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Expansion of International Broadcasting

The Growing Global Reach of China Central Television

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The global expansion of satellite capacity and the widespread use of the Internet for content distribution are creating a significant change in the ecology of global news, leading to widespread proliferation of news channels available in different regions and across the globe. These have broken down domestic monopolies on television news provision in many countries and made alternative sources of news available to large numbers of people. This is spreading voices and perspectives—including those with sometimes unwelcome views—to places they were not previously heard.

These developments differ from the traditions of international broadcasting that emanated from colonial and then later continued from post-colonial powers (Potter, 2012; Gillespie and Webb, 2013) and those related to international conflicts in the mid-twentieth century that spawned cross-border and global radio broadcasting with official views, propaganda, factual and cultural programming as a norm (Wasburn, 1992; Schwoch, 2008; Cull, 2009; Johnson and Parta, 2010). During the second half of the twentieth century, smaller nations began providing some international radio services so their voices could complement those of the large services of major powers such as the China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. As capabilities to distribute television worldwide became available they were first exploited by Western states, especially the United Kingdom and the United States through the BBC World Service (a state funded service) and CNN (a commercially funded service).

This, added to the global dominance of Western news agencies, led many at the time to criticize hegemonic global news provision based on Western values, interests, and perspectives (Tunstall, 1979; MacBride, 1980). In recent decades, however, this dominance has been challenged by funding for and development of regional and global television news providers by other countries. Hundreds of satellite news channels are now available worldwide that provide domestic and regional services and a group of global players operating in multiple languages have now appeared, including RT from Russia, Al Jazeera from Qatar, CCTV from China, and second-tier Western international television services such as France 24 and Deutsche Welle. These broadcast on their own channels and sometimes prepare daily or weekly programmes for broadcast on other channels or by domestic broadcasters. The new environment is thus providing a wide range of international television services and choices, particularly to developing countries (Geniets, 2013), but these international players are also gaining access to North America and Europe audiences.

The development of more international news and commentary provision is reducing the Western dominance in news provision, de-Westernizing the practices and styles of news presentation, providing different perspectives and opinions on global developments, and providing coverage of issues and countries not well covered in West (Miles, 2005; Lynch, 2006; Rai and Cottle, 2007; Thusu, 2007; Painter, 2008; Seib, 2013).

The purposes, content and perspectives conveyed, and effects of these broadcasters are still being debated, partly because they are not always transparent or clearly visible. Some patterns of use by the public are emerging, however: 1) international broadcasters tend to have much smaller audiences than domestic broadcasters; 2) audiences tends to be larger when broadcasters come from countries with cultural affinities to those of audiences in recipient nations; 3) individuals in diaspora for the originating nation are more likely to view; and 4) individuals who deliberately wish to seek out differing perspectives or have economic or political interests in the originating country are more likely to view such broadcasts.

The largest emerging player in this new environment is China Central Television (CCTV) and its advent mirrors that growing international status of China as an economic and political actor. The Chinese voice is increasingly heard on the international political stage regarding foreign policy; Chinese industry has been opened up to the economic world, and Chinese art and culture have become more widely recognised with the creation and expansion of the Confucius Institute, an equivalent to the British Council, Goethe Institute, and Maison Française. The Chinese Government has pursued all of these objectives under the 'soft power' policy concept.

Chinese media have also participated in these developments by setting up operations abroad to broadcast a Chinese voice on world affairs and this media expansion cannot be seen as independent initiatives. Xinhua News Agency, *People's Daily*, *China Daily* and China Central Television have been at the forefront of developing foreign markets. They all share certain features in common: They are well known media in China; they are Government owned; and they represent the official voice. This report focuses on China Central Television (CCTV), its foreign market expansion and its development strategy. It reviews its structure, activities, and financing tries to discern what kinds of audiences choose to watch CCTV and why. It then makes comparisons with other leading international media and the extent to which CCTV is known amongst foreign audiences.

An Overview of China Central Television (CCTV)

China Central Television is a state-run television station and is the only station with a national network in China. It started in 1958 with a single black and white channel, shifted to colour broadcasting began in 1973 and it now broadcasts news, sports, entertainment and culture programmes over 24 public channels, 21 pay channels, 8 mobile channels and 28 internet channels 24 hours a day. 1.2 billion Chinese, representing 95.9% of the Chinese population, can receive its output. With 31 national correspondent stations and 50 local television stations, CCTV is the biggest and the most important television and mainstream media group in China.

It is run from a new headquarters building in Beijing. The building, cost in excess of 5 billion CNY (\$1 billion; €700 million; £600 million) and provides 473,000 square metres (1,552,000 sq. ft.) of floor space, indicative of the significance given CCTV by the state.

CCTV is an example of how China keeps state-owned companies profitable whilst the nation as a whole becomes less government controlled and more market orientated. It operates both as a mouthpiece for the government and as a commercial business which makes large profits and commands an audience vastly larger than any other major television network worldwide. In 2008 CCTV earned \$2.5 billion (€1.8 billion; £1.5 billion) in total revenues, compared to \$1 billion (€700 million; £600 million) in 2002, and paid a little less than \$1 billion in tax to the government in 2011. It carries advertising and rates have been rising at twenty to thirty per cent per year. The advertising slots are auctioned annually and in November 2012 bids netted a record return of nearly \$2.6 billion. Jiannanchun, a Chinese liquor group, was the biggest buyer and other sponsors include international companies such as Coca-Cola, Adidas and Proctor and Gamble. This annual auction is regarded as a barometer of the Chinese economy and in the last 19 years the annual revenue has increased nearly 500 percent.

The Growing Global Reach of CCTV and Interest in International Broadcasting

The focus of this report is on the growing global reach of CCTV and its methods of expansion into the world of international broadcasting. The report is based on reviews of scholarly literature and media mainstream media reports between 2009 and 2012, correspondence with journalists, editors and media industry employees, and in-depth interviews. Most of the articles had a negative attitude towards CCTV's expansion abroad. Many of the articles concerned the broadcaster's expansion into developing countries, a few considered CCTV coverage in the USA, and even fewer about coverage in Europe. Most reflected the view that CCTV's expansion abroad was the result of desires to increase international influence, strengthening China's soft power and cultural development. It is clear that the Chinese Government has a strong desire to promote foreign broadcasting and, indeed, support from the Government is a principle reason for the expansion. The objectives of the internationalisation of CCTV were explicitly by the Angola Press Agency (Luanda) in 2012 when it said 'The expansion of CCTV aims to increase the international influence of China, trying to raise the cultural development of the country to the level already achieved by its economy' (Angola Press Agency, Chinese television...., 2012).

