Team, the unusual dry weather in 2000 made roads in Kekexili much more convenient to pass, making it difficult to trap vehicles. The testimony not only challenged the Administration’s announcement that the group was trapped for an insufficiency of petrol, but also implied that the Administration members hadn’t entered Kekexili for patrol as usual as the Administration declared. But at this time their efforts were not directly suppressed by the local government but confronted by journalists cooperating with the Administration. For example, a most active journalist might have been Luo Xinzhong from *Shanghai Morning Post*, a large-circulation commercial newspaper published under the CCP Shanghai Committee’s Party paper², *Liberation Daily*³. He wrote several detailed reports including objective reports of the rescue operation and exclusive interviews with the main chiefs of the Administration, which were widely reshipped a first-hand materials by both the print media and the internet. Obviously the civil society felt very angry that the public attention originally mobilized by their hard work was to channel to the local government, who could be taken as their “opponents”. In a media interview, Liang Congjie just expressed the anger of activist to assert that the journalists backed up Natural Reserve Administration had been “bribed” by the local government, violating “human conscience and professional ethics”⁴.

Despite the critics and suspect from the civil society, however, the incident had made Kekexili Natural Reserve Administration known to the public, and become another media information source besides Wild Yak Team. And moreover, the Qinghai Provincial

¹ Sun Danping, “The journalists questioned the news of ‘the Kekexili official antipoaching team has been in danger’ <jizhi zhiyi ‘kekexili fan daolie duiwu yuxian’>,” *Beijing Youth Daily*, June 24, 2000.

² The *Beijing Youth Daily* was published under the Beijing CCP Committee’s Party paper, *Beijing Daily*.

³ Luo wrote 6 tracing reports recording the Administration’s rescue operation, and reprinted one article a local journalist following the trapped group recording his experiences.

⁴ See: Interview with Liang Congjie in “To Tibetan antelope: what will you future be <*zang lingyang: ni de mingyun jiang hui shi shenme?*>?”, *ChinaNet*, January 16, 2001. [http://www.china.com.cn/zhuanti2005/txt/2001-01/16/content_5017101.htm]

Government had taken substantial measures to intervene, to establish a new police agency to assist the Administration who was illegal to hold guns¹. Since the environmental activists used to recommend a plan of coordination between the Administration and Wild Yak Team that without being armed, the Administration could only set up checkpoints to conduct random sample inspection while the Wild Yak's Team as a police agency could fight poachers². The establishment of a new police agency undermined the value of the Team's existence, which signaled that Wild Yak Team was completely excluded from the political arrangement.

In the January of 2001, the local government formally disbanded the Wild Yak Team, but, it might have been surprised that the contradiction between the supporters of the Team and the local authority, having been made public for several times before, didn't seem to lead to any serious conflict. We may think that the decision was made so suddenly that even the most active activists couldn't have made response in time. Even until the end of 2000, supporters of Wild Yak Team were still passionately tracing their latest situation. China Environment News, ruled by the top environmental watchdog, SEPA, even published the Team leader's message in the 2001 new year, alleging that the Team would "continue their responsibilities"³.

Even though the enforcement of final governmental decision to disband Wild Yak Team also drew great media attention like before, the conflict had been alleviated and replaced by a delicate balance between governmental will and demands of the civil society. On one hand, although the local media under direct local governmental ruling didn't take the news, several influential Party mouthpieces located in Beijing and Shanghai—they included People's Daily under CCP Central Committee, *China Youth Daily*⁴; under China Communist Youth League (CCYL) Central Committee, Beijing Youth Daily under CCYL Beijing Committee, and *Liberation* under CCP Shanghai Committee—became the first to

¹ China News Agency Newsletter: "Qinghai Province cracked down on illegal poaching of Tibetan antelopes <Qinghai yanli daji feifa liesha zang lingyang huodong>," published on October 9, 2000.

² Xu Zhiqian, "Chiru's Guardian Angels Shedding Blood, Tears," China Internet Information Center, January 18, 2001. [<http://www.china.org.cn/english/2001/Jan/6643.htm>]

³ See: "Massages to the new century with the love to the earth <manhuai diqiu qing, jingyu xin shiji>," *China Environmental News*, January 1, 2000. Page 2.

⁴ China Youth Daily has been active in environmental journalism from early 1990s; it was the first among the comprehensive newspapers in China to start the special page for environmental protection in 1999. From 1998 until 2005, the rate of related reports has a 30 per cent increase annually on average. —the writer.

issue it from January 5. Among the most authoritative Party mouthpieces for leading CCP, although *China Youth Daily* and *Beijing Youth Daily* had been public supporters for the Wild Yak Team, *People's Daily* and *Liberation Daily* had rarely participated in the issue before, and even, as mentioned before, a commercial paper subordinate to *Liberation Daily* was a most active supporter of the local government. Despite of having played different roles in this issue, the authoritative Party mouthpieces, who always to transfer the orthodoxy and directive of certain issues of highest political authority, about at the same time issued reports similar in: neutrally transferring the governmental decision without any critics against the local government, and, giving a record of achievements of Wild Yak Team without undermining its antipoaching hero image¹. Under China's political convention, the common action of Party mouthpieces can be easily to be interpreted as the will of highest authority to determine the nature of and make an end to the controversy on the issue, although there hadn't been direct evidences to prove it. If be it, it might indicate that the social mobilization capability had been somehow recognized and even respected by the Central authority, but, it also agreed with the local government to strictly limit the capability subordinate to governmental needs.

On the other hand, through mainstream media channel, the civil society demonstrated a much more moderate and cooperative attitudes to accept the sad result. For example, when Liang Congjie accepted the interview with a journalist who he knew well from *China Youth Daily*, while considering it a great loss to disband the Team as “the sole armed antipoaching squad during the recent years”², he mentioned his “communication” with the main chiefs of the Natural Reserve Administration, and, said he just put hopes to their efforts. And further, Liang even indicated his compromise by sending a letter to Qinghai Provincial Government, in the name of his CPPCC member identity, to “thank the local governmental efforts to cultivate such an excellent antipoaching squad (Wild Yak Team)”³—it implied Liang's forced change to identify

¹ The difference is *People's Daily* and *Liberation Daily* took Kekexili Natural Reserve Administration for their direct information source, with *China Youth Daily* and *Beijing Youth Daily* taking green activists on the Wild Yak Team side. —writer.

² Wang Yao, “The Kekexili Wild Yak Team who have been fighting with poachers will be disbanded <*tong toulie fenzi douzheng de kekexili ye maoni dui jiang bei chexiao*>,” *China Youth Daily*, January 7, 2001.

³ Zhao Lin and Chang Nanxi, “The ten years of Liang Congjie and the ten years of Friends of Nature

Wild Yak Team as a governmental agency rather than a “public symbol” which he and his colleagues had worked hard to frame, hoping it to exchange with the governmental to accept the agency again—but “it was too late”¹ to obtain any concession from the local government².

However, the words of the most influential environmental activist might be interpreted as a last compromise rather than according to the will. Because in another interview by a more free internet media about the same time, Liang agreed that he couldn’t “trust the Administration at all” according to his “experience to communicate with the main chiefs”, especially couldn’t tolerate the chiefs to hire “morally corrupt journalists” to frame them as antipoaching heroes³. Apart from moderates like Liang, who were disappointed by the result and not to give up their distrust or even hostility against the local authority but also trying to reflect on the lessons from the premature actions they had taken beyond capability of the young civil society, some aggressive young activists just began to use alternative media and internet media — for example, www.Chiru.org — to express their support for the Team and the discontent with the local authority, but their voices had very little space in the mainstream media to have material effects⁴.

3. Analysis

This chapter, through early conservation activism of Chinese environmental NGOs, demonstrates – besides their initiatives of environmental priority and democratic ethics which have been intensively dug into – especially that how they are “selected” as social units to embed political mobilization: one point, environmental NGOs showed their

<liang congjie de shinian he ziran zhi you de shinian>,” South Weekend, June 10, 2004.

¹ Ibid.

² And also see: Katherine Morton, “Transnational advocacy at the grassroots: benefits and risks of international cooperation”, in Ho and Edmons, ed., *China’s Embedded Activism*, pp. 214.

³ See: Interview with Liang Congjie in “To Tibetan antelope: what will you future be <zang lingyang: ni de mingyun jiang hui shi shenme>?”, *ChinaNet*, January 16, 2001.

[http://www.china.com.cn/zhuanti2005/txt/2001-01/16/content_5017101.htm]

⁴ The currently new-born internet in China had been utilized as intellectuals to send public expressions, however, the state was also trying to use the platform. See details in Zhou Yongming, *Historicizing Online Politics: Telegraphy, the Internet, and Political Participation in China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006. pp. 155-180. Under the political pressure, green NGOs had become one of the first groups to take use of the internet. And, their expressions online had also drawn the attention of the mainstream media. For example, at the same time the www.chiru.com was established, China Youth Daily quickly publicized the news in an investigative report about the volunteers of the antelope protection. See: “Tibetan antelopes have got a brother in Beijing <zang ling you ge beijing xiongdi>,” *China Youth Daily*, March 8, 2001. Page 4.

capability of activism through mass media, with their good interaction with politics; the other point, the final failure witnessed the unacceptable coexistence of governmental authority and NGO subjectivity while separate initiatives were contradicted, which makes cooperation with and utilization of institutional resources a more practically reasonable choice for NGOs in future.

3.1 NGOs' Capability: Mass Media and "Public Opinion" to Influence Policymaking

The activism on Tibetan Antelope has been commonly judged as the first symbolic issue of China's green civil society, but its great influence seemed quite disproportionate with the actually poor resources of the very few environmental NGOs at the very early stage, with the limited members of mainly intellectuals and university students, the poor investment, and the loose organization which led to the activities mainly depending on the capability of several core members. However, the NGO activists had taken the best use of resources they could obtain from the unfavorable political ecology: the political identity of certain members and the mass media. But, it may be more important that, at the exact time when civil society found it the effective way to have immediate influence on policymaking rather than promoting achievements in the social community, the civil society would also found itself falling into the dependence on the political authority. Because, not only the core members' capability depended on their approaches to influence political agendas, but also the mass media was part of the political system — mass media organizations and journalists also has the similar hierarchy to the bureaucracy, which can be interpreted as that a journalist with higher hierarchy can naturally have the supervision power on the lower-level officials — according to the tradition of communist system. Just as the antelope protection issue indicated, when the civil society attempted to construct their subjectivity to deviate the governmental targets, it would be faced with the risk to lose their support from the institution or even become suppressed.

At the early stage, both the activities of Yang Xin and FON had been greatly encouraged by the government. The Tibetan antelope protection had been the set agendas of the nation with very clear legal assurance, and as the consumption market of

the antelope wool was in the foreign countries with the poachers coming from the social margins, there had been no institutional obstruction to the national protection policy except the shortage of financial foundation. The Qinghai Provincial Government had been pursued the establishment of a national reserve for Tibetan antelope to get the national investment, but before it, they should have built up a provincial reserve on the poor local financial capability. Under that condition, the brave suggestion of Yang Xin to raise money from the society seemed to be worthy of trying for the governor, which also didn't seem to have the political risk. And, by judging from the related activities in Beijing, both by individual activists like Yang Xin and organizations like FON, we can see the entry of SEPA, the embarrassed environmental watchdog which had been just upgraded into the semi ministry. SEPA was one of the two most active central departments in the story — the other one was the Ministry of Forestry, and as the department had exactly the direct responsibility to fight with poachers, it played the much greater role in this issue, which also indicated the weak capability of SEPA's overall planning on EP — and offered some help to the civil activism, such as presenting at Yang's endowment drives, awarding the Wild Yak Team, and other similar coordination with NGOs. Although only in this case, the performance of SEPA hadn't seemed so prominent, the new-born department demonstrated its initiative for new opportunities of better influence beyond its institutional weakness, and the willingness would developed into actions in the near future, which will be discussed in next chapters.

And, as the “favorable supplement” to the governmental governance, the civil society chose the approach of making news to the public, which had oriented the public donations. Yang Xin himself had the background of journalism and the network in the circle of journalists, and, at the very early stage, he had once been the report focus. Tibetan antelope as part of Yang's colorful exploratory experiences had become the attractive stories to attract the public. However, the entry of FON made the mass media the most prominent mechanism. The several pioneers, who were also FON key members, should have been thanked for their brave steps into the no-man Kekexili. If there hadn't been the promoting dynamics from the NGO, it would be difficult to image the market-driven mass media organization to take the risk. However, after the sensational

effects of the pioneering reports, the Tibetan antelope protection then demonstrated its news value to journalists throughout the country. And, the reporting climax came along with Zhaba Doje's visit in Beijing, during which the initiative use of media resources by environmental NGOs could be seen clear enough. The NGOs' actions—arranging meeting with mass media at home and abroad, editing and providing materials to the mass media, and arranging lectures in universities—had guaranteed the media issue framing according to the purposes of the civil society. Thus, as the result, admitted by Liang Congjie, the Team developed into a symbol <*pin pai*> of the social activism, with most of the domestic and international donations being made clear by the donators to contribute to the Team¹.

3.2 More Practically Reasonable Choice in Future?

The peaceful interaction between the civil society and the political power had been lasted until the establishment of Kekexili National Reserve, which meant the local government got the formal channel to share the national investment to complete the responsibility of antelope protection, and meanwhile, meant the institutionalization of the protection regimes in this area. And further, the public attention had been oriented to problem. Thus, for the government, the civil society had already finished its role as the “favorable supplement” to the governance and the integrated resources for the protection would be up to the governmental distribution. But such governmental attitudes would not be accepted by the civil society, whether for their hard work offered for this career or for the general politically liberalist inclination of the core members, as mentioned in the first section of this chapter.

The construction of subjectivity had been carried through the social activism to support the Wild Yak Team, regardless of whether consciously or unconsciously. The contradiction between the civil society and the government—to speak accurately, the local Yushu Prefectural Government who had been backed by the Qinghai Provincial Government—had been made prominent at the point of who, the Wild Yak Team or the Reserve Administration, would be entitled to be the “only” legal anti-poaching agency in

¹ See: Interview with Liang Congjie in “To Tibetan antelope: what will you future be <zang lingyang: ni de mingyun jiang hui shi shenme>?”, in www.china.com.cn, January 16, 2001. [http://www.china.com.cn/zhuanti2005/txt/2001-01/16/content_5017101.htm]

the Kekexili National Reserve. On one hand, for the local government, that was its exclusive power over personnel and it followed the bureaucratic rules, written or unwritten to make the decision. But on the other hand, the civil society—to speak accurately, the active environmental NGOs and journalists in this issue—wouldn't easily abandon the Wild Yak Team, not only according to the emotional friendship, but also for the Team's value to be “symbol” of China's civil activism. Although the Team had always emphasized their political identity and denied to be described by the mass media as a social organization, and their cooperation with the environmental NGOs and mass media had been exactly for the political legitimacy, but the real voice was just, possibly consciously, ignored by the mass media¹. The higher praise of the Wild Yak Team and the conscious emphasis on framing its “difference with the ineffective governmental agencies”², lightened the anti-poaching heroes, but at the same time, objectively depreciate the government, ranging from the prefectural to the provincial government, even to the central agencies like the Ministry of Forestry³. The image of “the only anti-poaching squad” had also oriented the audience to ignore the sacrifices and hard work of other people under the direction of governmental management, such as that in the Kekexili No.1 action.

In other words, the substance of the conflict surrounding the Wild Yak Team was whether the top-bottom bureaucratic rules or the public opinion would be the decisive factor to distribute the mobilized social resources. That's why we can see the local government finally intervened in the media issue framing to compete with the supporters of the Wild Yak Team. And, the conflict just implied the contradiction between the modernization of China's society according to the economic growth and the hysteretic political reform. Thus, there had been rarely no possibility of compromise between the fossil local officials and the idealistic and somehow hotheaded young civil society. Under the unacceptable coexistence of governmental authority and NGO subjectivity at that

¹ Li Jing and Zhu Wenqin, “The elimination of Wild Yak Team: the report on its living and death of an environmental organization <*ye maoniui dui de xiaoshi: yige huanbao zuzhi de shengsi baogao*>,” *Sanlian Life Weekly* Online, published on September 3, 2000. See the reshipment on South News Group online. [<http://www.southcn.com/news/china/china04/kkxl/tears/local/200304220799.htm>]

² see: “Who will protect Kekexili”. And the conscious framing of the conflicting image had been a common choice of mass media in shaping the hero.

³ Zeng, “Media Agenda Building and Public Expression in NGO,” p. 17.

time, the limited capability of the civil society had been demonstrated along with the disband process of the Wild Yak Team. Even though, the supporters of the Wild Yak Team had attempted to repeat their success in the Yunnan Monkey case, writing the petition to the top official for the central pressure on the local government, they only had the negative response. Because it's easy to find that in this case, there hadn't been any obvious local disobedience to the center. At the last moment of the Team, Liang finally got aware of that both NGOs and mass media had forgotten to "praise the parents before praise their children"¹. Thus, Liang did his last effort to write a letter to the Qinghai Provincial People's Consultative Committee, in the name of the member of the national-level CPPCC, to "thank the local authority for cultivating the heroic anti-poaching squad"². But it was already "too late"³. For the respectable old man, it even might have been the vigorous support of the civil society had inspired the "counterattack" of the local government to lead to the tragic ending⁴.

However, the sadness caused by the unsuccessful attempt for the subjectivity construction could be partly relieved by the success on concentrating national and public concern on the Tibetan antelope protection. Some participating activists and journalists believed that the antelope had got the status in China's wildlife protection only secondary to the Panda⁵. Another well-known evidence is that the special passage for the antelope had been planned into the Qinghai-Tibet railway construction and drawn the extensive media attention. Another well-known evidence is that the special passage for the antelope had been planned into the Qinghai-Tibet railway construction and drawn the extensive media attention. And moreover, there is an especially important outcome of this activism that, from 2002, national power has formally intervened in antelope protection volunteer recruitment, which indicates the conscious attachment of importance of social resource integration and assure the "orientation" in favor of Party-state orthodoxy.

¹ Zhao and Chang, "The ten years of Liang Congjie and the ten years of Friends of Nature."

² Zhao and Chang, "The ten years of Liang Congjie and the ten years of Friends of Nature."

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. And, similar statements can be also seen in: The open letter of Liang Congjie to a young environmentalist on the lessons of the civil antelope protection, [<http://www.green-river.org/hujia.htm>]; and Katherine Morton, "Transnational advocacy at the grassroots: benefits and risks of international cooperation", in Ho and Edmons, ed., *China's Embedded Activism*, pp. 214.

⁵ For example, Liang Congjie and Xi Zhihong used expressed this opinion while interviewed by the TV program, "The 60-minute Magazine", produced by the Xinhua News Agency.

Chapter Four
Environmental Department Initiatives and Normalized Channel to link
Politics and Society:
The Case of Yuanmingyuan Anti-seepage Project

Tibetan antelope protection witnessed the early attempt of environmental NGOs to play the similar part of their counterparts in developed democracies and some certain nations in transition. The pursuit of subjectivity as an independent factor for policymaking cannot be taken as successful, but the experiences indicate their special advantages to combine with institutional resources to open the political access. And, correspondingly, policy entrepreneurs also noticed opportunities, especially, after reformists took leading position in the central environmental department (SEPA). During the first five years of 21st century, reformists had begun their battle to apply legal leverages and suppress aggressive construction plans designed by profit-oriented entrepreneurs, to speak specifically, the coalition of departments in certain industries and large state-owned enterprises. Thus, activists of environmental NGOs and mass media, who already experienced common actions in wild life conservation, was integrated under SEPA initiatives while SEPA's positive investment of institutional resources promoted them to be much less vulnerable to profit-oriented entrepreneurs, so as to outline the embedded mobilization.

This chapter pays special attention to an influential controversy on water resource management in urban Beijing, where the water supply has been always rigorous¹. This case, well-known as “Yuanmingyuan Anti-seepage Membrane Project Issue <*Yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng shijian*>” or “Yuanmingyuan (Membrane) Issue” in short, is generally taken as the symbolic cooperation between the environmental department and NGOs with other “social actors” against profit-oriented environmental damage. However, there is an important point without being paid enough attention that the rapid actions might not be simply the “public response” to a wrongdoing. In fact, the

¹ Chen Shaojun, “Water Saving and Seepage Reduction Projects: Experience from the Yuanmingyuan Lake-bed Seepage Control Project <*fangshen gongcheng he jieshui: you yuanmingyuan hudi fangshen gongcheng xiang dao de*>,” in *China Environment and Development Review*, Vol.3, pp. 249-254.

small-scale project just launched in 2003, and was almost completed in 2005 when it suddenly incurred great attention. And in addition, although all media discourses took its “negative effects on environment” as “obviously serious” in 2005, media coverage with regard to the project before it had never doubted the environmental influence. Then, if we link the phenomenon to the 2005 “Environmental Protection Storm <*huanbao fengbao*>” led by SEPA with utilization of mass media assistance, and, if we pay more attention to the SEPA efforts in the Yuanmingyuan issue to promote the process, we’ll find it not a paradox phenomenon but demonstrating how institutional resources had been initiatively embedded into the seemingly social mobilization.

1. The Case Happening At the Climax of the 2005 “EP Storm”

In early 2005, China's environmental watchdog, the State Environment Protection Administration (SEPA) launched a big action which was called by mass media as “environmental protection storm”. It indicated the attitudes of active declaration of War against the strong profit-oriented departments, and further the different tactics of SEPA beyond the formal institutions to mobilize the social resources. On 18th January 2005, SEPA ordered 30 large industrial projects—twenty-six of them were energy projects—located in 13 provinces and valued at more than RMB 118 billion yuan (about US\$13.7 billion) to halt for the reason that they had failed to complete required legal procedures of environmental impact assessment (EIA), according to the national Environmental Impact Assessment Law. Although the law provisions, which ordered that a project would not be approved until it had undergone an environmental appraisal, came into effect in September 2003, it was the first time that SEPA has used the granted power to halt projects. And, on 27 January, SEPA launched a second wave by announcing a list of 46 thermal power plants. According to the SEPA, all of them were not equipped of needed de- sulphurization mechanisms, posing a threat to the environment. Those plants were among the 137 de-sulphurisation projects planned in the country's acid rain and sulphur dioxide control regions covering 109 square kilometers with 39 per cent of the nation's total population.

Given SEPA’s weakness, as mentioned in the second chapter, the extensive and

clearly pointed “storm” had brought big surprise. Not only all the energy projects were designed to satisfy China’s rapid economic growth, which means economic priority, and major polluters, but also the listed banned projects included ultra-large projects backed by powerful profit-oriented departments much stronger than the environmental watchdog. For example, it included three hydro-electric power stations of China Three Gorges Project Corporation (CTGPC). The Ministry-level state-owned enterprises was established to operate the well-know Three Gorgeous Dam, the world’s largest hydro-electricity project, who was on a par with SEPA in the political hierarchy. Thus, the dynamics of “environmental protection storm” was naturally interpreted by observers as the result of a 'turf war' between SEPA and other profit-oriented departments. To put it in another way, SEPA is engaged in a “power expansion” (kuo quan)¹.

It’s unusual for SEPA to positively make the order public—he at the first time put it on website and held news conference—because traditional Chinese bureaucracy preferred to negotiate among conflicting departments with little information disclosure, at least until they had achieved the balance. SEPA’s unusual actions drew attention of mass media and environmental activists, and it might be taken as a good attempt to for the weak environmental department to involve the “third actor”, the public, into its conflict with profit-orientation, for example the CTGPC, who ignored the formal order for halting its projects of SEPA even despite of the top environmental watchdog’s threat to take legal actions. But the public attention hadn’t maintained long, because, National Development and Reform Commission, the central development planning body ruling above SEPA and CTGPC, quickly intervened in their conflict, said to be under the direct directive of the Premier. Two weeks from the SEPA order, CTGPC surrendered under an unexposed bureaucratic process, with consideration of national planning, interest balancing, bureaucratic shielding and leadership coercion. That means, although the conflict was resolved to in favor of SEPA’s target, either public participation or law’s authority was limited, and, SEPA’s institutional weak position in the system didn’t change. Thus, SEPA and mass media, activists with concern on environmental management and system

¹ Jian Yang, “Understanding China’s ‘environmental protection storm’: Jian Yang comments on a recent burst of activity by China’s environmental protection agency,” *New Zealand International Review*, Vol. 30, 2005. [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_6991/is_3_30/ai_n28274641/]

reform needed more to demonstrate the demand and to expand the power, institutionally. As SEPA's deputy director, Pan Yue, who was favored by Chinese liberalists as a maverick thinker or even exaggerated to be "China's Yeltsin", declared, "We must sharpen our teeth. We shall never be rubber stamps. We must take concrete actions" ¹. When the environmental "storm" and public passion hadn't subsided, in 2005 March, a construction project in Beijing's Yuanmingyuan Park ignited the passion again. And at this time, SEPA, environmental activists and mass media made a strong alliance, promoting an inspiring media wave, and, through the influence of "public opinion", traditional bureaucratic policy making was excluded, SEPA successfully set a sample for its vow of reform: law authority, public participation, and further, democracy².

The Yuanmingyuan Park (Old Summer Palace) is located in the northeast part of Beijing, a masterpiece of royal gardens built from 1709 onwards and burned down by the British and French aggressor troops in 1860, and known as a famous scenic spot. The controversial project was launched from 2004, which was a multi-dollar environmental renovation scheme, including a water-saving plan to cover its 133-hectare lake bed with impermeable membrane, for preventing the lake seepage. And, media wave started in 2005 March, when some experts expressed their question on the ecological influence of the antiseepage membrane plan. Thus, the public issue was generally known as "Yuanmingyuan antiseepage issue" (Yuanmingyuan fangshen shijian), or "Yuanmingyuan issue". During the climax of media wave, the key words of "yuanmingyuan fangshen" (yuanmingyuan antiseepage) could lead to 81300 and 84800 reports separately on Yahoo! and Google searching³. In Beijing, the capital with both most complicated bureaucratic networks and most well-educated public, under the active role of SEPA, environmental activists (especially the organized NGO activists) and mass media, the focus of issue framing was promoted from discussion on whether the project had negative environmental effects to how to enforce legal procedurals and introduce public participation mechanisms to reform China's environmental governance.

¹ "Understanding China's 'environmental protection storm',"

² See for example: Yuhong Zhao, "Public Participation in China's EIA Regime: Rhetoric or Reality?" *J Environmental Law*, 22(1), 2010. pp. 89-123.

³ See: Zhang Haixin, "Environmental NGO and Media Supervision <huanjing fei zhengfu zuzhi yu xinwen yulun jiandu>," the Master Paper, Hebei University, publicized on July 8, 2006.

2. Entry of the Antiseepage Project into Media Coverage

2.1. The Bureaucratic Scheme Making with the Absence of Environmental Agencies

This controversial water conserve plan is part of the general scheme of “Comprehensive Project on Yuanmingyuan Park Environmental Renovation”. According to the Park administration, due to rainless period and lake bed seepage, the administration had suffered from financial problems to maintain enough water to keep scenic sight and plants alive. Irrigationists provided them with the method of impermeable membrane, which was judged by economic governmental sectors as a mature technology to conserve water¹, and, also being used in some other parks of Beijing. The total spending of the membrane plan was reported by mass media to be 30 million RMB (US\$3.6 million) at first, and for a time during the report climax, reported as 150 million RMB (US\$18 million).

The scheme-making progress had taken a long time, from 2003 to 2005, with the participation of Beijing Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage, Beijing Water Authority, Beijing Municipal Government and Haidian District Government. According to the formal files brought forth by the Park administration later, there seemed to follow the policy-making custom in urban governance of China—experts’ review and bureaucrats’ executive decision without public participation—environmental sector was also absent in this progress. Rather than saying the environmental sector was excluded, it’s better to say it was ignored. From 2003 to 2004, only several media reports had mentioned the scheme, either on pure introduction to the necessity² or kind of solicitude

¹ The anti-seepage materials utilized in the membrane is listed in the “ordinary materials” according to the “Policy Guidelines for the Techniques of Saving Water in China <zhongguo jieshui jishu zhengce dagang>,” published by National Development and Reform Committee, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Water Resource, Ministry of Construction, and Ministry of Agriculture, on April 21, 2005. The Article 2.2.3.

² Similar reports covering the project in 2003 can question the media statement in 2004 that “the public had been ignorant of the project before”. See for example: “*Fu* lake in Yuanmingyuan was changed into arable land <yuanmingyuan “fuhai” bian gedt>,” December 15. Also as reference to: Beijing Youth Daily, “Low water level brought death like flies to the fish in Yuanmingyuan Park, Beijing <beijing: dishuiwei shide yuanmingyuan yu dapi siwang>,” *Beijing Youth Daily*, March 3rd, 2003. *Beijing Stardaily*, “Tracing water shortage in Yuanmingyuan: water from Wanquan River was channeled in <yuanmingyuan fuhai ganhe zhuzong: Yuanmingyuan yinlai wanquanhe shui>,” March 19th, 2003. *Beijing Daily*, “Yuanmingyuan is troubled by water shortage every year during the seven month long rainless period <meinian kushuiqi qige yue zuoyou, shuijing qeshui kunrao yuanmingyuan>,” July 26th, 2003.

to relic protection¹.

2.2 Early Media Exposure according to “Accident”

In later March, 2005, when the Park administration nearly finished their work of covering lake bed, a tourist named Zhang Zhengchun “incidentally” discovered the project and soon wrote to several main stream newspapers—*Beijing News*, *China Youth* and *People’s Daily*—under the name of “an ecologist and visiting professor of Lanzhou University” in March 22nd. In his letter, he asserted that “covering the lake bed with impermeable membrane will cut off its relations with the underground water system”, was “an ecological disaster” and “should be stopped immediately”². After receiving positive response, Zhang further mailed an article, “Save Yuanmingyuan Park” to more journalists in 26th, and, at the same day, got touch with Li Hao, the leader of an NGO named “Earth View”, by whose help Zhang got more contact with the social circle of journalists from well-known local and national newspapers. In March 28th, only 6 days after Zhang’s letter, the first related media report was published on *People’s Daily*, the official paper of Chinese Communist Party. This article, named “Membrane on Yuanmingyuan’s lake bed: protection or damage”, led audience’s focus to environmental protection, which also keynoted the following media boom. As Zhang himself described, “It’s really like a bomb! That happened in Yuanmingyuan is reported throughout the country.”³ In latter reports, several experts echoed Zhang’s view, and the possible “disaster” caused by the membrane was further claimed to be “preventing the water from seeping into the ground, disturbing Beijing’s underground water system”.

Soon after the first report, NGO activists in Beijing energetically participated in. From March 28th, Liang Congjie, who had played important role in the case of Tibetan antelope with his well-known organization, “Friends of Nature” (FON), spoke to *People’s Daily*, *South Weekend* and Chinese Central Television, claiming to support the view of Zhang Zhengchun, asking to stop the nearly finished project. However, factually, as early as in

¹ For example, the *Beijing News* had reported the opposition of experts on historical relics to the lining of the lake-bed. See: *Beijing News*, “Four sight sports of Yuanmingyuan are kept as it to be (yuanmingyuan si da jingdian huifu canmao),” September 17th, 2004.

² *People’s Daily*, “Is lining Yuanmingyuan’s lakebed with antiseepage membrane protection or damage (yuanmingyuan di zhengzai pushe fangshenmo baohu haishi pouhui)?” March 28th, 2005.

³ *Shanghai Morning Post*, “The first one to quest antiseepage project just stood out (zhiyi fangshen gongcheng diyiren xianshen),” April 13th, 2005.

2004, Liang, as a veteran historian, had questioned Yuanmingyuan Park's renovation scheme from the respect of historical relic protection, without being sensitive to possible ecological damage¹. That may tell us, it was exactly the media exposure to lead people to link the "environmental renovation project" with ecological damage.

2.3 Media Framing to Link the Project with Ecological Damage

Generally, the media's issue framing during those days was mainly consisted of two parts. Firstly, the membrane project was an ecological disaster, and, this conclusion was made by "experts' agreement". By checking the media reports, we can easily find assertions like "lake and vegetation going dead", "whole ecological system being damaged" (*People's Daily*)², "this method (of membrane) has already been rejected by main stream ecology" (*South Weekend*)³, or "ecological system can take care of itself so that there is no need to prevent seepage" (Beijing News)⁴. And further, some experts described the lake water of the Park as "water of life for Beijing", like "for Beijing, the ecological system of Yuanmingyuan is playing a role in water conservation, weather regulation, biodiversity maintenance, groundwater purification and supplement, and so on" (*China Environmental News*)⁵, "water seepage in Yuanmingyuan is necessary to the whole Beijing's water system and shouldn't be prevented" (*Beijing News*)⁶, or "membrane would damage the Yuanmingyuan's ecological chains developed during hundreds of years, and also the whole ecological conditions of North Beijing" (*Beijing Evening News*)⁷. Such discourses clearly impressed common audience with a negative image of the membrane project. And moreover, while these assertions were all claimed by "experts", it became much more trustable. As Niklas Luhmann, in his book "Ecological Communication", pointed, communication in environmental issue always became

¹ See: "Yuanmingyuan Historical Relics is possibly not able to be protected anymore (yuanmingyuan yizhi gongyuan keneng baobuzhu le)," *People's Daily*, July 20th, 2004. "Yuanmingyuan cannot be destroyed for the third time (yuanmingyuan buneng zai hui disanci le)," *Beijing News*, October 20th, 2004.

² "Is lining Yuanmingyuan's lakebed with antiseepage membrane protection or damage?"

³ "What has been buried in Yuanmingyuan <yuanmingyuab maixia le shenme?>" *South Weekend*, April 1, 2005.

⁴ Liu Jianhong, "The Lake-bed lining to save water in Yuanmingyuan has been questioned <yuanmingyuan hudi pu fangshen mo jieshui zao zhiyi>," *Beijing News*, March 29, 2005.

⁵ Zhang Zhengchun, "Yuanmingyuan marsh can benefit the capital <yuanmingyuan shidi ke zaofu shoudu>," *China Environmental News*, April 21, 2005.

⁶ Liu, "The Lake-bed lining to save water in Yuanmingyuan has been questioned,"

⁷ Sun Haidong, "Specialists questioned the lake-bed anti-seepage measures <zhuanjia zhiyi hudi fangshen>," *Beijing Evening*, March 31, 2005.

complicated because of profession limitation and multiple interests, and, in this situation, expert identity, which easily to be trusted, could make communication less difficult¹. A 2005 social investigation in China indicated that 58% of interviewees hoped “experts” to use their professional knowledge to influence public policies, and 38% took “experts” as “mouthpiece of public interest”². Also, another investigation in 2006 showed that 78.6% of urban interviewees and 80.8% of rural ones ranked “professors” as the first to trust³. Thus, we may find that the issue-framing of “ecological disaster” claimed by “experts” had left audience very few spaces to make their own consideration.

Secondly, compared with critics expressed by commonly trustable experts, reported explanations to support the project were mostly expressed by park officials and experts who were “possibly share the same interest with officials (*Beijing News, Jinghua Times*)⁴. Media’s discourses clearly framed the contradictions between two views as rooted in the conflict between two social status, with experts to criticize the project on behalf of public interest and officials caring their own interest. Literally, the word of “*zhen feng xiang du*” (be diametrically opposed to) was frequently used between “experts and the public” and “officials” (i. g. *People’s Daily*⁵, *China Youth*⁶, *Beijing News*⁷). Like mentioned before, the symbol of “experts” made the critics more persuasive, with the symbol of “officials” made the opposition. There is a direct proof for this tactic. On one side, Zhang zhengchun, who at first exposed the project to mass media, might be the most well-known “expert” in this cast. His identity of expert was supported by the title of “ecologist” and “guest professor of Lanzhou University”. But, in 2005, the university

¹ Niklas Luhmann, *Ecological Communication*, translated by John Bednarz, Jr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

² *China Youth Daily*, A poll indicates people takes the professor, teacher and judge as the most trustable characters (diaocha xianshi gongzhong dui jiaoshou, laoshi, faguan xinrendu pai qiansan), October 30th, 2006.

³ Data from: Horizonkey Investigation Company website. Source: http://www.horizonkey.com/showart.asp?art_id=605&cat_id=6

⁴ Similar opinions to doubt the independence of the specialists to agree with the project can be seen, for example, in: *Beijing News* Editorial, “What kind of experts can determine Yuanmingyuan’s future <*shenmeyang de zhuanjia dui yuanmingyuan you jue ding quan*>?”, *Beijing News*, April 22, 2005; and Bi Lei, “Who dose Yuanmingyuan belong to <*yuanmingyuan shi shui de*>,” *Jinghua Times*, April 4, 2005.

⁵ Zhao, “Is lining Yuanmingyua’s lakebed with antiseepage membrane protection or damage?”

⁶ “The public cannot carry out their right to control public assets: the property predicament in national parks <*zhuren wuquan zuozhu: guojia jingqu de chanquan kunju*>,” *China Youth Daily*, March 31, 2005.

⁷ “The final safety of Yuanmingyuan depends on the management system reform <*gaige guanli tizhi yuanmingyuan cai neng huode zuizhong anquan*>,” *Beijing News*, March 29, 2005.

located in Gansu province officially declared it to be untrue on a local newspaper, and, demanded Zhang “stop doing anything under this title”¹. However, the university’s statement was ignored by most main stream media and the title was kept being used. On the other side, when the director of Yuanmingyuan Park tried to defend the project, he was introduced as “having experiences of grass-roots cadre”. There was no report to mention that the official, graduated from Beijing Forestry University, factually had a professional background of ecology.

In general, media boom during the first several days made the impression of “environmental disaster”, which had preliminarily drew public attention. However, the first days only demonstrated the action of personal experts and journalists, but the strong issue-framing of “ecological disaster” could then link environmental NGOs and environmental watchdog “naturally” into the issue. In other words, it the issue framing made a base for the actual “mobilization”, which led to unified actions by “government” and “civil society”.

3. Intervention of SEPA and the Official Orientation of mass media

3.1 Expanding media Scope and the Obstruction from Government

Based on the judgment of “ecological disaster”, it was logically for the mass media to ascertain where the responsibility lay. At the first time, which means, before the active participation of SPEA, the mass media generally focused on criticizing of individual officials from the Yuanmingyuan Park administration. It was surmised that officials from Yuanmingyuan Park administration might have tried to keep enough water in lake just to make tourists enjoy boating, thus, the administration could make more money (i. g. *People’s Daily*², *Beijing News*³⁴, *China Youth*⁵, *Beijing Youth*⁶, *Nanfang Daily*^A, *South*

¹ “May Zhang Zhengchun not be the professor of Lanzhou University <*zhang zhenchun bushi lanzhou daxue kezuo jiaoshou*>?” *Guangzhou Daily*, April 4, 2005.

² Zhao, “Is lining Yuanmingyua’s lakebed with antiseepage membrane protection or damage?”

³ liu, “The Lake-bed lining to save water in Yuanmingyuan has been questioned,”

⁴ Editorial, “The city kidney cannot be divided from the land mother <*chengshi zhi shen yu dadi zhi mu buke fen*>,” *Beijing News*, March 30, 2005.

⁵ Media reporting claimed that the project contained “corruption” since that the building contractor was doubted to be unilaterally decided by water resource department without public bidding. See: “No public bidding in Yuanmingyuan project <*yuanmingyuan zhengzhi wei jingguo zhao tou biao*>?” *Beijing News*, April 13, 2005; and “Analysis of interests behind anti-seepage project <*fangshen gongcheng beihou de liyi fenxi*>,” *China Youth Daily*, April 4, 2005.

⁶ Huang Jianhua, “Participants list for Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage hearing is decided today

Weekend). While mass media emphasized the “stupid”, “irresponsible”, and “greedy” images of Park officials, they seemed to have been discussing it as an independent event.

However, there were still some sensitive journalists having tried to dig deeper, reporting this issue as a more typical case to discuss the environmental governance system. The most important question of them was, whether this project had gone through enough legal procedures. For example, *People's Daily* firstly raised the doubt on March 30th that the Park administration might have abused their administrative power to disobey the law. This report, under the title of “Yuanmingyuan is not a pleasure ground: the membrane project is illegal”³, firstly quoted relevant provisions of 2003 “Law of the People's Republic of China on the Environmental Impact Assessment” (EIA law)⁴, which had been depended on by SEPA in the “environmental protection storm”, and 2002 “Cultural Relics Law” to doubt that the membrane project hadn't undergone its legal procedure without being assessed by environmental and cultural relic protection watchdog⁵. But, to journalists' disappointment, their faming of illegal procedures hadn't been echoed by relevant governmental sectors at the first time. On March 30th, Beijing Cultural Relics Bureau replied to interviewer from *Beijing Evening News* that, “as membrane project is part of Yuanmingyuan's whole environment management scheme, it's hard to make clear whether it is a ‘construction project’”⁶. And, just on the next day, reporter of *Beijing Youth* also got a similar answer from Beijing Environmental

<yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng tingzheng hui jinri queding canhui renyuan mingdan>,” *Beijing Youth Daily*, April 12, 2005.

¹ Zhang Tiankan, “Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage and reflection on urban ecology <yuanmingyuan fangshen yu chengshi shengtai fansi>,” *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, March 30, 2005.

² liu, “What has been buried in Yuanmingyuan,”

³ Liu Qiong, Lai Renqiong, Liu Yi and Zhao Yongxin, “Yuanmingyuan is not pleasure ground, anti-seepage project is not legal <yuanmingyuan bushi youlechang, fangshen gongcheng wu hefaxing>,” *People's Daily*, March 30, 2005.

⁴ “*Law of the People's Republic of China on the Environmental Impact Assessment*”, (Adopted October 28, 2002. Effective September 1, 2003). Source: www.chinaenvironmentallaw.com

⁵ See: Liu Q, Lai, Liu Y and Zhao, “Yuanmingyuan is not pleasure ground, anti-seepage project is not legal,” This report claimed the Yuanmingyuan Administration “flagrantly violated” the “law of historic relics amended in 2002”, but didn't point exactly which article was violated. I think, here, the “law of historic relics” was the most possible to mean the “Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics” amended for the second time in 2002, specifically, Article 18 to formulate that “while carrying out capital construction or agricultural production, any unit or individual that discovers cultural relics shall immediately report the discoveries to the local department for cultural administration. In case of important discoveries, the local department for cultural administration must submit timely reports for handling by the departments for cultural administration at higher level”.

⁶ “Environmental department intervenes into Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project <huanbao bumen jieru yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng>,” *Beijing Evening*, March 30, 2005.

protection Bureau¹.

Why the two bureaus couldn't give the mass media positive response to make a ruling on the membrane project? One reason might be that the provisions of the laws were somehow not clear in defining "construction project". At that time, the EIA Law only stipulated, in its Article 9, the "specific scope of programs for which environmental impact appraisals shall be made according to the provisions of Articles 7 and 8 of the present Law shall be prescribed by the administrative department under the State Council in charge of environmental protection jointly with other relevant departments of the State Council and be submitted to the State Council for ratification". And in addition, the EIA law still demanded that the "names of the construction projects subject to classified management of appraisal of environmental impacts shall be determined and published by the administrative department of the State Council in charge of environmental protection" (Chapter 3, Article 16). In fact, the formal directory of "construction project" hadn't been completed until 2005. Also, relevant cultural relics protection laws hadn't had a definite directory of "construction project" until 2008². Thus, it was hard for the watchdogs to conclude whether the Yuanmingyuan Park administration had disobeyed the laws. In other words, there was no authority, legal or governmental, to back up the judgment of mass media. But, on the contrary, the Park administration was attempting to persuade the public of the project validity, and moreover, they were supported by Haidian District Government, one of the original policy makers. On March 31st, the Park administration issued a formal statement to reaffirm the membrane project was a part of "**environmental protection scheme**", thus, there was no need of **environmental impact assessment**³. And, on the same day, the Haidian District Government held a symposium, inviting irrigationists and ecologists. According to the invited experts' argument, the membrane project to keep

¹ "Haidian district government, Beijing, responds to questions on Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project and invites specialists for reexamination <Beijing haidian zhengfu huiying yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng, qing zhuanjia zai lunzheng>, *Beijing Youth Daily*, March 31, 2005.

² However, with reference to related legal provisions, "Measures for Administration of Qualification for Construction of Cultural Relics Protection Projects" coming into force in May 2003 has no related formulation of coerce EIA process on relics-related projects. And there were no related formulations until 2008, when the "Provisional Regulations on Approving Relics Protection Projects" came into force.

³ "Haidian district government, Beijing, responds to questions on Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project and invites specialists for reexamination

water was a reaction to the general degradation of Beijing's ecological system, in other words, the Yuanmingyuan, only trying to rescue itself, was not an injurer but a sufferer¹.

Even though the strong defense of the Park administration and original policy maker were not widely reported, there seemed that the mass media couldn't have reached enough resources to support their critics. The most important was that when the departments resorted to by the mass media hesitated to cooperate, the media framing of "illegal procedures" would have become vulnerable. As an active environmental journalist wrote, unreconciledly, "under the active public participation and powerful media supervision, despite of there are verified evidences of ecological disaster and illegal construction project, the related departments still give no positive reaction" ². Obviously, the mass media, their cooperating experts and NGO activists had got tired of their weak position in the debate with yuanmingyuan Park administration and the original policy makers in the government—especially the water resource sector and Haidian District Government—and, it was natural for the mass media to demand an effective ruling power to end the project whose "main part" had been "completed"³. And, echoing the voices, SEPA began to play its important role.

3.2 SEPA Intervention according to Elite Network

On March 31st, when expanding media scope was obstructed, SEPA formally stood up to demonstrate its ruling on the project, by issuing an official notice to Yuanmingyuan Park administration, charging them to stop the membrane project. The notice was the first official declaration to quote article 31 of EIA Law to deny the validity of Yuanmingyuan's membrane project, and further, the notice called for a public hearing to "end the debate" ⁴, which was also based on the EIA Law. While officially halting the project, SEPA also publicized a press release to the mass media. This document was consisted of three parts. Firstly, SEPA expressed affirmative reply to the mass media's question of the legal procedures. It said, the project had disobeyed the related provisions

¹ Xia Mingqun, "Yuanmingyuan is not injurer on environmental destroy <yuanmingyuan bushi pohuai huanjing de shihai zhe>," *Jinghua News*, April 1, 2005.

² Liu Jianqiang, "From one hundred days of fogyism to reform in Yuanmingyuan <yuanmingyuan shijian cong bairi weijiu dao bairi weixin>," *South Weekend*, July 21, 2005.

³ "Yuanmingyuan lake bed project questioned," *China Daily*, March 30th, 2005, page 3.

⁴ SEPA: Notice on Ordering Yuanmingyuan Comprehensive Improvement Project to be Halted <guanyu zeling yuanmingyuan huanjing zonghe zhengzhi gongcheng tizhi jianshe de tongzhi>," SEPA letter No. 101. [http://www.zhb.gov.cn/info/gw/huanhan/200504/t20050401_65763.htm]

of “large-scale construction project costing more than 50 million yuan (about 6 million US dollars) in any state-level important cultural relic sites should submit environmental impact assessment report to the SEPA for examination and endorsement”¹. Secondly, as regards to whether the membrane project was “construction project” applying to the EIA Law, SEPA also gave an affirmative response that “with large numbers of machines, severe change to the ecology and land surface, and a huge sum of investment...it must be a ‘construction’”². Based on the affirmation, this document concluded, “it’s not only a breach of legal procedures, but also a much more serious case”³. Thirdly, SEPA called for a public hearing held on the project, to introduce public participation into the resolution.

To speak precisely, there were not enough details in the EIA law to support the conclusion, which means, it was the political identity of SEPA, a state-level ruling department for environmental protection, to make its conclusion persuasive. But it was exactly what the mass media and environmental activists needed, effective support from political authority. By tracing the actions of mass media before SEPA’s intervention, journalists had pinned their hopes on the watchdogs of municipal level, but the negative attitudes of the municipal sectors had brought the mass media into an embarrassment: they had early announced their justice of presenting public opinion before obtaining enough material evidences to support their accusation, while the Yuanmingyuan Park administration had steadfast governmental supporters, who had participated in the original policy making of the project. In other words, before the SEPA’s intervention, the efforts of mass media with some experts and environmental activists to boycott the project and to emphasize public participation put themselves on a non-negotiable opposition against the governmental power. As one of Beijing’s largest-circulation newspapers, *Beijing News*, wrote, “the **local** departments who have direct ruling on Yuamingyuan Park Administration refused to reflecting and performing their duty to

¹ Liu Jianhong, “Yuanmingyuan lake-bed anti-seepage project was ordered to halt yesterday while nearing accomplishment <*yuanmingyuan hudi fangshen gongcheng jiben wangong, zuo bei jiaoting*>,” *Beijing News*, April 1, 2005.

² Editorial, “What’ll be the drops scene of Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project <*yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng gai ruhe shouchang*>,” *Beijing News*, April 2, 2005.

³ Liu, “Yuanmingyuan lake-bed anti-seepage project was ordered to halt yesterday while nearing accomplishment ,” But there was no further explanation to the conclusion of “much more serious case”.

punish the illegal project”¹, thus, appealing to a more authoritative watchdog had become a logical choice for the mass media.

On March 31st, in a media event, an environmental activist and freelancer, Xi Zhilong—this name was also mentioned in the Tibetan Antelope issue, and he had been a photographer of the Chinese Central Television—found deputy director Pan Yue of SEPA, who was one of the very few officials invited to the event mainly consisted of journalists and scholars². Xi, as a private friend, presented Pan the front page report on *South Weekend*, titled “What dangers have been hidden in Yuanmingyuan (yuanmingyuan maixia le shenme)?” with photos by Xi himself. While indicating there was “ecological disaster” happening in the historical relic site, Xi asked Pan for “effective measures” by SEPA. Much different from the municipal sectors, Pan on the spot gave a positive reaction. While finishing reading, Pan “immediately” promised Xi that the SEPA would “certainly give a satisfactory answer to the public”, and to be more affirmative, he made a written comment on the *South Weekend* brought by Xi. As mentioned in early cases, in China’s political practice, the written comment of political leaders or other high-level officials, even if in informal situations, can be taken as of the same effects as official decisions through formal procedures. According to *South Weekend*’s later report, the written comment showed Pan had already made his decision to stop the membrane project “at once” while he had just finished reading the report brought by Xi³. Then, only hours later, mass media received the media release from SEPA to publicize the formal decision on the membrane project and Yuanmingyuan Park administration, as mentioned in details. Judged from the dramatic meeting between Pan and Xi, and also, as SEPA admitted later, in a media interview several days after the meeting, the top watchdog had been totally ignorant of the project before the media exposure, and moreover, the quick measures taken by SEPA were completely based on the information provided by mass

¹ Editorial, “Yuanmingyuan Issue: it shouldn’t to let environmental department to fight a lone battle <yuanmingyuan shijian: bu gai rang huanbao bumen gujun fen zhan>,” *Beijing News*, April 26, 2005.

² That was the symposium for the 20th anniversary of *Southwind Window Magazine*, an influential reformist publication. Pan Yue was invited for his former working experiences as a journalist and the close relationships with reporting professionals also for his “reformist attitudes of development and transition”. See: “Record on the symposium for the 20th anniversary of *Southwind Window Magazine*,” *Sohu web*. [<http://news.sohu.com/20050331/n224957941.shtml>]

³ Liu Jianqiang, “To pursue solution to Yuanmingyuan deadlock after 40 days of dry lake <hupo ganhe sishi tian hou qiujie yuanmingyuan jiangju>,” *South Weekend*, May 12, 2005.

media¹.