Far greater scholarly and media attention has been devoted to Al Jazeera, Russia Today, France24 and other state related broadcasters, so much of the CCTV development in recent years has gone relatively unnoticed. Amongst western researchers there is considerable debate about state-related or state-owned television, as well as discussions of their effects on politics, race, democracy, and propaganda. There has been the subject of extensive discussion about Al Jazeera's status as a pan-Arab satellite operator in Arabic and a global English channel and how it brings new perspectives to inhabitants of Arab countries and the world. Similar research about CCTV has not yet appeared. CCTV and Al Jazeera also share an objective of improving understanding of the cultures of their nations of origin and significant emphasis is placed on the role of Language. Some research has addressed the status of the Arabic language and the contributions of the Arabic-language Al Jazeera network to it and about the broader intersections of language and nationalism which are often addressed by the Al Jazeera network. It has been described as the biggest media phenomenon to hit

the Arab world since the advent of television (el-Nawawy, Iskandar and Farag, 2002) and “a fresh break from the traditional news agenda” that plays a conciliatory role in international conflicts (el-Nawawy and Powers, 2010). As of yet no significant research has focused on such topics with regard to CCTV.

Articles written in the West often reveal a suspicious attitude to state-owned television in China and Russia, particularly in relation to democracy and the intended audience. They often convey concerns about censorship (Helle, 2012) and react to foreign broadcasting because of portrayals of China as the “uncertain other” and Africa as the “disappointed backyard” in Western media (Gagliardone, Repnikova, and Stremmler, 2010). Few studies address the issues of ownership or capital resources and the general impression is that writers care more about the content of the programmes and the influence of television and broadcasting in general than how it is organized and produced.

The Global Development of CCTV

In contrast to many Western television networks closing foreign bureaux, CCTV is expanding its global news gathering facilities and now has regional production centres in America and in Africa, 5 regional central bureaux, and 63 overseas correspondent stations and it plans to build more in the coming years. By June 2010 CCTV cooperated with 279 foreign media organisations and companies around the world and carried out 373 projects involving its whole channels and broadcasts within time slots obtained from other broadcasters. CCTV broadcasts in 140 foreign countries and can be accessed by some 1.5 billion people, but actual audience figures are not available to understand actual penetration. It has seven international channels that broadcast in English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian, as well as Chinese, and 7 foreign channels which transmit by satellite as part of the CCTV-4 comprehensive channel. CCTV-News is its most important journalistic output. The CCTV-4 Chinese broadcast is specifically intended for Chinese speaking people abroad, as well as for people who want to learn the Chinese language.

Figure 1. The Global Provision of CCTV International Channels



Two digital channels were launched in North America in 2004. The Traditional Opera Channel focuses on Chinese Opera, whilst the Entertainment Channel aims at building an entertainment site for Chinese people abroad. Most of the Chinese people in North America come from Southern China and the output reflects this with programmes from Fujian and Guangdong Opera. All the entertainment programmes are chosen from CCTV Channel 25 and cover opera, dancing, music, old Chinese folk art, acrobatics, variety shows and gala's amongst other subjects. They are suitable for people of all ages and the two channels keep traditional Chinese art at the top of the agenda whilst being modern, humorous and above all, attractive to audiences.

In 2005 CCTV together with 8 provincial Chinese television stations launched a new Dish Network Greatwall Platform aimed specifically at the Asian community outside China. In the first year of operation the network attracted over 30,000 customers. At the start of 2011 CCTV-Documentary launched domestic and international transmission in both Chinese and English.

There is no doubt that the Chinese government supports these initiatives to promote and enhance a mutual understanding between China and the rest of the world. The government is also keen to make CCTV into a leading media group with a strong international influence using the latest technology and ensuring that it is rich in content about China, international affairs, news of the developing world, and Chinese culture. The coverage is designed to improve global understanding of China and Chinese culture, but also to be an authoritative voice of Chinese government views of global developments. Former Chinese President Hu Jintao reflected this view, saying "the country will build a modern media system and enhance the power of news media for domestic and world service so as to create a favourable social environment and atmosphere for public opinion". He also said "CCTV is an important window through which China knows about the world and the world learns about China" (China View 2008).

Current Chinese President Xi Jinping has continued that support. In his inaugural speech he expressed the opinion that China needs to learn more about the world and the world also needs to know more about China. He specifically expressed the hope that all journalists, both domestic and foreign, would continue to make every effort to present China world-wide (Xi, November 16, 2012).

The Current Situation on CCTV Global Development

CCTV now operates two regional overseas production centres and programme feeds: CCTV America and CCTV Africa. Both have high-technology newsrooms, employ Chinese journalists as foreign correspondents, hire foreign staff and provide training courses for new journalists with an emphasis on training for journalists from less developed countries.

Those studios provide materials for the diverse range of countries within their regions but also for exchange with other CCTV operations. The following tables list the countries where the broadcasts from the seven overseas CCTV channels (CCTV-4 (Comprehensive channel), CCTV-News, CCTV-Documentary, CCTV-Francais, CCTV-Espagnol, CCTV-Arabic, CCTV-Russian) can be received:

Table 1. 121 Countries Where the CCTV-4 Comprehensive Channel is Available

Continent	Countries / Districts
Asia	Hong Kong(China), Macao(China), Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Brunei, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives.(26)
Europe	France, Germany, Russia, Kazakhstan, England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Portugal, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Belarus, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Moldova, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Italy, Monaco, Andorra, San Marino, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Malta, Cyprus.(45)
North America	USA, Canada. (2)
Central and South America	French Guiana, Panama, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Dominica, Cuba, Bolivia, Mexico, Netherlands Antilles, Honduras, Guyana.(12)
Oceania	New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Marshall Islands, Fiji.(5)
Africa	South Africa, Mauritius, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Egypt, Madagascar, Cameroon, Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia.(31)

Table 2. 94 Countries Where the CCTV- News Channel is available

Continent	Countries / Districts
Asia	Hong Kong(China), Macao(China), Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, India, Indonesia, Brunei, Nepal, Maldives, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Israel, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait.(30)
Europe	France, Germany, Russia, Kazakhstan, England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Portugal, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Belarus, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Moldova, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Italy, Monaco, Andorra, San Marino, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Malta, Cyprus.(46)
North America	USA, Canada. (2)
Central and South America	Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Netherlands Antilles.(4)
Oceania	New Zealand, Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, Papua New Guinea.(6)
Africa	South Africa, Uganda, Mozambique, Mauritius, Egypt, Cameroon.(6)

Table 3. 34 Countries Where CCTV-F, the French Channel, is Available

Continent	Countries / Districts
Europe	France, Russia, Romania.(3)
North America	USA, Canada. (2)
Africa	Madagascar, Mauritius, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia.(29)

Table 4. 12 Countries Where CCTV-E, the Spanish Channel is Available

Continent	Countries / Districts
Europe	Spain, Russia, Poland, Romania.(4)
North America	USA. (1)
Central and South America	Mexico, Cuba, Bolivia, Chile, Brazil, Panama, Honduras.(7)

Table 5. 44 Countries Where CCTV Broadcasts in Time Slots on Domestic Channels

Continent	Countries / Districts
Asia	Hong Kong(China), Macao(China), Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam.(18)
Europe	UK, Poland, Hungary, Sweden.(4)
North America	USA, Canada. (2)
Central and South America	Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Guatemala.(7)
Oceania	New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Tonga.(4)
Africa	Zimbabwe, Namibia, Kenya, Tanzania, Angola, Nigeria, Madagascar, Seychelles, French Reunion.(9)

There are also CCTV-Arabic and CCTV-Russian channels, they were the latest two international channels of CCTV. The launching of these two channels contributed CCTV's internationalization strategy. In the future, CCTV will launch a Portuguese Channel to become a 7 languages and 11 channels international broadcaster.

Table 6. CCTV-A, the Arabic Channel

CCTV-Arabic	
Launching	25 Jul, 2009 (Arabsat / Nilesat)
Countries / Districts	Middle East & North Africa countries: Iraq, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Yeman, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Algeria, Somalia, etc. 25 countries and districts.
Audience	6,372,500

(Data source: CCTV official website, <http://cctv.cntv.cn/>)

Table 7. CCTV-R, the Russian Channel

CCTV-Russian	
Launching	10 Sep, 2009 (Arabsat / Nilesat)
Countries / Districts	Russia, the Republic of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Crimea, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, etc. 10 countries and districts.
Audience	1,530,100

(Data source: CCTV official website, <http://cctv.cntv.cn/>)

From the above tables we can see that CCTV-4 and CCTV-News have the widest international coverage and that the other channels provide programmes in specific languages for specific countries. CCTV intends to develop more programmes in other languages and more channels to extend its coverage further in the future.

An introduction to CCTV's Foreign Production Operations

The broadcaster is rapidly expanding its foreign operations countries and regions it believes it can have greater commercial impact and where it wishes China information and the perspectives of the Chinese state to be more readily available.

CCTV Africa

Although a number of African nations have vibrant local media, especially in radio and print, economic conditions overall have kept the continent from being well supplied with quality content, especially when compared to the highly competitive market in Western countries. Nevertheless there is considerable demand for what the television has to offer and some African countries have seen rapid progress with both satellite and digital TV. As a result, CCTV sees Africa as offering commercial growth opportunity in television as incomes rises and electricity supply improves. At present most Africans obtain the news from traditional sources such as newspapers and radio, but television is gaining ground where free channels are available and CCTV intends to benefit from the increasing consumption of television programming.

There are, of course, limitations on this development because of individual national economies and because many African countries do not have their own media agencies and often rely on only one newspaper or TV station. In the 23 French-speaking African countries, for example, the majority of viewers only have access to one or two local French free-to-air channels and French Channel 5. Unless they speak Arab, English, or other internationally broadcast languages, other channels available through satellite are of little use. Consequently, the ability to communicate news and information are restricted in these nations. Countries with better economies such as South Africa, Egypt, Kenya and Nigeria have more media outlets with both state and privately owned newspapers, radio and television. These outlets are promoted and advertised widely and have resources for gathering and disseminating information. They are constrained, however, by the overall level of development of each country and generally they are behind media on other

continents. Some stations do not have enough resources to produce sufficient programming to fill their broadcasting time and frequently broadcast programmes obtained from the international television companies.

Chinese media have been quick to spot these local constraints as opportunity to offer content and have targeted regions they believe will give them the quickest increase in ratings and popularity. Television is more readily available in urban areas, but only a quarter of Africans live in urban environments. Consequently, not everyone is able to watch television and tend to rely more on radio. In Kenya, for example, only 63% of the urban population and 25% of the rural population watch television. These figures are increasing and the rate of increase is accelerating with improvement in the national economies and the introduction of satellite and digital TV. There is no doubt that demand for media services will increase in Africa. Xinhua News Agency, China Radio International and the People's Daily all recognise this opportunity and created presences on the African continent (see Liuying, Zhouyu 2010).

CCTV Africa was the first foreign regional production centre and programme provided opened by CCTV and the launch was a significant step in the development of Chinese television abroad. Operations commenced in January 2012 when offices were opened in Nairobi in Kenya, with 2450 square metres of space including two high definition studios. Both the offices and the studios are fitted out with advanced news gathering, production and broadcasting equipment. A young, professional editorial team was assembled and the total staff is approximately 100 people. Journalists come from different cultural backgrounds and about half are Africans.

Initially the station produced a one-hour daily programme of news, broadcast in English. After six months further programmes were developed including Africa News, Talk Africa and Face of Africa. These programmes covered a wide range of styles and subjects including talk shows and documentaries dealing with political, economic, social and cultural issues across Africa. Later China Network Television made an 'I Love Africa' programme for mobile phone users that also provided city tours, variety shows, as well as Chinese films and education programmes.

CCTV Africa was an important step in developing CCTV's global reach and its goal of 'showing a real China to Africa and presenting a real Africa to the world' was recognised in a report by the Xinhua News Agency (Guo Qian and Song Chen, 2012).

CCTV America

The second foreign-based production centre was opened by CCTV News on February 6th 2012, with a schedule of daily programmes originating from studios in Washington, DC. Fifteen Chinese nationals were initially employed, along with more than 60 foreign staff mostly from the American media, Cable News Network (CNN), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and other national and international broadcasters. Amongst them was Jim Laurie who worked previously at the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and has

won the Emmy and Peabody Awards for journalism. He currently teaches journalism at the University of Hong Kong and is a CCTV Executive Advisor (Zhand Wei, 2012).

The production centre is in 3,500 square metres of space located on New York Avenue in downtown Washington, with state of the art television news gathering, production and broadcasting equipment and two high definition studios. The studios are specifically designed to be used flexibly and can be dismantled and recreated to meet the needs of different types of programmes. The output is transmitted via satellite and cable and American audiences can also watch CCTV America programmes on Comcast Cable TV and Dish TV as well on MHz Channel 3 from Washington DC. In the early introduction video film of CCTV-America, Ma Jing, director general of CCTV America, said, "This is a natural outgrowth of China Central television. CCTV has 42 channels which can reach an audience of 1.2 billion people. The domestic market is almost saturated. So we are seeking growth in the global market." This introduction video film was broadcasted only abroad from Feb 6, 2012. Also in this video, former director of Broadcast Operations, Alan Adair, has encouraged the staff said, "We've got to get this right, we've got to be accurate, we've got to be slick, we've got to be professional. It's an awesome responsibility because it's such a respected brand, and we've got to get this right." Those are huge challenges in the U.S. where the channel must build both credibility and brand awareness and respect. Programmes are primarily designed to cover important Chinese economic policy and financial news, the Sino-US relationship, and Latin American affairs. CCTV America currently broadcasts for four hours per day and includes a commercial programme entitled 'Bis Asia America' hosted by Phillip Yin, who previously worked for Bloomberg Television and CNBC. It offers a weekly talk-show programme entitled 'The Heat' and another weekly programme called 'America's Now' which **focuses** on news from Central and South America. CCTV America also produces four hours of news daily in English for a Chinese audience that is broadcast by CCTV-NEWS. A hundred journalists from fifteen different bureaux in North and South America cooperate to produce the material.