3.3 Motivations of SEAP Intervention: Application of EIA Law

While discussing the success of mass media in achieving an authoritative governmental sector to support their issue-framing and to strengthen the material pressure on Yuanmingyuan Park administration, we are also confronted with two questions: a) why the deputy director of SEPA could quickly make his decision just by basing on a single media report, without further consultation or analysis? b) The very short time, between Pan's meeting with Xi and the SEPA's media release and official notice to the Yuanmingyuan Park administration, indicated that it was impossible for SEPA to communicate with any original policy makers of the project or any other governmental sectors. In other words, SEPA didn't hope the handling of the case to be limited in the official channels. Then, what made the top environmental watchdog decide to abandon the bureaucratic tradition in this case? Answers to these two questions may be oriented to a conclusion that SEPA's focus was far beyond the Yuanmingyuan case itself.

As mentioned in the second chapters, environmental sector had been powerless compared with economic profit-directed departments. That may explain why it was naturally absent in the original policy making of the Yuamingyuan project. However, also as mentioned before, its influence had been promoted from late 1990s, under efforts of both environmentalists and political leaders who had hoped to change China's development mode. A most crucial policy to upgrade its real power was the legislative actions. In September 1st, 2003, China's first "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Environmental Impact Assessment" (EIA law) came into force. According to this law, as in the general provisions, it tried to make the EIA a responsibility of any construction entity:

To work out any of the programs...of the present Law or to build any project within the territory of the People's Republic of China or within other seas subject

¹ "Pan Yue, Deputy General of SEPA, claims ignorance of the project construction <guojia huanbao zongju fu juzhang pan yue: gongcheng donggong women bu zhiqing>," Beijing News, April 14, 2005.

to the jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China, appraisals shall be conducted about the environmental impacts according to the present Law.

(Chapter 1, Article 4)

And also, the environmental departments had been privileged to strengthen the enforcement power. As stipulated in the legal liabilities, the environmental department had been authorized the privileges of administrative penalty on violators, as:

Where any construction entity fails to submit its environmental impact appraisal documents of the construction project concerned or fails to submit environmental impact documents for examination and approval anew or for inspection anew according to the provisions of Article 24 of the present Law and unlawfully starts the construction, it shall be ordered by the administrative department of environmental protection that is entitled to examine and approve the environmental impact appraisal documents to stop the construction and go through the relevant procedures within a prescribed time period. If it fails to go through the relevant procedures within the time period, it may be fined not less than 50,000 yuan but not more than 200,000 yuan, and the person in-charge and other personnel of the construction entity who are held to be directly responsible shall be given an administrative punishment.

Where any construction entity unlawfully starts construction without obtaining approval for its environmental impact appraisal documents or without obtaining new approval of the original examination and approval department, it shall be ordered by the administrative department of environmental protection that is entitled to examine and approve the environmental impact appraisal documents to stop construction, and may be fined not less than 50,000 yuan but not more than 200,000 yuan, and the person in-charge and other personnel of the construction entity who are held to be directly responsible shall be given an administrative punishment.

Any construction entity of marine construction projects who commits any of the unlawful acts as described in the preceding two paragraphs shall be punished

according to the Law of the People's Republic of China on Protecting the Marine Environment.

(Chapter 4, Article 31)

These stipulations, if strictly enforced, obviously could become an effective weapon for environmentalists to withstand the profit orientation. But, since even today's China still cannot to be taken as a country "ruled by law", the EIA Law inevitably hadn't been treated seriously until the Yuanmingyuan project being exposed by mass media. During the nearly one and a half years after the EIA Law had come into force, according to SEPA, there had been none of construction projects positively undergoing the EIA procedures dominated by environmental departments. As we mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, SEPA launched "environmental protection storm" to demonstrate the law authority, but the efforts was counteracted by traditional bureaucratic shielding. Thus, naturally, the SEPA found the Yuanmingyuan issue a big chance to promote the law provisions. As a SEPA official pointed to mass media, "Yuanmingyuan Park is not the only one to ignore the environmental impact assessment, and we can see through this issue that...there is serious defect in governance system¹". In other words, SEPA had the very dynamics to intervene in the Yuanmingyuan issue, not only linking the issue with environmental protection, but also subverting the whole bureaucratic policy making customs to set an example to strengthen the authority of the EIA Law and the environmental watchdog also.

Besides emphasizing the authority of law, there was another action of SEPA to deal with the "serious defect in governance system" through Yuanmingyuan issue, that was, to create a public participation model of EIA. In SEPA's March 31st notice to Yuanmingyuan Park administration office, in addition to the order to stop the project, SEPA called for a public hearing on resolution of the membrane project and the whole environmental restoration scheme, and the time was set on April 13th. The public hearing is a process of law generally applied in systems of Anglo-Saxon countries, which means a proceeding before court or other decision-making body or office. In the course of litigation, hearings

¹ "Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project drew attention: who does Yuanmingyuan belong to <yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng yinfa guanzhu: yuanmingyuan jiuqing shi shui de>," *Beijing Evening*, April 4, 2005.

are conducted as oral arguments in support of motions, whether to resolve the case without further trial on a motion to dismiss or for summary judgment, or to decide discrete issues of law, such as the admissibility of evidence, that will determine how the trial proceeds. Limited evidence and testimony may also be presented in hearings to supplement the legal arguments. China's public hearing system seems to be transplanted from the United States, where, from the "due process revolution"¹ in 1960s, the public hearing has been taken as a necessary proceeding when many administrative decisions were once made much less formally. In this case, the Public Hearing is a process in which interested parties and any other persons who may be affected by the result have the opportunity to make submissions, ask questions or register objections to a development application or other matter under the law, and, a Public Hearing body is comprised of elected officials or citizen members appointed by a special council². This proceeding was drawn into the Chinese EIA Law for the purpose below:

In case a program may cause unfavorable environmental impacts or directly involve the environmental interests of the general public, the organ that works out the special programs shall, prior to submitting the draft of the programs for examination and approval, seek the opinions of the relevant entities, experts and the general public about the draft of the report about the environmental impacts by holding demonstration meetings or hearings or by any other means, except it is provided by the state that it shall be kept confidential.

The drafting organ shall take the opinions of the relevant entities, experts and the general public about the draft report of environmental impacts into careful consideration, and shall attach a remark whether the opinions are adopted or refused to the report of environmental impacts to be submitted for examination and approval.

(Chapter 2, Article 11)

¹ Due process revolution is a development of the due process clause of American legal system, whose main focus was on the application of that to political judgments by officials about how to run a school or to administer a government agency.

² Reference: Lorch Robert, *Democratic Process and Administrative Law*, Wayne State University Press, 1980.

Obviously, judged from Article 11, holding a public hearing could be in favor of SEPA at least in three aspects: a) it helped to give prominence to the EIA law. b) A transparent and open proceeding could help minimize the intervention of other governmental sectors, especially local district or municipal governments who had direct ruling on Yuanmingyuan Park administration and participated in the original policy making of the project, and avoid a direct conflict inside the government, where SEPA was not in a strong position. c) By encouraging the public participation, the alliance of SEPA, mass media and environmental activists could be integrated through the proceeding, achieving a maximization of utility to withstand the original policy makers. That's why the public hearing was also generally welcomed by the mass media. For example, *China Youth Daily*, the party paper of Chinese Communist Youth League and a good seller in Beijing, praised SEPA and the deputy director highly of recording "first" for establishing new public participation model¹. *South Weekend*, a national best seller famous for its sharp political and social criticism, took the intervention of SEPA was a "successful start to create the 'harmonious society' by the joint efforts of the government and public" ². And, from then on, the focus of the mass media had transferred to report on the public hearing—details will be discussed later—as *People's Daily*, the CCP party paper said, the mass media and the whole issue came into "the second stage" ³. What was it to be?

4. Environmental Departments, NGOs and Mass Media United: against Original Policy Makers

When we analyzed the mutual interests of mass media and environmental departments and their alliance in this case, we shouldn't ignore the active participation of environmental NGOs. As in the research rhetoric, environmental NGOs are commonly permitted as a symbol of the "public", thus, an empirical study of the new "political mobilization" of China cannot be without the absence of environmental NGOs. However,

¹ "Yuanmingyuan, a number of events created the first hundred days exposure to environmental assessment," *China Youth Daily*, July 12th, 2005.

² Liu, "From one hundred days of fogyism to reform in Yuanmingyuan,"

³ Zhao Yongxin, "Yuanmingyuan Issue Promoted Public Participation <yuanmingyuan shijian tuidong gongzhong canyu>," in Liang Congjie and Yang Dongping (ed.), *FON Green Paper Book 2005: Crisis and Breakout*, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2006. p. 52.

following the trace of the Yuanmingyuan case, we may find that environmental NGOs hadn't become the starter. At the first stage—as the mass media defined, before SEPA formally halted the project and called for a public hearing—although there had been several leaders of environmental NGOs, such as Liang Congjie from FON, receiving media interview to support the expert Zhang Zhengchun, who had firstly exposed the membrane project to mass media as “ecological disaster”, and there had been persons of the dual identity of journalist and NGO member, such as Xi Zhinong who had got touch with SEPA deputy director, playing active role, all of them had just acted in personal identity. The entity of “NGO” hadn't participated until April 1st, 2005, when FON hosted a symposium on “the ecological condition and protection of the historic Yuanmingyuan Park”.

Before discussing the significance of this symposium, we need say firstly that it was not the first time environmental NGOs tried to participate in the policy-making of urban governance, and it exactly was the experiences influencing their behavioral pattern in the Yuanmingyuan issue. In 1998, Beijing Municipal Government made a plan to cover the riverbed of Kunyu River, a main waterway of Beijing's old river networks, with cement. As a part of a diversion canal construction, the target of the plan was obviously to prevent seepage. The plan had then been questioned by some experts and environmental activists. Like in the Yuanmingyuan issue the criticism had been quickly upgraded from purely of its expected negative effects on environment, to its policy-making procedure without environmental impact assessment and enough public participation. During the next two year, environmental NGOs, accompanied by some media reporters, had continuously attempted to discuss with the Municipal Government for “the right to know and participate”¹. But there had come no negotiation. In 2001, two most influential environmental NGOs in Beijing, Friends of Nature (FON) and Green Earth Village, held a symposium and invited the former deputy mayor of Beijing Municipal Government. But, at last, the face-to-face discuss had broken down with ill feelings, due to a wide divergence of opinion—no compromise between radical green ideas of NGOs and profit-directed tradition of the government. And moreover, the deputy mayor had

¹ liu, “What has been buried in Yuanmingyuan,”

“prevented mass media from reporting anything on the meeting”. That had disappointed NGOs seriously because “no media report had made the meeting’s most serious failure (in expanding the influence of NGOs’ voice)”¹. We can judge from this process that, what the environmental NGOs had demanded in Kunyu River issue had been from two aspects: a) to change the original policy-making through public pressure; b) under the failure of a), at least to speak loud of their voices by making news events. The failure in Kunyu River issue might have made NGOs and mass media more sensitive to the Yuanmingyuan Park membrane project, because we can find several reports recalling the Kunyu issue to compare with the Yuanmingyuan project, both by interviews and NGO interviewees. And, the real negative effects of Kunyu River’s cement cover had been taken as a proof of the expected “ecological disaster” by Yuanmingyuan’s plastic cover², although, strictly, the two projects weren’t based on the same kind of technique.

On April 1st, FON, internet media www.bokee.com and tech.sina.com.cn co-sponsored a symposium on “the ecological condition and protection of the historic Yuanmingyuan Park”. University professors, scientists, engineers, lawyers, and officials of the Park were invited to attend the symposium. Liang Congjie, president of FON, announced in his opening remarks that this symposium was held for two aims. Firstly, it provide a platform to listen to the opinions of specialists to find out whether covering the lake bed with plastic membrane to prevent water seeping would be effective or harmful for the preservation of the ecology of the Park. And Secondly, it would discuss whether “the public had the right to the information concerning such a large-scale project” going on “a famous historic site and embodies a deep meaning for the whole country”, and whether the public had “the right to voice their opinions”³. In other words, this symposium was about green priority and public participation. By now, it seemed that the behavior of FON had been nearly the same with that in the Kunyu River issue, which was, voicing through a media event to expand the influence and to integrate the opinion of objectors. But there

¹ Tang Jianguang, “Chinese NGO says: I object <zhongguo NGO: wo fandui>!” *News Weekly*, No. 24, 2004, pp. 30-34.

² Media and NGOs inclined to judge the two projects as similar, and used the proved negative effects of Kunyu River lining project to make reasonable the critics of Yuanmingyuan project, despite of that techniques applying in the two projects were factually different. See for example: liu, “What has been buried in Yuanmingyuan,”; and Editorial, “The city kidney cannot be divided from the land mother,”

³ Friends of Nature: *Newsletter*, Autumn 2005. Source: <http://www.fon.org.cn/content.php?aid=8755>

was a very crucial difference that the sponsors invited some special guests, officials of the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA). Why was it important? By tracing the Kunyu River issue, a lesson NGOs learnt might be that their radical ideas of environmental protection wouldn't have been easily accepted, and if they had wanted to play a part in urban governance, they couldn't have completely put themselves on the opposition of the powerful governmental ruling. Thus, they needed an ally in the governmental sector to balance the power, who should have both taken green targets as priority, and been seeking more effective participation in policy-making of governance. That was why the SEPA had become the exact one to combine with for environmental NGOs, because they both had got tired of being peripheralized in policy making of city governance. Although, according to FON, they had also sent invitations to Haidian District Government, Forestry and Historic Relics sectors, none of them had given positive response, like SEPA. That means, in the combination, the environmental NGO was not the only active one. And moreover, this active combination between environmental departments and environmental NGOs, a metaphor of "harmonious relations between the government and public" was publicized through mass media attended. According to FON and Zhang Zhengchun, this event attracted 20 mainstream media organizations, including People's Daily, Beijing News, China News Week, several channels of Chinese Central Television, China Radio International and Television Broadcasting Works from Hongkong¹. Different from that in Kunyu River issue, voices of this symposium was "presented through mass media", which taken by FON as "a most important achievement" ². We may judge the event as an open ceremony to demonstrate the alliance of environmental department, environmental NGOs and mass media. In this ceremony, their mutual interests were systematically expressed. And further, opinions of expressed in this symposium made the basis of media issue-framing at the "second stage".

¹ See: Friends of Nature, "Follow-up Articles on Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project," [<http://www.fon.org.cn/content.php?aid=302>]; and, Zhang Zhengchun, *Diary on Yuanmingyuan Issue*, unpublished documents collected from personal channel.

² Yi Yimin, "One case of public participation in environmentally influential issues: NGO is the active power to promote public participation – judged from the event process of the hearing on Yuanmingyuan membrane issue <*huanjing yingxiang zhong de gongzhong canyu anli zhiyi: minjian zuzhi shi tuidong gongzhong canyu de jiji lilang – yuanmingyuan pumo shijian tingzhenghui de qianqian houhou*>," *Friends of Nature Newsletter*, No.3, 2005. [<http://www.fon.org.cn/content.php?aid=6630>]

Although this symposium was announce to present voices from both supporters of the membrane project and objectors, there was a clear inclination among the attendants: firstly, as mentioned before, SEPA officials were the only representatives of ruling departments; secondly, headed by Zhang Zhengchun, all the attending experts were from fields of ecology, city planning, environmental education and humanistic research, which means they generally took an environmental priority, without scientists on seepage preventing, and, most of them had a close relations with FON as member or cooperator and obtained information of the membrane project from media critics or retails by FON; and, thirdly, all the attending “citizens” were FON members¹. Thus, it’s not strange that all the expressions leant to one side. According to FON, it focused on five points, listed below²:

- a) Covering the lakes in the Park with plastic membrane might block the natural recycling of the water bodies, thus causing the deterioration of water quality;*
- b) The project might decrease the biodiversity in the Park’s wetlands, directly affecting water plants and fish in the lakes and indirectly the birds in the Park.*
- c) While it is true that Yuanmingyuan is short of water, the whole city of Beijing is suffering from a severe shortage of water. Therefore, any solution to water shortage should take the whole situation of Beijing into consideration. Tackling the water problem of Yuanmingyuan in isolation would not be appropriate.*
- d) Such a large-scale project should go through proper legal procedures. Before the start of the project, an environmental impact assessment report should be submitted to the State Environmental Protection Agency, which will then review the report and make a ruling. Yet, the project started without any legal procedures. Therefore, the project should halt immediately while an environmental impact assessment is being conducted.*

¹ See the list of main participants and the record of speeches in “Record of Yuanmingyuan Ecology and Historical Relics Protection Symposium (held by Friends of Nature, Green Earth Village and Blog.com online),” [<http://tech.sina.com.cn/d/2005-04-01/1433568907.shtml>]

² Friends of Nature: *Newsletter*, Autumn 2005.

e) A public hearing should be held on the project, and public participation in policy-making should be emphasized.

These five points reflected three aspects of considerations for the three most active actors in the Yuanmingyuan issue: at first, to reaffirm the mass media's issue-framing of "ecological disaster"; then, to echo SEPA's judgment of "illegal procedures" and the order to hold a public hearing, which respected the authority of SEPA; and, at last, on the status of the environmental NGOs to represent the "public opinion", to emphasize the "right to know" and more public participation in urban governance. Therefore, under the alliance, the focus of the mass media's issue-framing had been transferred from technical discussions on "ecological disaster" to more common topics. At the so-called "second stage", mass media had begun to make it clear that the political and social concerns, such as the public's right to know "the environmental policy making procedures" (*Jinghua Times*, April 2), "the defects of present policy-making systems and procedures reflected by the issue" (*Beijing News*, April 2), or "the interest relations of policy makers hidden behind the membrane project" (*China Youth Daily*, April 4), were the very reason why the mass media cared about the project.

5. Public hearing: Orientation for Symbolic Meaning rather than Substantive Meaning

5.1 Target of the Public hearing: SEPA's Role of Law defender

At the "second stage", the common interest made mass media, environmental NGOs and SEPA united together to commonly counteract with original policymakers and try to reverse the project, in order to set the sample for similar policymaking process in future. For this common target and making valuable news, SEPA, depending on the formal administrative power, ordered the project to halt, and facilitated a public hearing – there had been no example of public hearing in environmental realm – to open political access to the allies.

Public hearing system, a modern democratic proceeding, has been formally drawn into Chinese legal system since middle 1990s, and it had been used to assure guarantee the reasonableness of administration, mainly limited among the bureaucratic system and

corporation juridical persons. For example, according to the “Administrative Punishment Law” came in power in 1996, before “making an administrative punishment decision for suspending production and business operations, revoking certificates or business licences, imposing relatively large fines or imposing other administrative punishments, administrative organs shall notify the parties concerned of their right to a public hearing”¹. From then on, this proceeding had become gradually improved, and taken as an approach to a more democratic and open policy making. For example, according to the “Administrative Permission Law of the People’s Republic of China” adopted by the National People’s Congress in August, 2003, the administrative department “shall make known to the general public, and hold hearings on, the matters for the granting of administrative permission which, according to the provisions of laws, regulations or rules, need hearing, or other matters of vital importance involving public interests for the granting of administrative permission which the administrative department believes need hearing”². And, for environmental protection, after the EIA law had drawn in the public hearing proceeding, SEPA released “Interim Measures for Hearing the Administrative License in Respect of Environmental Protection” in June, 2004, to improve the “scientificity, impartiality, reasonableness and democracy”³ in respect of environmental protection. By judging from these provisions, we may conclude the public hearing proceeding in China has been designed to achieve a scientific and reasonable decision making in administration, based on hearing multiple opinions from different parties. In other words, its effects have been expected on promoting both substantive and procedural justice, with the former being the target and the latter being the approach.

Even though, from middle 1990s to early 2000s, the public hearing had grown into a mature system in China, with detailed legal assurances, and it also had been put into practices in administration, like the price hearing, until the Yuanmingyuan issue in 2005,

¹ “Administrative Punishment Law of People’s Republic of China,” Article 42.
[<http://www.lehmanlaw.com/resource-centre/laws-and-regulations/administration/administrative-punishment-law-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-1996.html>]

² “Administrative Permission Law of the People’s Republic of China”, Article 46.
[http://www.gov.cn/english/laws/2005-09/07/content_29926.htm]

³ SEPA : “Interim Measures for Hearing the Administrative License in Respect of Environmental Protection,” Article 1.
[<http://www.lawinfochina.com/NetLaw/display.aspx?db=law&sen=rLdDdW4drhdDdWhdrhdGdW4d/DdvdWnd9DdFdWfrddyWud9hdGdWed/DdTdWud/ddTdWud9Dd+&Id=3608&>]

it hadn't been practiced in respect of environmental protection. Thus, the substantive effects on policymaking were hard to be awaited. According to an investigation taken by Chinese Central Television's news program publicized on April 13th, 2005, only 9% of the informants agreed that a public hearing could play important role in improving democracy of policy-making. On the contrary, 64% of those doubted its actual effects, and, 27% took it as "partly" effective¹.

As Pan Yue, the deputy director of SEPA, announced openly, the public hearing was expected to effect in four aspects of: a) the implementation of the concepts of 'scientific development' and 'harmonious society' initiated by the Central authority; b) the implementation of related environmental regulations, including EIA Law and "Interim Measures for Hearing the Administrative License"; c) the promotion of public participation mode; d) the promotion of democracy in environmental decision making². We can see in the announcement that there was no word exactly on the Yuanmingyuan issue itself. All the four aspects were pointed to the implementation of procedural justice. On the contrary, the substantive result of the Yuanmingyuan membrane project was ignored, because, according to Pan Yue in another membrane interview, the membrane project itself was not more than "an insignificant work with a trivial investment and a simple controversy on whether lining lakebed or not", which didn't worth a public hearing hosted by the top environmental watchdog, thus, as he added, the "only" significance of the public hearing was to "firstly give the public a chance to experience a lesson of how to participate in such a open procedure in environmental policy making"³. In other words, a scientific and reasonable alternative scheme to the membrane project was not considered with priority in SEPA's Yuanmingyuan agenda. What SEPA hoped was to use its enforceability to set an example, demonstrating their equal legal status in policy-making with the profit-directed departments⁴, and, even, further expanding the

¹ See : The Column of "Oriental Time Space <*dongfang shikong*>," by Central Television, April 13, 2005. [<http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2005-04-13/20066377604.shtml>]

² Wang Jing, "Pan Yue: we must listen more to opinions of specialists and the public, not to easily decide a project <panyue: duo ting zhuanjia gongzhong de yijian, buneng pai naodai ding xiangmu>," *People's Daily Online*, [<http://env.people.com.cn/GB/1072/3317155.html>]

³ "SEPA deputy general Pan Yue: I valued more of Yuanmingyuan hearing <*huanbao zongju fu juzhang pan yue: wo geng zaihu yuanmingyuan tingzhenghui*>," *Legal Daily*, September 24, 2007.

⁴ See for example: "Pan Yue of SEPA: dealing with environmental violation will not be dependent on opinion influence <*huanbao zongju pan yue: chuli huanjing weifa bu shou yulun yingxiang*>," Beijing

application sphere of EIA from pure natural environmental impact assessment to social human environment¹.

5.2 SEPA's Agenda-setting of the Hearing and Passive Resistance of Original Policy Makers

While SEPA's had exerted itself to arrange the public hearing, the original policy makers of the Yuanmingyuan project chose to give conservative response. As mentioned before, the original policy makers include the Yuanmingyuan Park administration office, its direct ruling, Haidian District Government, and Beijing Municipal Government, with Water Resource Bureau and Historical Relic Bureau of Beijing City. On April 1st, Haidian District Government, as the most direct ruling upon Yuanming Park administration office, was forced accept SEPA's administrative order to halt the membrane project formally, but it still insisted that they agreed on the Park's self-defense² that a) the membrane project should not have been judged as a construction project; b) the scheme of the project had been based on careful appraisal; c) the project as countermeasures for dealing with water shortage of Yuanmingyuan Park shouldn't have been suspended; d) anti-seepage measures wouldn't have negative impact on ecological environment. Also on April 1st, Beijing Municipal Historical Relic Bureau formally reacted to SEPA and the mass media. Besides agreeing with the Park's self-defense, it identified the implementation of plastic membrane as "world-widely applied techniques also accepted in the field of archeology"³. In other words, the Bureau denied the negative impact on historical relics of Yuanmingyuan Park reported by mass media. However, neither Haidian District Government nor Historical Relic Bureau was ready to clash with SEPA. On April 13th, the two low-level administrative sectors sent representatives to the public hearing at the demand of SEPA, but they chose to keep silence⁴. Different from them, the

News, June 1, 2005; and Huang Yiyin, "Pan Yue and his environmental revolution <*pan yue yu ta de huanbao geming*>," *Economic Observation*, April 17, 2005.

¹ "Citizens can apply for participation in Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project hearing held on next Thursday <*yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng xia zhousan tingzheng, gongmin ke shenqing canyu*>," *Beijing News*, April 7, 2005.

² "Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project restarted <*yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng zaici kaigong*>," *Beijing News*, April 2, 2005.

³ Wang Qing, "Beijing municipal bureau of historical relics argues that Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project hasn't damaged relics <Beijing shi wenwu ju chen yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng wei pohuai wenwu>," *Jinghua Times*, April 2, 2005.

⁴ See: Gou Xiaofeng, "EIA becomes a hot potato, the end of Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage becomes a suspense <*huanbao pinggu cheng tangshou shanyu, yuanmingyuan fangshen shouchang cheng*>,"

water resource sector even kept from openly expressing anything¹. And, Beijing Municipal Government, the only one among the original policy makers having a similar administrative level with SEPA, only held a press conference, in which, the Municipal Government expressed their critics of the mass media reporting on Yuanmingyuan issue as “not objective and comprehensive enough”, implying their dissatisfaction with SEPA’s intervention. But, this press conference was held on May 24th, more than one month after the public hearing, thus, it also avoided a direct clash between the two high-level administrative sectors². Then, under the passive resistance by the original policy makers, SEPA dominated the organizational process and agenda-setting of the public hearing.

On one hand, the organizational process assured the dominance of SEPA. On one hand, on SEPA’s time table, there was only one week for participants to prepare: SEPA publicized details on how to apply for how to participate on April 6th; the application procedure started on 7th; the list of those selected was publicized on 12th, one day before the day the public hearing was held. That means, the procedure left scanty time for participants to investigate and collect information, thus, very few participants couldn’t raise substantive evidences to support their views, except those objectors against the project from the very first time. As Chinese Central Television noticed, most of the participants had brought more “an earnest hope to change the situation (of absence of public participation in policy making)” rather than adequate evidences³.

On the other hand, the selection of participants was also managed by SEPA. Among the more than 200 applicants through phone, internet and fax—according to media reporting, one third of them were specialists on ecology and historical relics, one third

xuannian,” *Economic Reference*, May 17, 2005; and Liu Jianhong, “Specialists will be organized again to reexamine Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project <*yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng jiang zuzhi zhuanjia zaici lunzheng*>,” *Beijing News*, April 14, 2005.

¹ In another symposium held on April 20 to invite 11 specialists on water resources and ecology, the participants demonstrated their agreement with the project as reasonable, which consciously pointed against the conclusion of the public hearing held by SEPA. The symposium was held jointly by China Water Resource and Hydropower Press and Tom.com online. However, in comparison with the public hearing, the symposium and its opinion drew very little attention. See: Fan Yinghua, “Thorny issue raise on Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage that some specialists petitioned to restore the project <*yuanmingyuan fangshen zaiqi bolan, zhuanjia yaoqiu hui fu fangshen gongcheng*>,” *Huaxia Times*, April 21, 2005.

² See details in Liao Weihua and Shi Weijia, “Beijing Municipal Government held conference today in response to Yuanmingyuan Issue and claimed media reporting as not existing objectively <*Beijing jin kaihui huiying yuanmingyuan shijian, chen meiti baogao bu keguan*>,” *Beijing News*, May 24, 2005.

³ See : The Column of “Oriental Time Space <*dongfang shikong*>,” by Central Television, April 13, 2005.

were university and high school students, and the rest were “common citizens caring environmental protection”, with Beijing’s influential environmental NGOs among them¹—SEPA selected 50 lucky persons. Objective standards for selection hadn’t been publicized. According to SEPA, Yuanmingyuan Park was “belonging to all the Chinese citizens” and, the issue should have been “serving the whole social benefit”², making the issue have no direct stake holder to set any standards. In result, the participants were insisted of four parties: representatives of original policy makers being invited, who chose to keep silence in the hearing, as mentioned before; 33 experts, most of who had clearly boycotted the project through mass media; 10 representatives from environmental NGOs, who clearly took green priority to object the project, and 17 common citizens having environmentalist inclination or being NGO members³, among whom, a 11-year-old schoolchild and NGO member with her speech in the hearing drew the most media attention. The participant arrangement and the media’s attention to a legal-disabled child clearly indicated more symbolic meaning than substantive meaning of the hearing.

Not only the organizational procedural, but the agenda setting of the hearing was framed by SEPA. According to an open record, the agenda was set in respect of two points: for substantive justice, it questioned the whether lining the lakebed with plastic membrane to be the only effective way to prevent seepage, and whether to bring a disaster to ecology; and, for procedural justice, it doubted whether there had been corruption and other wrongdoing in the policy making, and, further defect of the environmental management system. As both the two points were main issue-framing of mass media had brought before, we can judge it as another evidence to reflect SEPA’s positive response to, or, active cooperation with mass media. In other words, the agenda had been predetermined by the well-formed one-sided media pressure, thus, the hearing was inevitably oriented to a platform for objectors. Actually, the hasty selection procedure and the media pressure prevented “people with multiple views” from “participating in”⁴.

¹ Huang, “Participants list for Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage hearing is decided today,”

² Qi Ye (ed.), *Research on China’s Environmental Supervision System*, Shanghai: Sanlian Bookshop, 2008, p. 208.

³ Detailed list of participants can be seen on *China Environmental News*, April 12, 2005.

⁴ Xia Mingqun, “SEPA commented on Yuanmingyuan hearing for the first time and claimed representatives to be not rational enough <*huanbao zongju shou ping yuanmingyuan tingzhenghui, chen daibiao lixing buzhu*>,” *Jinghua Times*, June 5, 2005.

And in addition, the bias could also be judged from the atmosphere during the hearing itself. While dissenters reiterating their critics of the membrane project were loudly applauded, speech by supporters could only get lukewarm response out of politeness¹. Even SPEA, after the event, had got to admit the discussion to be flooded by sentimental speech with a shortage of persuasive evidences and rational reasoning². However, it didn't prevent the event from setting a sample to demonstrate the authority of law procedures and SEPA's ruling.

5.3 Environmental NGOs' role of Symbolizing "Public Participation"

Judging from the participators, we may find that, as an ally with SEPA in the issue, not only environmental NGOs participated in the name of groups, but also NGO members occupied most of the seats for "citizens". That means, in the event, while SEPA played the important part of the defender of law authority, NGO demonstrated another important part of "public participation". Early on April 1st, in the symposium on "the ecological condition and protection of the historic Yuanmingyuan Park" hosted by FON, the leading environmental NGO specialized its standpoint to be promotion of implementing EIA Law...through the chance of Yuanmingyuan issue³. Rightly after the symposium, Beijing's several leading NGOs released an open annunciation to support SEPA and look into their role in the hearing. It said:

We admire the positive and swift response of the ruling governmental sector (SEPA) to the Yuanmingyuan issue, and, we support its administration in accordance with the law and reasonable solution to the problem...We NGOs hope that the hearing can listen carefully to views by experts and citizens...We NGOs hope to participate in the hearing process and also the EIA work, and further, through this issue, to promote public participation in environmental management and policy making.

¹ See: Zhao Shengyu, "Record of Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project hearing on environmental impact <yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng huanjing tingzhenghui jishi>," April 13, 2005. in: <http://news.qq.com/a/20050413/001621.htm>

² Xia, "SEPA commented on Yuanmingyuan hearing for the first time and claimed representatives to be not rational enough,"

³ See: "Record of Yuanmingyuan Ecology and Historical Relics Protection Symposium (held by Friends of Nature, Green Earth Village and Blog.com online)," [<http://tech.sina.com.cn/d/2005-04-01/1433568907.shtml>]

*(Friends of Nature release: “Statement for governmental decision to hold a hearing for Yuanmingyuan lakebed membrane issue”)*¹

Under the hearing agendas set by SEPA, the activeness of environmental NGOs was also demonstrated. To seize the big chance to perfectly express their view, on April 10th, several NGOs and some other environmental activists acted a simulation exercise for the hearing. From this rehearsal, NGOs found that “to effectively defeat supporters of the project”, they must have succeeded in both “voicing as one” and “releasing clear evidence easy to understand and vivid illustration with impact effect”, “in a limited speech time”². Following the lesson, NGOs took their actions from two respects.

On one hand, they integrated together to “voice as one”. There were 9 NGOs selected to participate the hearing³, of who, the leading FON had offered active help to other weaker ones to get entry permission, through its personal network with SEPA officials⁴. In the hearing, selected NGO representatives uniting together as a strong power insisted the membrane project be bringing ecological disaster and violating legal procedures as mass media had stated. And, based on the conclusion, NGOs’ common voices shaped the image of “public opinion”, consisting of demands for: a) the lined membrane being removed regardless of cost, as “however high cost” would be compensate by “the benefit from defending the law”; b) application of institutional guaranteed public participation into Yuanmingyuan Park administration; c) local governmental subsidy for water supply of Yuanmingyuan Park; d) application of administrative accountability system into environmental protection⁵. Judging from the demands, we can find its identification with

¹ Friends of Nature, “Statement on Supporting Governmental Decision to Hold Hearing with Regard to Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage membrane Issue <zhichi zhengfu zhendui yuanmingyuan pushe fangshen mo shijian juxing tingzhenghui de shengming>,” April 1, 2005. [<http://www.fon.org.cn/content.php?aid=11822>]

² Yi, “One case of public participation in environmentally influential issues: NGO is the active power to promote public participation – judged from the event process of the hearing on Yuanmingyuan membrane issue,”

³ See: Detailed list of participants on *China Environmental News*, April 12, 2005.

⁴ Ding Yue and Wang Haixin, “Record on the first visit of “Public Interest China” to Friends of Nature: to protect the last pure land <gongyi zhongguo chufang ziran zhiyou shouzha: shouhu zuihou de jingtu>,” [http://www.pubchn.com/blog/pubchn/articles.php?article_id=12666]

⁵ Joint statement by Friends of Nature, Green Earth Volunteers, Green Earth Village, Environment and Development Institute, Tiexi Education Research Institute, Alxa SEE Ecological Association and Wild China: “Appeals with Regard to Rehabilitation Work of Yuanmingyuan Anti-seepage Project <guanyu yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng shanhou de huyu>,” [<http://www.fon.org.cn/content.php?aid=138>]

SEPA's orientation, which is, giving the hearing more symbolic meaning to promote a reform of environmental management—emphasis of green priority, legal procedurals and democracy—rather than substantive meaning to offer the membrane controversy a special solution.

On the other hand, NGO representatives had prepared “clear evidence easy to understand and vivid illustration with impact effect”. A most well-know example was some photos released by FON, which demonstrated images of lotus “photoed separately in 2002 and 2005”. FON representatives argued that, as the lotus in the “2005” photos looked to have worse growth than those in the “2002” ones, the photos just proved the “ecological disaster” brought by the membrane project. These photos were paid great attention in and after the hearing, widely quoted by mass media as a most important evidence¹. Although these photos and the following conclusion were used to be questioned, only in the internet, of being not reasonable enough without more detailed interpretation and substantive proof of the photoing time, place and other special conditions², it actually reflected environmental NGOs' success in bringing the audience “impact effect”, which made their argument more persuasive to common people than pure scientific data.

5.4 Mass Media Choice: Strengthening SEPA Agendas and NGO Demands

More than 50 print, broadcasting and internet mass media organizations were invited by SEPA to the hearing. Among them, National broadcasting, Party paper, commercial best seller were included. Their reporting and framing of the discussion through the hearing further strengthened the orientation.

In first place, like at the first stage, mass media put their reporting focus on objections against the project, with the discussion between objectors and supporters

¹ In an media interview in August 2005, Yuanmingyuan Administration took these pictures for an example of the “terrible effects” made by mass media. See: Li Ningyuan, “To repair what should be repaired and to dig what should be dug – Yuanmingyuan Administration particularizes ‘anti-seepage project’ <*gai bu de bu gai wa de wa, yuanmingyuan xishuo ‘fangshen gongcheng’*>,” *News Evening*, August 11, 2005.

² After the reporting climax, Yuanmingyuan Administration offered the explanation of the pictures as, “nobody doubted the two pictures, but the fact is ridiculous: the former one is the lotus lake in Changchun garden in 1998, and the latter one is another lake in 2004. The former lotus had grown for five years, and the latter had only grown one year. Anyway, these two lakes had never been lined with anti-seepage membrane.” See: Li, “To repair what should be repaired and to dig what should be dug – Yuanmingyuan Administration particularizes ‘anti-seepage project’,”

framed as conflict between the Yuanmingyuan Park administration office and common citizens. Judged from the reporting contents of media organizations invited to the hearing, the reports concentrated on four topics as: a) disastrous influence of the membrane project on ecology; b) suggestions of alternative scheme for the project; c) economic dynamics of Park administration officers involved in the project; d) defect in environmental management system reflected. We can use the table 4-1 below to compare the SEPA agendas, NGO demands, as mentioned before with media reporting focus, illustrating the accordance among them. By integrating the focus of SEPA, environmental NGOs and media reporting through the hearing, we can find a more clear indication of their alliance: when SEPA and NGOs, separately representing “government” and “public”, demonstrated their will to overthrow the original project schemes and promote their influence in future policy making, mass media used their information choice to transfer their orientation as “public opinion”.

Table 4-1 Comparison among SEPA agendas, NGOs demands and media focus

SEPA agendas	NGO demands	Media focus
Judgment of project influence on ecology	Judgment based on green priority	Continuing reporting contents at the first stage to frame ecological disaster with concentrating on evidences raised by NGOs, for example, lotus photos
Alternative schemes to resolve the water shortage of Yuanmingyuan	Remove of lined membrane and local governmental subsidy for water supply	Alternative schemes raised by objectors to satisfy the water supply of Yuanmingyuan: 1) channeling water from reservoir or 2) using recycle water
Tracing corruption and wrongdoing		a) Park administration must have undertaken the project for commercial benefits; b) Construction without inviting tenders indicated corruption; c) Park’s publicized cost was not in accordance with that mass media reported.
Discussing defect in management system	1) Public participation; 2) administrative accountability	a) Park administration needed a third-party supervision; b) More governmental sectors needed to involve in policy making;

system

- c) Environmental management needed the cooperation among experts, representatives of citizens and the environmental department;
 - d) Administrative accountability system needed to be applied;
 - e) EIA process needed to respect the participation of environmental NGOs.
-

On the other hand, according to the reporting contents, mass media chose discussion on tracing corruption and wrongdoing of the project and on how to reform the existing environmental management system as their focus, rather than paying attention to a substantive resolution to the special issue. One reason may be that was what the discussion really focused on, as mentioned earlier. But, the most important reason may be that was exactly what the media tried to achieve. After the hearing, although the mass media admitted it hadn't achieved a resolution, they all cheered up for the hearing to symbolize a "success in promoting democracy". Let's raise reports of some influential best sellers for example. *Beijing News* took the hearing "gloried with spirits of democracy and science", and, "bringing a practical approach for China's political democracy construction" ¹. *Nanfang Daily*, located in Guangdong Province, praise the hearing as "a new start" for "a well-formed democratic public participation" ². Critical *South Weekend* judged it a "demonstration of the authority of 'ruling by law'" ³. *Beijing Youth Daily* thought that the agendas focusing more on "common public policy making procedures" rather than on "a single case of Yuanmingyuan" had just brought the hearing more significance⁴. SEPA-ruled *Chinese Environmental News* made clear that holding "such a hearing related to public policies" on "a grand scale" was to make a sample for establishing "an institutional approach to put an end to similar illegal actions" ⁵. And,

¹ Fang Ning, "Hearing: important practice of democratic politics <tingzhenghui: minzhu zhengzhi de zhongyao shijian>," *Beijing News*, April 23, 2005.

² Guo Weiqing, "To protect Yuanmingyuan needs strengthening of public participation and supervision <baohu yuanmingyuan xuyao jiaqiang gongzhong de canyu yu jaindu>," *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, April 16, 2005.

³ Liu Jiangqiang, "Main body of Yuanmingyuan lake-bed anti-seepage project is in state of shutdown <yuanmingyuan hudi fangshen gongcheng zhuti gongcheng chuyu tinggong zhuangtai>," *South Weekend*, May 12, 2005.

⁴ Editorial, "Can anti-seepage hearing decide fate of Yuanmingyuan <fangshen tingzhenghui nengfou jue ding yuanmingyuan mingyun>," *Beijing Youth Daily*, April 14, 2005.

⁵ "Responsibility Investigation becomes the focus on how to end Yuanmingyuan issue <yuanmingyuan ruhe shouwei zeren zhuijiu cheng jiaodian>," *China Environmental News*, April 15, 2005.

according to *People's Daily*, “whatever the final (substantive) resolution” to Yuanmingyuan issue would have become, the “form of public hearing” had achieved its “symbolic meaning” for “offering a platform” for participation¹. From these media judgment, we may find that, whether in Party paper, environmental-special paper or well-known critical media, not only “procedurals” and “symbolic meaning” we mentioned before were continuously focused, but also the keywords as “democracy” and “ruling by law” were also used to describe significance of the hearing. And, as we know, “democracy” and “ruling by law” were both most important keywords of China’s political reform targets.

6. Maintaining SEPA Pressure until Final Resolution

The public hearing indicated the democratic color – despite of the somehow bias agenda-setting and “irrational” (originally expressed by SEPA) debates – and, until then, “disastrous influences” of the project – and in addition, the speculation of its connection with “corruption” and “management systematic deficiency” – had been framed as an undoubted conclusion for the public opinion. However, the substantive resolution was finally up to the technically assessment according to EIA Law, not the informal conclusion of public hearing or media judgment. Factually, even after the legal assessment process formally started, continuing media critics were still exerting pressure on work of the assessment institution². And, more important, SEPA maintained keen supervision through the whole process and dominated the information channel, which greatly influence the process orientation.

6.1 Active News-making of SEPA: Promotion on EIA and Information Disclosure

After the heated public hearing, SEPA continued keeping touch with mass media, and, for its positive information disclosure, the reporting focus had been transferred to the

¹ Chen Jiaying, “Symbolic meanings of Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage <*yuanmingyuan fangshen de xiangzheng yiyi*>,” *People's Daily*, April 14, 2005.

² The pressure was also confirmed by Tsinghua University who finally made the EIA report. See: *Xinhua* News Agency newsletter, “Chief in Yuanmingyuan EIA announced to burden enormous pressure <*yuanmingyuan huanping fuzeren chen chengshou juda yali*>,” July 5, 2005. [<http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2005-07-06/00336358377s.shtml>]

SEPA. In first place, just at the end of the hearing, SEPA announced to the mass media that whatever the EIA result of Yuanmingyuan project to be, SEPA would penalize the Park administration: with EIA result being disqualified, SEPA would give a penalty on negotiation with the local government; with result being qualified, the Park administration would also be penalized for having not accomplished legal procedures before SEPA noticed, according to article 31 of EIA Law. In this decision, it implied two important messages of SEPA: on one hand, the Park administration had truly made mistakes, and, on the other hand, it indicated that the Yuanmingyuan membrane project might be without negative influence on ecology (EIA result qualified), which was different from mass media had reported. But, most of mass media just seized the keyword as “penalty”.

Secondly, along with the end of the hearing, most media lost their energy on this issue, except some few ones, who had been active from the very first stage, reporting a little information on the EIA process from SEPA officials. Factually, at that time, there was no professional EIA institution agreeing to accept this work, and the reason was said vaguely to be “technical problems” and “hard time limit”¹. But there was also an opinion that the EIA institutions might have avoided this work for worrying about offending the local government or SEPA². However, the slow EIA process had worn down the public passion, and related media reports had fallen since April 20th. From April 28th to May 8th, there was even no related report on mass media (except personal discussions through internet BBS). In the silence, SEPA stood out again. On May 9th, SEPA, under the entitlement offered by EIA Law (article 31)³, ordered the Yuanmingyuan Park administration to raise EIA report in 40 days⁴. This order restarted the media

¹ Wang Qing, “No EIA unit wills to take the EIA of Yuanmingyuan for skill difficulty and time pressure <*jishu nandu da shijian jin, huanping danwei bu yuan huanping yuanmingyuan*>,” *Jinghua Times*, April 20, 2005.

² From internet sources and personal interviews by the writer.

³ According to this article, “any construction entity fails to submit its environmental impact appraisal documents of the construction project concerned or fails to submit environmental impact documents for examination and approval anew or for inspection anew” shall be “ordered by the administrative department of environmental protection that is entitled to examine and approve the environmental impact appraisal documents to stop the construction and go through the relevant procedures within a prescribed time period”.

⁴ SEPA: Notice of Charging Yuanmingyuan Administration to Apply for Completing Required EIA Approval Formalities for Yuanmingyuan Environmental Comprehensive Improvement Project <*guanyu zeling xianqi bu ban yuanmingyuan huanjing zonghe zhengzhi gongcheng huanjing yingxiang pingjia baopi shouxu de tongzhi*>,” SEPA letter, No. 167.

concentration long at rest, making SEPA become the most important information source and reporting focus. In addition, as routine EIA procedures usually spent more than 2 months¹, the 40-day time limit seemed to give the Park administration a mission impossible. Thus, the Park administration had got to appeal to SEPA's intervention to "appoint an EIA institution", to "make a faster progress"². Even though, strictly, according to EIA law, SEPA was not allowed to appoint the EIA institution or influence any other technical details³, but, under the demand of Yuanmingyuan Park administration itself, SEPA could logically give a positive response and then supervise the whole EIA process.

After responding to Yuanmingyuan Park administration, SEPA quickly demonstrated their influence on May 11th when the deputy director, Pan Yue, named the EIA institution subordinate to Beijing Normal University—one of the EIA institutions having refused the duty of EIA for Yuanmingyuan Park—to criticize their negative attitudes to make a morra. According to the press release of SEPA, Pan flayed the university institution as "violating either moral concepts or professional ethics", and valuing "economic benefits and private interests" rather than "social responsibility". He declared that, taking it as an opportunity, he would "improve management on EIA institutions", and, "rectify the order of the whole industry"⁴. By judging from the official expression, we can easily find that the focus of SEPA was still on the system reform, like that during the public hearing.

SEPA's activeness and clear attitudes quickly woke mass media. Pan's declaration was widely quoted and echoed with high spirit. Media reports on May 12th was dominated by analysis of EIA institutions "violating either moral concepts or professional ethics" and editorial suggestions on how to "rectify the order of the whole industry". And, compared

[http://www.zhb.gov.cn/info/gw/huanhan/200505/t20050509_66478.htm]

¹ According to a professional of EIA talking to mass media, a normal process of EIA commonly costed at least two months, exceeding the SEPA time limit of 40 days. See: Xia Mingqun, "EIA units take it unnecessary to risk Yuanmingyuan EIA for the wide range of influence <huanping danwei: yuanmingyuan sheji mian tai guang, meiyou biyao mao fengxian>," *Jinghua Times*, May 11, 2005.

² Wang Qing, "Yuanmingyuan Administration claims to be unable to guarantee submitting EIA report on time <yuanmingyuan guanlichu: buneng baozheng anshi jiao huanping baogao>," *Jinghua Times*, May 11, 2005.

³ The information is publicized by Xinhua News Agency on May 5, and quoted by several media organizations such as *Beijing News*, *Jinghua Times* and so on.

⁴ SEPA newsletter No. 44: "Pan Yue, the deputy general of SEPA criticized the EIA units being afraid of taking responsibility by name <huanbao zongju fu juzhang pan yue dianming piping bugan chengdan zeren de huaping danwei>," [http://www.zhb.gov.cn/xcyj/zwhb/200505/t20050511_66450.htm]

with reports on the public hearing, the criticism, once pointed to Yuanmingyuan Park administration, was even pointed to “higher-level governmental department”, implying that it was the political intervention of strong administrative power to prevent any EIA institution from performing their “social responsibility”. Most mass media believed that the EIA report would lead to overthrow the whole project, and, the EIA institution was afraid of “retaliation” from the original policy makers. The most interest might be that both Party paper and critical commercial best seller held this view. *Beijing News*’ editorial might be the most clear. It took SEPA’s ruling to represent a “new administration mode”, and, it believed there existed an “old mode” on the opposition. As it argued, the “old mode” was “disregard of law, science and public opinion”, with the “new mode” respecting all of them, and the result of conflict between the two modes would determine the future of system reform¹. Interestingly, this somehow liberalist view was corresponded with *People’s Daily*, when the CCP Party Paper, by a more cautious choice of words, suggest to establish a “third Party” to supervise the EIA process, to keep EIA process independent from political power, maintaining equality and justice².

Under the pressure of SEPA and mass media, EIA institutions of Beijing successively demonstrated their willing to accept this work. On May 17th, SEPA said to mass media that Tsinghua University had been chosen to take the responsibility, and, SEPA “appreciated very much”³.

6.2. To interpret EIA Report for a Final Success

When Tsinghua University formally took over the EIA of Yuanmingyuan project, it meant the legal procedures would determine the fate of the project, which mass media and other project objectors had advocated. In other words, the task of experts, environmental activists and mass media for this issue could be taken as completed. However, objectors immediately found themselves faced with a new trouble: what if the scientific report negated their estimation of “ecological disaster”, to support the

¹ Editorial, “Ruling by law is the certain orientation of solving Yuanmingyuan problem <fazhi, shi jie jue yuanmingyuan shijian de biran fangxiang>,” *Beijing News*, May 13, 2005.

² Editorial, “EIA of Yuanmingyuan exposes moral risk <yuanmingyuan huanping baolu daode weiji>,” *People’s Daily*, May 12, 2005.

³ Wang Jing, “Tsinghua University takes over EIA and will submit report on time <qinghua jieshou huanping, jiang zai xianding shijian nei tijiao baogao>,” *People’s Daily Online*, [<http://env.people.com.cn/GB/1072/3394018.html>]

reasonableness of the membrane project? Because in that situation, not only the pressure on Yuanmingyuan Park administration would be relieved, but also the reputation of objectors, who had screamed for overthrowing a nearly finished project without enough substantive evidences, might bear negative influence. On June 19th, Beijing Daily, quoted from an anonymous source, reported the final EIA report would “basically support the Yuanmingyuan lakebed membrane project”¹. Despite of being proved to be not dependable, the information still made objectors get emotional. FON even held an urgent informal meeting with objectors to discuss countermeasures, with active mass media participated². Obviously, objectors needed to improve the media framing to maintain absolute predominance in the conflict with Yuanmingyuan Park. After participating in the urgent meeting, active journalists immediately took actions. *Beijing News* released three editorials on June 20th and 21st, titled “Resolution to Yuanmingyuan problem should not only depend on scientific judgment” (yuanmingyuan wenti bu jinjin shi zhuan ye panduan), “Value rationality³ cannot be ignored in Yuanmingyuan issue” (yuanmingyuan wenti buneng hushi jiazhi lixing) and “The more important thing Yuanmingyuan problem needs is judgment based on humanistic spirit” (yuanmingyuan geng xuyao jiazhi panduan). Different from former reports, these editorials didn’t emphasize the “ecological disaster” in respect of scientific analysis, but tried to interpret the artificial project to change the nature as the original sin of Yuanmingyuan Park, and philosophy concepts like “value rationality” or “humanistic spirit” were taken as a higher criterion than “scientific judgment” according to EIA report. Another critical paper, *South Weekend*, even declared, “under a conflict of interests, scientific conclusion shouldn’t determine, as the so-called expert views can be fabricated”⁴. For finally succeeding in changing the project policy, mass media, accompanied by other objectors, had got to abandon part of their former emphasis. And moreover, in Chinese public opinion,

¹ Ma Li, “It’s said that EIA result supports Yuanmingyuan anti seepage <chuan huanping zhichi yuanmingyuan fangshen>,” *Beijing News*, June 19, 2005.