The opening of CCTV America received significant coverage from other media. The Voice of America called the opening of the service a new step by the Chinese Government to promote their soft power policy, to promote the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and to enhance their international influence abroad (VOA, 2012). The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) said the new initiative represented the latest effort of the Chinese Government to increase their international influence (BBC, 2012).

Plans for Future Foreign Production Centres and Bureaux

Because of the global economic instability over the last five years most international media organisations have been retrenching. Nevertheless CCTV has opened two foreign production centres with a significant investment in human, physical and financial resources. The official website of CCTV has extolled this commitment with phrases such as 'an important piece of news' 'the first to report about China to the World', 'largest number of overseas bureaux' in describing the developments and opening of the 2 foreign production centres, five overseas bureaux, and assignment of sixty three foreign correspondents at stations around the world. A further ten foreign

stations are planned, including ones in Bangladesh, Czech Republic, Mongolia, Belarus, Peru and New Zealand. In the initial four months of 2012, the foreign operations produced more than 6700 items of news broadcast in the four months from January to April 2012, an average of over 1500 each month. Other international media outlets such as the BBC and Reuters are quoting CCTV's news output and using their pictures and videos.

The question whether and where CCTV might open its next foreign production centre remains unanswered, but it is expected that it may be in Europe. The Americas and Africa are already covered and CCTV originates in Asia so Europe is that last remaining major continent without local production. Given that Europe has one of the largest economies in the world, is a centre of a global market, has enormous political importance, and has significant commercial relationships with China such an expansion would make sense. However, television in Europe is fiercely competitive and there are well-established reputable media companies in Europe, but the audience is vast. In general European audiences are well educated, with good levels of income, and they demand trustworthy and reliable sources of news and information.

Although CCTV has a small bureau in London, it would seem an ideal location for the next stage of CCTV's overseas development—establishment of a full European news production centre—because it is the largest city in Europe, is its most significant financial centre, and is home for the world leading television video suppliers and important media organisations in the world such as the BBC and Reuters, along with newspapers such as 'The Times', 'The Daily Telegraph', 'The Guardian', 'The Independent' and 'The Financial Times'. Global media organisations such as Associated Press, Cable News Network, Al Jazeera, France 24 and Russia Today all have major offices in London.

The Foreign Strategy of CCTV

The strategy of China Central Television is to become an internationally recognised media presence. This would be reflected in the extent of its coverage, its audience ratings, its popularity and reliability, as well as its international influence. In the Chinese language a single word describes the "Chinese dream" and was first used by President Xi Jinping, when he visited the 'Road to Revival' Exhibition in the national Museum of China in November 2012 with other members of the Chinese Central Collective Leadership. He defined the Chinese dream as the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and asserted it was an achievable goal (Xi, November 30, 2012). CCTV aims to see itself as part of achieving the dream by becoming a recognized international media company with an audience that matches its aspirations (CCTV.Com, "Unshakeable Peak of Journalism", 2012).

Zhao Huayong, the former director of CCTV, committed the broadcasters to developing overseas in 2006. His vision was to develop three international channels which could initially broadcast to about 60 million people. To implement the vision he initiated the commercial platform entitled the 'Great Wall' with a prospective audience of 30,000 North American and 10,000 Asian viewers and started collaboration with the Taiwanese media. He outlined a strategic plan for CCTV for the following five years (2006-2010) that clearly defined the 'national characteristics, the national demeanour and the influence on the world' of the Chinese people, demonstrating modern aspects of Chinese society as

well as its traditional and contemporary culture. The company would not shy away from competing with other media outlets as part of that strategy (Zhao Yong, 2006). Seven years later much of this vision has been achieved, but it remains a challenge to achieve full audience recognition and acceptance. This is important both in commercial terms, but also in terms of developing credibility and editorial trust so the broadcaster can achieve its objective of global impact.

Chinese National Guidelines on Overseas Development

In the 1970s the Chinese government implemented policy opening China to the world and accompanied this by a programme of significant economic and social reforms. Consequently, many Chinese enterprises developed an international role and Chinese manufactured products began being exported in significant numbers. Concurrently, China absorbed foreign capital and investment and many foreign companies expanded their businesses into China.

Within this reform CCTV was also designated to expansion of its business overseas. However, historic government control of most aspects of Chinese society, its promotion of its own policies, and overt censorship of the media has meant that CCTV has had to overcome accusations that it remains only a mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party, that it is controlled by the government and that its news is not objective. CCTV has deliberately tried to alter this perception by putting capital, manpower and material resources into its networks to increase its coverage and widening its journalistic and intellectual base so that it will be perceived as representing China and Chinese culture more widely. Realisation of that objective still remains a goal. Liu Yunshan, the former Government Propaganda Minister and Member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party, has emphasised that the official mandate of CCTV is to broadcast news and programmes about China which reinforces the Soft Power policy of the Chinese Government. He also said the Chinese media needed to accelerate the pace of external development as an urgent strategic task so Chinese communications matches the country's increasing international status (Xinhua, October 20, 2010). Whether CCTV can project that soft power in a credible and attractive manner to global audiences remains to be seen.

CCTV Network Expansion in Languages and Transmission

CCTV is actively promoting its brand and image abroad to create the international media presence that supports the country's overall goals. Its first step was to create a satellite TV platform on each continent to allow each CCTV network to broadcast programmes abroad. Its internet platform is entitled 'The Great Wall Platform' and it is authorised by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television of China (SARFT) and managed by the China International Communication Company (CICC).

The Great Wall is now available in the USA, Europe, Canada and Latin America and there are plans to extend it and elsewhere. The platform is comprised of the comprehensive channel and the smaller specialised channels of CCTV, Hong Kong Television, and American Television, as well as local television networks. Broadcasts are in Chinese, English, Spanish and French to meet requirements of

different areas of the world. It is popular amongst Chinese people abroad, but it also displays traditional Chinese culture to foreign audiences (Baidu Baike <http://baike.baidu.com/view/1351370.htm>).

In addition to its production centres in Africa and America, CCTV is launching eleven additional international channels and two digital channels that will operate in six languages on the Great Wall Platform. According to our interviews, an associate researcher of CCTV Research Department Ying Zhou described the development in the following terms “Broadcasting in more languages means extending our reach and accessing a larger audience. We are also planning to include Portuguese in the coming year as part of our whole external propaganda plan. Another Chinese national media China Radio International (CRI) launched Portuguese FM in June 2012, the new Bureau was built in Lisbon, Portugal. On the basis of CCTV’s original plan, CCTV would broadcast 7 languages (including Portuguese) 11 channels by 2012. We have no idea why CCTV’s plan was delayed, however their website already published recruitment advertising of Portuguese reporters and editors since late 2009. According to the latest documents of Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, in the future, China will further open up cultural markets by enlarging the scope of cultural exchanges; support key media to expand cultural exchange into national and international markets. (The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, The Decision on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening Reforms, 12 Nov, 2013, The Xinhua News Agency was authorized to publish)

Figure 2 illustrates the global reach of CCTV’s current network. Most of the world is covered, but what matters is whether the potential audiences actually watch CCTV’s output and whether they will continue to watch.