² Ma, “It’s said that EIA result supports Yuanmingyuan anti seepage,”

³ This philosophical concept, which also called substantive rationality, provides support to social action taken to lead to a valued goal, without thought of its consequences and consideration of the appropriateness of the means chosen to achieve it. It also can be commonly interpreted as “the end sanctifies the means”.—writer.

⁴ Editorial, “Yuanmingyuan EIA report is coming soon, and will it replace interest expression with specialist opinion<yuanmingyuan huanping baogao jiang chulu, zhuanjia yijian qudai liyi biaoda>?” *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, June 20, 2005.

concepts of humanistic spirit or value rationality were much less persuasive than scientific judgment to common citizens. The change to media issue framing implied the embarrassment of objectors. Who could relieve the stress?

On June 30th, after the appraisal acted by a panel consisting of specialists from fields of ecology, gardening, cultural relics, and water preservation¹, Tsinghua University formally submitted the EIA report to SEPA for examination, in accordance with the legal procedures. Almost at the same time, mass media was again told by anonymous source that the report judged the project to be of no big defects²³. According to the report publicized later, the information source seemed to be correct. Generally, the report views conflict with mass media framing of ecological disaster in⁴: 1) countermeasures to keep enough water-supply was necessary, even to prevent ecosystem degradation (15.1.1[1], (15.1.1[2])) ; 2) the materials taken to line the lakebed was not only effective for keeping water but of no ecological risk (15.1.3); 2) according to scientific investigation, analogy, and simulation analysis, the water ecosystem could be recovered in a short time after lining lakebed, and there was no serious influence on land ecosystem(15.1.6 [4], [5]). And further, the report also took an investigation on historical relics, and negated serious negative influence (15.1.7[2], 15.1.7 [3], 15.1.7 [4], 15.1.7 [5]) , which similar to the conclusion had been made by Beijing Historical Relic Bureau before⁵. The report publicized on July 5th further pressure the stress on objectors. Active experts and environmental activists quickly declared their discontent through mass media, refusing to accept the EIA report as the only substantive basis for resolution⁶. Concepts of “spirit and human feelings”, “historical ethics”, “aesthetic standard” were attempted to frame as a

¹ “Tsinghua University report backs lake project,” *People’s Daily*, July 2nd, 2005.

² Ma Li, “EIA report approves Yuanmingyuan anti seepage <huanping baogao renke yuanmingyuan fangshen>,” *Beijing News*, July 2, 2005.

³ Wang Qing, “Yuanmingyuan EIA report announces lake-bed membrane innocuous and harmless <yuanmingyuan huanping baogao chen hudi pumo wudu wuhai>,” *Jinghua Times*, July 2, 2005.

⁴ See: Tsinghua University EIA Office, “Environmental Impact Assessment on Yuanmingyuan East Lake bed anti-seepage project <yuanmingyuan dongbu hudi fangshen gongcheng huanjing yingxiang baogao shu>,” publicized in June 2005, pp. 271-277

[http://www.mep.gov.cn/ztd/yymfcgc/zjgd/200507/t20050705_68267.htm]; and also see: Liu Shukun, “Re-reflection on Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project <dui yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng de zai sikao>,” in *Special Issues of Specially Invited speeches in 2005 Academic Annual Meeting of China Hydraulic Engineering Society* (documents collected from personal channel), pp. 97-106.

⁵ “Environmental Impact Assessment on Yuanmingyuan East Lake bed anti-seepage project,”

⁶ Zhao Yongxin and Liu Yi, “Specialists in various fields comments on Yuanmingyuan EIA report with satisfaction and regret <you manyi you yihan, gefang zhuanjia pingjia yuanmingyuan huanping baogao>,” *People’s Daily Online* [<http://env.people.com.cn/GB/35525/3521111.html>].

new aspect to object the project¹.

Facing with the embarrassment of mass media and other objectors, SEPA, who had been standing on the same side, made a quick reaction. According EIA Law, there was a 60-day period for SEPA to examine the report, and, even on July 2nd, the EIA chief of SEPA told *Jinhua News*, a local popular newspaper, that the examination would spend at least 35 working days². But, “when experts of multiple views” were still “discussing the report details”³, SEPA made a surprisingly fast determination. On July 7th, deputy director, Pan Yue, took a press conference to transfer the final determination of the top watchdog in environmental protection field: with careful examination, SEPA **agreed on the conclusion submitted by Tsinghua’s EIA report, and order the Yuanmingyuan Park administration to thoroughly rectify (quanmian zhenggai) the project plan (to remove all the lined membrane)**⁴. It should be admitted that, this determination were some how self-contradictory. As we know, the EIA report basically supported the project, then why SEPA could make such a determination ordering to remove the membrane while agreeing on the report conclusion? Factually, in this 277-page report, besides basically affirming the scientific reasonableness, to be more precise, investigators also pointed out several unavoidable defects of an artificial project, and indicated suggestions for improvement. But under a pressure of 40-day time limit, the hastily raised suggestions sometimes contradicted with the general conclusion⁵, which naturally left space for different interpretations. In the interpretation of SEPA released to mass media, negative effects of an artificial project were emphasized. For example, when mentioning the membrane materials, SEPA accepted the report conclusion to be of no risk to pollute the water, but it still demanded the project to take “(more environmental friendly) natural antiseepage approaches”⁶, without defining exactly what approaches. For this reason, SEPA’s determination on the future of the

¹ Editorial: “Evidences raised by EIA report are not sufficient for Yuanmingyuan’s resolution <huanping bushi gaizao yuanmingyuan de chongfen tiaojian>”, *Beijing News* July 6th, 2005.

² Wang, “Yuanmingyuan EIA report announces lake-bed membrane innocuous and harmless,”

³ Zhao, “Yuanmingyuan Issue Promoted Public Participation,” p. 54.

⁴ SEPA newsletter, “SEPA demands Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project to be comprehensively improved <guojia huanbao zongju yaoqiu yuanmingyuan fangshen gongcheng quanmian zhenggai>,” publicized on July 7, 2005. [http://www.zhb.gov.cn/xcyj/zwhb/200507/t20050707_68352.htm]

⁵ See: Liu, “Re-reflection on Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project,”

⁶ SEPA newsletter, “SEPA demands Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project to be comprehensively improved,”

project seemed to be on the opposition to what the EIA report had prospected.

The final determination of the top environmental section could be taken as an end to the whole public event, leading to the result in two respects. On one hand, as most of the common people reached information from mass media release rather than spending time on a 277-page technical document, the public statement of SEPA naturally had much greater influence on public opinion than the conclusion of the EIA report, which kept the consistency of media issue framing. On the other hand, when Yuanmingyuan Park administration was ordered to remove the “false” membrane, it indicated the success of the environmental-priority coalition of SEPA, experts, environmental activists and mass media. As the Zhao Yongxin, the journalist of *People's Daily* to firstly report the issue, admitted, the “SEPA’s order for thorough rectification” had “swept away” his “bewilderment”¹ from reading the EIA report. He acclaimed, “citizens are greeting SEPA’s courage (against wrongdoings and to reform the system—writer), and celebrating the social progress...which is the success of law, public participation, science and democracy, and is a token of China’s modernization”².

7. Analysis

The Yuanmingyuan case just happened at the climax of the “Environmental Storm” began by SEPA to strengthen the legal authority of the Environmental Impact Assessment Law, and was taken by SEPA and NGO as a test case for the public participation in environmental decision making³. In comparison with the Environmental Storm and the “Nu River Defense Battle” which will be discussed in the next chapter, it didn’t seem to match the extensive media attention, because the actual environmental impact of the Yuanmingyuan project was undetermined and very possible to be much less serious. However, this case is still worth of studying for the very clear steps of the proceedings according to SEPA’s active intervention during a certain short time, helping

¹ Zhao Yongxin, “Delight and Expectation: thoughts on SEPA’s order for improvement of Yuanmingyuan anti-seepage project <*huanxin yu qidai: huanbao zongju yaoqiu yuanmingyuan fangshen zhenggai ganyan*>,” *People's Daily* Online, July 8, 2005. [<http://env.people.com.cn/GB/35525/3527088.html>]

² Ibid.

³ Nick Young, “Public enquiries draw SEPA and environmental NGOs closer together,” *China Development Brief*, April 22, 2005. [<http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.com/node/72>]

us to understand the pattern of SEPA's mobilization. And, also important, by judging from the case, we are indicated the frequent communication, trust relations, and some sort of action coalition between environmental officials and environmental NGOs with other active journalists. In other words, we may say that, after the setbacks of Tibetan Antelope issue, environmental NGOs found exactly the stable partner in the political system for them to obtain beneficial resources. And as well, that was exactly the action capability of NGOs which had been developed during those years to make them get recognition and initiative proximity from the political actors.

This controversy was firstly aroused by the accidental discovery of an intellectual. In order to stop the project, the discoverer chose to report it to the mass media rather than relevant departments. And, the news value of this issue was felt by a journalist of the most authoritative Party Paper and quickly became a public issue. The mass media framed the project as an "environmental tragedy" having disastrous consequences not only on the ecology of the Yuanmingyuan Park area, but also on the whole ground water system of Beijing. With the existing public concern on the poor water resource management of Beijing, the issue framing easily aroused the extensive sympathy. A current public survey indicated that as many as 85.4% of the interviewees agreed to remove the membrane, which had been strongly advocated by the mass media, but 86.7% of the interviewees admitted that except the media information, they had no idea of what the project would really make or what the antiseepage membrane was¹. However, the great media influence hadn't been formed at the early stage, because the media issue framing of the environmental tragedy and the corruption doubt had been only kept as the conjecture of mass media, public intellectuals and environmental activists. Although they had asked for the governmental intervention to recognize the conjecture, they hadn't got any positive governmental response, because, not only the objection didn't sound reasonable enough to prove the "tragedy", but also according to the customary bureaucratic process, the policymaking of the project didn't seemed be obviously illegal.

In comparison of the other departments to have disappointed the project opponents,

¹ "Environmental Impact Assessment on Yuanmingyuan East Lake bed anti-seepage project, pp. 253-254.

SEPA became the decisive player to promote the Yuanmingyuan issue into the climax. The SEPA intervention indicated its well-established network with journalists and environmental activists, who had made SEPA's information channel to know the project and make the decision to halt it. For the observers, it might be quite strange for the semi ministry, only with the interpretation of a news report, to directly exert the administrative pressure on the Park administration at the grass-root level of the bureaucratic hierarchy. However, it was easy to understand the action according to its succedent actions to turn the public concern to the legalization of the EIA process and the public hearing, which indicated the urgent needs of SEPA. Thus, it would be natural to conclude that the keen SEPA top official took the chance of Yuanmingyuan to set an example of the environmental priority and the "rule by law".

Despite of the informal information channel, SEPA's order to halt the project depended on its institutional resources according to the bureaucratic hierarchy, but it also broke the tradition, as a central semi ministry to jump over the municipal government and EPB. As the issue happened during the period of Environmental Storm, it might not be surprising for other departments to see the heterodoxy of SEPA, but the antiseepage project in a Park was too small in scale—in comparison with the hydropower projects SEPA halted to angered the powerful electricity goliath—to arouse the counteraction of departments at the similar level with SEPA. Thus, we can see the Beijing municipal Government announce to respect the SEPA and decision and left the Park Administration alone to deal with the controversy. However, instead of solving the controversy limited to the bureaucratic procedures, SEPA chose to embed its mobilization in the public participation.

The embedded mobilization was firstly indicated by the role of SEPA in this issue. During the whole process, SEPA hadn't used its administrative authority to clearly claim to remove or maintain the membrane, but only played the role of agenda setting in order to solve the problem and the neutral intercessor between the Park Administration and the public opponents. But it's also easy for us to see the conscious orientation of SEPA leading to the subversion of the original policy, based on the administrative capability it had. Several evidences had implied the orientation: for example, the sign-up procedure of

the public hearing made it more favorable for the participation of well-organized opponents to “represent the public”; SEPA took the control over the time-set of EIA process and the choice of EIA institution; and, SEPA dominated the interpretation of the final EIA report. For the pioneer official, Pan Yue, the domination of SEPA of the EIA process was an “exploration” of “governmental itself” to “set up an open platform for all kinds of comments focused on the government decision-making”¹.

Besides the active orientation of SEPA, the activities of journalists, especially those with the liberalistic view, and the environmental NGOs had made the foundation, the “social units”, of embeddeness, making it possible for SEPA to link its efforts to the public rather than its unreliable bureaucratic colleagues. In the last chapter, we have already discussed the dynamics of the coalition of environmental NGOs and liberalistic journalists for environmental protection and participation in policymaking, and, the dynamics also linked them to the coalition with SEPA. When SEPA launched the public hearing and EIA process, the organized environmental activists and liberalistic journalists actively participated in and perform the responsibility of public supervision. Their opinion expression over Yuanmingyuan event – to create a number of first exposure to the EIA market unspoken rules ions and activism against the membrane project, publicized on the hearing and through media channels – had become the source of the validity for SEPA’s heterodox beyond the bureaucratic customs. As the only governmental department “intervening in the issue actively”², the orientation of SEPA was also welcomed. According to the China Youth Daily, SEPA had “left enough freedom to the mass media”³.

In summary, the Yuanmingyuan membrane project issue seemed like an elaborate experiment of the embedded mobilization, setting the good example for the exploration of better governance on environmental issues. *Beijing News*, an important liberal news paper used the concept of “effective and inexpensive democracy <hui er bugui de minzhu

¹ Liu Shixin, “Yuanmingyuan event 100 days to create a number of first exposure to the EIA market unspoken rules <yuanmingyuan shijian baitian chuang duoxiang diyi bao huanping shichang qian guize>,” *China Youth Daily*, July 8, 2005.

² See for example, Yi Rongrong, “Three wonders with regard to Yuanmingyuan <guanyu yuanmingyuan de san ge xiangbutong>,” *Science Times*, May 12, 2005; and also *Beijing News* editorial, “Yuanmingyuan Issue: it shouldn’t let environmental department to fight a lone battle,”

³ Liu Shixin, “Yuanmingyuan event 100 days to create a number of first exposure to the EIA market unspoken rules,”

zhengzhi>¹ to praise the practice. The concept may be interpreted as that on one hand, it had been “effective” in subvert the result of the bureaucratic policymaking through the expression of the “public opinion”, and in enforcement the influence of the weak environmental watchdog; and on the other hand, it had been “inexpensive” in the use of existing institutional resources and administrative authority of SEPA to avoid the conflict between the government departments and the public possibly along with the mobilization of social resources, thereby to reduce the system cost to keep the social stability.

But, as supplementary, we may still get aware of that — in comparison with the positive meaning of the Yuanmingyuan issue for the procedural democratization of environmental governance — there finally hadn’t been any scientific alternative scheme for either proponents or opponents. At last, the plastic membrane had been still lined along the lake-bed, with some trivial changes to the material and the size. Not only the opponents had been hard to accept the result², but also the Park Administration had been annoyed because the serious seepage and water waste hadn’t been relieved³. Despite of the situation, the media attention had already faded away.

¹ Fang, “Hearing: important practice of democratic politics,”

² Zhao Yongxin, “Anti-seepage membrane in Qichun garden, Yuanmingyuan, hasn’t been removed according to the improvement order <yuanmingyuan: qichunyuan anbian fangshenmo hai wei an zhenggai yaoqiu chaichu>,” *People’s Daily Online*, September 12, 2005.

³ Wang Qing, “Yuanmingyuan finished ordered improvement and begins to fill the lake with water, however, the Administration claims that water will be lost quickly <yuanmingyuan fangshen zhenggai hu kaishi zhushui, yuanfang chen shui henkuai hui liushi>,” *JInghua Times*, September 9, 2005.

Chapter Five
Clash between Informal Environmental Politics and Institutional Vested
Interest Group:
The Case of “Nu River Defense Battle”

The last two chapters have demonstrated the outline of the embedded mobilization in China’s environmental governance, the reformatory attempt promoted by the coalition of SEPA, environmental NGOs and mass media. And moreover, we can see from the two cases the actual result of the embedded mobilization to achieve the “effective and inexpensive democracy”, not only having inspired the public attention to China’s environmental situation, but also helping to offer SEPA and the civil society the new policy leverages to influence the decision-making.

However, after analyzing the purposes and action modes of the entrepreneurs in the embedded mobilization and its general characteristics, this study now is faced another question. The last two cases haven’t indicated the “true” conflict between SEPA and the economic-orientation, thus, it was hard to examine the real effects of the embedded mobilization. As mentioned in the second chapter, in the authoritarian Party-state with the bureaucratic fragmentation, the environmental governance in China had been mainly strongly obstructed by the strong economic orientation in accordance with the nation’s general industrialization plan. And that was why the SEPA had been offered less institutional resources, and the environmental NGO activism hadn’t got the extensive public support. But in the last two cases, the attempt of the embedded mobilization to influence the decision-making hadn’t tried to challenge any national line. To speak more specifically, in the Tibetan antelope protection, the environmental NGOs and mass media with the help from SEPA had tried to give prominence to the social action in an established national protection plan. And, in the Yuanmingyuan case, SEPA had taken control over the process, the top environmental watchdog, with environmental NGOs and mass media as the coalition, had depended on the EIA Law to enforce the SEPA authority and pursue public participation, without challenging the validity of the Party-state system. And further, in this case, although the mass media had strongly described the contradiction between the reformatory actions of SEPA and the fossil bureaucratic

tradition to ignore the public opinion, it must be admitted that there hadn't been any actual conflicts between SEPA and the economic-oriented departments at the similar administrative level, or the local municipal government.

To further comprehend the embedded mobilization, we must analyze its application to cases substantially involving the contradiction between the EP and economic development, which would maintain the long-term controversy of China. This chapter raises the case of Nu River Project (NRP), which started in 2003 with climax from 2003 to 2006 and had continued its influence even until today. The internationally known social action to object the hydropower construction on a non-dam river, romanced as the "Nu River Defense Battle", had been judged as a symbol of China's great civil achievements and the political pluralization. However, this study will explore its value for the embedded mobilization which had somehow been ignored, without denying its great meaning as the symbolic social action. While further analyzing the embeddedness and mobilization in a much larger scale to deal with a much more complicated situation, this chapter will add two aspects of focuses: one aspect is the conflict with the truly strong group of development-oriented departments and the state-owned enterprise, whose dynamics of benefits were backed by the official framing of economic developmental priority; and the other aspect is, besides the obstruction from the political sphere, the coalition of SEPA, environmental NGOs and mass media had been faced with the challenge from the public sphere, to speak specifically, the public intellectuals who denied the environmental priority in the industrialization and the environmental NGOs' identity of "representing the public". Especially the latter aspect has been more possible to be ignored, but may have brought the more complex implication.

1. Controversy on Dam Projects in China

For the serious harm of seasonal floods to an agricultural society, "water management <*zhishui*>" has been an important public issue and governmental responsibility during China's history. It even led to the thesis of "hydraulic state"¹, proposing that the

¹ Karl. A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.

autocratic power of China's dynasty was derived from water management. Although the thesis had been called into question, history told us that control of flooding was a critical criterion for measuring the rulers' capability, and even in middle 1970s, the floods had been still a big threat to man's life and property. Dam construction used to be a traditional approach to deal with the problem, by saving water in rainy seasons to ease flooding and drainage in dry seasons for irrigation. Dams have still been taking the responsibility, however, the main imperative of massive "water management" today has been economic benefits. Especially from the end of 1990s, the high-speed increasing need of electricity in accordance with economic development¹, hydro power, which was described as a "clean and renewable energy" in comparison with non-renewable coal and oil, unstable wind power and risky nuclear power, has been strongly encouraged in China. A plenty of dams have been built on nearly all the riverways. According to the statistics by the World Commission on Dams (WCD), until 2005, when the Chinese anti-dam action had reached its climax, China had maintained 22000 dams, nearly half of the total 48000 dams through the world². Although, most of them are of short scale and only small parts are for hydroelectricity, the small parts have draw great attention according to its involvement of interest division, political sensitiveness, and social effects like environmental concern.

1.1 "Occupying Resources": Dam Project for Interest Division

The controversy on dam projects firstly derived from the unfair distribution of the economic benefits, which had mainly flowed to the State-owned electricity companies, who were commonly called "five electricity brothers", being the most active players of hydropower development in Southwest China. From the beginning of 21st century, there had been a eager development of rich potential "clean energy" along the large rivers—Nu River, Jinsha River, Yalong River, Dadu River and so on—in Southwest China. The rapid development had quickly demonstrated its characteristics of disorder, unreasonableness and over-exploitation. And, this phenomenon had been generally called as "riding on

¹ See details in the annual data of National Bureau of Statistics of China [<http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/nds/>].

² Wang Yongchen (ed.), *Change: 2006 Survey Report of Chinese Environmental Journalists (gaibian: zhongguo huanjing jizhe diaocha baogao 2006)*, Beijing: Sanlianc, 2007. p. 124)

horse occupying resources” (*paoma quanshui*), which had been generated from certain economic and political incentives.

The first and most important reason for “occupying resources” was the profit-orientation after the reorganization of State-owned electricity enterprises in early 2000s. In 1996, to deal with the growing electricity demand, the Ministry of Electric Power—it was abolished two years later—organized the State Power Company of China (SPCC) composed of individual entities for the State investment on electricity exploitation. And the assets of SPCC were distributed to five entities: Huadian Group, Huaneng Group, Guodian Group, Datang Group and China Electricity Investment Group. Before the 2002 reorganization, any electricity development of the individual entities under SPCC was arranged by the national plan, thus, there had been no pressure of profit or self-development. However, the reorganization made the “five brothers” profit-oriented companies to build up their own business, which had become the economic dynamics for the State-owned enterprises (SOEs) to compete for occupying potential resources. In addition, these SOEs had the rank equaling to vice-ministry in the bureaucratic hierarchy, which had brought them great self-governance autonomy in exploitation and occupying potential hydropower resources, and the administrative power to promote their plans in front of the local government and other governmental sectors¹. Under economic dynamics and entitled administrative ability, “five brothers” had made their strategy to go to the undeveloped area in Southwest China for exploiting potential resources to the greatest extent.

The second reason was that there had been the custom of the “domination by who occupies”. There had been an unwritten rule that when a SOE had build dams on a certain river, it automatically owned the exclusive right in developing the water resources along the river. For example, between the most powerful “brothers”, Huadian Group handled Nu River development in Yunnan Province and Huaneng Group owned the right to develop Lancang River. This rule might have originally been permitted by the State to

¹ In addition, although these SOEs are in theory vice-ministry level, they actually had greater power and language power for many reasons. The most important might be that, on one hand was their financial power through monopoly, and on the other hand was some special identities of their directors. For instance, the Huaneng Group was generally known controlled by the family of Li Peng, the former Premier.

encourage active development, but it obviously had prevented effective supervision on the disorder exploitation of “five brothers” and healthy economic competition.

The last reason was that the profit-orientation and absence of effective supervision had made SOEs commonly ignore the social and environmental influence of exploitation. Most investment had put on the project building itself, and influence like resettlement, heritage and ecology rarely received enough financial distribution, which had brought negative images of the public to “occupying resources”¹. In comparison with the great economic benefits of the SOEs through monopoly development². In other words, there had been a serious inequity between SOEs who took large benefits away with little input especially the payment for using the resources and the local people who had been forced to suffer from the side effects of dam projects.

Besides profit-oriented SOEs, “occupying resources” had also obtained support from the local government, mainly for economic increase and, in accordance, the political achievements to help future political career. Even though the main part of direct benefits from hydropower would be distributed to the SOEs—for example, the development of Lancang River had been operated by a special corporation with Huaneng Group owning 70% stock and Yunnan Provincial Government owning 30%; in addition, the local government had some influence but not very effective because the central-level Huaneng Group had centralized leadership relations (*chuzhi guanli*) with the special corporation (Huaneng Lancang River Corporation) at provincial-level³—the local government in Southwest China concentrated more on the creation of new jobs and potential prosperity of other business brought by the dam construction, such like building material industry and services. Thus, the local government in the undeveloped Southwest China would incline to take administrative measures or even political coercion to suppress opposition. On the other hand, the governments in advanced East China were also demanding the cheap electricity provision and wouldn't anti the eager resources occupation, and, since

¹ See: Zhang Fan, “Economic Reasons of ‘Occupying Resources’ Phenomenon and Countermeasures,” *China Water Resources*, Vol. 18, 2005, pp. 34-36.

² Yang Min, “Looking Back China’s Electricity Reform (*huiwang zhongguo dianli gaige*),” in *Change: 2006 Survey Report of Chinese Environmental Journalists*, pp. 106-120.

³ See details in: Andrew C. Mertha, “China’s ‘soft’ centralization: shifting *tiao/kuai* authority relationships,” *China Quarterly* 184 (December 2005), pp. 791-810.

political leaders from East China generally had more language power than those from the west part, their energy demand would also bring pressure on the State to encourage “occupying resources”.

1.2 Political Dissidents on Dam Projects: Case of Three Gorgeous Project (TGP)

Another factor to make the dam project controversy was its political sensitiveness, which had drawn global attention since the debate on the Three Gorgeous Project (TGP).

The TGP controversy, which had lacked grassroots debates¹ but mainly involved the leadership (CCP or TGPPC), bureaucracy, their think-tanks, media, and some independent intellectuals, with political struggle, suppression, and even conspiracy—might have been not so typical in comparison with the anti-dam climax in the first 10 years of 21st century. However, its political implication as a symbol for Chinese political dissidents had deeply stigmatized the anti-dam actions.

The idea of the TGP had been firstly raised by Dr. Sun Yat-sen during 1910s, as “the alternative to coal”². From 1932 to 1935, the RC government had planned a relative financial scheme and signed a contract of technical cooperation with an American company. And at that time, the plan had been taken by media as a national pride to demonstrate the industrialization of an ancient agricultural civilization³, but the plan had been finally given up due to war and financial crisis of the RC government. After the establishment of People’s Republic of China, during the 1950s, surrounding the TG dam construction on the mainstream of Yangtze River, a small scale debate was progressing in Central bureaucracy, limited to few ardent supporters represented Lin Yishan, by head of Yangtze Valley Planning Office (YVPO) of that time, or opponents represented by Li Rui, former head of General Bureau for Hydroelectricity⁴, and leaders like Mao Zedong and

¹ GØrild Heggelund, *Environment and Resettlement Politics in China: The Three Gorges Project*, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003, p. 2.

² See: “It’s proper for China to use water power: as the alternative to coal (*zhongguo yi liyong mei zhi tidaiwu*),” *Shen Bao*, September 18, 1919.

³ See print reports during that time for example: “The state is planning the large-scale dam (*jianzhu daguimo shuiza woguo zhengzai jihua zhong*),” *Wenhui Bao*, October 23, 1935. Yangtze hydropower project has been gradually developed with smaller scale (*changjiang shuidian gongcheng suoxiao guimo zhubu fazhan*),” *Dagong Bao*, November 8, 1935. “Develop Yangtze water resources, construct large-scale dam (*fazhan changjiang shuili, jianzhu dashuiza*),” *Wenhui Bao*, November 29, 1935. Sino-American technical contract signed for TG hydropower project (*sanxia shuili fadian gongcheng zhongmei qianyue jishu hezuo*),” *Wenhui Bao*, December 2, 1935. American technicians come to Wuhan (*mei jishu renyuanyuan xiangji laihan*),” *Wuhan Daily*, April 12, 1936.

⁴ The YVPO was reorganized into Yangtze River Water Resources Commission (YRWRC) in 1990, and the organization of General Bureau for Hydroelectricity doesn’t exist now.

Zhou Enlai. Generally, it was a debate between section on water resource and section on hydroelectricity¹, and the latter had raised more scientific analysis, while, judged from a lot of evidences, Mao Zedong seemed very interested in the suggestions of the former. However, the debate had kept behind the scene until 1956, when Lin Yishan wrote on *Chinese Water Resources* journal published by Ministry of Water Resources (MWR) an article to interpret his idea of constructing a dam with an unbelievable height of 235 meters² mainly for control floods. And the opponents, guided by Li Rui, made a special issue on official journal, *Hydroelectricity*, against the idea of Lin, raising respective problems on floods, electricity, shipping, economic cost, etc. However, the debate was too technical and professional, so that it was limited in the two bureaucratic sections, not known by “common people”, and even never came into the notice of Mao Zedong³. But according to the memories of Li, the supporters succeeded in framing issue by inviting specialists from Soviet Union into discussion, so as to put their plan into political agenda⁴. On September 1st, 1956, an article taking the supporting standing was published on the front page of *People’s Daily*⁵, and it involved even very detailed plans and the scale of generating electricity in future. So that the article had shaped an image to the people that the Leaders had already recognized the plan and it would have soon been started⁶. In fact, before the influential article, several articles on survey along TG area had appeared on print media, including *People’s Daily*⁷. Li Rui then wrote a response named “Brief argument on Three Gorges project” against that published on September 1st. To his disappointed, the most important Party Paper accepted firstly but finally refused to publish it, for the former Premier, Zhou Enlai, thought it was not suitable to discuss the topic publicly at that time. However, still, the topic was allowed to be discussed in some

¹ Li Rui, “Be Responsible for History: Memories on How the Three Gorges Project Started (*dui lishi fuze: huiyi sanxia gongcheng shangma guocheng de shimo*)”, *Modern China Research*, Vol. 166, No. 3 1999.

² The final plan is 175 meters in height.

³ “Be Responsible for History,”

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ “Survey on Yangtze basin water resources ends (*changjiang liuyu shuili ziyuan chatan gongzuo jieshu*),” *People’s Daily*, September 1, 1956.

⁶ “Be Responsible for History,”

⁷ See for example: “Large-scale survey on Yangtze River basin is in full swing (*changjiang liuyu daguimo kance gongzuo quanmian zhankai*),” *People’s Daily*, March 25, 1956. “Large-scale survey work on engineering geology and hydrologic geology along Yangtze River basin is in active progress (*changjiang daguimo de gongcheng dizhi he shuiwen dizhi kance gongzuo jiji jingxing*),” *People’s Yangtze Paper*, May 19, 1956. And, “Survey work on geology along both sides of Yangtze River has been completed (*sanxia liangan dizhi diaocha gongzuo quanbu wancheng*),” *Hubei Daily*, August 24, 1956.

other papers and magazines which were not so influential. The year 1956 was considered as the beginning of a limited public debate on Three Gorges Project¹. In the next year, 1957, Li wrote another article on *People's Daily*, implying his critics on the project. He mentioned that how effective the great dam would be against floods couldn't have been perfectly proved, and moreover, the project would cost too much².

From 1956 to 1957, we have seen not only the debate between top bureaucrats of central departments, but also their mobilization of mass media to expand the influence of ideas. However, the use of media had been just taken as an aid to persuade the top political authority, rather than to involve multiple participation. Along with Li Rui being dismissed in the political campaign of late 1950s, the voice of opponents had faded away. However, also according to the continuing political campaign until the late 1970s, proponents had also failed in promoting their plan. In addition, from late 1970s, after the death of Mao and Zhou, the charisma leaders, Lin Yishan and the YVPO lost their strong position in top-level policymaking process, while Li Rui gained more trust from new leaders at that time like Hu Yaobang in charge of Party issues, Zhao Ziyang leading the government, and Chen Yun generally planning the economic reform. The change of power balance between the two Li's had for a time driven the TGP from political agendas.

However, the new leaders preferred the policymaking mode different from Mao. As GØrild Heggelund pointed³:

(T)he reform movement in the 1980s diminished the role for personnel leadership and created a greater regard for consensus in decision-making...top leaders became more reluctant to employ Mao's methods to overcome bureaucratic resistance, such as ideological campaigns and broadsides and deification of top leaders. Top leaders now prefer active co-operation of all major parties concentrated to prevent long delays of a project.

¹ Li Rui, *On Three Gorgeous Project (lun sanxia gongcheng)*, Hunan: Hunan Technology Press, 1985. pp. 1-2.

² Li Rui, "The Ethics of 'Big Fishing Net' (*da yuwang zhuyi*)," *People's Daily*, April 14, 1957.

³ *Environment and Resettlement Politics in China*, p. 27.

On one hand, the policymaking participants had been expanded from several top leaders and active bureaucrats, to the fragmented bureaucratic departments. On the other hand, according to the need of comprehensive industrialization had taken the place of ideological struggle to become the national priority, technocrats with engineering background had achieved dominance in policymaking process. Thus, the TGP idea, with its expected great benefits and the charming challenge in engineering, quickly found its supporters, especially those top officials from the newly-organized Ministry of Water Resources and Electricity Power (MWREP), including Li Peng, the later Premier whose family then controlled Huneng Electricity Group. In 1983, MWREP was entitled to lead the planning of TGP, and 400 experts were hired to examine the conditions of fields including hydrology, sediment management, geology, flood protection, electricity generation, shipping, resettlement, environment, engineering and economics, and so on. While feasibility research and expert advices were focused to make the decision seemingly “scientific”¹, the totally absence of public participation had proved it not “democratic”. The details of the examination process had been only publicized on professional media mainly with positive comments. Until the examination was elementarily completed in 1988, the top Party paper, *People’s Daily*, raised the report “GTP special examination comes to an end (*changjiang sanxia gongcheng zhuanli lunzheng gaoyiduanluo*)”, to describe the TGP as “comprehensive” and “commonly agreed by most participating experts a technically feasible and economically reasonable”, while agreeing that “some experts with dissidents” had “refused to approve the examination report”². Four months later, *People’s Daily* added another report to further describe the examination as with “two sharply opposing views”³. And, a newsletter of the National Xinhua News Agency listed the detailed objections on economic benefits, technical difficulty and environmental effects⁴.

¹ However, according to Li Rui, the “scientific” decision had been to a great extent framed by MWREP from the choice of experts and setting of research agendas. See: “Be responsible for history,”

² “TGP special demonstration has come to a conclusion (*changjiang sanxia gongcheng zhuanli lunzheng gao yi duanluo*),” *People’s Daily*, December 2, 1988.

³ “TGP demonstration work has completed (*sanxia gongcheng lunzheng gongzuo quanbu wancheng*),” *People’s Daily*, March 8, 1989.

⁴ “TGP demonstration has formally ended and will be submitted to State Council for macro-policymaking (*changjiang sanxia gongcheng lunzheng zhengshi jieshu, jiang jiao guowuyuan zuo hongguan juice yiju*),” Xinhua News Agency, March 9, 1989.

However, to admit the existence of opposite views by Party mouthpieces had seemed to be rather an objective description of the examination progress and reflection of top authority than a signal for public discussion. The main framework of the mouthpieces reports—mainly on *People's Daily* and *Hubei Daily*, since TGP was designed to locate in Hubei Province—was mainly “teaching” common people the great economic benefits and importance for the national energy demand of the TGP. Opposite views were only mentioned without influencing the main framework. For example, the doubted environmental effects were interpreted as “of both positive and negative effects...with bringing more good than harm”¹, and “negative effects” were believed to be “possibly reduced to the minimum extent under the condition of high concern”².

In comparison with the highly limited public discussion in China mainland, there had seemed to be an open channel for TGP opponents through mass media in Hong Kong. But if we carefully checked the Hong Kong media active at TGP discussion, we may easily find them all having close relations with CCP, like *Dagong Bao*, *Wenhui bao* and *Ming Bao*. Thus, it'll be not unnatural for us to speculate that relative reports on these papers might have been — rather than a channel for suppressing opposite views — encouraged to frame a image of the Chinese government as “open to comprehensive discussion for decision-making”, as high-level political leaders, bureaucrats and experts repeatedly expressed through these Hong Kong papers³. Another direct evidence to confirm this speculation was that a group of Hong Kong reporters⁴ were invited by the Chinese government for a field investigation in TGP area in Hubei Province. And they were “thanked” by the government for “promoting a comprehensive public understanding of

¹ Zhang Guangdou, “TGP should be constructed as early as possible (*changjiang sanxia gongcheng yi zaori Xingjian*),” *People's Daily*, December 1, 1991.

² “The group of members of the Standing Committee of National People's Congress investigates on TGP (*renda changweihui zutuan kaocha sanxia gongcheng*),” *People's Daily*, November 25, 1991.

³ See for example: “Controversy on advantages and disadvantages of TGP: related companies clarify misunderstandings (*sanxia gongcheng libi zhengduan, youguan gongsi chengqing wujie*),” *Wenhui Bao*, March 9, 1986. “Deng Xiaoping talks about TGP to judge advantages more than disadvantages (*dengxiaoping tan sanxia gongcheng, zhichu haochu duoyu huaichu*),” *Wenhui Bao*, January 31, 1986. “Li Peng reveals that foreign experts will be hired for consultation (*lipeng toulou jiang pin waiguo zhuanjia canjia zixun*),” *Wenhui Bao*, June 16, 1986. Pan Jiazheng, “The problems faced with TGP (*sanxia gongcheng miandui de wenti*),” *Ming Bao*, August 18, 1988. “TGP scientific research provided basis for policymaking (*sanxia gongcheng keyan tigong juice yiju*),” *Dagong Bao*, May 15, 1991. “TGP is economically feasible(*sanxia gongcheng jiji shang kexing*),” *Dagong Bao*, December 20, 1991.

⁴ The group members were from *Dagong Bao*, *Wenhui Bao*, *Ming Bao*, *Business Paper*, *Dongfang Daily*, *Nanhua Daily*, *Xin Evening*, *Economic Guide*, *TVB* and *Radio Hong Kong*.

TGP”¹.

To summarize, until the TGP plan was passed by Chinese People’s Congress in April 1992, despite of the 177 vetoes, 644 abstentions and 45 members having not voted², there had been very little space for opponents to frame their views to the public. Common people had only been given an impression of peaceful consensus in policymaking. The role of mass media was still for the traditional “political mobilization”, using the information monopoly to make common people accept the official frameworks and then prove the policy validity according to the framed “opinions of masses”. But on the contrary, there had been hidden very severe struggle in the political sphere. In other words, without the existence of a public sphere and open discussion, the debate between proponents and opponents had been inevitably developed into zero-game political conflict and finally got to be managed only through political approaches. For example, Li Rui, the earliest opponent had been long excluded from core decision-making circles. And further, there had been a saying that in the early 1990s, some 179 people had been imprisoned for their opposition to TGP, which had made it a hot topic of China’s politics and taken as an important illustration of the totalitarian remains. For example, Dai Qing and her well-known book of critical essays *Yangtze! Yangtze!* which had been banned in China and made Dai a representative oversea dissident, was a summary of such expressions³. Even though, since late 1990s when Zhu Rongji replaced Li Peng—Li and his family had been believed to be representing the interest group of water resource department and electricity SOEs—to become Premier and made good cooperation with liberalists and mass media to promote his drastic reforms, negative effects of TGP had been encouraged to be discussed publicly, the debate still had been only open to the Party mouthpieces and governmental think-tanks, without adopting grassroots organizations and political dissidents⁴. Thus, the “anti-TGP” had remained an important symbol of

¹ “Reporter group from Hong Kong pays attention to TGP (xianggang jizhe tuan guanzhu sanxia),” *People’s Yangtze Paper*, November 4, 1990.

² Vetoes were mostly from the provinces along upper Yangtze River, who would not benefit much from the hydropower generation as the East advanced areas would, but would be directly burdened with the side problems like resettlement or environmental effects. The vetoes had demonstrated a bad coordination among provinces and further the smaller language power of local leaders of West China at the national-level.

³ Dai Qing: *Yangtze! Yangtze!* Toronto, Canada: Earthscan, 1994.

⁴ *Environment and Resettlement Politics in China*, pp211-221.

China's "abroad democratic movement" (*haiwai minyun*) composed of political dissidents, and its heritage of political implications had been applied in the issue frameworks of later anti-dam climax.

1.3 Environmental Concerns of Dam Projects: from Fringe to Main Agendas

Opponents to the eager dam construction began to bring environmental concern into their issue frameworks of the TGP issue from late 1990s. In May 1999, the State Council announced a resettlement policy change, moving a large number of people originally planned to be resettled in the reservoir area completely out of the reservoir. And the stated reason for the change was "the weak environmental and ecological condition in the area"¹, marking the environmental effect a decisive factor of dam policymaking at the national-level. But the environmental concern in TGP issue was only subordinated to the resettlement problem. And, its evolution into an independent factor to counteract with eager hydropower exploitation had been connected with the development strategy change of the central political authority.

After the Premier term of Zhu Rongji, his successor, Wen Jiabao, and the forth political leader, Hu Jintao, have paid more attention to a "comprehensive and scientific development" (*kexue fazhan guan*), caring side social effects derived from economic increase as well as the increase itself, to build the "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui*). This directive has also guided the national strategy to develop the lagging west part of China, which named "The Great Western Development Strategy" (*xibu da kaifa zhanlue*), formulated in 2000 and legislated on the Tenth People's Congress in 2004. That the environmental concern has made a main factor for the "comprehensive development" in the strategy might have been according to a) the serious pollution derived from the 20-year rapid economic increase had brought the top authority impressive lessons; b) the especially vulnerability of ecology in western regions and the special feelings and habits of some ethnic groups related to certain natural environments had upgraded the value of environmental concern; c) China could be influenced by the pressure from relative international governance regimes more than it used to be, especially after its entrance into the WTO. According to Wang Jinxiang, deputy-director of the leading group for the

¹ *Environment and Resettlement Politics in China*, p. 4; pp. 185-188.

Great Western Development office directly under the State Council, Environmental protection have been taken as “a key principle in developing China's west”¹. Beyond stated principles, special plans have been also formulated. For example, the 2003 "Returning Grazing Land to Grassland" policy was aimed at the regions crucial to the Yangtze River basin protection, and the efforts under the imperative national policy have made China “one of a few countries in the world that have been rapidly increasing their forest cover”, according to David Dollar, director of the World Bank in China².

However, we cannot simply overestimate the environmental factor in policymaking, because the “development” has been still the core concept of the State issue frameworks. Especially for the hydropower development issue, before, during and after the anti-dam climax, although the disorder “occupying resources” action have been continually criticized by Party mouthpieces, official think-tanks and even top leaders themselves, there has always been encouragement on “proper” exploitation, because the top authority have not only taken it a large business but also an approach to coordinate the economic gap between western and eastern regions as most of the generated electricity have been sold to advanced eastern areas like Shanghai and Guangdong. Although this long-distance transmission had been doubted as market inefficiency, and seen by the advanced areas as a national mandated dependence on southwest energy, the central government hadn't hesitate to take administrative approaches to ensure the southwest projects. For this purpose, hydropower projects had been even banned in Guangdong Province from 2001 to 2005³. In other words, the environmental concern has been actually a crucial factor to make the development “comprehensive and scientific” rather than a priority over the development.

¹ “Western china tries to balance environment, development”, Xinhua News Agency, April 10, 2006. [http://www.mwr.gov.cn/english/news/200604/t20060411_101705.html]

² Rogerio Wasserman, “Can China be green by 2020?” BBC News. Web, December 11, 2009. [<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7972125.stm>]

³ Andrew C. Mertha, *China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008. p. 30. But there is also an opinion that the banning had been held for the monopoly profits of The State Grid Corporation of China (SGCC), commonly recognized as backed by the family of Li Peng.

2. Governmental Fragmentation Triggering Nu River Project (NRP)

Controversy

2.1 Fragmentation and Alliance of SEPA and Environmental NGOs

The Nu River is an international river, which rises in Tibet autonomous region of China, follows through Yunnan province, Burma, where it is called Salween, and Thailand, where it is known as Salaween. For the industrializing China hungering for clean and renewable energy, the river with a length of 742 kilometers in Chinese territory and a natural head of 1578 kilometers would provide the second highest potential generation. However, besides the energy temptation, the river also has very high value of species and cultural diversity, as a home to 7000 species of plants and 80 rare or endangered animals and fish, so that it has been called by UNESCO as “may be the most biologically diverse temperate ecosystem in the world”¹ and listed on UNESCO World Heritage Site² as part of the “Three Parallel Rivers Area”³ at the beginning of July 2003.

Early from 1958, the view to construct a dam on the waterpower abundant river had been conceived by Congress representatives from Yunnan Province, and raised as the congressional proposal for several times during the 1980s. The national energy sector formally started the plan in 1988 and primarily schemed 6 hydropower stations with an installed capacity of 10.9 million kilowatt⁴. In 1999, National Development and Reform Committee (NDRC), the top functional department for macroeconomic control under State Council, took dominance on the project, in accordance with the “congressional

¹ From Wikipedia. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nu_river]

² The UNESCO World Heritage Site is a place (such as a forest, mountain, lake, desert, monument, building, complex, or city) that is listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as of special cultural or physical significance. By 2011, the list includes 936 prosperities which the World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 state parties, considers as having outstanding universal value. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO_World_Heritage_Site; and also, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>.

³ This area lies within the watershed areas of the upper reaches of the Jinsha, Lancang and Nu rivers, in the Hengduan Mountains of Yunnan Province, China, extending over 15 core areas, totalling 939,441.4 ha, and buffer areas, totalling 758,977.8 ha across a region of 180 km by 310 km, and, judged by UNESCO as possibly being “the most biologically diverse temperate region on earth” and “An exceptional range of topographical features”. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Parallel_Rivers_of_Yunnan_Protected_Areas; and also: <http://www.worldheritagesite.org/sites/parallelriversyunnan.html>. And, the area was added in the list just in July 2003, one month earlier than the NDRC examination meeting on NRP report. See: “China adds three more sites to World Heritage List,” *People’s Daily*, July 6th, 2003. [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200307/06/eng20030706_119513.shtml].

⁴ Cao Haidong, Zhang Peng, “Civil power behind the suspension of Nu River dam (*nujiang daba gezhi muhou de minjian liliang*),” *Economics*, May 20, 2004.

suggestion”¹, announcing to promote it “in accordance with legal procedures”². Then, under the supervision of water resource sector, two research institutions — Beijing Exploitation & Design Institute and Huadong Exploitation & Design Institute — successfully bid the job of the survey and design. In 2003 July, the “Report for Hydropower Plan in Middle and Lower Nu River Project (the NRP report)” was completed, planning a series of 13 hydropower stations with an installed capacity of 21.32 million kilowatt, equaling to 20% of the total installed capacity of China at that time. And, factually, earlier than the completion of the NRP report — in other words, when the plan hadn’t been formally approved according to legal procedures — the State-owned electricity goliath, Huadian Electricity Group, who not only possess economic resources but also considerable political power and support from the Ministry of Water resources”³ had already taken material steps to get the entitlement of Yunnan Provincial Government to exploit the Nu River hydropower resources, and a share-issuing enterprise exactly for the exploitation was already built on June 14 with high investment, much earlier than NDRC gathered all “relative sectors” to examine the NRP report on August 26th. This process was not strange according to the policymaking custom of China’s hydropower development: it was the money (investment of State-owned goliath) and scientific data (the NRP report) to be emphasized rather than discussions by multiple stakeholders, and in addition, the hydropower development had been acquiesced as the sphere of the water resource sector and electricity goliath in the bureaucratic balance. Thus, the legal procedure of “examination” on August 26th had been only taken as a matter of form which wouldn’t have truly influenced the policy. Similar to the decision-making process, the report emphasized the expected great electricity generation, prospected economic benefits and engineering details, with insufficient attention to the social effects of the environmental community with the relocation of more than 50,000 people, most of who from ethnic minority hill tribes. And, it hadn’t been expected the “ignorance” to invoke the “heretic” who had dared to deny the plan, that was, the marginalized SEPA.

¹ Li Ziliang, “Controversy on Nu River dam: what’s the point (*nujiang zhengba: daba zhizheng zheng shenme*)?” *Liaowang News Weekly*, December 6, 2004.

² “Controversy on Nu River dam: what’s the point?”

³ “Bridge Over Trouble Waters,” p. 139.

According to a SEPA speaker, the SEPA had “never heard the plan” until they were informed to participate in the examination procedure on August 12th, making them hard to accept¹. As discussed in last chapter, SEPA had been long unsatisfied with their marginalized position in the policymaking process, and, the Environmental Impact Assessment Law, coming into effect in 2003 September 1st, had been expected to be an effective tool to challenge the powerful profit-oriented sectors. Thus, in the meeting to examine the NRP report, SEPA became the only objector, demanding to apply the coming EIA provisions to this project to raise EIA report for SEPA’s special examination, “according to its large scale and considerable influence”². Although the drafters argued that the Report had already included a detailed EIA part which had cost RMB ¥5,000,000 (about US\$600,000) ³, this job was carried out in accordance with a 1992 administrative regulation issued inside the water resource sector, which was different from the 2003 EIA Law in details⁴. According to the SEPA representative, that Huadian Electricity pushed the NRP at that time was seemingly an attempt to escape the critical date of September 1st, when EIA Law came into effect. Thus, he insisted that the EIA process be reworked strictly following the EIA Law and SEPA supervision, rather than the dominance by the water resource sector.

However, the rare tough position of SEPA still hadn’t been taken serious enough when all the other sectors and NDRC achieved consensus to approve the Report, with SEPA representatives only being able to insist NDRC write their objections in the meeting summary⁵. The isolation of SEPA was not strange because the Nu River, being planned for more than 10 years, had been entangled with complicated economic interests: electricity goliath, water resource sector, local government, and also, state tax revenue. The planned series of 13 hydropower stations, with the installed capacity larger and annual electricity generation 21.5% more than the Three Gorgeous Program, was expected to bring a production value of 34 billion RMB yuan (more than 4 billion US

¹ Jianguang Tang, “The public pressure behind the suspension of Nu River dam project <nujiang daba gongcheng zanhuan beihou de minjian liliang>,” *China News Weekly*, May 20, 2004.

² “Controversy on Nu River dam: what’s the point?”

³ Xu Xiaoying, “The reversion of ‘Nu River Defense Battle’ <nujiang baoweizhan nizhuan>,” *Business Weekly*, Vol. 20, 2005.

⁴ Huang Yikun, “Nu River project needs reexamination <nujiang gongcheng chongshen>,” *Economic Observation*, April 12, 2004.

⁵ “The public pressure behind the suspension of Nu River dam project,”

dollars) per year, which means 5.199 billion RMB yuan (about 0.65 billion US dollars) for Central tax and 2.718 billion yuan (about 0.45 billion dollars) for local tax.

Besides the State-owned electricity goliath who “didn’t deny” to be the “biggest beneficiary”¹ in hydropower development, the local government—Yunnan Provincial Government and Nu River Prefectural Government—was another active promoter of the project. Nu River Prefecture, along the Southwest border of China, was one of the least advanced areas of Yunnan Province, with long border, complex topography and pressure to protect rare natural resources to seriously obstruct its modernization and development². Until 2003, Nu River Prefecture only had a 5.9% GDP increase much than the National average and the annual tax 0.1 billion yuan could only offer 14.07% of its financial need. Among the 492-thousand population, 130 thousand had the annual income of less than 625 RMB yuan (about 74 US dollars)³. To break away from the financial predicament and speed up economic increase, the Nu River Project was quite attractive for its prospect of bringing a 1 billion tax increase for the Prefecture, and in addition, creating 448250 long-term jobs and save 500 thousand cubic meters of wood fuels, which would help to protect local natural resources⁴.

After the examination meeting on August 26, despite of the ignored strong objection of SEPA, the NRP report was commonly judged as being formally approved by the majority supporters. However, SEPA didn’t surrender but turned to search for alliances, and lead the policymaking into a non-traditional, more complicated process which had mobilized pluralistic resources. Just on a short break of the June 26th meeting, the SEPA representative Mu Guangfeng, vice director of the Environmental Impact Assessment Office and director of SEPA’s supervision department, initiatively shared their

¹ A high-level administer of Yunan Huadian Corporation also emphasize that the electricity goliath was just “represent the State” in a media interview. See: Zhang Hui’e, “Nu River will also be constructed dams (*nujiang ye yao jian daba le*),” *Nanfang Dushi Daily*, November 25.

² See: Xie Yi (the Nu River Prefectural Party Secretary at that time), “Promote protection through development, and develop in protection, to achieve the harmonious development between human beings and nature <yi kaifa cu baohu, *zai baohu zhong kaifa, shixian nujiang ren yu ziran de hexie fazhan*>,” the speech in the High-level Forum on Hydropower Development and Environmental Protection. [scitech.people.com.cn/GB/53753/3796205.html]

³ See: Nu River Prefectural Party Committee, “Instructions of Nu River Prefectural Party Committee Government on Nu River Development and Environmental Protection <*zhonggong nujiang zhouwei zhou renmin zhengfu guanyu nujiang kaifa yu huanjing baohu de yijian*>,” in “Civil power behind the suspension of Nu River dam,”

⁴ “Promote protection through development, and develop in protection, to achieve the harmonious development between human beings and nature,”

information on NRP with Wang Yongchen at the first time¹. Wang was a personal friend of Mu and the leader of Green Earth Volunteers (GEV), a Beijing-located NGO mainly consisting of mainstream journalists, asking the activist to recommend a specialist for consultation in their further actions to prevent the project². In other words, the official wanted environmental activists to help his “beat back”³. According to a later report of *South Weekend*, the official suggested Wang the possibility of “mobilizing” the “experts on the Nu River” and “massive efforts of social groups” to “help mount a campaign”⁴.

That was also the first time the activist and her colleagues paid attention to the important river area. According to Wang, she had only got very little knowledge on dam projects or few experiences of anti-dam actions before, except glimpsing its possible connection with environmental protection from an earlier tour in Thai when she ever saw a village who were withstanding with local dam construction⁵. The experience had brought her an impression that “‘dam project’ equals to ‘environmental degradation’”, connecting China’s green activity with international anti-dam activity⁶. Thus, when her SEPA friend told her that Nu River was the last “no-dam river” of China, Wang quickly made her decision to cooperate, recommending her friend, biology Professor He Daming of Yunnan University, as consultant for SEPA.

2.2. “Beijing Conference” and Voicing of Counterviews

One week after the examination meeting, on September 3rd, SEPA hosted a symposium on “hydropower development and ecological protection issues of Nu River basin”. This symposium commonly known as “Beijing Conference” invited NGO activists and specialists “mainly majoring in ecology, environmental protection, biology, and

¹ Xu Xiaoying, “Alliance of Chinese NGOs and government <zhongguo minjian zuzhi yu zhengfu de jiemeng>,” *Business Weekly*, Vol. 6, 2005.

² Metha, *China’s Water Warriors*, p. 119.

³ “Civil power behind the suspension of Nu River dam,”

⁴ Deng Jie, “New Power of Environmental Protection is Growing,” *South Weekend*, December 27, 2005.

⁵ “Civil power behind the suspension of Nu River dam,”

⁶ See details of the international anti-dam activism in: B. R. Taylor ed., *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 90-94; W. M. Adams, *Green Development: Environment and Sustainability in the Third World*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000. In Addition, the anti-dam activism has been always designed beyond the environmental controversy to care about the rights of interests of the residents in dam areas, see also: Aviva Imhof, Susanne Wong and Peter Bosshard, *Citizens’ Guide to the World Commission on Dams*, International Rivers network, Berkeley, CA, USA, 2002.

humanities”¹ who “on the whole had negative feelings against hydropower development². Among them, Pro. He Daming, who had been recommended by Wang Yongchen to SEPA for consultation, raised six reasons to boycott the construction, which included³: a) it was China’s state responsibility to maintain the ecosystem of Nu River Valley, as part of the “Three Parallel Rivers Area”⁴ listed on UNESCO World Heritage Site⁵; b) maintaining the natural valley was favorable for both species and ethnic cultural diversity; c) vulnerability to severe geographic conditions like soil erosion, mudslide and earthquake would make constructions profit much less than expected; d) the following ecological migration might bring social problem, according to the experiences of Three Gorgeous Dam; e) it was still uncertain that local people would factually benefit from the project profits to shake off poverty. As the consultant for SEPA and the only specialist from local place, the suggestions of He was depended by the rest specialists, who were all from Beijing, and led to a common agreement—publicized to mass media—that Nu River, as its “special importance” for “national long-term objective of ecological security”, should have been “conserved from any modern development”⁶. In addition, as “shaking off the poverty of local people” was a main political correct of hydropower development, the attendants also emphasized on “ecotourism” as an alternative approach⁷. The specialist statement was echoed by the hosting SEPA official. He further made clear that development might “worsen the local poverty” for “the possibility of land decrease and

¹ “The public pressure behind the suspension of Nu River dam project,”

² “The public pressure behind the suspension of Nu River dam project,”

³ See: “Planned 13 dams on Nu River are strongly opposed by environmental experts (*nujiang jiang shangma 13 ji shuiba, zao huaibao zhuanjia qianglie fandui*),” *Beijing News*, November 25, 2003. And “Nu River will also be constructed dams,”

⁴ This area lies within the watershed areas of the upper reaches of the Jinsha, Lancang and Nu rivers, in the Hengduan Mountains of Yunnan Province, China, extending over 15 core areas, totalling 939,441.4 ha, and buffer areas, totalling 758,977.8 ha across a region of 180 km by 310 km, and, judged by UNESCO as possibly being “the most biologically diverse temperate region on earth” and “An exceptional range of topographical features”. See:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Parallel_Rivers_of_Yunnan_Protected_Areas; and also:

<http://www.worldheritagesite.org/sites/parallelriversyunnan.html>. And, the area was added in the list just in July 2003, one month earlier than the NDRC examination meeting on NRP report. See: “China adds three more sites to World Heritage List,” *People’s Daily*, July 6, 2003

[http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200307/06/eng20030706_119513.shtml].

⁵ The UNESCO World Heritage Site is a place (such as a forest, mountain, lake, desert, monument, building, complex, or city) that is listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as of special cultural or physical significance. By 2011, the list includes 936 prosperities which the World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 state parties, considers as having outstanding universal value. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO_World_Heritage_Site; and also: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>.

⁶ “Planned 13 dams on Nu River are strongly opposed by environmental experts,”

⁷ “Planned 13 dams on Nu River are strongly opposed by environmental experts,”

soil erosion during passive migration”¹. This agreement made by attending specialists and SEPA officials then “formed the basis of further protest against the project”² during the next five years. Even though “two or three “hydroelectricity experts”³ had tried to defend the development by reaffirming the views in the NRP report, they then had become “isolated” with “tease and mockery”⁴.

This symposium, commonly known as “Beijing Conference”, was then judge by “environmental activists and officials in the environmental protection sector” as “triggering off the first shot” for “Nu River defense battle”⁵. The expression of “battle” might have told the future of little space for dialogue and space between NRP supporters and objects. And, in addition, the symposium demonstrated the coalition of SEPA and green civil society from the very first time of the “battle”.

2.3 “Kunming Conference” to Start the Debate

In response to the “Beijing Conference”, Yunnan Environmental Protection Bureau hosted symposiums separately on September 29th and October 10th, and, different from “Beijing Conference”, specialists invited—also mainly in the field of environmental protection—were all from the local Province. It had also made fundamental divergence in the unanimous conclusion. The attendants denied the statement of their Beijing peer to judge Nu River as “having not been developed before”, by arguing that there have already been large-scale effects of human activity along the river basin during the history, including a small hydroelectricity station on the upper river in Tibetan Autonomous Region, and other development by other sovereignties along the downriver. Thus, according to the attendants, it was “impossible to keep a completely natural ecosystem along the Nu River”⁶.

Even though the meeting was hosted by local environmental protection sector in accordance with SEPA’s instruction, the final conclusion clearly indicated the will of the local provincial government, who controlled SEPA’s local branch through its power over

¹ Han Luowu, “Should dams be constructed on Nu River <*nuijiang jiujiang gaibugai jian shuiba*>,” *Legal Daily*, September 4, 2003.

² “Planned 13 dams on Nu River are strongly opposed by environmental experts,” and “Nu River will also be constructed dams,”

³ “Planned 13 dams on Nu River are strongly opposed by environmental experts,”

⁴ “Planned 13 dams on Nu River are strongly opposed by environmental experts,”

⁵ “Civil power behind the suspension of Nu River dam,”

⁶ “Planned 13 dams on Nu River are strongly opposed by environmental experts,”

personnel. On October 20th and 21st, the local provincial and autonomous prefectural government, accompanied with related sectors who had participated in the original policy-making process¹, confronted with SEPA in another “symposium”, commonly called “Kunming (capital of Yunnan Province) Conference” to be in contrast with the “Beijing Conference”. This conference, although named as “symposium” to indicate the “independence” from formal policymaking process, was attended by project supporters and objectors from the government far beyond only specialists. In such a face-to-face confrontation among governmental sectors, it was undoubted for SEPA again to feel isolated and weak. Public statement of the “Kunming Conference” judged the conclusion of objecting specialists on the ecosystem importance of Nu River and its vulnerability to constructions as exaggerative. It argued²: 1) the Nu River project was designed to be located below the 2000-height (above sea level) line, which meant it was outside the UNESCO “Three Parallel Rivers Area” and wouldn’t influence the natural heritage protection; 2) vegetation in the project planning area had been proved to have enough self-recovery capability; 3) there hadn’t been State special protected fishes in this river basin. And moreover, rather than ecological consideration, “to make the living and deployment for local poor people” was insisted by the statement to be “the first and most important responsibility of Central and local government”, and, the statement emphasized that the local people had “already sacrificed for the State ecological protection in this area” and deserved compensation through State modern development³, refusing to abandon the project.

It might have seemed that the objections had been suppressed again, however, SEPA in this conference was taken as an equal negotiation counterpart, which meant a great progress in comparison with how it had been treated in the NDRC examination meeting. And moreover, the Project supporters also tried to placate angry SEPA officials by

¹ The participants were composed of delegates from Yunnan Provincial Government, Provincial Environmental Protection Bureau, Provincial Planning Commission, Provincial departments on agriculture, water resources, forestry, and land resources, Provincial Policy Research Office, “Three Rivers Parallel” Protection Office, Beijing Survey and Design Institution, Huadong Survey and Design Institution, Kunming Survey and Design Institution, Nu River Prefectural Party Committee, Nu River Prefectural Government, Prefectural EPB, Yunnan Huadian Corporation and SEPA. See: the brief of “Kunming Conference”. [<http://www.Nu.ngo.cn/Files/Cat01/018.doc>]

² See: the brief of “Kunming Conference”, pp. 2-3.

³ See: the brief of “Kunming Conference”, p. 4.

promising to consider their views more. They admitted that the hydropower development needed to be coordinated with protecting local ecological, environmental, cultural and ethnic resources, thus, the original NRP report should have been improved with more care about “sustainable development”¹. In other words, SEPA successfully framed environmental thought as the main controversy issue of Nu River construction, then making the environmental watchdog an indispensable player for the policymaking. SEPA further took the chance to raise its main purpose, demanding to add the EIA process dominated by SEPA to the policymaking according to the newborn EIA Law, to replace the EIA undergone by the water resource sector².

2.3 Information Transparency

When SEPA and the original policymakers were confronted according to traditional bureaucratic rules of negotiation, mass media were doing their work to bring a information transparency. During the “Kunming Conference”, views of supporters for NRP was carried, with views of opponents being ignored, by local media, however, the views of opponents obtained much more public attention through mass media located in Beijing, which had much larger circulation, much more skilled reporter, and much greater influence in comparison with the local media.

Early in the Beijing Conference, Wang Yongchen was invited to attend. As the leader of GEV, the environmental NGO mainly composed of journalists, Wang called on her members from nearly 20 media organizations³, and these journalists then became pioneers and predominant players of issue framing during the “Defense battle”⁴, according to an administrator of Huadian Electricity, the hydropower goliath. According to a investigation report, the organizations covered best sellers and influential Party mouthpieces included CCTV, *Beijing News*, *China Youth Daily*, *South Wind Window*, *Economic*, *News Weekly*, *International Herald Leader*, *21st Century Business Herald*, *Green China*, *Oriental Morning Post*, *China National Geographic*, *Forest and Human*

¹ See: the brief of “Kunming Conference”, p. 4.

² See: the brief of “Kunming Conference”, p. 4.

³ “The reversion of ‘Nu River Defense Battle’,” And also see: “Civil power behind the suspension of Nu River dam,”

⁴ “The public pressure behind the suspension of Nu River dam project,” .

Ecology, and *China Environmental News*¹.

We may use an example to demonstrate the media power. In 2003 October, to deal with the local Prefectural Governmental actions to construct “local public opinion” through the “rubber stamp”, local people’s congress and CPPCC. *Newprobe* (xinwen diaocha), CCTV’s popular column for in-depth news investigation and whose chief editor was a well-known activist in the green public sphere, interviewed opposing activists and Nu River Prefectural Governmental officials. In this interview, opposing activists asked the officials several questions which made the officials seem to have “betrayed an almost complete ignorance beyond the most general aspects of the project, underscoring the lack of information that was extended to local officials and their somewhat unqualified support for the project”². According to the opposing activists, before the *Newsprobe* broadcast, prefectural people’s congress and CPPCC had placed the NRP on the agenda, but after the broadcast, the NRP was “dropped from the Schedule”³.

3. Mobilization of Environmental NGOs

3.1. Environmental NGOs as the Main Player on Front Stage

Although SEPA, with the assistance of environmental NGOs, successfully framed the public opinion to emphasize its importance, it didn’t immediately change its weak position, because the supporters obviously had much more institutional resources. After the “academic symposiums”, top officials of Nu Autonomous Prefecture—we may judge the local government as a most active supporter because officials pursued economic development for political achievements, as mentioned in the former chapters— quickly went to Beijing on October 22, to report the details of environmental controversy to NDRC and other main supporters. And, at the same time, local governmental active attempt even looked effective for a time. On November 12th, some key SEPA officials went to Yunnan Province for “investigation” in Nu River valley and have a non-public

¹ Hu Kaiping and Yu Xiaogang, “Bridge Over Trouble Waters: The Role of the News Media in Promoting Public Participation in River Basin Management and Environmental Protection in China,” in Jennifer L. Turner and Kenji Otsuka (ed.), *Promoting Sustainable River Basin Governance: Crafting Japan-U.S. Water Partnerships in China*, Chiba, Japan: Institute of Developing Economies (IDE)/Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), 2005, pp. 125–140. p. 137.

² *China’s Water Warriors*, p. 117.

³ *Ibid*, p. 118.

communication with local officials, without any specialists, activists, or journalists to attend at this time¹. On January 5th, the environmental evaluation part of NRP report, after separated from the whole Report as a compromise to SEPA, had been proved by NRDC. This seemingly “result” of the controversy just gave people wrong impression that the policymaking process of Nu River Project had been finally dragged back to the traditional way, ending under the interest coordination inside bureaucratic sectors, without any substantial change to the original Project scheme.

But the trivial compromise, without either respect to SEAP authority under the new EIA Law or opening to public participation, was quite different from the expectations of SEPA and its activist friends. Factually, they had never given up, and their efforts to influence policymaking outside the formal process had always been continuing. While SEPA were communicating with supporters through institutional channels, it hadn't stopped exchanging information with environmental activists and journalists, and continuously received “encouragement” of “holding on”² from them. For environmental activists like Wang Yongchen, that was not a peaceful balance of interests but a smokeless “battle”. And, from then, environmental NGOs had developed their role beyond only the assistant to SEPA before.

3.2. Environmental NGO coalition: Domestic and International

On 2003 October 25th, in the representative congress of a half-official organization, the China Environment and Culture Promotion Society, an artist and the vice president of the Society expressed his “worry” on the NRP construction to damage the “original ecology”. His words made Wang “suddenly have a brainwave”, and immediately decide to persuade the attendants to support their petition, using their “personal influence” to protect Nu River”. Wang's “brainwave” finally brought her 62 signs on the spot, from celebrities from the fields of science, arts, journalism, and grass root environmental protection. This signed petition was then publicized through mass media and brought great widespread of the “defense battle”.

However, GEV was not fight alone. Besides the allies located in Beijing, it also got

¹ Nu River will also be constructed dams.”

² “Civil power behind the suspension of Nu River dam,”

touch with the small NGOs in or near the local place who had paid attention to the hydropower construction for quite a time. Among them, Green Watershed was the most capable. From 2000 when the organization was founded, its leader and main sponsor, Yu Xiaogang, put his energy on monitoring the dam effects of Manwan Dam (finished in 1994 on Jinsha River) and Xiaohua Dam (currently under construction on Langcang River).

Just at the time the Nu River controversy began, Yu tried to meet SEPA officials directly during their visit in Kunming for a field investigation in November, but he failed when the officials abruptly revised their itinerary¹. And after that, Yu turned to get touch with environmental NGOs in Beijing. During his visit to Beijing in November, with the real experiences of Green Watershed, a common vision of how to protect Nu River and even other Southwestern rivers was formed. And, “a coalition was born”² by Beijing-located domestic and international NGOs including Green Earth Volunteers (GEV), Friends of Nature (FON), Institute of Environment and Development, Global Village of Beijing, Beijing Books Education Center, Society Entrepreneur Ecology, Conservation International and Wild China, with NGOs from Southwestern China including Green Watershed, Green River, Friends of the Earth, and Sanjiangyuan Environment Protection Association, and many others through the country³. Especially the participation of Green Watershed provided the coalition with first-hand information, which made him a spotlight. During the visit in Beijing, even nationally televised popular column of CCTV, the Party broadcast, invited them for speech as local expert. In February 2004, Green Watershed and GEV organized a trip for nine large media resources to Nu River basin, which “resulted in nationwide awareness of the ill planned dam building situation”⁴. On the other side, the social campaign experiences of Beijing-located NGOs made Green Watershed more capable. In May 2004, Green Watershed arranged 14 citizen representatives of proposed NRP-affected area to visit villages at Manwan Dam and Xiaohua Dam, showing them the negative effects of dam building on rural

¹ Mertha, *China's Water Warriors*, p. 120.

² “Bridge Over Trouble Waters,” p. 136.

³ Ibid, p. 135-136.

⁴ Ibid, 137.

communities that when they were forced to leave their agricultural environment, it might be very hard for them to make the living. And the representatives were then given opportunity by the NGO coalition to voice their opinion to mass media in Beijing.

Besides domestic coalition, the international cooperation was also a critical factor for environmental NGOs to succeed in the “battle”. In November 2003, “Third Meeting of China and the United States Environment Forum” was held in Beijing. Beijing’s well-known environmental NGOs were in attendance. Wang Yongchen with her GEV became the first to petition attendants, including grass root NGOs from both at home and abroad, and UNESCO officials, to pay attention to and discuss the dam building issue in Nu River. Wang’s appeal was echoed by a heated debate on whether the dam building would help local people out of poverty or lead them even harder to make living after the remove from their accustomed agricultural environment. Although there hasn’t been any agreement in this meeting, environmental NGOs successfully drew international attention to their issue framing over NPR, especially the attention from the international anti-dam coalition.

In November 2003, Chinese NGOs GEV, FON, Green Watershed and Green Island were invited to the World River and People Opposing Dams meeting held in Thailand. This event had been the main opinion expression platform for international anti-dam activity since its first meeting held in 1997 in Brazil. The 2003 meeting took anti NRP as a main topic, and it led to a signed petition by NGOs from over sixty countries to protect the Nu River and sent to UNESCO which obtained a UNESCO reply promising to keep close attention to this issue. And further, under the great promotion of Chinese NGOs, more than eighty NGOs in Thailand on the lower Nu River (named Salween in Thailand territory) wrote a letter to the Chinese ambassador in Thailand to express opposition¹.

In March 2005, GEV, FON and Global Village of Beijing, as most influential and capable NGOs of China, attended in the Fifth UN Civil Society Forum and become the main player. GEV representative was invited to raise a speech on their actions to protect Nu River, and they attained signatures from attending high-level UN officials for their

¹ However, there have factually development plan and actions along Salween River according to the national economic plan of Burma and Thailand. See details in *Salweenwatch. Web.* [http://www.salweenwatch.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1]

petition to Chinese government. And this event in Beijing again made a lead front-page story for mass media. According to the efforts, by early 2004, the NRP controversy had “attracted worldwide interest as 60 international organizations agreed to lobby the Chinese government”¹.

3.3. The Issue Frameworks of Mass Media: Environmental Priority

As it was mentioned before in this chapter, we can find how active SEPA and environmental NGOs played their role to frame the issue over NRP through their close media resources, leading the public opinion to an environmental concern. Environmental activists also agreed that “some journalists abandoned a neutral position as observers and took the bias for the powerless (local citizens having rare participation in policymaking) and disadvantaged NGOs (in comparison with governmental sectors and electricity goliath)” as “their responsibility (to balance the interest division) during social transformation”². So what exactly the frameworks were?

The basic framework was the expression of “virgin river” with obvious environmental priority to describe Nu River, giving emphasis to the “potential (environmental) risks”³ of dam construction. This expression was firstly raised by Wang Yongchen and her close friend Zhang Kejia, leader of NGO Green Island and a veteran environmental journalist of *China Youth Daily*. When Zhang used the expression on *China Youth Daily*, advocating to “leave a virgin river for human beings in the rush wave of economic development”⁴ on August 19th, Wang, on *South Weekend*, expressed more emotionally to judge the development of “the virgin river” as a “profanity to nature” which would “bring retribution”⁵ on 20th. This expression was then applied to the “Beijing Conference” agreement and diffused by mass media transparency, and judged as a core expression of “Nu River Defense battle” to inspire the public feelings to respect “biodiversity and the

¹ Jim Yardley, “Rule by law: seeking a public voice on China’s ‘angry river’,” *New York Times*, December 26, 2005.

² Fu Tao, “The Development of Chinese Environmental NGOs <zhongguo huanjing zuzhi de fazhan>,” in FON Green Paper Book 2005. pp 160-167, p. 161.

³ Wang Yongchen, “Western River Development and Public Participation <xibu jianghe kaifa yu gongzhong canyu>,” in Wang Yongchen (ed.), *Change: Chinese Environmental Journalists Investigation Report 2006 <zhongguo huanjing jizhe diaocha baogao 2006>*, Beijing: Sanlian Shudian Press, 2007, pp. 122-164. p. 134.

⁴ Zhang Kejia, “Nu River dam project met voice of objection <nujiang shuiba jihua zaoyu fandui sheng>,” *China Youth Daily*, August 19, 2003.

⁵ Wang Yongchen, “Petition to leave the last ecological river <qing liuxia zuihou de shengtai he>,” *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, August 20, 2003.

value of natural and cultural heritage”¹. It was still doubtful about the reasonableness of “virgin river”, because China, Thailand and Burma government had already constructed several dams for hydro electricity respectively on the upper and lower Nu River. However, the insist on this expression might indicate the “media bias” for “their responsibility during social transformation”. According to *Nanfang Dushi Daily*, the controversy was factually a choice between “maintaining a precious ecosystem river” and “depending on the dam construction (which might not be the only and most effective way) to increase economic earning”². And mass media chose the former, echoing activity of SEPA and environmental NGOs. For example, *China Youth Daily* described the “lost” of constructing 13 dams as “destructive” to Nu River valley which had been “a spotlight for ecologists from all over the world”, and argued to pay more attention to “its unique value for ecological and social humane environment” rather than “for energy demand”³. *People’s Daily* took the Nu River ecosystem as “scarce even of the whole world”, and emphasized the need to consider more about “environmental benefits” rather than “economic benefits”⁴. And, *Beijing Youth Daily* even went farther to judge Nu River valley as “a main passage and safety basin for the migration of living creatures between North and South in Eurasia Continent”, and suggested to “add damages of species, culture and ecology into the hydropower construction cost”⁵. Thus, through media issue framing, environmental priority was lifted from a technically topic in the original policymaking, to the core concern of the NRP controversy.

While advocating the environmental priority, media framework also included suspicion of reasons of NRP supporters, especially the substantial benefits of development. Hydro electricity was commonly doubted in mass media as an “unclean energy” and as of less economic benefits than that being expected. As evidences, environmental NGOs translated the 2000 Report,

¹ “Western River Development and Public Participation,” p. 136.

² “Nu River will also be constructed dams,”

³ Zhang Kejia, “Many specialists questions Nu River Development, calling on GDP with ecological input <zhongduo zhuanjia zhiyi nujiang kaifa huyu GDP baohan shengtai chengben>”, *China Youth Daily*, September 5, 2003.

⁴ Zhao Yongxin, “Don’t forget environmental protection in hydropower construction <shuidian mo wang huanjing baohu>,” *People’s Daily*, September 19, 2003.

⁵ Sun Danping, “Nu River planning invoked controversy on whether we need more dams <nujiang guihua jian daba yin zhengyi, women shifou xuyao jian gengduo shuiba>,” *Beijing Youth Daily*, October 30, 2003.

“Dams and Development: A New Framework for Decision-Making”, of World Commission on Dams—a coalition of international civil society formed in 1997 to research the environmental—social and economic impacts of the development of large dams globally for media sources. According this investigation result provided by the report¹, the potential risks of dam building and hydropower development included resettlement problem, sediment accumulation to water interception, damage of biodiversity, flush of historical heritage (for ancient culture had been inclined to grow along big rivers), increase of greenhouse gases emission, and difficulty to rebuild the local society with ethnic and cultural diversity. In addition, this report judged that, due to the shorter useful time and larger construction cost than that being expected, most of the dam construction couldn’t achieved their planned economic benefits. Based on these investigation results, this report concluded hydro electricity shouldn’t have been taken as “clean energy” and recommend state governments to search alternative approaches for energy demand. According to Wang Yongchen, environmental NGOs and mass media used this report text to transfer the public a image that “international society” had changed their “elementary view of how to deal with river resources”, from “development” to “recovering its original ecology”². But the diffusion of this information also indicated the media “bias”. Even though World Commission on Dams might have represented the anti-dam civil society to advocate for environmental priority over dam issues, their “framework of decision-making” hadn’t generally accepted, especially by developing countries confronted with energy risk. For example, in the 2002 World Sustainable Development Summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa, leaders from 192 countries agreed large hydroelectricity as a most clean and renewable energy resources and made consensus to encourage development, to relieve the stress of climate change³.

3.4 Issue Frameworks Encouraged by Top Leader

Influenced by the public opinion, the activity of Huadian Electricity Group and NDRC

¹ See details in World Commission on Dams (WCD): “Dams and Development: A New Framework for Decision-Making,” November 2000 [From: <http://www.dams.org/report>]

² “Western River Development and Public Participation,” p. 136.

³ Zhang Boting, “Dams and Development: A News Policymaking Framework <shuiba yu fazhan: yige xin de juice kuangjia>,” *People’s Daily Web*. October, 24, 2005. [<http://scitech.people.com.cn/GB/53753/3796280.html>]

to push the NRP planning to People's Congressional procedure was slowed down¹, and SEPA adopted a tougher touch. In its formal response to Huadian Electricity Group over NRP, SEPA clearly raised two necessary prerequisites for approval on this project: undergoing EIA process according to the EIA Law, and take another prove process over the project planning of 13 dams with participation of SEPA². SEPA's holding on to its legal status further encouraged its NGO allies. On January 8th and 9th 2004, NGOs Green Watershed and Resettlement Research Institute with The Chinese Academy of Social Science and Geological Society of Sichuan held a symposium to discuss the opposing views to NRP and sent the symposium record to "top policymakers"³. At the end of January, Li Xiaoxi, a key member of FON and a Deputy to the people's congress of Haidian District, Beijing, directly sent a letter on NRP controversy, especially the reasons of opponents, to Premier Wen Jiabao. And, this letter became the key.

In February, NDRC raised the NRP report to the State Council for approval. But to the supporters' great disappointment, the report was denied with the written comment by Premier Wen to suspend the project, for the reason that "such a large-scale hydropower project drawing great public concern and controversy in respect of environmental protection" needed "cautious investigation and scientific policymaking (without rush)"⁴. This written comment was then specially transferred to Li Xiaoxi⁵, as a direct response to her petition to the Premier. The top authority recognition of "public opinion" indicated the mobilization effects of SEPA and NGO activity and greatly encouraged them. For example, Wang Yongchen, on hearing this news during the trip she organized journalists to Nu River basin for a survey, was cheered up to acclaim it to be "a great progress of China's democratic process"⁶.

On the other hand, the position of SEPA was also strengthened. Although Mu Guangfeng — the first SEPA official who triggered the "Nu River Defend War" as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter — was deprived of real power and moved to a

¹ "The public pressure behind the suspension of Nu River dam project,"

² "Controversy on Nu River dam: what's the point?"

³ Ibid.

⁴ "The reversion of 'Nu River Defense Battle,'"

⁵ "The reversion of 'Nu River Defense Battle,'"

⁶ "Western River Development and Public Participation," p. 122.

sinecure making him politically marginalized, as the price of his challenge to the customary policymaking system¹, SEPA didn't change their hard insist. After the Premier suspended NRP, "SEPA had dominated the development steps" ², through finally forcing NRP supporters to accept EIA process under SEPA's authority. The project then was suspended until SEPA gave approval to the EIA report in 2008. While achieving the main purpose, SEPA also demonstrated an inclination to care about the appeals of environmental NGOs. As Pan Yue, the deputy general of SEPA, told Yu Xiaogang (Green Watershed):

*The base for government administration is people's genuine support. The true support of the people will result in social stability, but social stability depends on social justice. Social justice depends on socialist democracy, and the best situation of socialist democracy is public participation. In the current Chinese political system, **the best area for public participation is in environmental issues** because environmental problems affect everyone, so the whole of society must participate in the solution...Public participation does not result in social unrest, but social unrest is the result of a lack of outlets for public participation³.*

Pan's statement seemed to echo the cheer of Wang Yongchen—through her activity in protecting Nu River, she had been well recognized as the representative China's anti-dam green society—for "a great progress of China's democratic process". We may remember that in the Yuanmingyuan membrane issue, Pan had quite a many similar expressions.

¹ *China's Water Warriors*, p. 122.

² Sun Rongfei, "High-level authority has gradually lifted the embargo on Nu River hydropower planning after the postpone for one year by State Council <guowuyuan jiaoting yinian hou, gaoceng zhujian jiejin nujiang shuidian guihua>," *Diyi Caijing Daily*, June 3, 2005.

³ Hu and Yu, "Bridge Over Trouble Waters," p. 137.

4. Social Risks of Environmental NGOs: a Different Angle to Understand the Dual Identity

4.1. Challenge to Natural Validity of Environmental NGOs to “Represent the Public”

For the giant scale of the NRP, for the active participation of public, for the involvement of China’s top leaders, and for the international influence, the “Nu River Defense Battle” was judged as a most important public issue of China’s environmental protection history, and a typical case of modern China’s social mobilization. However, with this premises, as mentioned in this chapter, political factors were quite initiative to promote the process. The “mobilization” was factually triggered by the environmental watchdog who had been tired of its weak position in the bureaucratic institutions, making the base for following issue framing. Besides it, a fact being easily neglected was that the most serious challenge to green NGOs hadn’t been from the Party-state — not only environmental NGOs had received support from the top bureaucratic leader, but also most of the political pressure from NRP supporters were counteracted by SEPA — but from inside the public sphere. This story may show us another side, or natural defect of China’s young green civil society, which might have weakened the ideal expectation of optimistic liberalists on them to mobilize the potential social resources of China against the high political pressure, but would help us to observe more complexity of China’s pluralistic public sphere.

When the Premier ordered to suspend the project, the great success also brought risks to environmental NGOs. Firstly, the activity of SEPA turned to “silence”¹ in mobilization as it had already reached the main purpose of applying EIA procedure into the policymaking. That meant less opportunity for the green civil society to use institutional resources. A most obvious signal of the divergence between SEPA and environmental NGOs was over the choice of a responsible EIA agency. NGOs emphasized to opposite the participation of agencies under supervision of water electricity sector, but SEPA, at least publicly, announce it “proper” to entrust such agencies, because only water electricity sector had enough detailed data of the river basin to “deal with the complex

¹ “Nu River hydropower program: problems on protection and development of a ecological river <nujiang shuidian xiangmu: yitiao shengtai he de kaifa yu baohu nanti>,” *East Morning*, November 2, 2004.

EIA work”¹, very like a compromise under bureaucratic rules.

Secondly, profit-oriented sectors and the local government finally got aware of their failure in framing public opinion and tried to do a better media communication more actively, instead of passively responding to pressure from the civil society. According to a research section chief of Yunnan Provincial Province, the local government had found them “lack skills to transfer to the public how the project being helpful to solve the local poverty problem and protect the ecology”, and on the contrary, the NGO might have been “making mistakes in professional knowledge but skillful at arousing audiences’ fervor”². And further, the chief also criticized environmental NGOs as “extreme”, for NGOs and some journalists had been inclined to avoid serious discussion but simply judge the supporters as “stakeholders”, “dogs of government” or “malfeasants”³ to put the supporters into a morally weak position. With such considerations, Yunnan Provincial and Nu Prefectural government started to invite journalists to the local place for field work from 2004.

However, the two facts didn’t certainly mean NGOs were faced with political pressure. Although the changing attitudes of SEPA made the civil society lose a strong alliance in mobilization, after all, SEPA didn’t, at least for a time, change his status against NRP supporters. And moreover, although the local government found their shortage of media communication, officials in the far Southwest part was still difficult to influence the shaped issue framing of mainstream mass media mainly located in advanced East areas, at least in the short term. Factually, from 2004, the strongest doubt about the environmental NGOs was from those who had the same non-governmental identity with the environmental NGOs, which had put them in a risk of social validity.

It should be admitted that most environmental activists, at least during the early time of “Nu River Defense battle”, were fervent and dedicated, but not knowledgeable to control rational discussion. As mentioned before, Wang Yongchen, the most active sponsor had agreed with the SEPA official to “defend the river” when she only had very few special knowledge on the river and international anti-dam movement. And a most

¹ “Nu River project needs reexamination,”

² “The reversion of ‘Nu River Defense Battle,’”

³ “The reversion of ‘Nu River Defense Battle,’”

active sponsor even had mistaken the hydropower units of “kilowatt” and “kilowatt-hour” in her cited sources, directly reducing the persuasiveness of her announcement to mass media that the large NPR only had very small electrical energy and would be a waste. As a result, there extreme environmentalist position and emotional discourses, while easily arousing fervor of audiences — mainly of rising middle class in big cities but not from the local place — led to severe opposition from some professional persons who announced to take “science” as the priority rather than “emotion”. These oppositionists emphasized the core value of “development”, and insisted that people would make positive use of the nature in a proper and controllable way. We can easily find that was really the difference between environmental ethics (subjectivity of environment) and development ethics (subjectivity of development), which had been a popular controversy in academic, political and public sphere of developed democracies from the late 1960s¹, but the common controversy had different meaning in China. With poor preparation of professional information, environmental activists attained the social validity mainly through their non-official identity rather than reasonal persuasiveness, based on the decrease of government credibility. According to the announcement of Wang Yongchen, their actions were “naturally valid” for the activists were “belonging to middle class in economic status”(to the contrary with interest group, such as the electrical goliath), “considering both economic and social effects”(to the contrary with profit-oriented consideration), “taking the approaches of mass media, law, academic actions and other social capitalism”(to the contrary with administrative means), and “representing the interest of marginalized local people without caring their own self benefits or benefits of any organization”(to the contrary with interest group)². Obviously, even though environmental activists also had taken a role to follow the route of SEPA and thus somehow shared the institutional resources, they preferred to stress the non-official identity and the image of no involvement in any special interest, with judging specialists

¹ See in reference to: Rom Harré, ,Jens Brockmeie and Peter Mulhausler, *Greenspeak: A Study of Environmental Discourse*, Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999; and also Takis Fotopoulos, *The Multidimensional Crisis and Inclusive Democracy*, English translation published on: *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 1.5, Special Issue, August, 2005.

² “Western River Development and Public Participation,” p. 147.

who had supported NRP as “bending to governmental pressure”¹. And, the simple view of differentiation had become expanded to the public in accordance with environmental NGO’s rich media resources². However, on the contrary, how about their activism going to result if the identity of “representing common people” was shaken?

4.2. Debate over “Worship nature” as continuation of NRP Controversy

The risk of environmental NGOs to continue their efforts on protecting Nu River was started by the debate over “worship nature”, in which their environmental priority was doubted with “emotionalism” and “enthusiasm”.

The staged success of “Nu River Defense Battle” not only brought environmental NGOs, especially their key members, great fame as “public intellectuals” but also encouraged them to develop their language power. After the 2004 tsunami in Indian Ocean, an environmentalist activist raised the topic that “The catastrophe factually warned people to feel worship to the nature”³ on *South Weekend* of January 6th 2005. This article, while being fervently echoed by environmental activists, was noted by a biochemist and free-lancer named Fang Zhouzi. Fang was also a non-official “public intellectual” famous for his experiences of revealing corruption in academic world and pseudo-science from 2000. Different from most experts who were weak at transferring their views to public, Fang, who had experienced his research career in United States during the whole 1990s and been one of the first Chinese to sponsor internet media from the late 1990s, knew how to take advantage of media tactics as well as environmental

¹ For example, in the “Kunming Conference” in October 2003, the objectors were mainly from Beijing and the supporters were mainly from the Yunnan Province. Thus, the sensitive objectors criticized the supporters of just obeying the governmental pressure. However, the critics hadn’t been accepted by the specialists from Yunnan Province. As Han Lianxian wrote, “along with the more times of communication with the local people and the deeper participation into their true life, the more worries grow about their bad living conditions. That’s exactly why the presenting specialists in the Kunming conference had been divided into two pacts...the objectors of scholars and environmentalists from Beijing criticized the Yunnan scholars of bending to the government, but the truth was the Yunnan scholars had more experiences of studying along the Nu River basin, which made them recognize more about the local poverty”. See: Han Lianxian, “Thought About Nu River Dam Construction <nujiang jianba de sikao>,” *Great Nature*, No. 5, 2004, pp. 2-5. p. 3.

² See for example, *Beijing News* described it as “the head-on confrontation between the ‘Beijing pact’ and the ‘Yunnan pact’,” (“Planned 13 dams on Nu River are strongly opposed by environmental experts,”); *Nanfang Dushi Bao* doubted the specialists from Yunnan to be “too afraid of losing their jobs to say the truth,” (“Nu River will also be constructed dams,”) For *Youth Reference* <qingnian cankao>, a paper published by the China Youth Daily Group, the controversy between opponents and proponents just equaled to the “living place divergence”. (“Interest conflict behind the Nu River hydropower with the investment of near 100 billion RMB yuan <zong touzi jin 1000 yi yuan, nujiang shuidianzhan beihou de liyi zhi zheng>,” *Youth Reference*, March 16, 2004.

³ Liu Hongbo, “Human attitudes to the nature and ourselves <renlei miandui ziran he ziji de taidu>,” *South Weekend*, January 6, 2005.

NGOs. After reading the topic of “worship nature”, Fang quickly wrote an article under the title of “What can we learn from the tsunami,” on January 8th. Formal publication of this article was postponed to January 19 on *China Youth Daily*, where Fang had his column, and was modified to make the view seem not so sharp. In this article, Fang criticized the discourse of “worship nature” as “prittle-pralle”¹, like the well-known fight between catholic and protestant in the 18th century, when they accused the each other of bringing tsunami for annoying the God. And, Fang expressed his view of taking nature as the objective serving human beings, which needed “vigilance and emergency mechanism to the potential catastrophe”². About the same time, another scientist named He Zuoxiu³, published the article, “People need no worship nature,” the theoretical physicist and Academician of Chinese Academy of Science directly pointed “worship nature” as an “anti-science slogan”. And, he even took the “Nu River Defense Battle” as an example of “anti-science”, arguing that “some degradation of natural environment” was not “avoidable” for China’s modern development, only if either development or environmental degradation was “oriented by people’s demand”⁴. We may find that, He and Fang emphasized the human beings as subjective, which indicated the philosophy of “development ethics”, while “worship nature” implied “environmental ethics” which considers extending the traditional boundaries of ethics from solely including humans to including the non-human world. And, it further angered environmental activists when “Nu River Defense Battle” had been taken as an example of “anti-science”. As a clear counterattack, Wang Yongchen, sponsor of “Defense Battle”, immediately wrote the article named “‘Worship to nature’ is not anti-science” on *Beijing News*, the Beijing branch of *South Weekend*. In this article, Wang especially emphasized her insist on anti-hydropower and announced that He Zuoxiu had started a “battle of controversy”⁵, which gathered more activists to participated in the debate, and, the concept of “battle” signaled that the debate would not be a peaceful dialogue. According to the statistics of

¹ Fang Zhouzi, “What revelation can tsunami bring us <haixiao neng gei women shenme qishi>?” *China Youth Daily*, January 19, 2005.

² Fang, “What revelation can tsunami bring us,”

³ Some literatures have mistaken his name as “He Zuoma” for the name included a difficult character.

⁴ He Zuoxiu, “People need no worship nature <renlei wuxu jingwei da ziran>,” *Globe*, January 11, 2005.

⁵ Wang Yongchen, “‘Worship to nature’ is not anti-science <jingwei ziran bushi fan kexue>,” *Beijing News*, January 15, 2005.

Fang Zhouzi¹, the climax of this “battle” lasted for one month. Even only on *Beijing News* — the main “battle field” — from January 15th to February 15th, a total of thirty-one articles by twenty-second writers were published for this topic. Among them, twenty-one articles were provided by sixteen environmental activists, including famous leaders like Wang Yongchen (GEV) and Liang Congjie (FON), who had just contributed a lot to the “Defense Battle”. And the rest included nine articles by five opponents to “worship nature” and a neutral one, which indicated the continuing “bias” of mass media. And there were articles and discussion on other print media and websites. Articles had decreased after the middle of February, but not finally ended until May, when opponents judge environmental activists as “being unable to refute any more” but environmental activists announced to be “suppressed by government”². In other words, this “battle” ends with “both sides declaring to beat each other”³ without any consensus.

Even though this “battle” might have seemed to be like a usual battle of words among intellectuals, as it happened just after the staged success of “Nu River Project” had brought environmental activists great credibility and social validity, the controversy factually made somehow negative influence on them, because it was really a controversy of public sphere with no political interventions. Thus, it challenges their natural validity of “representing common people”. The opponents like Fang and He were academicians and free-lancers, with no obvious official background as well as the environmental activists, and no involvement in — at least no direct evidence indicated — any governmental or commercial interests, thus, like environmental activists, they were originally “positive character in media stories (to represent the public opinion)”⁴. Even some environmentalists admitted it a controversy between “two kinds of philosophy”⁵, rather

¹ Fang Zhouzi, “Review on the ‘worship to nature’ controversy <*renlei shifou bixu jingwei daziran zhizheng shuping*>,” *SinaTech* (internet media).
[<http://tech.sina.com.cn/d/2005-03-01/1030538478.shtml>]

² With regard to the end of the controversy, the anti “worship to nature” pact judged it as the result of the “worship to nature” pact feeling their unreasonableness, but on the contrary, the “worship to nature” pact announced to have been “interrupted by the government agencies”. See respectively: Fang, “Review on the ‘worship to nature’ controversy; and Wang, “Western River Development and Public Participation,” p. 142.

³ “Scientific fighters criticize environmental NGOs <*kexue doushi jichi huanbao minjian zuzhi*>,” *Waitan Pictorial*, April 20, 2005.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Zhang Shuanghu, “Controversy on pro ‘Worship to nature’ and the anti- is the conflict between two civilizations <*jingwei yu fan jingwei shi liangzhong wenming zhi zheng*>,” *Science Times*, April 15, 2005.

than in relation to special interests. In other words, the environmental priority of environmental activists given to anti-dam was not the only choice of public¹. In addition, some environmental activists themselves used quite an emotional and enthusiastic expression in the debate, making them seem not so “reasonable”. For example, Wang Yongchen, to prove the necessity of “worship”, told the story on a Chinese-Japanese joint climbing expedition who died in accident on Meili Snow Mountain, describing the deaths as a result of “mountain god’s anger”². However, for the mainstream Chinese society with no religious tradition in the history and under the education of atheism from 1949, Wang’s such expression was not so commonly acceptable, and, for her opponents, it even sounded like that the “worship nature” camp had been “not immune from falling into superstition or ignorance, as lacking scientific training”³.

And moreover, for a quick success, some environmental activists even tried to play a theatre of “public participation” to seek support, which finally harmed their own credibility. *Beijing News* used to publish a letter from a junior school student to judge it a “scientific common sense” to “worship nature”, and argued that it was “truly anti-science” to deny the “common sense”⁴. This letter was then highly praised by environmental activists in mass media as a proper illustration of “true public choice”. And the junior school girl became famous and even invited as “civil representative” to the online debate hosted by www.sina.com.cn, a most influential livedoor of China. But it was then exposed that this girl was the daughter of a famous environmental activist, and her mother just sat with her in the online debate, without leaking any information of their relations⁵.

However, the result that “worship nature” debate developed beyond a simple war of words among intellectuals was owing to that it had been taken as the continuation of the

¹ See details respectively in: Liao Xiaoyi, “What’s the fault to worship nature <*jingwei ziran he zui zhi you?*>?” *Beijing News*, January 24, 2005; and Fang Zhouzi, “Retort to Liao Xiaoyi: Does environmental activism naturally have the justice <*bo liao xiaoyi: nandao gao huanbao jiu daibiao zhe zhengyi?*>?” *Beijing News*, January 26, 2005.

² Wang Yongchen, “Worship nature is not antihuman,” *Beijing News*, January 14th, 2005.

³ Fang Zhouzi, “Should humans worship nature: whether rationalism or enthusiasm is more important,” env.people.com.cn/BIG5/35525/3290166.html; and also see: Fang Zhouzi, “What kind of ‘environmental protection’ do we want?” <http://tech.sina.com.cn/d/2005-02-23/0837532641.shtml>.

⁴ Xin'er, “It’s the scientific common sense to worship nature <*jingwei daziran shi kexue changshi*>,” *Beijing News*, January 18, 2005.

⁵ See: “Guest chat record of Liao Xiaoyi, Wang Yongchen and Zhao Nanyuan in Sina <*liao xiaoyi wangyongchen zhao nanyuan zuoke xinlang liaotian shilu*>,” [www.sina.com]. [<http://tech.sina.com.cn/d/2005-01-27/1845517088.shtml>]

NRP controversy. Since He Zuoxiu had mentioned the NRP in his first article, following participants in the “battle” of “worship nature” couldn’t stop repeating this most influential environmental issue of China during recent years, as a case to illustrate their views¹. This chance was then seen by an expert on hydroelectricity named Zhang Boting. As the vice secretary of Chinese Water Engineering Association — an association of related academicians and engineers—at that time, failure of NRP supporters was due to a shortage of channels and skills to introduce positive effects of large-scale hydro project to the public, when the mass media was filled with propaganda of its negative effects and even “slander”² by the environmental NGOs and their media friends. Thus, when he found the opponents to “worship nature” had just weakened the social validity of environmental activists, he got touch with them and used his personal networks, promoting the Yunnan Provincial Government to invite the scientists and free-lancers for a field investigation. This action factually promoted the intellectual controversy rise to the practical discussion on the real policymaking of the NRP.

4.3 Debate Focus from “Worship nature” to “Represent Local People in Nu River Basin”

During early April 2005, the anti “worship nature” pact experienced their investigation in Yunnan Province, especially the Nu River basin residence. As mentioned before, in the “worship nature” debate, the elementary contradiction had been focused on “environmental ethics” and “growth ideology”, in other words, the priority of non-human world or material demand of human beings. The intellectuals were then showed the serious poverty of local people, which further strengthen their belief in priority of human demand and opposition to environmental activists. Thus, with their intervention in the public sphere of Nu River Project, the focus of the issue framework was changed from on “whether to protect the ecology (virgin river)” to “whether to lift the local poor people out of poverty”. This change led the role of environmental activists from the dominant of public sphere to only a “competitor” of views. And moreover, since the topic of “lifting

¹ Fang Zhouzi, “Replies to the New York Times reporter on Nu River dams <*jiu nujiang jianba da niuyue shibao jizhe wen*>, People’s Daily web, December 28, 2005.

² “The sermonizer for the public communication of China’s hydro science <*zhongguo shuidian kexue dazhonghua chuanbo de budaozhe*>,” *Yunnan Hydropower Paper*, November 6, 2007.

somebody out poverty” traditionally belong to the philosophy of growth ideology¹, debate under such a framework had eventually made marginalized environmental NGOs.

A fact not to be ignored was that, despite of a “green” title, some active opponents to NRP had concentrated on care of local living. One of them was Yu Xiaogang of “Green Watershed”. According to long-term survey on Manwan and Xiaohua dams which had finished construction before NRP planning was completed, Yu argued that hydropower benefits wouldn’t certainly shaking off local poverty because the division of earning was always unfair for serious corruption. During “Nu River defense battle”, Yu organized representatives from NRP-effected area to Manwan and Xiaohua dams to experience the negative influence of hydropower construction, and made a documentary movie to persuade audience both from the local place and big cities of the hard life of dam-effected people when they had been removed from their agricultural environment and traditional communities². Yu’s greatest shock to others might be in late October 2004, when he brought with him two local peasant activists to the UN International Conference on Hydropower and Sustainable Development, which was taken to be a break of rules only accepting policy experts and officials to such meetings. Under the persistence of Yu, those peasant activists were permitted to give speech in the conference, named “The Relations between Dam Construction and the Rights of Original Inhabitants to Participation”. This speech used the case of Tiger Leaping Gorges Dam along Jingsha River to echo many concerns on NRP. The speaker, Ge Quanxiao, described negative impact of dams such as “other infrastructure constructions being cut”, “resettlement to strange surroundings”, “loss of traditional courtyard houses”, “social upheaval”, “undermining harmony of ethnic groups that evolved over generations”, and so on³. And he described the goals of local inhabitants—according to Ge, “common famers” and “the biggest group of stakeholders”—as “bright sunshine, fresh air, clean water and fertile lands” rather than

¹ Generally, the economic growth is judged as the base of poverty solution. Although the ecological scholars have raised some instances of poverty going serious according to the ecological deterioration, the common sense hasn’t been shaken, especially in developing countries. See for example: T. Dos Santos, “The Crisis of Development Theory and the Problem of Dependence in Latin America” in Henry Bernstein, (ed.), *Underdevelopment and Development*, United Kingdom: Penguin, 1973. And, Ted Trainer, *Developed to Death*, London: Greenprint, 1989. And, Takis Fotopoulos, *The Multi-Dimensional Crisis and Inclusive Democracy*, Athens, 2005, pp. 133-149.