CCTV’s plans to reach a larger audience

CCTV has achieved a great deal in a short time in respect of its broadcast capabilities and its programming, but it is more important that the output is seen and respected by the public. All media organisations, whether funded by the state, advertising or other means have to ask themselves ‘where is our audience?’ Broadcasters like the BBC have to be sure that their audience is willing to pay licence fees whilst commercial broadcasters need to maintain and increase their audience ratings and popularity in order to attract paid advertising. In the competitive global market CCTV has no choice but to ensure that its programming attracts and keeps an audience.

Considering different audiences from different time zones may have different interests, CCTV-4, the 24 hours Comprehensive Chinese International Channel which is mainly targeted at overseas Chinese is divided into three editions: Asia Edition, Europe Edition and America Edition since 2007.

Figure 2. Global Satellite Coverage of CCTV International

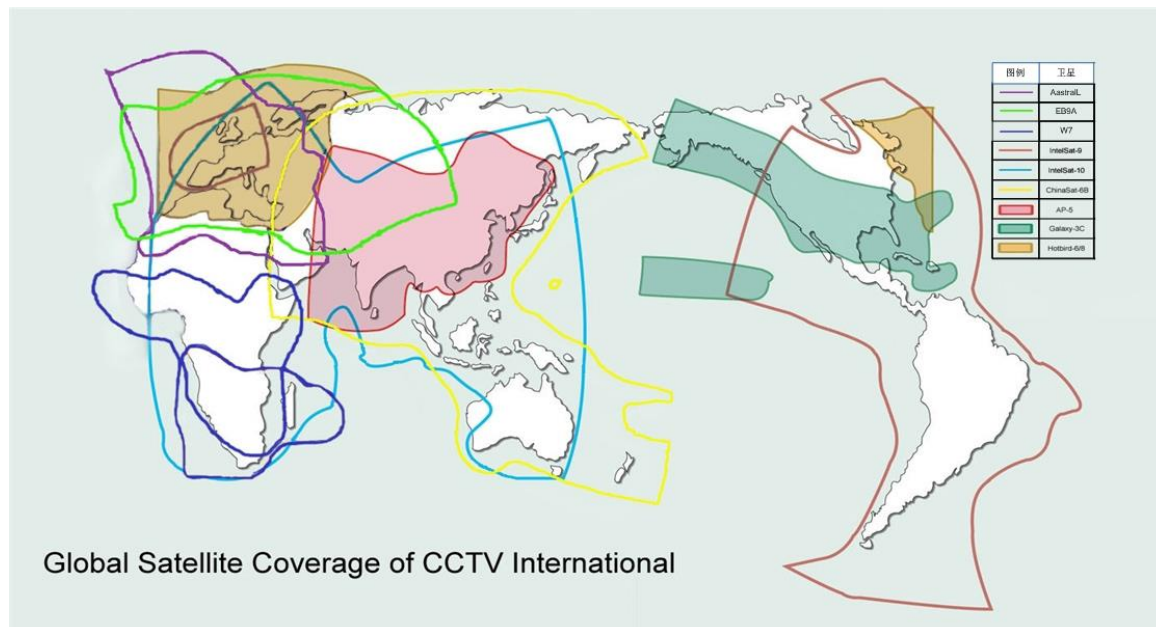


Figure source: CCTV International blog (<http://blog.cntv.cn/7089247-1157053.html>)

Data from the CSM Media Research, an independent Chinese broadcasting and television rating survey and research company that assesses CCTV and other media groups, showed that global audience rating of CCTV-4 2011 was 0.36% rose to 1.48% during Japanese earthquake in March 2011. In addition, the "Japan Earthquake" special report average viewing time daily increased 600%. (Guo Xiaozhi, 2011). On March 12 2011, audience share of CCTV reached 2.49%. (Li Chunxia and Chen Shuangshuang, 2011. Sheng Yilai, Director of Overseas Program Center of CCTV, mentioned that, satellites signals of CCTV-4 have already covered 98% of the world. Although in the very beginning CCTV-4 was not well accepted, after long time efforts, advertising of CCTV-4 reached 200 million Yuan [£19 million/\$32 million] compared to original 5 million Yuan [£480,000/\$800,000] (Gao, 2007).

Apparently, a basic potential audience exists in the approximately 50 million Chinese living outside China. Most of them will be keen to hear about their homeland and many of them will prefer programming in Chinese. There is a far greater number of foreigners who know little about China and might be willing to learn more. Most of these will never have been, and indeed are unlikely to go, to China so they know very little about its people or culture. CCTV is targeting these viewers and, according to data from the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) more than 100 million people have watched programmes from four of the CCTV Channels (CCTV Chinese, English, French and Spanish) by 2009. No independent verification of these figures is available but—even allowing for error—CCTV's foreign audience may at times be approaching those of the foreign audiences of the BBC and CNN (Zhu YuanLi, 2012).

CCTV's Plans to Reveal the 'Real' China

Zhang Changming, former Vice-President of CCTV, sees the broadcasters emphasizing the principles 'to be real, to be objective, to be accurate and to be transparent. CCTV will present the world with the

real China. It is imperative for us to be a multi-language, multi-faceted and multi-perspective broadcaster” (Bristow, 2009). The first Director-General of CCTV international centre, Zhao Yuhui, believes that some western media focused too extensively on negative issues when covering China and that most foreigners look at China through the tinted glasses of some Western media. CCTV, he says, should aim to correct this and not simply echo the Communist Party leadership (Zhao, 2002). Neil Cairns, a senior editor at Al Jazeera (AJE), suggests that CCTV should aim to show China to the world (the window) and to reflect it (the mirror) during an interview with one of the authors. He thinks that broadcasters, such as CCTV, should have a clear orientations and that CCTV Africa should achieve this with its twin aims of ‘bringing the true China to Africa’ and ‘bringing a true Africa to the world’. This clearly corresponds to Chinese Government policy.

A comparison with Al Jazeera is instructive. Al Jazeera English, the Middle Eastern equivalent of CNN, was founded in 1996 and has rapidly established an audience principally from the Arabic speaking world but increasingly, and significantly, amongst the international community. Many foreign viewers initially regarded the broadcaster with suspicion and some even labelled it as the ‘Terrorist’s Television’ because of its willingness to coverage and carry statements of non-state organisations combatting Western nations and culture. It was certainly regarded as the political tool of Qatar because it was located in, and financed by, the state of Qatar. Its international status has improved over time and it has become clear that Al Jazeera speaks with an independent voice and has its own viewpoints, at least when Qatari foreign policy goals are not involved. It is now one of the most powerful broadcasting media in the Middle East and the Islamic world and there is no doubt that it has a significant influence on the wider international stage. The Al Jazeera English channel, which was launched in 2006, is now reaching a potential audience of some 206 million people in 130 countries worldwide (Zhang Lei, 2013).

Neil Cairns stresses that Al Jazeera’s success is based on its independence and many people have realised its reporting is accurate and reliable. He initially thought that CCTV might suffer initially from the same suspicions and encouraged the station to ensure that it was truly independent and report stories and events that might not otherwise be told.