² “Voice of Nu River,” DVD documenting Yu’s May 2004 trip to Manwan area.

³ See: www.irn.org/basics/conferences/beijinghydro/pdf/dampar.pdf

“tall buildings and prosperity of big cities”¹. And, for the diverged goals from dam supporters, “the biggest group of stakeholders” demanded to “participate in the decision-making process for the sustainable development of this beautiful place”².

The voice of the peasant activists made environmental NGOs believe that local inhabitants also preferred to environmental priority, thus they hadn’t prepared prediction scheme to deal with a different voice. Early in 2004 May, several most active NGOs of Beijing hosted a conference. It was on the climax of “Nu River defense battle” and environmental NGOs had been rarely doubted with the public consensus they had mobilized. This conference invited three local young people who were then students of China Youth University for Political Science located in Beijing, and expected them to speak the “voice of local people”. But “totally different from what environmental activists had expected”, those students expressed their view that “most local people” had commonly sought for “better (modern) life”, and “the resettlement” might not have met much “obstruction” since “governmental subsidy (for resettlement” would have been a considerable fund to improve their living”³. Their view had just made the host “feel shocked and disappointed”⁴. In addition, the voice of doubt had also grown among environmental activists themselves. For example, a environmental volunteer and expert of Chinese Academy of Social Science Finance Institution—after his field work in the local place—described the local life he had seen to mass media as “unbelievably (for people from metropolis) primitive, closed and poor”⁵. And that experience had forced him to conclude that, although he still supported environmental protection in the abstract, he doubted “to keep the original ecology” might only have made more sense for well-to-do environmentalist living a modern life in Beijing, rather than the local people, for whom the hydroelectricity construction had seemed to be the “only way” to lift them out of poverty and achieve modern life⁶.

On the visit to Yunnan Province, anti “worship nature” camp applied their growth

¹ See: www.irn.org/basics/conferences/beijinghydro/pdf/dampar.pdf

² Ibid.

³ Tang Jianguang, “Who will decide the future of Nu River <*shui lai jue ding nujiang mingyun*>?” *China News Weekly*, No. 18, 2004.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Cao and Zhang, “Civil power behind the suspension of Nu River dam”.

⁶ Ibid.

ideology to the Project policymaking. For them, priority of lifting local people out of poverty made the Project construction reasonable enough. Thus, they then became opponents to environmental activists. On April 8, Fang Zhouzi, representing the investigators for his activeness and persuasiveness, was invited to give a speech to students of Yunnan University, where he generalized their views as¹: a) They also agreed with environmental activists that policymaking of hydropower projects needed to be prudent. b) But, for Fang and his comrades, the actions of environmental activists would not make sense for the cautious policymaking of Nu River Project, since they focused the effects of arousing enthusiasm and mobilization, rather than reasonableness in the issue framing. The most crucial point was that although environmental activists advocated to protect the original ecology, without real field investigation, they didn't find that the ecology had actually been damaging by primitive approaches of the local poor to make a hard living, rather than a poetic image framed by environmental activists. c) They criticized some journalists as being responsible for the diffusion of unreal information, which also had negative effects on cautious and scientific policymaking. d) Fang and his comrades announced to agree with environmental activists that the policymaking system and even political system needed to be reformed and improved—for example, to promote public participation, to normalize policymaking procedures, to eliminate political corruption, and so on—but they still doubted that if it was a reasonable choice to boycott all the hydropower policies until the political reform finished. Fang especially mentioned the expression of “original ecological river” (or “virgin river” as a more romantic wording), which had been a main concept of environmental NGOs' issue framing. Fang argued this phrase as a faked concept, as he described²,

I didn't see much primitive forest...I have seen patches of farmland on quite steep slopes. Locals call them “big character posters on the wall”. Slashing with burning is the method used to farm such land...We think that's a very

¹ See: Speech record of Fang Zhouzi in Yunnan University, *People's Daily Web*. [<http://tech.sina.com.cn/d/2005-04-11/1357577996.shtml>]; and also see: Fang Zhouzi, “Comments on the several opinions on Nu River hydro development <ping fandui nujiang shuidian kaifa de ruogan shuofa>,” *New Youth – Balance Magazine*, No. 1, 2006 (January).

² See: Speech record of Fang Zhouzi in Yunnan University.

primitive and outdated method, but the head of Nu River Prefecture told us this is the most progressive approach that adapted to local conditions, for the slopes are too steep to plow...Local people can only burn grass to fertilize the land because they cannot afford fertilizer. The used time of these lands are only a few years, thus the local people need to burn another patch then. And moreover, the production of such lands is very low: even 40 to 50 kilograms per mu can be taken as good and 5 mu can only serve one person...According to Lu Youmei (an authoritative expert on water resources from Chinese Academy of Science, with Fang in this survey), soil erosion have brought many landslides and mud-rock flows...Local people cut trees for heating and cooking, with a family cutting 3.5 cubic meter wood annually...So during my trip, I haven't seen any "original ecology". It was only a concept made up for media.

Fang's speech then pointed at the FON secretary, Xue Ye, who had just raised a speech on "ten reasons" to oppose NRP. According to Fang¹,

One of Xu's reasons was to protect the cultural diversity in accordance with UNESCO provisions since the Three Rivers Parallel had been listed in World Heritage...but the provisions to protect World Natural Heritage has no connection with "cultural diversity"...He mentioned Nu River is a international river and criticized China of refusing to join "Mekong International Convention" (to protect international rivers in Southeast Asia), but according to the experts I consulted, there's no "Mekong International Convention", but a "Down Mekong International Convention" signed among Southeast Asian Countries. In other words, China is unable to join the convention...Xu's ten reasons included problems of policymaking institutions, energy supply, resettlement, shaking of poverty and corruption. I may ask you, aren't the problems involved in all dam constructions? You think Nu

¹ See: Speech record of Fang Zhouzi in Yunnan University.

River shouldn't to be developed hydro electricity for these problems, so should all the dam constructions to be halted? It may take tens or even a hundred years to solve these problems since it was connected with the whole (political and social) system and citizen quality...So do you think no dam can be constructed in China? You announced yourselves to be "cautious" in policymaking, but factually you unconditionally oppose any dam construction only.

In addition, Fang ridiculed Xu, who majored in economics in university, as “not entitled to discuss scientific problems in the presence of professionals, without any learning of science”. This sharp criticism was pointed to Xu’s declaration that “it’s a commonly known physical principle that scientists only see what they want to see”¹. Factually this obvious misunderstanding not only annoyed Fang Zhouzi but also the attending university students, most of who were majoring in science. Thus, when Xu Ye tried to cut into Fang’s speech for retort, he was again and again interrupted by applause to Fang and laughter, and finally he left in a huff before Fang accomplished the speech.

There had been only a few print media—several local newspapers of Yunnan Province and a magazine with Fang’s column—and some websites published the views on Nu River Project of intellectuals anti “worship nature”, however, their pointing views and clear position against environmental activists forced environmental activists who had more media resources to make response.

Then it came the time for environmental activists to feel embarrassed. Environmental activists in developed democracies might envy the great success of young Chinese environmental NGOs on anti-large-scale constructions, but the great success depended on the loss of governmental credibility—to speak exactly, the slow political reform and shortage of public participation regimes made Chinese citizens inclined to believe there was serious corruption and interest involvement in policymaking, and the issue framing of environmental activists just strengthened the common opinion—rather than its advocacy of environmental priority. In other words, the social validity of environmental

¹ See: Speech record of Fang Zhouzi in Yunnan University.

NGOs was obtained through their identity of representing the public to doubt the government. Thus, when intellectuals anti “worship nature” took the point of “lifting local people out of poverty” as a key reason to support the Project construction, and criticized environmental activists as having no idea of local people’s true demand, environmental activists was confronted with a strong competitor for “the representative of the public”. And then, environmental activists were force to be faced with a dilemma: to maintain their environmental ethics and continued to boycott any man-made construction along the Nu River basin, or to prove the anti-hydropower action was for the local people life rather than environmental priority, which might keep their identity of “representing people” but might weaken their green identity.

Environmental NGOs had been unable to make the choice until they was faced with a great challenge in October. During this month, He Zuoxiu, the theoretical physicist and Academician of Chinese Academy of Science, who was also a main member of the anti “worship nature” camp, and Lu Youmei, both an authoritative expert on water resources from Chinese Academy and a former general engineer of Three Gorgeous Construction, wrote letter to Premier Wen Jiabao, raising their views of positive effects of hydropower in accordance with “local people’s demand of modern development”, and asked for a reconsideration of Nu River Project. They soon received the Premier’s positive response that “it seemed that decision-making of this issue needed to be adjusted again,”¹ and the responsibility was transferred to NDRC. Here, we can find that, the anti “worship nature” camp had become new supporter of Nu River Project in the public sphere, and, they used the same approach with environmental NGOs—remind the top authority directly—to promote their opinion into political sphere and formal policymaking process. The turning of situation had made little choice space for environmental NGOs.

With the instruction of the Premier, NDRC restarted the policymaking process. On October 22nd, NDRC entrusted “China Investment Magazine” to host a consultation conference with the title of “China’s hydropower development and environmental protection Audit Forum”, sending invitations to NDRC officials, SEPA officials, and

¹ “Top authority had gradually loosed ban on NPR planning after the one-year suspending,” <guowuyuan jiaoting yinian hou, gaoceng zhujian jiejin nujiang guihua>, *1st Financial Business Daily*, June 2, 2005.

intellectuals from both sides. Even though “environmental protection” was still included in the symposium title—that indicated the great power of the issue framing of environmental activists during the “Nu River Defense battle”—environmental priority factually lost its language power there. Since environmental activists anti hydropower development had refused to attend in order to “avoid embarrassing clash”¹. Intellectuals who support hydropower development, especially Fang Zhouzi, became the main actor. In his speech, Fang reemphasized his core point as “(any large-scale project being constructed) according to the demand of local people”², and he raised an opinion poll made by the institutions who had made the original NRP report (the NRP report poll) to illustrate the “demand of local people”. According to this poll covering 400 local habitants in the middle of Nu River, **68.4% of the interviewees agreed with the hydropower development, 13.5% objected, 7.4% indicated indifference, and 10.7% gave no answer. And, 70.1% of the interviewees believed the development would bring them increasing incomes, with 62.7% thought it would have positive effects on improving the quality of living**³. Under the absence of environmental activists, Fang still mentioned his view of them as “selfish”, because, the environmental activists who had enjoyed modern life style in Beijing wanted the Nu River basin to maintain the primitive situation, just like a “museum for their travel, fun and research in spare time”, without considering that the primitive situation would have isolated the local people from relatively sufficient and convenient modern life and made them “forever poor”⁴.

Despite of refusing to attend the symposium, environmental activists still followed the statement of their opponents. Fang’s speech, especially his quotation of the opinion poll which indicated a local support to hydropower development, then gathered strong critics. Wang Yongchen immediately announced to deny the credibility of the poll result, since she thought the local people just had “answered the questions without knowing

¹ Besides NDRC officials, hydropower engineers and intellectuals supporting the development, the environmental activists and SEPA officials were also invited to the conference. But the environmental activists collectively denied to present in order to “avoid the embarrassment similar to that happened in Yunnan University”. See: Xu, “The reversion of ‘Nu River Defense Battle’”.

² See: Memoir of “China’s hydropower development and environmental protection Audit Forum”. [<http://gov.finance.sina.com.cn/zsyzy/2005-10-27/72217.html>]

³ Memoir of “China’s hydropower development and environmental protection Audit Forum” (□)

⁴ Memoir of “China’s hydropower development and environmental protection Audit Forum” (□)

enough information of how much of their interest would be harmed”¹. Several months later, in 2006 February, Wang and her comrades of GEV organized their own survey covering “one hundred potential ecological migrants”. Different from Fang’s quoting evidence focusing on economic interests of local people, Wang chose the potential problem possibly brought by ecological migration. According to Wang’s investigation², **86.7% of the interviewees expected more compensation than the government promised to afford, with 80% of the interviewees felt “distrust” to the government, and 61.5% of the interviewees thought it was hard for them to share benefits of hydropower development.** In accordance with the interrelated data, Wang concluded that, without enough public participation—according to the same investigation, **73.3% of the interviewees thought they have “very little or none” participation in local public issues**—the interests division of hydropower benefits would bring serious conflict between the common people and local government, and “make new social stability”.

It was of our purpose in this chapter to give pros or cons over the two opinion polls with opposite conclusions, or views to support or boycott the hydropower. There may be a simple reason to the complete difference that they chose different groups of people as poll samples. Even though, in public speaking, the “local people” was generally taken as an overall variable by officials, public activists of both opponents and supporters, and journalists, they actually had diverging expectations, according to differences in age, residence, industry, ethnic groups and so on. For example, a university student from Nu River Prefecture told me that, for sure, she and her tribe members hadn’t chosen to support the dam, despite of knowing the positive effects. The reason was they had been afraid that the local county head, who belonged to another ethnic group which was majority in local place, would allocated the main part of State compensation to his ethnic members and left other groups very little. And, according to her, the environmental NGOs and mass media activism had exactly had influence on the local people, educating

¹ Wang, “Western Hydropower Development and Public Participation,” p. 152.

² See: Wang Yongchen, “Interview Record with One Hundred Potential Resettlers in Nu River Basin <*nurjiang baiming qianzai yimin fangtan lu*>,” from Wang’s blog [<http://blog.sina.com.cn/huanbaozhuyi>].

them how to frame their discontent¹. In addition, the different survey approaches might have also influenced the result: the NRP report poll set simple yes-no choices for clear questions, while Wang and GEV discussed with interviewees to find what they implied². According to Wang, her interview had concentrated on six questions as³: a) Are you aware that you will be relocated? b) If so, where did you get this information? c) Have you been consulted by the government or any relevant authorities, given that your lives are likely to be affected by the dam building? d) Do you know anything about compensation terms? e) Do you have any specific concerns or special difficulties related to resettlement? f) Do you think building the dams could help lift you out of poverty? However, in the actual interviews, these set questions were implied in the chatting contents rather than clear asked. Thus, Wang's detailed discussion would obviously bring more complex implications.

For more details, this chapter quoted the first and second interviewee of Wang's for examples to show NGO's framework of public opinion (Annex 1 and Annex 2). The attitudes of the two interviewees, if in the NRP report poll, might have been simply judged as "agreeing to" the government with NRP. However, in comparison — since Wang hadn't given the clear criteria of her judgment — we may reason⁴ in the conclusion of Wang and GEV that the first 50-year old restaurant owner in the first interview and the 70-year old ethnic minority might have been classified as "expecting more compensation than the government promised to afford" for he mentioned the worry about future living, "trusting" government and not taking it "hard" to share benefits of hydropower development as they directly indicated, and agreeing to "have 'very little or none' participation in local public issues" as they suggested several times to obey government and said the government hadn't held any discussions for the public. And in addition, it may be also important to sense the "education" of environmental activists besides the "inquiry" about local habitants.

¹ Personal interview. November 11, 2010.

² "Interview Record with One Hundred Potential Resettlers in Nu River Basin,"

³ See: <http://eng.greensos.cn/ShowArticle.aspx?articleId=65>

⁴ The conclusion is also helped by advices of a volunteer for GEV during that period.

Annex 1 “Interviews with a hundred potential migrants in Nu River Valley 1”

Source: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4ed9bee601000d1s.html

Interviewee: Yuan Liuzhao

Ethnic group: Han

Age: 50

Occupation: Family restaurant owner

Wang Yongchen (Wang): How old are you?

Yuan Liuzhao (the interviewee, a small family restaurant owner, Yuan): 50.

Wang: Are your business Ok? Are there many tourists? When did tourists begin to increase?

Yuan: When the Three Rivers parallel listed in World Heritages.

Wang: How's the increase comparing with last year?

Yuan: About a 20% increase.

Wang: Which season has the most?

Yuan: Not only in golden season.

Wang: Do you know there is to be hydropower construction?

Yuan: Having heard for two years.

Wang: Do you think it good?

Yuan: River water will become as precious as oil.

Wang: Where did you hear?

Yuan: The construction survey had already begun.

Wang: Do you know the county seat will be flooded?

Yuan: There have been rumors, no political leader saying so. It may take more than 10 years for survey and construction, no possibility to start at once. I think the state will compensate the persons and enterprises.

Wang: How much do you think the State will compensate?

Yuan: It depends on the construction.

Wang: Do you know where to move?

Yuan: Bingzhongluo. The government hasn't said but there is people's view.

Wang: Is Bingzhongluo big enough for your county?

Yuan: It's broader, no other place can (for it's hard to find a broad ground to establish cities in southwest mountains).

Wang: Is it suitable for farming there.

Yuan: No good production neither. For the speedy development, farm land will also be occupied (even without the hydropower construction).

Wang: When did you build the restaurant?

Yuan: 2002.

Wang: Is there any difficulty for your resettlement?

Yuan: Quite a difficulty. I built it on bank lawn, so it actually belongs to the bank.

Wang: How much have you returned?

Yuan: SARS came when the construction had just finished (which influence the business).

Wang: How much have you learn from the bank?

Yuan: 1.1 million RMB (about US \$140,000).

Wang: How much have you returned?

Yuan: Less than a half.

Wang: So what do you worry about most for resettlement?

Yuan: It'll be ok if the lawn can be relieved.

Wang: How if it cannot be? How about if the State compensate you according to the value of your restaurant, not the lawn?

Yuan: If the State won't compensate me, I'm not able to return. They can't let me sleep on the dam.

Wang: Is there time limit for returning the lawn.

Yuan: Time has already expired. I've got a one-year extension.

Wang: How about if you can't return in next year?

Yuan: The rate increased from 5.1% to 5.5%.

Wang: What's your former job?

Yuan: Working in the construction bureau.

Wang: Retired.

Yuan: Not yet.

Wang: So you do two jobs?

Yuan: Family members manage the restaurant.

Wang: What do you feel best of the river?

Yuan: The green water.

Wang: Do you know whether the water will keep green after the dam lifting it?

Yuan: No idea.

Wang: What's your education?

Yuan: Junior School.

Wang: Have you ever worried about the dam effects on you?

Yuan: No, I don't want to continue the restaurant, too hard.

Wang: Do people around you agree with the construction?

Yuan: Most. Everybody just think about following government policies.

Wang: How about if the policy is not proper?

Yuan: That's also up to the government.

Wang: How about if the compensation is not proper, or the new residence is smaller?
Do people here just obey or fight for something better?

Yuan: We have no worry, because it's anyway the State's Key project with investment of tens of billions RMB. There is no reason for government to give us insufficient compensation.

Wang: have your heard cases with bad compensation in other places?

Yuan: Not yet. I have only heard good news. I think the State will have policies. We need to trust the government, or we can achieve nothing.

Wang: Which will you choose? Dam construction or develop tourism resources?

Yuan: Both are acceptable. And I think we can have both.

Wang: But the landscape of Three Rivers Parallel will change according to the dam.

Yuan: I'm too old to consider it. People will feel you strange, and think you're bored to consider it. We generally obey the government.

Wang: Have the government held meetings to discuss it?

Yuan: No.

Wang: So is all information from rumors?

Yuan: No, hydropower companies from Beijing are on survey.

Wang: Why do you think the water will become as precious as oil?

Yuan: Nu River Newspapers had said so. It said that the key work of government was focused on promoting quality of officials and the major project. The dam is the project.

Wang: How many persons in your family?

Yuan: My wife, three children (possibly means two sons and a daughter-in-law, and the grandsons. Seven persons.

Wang: How's your children's education?

Yuan: The elder went to technical secondary school, and the younger went to junior college.

Wang: Thank you.

Annex 2 Interviews with a hundred potential migrants in Nu River Valley 2

Source: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4ed9bee601000d1s.html

Interviewee: Ma Yuehan (the Chinese pronunciation of "John" as being a Christian)

Ethnic group: Dulong

Age: 70

Occupation: Family restaurant owner

Wang (to the daughter of Yuehan): Do you hear the dam?

Ma Lihua: Yes, I heard there would be a hydropower station, and we'll move to Bingzhongluo. I don't want to move there.

Wang: Why?

Ma Lihua: I'll miss here.

Wang: Why.

Ma Lihua: Good-looking.

Wang: What's the best good-looking?

Ma Lihua: Landscape.

Wang: Are you all family reluctant to move?

Ma Lihua: My father wants move.

Wang: Why?

Ma Lihua: His family is there.

Wang: How old are you?

Ma Lihua: 12.

Wang: What's your most worry about moving?

Ma Lihua: I don't know.

Wang: What's your name?

Ma Lihua: Ma Lihua. She's my younger sister Ma Liying.

Wang: What are you living on?

Ma Lihua: My father has a salary of one thousand.

Wang: Where does he work?

Ma Lihua: The county hall of culture.

Wang (on the phone): Hello, are you the father? Are you in the county hall? Your daughter tells me you're a specialist on Dulong ethnic group.

Ma Yuehan (Ma): I belong to Dulong, but I'm not a specialist.

Wang: What's your work in the county hall?

Ma: Cultural work.

Wang: Do Dulong youth still have tattoos¹ on face?

Ma: No.

Wang: How about women over 40?

Ma: There are some.

Wang: Your daughter is good. She adores you. How old are you?

Ma: More than 70.

Wang: With such little daughters?

Ma: I adopted her. Her father died.

Wang: Do you have religious faith?

Ma: Christian.

Wang: Are many Dulong people Christians?

¹ Tattoos on face had been an ancient custom of Dulong women from before Tang Dynasty. It was explained as the self-protection of young women from cruel rulers or for a sense of beauty. This custom was forbidden by the government in 1966, for its harm to women's body.

Ma: Yes, we have little education.

Wang: Have you been to school?

Ma: No.

Wang: Do you know Susu characters?

Ma: all Christians know Susu characters¹.

Wang: Do you hear the hydropower construction?

Ma: Yes, people need to move.

Wang: Who did you hear from?

Ma: The government.

Wang: Which (level of) government?

Ma: The Gongshan county government.

Wang: Where do you know you will move?

Ma: Bingzhongluo.

Wang: Is there enough residence space?

Ma: The government will arrange it.

Wang: Do you want to move? Do you want the hydropower station?

Ma: It's okay to leave it to the government.

Wang: But the river is to be damaged.

Ma: Never mind. The government put more efforts, and we people put more efforts, our life will be better according to the hydropower construction.

Wang: Do you ever worry about it?

Ma: Not yet. We'll follow the government.

Wang: Do you have any difficulties if the government let you move to Bingzhongluo tomorrow?

Ma: It'll be okay if the government arranges it for us.

Wang: Do you have any difficulties to tell the government?

Ma: The difficulty is I may lose my farmland

¹ Susu is a minority ethnic group in Southwest China. During the Republican China era, missionary entering Yunnan Province used Latin characters to create Susu characters, in order to spread the Bible. The old characters had been reformed from 1949. For the special history, family churches of some southwest ethnic groups succeed the tradition to use Susu characters in religious activities.

Wang: Is it hard to find new arable land?

Ma: Yes.

Wang: Do you know your daughter doesn't want to move?

Ma: She must follow her father.

Wang: But you hear that the traffic is not so convenient there?

Ma: I haven't heard that. If so, it'll be difficult to collect firewoods.

Wang: Do you think the problem of traffic can be solved? If it cannot be solved, do you move?

Ma: I hope to choose a better place.

Wang: Do you believe the government will agree?

Ma: Yes.

Wang: Are there many tourists coming to your place?

Ma: Not so many. Bingzhongluo has a lot.

Wang: Where do you think is the most beautiful in the place? Your daughter says there is very beautiful landscape.

Ma: The most beautiful landscape has already disappeared.

Wang: Do you know the influence of the hydropower station?

Ma: I think it'll be somehow different to resettle so many residents.

Wang: Do you want to go there?

Ma: I follow the governmental arrangement. How will be the life of so many people?

Wang: Are your grains provided by the government?

Ma: No, I bought it myself.

Wang: How many people in your family?

Ma: Five.

Wang: How much can you earn from your vegetable garden?

Ma: About five, six hundred yuan.

Wang: How about if you lose it?

Ma: I can't live without it, because my salary is a little more than 1000 yuan a month.

Wang: How does children's school cost?

Ma: Annually 400 yuan for each child.

Wang: Are there additional incomes besides the 1000-yuan salary and 500 yuan from selling vegetables? Do you feed pigs?

Ma: Yes, it adds about 400 yuan annually.

Wang: And chickens?

Ma: No, I buy chickens for eating.

Wang: Do you think the resettlement will influence Dulong characters?

Ma: No, the characters have already faded away. Very few people are interested in it.

Wang: Aren't you working to protect the characters?

Ma: There isn't enough money.

Wang: How about the youth?

Ma: The government hasn't given enough financial support.

Wang: How many people can read Dulong characters in the county?

Ma: Totally less than one hundred persons.

Wang: Where do they learn the characters?

Ma: In the county hall of culture. I teach.

Wang: How many persons can teach like you?

Ma: 20.

Wang: Can you sing Dulong songs?

Ma: No, I only know the characters.

5. End to “Nu River Defend Battle” and Analysis of the Issue

5.1 Changes to Original Planning and Differentiation Among Opponents

In January, *Wenhui Bao*, a newspaper located in Hong Kong leaked—for its close ties to CCP, it could be taken as inspired by governmental policy makers, to probe the reaction of public opinion—some main conclusions of the EIA report of NRP. According

to the interpretation by New York Times¹,

A Chinese government environmental review has recommended reducing the number of dams included in a hydropower proposal on the Nu River in southwestern China to limit environmental damage and decrease the number of people who would be resettled, according to a Hong Kong newspaper report and a provincial environmental official... (T)he the recommendation calls for four hydro dams instead of the 13 in the original Nu proposal. The article, citing an unnamed source "close" to the government review, said a reduced number of dams would meet "the needs for economic development and environmental protection." Officials with the State Environmental Protection Administration, which has responsibility for the review, declined to comment. But an environmental official in Yunnan Province, where many of the proposed dams would be built, confirmed that the environmental assessment review has been completed and recommended only four dams. If so, the project would next be presented to the National Development and Reform Commission, a powerful government ministry, for approval. Then, if approved, it would be presented to the State Council, or the Chinese cabinet, for final consideration. The possibility of a scaled-down project would seem to represent a partial victory for environmentalists, academics and others who have lobbied against the project. But many environmentalists are concerned that approving four dams would merely serve as an opening for the full project to be built later.

The leaking of information seemed to be a limited compromise of the NRP supporters, but the opaque process of EIA completely diverged from the main demand of activists as "public participation". According to New York Times, "a coalition of environmentalists, lawyers, journalists and nongovernmental organizations" then called for "the release of the report as well as public hearings on the project", with citing "a 2003 environmental

¹ Jim Yardley, "Hydroelectricity project in China may be shrunk," *New York Times*, January 12, 2006.

law (EIA Law) that required public participation, including hearings, in deciding such major projects”¹, but “ (*Weihui Bao*) said the Ministry of Water Resources and the State Secrets Bureau” had classified the report “as a state secret, citing laws restricting the release of information about projects on international rivers”².

Under the pessimism of the activists, SEPA released a document on providing provisional approaches to allow limited public participation. In accordance with this document publicized in late February, on one hand, public could be facilitated to “take part in the EIA by answering EIA questionnaires, consulting experts, or participating in a symposium or public hearings.”³ On the other hand, developers would have to “release the data on the environmental impact of the project and the measures that are in place to handle it”. This document was more an appeasement rather than having actual effects. Even for the optimistic SEPA deputy general, Pan Yue, it was expected more in the form to be a “guide for establishing a comprehensive system for releasing information and set into place mechanisms to ensure more public participation in the policy process” according to its identity as “the first official document on public involvement in the environmental sector... (to) make government decisions in the sector more transparent and democratic”⁴. However, activists still tried to encourage the efforts of the weak non-profit-oriented department. About a month later on March 20th, SEPA register its first request under the document provisions⁵.

Not only information transparency was not enough, but a shrinking from 13 dams to 4 dams was not an acceptable result for environmental NGOs who persisting on protecting a “virgin river” from the man-made change, and they hadn’t given up hard working. Wang Yongchen with GEV, in the second half of 2006, launched the “Decade River Project <*zhongguo jianghe shinian xing*>” campaign. This campaign was planned to organize environmental activists and journalists to take a half-month survey along China’s southwest rivers included Nu River annually, from 2006 to 2015. This campaign

¹ Yardley, “Hydroelectricity project in China may be shrunk,”

² Ibid.

³ Sun Xiaohua, “Public to help assess impact on environment,” *China Daily*, February 23, 2006.

⁴ Sun, “Public to help assess impact on environment,”

⁵ Elaine Wu, “Activists seek hearing on dam project,” *South China Morning Post*, March 21, 2006.

was supported to¹:

- a) *record the decade of change to river development situation, water quantity and quality, landscape, and local people's living;*
- b) *publicize the records on mass media, to promote citizens' right to know;*
- c) *influence governmental policymaking, promoting scientific and orderly river protection and development;*
- d) *protect ecological and cultural diversity along river basin.*

In accordance with the planning, the campaign is still continuing². Environmental NGOs' activism on southwest rivers possibly cannot reach its climax of influence like around 2004, the local survey anyway indicated the growth of China's NGOs, for their initiative communication with the local communities who were direct stakeholders of river issues, to learn the local people's need on one hand and to socialize their own issue frameworks on the other hand.

5.2. Analysis of the Nu River issue

In 2004, when the vice secretary of Yunnan Provincial Government of that time was interviewed by *Liaowang* — a Party mouthpiece sponsored by the national Xinhua News Agency to socializing the Party directives through interpreting the focus news — he transferred the local official interpretation on “five factors obstructing Nu River hydropower development” and admitted that the SEPA and environmental NGOs had been the most influential entrepreneurs to mobilize the public opposition to the NRP, and mass media bias had been the most effective approaches for mobilization. As he pointed³,

Firstly, the examination on Nu River hydropower development planning was at the same as the EIA Law was coming to effect, whose new provisions demanded the independent EIA report included in the project planning, thus, the NRP planning needed to undergo a new procedure which slowed down the

¹ See: Introduction to “Decade River Project”, from the official web of Alex SEE Ecological Association [<http://gongyi.sina.com.cn/gyzx/2009-02-21/15577250.html>].

² For more details on its annual records, see: <http://eng.greensos.cn/RiverNews.aspx>

³ Li, “Controversy on Nu River dam: what's the point?”

project progress...The second factor is the special attention (both from the government and public) to NRP, for its planned large installed capacity of more than 20 million kilowatt, about 20% of the current installed capacity through the whole country...The third factor is a public misunderstanding of the real conditions of Nu River area. Many scholars, depending on the second-handed information rather than field work, hurriedly judged Nu River as a “virgin river” with original ecology and idyllic ethnic culture...Fourthly, in addition, some unreal reports of a few scholars and environmental NGOs have strengthen the misunderstanding image. At the beginning of controversy, such unreal reports might have derived from insufficient survey on the true situation of Nu River basin, but after the one-year discussion and investigation, we may say that it's quite irresponsible for some scholars and environmental NGOs who should have been familiar with the real situation to insist on publicizing their unfair views. And finally, we also must admit that the government have made many mistakes in past hydropower development. For example, in the Manwan Dam construction, the subsidy for resettlement had been not enough to improve the living level of the resettled residents, and even lower the living level of some of them. The mistaken resettlement policy has also become a reason to boycott the NRP...To speak generally, the five factors have reflected “the crash between the two values of protection and development”.

The official statement on an important Party mouthpiece, besides its obvious bias against the opponents, also implied the characteristics of the embedded mobilization in NRP case, which also will answer the questions raised at the beginning of this chapter.

This chapter examined the actual effectiveness of the embedded mobilization to counteract with the truly powerful profit-oriented departments, and there seemed to be the fundamentally positive answer. In comparison with the Tibetan antelope and Yuanmingyuan cases respectively dominated by the civil society and SEPA, the similar policy influence of the governmental actor and the social power in the Nu River Defense

Battle had been better integrated. Similar to the two cases, SEPA and environmental NGOs united together to promote the same media issue framing preferring the environmental priority and the democratic implication. On one hand, it had been the governmental fragmentation to trigger the anger of SEPA, who mainly concentrated on applying legal means to counterattack its arrogant profit-oriented co-workers. For this purpose, SEPA had embedded its authority in the public participation and media issue framing, as the informal approach to mobilize the social resources against the established bureaucratic custom. On the other hand, environmental NGOs couldn't have contacted the NRP policymaking without SEPA's provision of institutional resources, while the environmental NGOs' non-governmental identity and networks, especially the media networks which had accumulated through their social activities, had also helped SEPA reach extensive public resources. And, with regard to the media issue framing, similar to the last two cases, mass media had been the first choice for SEPA and the environmental NGOs as the mobilization approach, and mass media also hadn't hesitated to become their ally to demonstrate the obvious bias in the issue framing. According to the "incomplete statistics" of FON, during the controversy climax "from August 2008 to September 2004", only "the national mass media" of "near one hundred print and broadcasting media organizations" had "published and broadcasted more than one hundred articles and TV programs"¹. The former texts had introduced the main media frameworks and the bias, but it's still necessary to reemphasize that as many environmental NGO members had been current or former professionals within the mass media circle, the issue framing from the very beginning demonstrated an "us versus them"² impression. As the result, the success to get the order of the top political to suspend the project indicated the clear effectiveness of the embedded mobilization, despite of the actually strong pressure of the economic orientation.

However, observers shouldn't be too excited about the success of the "civil society", "public opinion" and "reformatory environmental department" to ignore exploring the

¹ Fu Tao, "The Development of Chinese Environmentalist NGOs <zhongguo minjian huanjing zuzhi de fazhan>," in Liang Congjie and Yang Dongping (ed.), *FON Green Paper Book 2005: Crisis and Breakout*, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2006, pp. 160-167. p. 161.

² *Water Warriors*, p. 145.

power source of their actions, which will offer the positive proof for the “embedded mobilization”. Factually, rather than the direct clash between SEPA and its profit-oriented bureaucratic co-workers, the success had been led by the clear proceeding of “SEPA and NGO promotion → extensive media reporting → formation of public opinion pressure → decision of top political authority → top-bottom political pressure on the electricity department and enterprises”. In other words, the embedded mobilization had been effective not directly on changing the decision-making, but on drawing the highest-level concern to force the strong departments and enterprises to compromise. Thus, we can conclude that the national orthodox of “sustainable development” had been the depended on as the power source of the embedded mobilization. And further, the visible media issue framing had also directed to the same conclusion. Although the mass media had tried to establish the environmental priority and ethics against profit-orientation and the increase ethics, they had never tried to clearly transcend the Party line. On the contrary, the directives of the central authority, especially the environmental concerns of “The Great Western Development Strategy” had been applied and interpreted to strengthen their reasons to boycott NRP. And coincidentally, although environmental NGOs and mass media framed their indications of demanding more civil “rights to know” and public participation in decision-making, their critics had only limited to be targeted at the local governmental “impropriety”, at the most up to the national-level SOEs and the water resource department — these national-level entities were also main “rivals” with SEPA in the bureaucratic system — without challenging the validity of the political system.

Then, according to the further development of the issue, we can see SEPA had gradually lost the motivations for further mobilization along with the top leader suspending the project and ordering the law procedure for EIA, and, had got to reconsider their negotiation with co-workers in the bureaucratic system. But meanwhile, the great success on changing policies and the expansion of influence in the international civil society had encouraged the environmental NGOs to continue the anti-dam mobilization, not only for universalize the value of environmental priority, or “worship nature”, but also for more language power in policymaking and even further political

reform implications beyond the existing institutions. The divergence between the environmental department and the civil society could be taken as the logical result because of the different agendas of the entrepreneurs. Especially after the halt of the project, while maintaining the self-censorship on domestic occasions, the environmental NGOs and the liberalistic journalists had indicated more political implications of their actions in their communication with the foreign mass media, especially on the potential effects of the green civil society on potential political transformation as: the social discontent with public policies→the discontent with improper actions of a certain level government of department→the discontent with the political system the impropriety deriving from→reform or even some more radical happening like that in Soviet Union. And we may also see that the foreign media had inclined to emphasize the political risks of the social mobilization in China—it might have be in accordance with the audience’s image of China as a totalitarianism of dictatorship—and possibly, the memories of the political struggle under TGP issue and the oversea dissidents might have framed the anti-dam mobilization a zero-game between the government and the public. In 2006, a *New York Times* story on NRP controversy obtained the Pulitzer Prize, a most important U. S. award for achievements in newspaper and online journalism, literature and musical composition. This story described the struggle of environmental NGOs for “rule by law” through the NRP issue, under the high political pressure¹:

The block marks the spot on the Nu River where officials here in Yunnan Province want to begin building one of the biggest dam projects in the world. The project would produce more electricity than even the mighty Three Gorges Dam but would also threaten a region considered an ecological treasure...For decades, the ruling Communist Party has rammed through such projects by fiat. But the Nu River proposal, already delayed for more than a year...A coalition led by Chinese environmental groups is urging the central government to hold open hearings and make public a secret report on the Nu dams before making a final decision. In a country where people cannot

¹ Jim Yardley, “Seeking a public voice on China’s ‘angry river’,” *New York Times*, December 26, 2005.

challenge decisions by their leaders, such public participation is a fairly radical idea. But the groups argue that new environmental laws grant exactly that right. "This is the case to set a precedent," said Ma Jun, an environmental consultant in Beijing. "For the first time, there is a legal basis for public participation. If it happens, it would be a major step forward."...For many people in China's fledgling "civil society"—environmentalists, journalists, lawyers, academics and others—the law has become a tool to promote environmental protection and to try to expand the rights of individuals in an authoritarian political system. But trying to invoke the law is risky...the activism on the Nu and other issues has provoked deep suspicions by the Communist Party even as a broader clampdown against such NGO's has forced some to shut down...The closed process that led to the Three Gorges Dam is what opponents of the Nu dams most want to avoid...Mr. Ma, the environmental consultant in Beijing, said..."Before the Nu River proposal, you would hear about opposition to certain projects...But it was all based on the tremendous courage of individuals. This time, we see progress in Chinese law that makes it possible for a more systemic challenge."

The emphasis of international media on the political meaning of the Nu River Defense Battle might have helped exerting the influence of environmental NGOs, but it also had promoted them, especially the most influential activists, to challenge the orthodox. When the NGOs inclined to completely object the construction — for the sake of “worship to the nature” — rather than to demand for a more democratic and cautious policymaking process, they deviated from the national line of “development”. Thus, without the embeddedness of SEPA’s institutional resources, the mobilization of environmental NGOs and the liberalistic journalists had not only suffered from the attacks of the profit-oriented departments, the electricity goliath and the local government, but also been faced with the challenge from another pact of public intellectuals who preferred the great industrialization, economic growth and technical factors in the policymaking.

As we see in the *New York Times* story, the weak position of the environmental NGOs in the controversy was impressive, the same as it had been in the last cases. But in the NRP case, there had been a new phenomenon of the “weak position” being doubted by, as discussed in this chapter, the activists of anti “worship nature” pact. In his speech in Yunnan University, Fang Zhouzi directly said the environmental NGOs factually had been “in quite a powerful position”¹ based on the financial support from oversea foundations and even governmental organizations, the close alliance with mass media and SEPA. This accusation might have been interpreted as the counterattack to the inclination of the environmental NGOs to accuse NRP supporters of the government’s dogs. However, it may be far beyond the simple abuse in the war of words. Factually, according to such opinion, the anti “worship nature” pact had not only provided another issue framework of the NRP issue beyond the “green civil society versus government” struggle and leading a complex public sphere with more “multiple” views which we haven’t found in the last two cases, but also — it may be more important — implied that the incentives of environmental NGOs’ social mobilization had been partly from the governmental acquiescence or even support, in other words, limited within the “Party line”. And further, the participation of anti “worship nature” pact had somehow staked the environmental NGOs’ position of “public representative”, which had weakened the natural validity of their issue framing. To speak exactly, in order to make the mainstream of public opinion in the competition, the environmental NGOs and their mass media comrades had got to increase the reasonableness of the framing, especially to reflect on the extremalization of environmental priority. Among the mass media, there had been voice that the media might have concentrated too much on “abstract conclusion” rather than “concrete analysis”, and restricted to the “value bias” too much so as to ignore the “ipso facto”, but finally, the “media inclination” would not have been equal to the “public choice”². In the “Decade River Project” survey organized by Wang Yongchen and her GEV, there had been also voice among GEV members that “the pressure of the local poverty” had been “higher

¹ See: Speech record of Fang Zhouzi in Yunnan University.

² Ren Bo, “The role of mass media in Nu River hydropower controversy <*daba jianfei zhi zheng zhong de meiti jue*>,” *Youth Reference*, September 21, 2005.

than that of the environmental protection”¹. In December 2008, the Chinese Central Television (CCTV) broadcasted a series of “Nu River Stories” in the column of “Green Space”, a program for environmental protection. The series reviewed the controversy from 2003, and the producer announced the purpose to be “how to create the chance for the living and development of the local people” with “objectively demonstrating the living situation of the residents”, and “let the audience themselves to think”². Obviously, the series had a similar issue framing with the anti “worship nature” pact and, through a clear content emphasis on the local poverty and detailed compensation policies of the government, implied its support to the construction.

In 2008, the dam construction on Nu River had been restarted, it may be quite strange that there had been neither clear encouragement of nor clear opposition to it by the central government, thus, the public controversy and informal gaming had still continued in a much smaller scale, especially after the National Energy Administration in February 2011 leaked the message that the Nu River would possibly be permitted to “comprehensively” developed in the National Twelfth Five Year Plan within the planned over 60 hydropower projects³. But the restart of NRP shouldn’t be simply interpreted as the “failure” of the green civil society, as well as the mobilization to change certain policies for environmental concerns shouldn’t be taken as the zero-game between the civil society and the government. Factually, according to the whole NRP progress, on one hand, the central government had encouraged the mobilization of SEPA and the environmental NGOs to counteract with the greedy SOE who hadn’t earnestly carried out the Party line of caring environmental effects and resettlement fairness in developing the west. On the other hand, the mobilization ability of the environmental NGOs had been strengthened through the institutional resources afforded by SEPA according to the governmental

¹ Zhang Ke, “Under the endless controversy on Nu River Hydropower, the local poverty pressure has prevailed over environmental protection <*nujiang shuidian kaifa zhengyi buduan, dangdi pinkun yali yi chaoguo huanbao*>,” *First Financial Daily*, January 8, 2008. And the writer had also heard similar views through the personal communication with some other journalists.

² Wu Qingquan and Li Li, “Narration on Nu River stories from the humanistic perspective <*cong renwen jiaodu jiangshu nujiang gushi*>,” *Yunnan Daily*, December 17, 2008.

³ See for example: “NRP is faced with the newest opponents (*nujiang shuidian yinglai zuixin fanduipai*),” *South Weekend*, March 3, 2011. And “Several hydropower projects along Nu River have been accused to be constructed without permission, making the ecological degradation (*nujiang duozuo shuidianzhan beizhi weipi xianjian, zhi shengtai huanjing biancha*),” *Daily Economic News*, September 22, 2011.

fragmentation, and further, they had learnt a lesson from the challenge of anti “worship nature” intellectuals so as to improve their issue framing, which might have made the environmental NGOs mobilization more persuasive of “representing the public”, in order to construct the healthy public sphere of China.

Chapter Six

Confirming Central Orthodoxy in Embedded Mobilization: The Case of Tai Lake Crisis

The analysis of the cases in the last three chapters has gone very close to complete the jigsaw of “embedded mobilization”, and the last piece is the role of the top authority at the central level. Whether from the active opinion orientation and resources investment of SEPA or from the campaign and petition of environmental NGOs, we cannot ignore the existence of the central authority, and what we can make clear is that the central orthodoxy to value the environmental factor of the development had been depended on by those main actors in order to dwarf their rivals. However, judged from the visible process, the formal presence of the top authority – especially the presence of the Premier in the Nu River Project issue – had seemed to be in response to the petition of the SEPA official or the environmental activists with the special channel of transinformation. Then, should we just take the central authority as a passive player whose power had been just extracted according to the route map of the “embedded mobilization” composed of the environmental department, environmental NGOs and the media opinion they inspired? This question reflects another crucial point that **whether the combination of institutional resources and informal politics does undermine the centralized Party-state system or become a positive factor to improve the system with carrying out central orthodoxy; and further, whether the intervention of center is a subjective factor of the “embeddeness”**. With such concern, this chapter extends to another important EP field as the environmental emergency, which most directly indicates the contradiction between economic growth and environmental quality. In this field, local economic interests and local leaders’ careers of those “elite regions” – those local regions with advanced economic achievements and more political influence in the central institutions, as discussed in the second chapter – are involved, bringing the alliance of environmental department, NGOs and mass media more obstructions.

At the end of 2007, the source of tap water for Wuxi Municipality, Jiangsu Province, located in Tai Lake, had been severely polluted by blue-green algae. As one of the frequent water crises in China from 1990s, mostly occurred with industrial pollutions¹, this so-called “Tai Lake water crisis <*taihu shui weiji*>” (or “Tai Lake blue-green algae accident <*taihu lanzao shijian*>”) was typical but also had special significance for us to pay attention as, in the first place, it occurred in a most economically advanced area to make clear its non-accidental connection with industrialization and development mode; secondly, this crisis signaled the failure of a long-term and costly pollution management in Tai Lake basin, which naturally concentrated the attention to governmental responsibility; and lastly, the pollution on tap water directly caused the close concern of urban citizens at the very first time. And in addition, for our research on embedded mobilization, this case has its special point, which is, there was the direct connection between central leadership and the interest expression of local community. In other words, environmental departments and NGOs became supporting players, which leads us to see more clear the initiatives and incentives of environmental management as the strong national willingness. In the Tai Lake emergency, the central leadership concerning development sustainability and public complaints directly conflicted with the local Party and government who benefited from the extensive economic pattern. However, the institutional arrangement of local economic autonomy limited the administrative operation of the center – and in addition, the strong position of local leaders from advanced regions in State Council might also be the obstacle – and therefore, the mobilization of “public opinion” was still effective to aid the intervention of central leadership, in order to take control of the institutional reform on pollution management and emergency response mechanism.

Similar to other public issues discussed, mass media was the vehicle to frame

¹ For example, in 1990, Wuxi suffered from half a month without tap water due to blue-green algae. Recently, in February 2006, the water resource of Mudanjiang Municipality, Heilongjiang Province, was officially announced as polluted, leading to a panic buying of pure water. The last serious accident may be the severe pollution along Songhua River, Heilongjiang Province, from November to December 2006, caused by leaking benzene from a chemical plant explosion, resulting in the resignation of SEPA head at that time.

the issue and mobilize social attention. However, media framing in this case demonstrated the clear differentiation among media organizations, rather than the phenomenon of overall predominance. What may the new phenomenon help us, under the situation of direct conflict between center and the local, to understand more comprehensively the framework of “embedded mobilization”?

1. Case Background and Process

1.1 Industrial pollution in Tai Lake as National Protection Agenda

The rapid industrialization in Tai Lake basin transformed the blue-green algae from a common trouble of nature to modernized problem influencing basic living and development quality, which projects the whole serious situation. The blue-green algae (cyanophyte) are a kind of prokaryote found mostly in fresh water; some species produce neurotoxins, hepatotoxins, cytotoxins, and endotoxins, making them dangerous to animals and humans. Common to residents in the Tai Lake area, each summer the blue-green algae reproduce massively and leave remains floating on the lake, a process that has increased since the 1970s due to man-made processes from agricultural fertilizer, industry, and domestic waste. Research materials demonstrated that as early as until the late the 1990s, around the rural area of Wuxi Municipality, both surface water and ground water in superficial layers were badly polluted and had become undrinkable¹. The species had firstly appeared in Tai Lake during the 1960s and become a troublesome pollution source for the local people from the 1970s. And, as early in 1990, there used to be a similar water crisis which led to a half-month break of tap water supply and the direct economic loss of 200 million yuan RMB. The severe deterioration of the situation from the 1990s² had been caused by the great increase of industrial pollutants, including a large scale of sewage without any treatments, and the increase of agricultural and sanitary sewage according to the modernization. As the result, even not during the season of the massive reproduction of the blue-green algae, the water quality of Tai lake still kept

¹ See: Research Centre of Environment and Development of CASS: *China Environment and Development Review*, Vol. 1, Social Science Documentation Publishing House, 2001.

² Gang Gu, “Reason and Control on Blue-green Algae Fast Growth of Eutrophication in Taihu Lake <taihu lanzao baofa chengyin ji fu yingyang hua kongzhi>,” *The Administration and Technique of Environmental Monitoring*, Vol. 8, No. 6, Decemeber 1996, p. 7.

in quite a low level, with 32% of the lake water failing to achieve the standards of drinking water¹. And further, from 2000 to 2006, there have been about 2 to 6 times of massive reproduction annually², bring the local residents into great trouble³.

On the contrary to the serious water pollution had been the impressive economic achievements. People in the area around Tai Lake had created the development pattern called “South Jiangsu Pattern <*sun nan moshi*>” depending on township enterprises for industrialization, which promoted the GDP per capita of Jiangsu Province to about 6,000 US dollars in the middle of the 2010s, in comparison with the national average level of 2000 US dollars during the same time. The “South Jiangsu Pattern” of encouraging township enterprises also used to be a good sample for the less advanced areas. However, besides the impressive achievements, the bad negative effects of township enterprises on the environmental conditions shouldn’t have been neglected, and further, according to the theory of Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC)⁴—the theory hypothesizes the GDP per capita of 5000-10000 US dollars as the turning point for an industrializing country to shift its focus from the simple economic increase to the balance between economic growth and environmental governance—the Tai Lake area should have been taken as capable of increasing the environmental investment. Thus, the central government had paid great attention to the natural environment improvement in the Tai Lake basin, because the pollution management had not only been in response to the urgent pressure of the bad water quality, but also been taken as the example for the less advanced areas to reflect on the pollute-firstly-clean-secondly pattern.