Lu You, a CCTV European correspondent based in London, in an interview with one of the authors, said she believes that the international reporting of Chinese affairs has been unbalanced mostly because the Chinese media were often voiceless worldwide and this became a motive for CCTV to develop overseas. She says it is difficult for any new broadcaster to break into a new market and that gaining access to foreign officials and sources as a Chinese foreign correspondent from CCTV is sometimes difficult because it takes time to gain trust and respect. She describes it as ‘feeling like she is starting life as a journalist again’ because of the need to develop access and sources for coverage. Lu You says she often compares CCTV to the BBC to help people understand its position in Chinese society, but that she entirely understands people’s suspicions of new television stations and their reporters particularly from a country with a Communist government. ‘I am not afraid of being a

correspondent in a Western world and will never give up,' she says. 'CCTV is determined to enter the global market and the stations correspondents must equally stick to their task'.

CCTV and a Free Internet Service

The worldwide development of the internet has had a significant impact on all the traditional media outlets and CCTV has begun an internet service. Viewers can download, upload and share video on line via its CNTV (China Network television) website. The free service tries to ensure that the traditional television and internet platforms cooperate with each other and are fully compatible. Initially this caused some confusion amongst the audience when the official website – www.cctv.com – suddenly turned into a new global homepage with the address www.cntv.cn in 2010 because the relationship between CCTV and CNTV was not clear and it provoked an internal discussion about intellectual property rights. It was ultimately decided that both websites would combine with the address www.cntv.com and it became the official website for CCTV.

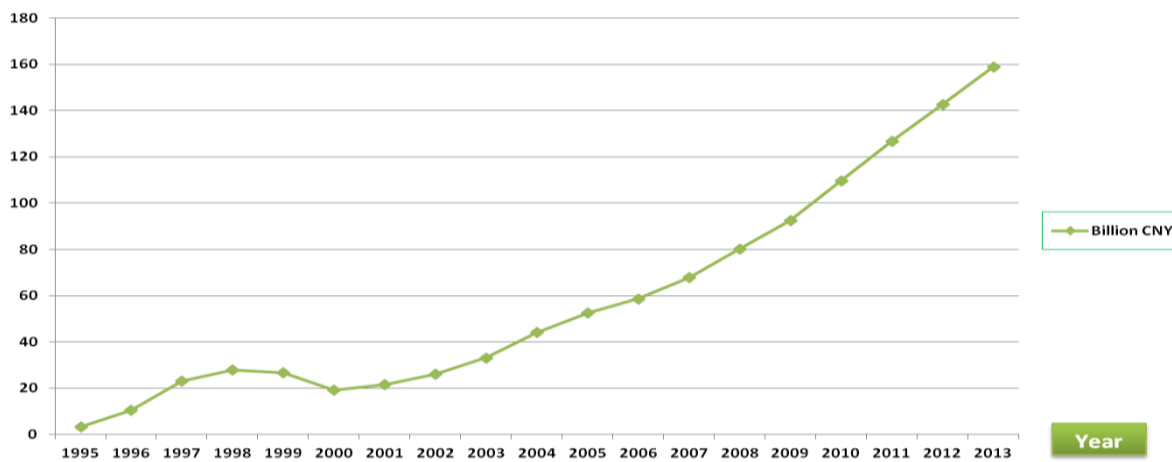
There is a large audience for CCTV's website, particularly at the time of the traditional Chinese festivals such as the Dragon Boat Festival, the Spring Festival Gala, the Mid-Autumn Festival and the Chinese New Year in which special content is available. In addition, according to our interview to a former CCTV sports journalist Lu You who used to travel around the world to cover sports games, she said football coverage on CCTV5 is particularly popular with fans in Germany, France and Spain because in these countries the audience can receive the output for free on the site rather than having to pay for viewing on the subscription channel in their own country.

The Financing of CCTV

The cost for operating CCTV 's global operations is large, but full information about the financing of CCTV is unavailable. However, an indication of its budget can be realised from some published figures. For example CCTV's total income in 2008 was around \$2.5 billion. In 2001 it paid over \$0.8 billion dollars in tax to the Government and in 2012 it netted nearly \$2.6 billion in the annual advertising auction. The annual income from this auction has been steadily increasing over the last 18 years as is shown in Table 9 below.

The advertising revenue raised by CCTV is approximately one-third of all advertising revenue in China. CCTV also has more than 30 digital subscription channels but these do not produce large revenue streams and the main income still comes from advertising.

Table 8 CCTV's revenue from the Annual Advertising Auction from 1995 to 2013, in billion Yuan (1 CNY=\$.16)



Whilst CCTV now has sufficient revenue to finance its overseas operations from advertising, it is a state-run institution. This has led people to suspect that the substantial capital expenditures required for the expansion itself have been financed by the government. This raises questions such as ‘how much has CCTV invested in its overseas development?’, ‘do the funds come solely from advertising revenue?’, ‘was some of the funds derived from government sources?’, and, if so, ‘what proportion?’ Because of the lack of transparency and accounting complexities in the state budget, these are difficult questions to answer. Executives and journalists in the foreign operations are unable to answer the questions themselves. Asked where the money come from in an interview with one of the authors, Wang Chaowen, President of Xinhua News Agency in Africa, acknowledges that the overseas funds for Xinhua News Agency come from both the government and advertising, but is unable to give an exact proportion.

Lu You, London correspondent for CCTV Europe, defends the dual source of funds pointing out that CCTV is part of the National External Propaganda Plan and, therefore, the government should play its part in financing overseas developments. She also argues out that overseas development is very expensive and that the initial stages require funding to cultivate a market (interview). A senior official of CCTV in Beijing Headquarters would agree to answer this question but preferred to remain anonymous, says CCTV is a state-run organization that has to compete in the market place, but that some of the funding should come from the government even though most is self-generated from advertising and produced commercial profits. Currently the overseas enterprises are losing money, but this is inevitable in the initial stages of expansion, he said.

The uncertainties about the funding of CCTV have surfaced in reports in Western media. Peter Foster, a journalist for the Daily Telegraph, reported CCTV has received an undisclosed amount of financial support from the Chinese government, allowing it to operate without substantial advertising revenue from its activities overseas (Foster, 2012). Tania Branigan reported in The Guardian newspaper that “CCTV hopes to win millions of viewers in the US and Africa with

English-language services produced in Washington and Nairobi. It is the latest in a multibillion-pound soft power push, as Beijing searches for a "cultural aircraft carrier" to extend its global influence. The China Central Television (CCTV) expansion is arguably the most ambitious, although the broadcaster declined to answer queries about the plans" (Branigan, 2011).

In 2009 the South China Morning Post of Hong Kong reported that the Chinese Government was intending to spend 45 billion Yuan (USD \$6.6 billion) to promote the international development of its major media institutions and thus improve the Chinese national image all over the world. The paper also reported that if the plans proposed by the three state-run media (CCTV, Xinhua News Agency and People's Daily) were considered worthy of support, each of the three could expect to receive a capital injection of up to 15 billion Yuan and that the Chinese Communist Party has always concentrated its influence when supporting significant policy developments on the basis that the greater the input the more that can be accomplished.