The Tai Lake pollution management started from the middle of the 1990s. In April 1996, the State Council Environmental Protection Committee held an on-the-spot

¹ Ninghong Zhang, Gang Li, Jianqiao Yu, Ming Ding and Liang Xu, “Character of Blue-green Algae Blooms Outbreak in Taihu Lake <*taihu lanzao shuihua baofa zhuyao tezheng chuxi*>,” *Environmental Monitoring in China*, Vol. 25, No. 1, January 2005, pp. 71-74. p. 71.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Since 1991, Environmental Kuznets Curve has become standard features in the technical literature of environmental policy, though their application is strongly contested. See for example: Bruce Yandle, Maya Vijayaraghavan, and Madhusudan Bhattarai, “The Environmental Kuznets Curve: A Primer,” 2000, The Property and Environment Research Center. [<http://www.perc.org/articles/article688.php>]; William T. Harbaugh, Arik Levinson, and David Molloy Wilson, “Reexamining the Empirical Evidence for an Environmental Kuznets Curve.” *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 84, No. 3, August 2002, pp. 541-551; and Julianne H. Mills and Thomas A. Waite, “Economic prosperity, biodiversity conservation, and the environmental Kuznets curve”. *Ecological Economics*, Vol. 68, No. 7, 2009, pp. 2087-2095.

meeting in Wuxi Municipality to check the achievements of the environmental law enforcement in Tai Lake basin. In this meeting, Song Jian, a State Councilor at that time, raised the suggestion to completely clean the Tai Lake water until 2000. The suggestion then oriented to the formal determination of the meeting as: a) the establishment of the leading team on Tai Lake pollution management, with the manning of representatives from the relative ministries and leaders from Jiangsu Province, Anhui Province and Wuxi Municipality; b) the establishment of the operation office for the leading team; and c) the establishment of a specialists team to make the “The Ninth Five-year Plan of Tai Lake Pollution Management and 2010 Plan <*tai hu wu ran zhi li jiu wu ji hua ji 2010 nian gui hua*>”. The scheme actually finished in 1998 planned to completely achieve the set wastewater discharge volume in Tai Lake basin until the end of 1998, clean the visible pollution in Tai Lake water body until 2000 to guarantee the drinkable water quality, and further, until 2010, to low the level of eutrophia in the Lake in order to guarantee the benign ecological cycles. According to the guiding plan, the State Council, in 1998, had invested plentiful resources as the emergency measures to contain the deterioration, including the blitz of organized governmental actions to suspend or terminate the operations of enterprises taking illegal waste discharge, the establishment of special sponsorship to promote the technology with regard to pollution control engineering and stream restoration, and so on.

With such measures, until December 31st of 1998, 97.3% of the supervised 1035 enterprises with the most impressive waste charge had achieve the set waterwaste discharge volume, and the annual sewage volume had been reduced to 540 million cubic meters¹. But after the State Council announced to “fundamentally achieve the interim goal”², the governmental supervision on and law enforcement of illegal waste discharge had gradually become relaxed, and in addition, the management focused on the Tai Lake basin couldn’t factually prevent the waste along the river channels linked to the lake. To people’s disappointment, the unstopped industrial boom according to China’s entry into WTO had brought the waterwaste volume up to the surprising number of 3.24 billion

¹ Hesheng Chen, “Tai Lake Management Shouldered Heavier Responsibilities<*taihu zhiwu renzhong daoyuan*>,” *China Water*, No. 3 (Vol. 429), March, 1999.

² *Ibid.*

cubic meters in 2000. Thus, in 2001, the State Council had got to admit that the achievements of “Ninth Five-year Plan of Tai Lake Pollution Management” to still “have a long way to the set goals”¹. And, based on the judgment, SEPA was appointed to formulate “The Tenth Five-year Plan of Tai Lake Pollution Management <*tai hu wu ran zhi li shi wu ji hua*>”, which set the general and interim goals during the five years from 2001 to 2005, the general financial plan and the division of responsibilities among the different governmental departments and between the center and the local place.

1.2 Difficult Enforcement of National Willingness: Fragmented Management and Partial Interests

With the directives of the Tenth Five-year Plan, the large number of more than 10 trillion yuan RMB had invested into the Tai Lake pollution management, but the 2007 water crisis obviously demonstrated the unsatisfactory results of the years of efforts from 1998, which forced the State Council to consider another another 100 trillion of investment after 2007. However, the failure perfectly illustrated the sticking point of the central-local contradiction in pollution management, as we have analyzed in theory in the second chapter. And moreover, the contradiction hadn’t derived from any accidental happenings, but the institutional arrangement of the responsibility division and, this will help us to comprehend the incentives of the center to mobilize the “public opinion”, as supplement to the weak institutional regimes.

The implement of Tai Lake basin management—factually, it is the common rule in all the river-valley managements in China—just follows the principle of the “localized management”. According to the general legal arrangement, the responsibilities with regard to water resources development, utilization, conservation and protection are up to the local governments at or above the county level (Water Law of People’s Republic of China, enforced from October 1st of 2002, Article 1), and, the local environmental protection department at various levels is pointed as the agency to supervise and integrate the anti-pollution actions (Water Pollution Prevention Law of People’s Republic of China, amended in May 15th of 1996, Article 4). In consistence with the legal setting of

¹ See: SEPA, “Ninth Five-year Plan of Tai Lake Pollution Management,” the Introduction. [<http://www.jshb.gov.cn/jshbw/jhgh/gjgh/zxswgh/200909/P020090901794650559130.pdf>]

the core responsibility of the local government in river-valley management, the Tai Lake management had taken the rule of “local executive chief responsibility system <*xingzheng shouzhang fuze zhi*>”, attributing the crucial responsibilities with regard to collecting funds, policy enforcement and construction supervision¹.

The system design of localized management, besides its original purpose to utilize as many resources as possible and guarantee the favorable local freedom of policy choice according to the different local conditions, has also brought the “tragedy of the commons”. The Tai Lake basin, with the wide range of 36,500 kilometers, covers parts of the areas of Jiangsu Province, Zhejiang Province and Shanghai Municipality. Although the executive power on Tai Lake is mostly integrated to Jiangsu Province, the actual control power is divided to Suzhou Municipality with 70% of the water range, Wuxi Municipality with the 29% and Changzhou Municipality with the 1%. The three municipal administrations have no subjection to each other, and further they have been all benefited from the “South Jiangsu Pattern” with both the rapid economic growth and the serious environmental damages, thus, the Tai Lake resources, as the “commons”². In other words, administrations under the rule of localized management have naturally tended to value the economic growth in the short term as their visible achievements, while shifting the blame of bad environmental management on other local administrations, because it would be technically hard to clearly define which local administration had factually caused what damages.

In order to deal with the dilemma of coordinating the short-term benefits-orientation and centralize the management, the institutional system has offered two regimes. One is pointed at the certain dispute in relation with water pollution among different administrative regions. According to the Water Pollution Prevention Law (Article 28), the dispute is encouraged to be solved through the negotiation among the parties, or appealed to the coordination of the government at higher level upon all the parties, but the higher government is not authorized to take mandatory measures. The other regime just depends on the key role of environmental departments, especially SEPA at the

¹ SEPA, “The Tenth Five-year Plan of Tai Lake Pollution Management”, Articles 1, 2, and 3.

² For more details on “tragedy of the commons”, see in reference to Garrett Hardin, *Science*, Vol. 162, 1968, pp. 1243-1248.

national level, to integrate the trans-regional resources through formulation of general plans, supervision on certain program progress, and adjust and update the specific responsibility division among regions and departments to cope with the situation change (Water Pollution Prevention Law, Article 8, 17, 27, 45, 56, 86).

However, in the actual execution, with the shortage of external mandatory force, there are few incentives to reach the trans-regional negotiation. And further, the written integration role of SEPA is interrupted by the bureaucratic fragmentation. The table 6-1, through listing several programs crucial for Tai Lake management and the sophisticated setting of administration sections, indicates the practical dilemma of coordinating actions. And moreover, to mention the obedience of local EPBs to the local government, it was even harder for the environmental agencies to playing the effective role.

Table 6-1: Fragmentation in Tai Lake Pollution Management Programs:

Source: Huang Xianjin, Wang Lachun, Gao Chao and Shi Yunniang, *Research on Tai Lake Water Resources and Water Environment*, Science Press, 2008. p. 140-141, table 11.1, "State of power distribution among managing departments".

Programs	Management Sections	Nature of Fragmentation ¹
Discharge control	Committee of Tai Lake Water Pollution Prevention, Jiangsu Provincial Environmental Protection Administration, EPBs of Suzhou, Wuxi and Changzhou Municipalities, EPBs of counties under the three Municipalities, and marine sections of the three Municipalities and their counties.	Vertical and horizontal fragmentation
Discharge volume management	Tai Lake Basin Bureau of the Ministry of Water Resource, and Jiangsu Provincial Environmental Protection Administration	Horizontal fragmentation
Management on lake drainage installment	Tai Lake Basin Bureau of the Ministry of Water Resource, Jiangsu Provincial Water Resource Administration, and Water Resource Bureaus of Suzhou, Wuxi and Changzhou Municipalities	Vertical fragmentation
Drinking water source protection	Water Resource Bureaus and EPBs of Suzhou, Wuxi and Changzhou Municipalities and of their counties	Horizontal fragmentation

¹ Horizontal fragmentation pointed at the fragmentation among departments with different functions, and vertical fragmentation referred to that, inside a certain department system, from center to local regions at various administrative ranks.

Even though we may say that the department fragmentation and local responsibility are the characteristics rooted in the public governance system of modern countries, as we mentioned in the first chapter, the shortage of either law leverage to normalize the willingness of individual executives, or a authoritative environmental department to coordinate the fragmentation, have factually led to the dilemma of discontent of all the actors. There has seemed to be the deadlock of the system that the local executives have been complaining about the center to burdening them with responsibilities both of economic achievements and environmental management, while the center has been worrying about their authority on the local administration according to the decentralization. In the environmental crises gradually becoming frequent from the late 1990s, the central anxiety and censure to the local government had not been unusual to see for observers. However, the 2007 Tai Lake water crisis nearly contained all the typical factors to indicate the systematic contradiction: the economic advanced region, the powerful elite executives (the second chapter mentioned the elite administrative regions with more influence in the national-level policymaking according to their economic achievements and revenue contribution), the important water area with prominent historical and cultural meanings and well-known for its poor pollution management effects despite of the large investment and the high-sounding governmental attention, and the slow response of the local government to indicate the bad emergency system.

1.3 Event Process: Local Disguise, Media Exposure, Local Response and Central Involvement

Based on the summary of information collected from different media channels and official release, the table 6-2 outlined the event process of this crisis. The potential danger had early appeared from April 25, with the material threat being found at the latest on May 25, and, the urgency was recognized by local officials including political leaders and related agencies about the same time. But all the crisis information had not been publicized, except the information about the some emergency measures against the unusual phenomena of the Jiangsu Provincial and Wuxi Municipal Government, published in some local Party papers. However, these papers had generally drawn little

attention from common citizens¹. However, on May 28, a lot of citizens, who noticed the tap water had become too smelly to be used, called the hotline of the Wuxi Municipal Government, but they only got the vague response that there had been “no serious problem with the water quality”². Without any official explanation, a two-day social panic occurred through the spread of complaints, conjectures, and internet rumors³.

Table 6-2: Time table of the event process

Time	Events
April	Potential danger was found. ⁴
25–May	
7	
May 8	Wuxi Municipal Government planned emergency measures.
May 16	Deterioration of water quality was found in several waterworks.
– 25	
May 21	Wuxi Municipal Government launched emergency measures.
May 28	Crisis broken out — about 70 percent of drinking water in Wuxi Municipality had been polluted, affecting two million citizens.
May 30	Information released in the local mass media.
May 31	Wuxi Municipal Government’s press conference held, emphasizing unpredictable natural causes; public crisis answer mechanism launched.
June 1	A meeting discussing emergency measures allowed the mass media to sit in, attracting 30 media agencies through the country ⁵ .
June 2	Vice Premier, Zeng, gave comments on local environmental governance.
June 3	Wuxi Municipal Government reiterated that water quality reached standards.
– 4	
June 5	SEPA declared the connection between this crisis and long-term contamination.
June 8	Local Government’s official explanation to frame natural factors as the “chief cause” ⁶ .

¹ Two influential local newspapers expressed a little concern with the issue. *Yangtze Evening Post* published a short article informing readers that the blue-green algae had appeared and would be harmful to water quality, see: “Blue-green algae has appeared in Tai Lake” (*tai hu chu xian lan zao*), *Yangtze Evening Post*, April 21, 2007. On the contrary, *Xiandai Kuaibao* published a more detailed article. However, this report did not mention the potential danger to water source either. It was an investigative article on the harm of blue-green algae to the tourism industry, with an analysis of the accumulating water pollution in the Tai Lake area. See: “Unexpected earlier boom of blue-green algae makes tourists unhappy” (*wu xi tai hu lan zao ti qian bao fa sao le you ren xing*), *Xiandai Kuaibao*, May 17, 2007.

² See: “Boom of Tai Lake blue-green algae makes water in Wuxi taste off” (*wuxi tai hu lan zao bao fa zi lai shui fa chou*), *Yangtze Evening Post*, 30th, May, 2007; “Wuxi city attacked by blue-green algae”.

³ Citizens rushed into markets to buy water; some planned to escape to other places. See: “Wuxi city attacked by blue-green algae”.

⁴ The blue-green algae broke out near a drinking water source on April 25. See: Jiang Mingdao, “Wuxi City attacked by blue-green algae” (*wuxi lan zao gongcheng*), *China News Week*, June 8, 2007.

⁵ Brief, *Xiandai Kuaibao*, June 2, 2007.

⁶ Reporting staff, “Huge sewage mass was the chief cause” (*juda lan zao wushituan shi huoshou*), *Yangtze Evening Post*, June 7, 2007.

June 10-11	Vice Premier, Zeng, investigated Wuxi City and Jiangsu Province with the directive of the Premier that the crisis suggested the pollution treatment in the Tai Lake area be enhanced. State council discusses raising the environmental standard in the Tai Lake area.
June 13	A formal speech of the Secretary of CPC Jiangsu Provincial Committee was published by main local media, promising to enhance pollution treatment under the “concept of scientific development”.
June 29-30	Premier Wen investigated Tai Lake and gave guidelines for local environmental governance.
July 7	Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee and Government held a high level working conference on Tai Lake pollution control. The conference evaluated the effects of the policies in response to the water supply crisis, and formulated concrete targets and policies for maintaining the priority of environmental protection in the Tai Lake area.

There may be no clear evidence to know the current governmental purposes to make the information transparent, which might be the self-confidence to control the situation according to the customary procedures, but anyway, the failure of early measures and the following social panic had put them on the position of being seemed incapable and serving to be criticized, especially when the story had spread in a wide range by the mass media from May 30th, started by the influential local urban newspaper¹, *Yangtze Evening Post*, and the Central Television CCTV². At that noon of May 31st, the Wuxi Municipal Government had forced by the media pressure to give the public explanation that it was a natural disaster. From then on, not only the mass media had continued to concentrate on the governmental emergency measures and the event pace, but also the central government had quickly and actively intervened in the “local executive chief responsibility”. And, according to the recovery of the water quality standards at least on June 4, the rehabilitation measures and introspection on existing environmental governance policies had still continued, with related media reports and central intervention kept on. Finally, a provincial-level conference on local pollution management – it put the raising of environmental standards in the Tai Lake basin and

¹ The newspapers published by party organs for profit. Except the Party censorship, its daily operation is totally marketized and commercialized.

² On the same day, two main local Party papers, the *Xinhua Daily* and *Wuxi Daily News* published reports with nearly the same contents. It meant the local government had given up blocking the information or ignoring citizens’ complaints.

strengthening of coordination among related agencies into the future agenda — concluded from the concentrated media reporting.

Judged from the process, there had been two points interesting for this study. One is that the media concern had gone beyond the crisis solution itself, ranging the main focus onto the pollution management reform. And the other is the governmental actions at the national-level. There hadn't been any direct orders to define the local measures, which hadn't broken the established system of central-local division for "local executive chief responsibility", but the actions like guiding conferences and the local visit of the Premier, had all along been together with the media pressure. The two points then, with the central-local contradiction mentioned in the last section, brings the question that whether the media channel had been initiatively encouraged by the center to supervise the local authority and further to take the chance to promote the system reform, by mobilizing resources outside the defective system.

2. Media Framing with Political Censorship: Local Control and Remote Supervision

As mentioned in the first chapter, although the marketization and commercialization of Chinese mass media provided the dynamics for journalists to pursue media freedom, it did not necessarily lead to media independence from political control. Chinese mass media still must keep accordance with the political orthodoxy, known as "direction on public opinion". However, the practice hasn't naturally led to the unitary media opinion, as the common image under the communist media control. This phenomenon is factually not ridiculous. If we break the set thinking mode that the "competition of ideas" only derived from "market", and linked it to the competition — not only of power but also of ideas — inside the Party-state system, we may find that the seemingly paradox, besides being influenced by the liberalistic inclination of individual journalists, has been also caused according to the decentralization.

It should be made clear that, the media organizations — as the public institution <*shiyè danwèi*> establishment — are respectively under the direct control of its

“departments in charge <*zhuguan bumen*>¹”, usually the government and CCP committee one level higher, or a certain department. Thus, the direction on media is practically in accordance with the orientation of the “department in charge”. That’s the “local control <*shudi guanli*>” as legacy of the communist media system, which makes the local authority easier to suppress the bad news for them. However, the system has been counteracted by another media practice as the “remote supervision <*yidi jiandu*>”, which means media channels under the control of other departments, local governments and CCP committees in other places, or those directly under the central authority, can be more free to expose the local wrongdoings, with much less systematic obstructions². And even, in the practice, it’s likely for the “department in charge” to encourage the media organization to expose the wrongdoings of the competitors. Some foreign media also got aware of the special Chinese phenomenon as “the practice of sending reporters to investigate wrongdoing in other locations”, while “out-of-towners escape their reach, one of the most effective investigative means involved reporters digging for news in distant parts of the country, away from their own censors”³. Thus, the mixture of marketization, individual inclination and the decentralized systematic arrangement has brought the specialized media “pluralization” in China.

The common coexistence of “local control” and “remote supervision” just gives the inspiration of how to observe the wrestle of the center and the local authority in this crisis. And fortunately, the well-competitive media market in Jiangsu Province⁴ gives good samples for the obvious comparison. Table 6-3 demonstrates the respective issue frameworks of the *Yangtze Evening Post* and *Xiandai Kuaibao*. The reason to choose the two dailies is, even in the most competitive media market of China, these two dailies had

¹ A newspaper must be directly led and controlled by a department in charge of the publishing entity, according to Regulations on the Administration of Newspaper Publication, Article 8, issued by General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP), 2005, published in the official site of China State Council: www.gov.cn.

² See: Jiang Zhan (ed.), *Watcher of Social Transformation in China: Context and Practice of Media Supervision in the New Century*, Beijing: China Customs Press, 2002. 47.

³ Geoffrey A. Fowler and Jason Dean, “China’s reporters face a back lash over investigations”, *Wall Street Journal*, December 21, 2006. Page A1.

⁴ Local newspapers in Jiangsu Province are highly commercialized and sensitive to potential news for the intense market. See for reference: Research Center on Media Development, GAPP: 2007 Chinese Newspaper Competitiveness Report <2007 *zhong guo bao ye jing zheng li jian ce bao gao*>; Baoguo Cui, Mingzuo Zhu, “Newspaper Competition in the Yangtze Valley”, record of a symposium in School of Journalism and Communication of Tsinghua University, from: <http://tech.sina.com.cn/other/2003-10-21/1230246575.shtml>.

the largest circulations¹, which meant them to be the most influential media weapons to orient public opinion and mobilize social resources. And in addition, they were different in their “departments in charge”, with the former being supervised by the propaganda department of the Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee, while the latter belonging to Xinhua News Agency, both the biggest center for information collection and a semi-political institution of the State Council in China, as the “central media <*zhongyang meiti*>”.

Table 6-3 integrated the main focus of *Yangtze Evening Post* and *Xiandai Kuaibao* according to the event process, as they had caught up with the paces almost every day. This comparison, with contrast to the Table 6-3 to indicate the event development, clearly indicated the differences in the choice of information transparency. The first is whether emphasis was placed on environmental pollution or on abnormal natural factors as the cause of the crisis. Although we may differentiate the two as a fundamental cause and immediate cause, emphasis on accumulating environmental pollution drew the attention of the public to claim the local government’s responsibility of environmental governance, while emphasis on natural factors helped avoid discussing local governmental responsibility. The *Yangtze Evening Post* before June 12 had not given any prominence to the fundamental cause as environmental deterioration, while *Xiandai Kuaibao*, on June 2 – three days after the official informing of this crisis – published an investigative report, which, using the complaints of interviewed local citizens and conclusions from experts, implied that they aimed to attribute the crisis to the bad performance of the government on pollution management. Even when the two newspapers published the same local official’s explanation declaring the crisis to be caused chiefly by a huge sewage mass formed from abnormally high temperature, *Xiandai Kuaibao* added another report that five officials in Yixing City² were administratively punished for tolerating illegal discharge into Tai Lake³, indicating that the local government also admitted the

¹ These two newspapers are said to have the highest circulations in Jiangsu Province according to their rank of 60 and 61 in the World Newspaper Congress in 2007 and 2008. Data from: http://www.yangtse.com/sytj/jqyz/200806/t20080616_457880.htm.

² This is a city under the administration of Wuxi Municipal Government, where plenty of highly contaminated chemical plants are concentrated.

³ It should be noted that this issue was first exposed by journalists of CCTV, thus the local government was forced to take some measures, and the five officials punished all had a basic level status. Briefing,

connection between bad pollution management and the crisis, but refused to confess to the public.

Table 6-3: Reporting focus of *Yangtze Evening Post* and *Xiandai Kuaibao*

NY = number of articles in *Yangtze Evening Post* that day; NX = number of articles in *Xiandai Kuaibao* that day

Time (NY/NX)	<i>Yangtze Evening Post</i>	<i>Xiandai Kuaibao</i>
May 30 (1/0)	Information about the crisis released.	
May 31 (2/1)	Municipal emergency measures to assure water supply; A purified water company gave help.	Municipal emergency measures to assure water supply.
June 1 (2/3)	Municipal emergency measures showed effectiveness; Provincial leaders paid close attention.	Details of the emergency measures; Provincial leaders paid close attention.
June 2 (5/1)	Provincial management intervened; Governmental measures were successful and comprehensive, and the water quality markedly improved.	Investigative report to demonstrate the connection between this crisis and accumulating environmental pollution.
June 4 (1/0)	Provincial leaders investigated related work in Wuxi City.	
June 5 (1/0)	Provincial leaders mentioned strengthening environmental governance as part of the emergency measures.	
June 6 (1/1)	A provincial institution supplied its municipal branch with purified water.	A provincial CCPCC member demanded a pollution index of drinking water to be open to the public.
June 7 (2/1)	Old wells were reused to supplement the water supply; A Wuxi citizen was administratively attached for “spreading rumors”	A special comment implied that data on water quality published by local government might be fake.
June 8 (1/2)	Official explanation of this crisis, emphasizing natural factors as “chief cause”, given (<i>zui kui huo shou</i>).	Official explanation of the cause for the crisis; Five officials in Yixing City ¹ were administratively punished for tolerating illegal discharge into Tai Lake ² .
June 9 (0/1)		Local EPBs planned to enhance management on chemical and tourism industries around the Tai Lake area.
June 11 (1/0)	Old wells were reused.	

Xiandai Kuaibao, June 8, 2007.

¹ This is a city under the administration of Wuxi Municipal Government, where plenty of highly contaminated chemical plants are concentrated.

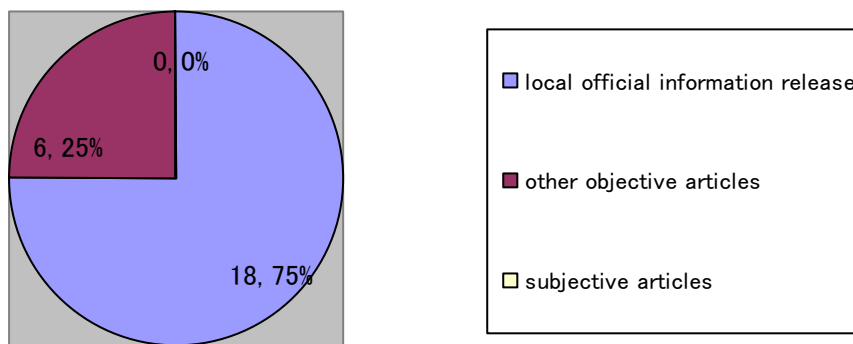
² This local official sanction was taken for the pressure of being exposed by journalists from CCTV. The 5 officials were from the basic administrative level.

June 12 (1/3)	A Vice Premier investigated the local area and gave the Central government directives on strengthening environmental governance.	Central government's directives on strengthening environmental governance; State council required the raising of local environmental standards; Central government demanded to rectify local chemical plants.
June 13 (1/1)	Secretary of Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee's formal speech asking to follow Central leaders' core directives and strengthen environmental governance.	Secretary of Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee's formal speech.
June 15 (0/1)		Special comment: advocacy of giving interested citizens the right to prosecute entrepreneurs or officials whom they considered to be responsible for the crisis.
June 17 (1/0)	Recovery of tourism industry in Tai Lake.	
June 18 (0/1)		Recently emerged blue-green algae did not affect the water quality;
June 22 (0/1)		A serious mistake of the local government: enterprises having stopped production were found in the official list considered to be rectified.
June 25 (0/1)		Wuxi Municipal Government declared to close all the sewage outfalls into Tai Lake by the end of 2007.
July 1 (1/1)	Premier Wen investigated the local area.	Premier Wen investigated the local place.
July 3 (1/1)	An outline of Wen's investigation route, emphasizing the local government's active coordination with Central directives.	A special comment demanding local leading cadres to set an example in environmental protection.
July 8 (1/1)	Provincial general meeting on environmental governance in the Tai Lake area held, and the goals and measures decided.	Provincial general meeting on environmental governance in the Tai Lake area held, and the goals and measures decided.
June 9 (1/2)	Another report of that meeting, focused on related policies of various agencies.	Another report of that meeting, emphasizing the local government's responsibility; A new water supply policy of the provincial government came into being.

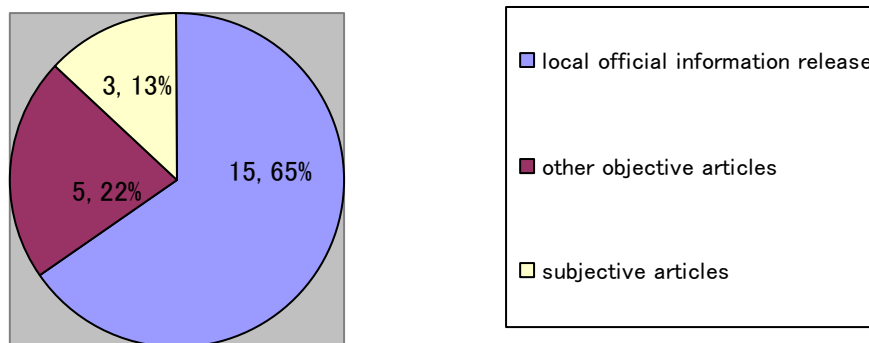
* *Yangtze Evening Post* mostly used news releases of local related agencies, while *Xiandai Kuaibao* used news from Xinhua News Agency and independent investigative reports. The meeting on July 7 summarized the crisis and the emergency measures, and established a new environmental governance plan and emergency answer mechanism for the future. Thus, the concentrated reports in the two local newspapers ended on July 9.

In addition to the information choice, the comparison of the two most influential print media can be taken with regard to the information sources and the reporting style in respect of subjective or objective writing, as shown in Graphs 6-1 and 6-2, respectively. The concentrated articles publicized from late May to early July were divided into three categories: information released by local officials with clear marks of related political agencies as the source; other objective articles without marks of political agencies as the source; and subjective articles, editorials, and special comments.

Graph 6-1: The proportion of article contents in *Yangtze Evening Post*,
Total number=24; Period=May 30 – July 9.



Graph 6-2: The proportion of article contents in *Xiandai Kuaibao*,
Total number=23; Period=May 30 – July 9.



As demonstrated, 75% of the content from the *Yangtze Evening Post* depended on official sources, indicating that this newspaper completely followed the issue frame of the local government. After a vice premier investigated the local area on June 11 and 12, the *Yangtze Evening Post* began to emphasize environmental pollution because it had to make his talk and the Central government's main criticism on local environmental

governance stand out. The vice premier conveyed Premier Wen's comments that "this crisis has sounded a warning to us, indicating that the long-time Tai Lake water pollution problem didn't get fundamentally solved, and we must attach greater importance"¹. On June 13, this paper published the formal speech of the Secretary of the Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee, the highest local leader, admitting mistakes in the local government's crisis response mechanism and environmental governance, promising to strengthen pollution management under the Central directive of "scientific development" <*ke xue fa zhan guan*>².

Judging from Graph 6-2, although official information accounted for 65% of the related content, it did not cover as much information on the repetitive guidelines of the local top brass as the *Yangtze Evening Post*; such information was used to shape a good image of the local officials to be rapid, responsible, and effective in dealing with the crisis. In addition, *Xiandai Kuaibao* demonstrated more questioning against local officials' announcements of their effectiveness through information from other sources. Two outstanding examples reflected this feature. When the *Yangtze Evening Post* conveyed an official announcement vaguely expressing that the water quality "markedly improved" and "basically reached standard", but with no concrete data³ on June 2, *Xiandai Kuaibao* kept silent until it published two pertinent articles on June 6 and June 7. The former was on the suggestion of a provincial CPPCC member demanding the local government to regularly publish detailed data on water safety⁴, and the latter quoted a case in Guangdong Province indicating that even scientific data could be manipulated according to the utility of local officials⁵. Not surprisingly, on several days, *Xiandai Kuaibao* issued an investigative report exposing serious mistakes of the local government.

¹ "Environmental protection standard in the Tai Lake area should be more strict" <*tai hu huan bao biao zhun geng gao geng yan*>, *Yangtze Evening Post*, June 12, 2007.

² The same speech draft was published in both the *Yangtze Evening Post* and *Xiandai Kuaibao* with different titles. "Persist in environmental protection priority, improve Tai Lake water quality with joint efforts <*jian jue shi xing huan bao you xian qi xin xie li zhi li tai hu*>", *Yangtze Evening Post*, June 13, 2007. "Thoroughly eradicate the pollution in Tai Lake, making the water become clean again <*che di zheng zhi tai hu shi tai hu shui bian qing*>", *Xiandai Kuaibao*, June 13, 2007. Page A11.

³ "Water quality in Wuxi City markedly improved <*wu xi zi lai shui shui zhi ming xian hao zhuan*>," *Yangtze Evening Post*, June 2, 2007.

⁴ "Whether water quality is good should be informed everyday" <*shui hao bu hao tian tian rang ren zhi dao*>, *Xiandai Kuaibao*, June 6, 2007. Page A 13.

⁵ "Dirty water could be 'caroused' under manipulated data" <*shu ju ma bi xia wu shui ye neng chang yin*>, *Xiandai Kuaibao*, June 7, 2007. Page A 10.

For example, the Wuxi Municipal Government declared it would close or rectify 71 enterprises considered to be highly contaminated on June 16, but it was discovered that some of them had stopped production several years before, raising the question of whether the local government had taken the environmental work seriously¹.

Another difference was in the newspapers' editorial attitudes. There was no subjective article in the *Yangtze Evening Post* to directly demonstrate the editorial attitudes on the crisis and the government. We might only find in its information, other than official information releases, mostly trivial details, with the efforts of citizens and companies to help themselves highly praised and the local government's "care" of citizens strongly emphasized.

Xiandai Kuaibao published three sharp special comments. The first was mentioned above, which used a case in Guangdong Province — *Nanfang Dushi Bao* exposed on June 6 that the water quality index of Guangzhou City published by Guangdong Province and Guangzhou Municipality were totally different — to criticize local officials of manipulating data according to their own utility², although not directly aimed at the local government in the Tai Lake crisis. However, after Central top leaders investigated the local area and the local leader officially announced their work deficiency and promised to follow the Central directives, *Xiandai Kuaibao* became much more aggressive against the local government. A commentary article on June 15 sharply criticized the interests of local officials, who pursued economic increases as their political achievements at the expense of environmental degradation and the health of residents, to be "the worst enemy of contemporary environmental protection in China", calling for a "legal right on the environment of citizens" to supervise and influence governmental behavior on environment protection through lawsuits³. The author of this article especially emphasized that it was a better way for the Central government to enforce environmental policies in local areas, rather than just depending on local EPBs. Not surprisingly, another article on July 2 criticizing local officials was also under the name of Central

¹ "Closed enterprises were unexpectedly listed to be rectified" <*ting chan qi ye jing ran shang le zheng zhi ming dan*>, *Xiandai Kuaibao*, June 22, 2007. Page A 8.

² "Dirty water could be 'caroused' under manipulated data".

³ "Let the legal right of citizens on environment counteract the pollution for economic interest" <*rang bai xing huan jing quan lai xiao jie wu ran huan zheng ji*>, *Xiandai Kuaibao*, June 15, 2007. Page A 9.

orthodoxy. The commentator, a professor of Nanjing University, by admiring the actions of President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen for setting an example for how to save energy and protect the environment, expressed his discontent with local officials¹.

3. Bias of “Remote Supervision” Along With the Central Intervention

3.1 Initiative Central Encouragement and Remote Media Focus

Besides the comparison — the contents of *Xiandai Kuaibao* had just corresponded with the central worries in the central-local contradiction with regard to the Tai Lake Pollution management plan — as the indirect evidences to imply the central mobilization, the initiatives of central governmental could also be found. The anger at the local officials and the decision to intervene of the center had been indicated by on *People's Daily*, the official organ of CCP Central Committee. This crisis was judged as “a seemingly natural disaster with the substance of human calamity”². What might be more important was its underlining that the local government had made costly mistakes in development³, and declared that it was the local officials’ pursuit of mere GDP growth⁴ that made them violate Central policies on regional environmental governance, undermining the expected effect of Central plan⁵. Further, this newspaper suggested that those officials having connived on an excessive pollution discharge be made responsible⁶.

And, there had also been direct evidences to show that, along with the central governmental intervention going deeper — from the related agencies MWR and SEPA to the vice premier in charge of environmental governance and the premier as well as general directives given to field and investigation by high-level leaders — the media attitudes toward the local government became more critical. For example, *Xiandai Kuaibao*, before Vice Premier Zeng investigated the local area and gave Premier Wen’s

¹ “President’s plain dressing in meeting and Premier’s drinking Tai Lake water” <*zong shu ji jian zhuang yu hui he zong li xi pin tai hu shui*>, *Xiandai kuaibao*, July 2, 2007. Page A 4.

² “Tai Lake blue-green algae alarms”.

³ See especially: “Tai Lake blue-green algae alarms <*tai hu lan zao qiao xiang le jing zhong*>”, *People's Daily*, Overseas Version, June 2, 2007; “Pollution is the main cause of Wuxi water crisis <*wu xi lan zao shui wei ji wu ran shi zhu yin*>”, *People's Daily*, June 4, 2007; “New southern Jiangsu economic mode: transmuted GDP <*xin su nan mo mo shi shan bian de GDP*>”, *People's Daily*, May 29, 2007, etc.

⁴ “New southern Jiangsu economic mode: transmuted GDP”.

⁵ See: “Blue-green algae send out warning light to Tai Lake <*lan zao gei tai hu liang hong deng*>”, June 1, 2007; “Pollution is the main cause of Wuxi water crisis”.

⁶ “Pollution is the main cause of Wuxi water crisis”.

directive, took the tactics of irony, implication, and allusion to express its discontent with the local government. However, later criticism included in investigative reports and subjective articles were directly aimed at the local government and the crisis, as conveyed by Zeng and then expressed by Wen himself during his later investigation of the local area: “Despite many years of Tai Lake pollution management, the problem was not solved. This water crisis warned us to pay more attention to the threat. The cause of this crisis needs to be analyzed more deeply and carefully. The local government is responsible to propose new schemes and measures, strengthening pollution control and comprehensive treatment.”¹ This statement made clear the issue frame of the Central authority, bringing encouragement to the media. In addition, the investigation implied a face-to-face communication of Central and local leaders, the official announcement thereafter indicating an ultimate result of compromise. A formal speech by the Secretary of CPC Jiangsu Provincial Committee was published by the local major media — he promised to enhance pollution treatment under the Central authority’s core value, “concept of scientific development”² — demolished the former local official explanation to emphasize natural factors, which implied the issue frame of the Central government prevailed in this game between the Central and local governments.

3.2 Media Issue Framing: Choice of Information Transparency and Reformatory Meaning

On June 1, the third plenary meeting of the emergency headquarters for this crisis, which allowed thirty media agencies nationwide to sit in³, showed an attitude of information transparency, but, cross-regional media started to participate in the reporting earlier from May 31.

¹ “Premier Wen gave comments that the Tai Lake pollution alarmed us < *wen zong li pi shi tai hu shui wu ran gei wo men qiao xiang jing zhon*>”, *Xiandai Kuaibao*, June 12, 2007, page A8.

² “Thoroughly eradicate the pollution in Tai Lake, making the water become clean again”.

³ Brief, *Xiandai Kuaibao*, June 2, 2007. Page A4.

Table 6-4: The cross-regional media focus according to event process

Time	Focus
May 30	Drinking water polluted; Local residents rushed to buy water.
May 31	Local residents rushed to buy water; A certain social panic and discontent; Governmental response: driving Yangtze River water into Tai Lake and appeased public emotions.
June 1	Central governmental agency's intervention in emergency response; Residents' inconvenience had not been alleviated; Peripheral area had not been affected.
June 2	Vice Premier Zeng gave comments on environmental governance; Local governmental measures to appease public emotions: prohibit binding up water prices, and reducing the water fee by half in June.
June 3 – 4	Local government declared that the water quality reached standards, with no carcinogen included. Recovery of water supply.
June 5	SEPA' s press conference announcing the connection between the crisis and environmental pollution; Local provincial leaders announce to strengthen environmental protection.
June 6 – 7	Repetition of SEPA' s press conference and its judgment; A local citizen was attacked for the name of "spreading rumors".
June 8 – late July	Five local officials of a city in Jiangsu Province were administratively punished for delinquency in environmental governance ¹ ; The State Council held a special meeting for environmental governance on Tai Lake, raising environmental standards in the area; Jiangsu Province closed 772 chemical plants against environmental standards.

* Most of the objective articles were based on Xinhua News Agency's news, with a few independent investigative reports.

Table 6-4 demonstrates the cross-regional media's focus according to time: on May 30 and May 31, besides spreading the news of this crisis nationwide, media reports emphasized the inconvenience brought to local citizens and governmental emergency response; on June 1 and June 2, Central governmental intervention was added, with the framing of words implying the Central attitude taken on this issue was as an artificial environmental crisis; local official declaration that the crisis was relieved prevailed on June 3 and June 4; the focus of June 5 and June 6 was the press conference of SEPA,

¹ These officials were announced to be responsible for conniving illegal waste discharge even during this crisis.

which further impressed the audience that the local government had been in breach of its duty in environmental governance; on June 6 the news reported that a local citizen was arrested for “spreading rumors”, and the next day, this action was given negative evaluation by several media; from June 8, related reports obviously reduced and became less concentrated until late July when media reports were about how to improve environmental governance in future.

Like *Xiandai Kuaibao*, the cross-regional media were inclined to frame the issue as an artificial crisis, an “outbreak of long-term imbalance of economic development and environmental protection”¹. Judging from Table 6.3, the outline of the inconvenience brought to local citizens by this crisis and following social instability was also a focus from the early stage, implying that the local emergency measure was not as effective as the local government had announced. Further, editorials and special comments sharply expressed their discontent with the local governmental direction on public opinion: no formal response to citizens questioning the water quality the first two days², the mayor of Wuxi’s announcement to deny the connection between the crisis and industrial pollution³, a governmental newsman’s insisting that water quality met standards, albeit with a bad smell⁴, declaration of this crisis as purely a “sudden happening”⁵. The goal of the local government was considered by cross-regional media as to escape from their responsibility, conceal their failure to solve pollution problems in long term, and to use the media as a propaganda tool. Some wrote ironically, “when confronted with a crisis, although the importance of direction on public opinion is not to be denied, it didn’t justify hiding the truth”⁶. However, although the original intention of blocking information was to keep stability, the non-transparency was exactly the cause of “great panic among residents”⁷. Xinhua News Agency issued a piece of news that a local citizen was attached

¹ Jiang Gaoming, “Why a place famous for its beautiful water became short of water <*jiang nan shui xiang yuan he nao shui huang*>”, *Beijing News*, June 3, 2007.

² Li Bin, “Taihu pollution shouldn’t be given a blind eye <*tai hu wu ran qi neng yan bu jian wei jing*>”, *Information Times*, May 31, 2007.

³ Wang Yongchen, “Is Tai Lake water crisis a natural or man-made calamity? <*tai hu shui huang shi tian zai hai shi ren huo*>”, *Beijing News*, June 1, 2007.

⁴ Editorial, “Who’s the most necessary to reflect upon Wuxi crisis <*wu xi shui wei ji shi jian shui zui gai fan xing*>”, *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, June 1, 2007.

⁵ “How could Tai Lake pollution be taken out of sight and out of mind?”

⁶ “Who’s the most necessary to reflect upon the Wuxi crisis?”

⁷ Zhao Zhijiang, “Tai Lake water crisis shouldn’t be forgotten <*tai hu shui bie cheng le yi bei wang qing shui*>”, *Yangzhao Dushi Bao*, June 7, 2007. It’s not a simple assumption.

for “spreading rumors”, which was judged by remote media as a governmental behavior to suppress dissent to their announcement of the drinking water safety¹.

However, the considerable interest of these cross-regional media was due not only to the crisis itself as a piece of big news to excavate, but, judging from these reports, especially the subjective articles, their wanting to frame this crisis as a typical case representative of similar issues throughout the country² rather than an accident isolated in a single place. Thus, rather than excavating scoops, they focused more on discussing the general significance. Some hoped the reports on the Tai Lake water crisis would warn audiences of the possibility of similar happenings in other places³, expecting the discussion on the solution would provide reference to solutions for other water pollution cases⁴.

The discussion might be divided into three levels according to the degree of risk as, a) the local government still had some alternative methods to sanction remote media when they were irritated; b) publishing journalists committing on-spot investigations or exercising pressure on the Central government to sanction the media administrator or the editor⁵; and, c) the discussion on certain topics might challenge the legitimacy or core value of the Central authority.

The first level of the discussions was the repetitive emphasis on serious environmental pollution and the demand for more effective governance. Some of the articles were written by famous environmental activists⁶, which indicated the close

¹ This attached person spread the message that “Tai Lake water contained carcinogens 200 times over standards” through mobile phone. But there was some related research that might prove that carcinogens in Tai Lake water were exactly over standard. Even according to official data published by Jiangsu Province in May 2007, cancer patients in Jiangsu Province accounted for as much as 12% of the whole country, caused by serious water pollution.

² Water pollution all over China makes similar suffering crises possible not only in Wuxi, or the Tai Lake area. For details on this serious situation, see: Ma Jun, *China's Water Crisis*, Beijing: China Environmental Scientific Publication, 1999; IPE: China's Water Pollution Map: <http://www.ipe.org.cn/>.

³ For example, Ma Longsheng, “Wuxi water pollution is a great alarm <wu xi shui wu ran shi zen yang yi ji cheng zhong de jing zhong>”, *Yangcheng Wanbao*, June 2, 2007. In this article, the author considered that it would be very natural for everybody to wonder if a similar crisis could happen in the city he lives in.

⁴ Wang Wenqi, “How to effectively prevent illegal pollution discharge <ru he cai neng you xiao e zhi wei fa pai wu>”, *Guangzhou Daily*, June 13, 2007.

⁵ *Southern Weekend* and the *Bing Dian Weekly*, both influential activists in remote supervision, had been officially sanctioned several times, reflecting their threat those in power. In 2005, local leaders from 17 provinces and municipalities jointly wrote a letter to the central government for prohibition against remote supervision. See: Ji Shuoming, “Relying on economic strength, the local government dared say no to the central government”, *Yazhou zhoukan*, Vol. 19 (39), 2005.

⁶ See for example: Yongchen Wang, “Is the Tai Lake water crisis a natural or man-made calamity? (tai hu shui huang shi tian zai hai shi ren huo)”, *Beijing News*, June 1, 2007; “Why a place famous for its

relation between environmental journalists and activists. However, as discussed in the last section, such contents were strongly encouraged by Central leaders' directives and were of hardly any risk.

The second level of the discussion was on how to improve the political system by forcing officials to perform their duties well. For example, some suggested vesting more power to the SEPA and local EPBs for a more coordinate enforcement of Central environmental policies¹. Some others suggested perfecting the rule of law, like by requiring a law to ascertain local officials' criminal responsibilities in environmental governance², or calling for a guarantee of directly interested citizens' rights to prosecute related governmental departments³. Also worthy of mentioning is that, since they involved suggestions on resource reallocation in the political sphere, which might harm some actors with vested interests, to reduce the risk, all of these articles explicitly or implicitly conveyed the Central governmental orthodoxy. For example, the *China Youth Daily*, which advocated investigating local officials' criminal responsibilities, utilized the speech of Premier Wen and precedents to punish local officials penally in Shandong Province and Heilongjiang Province⁴.

The last and riskiest level was the discussion of whether to apply more public participation in environmental governance. Such advocacy was not as clearly expressed as the other suggestions. The most interested in this topic seemed to be the newspapers under of the Nangfang Media Group⁵, known as Nangfang Baoxi (Southern Newspapers)⁶.

beautiful water became short of water", *Beijing News*, June 3, 2007.

¹ "The approach of nine the nine year pollution improvement in the Tai Lake area became controversial: environmental protection immediately requires public participation <tai hu jiu nian zhi li lu jing re zheng yi: huan bao ji xu gong zhong can yu>", *Diyicaijing Ribao*, June 7, 2007.

² Ruan Zhanjiang, "Officials responsible for Tai Lake pollution should be punished penally <tai hu shi jian ying wen guan yuan xing ze>", *China Youth Daily*, June 2, 2007.

³ See: Ou Muhua, "Wuxi water accident shouldn't only blame for blue-green algae <wu xi yin shui shi jian bu jin shi lan zao wen ti>", *Yanzhao Dushi Bao*, June 1, 2007; Wang Wenqi, "How to effectively prevent illegal pollution discharge <ru he cai neng you xiao e zhi wei fa pai wu>", *Guangzhou Daily*, June 13, 2007.

⁴ "Officials responsible for Tai Lake pollution should be punished penally".

⁵ See: editorial, "Who should contemplate in Wuxi water crisis"; Lian Yue, "Environmental problems can bear stalling tactics no more <huan jing wen ti yi wu fa zai shi huan bing zhi ji>", *Nangfang Dushi Bao*, June 16, 2007; editorial, "Power of Public Decision on Environmental Protection <huan jing bao hu de gong zhong jue ding li>", *Southern Weekend*, June 18th, 2007; Huang Xiaowei, "Social force is still weak in Tai Lake environmental pollution improvement <tai hu zhi wu min jian li liang yi ran bo ruo>", *Southern Weekend*, August 12th, 2007.

⁶ These newspapers, especially the *Southern Weekend* which is known as the largest circulation weekly in China, have been the pioneer in "remote supervision" from 1990s. Exposure of a lot of scandals has

On June 1, *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, the highest circulated daily newspaper of Nangfang Baoxi, published its first editorial, pointed out that the dilemma in China's environmental governance was that "the interested mass was powerless, while officials with power paid little attention"¹. The subsequent editorials were all based on this point, especially in their focus on how to improve the capability of citizens to ensure their rights. To put it concretely, some made a general demand to supervise the local government through "an effective channel between the public opinion and Central decision makers"; another recommended an effective European operational model, in which public participation in environmental issues become the decisive power². In the later stage, the influential weekly, *Southern Weekend*, took its advantage of investigative reports. Based on deliberations of the situation and the deficiency in official governance, it interviewed several civil environmentalists. The main focus of this article³ was the great efforts of grass root environmentalists and their poor surroundings with limited registration, poor sponsorship, and few young volunteers. On the other hand, while highly praising the civil struggle to protect the Tai Lake environment, the article also put a premium on the attempts of some open-minded local officials to encourage the growth of social power.

4. Analysis

The 2007 Tai Lake water crisis demonstrated both similarities to and differences from the last cases. Obviously, on one hand, they were similar in the mobilization of social resources as supplement to the environmental management system, and further, the mobilization had been embedded in the shaping of public opinion through mass media channels, to counteract with the systematic deadlock of the central-local contradictions. And on the other hand, the main difference was the absence of social power to directly push the event process, who participated as supporting roles as help enriching reporting contents. To speak specifically, in this case, it was not SEPA and

brought them high reputation in the public and great pressure from many local governments. For more details on the official sanction to "*nan fang bao xi*" for its being "too negative", see: <http://www.peacehall.com/news/gb/english/2002/10/200210290950.shtml>.

¹ "Who should contemplate in Wuxi water crisis"

² "Power of Public Decision on Environmental Protection"

³ "Social force is still weak in Tai Lake environmental pollution improvement".

environmental NGOs to respectively be clients of “central willingness” and “public interests”, but central leadership directly went up to the stage, involving in the game with the local authority, and responded to the complaints of local citizens. And further, opinion expressions and material actions of central leadership directly shaped and supported the media framing of the issue. However, the central orientation of media framing of public opinion was also faced with the counteraction of local authority, who took institutional control on local media organizations. The direct clash, bringing the nationwide boom of media reports concentrated in a short time, just contributed very precious data as the last piece to the “embedded mobilization” jigsaw. That point is, although in last cases, mass media's critical issue framing of development mode and existing institutions is emphasized according to their relations with the environmental department and NGOs, **the process of Tai Lake crisis just made clear of its political identity as the institutional mechanisms to connect the highest-level authority and the common public.** In other words, it help us to comprehend more the substance of “embeddeness” that, with the progress of environmental civil society <*min jin*>, the Party-state hasn't “withdrawn” from the space, but been strengthening its institutional capability to control the process.

This crisis happened in Wuxi City, a most economic-developed city in the advanced East China area, with the urban citizens having good living and comparatively well-educated. And in addition, a most competitive and commercialized media market was located in this area. All the factors seemed to orient to the normative democratization and liberalization in a developing country, but the obvious comparison between the local and remote media on the choice of information transparency and the bias of editorial comments had made it clear that the initiative governmental orientation had prevailed over the market demand for the mass media in order to achieve certain purposes. There might be a simple explanation that the more economically developed and well-educated a region is, the governmental elites pays more attention to the mass media and have more approaches of public communication with the journalist.

Undoubtedly, The Tai Lake issue was an inevitable risk derived from the “tragedy of the commons” in China. And according to the unsuccessful existing “local executive chief

responsibility system”, it was quite natural that the spearhead of complaints would have been firstly pointed to the local government in charge of allocating public goods, with the inconvenience brought to residents and the following social stability challenging the local officials’ legitimacy. Thus, for the local government, it was quite important to prevent the information spread, and moreover, if failed, to reduce the spread of negative information and complaints among the citizens, under the name of keeping “social harmony and stability”¹. For this reason, we can see the *Yangtze Evening Paper*, a highly commercialized local paper, despite of its largest circulation in the provincial market, had even given 75% of its coverage to official information, with no material investigative report or any negative contents.

However, the center hadn’t chosen to tolerate more in such a shameful case symbolizing the failure of the ambitious national pollution management plan for Tai Lake area, but the existing rule of “local executive chief responsibility” had prevented the central authority from directly intervene in the specific solution. Factually, despite of knowing the deficiency of the system, the central authority still depended on the local capability of financing and suiting measures to differing conditions to continue the costly ambitious pollution management plan. That’s to say, the center couldn’t broke the system but had to mobilize some non-institutional resources. In other words, the “public opinion” had been taken an important validity to urge the local governmental enforcement of the national willingness. Thus, the Party paper of Central CCP, *People’s Daily*, with the central media located in the local place like *Xiandai kuaibao*, nearly at the first time indicated the totally different attitudes from the local media, to deny the “natural disaster” and emphasize the risk as the inevitable result of the “South Jiangsu Pattern” which had ignored the environmental quality. Such conclusion would be hard to taken as just a brainwave of the journalists.