It is clear that CCTV's funds come both from within the business and from the government, but the precise proportions remain a mystery.

Concurrently, precise figure for CCTV's audience ratings or market shares are unavailable. Hing Hung, a London correspondent at Television Broadcasts (TVB UK), a Hong Kong commercial television station, says that CCTV's local audience rating in London was worse than TVB or Asian Television (ATV) (Interview). There is a significant Hong Kong population in London and TVB is popular amongst the Chinese people as well, so CCTV sometimes rents a midnight time slot from TVB to broadcast its own programmes.

We do not believe that CCTV's overall overseas audience rating is very high at this point. When compared with the enormous investment, the current success of CCTV abroad can be summed up by the Chinese proverb that it is 'Lost money in order to earn applause'.

The Western View of CCTV

CCTV is well recognised in Asia especially in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the South Eastern Asian countries. It is increasingly recognised in Africa particularly since the opening of CCTV Africa, but most people in North America and Europe are not acquainted with it. Those who know of its existence are suspicious and are aware of the close link to the Chinese government. This leads to questions about the degree of media freedom that CCTV enjoys and general doubt in the credibility of its news coverage. Only by making the company policy on these important matters transparent, as well as its funding and audience performance figures, can CCTV hope to win the trust of its audience and observers in the West and elsewhere.

Do staff have the right to make independent decisions?

There is no doubt that within China CCTV is understood to be the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party and the government. Outside China, and particularly since the opening of CCTV

America, people want to know if the foreign operations are able to take their own decisions or are controlled from China. Vivien Cui, a journalist with South China Morning Post, says that between 2002 and 2004 CCTV English was generally regarded as dry, full of propaganda and unprofessional but that this changes in 2004 when a new controller, Jiang Heping, was appointed. He was seen as a reformer and someone who was keen to shed CCTV of its mouthpiece image (Cui, 2004).

Jim Laurie, who is a consultant to CCTV America and a veteran of 20 years of broadcasting with ABC, says that whilst CCTV America only produces and broadcasts one hour daily programmes it operates in exactly the same way as other international broadcasters. He said: 'We do not have to get approval for each item of news from Beijing. So far there have been no discussions or censorship and it feels just like working for any other international media outlet. The company has been quite careful about that, even setting up a separate company called Media Links as a means to pay staff salaries' (Foster, 2012).

As to the suggestion that the station is simply a mouthpiece of the Chinese government, Jim Laurie says 'I put this channel in the same context as I would put Al Jazeera. Is it the mouthpiece of the Qataris? Or Cable News Network (CNN)? Is it the mouthpiece of commercial broadcasting in Atlanta? Is the BBC the mouthpiece of the British government? Is French 24 the mouthpiece of the French? Is Russia Today, or Russian RT as it's called, the mouthpiece of Vladimir Putin? I leave it to you to judge those kinds of things' (Ide, 2012).

Mike Walter, general news anchor at CCTV-America, says 'I remember when Al Jazeera started, people called it 'the terror network'. But now, years later, they're producing really quality stuff that's being recognized. That's what I hope for CCTV. I think it will just get better" (Pasternack, 2012). These views are echoed by Song Jianing, CCTV Africa chief, 'We opened this bureau in order to be able to tell the real story of Africa, the real story of China and the real story of Sino-African relations. Beijing has not rejected any of our content so far and we are hoping to add a second hour of programmes out of our Nairobi studio quite soon.' (African News..., 2012). The implications, of course, are that Beijing managers could potentially reject content that might conflict with China's perspectives on Africa developments.

Have News Topics and their Content been supervised?

Michelle Makori, who previously worked for Bloomberg TV, joined CCTV America in December 2011 as producer and news Anchor for 'Biz Asia America'. She is excited by CCTV's innovative approach and says she has not experienced editorial interference. 'I can tell you that CCTV, in my experience, has not been controlling at all from an editorial point of view, from a content point of view – certainly not more so than any other news channel that I've worked at,' she says.' Even though Chinese editors in Washington and Beijing vetted all stories, censorship was not an explicit policy. I was surprised that my reporting on more sensitive issues, like trade disputes, hadn't been a problem' (Pasternack, 2012).

Wang Guan, a reporter with CCTV Beijing, says the most significant editorial direction involves news selection. 'All media have issues of priority. Choosing one issue before another does not mean that the second one is not important,' he says. 'We respect other news but we have our own way of choosing our priorities and our own angles for presenting material' (VOA Chinese Network, 2012). When it comes to choosing story topics CCTV has a dedicated website for its foreign correspondents which manages and assigns their work. We were told in our interviews in London that hundreds of foreign correspondents can communicate through this platform which also derives workload statistics. One of the correspondents in London reporters' station, Lu You, says she chooses most news topics herself and only about a third to a half are given to him by Beijing. Large events or stories involving multiple correspondents or bureaux involve overall planning and instructions from the central controllers.

Financial resources and objective news reporting

CCTV America undoubtedly receives support from CCTV Beijing and analysts generally take the position that as long as CCTV America is a part of the Chinese propaganda plan and receives financial support from Beijing, CCTV America will face an enormous challenge to reach its intended audience objective as an objective and balanced news provider (VOA Chinese network, 2012). This view was not unnoticed in CCTV and Ma Jing, Director General, CCTV America said "We uphold traditional journalistic values, we consider accuracy, objectivity, truthfulness, and public accountability more important than anything else. We will strive to provide good journalism, high quality television, and alternative views" (PR Newswire, 2012). However, analysts point out that because the expansion of CCTV overseas is aimed at changing the negative image of China, particularly over controversial issues such as human rights, the one party system, policies on Tibet and the autonomous region of Xinjiang, it certainly has access to information right from the top of the Chinese Communist Party and is restricted in its reporting of internal Chinese affairs and this could be a weakness in the highly competitive market of the international media (BBC Chinese net, 2012). Heller Dale, a researcher on Chinese affairs at the Heritage Foundation, a Washington DC-based conservative think tank, strongly doubts whether CCTV America has independence in news reporting. "I can completely predict that CCP's publicity department or CCTV headquarters may set up some rules to control the news broadcast from CCTV-America. At least, to let them acquire some basic guidelines, they may communicate with CCTV headquarters every day," he says. 'Do you really think China put so much funds in CCTV-America without any specific measures to make sure the achievement of their determined goals?' (VOA Chinese Network, 2012).

Jim Laurie's view, however, is that the short and the long term targets for CCTV America are to produce high quality programmes and international news that are widely respected in America and the rest of the world. This aim demands that the funding for CCTV America must come from CCTV itself and not from the Chinese government (VOA Chinese Network, 2012).

What are the political motives for the Chinese Government supporting CCTV's expansion abroad?

China has given aid to Africa for some time and support for the media is seen as important as economic aid. Chinese aid is directed at many areas such as transport and construction as well as communication facilities. Indeed both China and Africa face the challenge of improving their international reputations and taking part in global information flows. China, for example, has often been portrayed as the 'uncertain other' whilst Africa is presented as the 'disappointing backyard' (Gagliardone, Repnikova, and Stremlau, June, 2010). Yu-Shan Wu points out Chinese media engagement in Africa is still framed along the lines of government exchange and cooperation with little attention given to local media projects. However Xinhua and CCTV's decision to launch satellite television services in Africa and the development of pay services may be a shift to a more commercially orientated media. CCTV is now both actively sourcing local and international personnel and engaging in active competition with Al Jazeera. Credibility and influence may grow simply from the competition between the two (Yu-Shan, 2012).

The significance of the new channel covering Africa is understood on the continent. For CCTV Africa's inauguration, Kenyan Vice-President Kalonzo Musyoka made a speech. He urged the channel to "present a new image of the continent" to break with the trend in which Africa is often shown in the international media as "the continent of endless calamities" (AFP, 2012). The Star, an influential Kenyan newspaper, reported that with the inception of CCTV Africa, over 700 million people from 170 countries would be able to understand Africa through a news channel that really cared about African news and an African viewpoint. Chris Alden of the London School of Economics said CCTV Africa is "part of a wider strategy to combat what can be seen as a negative relationship" between China and Africa (Genet, 2012).

CCTV has met more controversy and debate in North America. Barbara Drury, who used to produce 'Sixty Minutes' for the Columbia Broadcasting Corporation, was hired by CCTV America and says she had not been told how to practice journalism (VOA Chinese Network, 2012). However, John Lenczowski, President of the Institute of World Politics based in Washington DC, says the initial aims of CCTV America are very superficial and that sooner or later people will realise that CCTV America is part of a global strategy of the Chinese government to improve its soft power (VOA Chinese Network, 2012). He says that it is also a signal to the Chinese people that the nation is becoming both stronger and more powerful.

CCTV's News Content

CCTV has found it easier to gain acceptance of its cultural programmes than its news coverage. Neil Cairns from Al Jazeera English describes CCTV's overseas output as light, safe and reflecting Chinese culture (Interview). Amar C. Bakshi says CCTV 'has tried unsuccessfully to compete with international news outlets such as CNN and BBC. CCTV English has not attracted a sizeable audience over the past ten years due to poor production values, staid news presentation, and viewer scepticism about the channel's objectivity.' (Bakshi, 2011, p. 147).

Clearly CCTV has some way to go before its news output gains a supportive reputation abroad. Until it does, it may struggle to gain a regular audience.

Employment of Local Personnel

Both CCTV America and CCTV Africa have employed a significant number of locals and the latter has also developed media training courses for African employees. But CCTV itself has a poor record of employing local personnel at its overseas bureaux, preferring to despatch reporters from Beijing. This is exemplified in CCTV's London Bureau, where all the employees are Chinese nationals and there is no foreign staff.

Perhaps the biggest difficulty CCTV faces is not capital, resources or technology, but with a lack of personnel skilled in Western content production and values and public perceptions that they are unproven and may lack independence. The low popularity of CCTV and its limited relationship networks mean that Chinese correspondents are not fully accepted as trustworthy and their reports are often doubted or rejected. Consequently, it is very difficult to produce exclusive news or highly attractive programmes. This is usually less a problem for local journalists who have their own working methods and local contacts. Well-known local journalists are already trusted by local audiences and attract more people to watch their news programmes.

Figure 3 Montage showing the various capabilities of CCTV America



The development of new media outlets and the relationship with social media

China CCTV is widely accepted as the best media outlet within China and has commanded the top position in the Chinese media market for many years, however it is facing increased competition from provincial television stations provide a great amount of entertainment programmes as steam and provide content downloads on social and new media platforms.

Chinese social media such as Sina Weibo and Wechat have themselves developed rapidly in recent years, but they have a long way to catch up with more traditional outlets such as CCTV. When Al Jazeera has entered the American market it did so with a channel on You Tube and related activities on Facebook, Google+ and Twitter. CCTV has, to a certain extent, tried to develop its own position on the social media scene, but so far with limited success

Mobile media such as smart phones, tablets, and mobile television terminals are becoming more and more popular, yet CCTV seems to have failed to exploit these opportunities. It is certainly not central to its strategy on foreign development. So to date, it has not significantly invested in technical innovation and has not yet produced separate creative programmes for the mobile media market.

CCTV and China's 'Soft Power'

Bill Bishop, a funder of MarketWatch who writes about China regularly on his blog, questions whether CCTV will achieve its objectives in its current form.' Can China successfully build Soft Power without a Global Internet Strategy?' he asks. 'A potentially fatal flaw in China's overseas media push is that the efforts are almost entirely focused on declining media like television, radio and print. Can China really win hearts and minds when it is known as a country that blocks Facebook, Google, YouTube and Twitter? Will CCTV America mostly just be a boon for bureaucrats, western media consultants, unemployed journalists, cable channel and radio station owners, and advertising sales people, or does CCTV's overseas expansion have a real shot at building credibility and influence?' (Bishop, 2010).

CCTV's media focus has also been questioned by some observers. 'While what's being exported to Africa is mainly centred on official media channels, including the Xinhua Agency, CCTV, and China Radio International, inside China itself, there is a wide range of media with different editorial lines, and there is an active and engaged media audience eager for more information. In terms of China's soft power, the media undoubtedly plays an important role in ensuring its success. As for the emulation of China's soft power strategies by African nations, it seems to be an issue of economic resources'' (Gagliardone, Repnikova, and Stremlau, June, 2010).

The Center for International Media Assistance relates the CCTV expansion to overall Chinese objectives of global engagement and notes that it comes at a time when Western governments and commercial firms are reducing their investments in global media activities. “What’s at stake? Will China’s massive investments in international news operations translate into gains in political, economic, and diplomatic influence? There is no clear answer to this question, but it does appear that the Chinese have given it far more consideration than their Western counterparts,” the report says (Nelson, 2013)

CCTV appears to have had less difficulties entering Africa and conveying soft power compared to the Western countries. The Chinese media have met more resistance and faced more difficulties in the West from both competitors and public opinion. Amar C. BaKshi describes the overseas development as “largely unsuccessful” (BaKshi, 2011). There is no doubt that CCTV has a strong desire to play a role in foreign media markets. But there remains a risk that CCTV will simply become a branch of the Confucius Institute and there remain serious impediments, in both the short and the medium term, for CCTV to become a trusted global news brand like CNN or the BBC.

Whether it has the ability to overcome its challenges remains to be seen and it is unclear whether it can do so in the West, at least, without some forms of political and financial independence, perceived editorial independence, and skills in news and information provision techniques expected by Western audiences.

CCTV will also have to endure the time lag that all new entrants in broadcasting markets must survive before they become an accepted part of that ecosystem. At this point, both the broadcaster and Chinese state appear focused on the long term and willing to sustain the costs in order to pursue the benefits they hope to reap in the future.

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