The issue framing of the mass media, to speak exactly, the remote media had played a very active role in criticizing the local authority and transferring a large amount of reformatory discourses, looking as if they had been in the developed democracies. But it

¹ “The Provincial meeting on Tai Lake water pollution and blue-green algae management was held yesterday” <*sheng tai hu liu yu shui wu ran fang zhi ji lan zao zhi li xian chang hui zuo zhao kai*>, *Yangtze Evening Post*, June 2, 2007.

was totally different, as the mass media outcomes heavily depend on the fragmentation between the national environmental policy-making and concrete implementation of local government. And further, the media supervision – despite of political censorship and media-control mechanisms – got power from its political identity and basically reached the goals similar to its counterparts in developed democracies. On one hand, the local government was forced to admit their mistakes and promise to strengthen environmental governance after the Central directives. On the other hand, they transferred some suggestions of a democratic nature for the future agenda of environmental governance, which was also in concert with the central agendas. After this crisis, the Tai Lake area in Jiangsu Province on January 1st of 2008 began to take the “strictest” EP standards throughout the country. The defined document named “The Emission Limit of the Water Discharge for the Urban Sewage Treatment Works and Main Industries in Tai Lake Area <*taihu diqu chengzhen wushui chulichang ji zhongdian gongye hangye zhuyao shuiwuranwu paifang xianzhi*>” upgraded the existing EP standards in the past plans on polluting factories management and discharge emission reduction, which had been taken as the continuity of the long-term Tai Lake management planning.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion:

De facto embedded mobilization and the implication of Political Modernization

1. Two Dilemmas

At the beginning of this chapter, just as well as expressed in the introduction, it should be made clear that, this research is not designed to deny the potential of China's environmental movements to finally promote bottom-up and fundamental political change. It's only to demonstrate the subjectiveness of Party-state as adapting to, and orienting the changing social situation, rather than simply being a passive responder. With paying attention to this point which is easily to be ignored, the observation on China's Party-state-societal relations can be made more comprehensive.

The cases studied in this thesis cover the typical domains of China's environmental protection realm: wild conservation, urban environmental governance, environmental effects of large-scale artificial construction and industrial pollution. These cases are well-known for academic study and media discourses globally as they provide the interesting point of view to analyze civil societal growth and its potential power to democratize the Party-state. However, these well-studied cases can still be dug into more intensively. With paying more attention to analyze the "interaction" between political and social actors, the conclusion of this thesis doesn't lead to the attractive prospect of vigorous street movements launched by enlightened citizens subverting the "communism" which is generally taken as the fundamental political change, but demonstrates the more profound changes according to "embedded mobilization".

This "embedded mobilization" is not institutionalized but de facto, or we can take it as an informal politics, which indicates some kind of flexibility of China's Party-state system and a different development form of civil society, and further, the Party-state-societal relations. In this thesis, the de facto embedded mobilization makes sense in dealing with two dilemmas for post-economic-reform China. The first dilemma is the issue-oriented one that how a developing country like China can deal with universal modernity problems at the same when it's still trying to complete the primary industrialization, especially when the two responsibilities inevitably contradict with each

other. And, according to the case study, we may conclude that the Chinese authority chooses to maintain the existing institutions beneficial for industrialization – for these cases, decentralization and strong position of profit-oriented departments – but also conducts informal politics to solve environmental problems, which are also highly ranked political agendas. To speak specifically, political authority initiatively open access to multiple participants, especially social activists, encouraging controversy between them and vested interests groups, in order to make a balanced decision with being closer to the central orthodoxy (for these cases, “sustainable development”). It’s also important that, “opening political access to the mass” can be taken as the succession of traditional “political mobilization” which pursues to construct direct links between highest authority and mass. Thus, it has complete validity in China’s politics although it’s not clearly written. However, what political authority does in environmental realm is different from tradition is that, the coercive power conducting mainly through administrative approaches is replaced by the “embeddedness” when power is conducted through activism of selected social units – NGOs and mass media in these cases – with adaption to the increasingly pluralistic society and reformative ethics.

The other dilemma is from the theoretical aspect that how to deal with “political modernization” and “democratization”. Generally, while talking about fundamental political change in China, researchers incline to care more about the latter, especially when research topics are related with Party-state-societal relations. However, we all know “political modernization” has more profound contents according to complicated economic and social change¹. For China’s politics, according to the bad memories of totalitarian era, people may easily take power distribution as modernization, and label power concentration with autocracy and dictatorship. It may not be academically precise. A modern political system must be with two sides: the power distribution institutions to guarantee citizen freedom and participation, and decentralization; the power concentration institutions to keep social stability and the capability of providing public goods, and centralization. In this sense, China’s politics is not special. In fact, there have

¹ See: Samuel P. Huntington, “The Change to Change: Modernization, Development and Politics,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 3, April, 1971.

been scholars, with comparative studies on history of developed democracies, to emphasize “modern nation construction <*xiandai guojia jianshe*>” with concerns on centralization-decentralization institutions¹, national financial ability construction², social consulting institutions, and so on, rather than the ideologies of “autocracy” and “democracy”³. That’s exactly why I pay special attention to “embeddedness”, or “power through society” in this thesis. Not only it indicates there’s a large non-institutional space in China’s politics for political authority and social players to conduct interaction flexibly (as mentioned in the last paragraph), but also it implies the orientation of institutionalization in contemporary China: on one hand, political access is limitedly opening to public participants and the competition of the limited public resources may promote the pluralization of society (this point is most obvious according to the dam debate); on the other hand, the national ability both of mobilizing social resources and serving the society is being strengthened, with the decay of despotic power.

2. Composition of De Facto Embedded Mobilization in the Field of Environmental Governance

Based on the comparative case study, we have the whole picture of the embedded mobilization, which is composed with the four correlative factors: a) the willingness of the central authority as the orthodoxy; b) the environmental department and the environmental NGOs as the players on stage, and their normalized communication channelling politics and society; c) the mass media as the effective approach to take the mobilization; d) the external interventions to reduce the effects of the mobilization. The synthesis of the factors, which have different extents in issues in different problem domains, has led to different media issue framing and policy outcomes, with regard to the procedural change and the eventual change. (Table 7.1 - part 1 & part 2).

¹ Yongnian Zheng, *De Facto Federalism in China: Reforms and Dynamics of Central-Local*, Singapore; Hackensack, N.J.: World Scientific, 2007.

² Shaoguang Wang and Angang Hu, *Chinese National Ability Report <zhongguo guojia nengli baogao>*, Shenyang: Liaoning People’s Press, 1993.

³ The controversy on “democracy” in China is quite easy to be dominated by ideological color. See: Gengwu Wang and Yongnian Zheng, *The “ism” Controversy in China: from May Fourth Movement to Contemporary Era <zhongguo de “zhuyi” zhi zheng: cong wusi yundong dao dangdai>*, Singapore: Bafang Culture Press, 2009.

Table 7.1 (part 1): Comparison with regard to correlative factors and outcomes of embedded mobilization

Problem domain (with political sensitivity)	The typical case	Extent of correlative factors (positive)			Extent of external interventions (negative factors)
		Extent of involved Orthodoxy of central authority	Environmental department	Environmental NGOs	
Wild conservation (weak: with clear national willingness and social resources was strongly needed)	Anti-poaching of Tibetan antelope (1995 ~ 2001)	Maintained at the ideology-level	Enhanced the effectiveness of civil activism	Took the dominance	Active against environmental NGOs without challenging the orthodoxy
Urban environmental management (middle: with controversy but rarely severe riot, however, such controversy would easily become linked to topics of democracy)	Yuanmingyuan Park membrane controversy (2005)	Maintained at the ideology-level	Took the dominance	Enhanced effects of SEPA	Discontent indicated without taking strong
Big construction item (strong: with serious conflict among multiple interests, and involvement of international civil society)	Nu River hydropower development controversy (2003 ~ 2008)	Made the turning point	Made coalition with environmental NGOs	Made coalition with SEPA	Active within both institutional arrangement and the public sphere
Emergency countermeasures caused by the accumulating industrial pollution (strong: with clash between central and local on “development mode change”)	Tai lake water crisis in Wuxi Municipality (2007)	Took the dominance and encouraged the remote supervision by mass media	Followed the steps of central authority	Followed the steps of central authority	Active local control on media framing

Table 7.1 (part 2): Comparison with regard to correlative factors and outcomes of embedded mobilization

Problem domain	Issue framing of mass media (“Public sphere”)	Effectiveness on the policymaking	
		Procedural outcome	Eventual outcome
Wild conservation	In generally, voices of ENGOs predominated in public sphere, but according to the strong intervention of local administration in late stage, there was also some negative information.	Rearranged the Management regimes	Maintained original national directives
Urban environmental management	Environmental priority, advocacy of environmental laws and public hearing overwhelmingly predominated.	Applied EIA law and public hearing into the policymaking	Rectified the project
Big construction item	At former stage, environmental priority, critics of hydropower and profit sectors, and advocacy of public participation predominated. At later stage, with the strong intervention of profit sectors, local administration and “industrialization-inclined” activists, the issue framing became polarized. Lastly, with restart of the project, we may say industrialization bias and development ethics won.	Applied EIA law into policymaking and permitted the public discussion	Reduced the project scale from 13 stations to 4 stations
Emergency countermeasures caused by the accumulating industrial pollution	Clear difference between local media and central media (with media from other regions).	Rearranged the Management regimes up to the highest national standards	Speeded up the problem solution process

On one hand, the comparison indicates that the eventual outcomes are different, to speak specifically, not all the opportunities of embedded mobilization had changed the original policies which had been made under the dominance of profit orientation. The failure was typical according to the Tibetan antelope protection, as the environmental NGOs followed their independent agendas to promote the social mobilization, and on the contrary, the “embeddedness” was quite weak as the central orthodoxy hadn’t been transformed into material actions and SEPA just took the cameo role. The other cases had the eventual change to original policies, with the formation of the coalition between the environmental department and environmental NGOs, and the transition of the central orthodoxy into actions.

However, the different outcomes have the common characteristic to indicate the “balance”. In other words, the extreme environmental priority has had no chance to suppress the orientation of industrialization, which clearly demonstrated the divergence between the political authority and civil society in the mobilization. On the other hand, all the cases had led to the improvement of related policymaking procedures, especially in the application of legal leverages. And we may conclude that, rather than the eventual change to certain policies, the promotion of political reform is the core appealing of the embedded mobilization. And, the detailed analysis of correlative factors is summed up below.

2.1 The Orthodoxy of Central Authority: “Sustainable Development”

The national willingness of environmental protection has made the validity of the embedded mobilization, despite of its lacking the institutional assurance. To speak more accurately, the central authority has elaborately balanced the industrial modernization and the extent of environmental deterioration. The former is necessary for maintaining the legitimacy of the Party-state, and the “dream” for nationalists of the old country. But on the contrary, if the latter, being accompanied with the former, gets out of control, the possible damages on people’s living quality will also undermine the political legitimacy, and further, natural resources loss followed will influence the sustainability of the modernization.

However, the great challenge to the central authority to balance industrialization and environment – as that no industrialized country of our age have truly practiced industrialization and environmental recovery at the same time, but generally taken the pollute-firstly-manage-later pattern – had become even more difficult according to China’s political system arrangement with all the strength on economic growth from the economic reform. On one hand, at the national-level, the economic profit-oriented departments have just sat on the powerful position with the better financial support and elite staffing rather than those nonprofit sectors, like the environmental department. On the other hand, the practical decentralization derived from the economic reform – although it hadn’t fundamentally shaken the centralized system – has really forced the central authority to bind the local officials through encouraging their economic

achievements, as the main indicator to reach the greater political career, while offering the local more autonomy on certain policy choices to adapt to the de facto federalism and the complicated local conditions of the vast country. Thus, the local authority would have the natural bias to economic growth rather than the hard and costly environmental recovery.

The systematic contradiction between the imperative “sustainable development” and the absolutely mighty profit orientation have brought the central authority into the dilemma: even though the centralized system looked as if it authorized the central top leaders with the nearly absolute control, the authoritative power had factually been balanced by multiple pacts among the Party¹, and in addition, the system in favor of profit orientation have still seemed to be quite reasonable for the good economic performance of China, which makes no political leader chose to subvert it directly. Since that it was hard to balance the industrialization and nonprofit environmental management within the existing system, it would be quite necessary to utilize something informal to supplement the systematic deficiency, especially when the strong profit-oriented departments and local officials treated the central EP policies in a cold manner but the central authority feared the repercussions of certain actions. And, judging from the history of the Party-state, it’s not difficult to notice that the “public opinion” – or “mass line” – have been the absolute validity for certain policies, whether just namely or not. It means, the application of certain public opinion can reduce the systematic obstacle for the central authority to exert the pressure. Even though today’s authoritative leaders cannot ever mobilize the “mass” into great political campaign like Mao Zedong had done during the totalitarian period, they still keep the modernized mass media channel to shape the public opinion legally, and further, the central willingness has been comprehended by the environmental watchdog and the rapidly growing environmental NGOs, both of who also initiatively try to mobilize social resources for the environmental priority in conflict with the strong profit orientation. According to the cases, with the

¹ As Mao Zedong described the Party tradition as, “it is the imperial view to have no ‘party’ outside the Party, and it will bring all kinds of strange shape to have no multiple pacts inside the Party < *dang wai wu dang, diwang sixiang, dang nei wu pai, qian qi bai guai* >.” And, from the reform beginning, the Party leaders have been announcing the resolution of “inner-Party democracy”, including preventing the top elites from making arbitrary decisions.

difficult balance between the economic development and the “sustainability”, the extent of the central authority to transform its orthodoxy into eventual actions have been closely related with the problem domains, to speak specifically, with the extent of the involvement of the industrialization value and the profit-oriented departments.

In the earliest case of this thesis, Tibetan antelope protection was firstly a commonly accepted environmental agenda by both the state — center and local officials — and the civil environmentalists. At the national-level, the central authority had set the agendas earlier than the generation of civil consciousness, by establishing the legal assurance and taking concrete administrative measures like building reserves and anti poaching. And further, since the main protection contents had been targeted at the illegal poachers as the marginalized population, whose dynamics had derived from the foreign market demand. Thus, there had been no profit-oriented pressure group, bureaucratic fragmentation or central-local contradiction to obstruct the main guideline. However, the state, especially the local authority had been confronted with the financial problem to accomplish the mandatory responsibility, and it had become the original incentive of the government to response to the suggestion of environmental activists about the cooperation.

During the 2003 to 2006, the “environmental storm” and other conscious actions had concentrated both the political and public concerns on environmental affairs. The controversies on Yuanmingyuan membrane project and Nu River hydropower construction had drawn the attention from domestic and foreign countries, and had become the most precious resources for related researchers, especially from the perspectives of China’s public sphere and democratization. However, different from in the Nu River construction, the “national willingness” hadn’t been visible in the Yuanmingyuan case. That might be that, the factual effects of the anti seepage membrane in a park had been too far less than its symbolic meaning. But it should also be admitted that the national planning of water resource management had offered the orthodoxy for the opponents to the project, and, it seemed that the promotion of policymaking democratization procedures on a grand scale hadn’t been challenged the national line.

However, the implication and conjecture according to the Yuamingyuan membrane

case had been proved by the case of Nu River hydropower construction, when the power of the national orthodoxy had been indicated its importance. As the hydropower construction was designed to solve the serious electricity shortage at the industrialization climax, and further under the name of helping the local people shake off poverty. No political leaders in China could refuse the industrialization, whether as a nationalist or as the key member to maintain the ruling legitimacy of the leading Party. However, they couldn't accept the unlimited environmental damages unconditionally, because the state depended on the sustainability of natural resources and it had been still vulnerable to the possible social instability – like all other countries in the transformation period, China haven't formed its mature mechanisms to cope with it – derived from the environmental deterioration, especially from the massive ecological resettlement, which had already troubled the state in the Three Gorgeous Dam construction. Thus, the central authority had the clear incentives to take the actual actions to encourage both proponents of and opponents to express their ideas and contribute to the policymaking. However, the central authority had maintained its balance between the ideas of “development” and the “sustainability”, as intercessor of the controversy orienting the process to be favorable for the “sustainable development” directive.

The dynamics of the central authority was further clarified through the quick intervention into the Tai Lake urgency management, when the leaders finally giving up being the dispassionate observer and intercessor seemingly detached from the conflict between the environmental priority and the pursue of economic benefits. This case just made clear that the central authority had its defined agendas, rather than only to respond to the civil pressure. In other words, when there had been enough ripening of conditions – like in the Tai Lake crisis: emergency, advanced industrialized regions, water crisis vital to the 5 million urban residents, failure of the long-time costly national management plan – the central authority wouldn't hesitate to go up onto the stage.

2.2 Channels for Institutional Resources embedded in Society: SEPA-NGO Coalition

Under the national orthodoxy, SEPA and the well-organized environmental activists had become the leading roles in the spotlight at the stage of the embedded mobilization. SEPA, as mentioned in the second chapter, had the clear motives to upgrade its position

in the bureaucratic system and apply the environmental consideration into policymaking. The motives of environmental activists might be more complicated. Besides the environmental priority, they have more political appeals to promoting the fundamental change of policymaking regimes. To speak specifically, the environmental activism had been the test site of the “democratic politics” ideal of the environmental activists: the public opinion would compete with the official planning and bureaucratic interests in policymaking, or even develop into the decisive factor, and further onwards, change the Party-state system into a seemingly universal democratic arrangement. That was also the target of the participants in the unsuccessful liberalistic campaign publically confronting the authorities in the late 1980s, among which several pioneers of environmental NGOs had been involved.

The common motives of SEPA and environmental NGOs – environmental priority and the pursue of continuing influence on policymaking – created conditions for the integration of the institutional resources controlled by SEPA and the flexibility of NGOs to link social resources, but the coalition hadn’t formed easily at the early stage, when the new-born NGOs had originally planned to imitate their counterparts in developed democracies to set the subjective social agendas. However, different from those in developed democracies, the environmental NGOs in China had been hard to be independent not only for the commonly-known and well studied political restrictions, but also for their initiative utilization of the institutional resources. As the pioneers of China’s green activism, the intellectual elites had the natural relationship with political elites according to the networks such as classmates, teacher-student relations, battle companions, and so on. And further, some of them even had the formal identity in the political system as being the “consultant” to the government. In other words, some individuals, especially those key members, of early environmental NGOs had originally owned the channels to actually influence the policymaking, although the channels might not be formally established or sustainable.

The success of Yunnan golden monkeys, which gained the Friend of Nature (FON) the brilliant fame overnight, was the typical success of utilizing the institutional resources through the personal network. The FON leader, Liang Congjie, took his legal

responsibility as the CPPCC member to submit the issue to the current State Councilor, and the latter responded by publicizing the administrative order to halt the deforestation at the county-level, protecting the living conditions of the rare species. This made the vague point of the green activism that we could judge the efforts of Liang Congjie as representing the NGO he led, or as committing its political role. However, the success had greatly encouraged the civil activism, and, the Tibetan antelope issue witted the change of the NGO strategy to pursue the independence from the state power to shape the subjectivity of the typical “civil society”, according to the ideal image of developed democracies. At the early stage, the alliance of NGOs and individual activists had achieved great success in shaping the field composed of “civil donation channels”, “public opinion framing” and “actions of the Wild Yak Team at the front line” all in integration. Under the domination of environmental NGOs, SEPA had been also invited to build up the campaign, but at the current time, it seemed to be strong incentives for SEPA to mobilize resources outside the system. Besides the absence of an obvious divergence among different governmental sections, the new-born environmental watchdog hadn't been legally authorized the role of “department in charge” in the EP area, thus, it might be a reasonable conjecture that SEPA hadn't clearly recognized its predicaments and especially had no plan to strengthen their actual influence. However, it still inclined to respond to the petition and activism of the civil society, taking it the good opportunity to strengthen the social EP consciousness, by commending those who had gained merits in the protection.

However, along with the final failure of NGOs in integrating the local personnel, especially when they declared the Wild Yak Team as the symbol of civil activism in a high sound, there had become a change to the SEPA-NGO relations in the following campaigns. Especially when the reformists being sensitive of political flow took the lead in SEPA, the watchdog began to actively control its own agendas and embed in the civil activism. And on the other hand, environmental NGOs had changed their strategy to cooperate with the reformists who would both strengthen their actual effectiveness and somehow comprehend or even promote their political ideal. In the objection to Yuanmingyuan membrane project, SEPA indicated its whole initiatives. Firstly, it set the clear target to

depend on the authority of the legal leverage, to speak specifically, the Environmental Impact Assessment Law. This target had corresponded with the central orthodoxy of “ruling by law <fa zhi>”, and, the concept wouldn’t incur the antipathy of NGOs for its meaning of limiting the power of the Party organization and the bureaucracy. In other words, the environmental department and the civil society had found their mutual target without radically challenging the fundamental system, which made the base for the embeddedness. And, secondly, SEPA utilized the administrative order – in other words, the institutional resources – to set the issue agendas: halting the project to support the validity of social questions, holding the public hearing with arranging the details of participant choice and the agendas, setting the time table of the environmental impact assessment, and interpreting the report to make the final mandatory decision. However, along with the every step of SEPA was the “public opinion” and positive response of environmental NGOs, which made the whole process seem to be the application of fresh “public participation”, rather than the rigid administrative pressure exertion simply according to the bureaucratic hierarchy. In other words, the combination of SEPA and the public activism had made the change of the original policymaking on the membrane project go beyond the confines of the image of inner-bureaucratic contradiction, offering the actions more validity in respect the “mass line”, while the environmental NGOs could also enforce their effectiveness. And further, by judging from the details of the process, we can also find that the combination had been achieved consciously through the continuing communication between SEPA officials and NGO members, thus, it wouldn’t be exaggerative to conclude that a coalition had been formed between the players.

And, the “embeddeness” was made more distinct and prominent according to the analysis of the Nu River Controversy, or commonly known as the “Nu River Defense Battle” from the perspective of opponents to the largest hydropower planning at the current time in China. The process was started by the reformists in SEPA¹ to leak the unpublished policymaking inside the National Development and Reform Committee

¹ Factually, the official who leaked the decision of Nu River project to green activists had then gone farther on the way to promote the political change. And his name was even listed in a document published by the *Wikileaks* online, said to be owned by intelligence agencies of the United States on the political dissidents serving “protection”.

(NDRC), participated by related departments of State Council and the electricity goliath. As the consensus had earlier been achieved among the profit-oriented departments and enterprises, SEPA's accumulating discontent with being marginalized in the policymaking customs was then ignited, and like in the Yuanmingyuan case, SEPA took out the EIA Law. However, SEPA had little administrative power to press its profit-oriented co-workers in this case, thus, it chose to, utilizing its institutional resources, provide the platform for the "public opinion" voicing through environmental NGOs and the scholars standing with them. Then, we can see the two "conferences" held respectively in the Beijing and Kunming. The two symposiums, although without any consensus between opponents and proponents, had actually led the policymaking to exceed the control of political elites inside the system, and moreover broadened the space for civil activism. At the next stages, only environmental NGOs stood under the spotlight and the direct administrative intervention of SEPA had been rarely seen, however, the final result came to that the EIA process had been applied into the policymaking, which recognized the SEPA examination to be an indispensable factor in the policymaking of similar projects. On the other hand, environmental NGOs, after being linked into circle of policymaking, had given themselves a good account. They shaped the unprecedentedly influential green public sphere in China and even reached the activism to the international civil society. However, the inspiring success had again encouraged environmental NGOs to pursue the subjectivity – undoubtedly it was the natural choice during the growth of civil society – it then led to the divergence from the mutual orientation with SEPA, which put the environmental NGOs into the direct conflict with the strong profit-oriented departments, enterprises and the local government. The dilemma of environmental NGOs will be discussed in details in the section of analyzing the external intervention on the embedded mobilization.

2.3 The Approach of Mobilization: Media Framing

The last section discussed the key players of the embedded mobilization in China's environmental governance, and analyzed its dependence on the combination of the institutional resources embedded in social activism and the mobilization of social resources directly practiced by environmental NGOs, in order to meet the mutual target

of the SEPA-NGO coalition as applying the legal leverages into policymaking process to break the powerful position of profit-oriented departments who naturally inclined to ignore the environmental concern. And, for this combination, the media issue framing had played critical role, as the preconditions for the advocacy of public participation and the influence on public policymaking¹.

As discussed in the first chapter, mass media has its duality. On one hand, along with the marketization and commercial competition, it has been experiencing the pluralization. And on the other hand, as the legacy of the communist media system, it still follows the political directive and committing the self-censorship as the mouthpiece. However, the role as mouthpiece has brought, besides the political limitation, journalists the advantage to legally link to the policymaking and governance, since the mass media is theoretically part of the political system. Especially, those elite journalists of the central media are just like the ears and eyes for the political leaders to collect information from various departments and the local government, thus, it's not unusual that they have the formal position in the political hierarchy, sometimes even high enough to prevail over the local officials. In other words, mass media in China just stands in the vague position across the political and non-state field, as figure 7.1 indicates. And further, the “public opinion” mainly transferring by mass media coinstantaneously serves the needs of both SEPA and the active environmental NGOs: SEPA needs the public opinion as the absolute validity to break the policymaking customs, and influencing the public opinion framing is the most realistic approach for the young weak environmental NGOs producing the effects.

Figure 7.1 Factors and formation of mass media issue framing



¹ Guobin Yang and Craig Calhoun, “Media, civil society, and the rise of a green public sphere in China,” in Ho and Edmons, *China's Embedded Activism*, pp. 69-88.

Environmental NGOs' early reach to the mass media based on the personal network, which made its actual ability greater than it theoretically would have been, according to the few members, poor resource investment and the external restrictions of the Party-state system. There is no doubt that the Chinese environmental NGOs came into being as the intellectuals' response to the import of environmental concern of developed democracies, especially the thought of the American conservation. Considering the poor education situation about the same time – during the beginning of the reform, there had been maintaining only about 0.1 million students enrollment in college. And, the number had gradually grown into 3 million in the middle 1990s, with the annual enrollment of about 1 million on average, being trivial in comparison with the current population of 1.2 billion. That means, the higher education resources had been the luxury limited to very small population and that was exactly the current strategy to take the higher education as the “elite education”¹. In this case, the modern environmental awareness and the corresponding appealing of the related influence on policymaking had naturally been the consciousness only shared inside the small elite circle, within which, the few well-educated intellectuals served as Party celebrities, bureaucrats, think-tankers, teachers, writers, journalists, etc., had resonated with each other according to the same elite identity. And, further considering the special political ecology in the middle 1990s – the liberalists had been strictly suppressed after Tian'anmen movement, however, the 1992 “South patrol <*nan xun*>” of Deng Xiaoping had just somehow freed the restrictions – the green civil society seemed to be quite a suitable field to integrate the liberalistic power, for the sake of its meanings of “public participation” and “democracy” in the developed democracies.

Since that the early green activism had been promoted by the intellectual elites concentrated in big cities, especially in Beijing, the political capital, a most economically advanced, and a city with multiple information channels, it only deviated from the really interested local community². And, according to the objective political restrictions to any

¹ See: Cai Junlan, “The Fundamental Evolution of the Higher Education Scale in China and Analysis on the Characteristics <*zhongguo gaodeng jiaoyu guimo yanjin de jiben licheng ji qi tedian fenxi*>,” paper of the Guangdong Provincial Economic Institute, [<http://www.gdeco.com.cn/content.asp?id=196>]

² An important evidence for the deviation is indicated according to the Tibetan antelope protection that, when the Wild Yak Team who actually fought at the front-line emphasized their official identity, the

organized social campaign, the most realistic action the environmental NGOs could take was the “enlightening the people <*kaiqi minzhi*>” – from the time China opened the door to the world in the last years of Qing Dynasty, the liberalistic intellectuals believed in the concept as their responsibility – to impart the modern environmental consciousness to the common people, making the green public sphere which had the effectiveness on the decision-making. Thus, the utilization of mass media had been the crucial connection. And moreover, as journalists had been among the easiest to learn related knowledge about the modern environmentalism – in the era without enough education resources and multiple channels – it would not be strange that they had an important part of the pioneer environmental activists, such as Xi Zhihong for the Yunnan Monkey protection, Sun Danping for the Tibetan antelope activism. Without the pioneer efforts of these journalist activists to explore the first-hand materials from the local place, the media resource in advanced regions wouldn’t even have been oriented to the conservation issue in the no-man area of the far western area.

When the pioneer activists utilized the media resources depending on the personal friendship, the younger ones began to pursue the more stable regimes to close the relations with mass media. The Yuanmingyuan membrane issue witnessed that there had already been formed some kind of regular communication regimes between environmental NGOs and journalists, reflected by the multiple media channels of the Friends of Nature to publicize their information from the very beginning. And, in the Nu River defense battle, it even became more prominent of the “Green Earth Village”, the environmental NGO sponsored and mainly composed of journalists and former ones, which had been the decisive power for framing the issue. In fact, along with the increase and spread of educational resources and the industrialization process, the green public sphere had gradually gone beyond the elite circle, and the resonance between environmental activists and journalists had changed from the emotional sympathy to a more reciprocal relations¹. To speak specifically, on one hand, utilization of the discourses

green activists still had the preference to frame them as the symbol of the civil activism. Details can be seen in the third chapter.

¹ Guobin Yang, “Environmental NGOs and Institutional Dynamics in China”, *The China Quarterly*, No. 181 (March), 2005. pp.46-66. pp. 56- 57. And also see: Wen Bo, “Greening the Chinese Media,” *China Environmental Series*, Issue 2, 1998, pp. 39-44.

of the environmental NGOs is a most operatable approach for mass media to frame the “public opinion”; and on the other hand, environmental NGOs are happy to offer the help to journalists on “social relations” and “professional knowledge”¹, to socialize the environmental priority, and the environmental NGOs help themselves to obtain “some kind of validity, a creditable reputation” and expand the resources of “volunteers, materials and financial support”, and, further to “create the positive social environment for the growth of environmental NGOs”².

Another power source for the green energy of mass media is in the state. Objective data analysis showed that, the attention rate of mass media to environmental issues had indicated a positive correlation with the upgrade of EP topics in the political agendas from the early 1990s³. And, even earlier than the birth of Chinese environmental NGOs, officials of the environmental department had tried to apply the media framing into the EP field. From 1993, there had even been a long-term institutionalized media action named “China Trans-Century Environmental Protection Inspection Campaign <*zhonghua huanbao shiji xing*>”, launched by the current State Environmental Protection Bureau, under the coordination with the other 13 departments and agencies, participated by 25 most influential central media organizations. Every year, under a certain annual topic, journalists had been sent to the local place – especially the hot spot vulnerable to certain environmental deterioration – to inspect the environmental situation and the enforcement of relative national policies. To speak exactly, the journalists had taken not only the responsibility of recording and publicizing current situations, but also the similar role to “imperial envoy” to supervise on the local officials⁴. However, the earlier official promotion of media mobilization had been still restricted to the confined of taking mass media just as a tool of the Party-state. The situation had been changed according to the growth of reformists in the environmental department. The good media communication of reformists could be cast back to the former Premier, Zhu

¹ Chatham House, *Strengthening the Cooperation between Chinese Environmental NGOs and the Media*, pp. 11-12, 13.

² Feng Yuan, “NGOs in the contexts of the news media in Chinese mainland <*zhongguo dalu xinwen meiti zhong de NGO*>,” *China Development Brief*, No. 21, December 2004. [<http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.org.cn/wzdd/wzdd.jsp?id=337>]

³ Li Ruinong, “Trend and Reporting Approaches of Environmental Journalism <*huanjing xinwen de zoushi ji baodao lujing*>,” *Chinese Journalists*, Special Issue for Environmental Journalism, April 2008.

⁴ See the details of the annual topics in Annex 3.

Rongji, in whose period, the Three Gorgeous Dam project had become an open topic in the public sphere¹. And, in the last chapters, we have been familiar with Pan Yue, the deputy general of SEPA. As a well-known reformist, Pan had the long-term experience as journalist, serving a reformist magazine and the official paper of national environmental department. The practical experiences had offered Pan the good network in the media circle and the special knowledge of media operations. In the Yuanmingyuan issue, Pan and the SEPA nearly guided the whole process and the orientation, to upgrade the seemingly small project into a most splendid symbol of China's green public sphere and even the public participation and democratization. In the Nu River defense battle, SEPA initiatively opened the information channel to environmental NGOs and mass media, greatly surprised its profit-oriented rivals in the bureaucratic system who had been accustomed to keeping the policymaking secret from the public. And, in the Tai Lake crisis, even though SEPA hadn't taken the leading role, it still became the only national department to hold press conference to interpret their special opinions, making an important information source for the media issue framing.

Considering the source information from and cooperation with environmental NGOs and reformists of the environmental department, it would be easier for us to understand the obvious bias of mass media issue framing. Judged from the typical cases, the framing had commonly exceeded considering the issue as it originally had stood, or to speak more specifically, mass media framing concentrated more on digging up the "systematic" deficiency behind the certain issues, whether the issue had seemed to be the wild conservation (Tibetan antelope protection), the controversial technique (Yuanmingyuan membrane), the large-scale industrialized project (Nu River defense battle), or the urban environmental crisis (Tai Lake water crisis). Generally, the bias had been prominent in the characteristics: a) the nature of issues had been early determined at the very beginning of media reporting, and – except the antelope protection without any controversy – the environmental priority and political reformist discourse had commonly predominated the public sphere, making the media framing more like the one-side

¹ See details in: GØrild Heggelund, *Environment and Resettlement Politics in China: The Three Gorges Project*, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003, pp. 193-222.

criticism rather than the “controversy”, which led Liang Congjie to sigh with feelings that “China has the greenest media in the world”¹; b) the one-side critics had been concentrated against “the wrongdoings of local bureaucrats (or root officials)” as a whole rather than the scrutiny on defining exactly who would be responsible, the general profit orientation, and the defective policymaking regimes lacking the “rule by law” and public participation; in other words, the media framing inclined to orient the public to pay attention to the original sin of industrialization and the political system imperfection, and implying the preferent prospect of the political change under way; c) the media framing had elaborated on utilizing the orthodox discourse without challenging the Party-line; actually, all the reformist key concepts of “rule by law”, “public participation”, and the “public scrutiny” on officials applying to the mainstream media framing could find their validity in the direction of the central authority; especially in the Tai Lake crisis, we see clearly the accordance of media framing with the upgrade of the central intervention and how the media framing depending on the words of top leaders, despite of that there had been multiple interpretation of the words according to certain journalists’ positions in the political spectrum.

2.4 External Interventions: Official and Non-official

According to the analysis above, it’s quite clear that the combination of central orthodoxy, environmental department, environmental NGOs and media framing to accomplish the “embedded mobilization” has been targeted on deal with the strong profit-orientation and the policymaking regimes in favor of the preference of strong profit-oriented departments and the local authority. However, while the embedded mobilization is exerting the public pressure, it’ll be correspondingly faced with the opposition from the economy-oriented departments, the local authority, enterprises, and other non-governmental agencies or individuals who had been oriented by the profit orientation or paid great attention to the industrialization value. In comparison with the environmental priority, the value of profit orientation and industrialization has been more beneficial from the systematic arrangement, which sets the validity for the opposition. And moreover, despite of the common target to press the profit orientation,

¹ *Friends of Nature Newsletter*, No. 3, 1998.

the players integrated in embedded mobilization have their diverse agendas, making them possibly choose to respond the opposition with diverse attitudes, in other words, the dissolution of the integration of players. This indicates the “external intervention” in the embedded mobilization.

In the wild conservation, the local government had played a complicated role as to the mobilization. At the beginning, it had factually been the promoter of the civil activism. According to the obedience to the central direction – the legal frameworks and the policy demanding local financial responsibility of reserve establishment – the local government had applied the channel of the private funding, which offered environmental NGOs the opportunity to participate in the issue. During the early stage, the local government just had stood with the central authority and the environmental department to encourage the civil activism. However, along with the success, the environmental NGOs attempted to get independent from the political censorship, in order to build the subjectivity and the equal language power of the public sphere with the political sphere in antelope protection, and turned their work focus to supporting the Wild Yak Team to compete with the local candidates for political legitimacy, according to the mobilization of public opinion to shape its social legitimacy. However, meanwhile, the central authority and SEPA had achieved the expected goal of inspiring public consciousness, especially orienting the surplus social resources in advanced regions to the faraway west, to promote the protection. This heterodox action incurred the outcry of the local government and even speeded up the official disband of the Wild Yak Team. The environmental NGOs then had been forced to seek help, through the personal efforts, from SEPA and even the top official –the vice Premier in charge of EP issues Wen Jiabao, the current vice Premier was eventually the most potent candidate for the next Premier – but as long as the local government hadn’t disobey the central directive of the protection, and further, the local interest hadn’t neither conflicted with the environmental preference of SEPA. Therefore, the civil mobilization, with its own agendas, couldn’t further obtain the embeddedness of institutional resources.

According to the growth of the green civil society and the development of reformists in SEPA, there had become the firmer integration of environmental NGOs and the

environmental department. The Yuanmingyuan membrane case had witnessed the firm integration and its power. That chapter also mentioned the comparison case of the earlier civil opposition to the Kunyu River lining project in Beijing. In that case, the independent actions of the environmental NGOs to ask for the right of participation in policymaking had been directly refused by the Beijing Municipal Government, and, the government even took the administrative power to prevent environmental NGOs' mobilization of media reporting. However, in the Yuanmingyuan case, despite of the recourse of the root administration of Yuanmingyuan Park and the district government to the municipal government, the municipal government chose to "respect" the decision of SEPA and the "public opinion", even though the environmental department and environmental NGOs had gone much further than the appealing with regard to the Kunyu River project. In other words, the most potential external intervention in this case hadn't been exerted, which helped the complete success of the embedded mobilization.

However, the weak external intervention in the Yuanmingyuan case had been owing to not only the firm integration, but also the little eventual influence of the membrane project on the core interests of the local government and the related departments. Therefore, when SEPA and environmental NGOs took the same pattern in opposing the Nu River project, which had been an important step of industrialization as the national plan and touched the core interests of related departments, the local officials up to the provincial level, and the electricity interest group, the embedded mobilization had been naturally confronted with the great external interventions, for the project proponents had advantages in the legalized policymaking channels – for example, the NDRC, the local Party and government, and the People's Congress at both national and local level – to obstruct the opponents. But the embedded mobilization linked to the orthodoxy of the central authority to consider the environmental quality in the hydropower project, and obtained the staged success in suspending the project construction. However, the success also made the turning point of the SEPA-NGO relation – for SEPA had reached its goal of applying the legal leverages, leading itself into the circle of decision-making, when environmental NGOs targeted on the abolishment of the plan – therefore, SEPA chose to "keep silent" and communicate with its bureaucratic co-workers within the institutional

system, while the environmental NGOs continued their battle to defend the “ecological river”. The divergence of the coalition then broke the balance between the power proponents and opponents, making the independent mobilization of the civil society vulnerable to the attack from the profit-oriented sections. And, more serious for the environmental NGOs, the external interventions had been also from the non-governmental sector. Some environmental activists had just gone quite far to the extreme environmentalism, and incurred the conflict with another part of public intellectuals who preferred the value of industrialization and economic growth rather than the environmental priority. The conflict, even without the clear victory or defeat, just challenged the identity of environmental NGOs to “represent the whole public”, to some extent reducing the validity of their assertions and actions, not to mention the deviation of extreme environmentalism from the central orthodoxy of “sustainable development” to “balance” the development value and environmental concern.

In comparison with the cases above, the Tai Lake crisis seemed to indicate a smooth process, however, it doesn't mean the absence of the external interventions, but demonstrated the evolution of intervention approach. The peace on the surface is just for the reason that the local government, who had been aware of their deficiency in Tai Lake governance, “embedded” their institutional resources in the local media framing, in order to conflict with the framing of the central and the remote media, whose dynamics and power source were rooted in the embeddedness of the active intervention by the central authority. In this case, against the local work to frame the crisis as the “natural disaster” to dilute the responsibility of local officials, the environmental department and environmental NGOs maintained a high degree of unity with the central orthodoxy, avoiding the direct conflict with the local government. This phenomenon – let us temporarily call it of the “embedded external interventions” – of the local government to withdraw the mandatory approaches to suppress the critics might reflect the change of the political ecology in China, to speak specifically, the abuse of administrative resources in favor of the private interests of officials have gradually quit from the political customs, and officials have to respond to the public opinion with the more active attitudes and in a moderate way. And, it'll be reasonable for us to believe that the “embedded mobilization”

have contributed to the positive change.

3. Political Meaning of “Embedded Mobilization”: Institutionalization and Democratization of Political Development

Although this thesis focuses on the “embedded mobilization” mode limited to the environmental realm, the comprehension obtained from the empirical study can help us to see some points of the general conditions of the Party-state-societal relations. The empirical mode not only demonstrates how political and social resources integrated in environmental management, but also – since that study on Party-state-societal relations in China is oriented by the perspective of political development – contributes to comprehending China’s political institutionalization and democratization.

Lucian W. Pye, the political scientist and one of the leading China scholars, summarized ten aspects of political development as, a) the political prerequisite of economic development; b) the political form of industrialized society; c) political modernization; d) the operation manner of nation-state; e) the development of administration and laws; f) the need of large-scale mass mobilization and participation; g) the democratization of political institutions; h) the stable and orderly change; i) the political mobilization and political power; j) the social change at the political level¹. The ten aspects can come down to two dimensions as the **institutionalization** (construction of fundamental modern institutions for a nation-state in terrains of national defense, diplomacy, law, finance, central-local relations, bureaucracy, welfare, public services, and so on); and the **democratization** (general election procedures to confer political legitimacy, public participation to reflect social pluralism, establishment of good environment for community development, and so on). That’s to say, the political development should be a comprehensive progress, being integrated with emphases both on certain orders and pluralism. But it seems that the “orders” is often absent from today’s conversations on political development/modernization, since it may be easy to be mistaken as not more than defending the self-interests of authoritarian leadership².

¹ Lucian W. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development: An Analytic Study*, Little Brown & Company, 1966.

² The conscious construction of orders is ignored also because the consideration that political

However, just as John Rawls points out in the *Political Liberalism*, even the developed democracies have the “fact of oppression”, which realizes the lasting liberal pluralism¹. And, in reality, most seemingly normative political democratization – based on academically favorable economic modernization – led to political decay and anarchy disorders at social level². China’s practices in environmental realm may show us the possibility of a stable issue-oriented transformation.

The Dilemma of the Party-state in environmental management indicates the contradiction in dealing with industrialization problems and post-industrialization problems during the same historical period. On one hand, the Party-state needs to free up space for economic actions and strongly control social orders depending on Party authority, which make it dangerous for cursory choice of institutionalization approach. But on the other hand, increasing modern problems beyond economic benefits – with pressure from international society in addition – needs political institutionalization in modern manner and some extent of democratization. The embedded mobilization demonstrated in environmental realm, with combining existing institutional resources and informal politics applying limited pluralistic participation, can be taken as a balanced choice between the two considerations. According to the case study, each problem solution resulted in application and popularization of certain governance regimes (the government – volunteer cooperation regimes for Tibetan antelope protection), legal leverages (EIA Law), stricter environmental standards (Tai Lake management standard improvement), and democratic procedures (public hearing procedure and pluralistic

development is the objective outcomes and political contents of economic, social and cultural modernization, as political process becomes both systematic and flexible to adapt to the pluralistic society and complicated modernity problems; and, social power “tames” political power.

¹ Of course, Rawls also believes that the “oppression” must be taken by a stable political system supported by the majority of politically active citizens. See: John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, New York, N. Y.: Columbia University Press, 1996.

² See: Samuel P. Huntington, “Political Development and Political Decay,” *World Politics*, No. 3, Vol. 17, April, 1965. pp. 393-394. And moreover, the “democratic” revolutions and imitation of modern regimes in Europe, Africa and Middle East have showed us some negative instances. It won’t be denied that democratization is a universal value, but we can factually see most undeveloped nations throughout the world haven’t naturally benefited from the “typical” democratic transformation. According to the experiences of developed democracies, commonly accepted democratic rules of general election and multipartism have been achieved along with the construction of fundamental institutions – especially rules of “rule by law” and public servant system – and the formation of a stable social structure. Therefore, in such countries, mostly ranged in West and North Europe, democracy is a best regime to integrate society and maintain stability and cultural pluralism. But on the contrary, in many undeveloped countries with insufficient legal system and institutions for public goods distribution – especially when the society is based on non-modern units like races, tribes, clans and countryside network – dogmatic democratization easily leads to social anarchy and political oligarchy.

participation in dam projects). Thus, we may conclude that the embedded mobilization in environmental realm leads to an issue-oriented political development.

3.1 The Dilemma of Non-fundamental Institutionalization and the Initiative Change of the Party-state

According to the environmental management predicaments, we see the dilemma of decentralization and recentralization, badly-operated bureaucratic coordination and local officials' interest ties with enterprises. These phenomena commonly reflect the insufficiency of institution construction to deal with increasing modernity problems.

China's institutionalization is generally judged as slow and non-fundamental, and democratization topic is discussed with more ideological color. However, besides the need to protect ruling position of the Communist Party, the slow process of initiating fundamental political change may also indicate considerations of guaranteeing economic development, which are reflected in the leadership's straightway words of "crossing rivers via stone tangibility <*mo zhe shitou guohe*>", "development is the cardinal principle <*fazhan caishi ying daoli*>", "not to turn from side to side <*bu zheteng*>", "to discourage contention <*bu zhenglun*>", and so on. To speak specifically, even though ideological propaganda and Party-state structure inherited from traditional communist system are still operating, and on the contrary, "universal value" to advocate "small government", "general election" and multipartism of developed democracies are disseminating among elites and urban middle-class and even seems to be penetrate into political practice according to certain agendas, all of them cannot be judged as real "institutions" or "institutionalization" of a modern state. If we use the concept of Lucian W. Pye, China is a "civilization" rather than a "nation-state", which implies the low extent of the institutionalization¹.

In practice, despite of the intense controversy on institutional choice among elites with differentiated views – as we see in university forums, symposiums, closed-door conference, academic writings and internet – the legitimacy of the Party-state during the

¹ See: Lucian W. Pye, *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics*, Cambridge, MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1981; "China: Erratic Sate, Frustrated Society," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 4, Fall, 1990; and "How China's Nationalism was Shanghaied," in Jonathan Unger (ed.), *Chinese Nationalism*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996, pp. 86-112.

recent 30 years are mainly depending on great economic achievements, not communist ideology nor general election procedures according to “universal value”. China has oriented all its people’s power into struggle for increasing economic opportunities, and, the open access with less legal normatives to make money has led to the flexible flow among social classes, just like civil service examination system <keju zhidu> during ancient dynasties. Therefore, **it generates the logical circle to interpret the slow institutionalization predicament – if ideological color is deprived – as: a) the large population in an instable social structure leads Party-state to create economic opportunities according to rapid wealth accumulation; → b) open economic accesses to satisfy the large population (or at least not to annoy certain populations) leads to the flexible flow among social classes; → c) no stable social class structure for institutionalization; → d) no stable modern institutions increases governance cost and strengthens Party-state’s dependence on rapid economic increase; → back to a).** And in addition, the possible social instability and serious decay learnt from Soviet Union’s lesson may be also an influential variable.

However, obvious damages of extensive increase pattern on development sustainability, global environmental governance, and objective economic cannons make China unable to forever enjoy the bonus. And moreover, there is an unwritten but commonly accepted saying that if the GDP increase rate becomes lower than 8%, it’ll be difficult for the Party-state to keep social stability, with breaking promises of economic benefits with the “people” as a whole, rather than certain social classes. Therefore, the Party-state is forced to be faced with an unprecedented and risky work: to conduct institutionalization without normative social conditions. In other words, **on one hand, the core responsibility of the Party-state is industrialization which needs to avoid influence from controversy on institutionalization orientations; on the other hand, to finish the core responsibility needs lasting development sustainability, which depends on modernized and specific reforms to institutional arrangements beyond pure Party leadership authority by coerciveness.** That’s why I exactly make clear at the beginning of this

thesis that environmental agenda is chosen for study according to its political importance for Party-state's legitimacy.

Thus, the informal politics of “embedded mobilization” – to make big news, draw public attention, encourage controversy in public sphere to replace controversy in politics, and to utilize the “public opinion” to force bureaucrats again and again to reflect on policies they have already made in accordance with customs – makes sense for institutionalization. In first place, as the instability of social structure leads to the difficulty in achieving consensus, as individuals fighting for “people going up <*ren wang gaochu zou*>” in the great wave of economic increase cannot really find their social class identity and define a “real” and “common” appeals. Thus, the Party-state tries to make some to orient the “people” as whole. Secondly, although the Party maintains its legal legitimacy by pleasing people with economic increase, utilization of coercive power to “make” orthodox opinion would still incur strong apathy. Therefore, to encourage certain social activism as the embeddedness of power “through society” will be a better choice, and further, encouraging controversy (controllable, since the “social units” are selected) in public sphere is much better than the risky conflict at political-level (in accordance with the principle of “not to turn from side to side <*bu zheteng*>” announced by Hu Jintao). That may be the lessons from the political mess of Communism in the late 1980s, both domestically and globally. Lastly, public controversies lead to certain policy change and new regimes application, whose contents are really needed by the Party-state. We may take the practices as “experimental units <*shi dian*>”, as Chinese Party-state always prefers to take for a new reform idea. And further, they are also the set of examples to force officials not to forget the central authority and learn to change their customs and to obey the rules of newly established institutions.

3.2 Lever for a Complex Democratization: Civil Societal Growth Compounded with the Pluralization within Elites

When the central leadership is attempting to institutionalize the balance of centralization and decentralization, bureaucratic contradictions, and, industrialization and post-modern issues, the initiatives to open political access to activists and “public opinion” also have pluralized the political participation. However, the “environmental

democratization” in China may have its different characteristics.

The Party-state-NGO integration according to the embedded mobilization indicates the benign interaction between Party-state and certain social actors, but it doesn't equal to the factual relations between the Party-state and “society”. With the case study, we may find that, being compared with the real “common people” under an authoritarian system according to our empirical recognition, NGO activists have the much more institutional resources to participate in policy process; and moreover, as the social elites, their intellectual thinking and connections with political elites or international actors may promote them to pay more attention to the “fundamental political transformation” or “ideological change” – sometimes they act very emotionally – rather than every concrete problems of environmentally interest-related community¹. Thus, we may conclude that the growth of China's civil society is also compounded with the pluralistic interactions within China's elite circle, leading to a complex “democratization”. NGOs' emphasis on the “right to know” and public participation indicates the universal meaning of “public opinion”. And, the Party-state also finds the NGO activism a chance to alleviate social contradictions and improve its governance regime. What's interesting is, it'll be difficult to clearly differentiate whether a national measure to hear “public opinion” and encourage participation is rooted in political modernization or legacy of communist system. However, at least, the consideration of communist legacy can give us the comprehension that the Party-state strongly understand the importance of adapting to public opinion and socializing national directives, and further, the rise of “grass-root NGOs” as the indicator of a modern society, adds the orientation of “political development” to the self-improvement of the Party-state system. That may be the essence of China's complex environmental democratization.

The success of China's “environmental movements” has demonstrated the contents of democratization: construction of participation regimes, strengthening of legal balances to administrative power, and encouragement of opinion expression. However, the empirical study also indicates that the social and economic foundation for the democratization is

¹ It's also argued that NGOs act emotionally, partly because they lack environmental professionals and related knowledge, as the participants are more likely to be from humanity social sciences.

not enough. Without an instable class structure, NGOs doesn't really represent appels of a certain community or a (middle) class – as mentioned in this thesis, sometimes they even aliented from – but they represent certain ethics and a kind of intellectual choice. They make the symbolic indicator of “common people” and the bridge for leadership and environmental department to connect with more social resources and legitimacy. As mentioned in the first chapter, environmental NGO activism is placed high hopes for democratization for their indication of the increasing “urban middle class”, whose power had been proved according to color revolutions in ex-communist countries in East Europe and Soviet Union territory. But are the historical experiences and China's reality simply the same? In those countries – and also other developing countries in Asia, Europe North Africa and Latin America – a large population of urban middle class may imply finished industrialization, stable social structure and favorable institutional seetings for democratization, but, how about in China, the more-than-1.3-billion-populated country with the 900-million agricultural population? Even though big cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen demonstrate their modern prosperity in aspects of economy and idea, no less than those in developed countries, the industrialization and modernization process is still expanding to the vast inner mainland. Thus, it'll be unrealistic to expect a fundamental change to national agendas or the political system in the near future. The discontent and appeals of the urban middle class in big citie – the quantity may be large enough to easily bring elementary shift in many developing countries, but not in China – may urge some governmental improvement, but it is hard to make the Party-state feel the risk of losing legitimacy. But on the contrary, the discontent of large agricultural population in less advanced terrain will¹. There are also empirical evidences to show that the difference of appeals between NGOs located in big cities and interest-related local community has reduced NGOs' effects on “representing common people”². The most crucial may be that,

¹ That's why issues with regard to agriculture, countryside and farmers <*san nong wenti*> – in other words, the “development” and “modernization of living” – have made the annually top national agendas during the recent years.

² This phenomenon is especially made clear through the anti-dam movements, analyzed in the fifth chapter. In the case of “Nu River defense battle”, nongovernmental intellectuals divided into two pacts and both advocated to “represent common people”, when environmentalists emphasized environmental priority and “people's right to know” and their opponents valued the “factual demand” of local

in China, the most environmentally vulnerable areas are commonly ranged in less advanced areas, where environmental problems are placed importance for their negative effects on economic benefits rather than environmental priority¹. Thus, besides the fixed bureaucracy and the considerations of the Party to maintain power, the targets of industrialization² also make a critical reason that why environmental democratization is highly limited in China.

The empirical study demonstrates that those visibly active NGOs³ may share similar values and appeals to reformatist meritocrats, rather than the underdeveloped local community, and that's an important source for NGOs' effectiveness. There is natural networking among NGOs' leading members and political actors – and some of the leading members are formal officials or consultants to the Party-state – in favor of NGOs' utilization of institutional resources⁴. Thus, it gets more difficult to define the identity of China's NGOs, which both obtains legitimacy from “public opinion” and official directives. Possibly, we may consider it as the split between real appeals (as grass-root organizations) and action tactics (to serve the Party-state). To speak specifically, in international arena or personal communication, their energetic expectation of environmental democratization is clearer to be noticed, while in domestic practice, they commonly avoid touch sensitive democratic agendas but follow the central orthodoxy to be “de-politicalized” as Peter Ho (2007) claims as, a) portraying themselves as partners; b) skirting certain sensitive environmental questions; and c) avoiding any connotation with

community for getting rid of poverty. And, in that chapter, I raise the examples of an environmental activist's interview with local people. According to the interviews, it's not hard to find the different discourse and issue framing. In comparison with the ideological focus of the interviewer, the interviewees, local agricultural residents, have demonstrated more practical considerations of benefits and losses, and indicated dependence on the administrative power.

¹ For example, the discontent of local community with ecological resettlement according to dam construction concentrates on insufficient or disadvantaged compensation distribution; and the several examples of social riots of ecological resettlers are mainly caused by conflict between unemployed youth and local people.

² Of course, it should not be denied that the targets of industrialization is also compounded with the Party's considerations to maintain its power and legitimacy, however, they are also echoed by part of common people who take their living quality to be at rising stage, nationalists, and non-Party intellectuals who judge industrialization a inevitable process for a nation-state in contemporary era.

³ It may not be directly related with this thesis but needed to be paid further attention is that, during recent years, there is also controversy among non-profit organizations on whether they should emphasize on daily services and professional consultation, or gorgeous media campaigns and protests with clear political appeals. And moreover, the writer have also heard some social workers to complain about that only gorgeous campaigns can draw media attention and good sponsorship, although their daily services are “exactly helping people”.

⁴ And further, as mentioned in the case study, we may see several turning points were related with the direct petition of elite NGO members with their own accesses.

broad and popular movements¹. However, how about if it's not only the tactics but the true nature? Especially, without the identity with local community, can NGOs composed of "urban middle class" really sponsor broad and popular movements? During economic reform, movements that can be judged with "broad and popular" are limited to very few kinds as: farmers' protests, mass disturbances in small towns, unemployed workers' demonstrations during the "laid-off<*xiagang*>" period, and some demonstrations with regard to nationalism. It's obvious that social environmental activism is different with the cases². More interestingly, the seemingly unclear identity looks to be identical with that of a typical confucian intellectual. To put it simply, he/she needs to "civilize <*jiaohua*>" the unknown mass, and, the "civilization <*jiaohua*>" should be synchronous with a monarch's "good governance <*ren zheng*>" with the assistance of confucian philosophers, while the philosophers are spiritually independent from the political power and keeping the right of "leaving the sovereignty <*qu guo*>" if it doesn't promote "good governance <*ren zheng*>". According to the case study, on one hand, NGOs' advocacy of environmental priority and "right to know" in local community can be taken as some kind of "civilization <*jiaohua*>", and thus, the NGO-local community communication may be interpreted as the intellectual-mass relations, rather than the modern grass root NGO-society ties. And on the other hand, NGO activists – especially the leading members – are simultaneously "inside" and "outside" the political system. That's to say, serving a "good <*ren*>" political power can also be taken as the reflection of the intellectual nature, while they maintain their independence by "representing common people". And, the sharing educated background, living conditions and spiritual world, the corresponding communication and mutual actions of activists and meritocrats further fuzz up the boundary between political and public field. Thus, the environmental democratization under the embedded mobilization is also composed with the increase of both public participation and national ability, indicating the "strong Party-state – strong society" inclination.

¹ Ho and Edmons (ed.), *China's Embedded Activism: Opportunities and Constraints of A Social Movement*, p. 8.

² The comparison and analysis can be expected in further study.

Glossary of Chinese Media in the Thesis¹

Asian Weekly 亚洲周刊

Beijing Evening 北京晚报

Beijing News 新京报

Business Paper 商报

Business Weekly 商务周刊

Chengdu Business News 成都商报

China Central Television (CCTV): 中国中央电视台

China Environment News 中国环境报

China News Weekly 中国新闻周刊

China Social Science Quarterly 中国社会科学季刊

China Water 中国水利

Chongqing Shangbao (Chongqing Economic Daily): 重庆商报

Dagong Bao 大公报

Diyi Caijing Daily (First Financial Daily): 第一财经日报

East Morning 东方早报

Economic Guide 经济导报

Economic Observation 经济观察报

Economic Observation 经济观察报

Economic Reference 经济参考报

Economics 经济杂志

Front Line 理论前沿

Globe 环球

Guangzhou Daily 广州日报

Huaxia Times 华夏时报

Jinghua Times 京华时报

Journal of International Communication 国际新闻界

¹ Some media have commonly accepted English titles, while some others do not have formal translations. For the latter, the paper used Pinyin (Chinese pronunciations), with simple explanations in English added.

Legal Daily 法制日报
Lianhe Zaobao (United Morning News, Singapore): 联合早报
Liaowang News Weekly 瞭望新闻周刊
Liaowang 瞭望杂志
Ming Bao 明报
Nangfang Dushi Bao (Nangfang Metropolis Paper): 南方都市报
Nanhua Morning 南华早报
New Youth – Balance Magazine 新青年.权衡
News Evening 新闻晚报
News Morning 新闻晨报
People's Daily 人民日报
People's Daily, Overseas Version 人民日报海外版
People's Yangtze Paper 人民长江报
Radio Hong Kong 香港电台
Sanlian Life Weekly 三联生活周刊
Science Times 科学时报
Science Times 科学时报
Social Science Weekly 社会科学报
South News Group 南方报业集团
South Weekend 南方周末
Southwind Window Magazine 南风窗
The Journalist Monthly 新闻记者杂志
TVB 香港无线电视台
Waitan Pictorial 外滩画报
Wenhui Bao 文汇报
Wuxi Daily: 无锡日报
Xiandai Kuaibao (Modern Flash Report) 现代快报
Xihua Daily, Jiangsu Province 新华日报
Xin Evening 新晚报
Xinhua News Agency (New China News Agency) 新华社

Xinxi Shibao (Information Times) 信息时报

Yangcheng Wanbao (Yangcheng Evening News) 羊城晚报

Yangtze Evening Post 扬子晚报

Yanzhao Dushi Bao (Yanzhao Metropolis Paper) 燕赵都市报

Youth Reference 青年参考

Yunnan Daily 云南日报

Yunnan Hydropower Paper 云南电力报

Biography

- Adams, William. M. *Green Development: Environment and Sustainability in the Third World*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Ahmad, Ehtisham; Li, Keping; Richardson, Thomas and Singh, Raju. "Rcentralization in China?" IMF Working Paper of the Fiscal Affairs Department, IMF, October, 2002.
- All-China Environment Federation (ACEF): *China environmental protection NGO status report*, published on April 22, 2006.
- Alpermann, Björn. "Institutionalizing Village Governance in China," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 18, No. 60, May 2009.
- Amako Satoshi and Hishida Masaharu (ed.), *Structural Change in Villages and Local Areas*, Tokyo: Kinsou Shobou, 2000. [天児 慧、菱田 雅晴 編著: 『深層の中国社会: 農村と地方の構造的変動』、東京: 勁草書房、2000年9月。]
- Amako Satoshi, *Modern China: Political Society in Transition*, Tokyo University Press, 1998. [天児 慧 著: 『現代中国: 移行期の政治社会』、東京: 東京大学出版会、1998年4月。]
- Amako Satoshi, *Structural Change of Modern China □: Political Map of Central-Local relations*, Tokyo University Press, 2000. [天児 慧 編著: 『現代中国の構造変動 4: 政治: 中央と地方の構図』、東京: 東京大学出版会、2000年4月。]
- Ash, Robert and Werner Draguhn (ed.), *China's Economic Security*, NY: St. Martins, 1999.
- Bacharach, Peter and Baratz, Morton. "Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (Dec. 1962), pp. 947-952.
- Bagdikian, Ben H. *The Media Monopoly*, Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 2000.
- Bai, Tongdong. *New Mission of an Old State: Classical Confucian Political Philosophy in a Contemporary and Comparative Relevance Context <jiubang xinming: gujin zhongxi canzhaohao xia de rujia zhengzhi zhaxue>*, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2009.
- Baker, Susan and Petr Jehlicka, *Dilemmas of Transition: The Environment, Democracy, and Economic Reform in East Central Europe*, Frank Cass, 1998.
- Bardhan, Pranab. "Decentralization of Governance and Development," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 16, No. 4. Autumn 2002, pp. 185-205.
- Barmé, Geremie. *In the Red, On Temporary Chinese Culture*, New York: Columbia

University Press, 1999

Barnett, Arthur Dosk. and Ezra Vogel, *Cadres, Bureaucracy, and Political Power in Communist China*, NY: Columbia University Press, 1967.

Barry, John. *Rethinking Green Politics: Nature, Virtue and Progress*, Sage, 1999.

Baum, Richard. *Prelude to Revolution: Mao, the Party, and the Peasant Question*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.

Beckert, Jens. *The Great Transformation of Embeddedness: Karl Ploanyi and the New Economic Sociology*, Max-Planck-Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung, 2007.

Benson, J. K. "A Framework for Policy Analysis," in D. L. Rogers and D. Whetten eds, *Interorganizational Coordination: Theory, Research and Implementation*, Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1982. pp. 137-176.

Berkowitz, Daniel Allen. ed., *Social Meanings of News: A Text-Reader*, Sage publications, 1997.

Bian, Yanjie. "Chinese Social Stratification and Social Mobility," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 28, (2002), pp. 91-116.

Bo, Zhiyue. *Chinese Provincial Leaders: Economic Performance and Political Mobility since 1949*, Armonk, N. Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2002.

Brien, Kevin J. and Laura M. Luehrmann, "Institutionalizing Chinese legislatures: trade-offs between autonomy and capacity," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1998), pp. 91-108.

Brien, Kevin J. and Rongbin Han, "Path to Democracy? Assessing Village Elections in China," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 18, No. 60, May 2009.

Brook, Timothy and Frolic, Michel B. ed., *Civil Society in China*, Armonk, N. Y.: Me. Sharpe, 1997.

Burchell, Jon. *The Evolution of Green Politics: Development and Change within European Green Parties*, London; Sterling, VA: Earthscan Publications, 2002.

Burgh, Hugo de. *The Chinese Journalists: Mediating Information in the World's most Populous Country*, London; New York, NY: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.

Cai, Junlan. "The Fundamental Evolution of the Higher Education Scale in China and Analysis on the Characteristics," paper of the Guangdong Provincial Economic Institute.

[<http://www.gdeco.com.cn/content.asp?id=196>]

Central Academic Research Office of CCP, *Selection of Important Documents from 16th National Congress of CCP (Vol. 1, Vol. 2, Vol. 3) <16 da yilai zhongyao wenjian xuanbian>*, Beijing: Central Academic Press, 2005, 2006, 2008.

Chan, Hon S. and Wong, Kenneth K. "Environmental Attitudes and Concerns of the Environmental Protection Bureaucrats in Guangzhou, People's Republic of China: Implications for Environmental Policy Implementation," *International Journal of Public Administration*, Vol 17, No. 8 (1994). pp. 1523-1554.

Chan, Kim-man and Yan Zhou, "Political Opportunities and Anti-dam Movement in China," paper presented in the International Conference on Non-profit sector in Asia-Pacific Region organized by National Central University of Taiwan on 16th and 17th November, 2007.

Chang, Maria Hsia. "China's Future: Regionalism, Federation, or Disintegration," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. 30, No. 3, September 1992, pp. 226-227.

Chatham House investigation project: *Strengthening the Cooperation between Chinese Environmental NGOs and the Media*, implemented by Green Earth Volunteers, December, 2006.

Chen, Gang. *Politics of China's environmental protection: problems and progress*, World Scientific, 2009.

Chen, Jie and Deng, Peng. *China Since the Cultural Revolution: From Totalitarianism to Authoritarianism*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995.

Chen, Mingming. *Politics and Modernization in Post-revolutionary Society*, Shanghai: Dictionary Press, 2002.

Chen, Weixing. "The performance Criteria of Legitimacy: the Transformation of the Chinese Communist Party from Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao," *Cross-Strait and International Affairs Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2004.

Chen, Yung-fa. *Making Revolution: The Communist Movement in Eastern and Central China, 1937-1945*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986.

China Environmental Awareness Program, "2007 China Public Awareness Survey Report," sponsored by SEPA and practiced by Institute of Sociology, CASS, published on

- April 3, 2008. [<http://www.chinaceap.org/download/8.pdf>]
- Christmann, Petra and Taylor, Glen. "Globalization and the Environment: Determinants of Firm Self-Regulation in China," *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3(2001), pp. 439-458.
- Chu, Yun-han; Lo, Chih-cheng and Myers, Ramon H. *The New Chinese Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities after the 16th Party Congress*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Chung, Jae Ho. "Studies of Central-provincial Relations in the People's Republic of China: a Mid-term Appraisal," *The China Quarterly*, No. 142 (1995), pp. 487-508.
- Cottle, Simon. (ed.), *News, Public Relations and Power*, London: Sage Publications, 2003.
- Cox, Robert. *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2006.
- Dahl, Robert Alan and Bruce Stinebrickner, *Modern Politics Analysis (6th Edition)*, Prentice Hall, 2002.
- Dahl, Robert Alan and Stinebrickner, Bruce. *Modern Politics Analysis (6th Edition)*, Prentice Hall, 2002.
- Demes, Pavol and Joerg Forbrig (eds.). *Reclaiming Democracy: Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe*. German Marshall Fund, 2007.
- Deng, Zhenglai and J. C. Alexander (ed.), *State and Civil Society*, Beijing: Central Compilation and Translation Press, 1998.
- Deng, Zhenglai and Jing, Yuejin. "Construction of China's Civil Society," *Chinese Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 1, November, 1992, pp. 58-68.
- Deng, Zhenglai. *State and Society: Study on China's Civil Society*, Sichuan: Sichuan People's Press, 1997.
- Diamond, Larry Jay. *Developing Democracy: toward Consolidation*, JHU press, 1999.
- Dickson, Bruce J. "Cooptation and Corporation in China: the Logic of Party Adaptation," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 115, No. 4. (Winter, 2000-2001), pp. 517-540.
- Dittmer, Lowell. *China's Continuous Revolution: the Post-liberation Epoch, 1949-1981*, University of California Press, 1987.

- Dittmer, Lowell. *Liu Shao-ch'i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The politics of mass criticism*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974.
- Dobson, Andrew. "Environmental Sustainabilities: An Analysis and A Typology," *Environmental Politics*, Volume 5, Issue 3, Autumn 1996, pp. 401-428.
- Donatella, Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, NYSE: John Wiley & Sons, 1999.
- Doyle, Timothy and Dough McEachern, *Environment and Politics*, London: Routledge, 1998.
- Dryzek, John S. *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*, Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Dryzek, John S. *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*, Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Duan, Changqun; Yang, XueQing and Gao, Fayuan. "Fifty Years of Political Ecology in Mainland China," *Sinosphere*, vol. 3 (1), 2000, pp. 6-13.
- Economy, Elizabeth C. *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.
- Environment and Development Research Center, *China Environment and Development Review <zhongguo huanjing yu fazhan pinglun>*, Vol.1, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2001.
- Environment and Development Research Center, *China Environment and Development Review <zhongguo huanjing yu fazhan pinglun>*, Vol.2, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2004.
- Environment and Development Research Center, *China Environment and Development Review <zhongguo huanjing yu fazhan pinglun>*, Vol.3, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2007.
- Fagan, Adam. *Environment and Democracy in the Czech Republic*, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2004.
- Feng, Yongfeng. *Chinese Environmentalism: Declaration of War against Extreme Developmentalism*, Guangzhou: Zhongshan University Press, 2007.
- Feng, Yuan. "NGOs in the contexts of the news media in Chinese mainland," *China*

Development Brief, No. 21, December 2004.

Ferris, Richard J. Jr. and Zhang, Hongjun. "The Challenges of Reforming an Environmental Legal Culture: Assessing the Status Quo and Looking at Post-WTO Admission Challenges for the People's Republic of China," a paper presented at PACE, 2000.

Ferris, Richard J. Jr.; Wu, Changhua and Weiner, John Barlow. "Environmental Implications of China's Accession to the WTO: Preliminary Policy and Law Considerations," *Bridges Between Trade and Sustainable*, December 3, 2000.

Feshbach, Murray and Alfred Friendly Jr., *Ecocide in the USSR*, NY: Basic Books, 1992.

Fisher, Dana R. and Freudenburg, William R. "Postindustrialization and Environmental Quality: An Empirical Analysis of the Environmental State," *Social Forces*, Vol. 83, No. 1, (Sep., 2004), pp. 157-188.

Fotopoulos, Takis. *The Multidimensional Crisis and Inclusive Democracy*, English translation published on: *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 1.5, Special Issue, August, 2005.

Fraser, Nancy (ed.), *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy, Habermas, and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge Mass.: MIT press, 1992.

Friedmann, John. *China's urban transition*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Frome, Michael. *Green Ink: An Introduction to Environmental Journalism*, Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1998.

Gold, Thomas B. "The Resurgence of Civil Society in China," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter, 1990, pp. 18-31.

Gold, Thomas B. "The Resurgence of Civil Society in China," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter, 1990, pp. 18-31.

Goldman, Merle and Elizabeth J. Perry (ed.), *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Goldman, Merle. *Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China: Political Reform in the Deng Xiaoping Era*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

- Goodman, David and Segal, Gerald ed., *China Deconstructs: Politics, Trade and Regionalism*, London: Routledge, 1994.
- Granovetter, Mark. "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 91, No. 3, November, 1985, pp. 481-510.
- Grieder, Jerome B. *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China: A Narrative History*. (Transformation of Modern China series.) New York: Free Press, 1981.
- Gu, Edward and Merle Goldman (ed.), *Chinese Intellectuals between State and Market*, London: Routledge Curzon; New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Guidry, John A.; Michael D. Kennedy and Mayer N. Zald (ed.), *Globalizations and Social Movements: Culture, Power and the Transnational Public Sphere*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000.
- Guo, Sujian. *Post-Mao China: From Totalitarianism to Authoritarianism?* Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2000.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Thomas Burger, Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press, English Translation 1989.
- Hallding, Karl. *Water Resource Problems in China*, Stockholm University: Department of East Asian Studies, 1991, referenced in UNDP, *China Human Development Report 2002*.
- Han, Lianxian. "Thought About Nu River Dam Construction <nujiang jianba de sikao>," *Great Nature*, No. 5, 2004, pp. 2-5.
- Hanf, K. *Interorganizational Policy Making*, Beverley Hills: Sage, 1978.
- Hansen, Anderson. "Claims-making and Framing in the British Newspaper Coverage of the Brent Spar Controversy," in Stuart, Allan and Adam, Barbara and Carter, Cynthia ed., *Environmental Risks and the Media*, London: Routledge, 2000. pp.55-72.
- Harbaugh, William T.; Levinson, Arik; and Wilson, David Molloy. "Reexamining the Empirical Evidence for an Environmental Kuznets Curve." *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 84, No. 3, August 2002, pp. 541-551
- Harré, Rom.; Brockmeie, Jens and Mulhausler, Peter. *Greenspeak: A Study of Environmental Discourse*, Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999.

- Hauser, Gerard. "Vernacular Dialogue and the Rhetoricity of Public Opinion", *Communication Monographs*, Vol. 65, No. 2, June 1998, pp. 83–107.
- Heggelund, GØrild. *Environment and Resettlement Politics in China: The Three Gorges Project*, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003.
- Hickman, Leo. *The Final Call: Investigating Who Really Pays for our Holidays*, Eden Project Books/Guardian Books, 2008.
- Hishida, Masaharu (ed.) *Structural Change of Modern China □: Society: Symbiotic Relations with State*, Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 2000. [菱田 雅晴 編著: 『現代中国の構造変動 5: 社会: 国家との共棲関係』、東京: 東京大学出版会、2000年6月。]
- Ho, Peter and Edmons, Richard Louis. ed., *China's Embedded Activism: Opportunities and Constraints of A Social Movement*, London; New York : Routledge, 2008.
- Hong, Dayong. (ed.), *Environmental Sociology: An Academic Discipline under Construction <zhongguo huanjing shehui xue: yi men jiangou zhong de kexue>*, Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2007.
- Hook, Brian (ed.). *The Individual and The State in China*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996,
- Hu, Kanping and Yu, Xiaogang: "Bridge Over Troubled Waters: the Role of the News Media in Promoting Public Participation in River Basin Management and Environmental Protection in China", in Turner, Jennifer L. and Otsuka, Kenji. ed., *Promoting Sustainable River Basin Governance: Crafting Japan-U.S. Water Partnerships in China*, Chiba, Japan: Institute of Developing Economies (IDE)/Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), 2005, pp. 125–140.
- Hua, Shiping and Guo, Sujian ed., *China in the Twenty-First Century: Challenges and Opportunities*, Association of Chinese Political Studies. Meeting (19th: 2006: University of Louisville), 2007, pp. 13-24.
- Huan, Qingzhi. *Environmental Politics, International Comparison <huanjing zhengzhi, guoji bijiao>*, Shangdong University Press, 2007.
- Huntington, Samuel P. "Political Development and Political Decay," *World Politics*, No. 3, Vol. 17, April, 1965. pp. 393-394.
- Huntington, Samuel P. "The Change to Change: Modernization, Development and

- Politics,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 3, April, 1971.
- Huntington, Samuel P. *The Third Wave*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.
- Inglehart, Ronald. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Jacobs, Jamie Elizabeth. “Community Participation, the Environment, and Democracy: Brazil in Comparative Perspective,” *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol. 44, No. 4, (Winter, 2002), pp. 59-88.
- Jahiel, Abigail R. “The Contradictory Impact of Reform on Environmental Protection in China,” *The China Quarterly*, No. 149, (Mar., 1997), pp. 81-103.
- Jahiel, Abigail R. “The Organization of Environmental Protection in China,” *The China Quarterly*, No. 156, Special Issue: China’s Environment. (Dec., 1998), pp. 757-787.
- Jamison, Andrew.; Ron Eyerman, Jacqueline Cramer and Jeppe Laessøe, *The Making of the New Environmental Consciousness: A Comparative Study of the Environmental Movements in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990.
- Jensen, Lionel M. and Timothy B Weston (ed.), *China’s Transformations: the Stories Beyond the Headlines*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.
- Jia, Hao and Lin, Zhimin. (ed.), *Changing Central-Local Relations in China: Reform and State Capacity*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1994.
- Jia, Xijin. *The Third Reform: Non-profit Sector Strategy Research in China <di san ci gaige: zhongguo fei yingli bumen zhanlue yanjiu>*, Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2005.
- Jiang, Xiaojun, “Shichang Yunzhuang Yu Zhengfu Zhineng Zhuanhuan <The Operational Efficiency of the Market and The Changes of Governmental Functions>,” *Gaige <Reform>*, No. 1. 1993, pp. 62-67.
- Jin, Guohua and Tang, Xiaotian (ed.), *Research on “Xinfang” System Reform <xinfang zhidu gaige yanjiu>*, Beijing: Law Press, 2007.
- Kang, Xiaoguang. *Power Shift: Change of China’s Power Structure During the Transformation Period <quanli de zhuanxi: zhuanxing shiqi zhongguo quanli geju de bianqian>*, Zhengjiang People’s Press, 1999.

- Keane, John. *The Media and Democracy*, Cambridge: Polity, 1991.
- Keck, Margaret E. and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Kenis, Patrick. and Schneider, Volker. "Policy Networks and Policy Analysis: Scrutinising a New Analytical Toolbox," in Marin, Bernd; and Mayntz, Renate (ed.). *Policy Networks: Empirical Evidence and Theoretical Considerations*, Frankfurt: Campus, 1991. pp. 25-59.
- Kim, Ipyong J. *The Politics of Chinese Communism: Kiangsi under the Soviets*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973.
- Kitagawa Hideki (ed.), *China's Environmental Issues and Related Laws/Policies: to Sustainable Development in East Asia*, Kyoudou: Houritsu Bunka Shuppansha, 2008.
[北川秀樹 編著: 『中国の環境問題と法・政策: 東アジアの接続可能な発展に向けて』、京都: 法律文化社、2008年3月。]
- Klijn, Erik-Hans. "Analyzing and Managing Policy Processes in Complex Networks: a Theoretical Examination of the Concept Policy Network and Its Problems," *Administration & Society*, May 1996. Vol. 28(1), pp. 90-120, 1996.
- Krishna, Sumi. *Environmental Politics: People's Lives and Development Choices*, Sage Publications, 1996.
- Kuzmiak, D. T. "The American Environmental Movement," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 157, No. 3, (Nov., 1991), pp. 265-278.
- Lampton David M. (ed.), *Policy Implementation in Post-Mao China*, Berkley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Lau, Clement Chu S. "The Roles of NGOs in China," *Quarterly Journal of Ideology*, Vol. 31, 2009.
- Lee, Chin-chuan. (ed.), *Chinese Media, Global Contexts*, New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.
- Lee, Chin-Chuan. (ed.), *Voices of China: The Interplay of Politics and journalism*, New York: Guilford Press, 1990.
- Li, Cheng and Lynn White, "The Sixteenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: Hu Gets What?" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 43, July/August, 2003.
- Li, Cheng. "After Hu, Who? Provincial Leaders Await Promotion," *China Leadership*

- Monitor*, No. 1. Winter 2002, pp. 1-20.
- Li, Fan. (ed.), *Report on the Development of China's Grassroot-level Democracy*, Xi'an: Northwest University Press, 2003.
- Li, Hongbin and Zhou, li-an, "Political Turnover and Economic Performance: the Incentive Role of Personnel Control in China," *Journal of Public Economics*, 2005, vol. 89, issue 9-10, pp. 1743-1762.
- Li, Yiyu. *Relationship and Trust: Empirical Study on Rural Nongovernmental Organizations of Contemporary China <guanxi yu xinren: dangdai zhongguo xiangcun minjian zuzhi shizheng yanjiu>*, Beijing: China Books Press, 2004.
- Lieberthal, Kenneth and Lampton, David (ed.). *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China*, University of California Press, 1992.
- Lieberthal, Kenneth. *Governing China: From Revolution through Reform*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995.
- Lin, Shangli. (ed.), *Political Construction and Nation Growth*, Encyclopedia of China Publishing House, 2008.
- Lin, Yimin and Tu, Zhaoqing. (ed.), *Reform and Opening Up and Chinese Society*, Hong Kong: Oxford University, 1999.
- Liu, Alan P. L. *Communications and National Integration in Communist China*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971.
- Liu, Jianqiang. "China's Environmental Crisis Catalyzes New Democracy Movement", *Asia Weekly*, Vol. 21 (14), April 15, 2007.
- Lu, Ye. "Power and Process of News Production," *21st Century* (Net Journal, Hong Kong University), No. 12, 2005. [www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/21c]
- Luhmann, Niklas. *Ecological Communication*, translated by Bednarz, John Jr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Luo, Feng. *Embeddedness, Integration and the Reconstruction of Party Authority: A Survey on the Relations of China's Ruling Party, State and Society*, Shanghai: People's Press, 2009.
- Ma, Jun. *Chinese Water Crisis <zhongguo shui weiji>*, Beijing: China Environmental Science Press, 1999.

- MacFarquhar, Roderick. "Provincial people's congresses", *The China Quarterly*, No. 155 (1998), pp. 656-667.
- Manion, Melanie. "Chinese Democratization in Perspective: Electorates and Selectorates at the Town-ship Level," *The China Quarterly*, No. 163 (September 2000), pp. 764-782.
- Mann, Michael. "The Autonomous Power of the State: its Origins, Mechanisms, and Results," *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 25, No. 01 November 1984, pp 185-213.
- Marsh, D. and Rhodes, R. A. W. *Policy Networks in British Government*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- McAdam, Doug; McCarthy, John D.; and Zald, Mayer N. (ed.), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- McChesmey, Robert W. *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*, Urbana / Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999.
- McCombs, Maxwell and Shaw, Donald. "The Agenda-setting Function of Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 36, 1972, pp. 176-187.
- McCormick, Barrett L. "Censorship and Accountability in the Chinese Media," in Hua and Guo. ed., *China in the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 127-151.
- McElroy, Michael B. and Nielsen, Chris P. and Lydon, Peter. (ed.), *Energizing China: Reconciling Environmental Protection and Economic Growth*, [Cambridge, Mass.]: Harvard University Committee on Environment: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1998.
- McFarland, A. "Interest groups and theories of power in America," *British Journal of Political Science*, 17(1), 1987. pp. 129-147.
- McNeill, J. R. "Observations on the Nature and Culture of Environmental History", *History and Theory*, Vol. 42, No. 4, Theme Issue 42: Environment and History, (Dec., 2003), pp. 5-43.
- Mertha, Andrew C., *China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Miller, Norman. *Environmental Politics: Stakeholders, Interests and Policymaking*, Taylor and Francis, 2009.

- Mills, Julianne H. and Waite, Thomas A. "Economic prosperity, biodiversity conservation, and the environmental Kuznets curve". *Ecological Economics*, Vol. 68, No. 7, 2009, pp. 2087–2095.
- Mol, Arthur P.J. "Urban Environmental Governance Innovations in China," *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, No. 1, 2009, pp. 96-100.
- Mouri Kazuko (ed.), Structural Change of Modern China □: Standpoint of China as a large Power, Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 2000. [毛里 和子 編著: 『現代中国の構造変動 1 : 大国中国への視座』、東京: 東京大学出版会、2000年2月。]
- Muldavin, Joshua. "The Paradoxes of Environmental Policy and Resources Management in Reform-Era China", *Economic Geography*, Vol. 76, No. 3, (Jul., 2000), pp. 244-271.
- Muldavin, Joshua. "The Paradoxes of Environmental Policy and Resource Management in Reform-era China," *Economic Geography*, Vol. 76, No. 3. (Jul., 2000), pp. 244-271.
- Nagle, John David and Alison Mahr, *Democracy and Democratization: Post-communist Europe in Comparative Perspective*, Sage, 1999.
- Naughton, Barry J. and Yang, Dali L. ed., *Holding China together: diversity and national integration in the post-Deng era*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Neill, Michael. *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, Ashgate, 1997.
- Neuzil, Mark and Kovarik, William. *Mass Media and Environmental Conflict: America's Green Crusades*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996.
- Oi, Jean C. "Fiscal Reform and the Economic Foundations of Local State Corporatism in China," *World Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 1. October, 1992, pp. 99-126.
- Oksenberg, Michel and Tong, James. "The Evolution of Central-provincial Fiscal Relations in China, 1971-1984: the Formal System," *The China Quarterly*, No. 125 (1991), pp. 1-32.
- Palmer, Michael. "Environmental Regulation in the People's Republic of China: The Face of Domestic Law," *The China Quarterly*, No. 156, Special Issue: China's Environment. (Dec., 1998), pp. 788-808.
- Pan, Yue. "Public Participation in Environmental Protection < *huang jing baohu de gongzhong canyu* >," *Theory Front*, No. 13, 2004, pp. 12-13.
- Pearce, David. *Blueprint 3: Measuring Sustainable Development*, London: Earthscan,

1993.

Pellow, David N. "Framing Emerging Environmental Movement Tactics: Mobilizing Consensus, Demobilizing Conflict", *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 14, No. 4, (Dec., 1999), pp. 659-683.

Perry, Elizabeth J. and Selden, Mark. (ed.), *Chinese society: change, conflict and resistance*, London ; New York : RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.

Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation*, Beacon Press, 1971 version.

Price, Marie. "Ecopolitics and Environmental Nongovernmental Organizations in Latin America," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 84, No. 1, (Jan., 1994), pp. 42-58.

Pye, Lucian W. "Political Science and the Crisis of Authoritarianism," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 84, No. 1, 1991, pp. 3-19.

Qi, Ye. *Research on Environmental Supervision and Management System in China* <zhongguo huanjing jianguan tizhi yanjiu>, Shanghai: Sanlian Bookshop Press, 2008.

Qiu, Liben. "Civil Explosive Force in Anti-pollution <fan gonghai de minjian baofa li>," *Asia Weekly*, Vo. 21, June 17, 2007.

Radcliffe, James. *Green Politics: Dictatorship or Democracy?* Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Rawls, John. *Political Liberalism*, New York, N. Y.: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Regester, Michael and Larkin, Judy. *Risk Issues and Crisis Management in Public Relations: A Casebook of Best Practice*, Kogan Page Publishers Ltd., 2005.

Reid, Jane. *The Reporter as Gatekeeper: Who Decides*, Temple University, 1976.

Rhodes, R. A. W. *Understanding Governance: Policy Network, Governance, Reflexivity, Accountability*, Open University Press, 1997.

Ribot, Jesse Craig; Jarson, Anne; and European Association of Development Research and Training Institute, *Democratic decentralization through a natural resource lense*, Routledge, 2005.

Rice, Edward E. *Mao's Way*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972.

Richardson, J. J. & Jordan, A. G. *Governing Under Pressure: The Policy Process in a Post-Parliamentary Democracy*, Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1979.

- Rodden, Jonathan. "Comparative Federalism and Decentralization: On Meaning and Measurement," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 4. July, 2004, pp. 481-500.
- Roderick, MacFarquhar; Timothy, Cheek and Wu, Eugene. *The Secret Speeches of Chairman Mao*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Rom, Harré; Brockmeie, Jens and Mulhausler, Peter. *Greenspeak: A Study of Environmental Discourse*, Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999.
- Rootes, Christopher. (ed.), *Environmental protest in Western Europe*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Rosenbaum, Arthur Lewis. *State and Society in China: The Consequences of Reform*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992.
- Ross, Lester. "China: Environmental Protection, Domestic Policy Trends, Patterns of Participation in Regimes and Compliance with International Norms," *The China Quarterly*, No. 156, Special Issue: China's Environment. (Dec., 1998), pp. 809-835.
- Ru, Xin; Lu, Xueyi and Li, Peilin. (ed.), *Analysis and Forecast of China's Social Situation*, Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2006.
- Saich, Tony. "Negotiating the State: The Development of Social Organizations in China," *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 161, March, 2000.
- Schurmann, Franz. *Ideology and Organization in Communist in China*, University of California Press, 1968.
- Schwartz, Jonathan "Environmental NGOs in China: Roles and Limits," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 1, Spring, 2004, pp. 28-49.
- Seidman, Steven (ed.), *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.
- SEPA and Ministry of Education, *China Public Awareness Survey 1998 <zhongguo gongzhong huanjing yishi diaocha 1998>*, Beijing: China Environmental Science Press, 1999.
- SEPA and National Bureau of Statistics, "China's Green GDP Account and Research Report 2004 <zhongguo lvse GDP tongji yu yanjiu baogao 2004>," published on September, 2006. pp. 8-9.
- SEPA, *China Public Awareness Survey 2006 <zhongguo gongzhong huanjing yishi*

- diao cha 1999*>, Beijing: China Environmental Science Press, 2007.
- Shang, Hong. "Tuidong Woguo Zhengzai Jingli zhedi Tizhi Bianqian <Promoting the On-going Institutional Changes>," *Jingji Yanjiu <Research on Economics>*, No. 5. 1992.
- Shannon, O'Lear. "Networks of Engagement: Electronic Communication and Grassroots Environmental Activism in Kaliningrad," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, Vol. 81, No. 3, (1999), pp. 165-178.
- Simms, Andrew and Smith, Joe. (ed.), *Do Good Lives Have to Cost the Earth?* Constable Robinson, 2008.
- Solomon, Richard H. *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971.
- Sonoda, Higeto. *China as Country with Inequality: Prospect of Self-denial Socialism*, Chuou Kouron Shinsha, 2008. [園田茂人 著：『不平等国家中国：自己否定した社会主義のゆくえ』、東京：中央公論新社、2008年5月。]
- Starck, Kenneth and Xu, Yu. "Loud thunder, Small Raindrops: The Reform Movement and the Press in China," *International Communication Gazette*, 42.3 (1988), p. 143-59.
- Sullivan, Lawrence R. "Leadership and Authority in the Chinese Communist Party: Perspectives from the 1980s," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 4, 1986-1987, pp. 605-633.
- Sun, Liping. "The Evolution of the Interactive Relations among the State, Civil Elites and the Common Citizens in Chinese Mainland," *China Social Science Quarterly*, No. 1, 1994, pp. 37-53.
- Sun, Yan. "Harmonious Society and the Approbation of the Legitimacy of the CPC's Political Authority <hexie shehui yu gongchandang zhengzhi quanwei hefaxing de renke>," *Journal of Huaihai University*, Vo. 3, 2008.
- Susan L. Shirk, *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Tan, Frank. "The People's Daily: Politics and Popular Will-Journalistic Defiance in China during the Spring of 1989," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 63, No. 2, (Summer, 1990), pp. 151-169.
- Tang, Liang. *Chinese Politics in Transformation: Gradual Progress Route and Democratization*, Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 2001. [唐亮 著：『変貌する中国政治：漸進路線と民主化』、東京：東京大学出版会、2001年9月。]

- Tang, Shiqi. Sate-society Relations: *Comparative Study on Socialist Theory and Practice <guojia yu shehui guanxi: shehui zhuyi lilun yu shijian de bijiao yanjiu>*, Beijing University Press, 1998.
- Tang, Shui-Yan and Zhan, Xueyong. "Civic Environmental NGOs, Civil Society and Democratization in China," *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 44, Issue 3, 2008. pp. 425-448.
- Tang, Wenfang. "Political and Social Trends in the Post-Deng Urban China: Crisis or Stability?" *The China Quarterly*, No. 168. (Dec., 2001). pp. 890-909.
- Tao, Chuanjin. *Supply of Commonwealth: NPO, Public sector and Market shehui gongyi gongji: NPO, shehui bumen yu shichang>*, Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2005.
- Taylor, B. R. (ed.), *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.
- Thaxton, Ralph. "On Peasant Revolution and National Resistance: Toward a Theory of Peasant Mobilization and Revolutionary War with Special Reference to Modern China," *World Politics*, 30, No. 1, October 1977, pp. 24-57.
- Tong, Jingrong. "Guerrilla Tactics of Investigative Journalists in China," *Journalism*, Vol. 8(5), October, 2007, pp. 530-535.
- Townsend, James R. and Brantly Womack. *Politics in China*, (3d ed.) (Series in Comparative Politics: A Country Study), Boston: Little, Brown, 1986.
- Townsend, James R. *Political Participation in Communist China*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972.
- Turner, Jennifer and Wu, Fengshi. (ed.), *Environmental NGO and Environmental Journalist Forum: A Meeting of Environmentalists from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2001.
- UNDP and China Development Research Foundation, *China Human Development 2005: Development of Equity*, 2006.
- UNDP: *China Human Development Report 2002: Making Green Development to a Choice*, 2003.
- Uzzi, Brian. "The Sources and Consequences of Embeddedness for the Economic Performance of Organizations: the Network Effect," *American Sociological Review*, Vol.

61, No. 4, August 1996, pp. 674-698.

Van, Rooij, Benjamin. "Implementation of Chinese Environmental Law: Regular Enforcement and Political Campaigns," *Development and Change*, Vol. 37, no. 1 (2006), pp. 57-74.

Vermeer, Eduard B. "Industrial Pollution in China and Remedial Policies," *The China Quarterly*, No. 156, Special Issue: China's Environment. (Dec., 1998), pp. 952-985.

Vogel, Ezra. "From Friendship to Comradeship: The Change in Personal Relations in China," *The China Quarterly*, No. 21, January-March, 1965.

Walder, Andrew G. (ed.), *The Political Consequences of Departures from Central Planning: Economics Reform and Political Change in Communist States*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995.

Wang Shaoguang, "Chongqing Experience and Socialism ver. 3.0 <chongqing shijian 3.0 ban>," *Social Science Weekly*, July 8, 2010.

Wang Shaoguang, "Patterns of Public Agenda Setting in China <zhongguo gonggong zhengce yicheng shezhi de moshi>," *Chinese Social Science*, No. 5, 2006, pp. 86-99.

Wang Shaoguang, "Several Thoughts of 'Civil Society' <guanyu "shimin shehui" de jidian sikao>," *21st Century*, No. 8, 1991. [www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/21c].

Wang, Changjiang. *Construction of Leading Party Governance Ability in the Prospective of China's Political Civilization*, Shanghai People's Press, 2005.

Wang, Gengwu and Zheng, Yongnian. *The "ism" Controversy in China: from May Fourth Movement to Contemporary Era*, Singapore: Bafang Culture Press, 2009.

Wang, Hancheng and Liu, Bingjiang. "Policymaking for Environmental Protection in China," in McElroy, Nielsen and Lydon, ed., *Energizing China*, pp. 371-404.

Wang, Lili. *Green Media: Environmental Communication in China <lv meiti: zhongguo huanbao chuanbo yanjiu>*, Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2005.

Wang, Qingjie. "Transparency in the Grey Box of China's Environmental Governance: A Case Study of Print Media Coverage of an Environmental Controversy from the Pearl River Delta Region," *Journal of Environment and Development*, Vol.4, No. 2, 2005.

Wang, Shaoguang and Hu, Angang. *Chinese National Ability Report <zhongguo guojia nengli baogao>*, Shenyang: Liaoning People's Press, 1993.

- Wang, Shaoguang and Hu, Angang. *The Chinese Economy in Crisis: State Capacity and Tax Reform*, Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 2001.
- Wang, Yongchen. (ed.), Change: *Chinese Environmental Journalists Investigation Report 2006*<zhongguo huanjing jizhe diaocha baogao 2006>, Beijing: Sanlian Shudian Press, 2007.
- Wang, Zhenyao. (ed.), *The Frontier of Chinese Village Self-Governance* <zhongguo cunmin zizhi qianyan>, Beijing: Zhongguo shehui chubanshe, 2000.
- Weale, Albert. *The New Politics of Pollution*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992.
- Weible, Christopher M. "Beliefs and Perceived Influence in a Natural Resource Conflict: an Advocacy Coalition Approach to Policy Network", *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 3. (Sep., 2005), pp. 461-475.
- Weiss, Linda. *The Myth of the Powerless State*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Wellner, Robert (ed.), *Civil Life, Globalization, and Political Change in Asia: Organizing Between Family and State*, NY: Routledge, 2005.
- Wen, Bo. "Greening the Chinese Media," *China Environmental Series*, Issue 2, 1998, pp. 39-44.
- White, Gordon.; Howell, Jude and Shang, Xiaoyuan. *In Search of Civil Society: Market Reform and Social Change in Contemporary China*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Wilks, Stephen; and Wright, Maurice. *Comparative Government-industry Relations: Western Europe, the United States, and Japan*, Clarendon Press, 1987.
- Wong, Christine P. W. "Central-local Relations in an Era of Fiscal Decline: the Paradox of Fiscal Decentralization in Post-Mao China," *The China Quarterly*, No. 128 (1991). pp. 691-714.
- World Commission on Dams (WCD):
 "Dams and Development: A New Framework for Decision-Making," November 2000.
- Wu, Changhua and Wang, Hua. "China: Seeking Meaningful Decentralization to Achieve Sustainability," in Breton, Albert. (ed.), *Environmental governance and decentralization*, pp. 397-435.
- Xu, Xianglin. *Party, Government and Society in Evolutionary Reform* <jianjin gaige

- zhong de zhengfu, zhengdang yu shehui*>, Beijing: Zhongxin Press, 2004.
- Xu, Ying and Zhao, Litao. "China's Rapidly Growing Non-Governmental Organizations," *EIA Background Brief No. 514*, March 25, 2010.
- Yandle, Bruce. Vijayaraghavan, Maya and Bhattarai, Madhusudan. "The Environmental Kuznets Curve: A Primer," 2000, The Property and Environment Research Center.
- Yang, Anne S. "The Absent-Minded Reform of China's Media," in Finkelstein, David M. and Kivlehan, Maryanne. (ed.), *China's Leadership in the 21st Century: the Rise of the Fourth Generation*, Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2003. pp. 223-247.
- Yang, Dongping and Liang, Congjie (ed.), *FON Green Paper Book 2005: Crisis and Breakout <zhongguo huanjing de weiju yu tuwei>*, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2006.
- Yang, Dongping. (ed.), *FON Green Paper Book 2006: Transition and Game of China's Environment <zhongguo huanjing de zhuanxing yu boyi>*, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2007.
- Yang, Dongping. (ed.), *FON Green Paper Book 2008: Crisis and Turning of China's Environment <zhongguo huanjing de weiji yu zhuanji>*, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2008.
- Yang, Guobin. "Environmental NGOs and Institutional Dynamics in China," *The China Quarterly*, 2005, pp. 46-66.
- Yang, Kaihuang. *New Deal: Political Change in Era of Hu Jintao <xinzheng: hu jintao shidai de zhengzhi bianqian>*, Taipei: Straits Academic Press, 2007.
- Yang, Meirong. "A Long Way Toward A Free Press: the Case of the World Economic Herald," in Hamrin, Carol Lee and zhao, Suisheng. (ed.), *Decision-making in Deng's China: Perspectives from Insiders*, Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1995.
- Yu, Keping. (ed.), *Harmonious Society and Governmental Innovation <hexie shehui yu zhengfu chuangxing>*, Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2008.
- Zeng, Fanxu, "Media Agenda Building and Public Expression in NGO: A Case Study of Tibetan Antelopes Protection in China <huanbao NGO de yiti jiangou yu gonggong biaoda: yi ziran zhiyou jiangou "zang lingyang baohu" yiti wei geli>," *Journal of International Communication*, No. 10, 2007. pp. 14-18.

- Zhan, Jiang and Bai, Gui. (ed.), *Annual Report on Media Scrutiny in China: 2003-2004* <zhongguo yulun jiandu niandu baogao 2003-2004>, Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2006.
- Zhan, Jiang. (ed.), *Watcher on China's Social Transition: Context and Practice of Media Scrutiny in New Century* <zhongguo shehui zhuanxing de shouwang zhe: xin shiji xinwen yulun jiandu de yujing yu shijian>, Beijing: China Customs Press, 2002.
- Zhang, Hongjun and Ferris, Richard J. Jr. "Shaping an Environmental Protection Regime for the New Century: Environmental Law and Policy in the People's Republic of China," *Asian Journal of Management*, Hong Kong University, May 1998.
- Zhang, Leyin. "Chinese Central-Provincial Fiscal Relations, Budgetary Decline and the Impact of the 1994 Fiscal Reform: An Evaluation," *The China Quarterly*, No. 157. March, 1999, pp. 115-141.
- Zhang, Wei. "Environmental Journalism and Rise of Environmental Journalists in China <lvse xinwen yu zhongguo huanjing jizhe qun zhi jueqi>," *The Journalist Monthly*, May 2007, pp. 13-17.
- Zhang, Xiaobo. "Fiscal decentralization and political centralization in China: Implications for growth and inequality," *Journal of Comparative Economics*, vol. 34(4), December 2006, pp. 713-726.
- Zhang, Yong. "From Masses to Audience: Changing Media Ideologies and Practices in Reform China," *Journalism Studies*, 2000, 1(4): pp.649-64, November.
- Zhao, Chenggen. "Center and Local Area in Transition <zhuanxing qi de zhongyang he difang>," *Strategy and Administration*, No. 3, 2000. pp. 44-51.
- Zhao, Suisheng. (ed.), *China and Democracy*, NY: Routledge, 2000.
- Zhao, Yuezhi. "Watchdogs on Party leashes? Contexts and implications of investigative journalism in post-Deng China," *Journalism Studies*, 2000, 1:4(November, 2000), pp. 577-598.
- Zhao, Yuezhi. "From Commercialization to Conglomeration: the Transformation of the Chinese Press within the Orbit of the Party State," *Journal of Commercialization*, No. 50, pp. 3-26.
- Zhao, Yuezhi. *Media, market, and democracy in China: between the party line and the*

bottom line, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998.

Zheng, Yongnian. *De Facto Federalism in China: Reforms and Dynamics of Central-Local*, Singapore; Hackensack, N.J.: World Scientific, 2007.

Zheng, Yisheng. "On China's Environment and Economism <zhongguo de huanjing yu jingji>," *21st Century* (Net Journal, Hong Kong University), Vo. 87, No. 2, 2005.

Zhong, Yang; Chen, Jie and Scheb, John. "Mass Political Culture in Beijing: Findings from Two Public Opinion Surveys," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 38, No. 8, (Aug., 1998), pp. 763-783.

Zhou, Yongming. *Historicizing Online Politics: Telegraphy, the Internet, and Political Participation in China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.