

Radio and Social Transformation in China

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Certificate of authorship

I certify that the work presented in this dissertation has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged in the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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I want to clarify a couple of matters here to avoid any possible confusion for readers. The photos reproduced in the thesis are accessible online. They are gathered here to save readers the need to go to separate sites and deal with potential language issues. I have tried my best to provide full details of each picture; however, this is extremely difficult in some cases and not all details could be traced before submission of

the thesis. I reproduce details such as the author, time and interpretation associated with the photos wherever that information was available. For all photos with and without an identified author, I will pursue permission to reproduce them from copyright holders if the thesis progresses to publication in the future.

In chapter 5, I was unable to trace the name of one program I refer to due to a program rearrangement on the channel involved. Wherever I have translated quotations and citations from Chinese into English, I include my name. I also completed the translation into English of Chinese references I reviewed. I am more than happy to hear from anyone who can suggest better translations. In this thesis, the names of China-based Chinese authors and other Chinese individuals are in the conventional Chinese order with the family name first, followed by given name. In order to differentiate between Chinese names which share the same family name, I have kept both the Chinese family names and initials in the in-text references and added their locations wherever necessary in the list of references. The online copy of Hu Xiaomei's two books is no longer available and the link address is therefore missing. I will find a hard copy in China to complete the reference whenever I have a chance.

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Abstract

Since the arrival of television, radio has largely been an under-appreciated and understudied medium internationally. Radio in China is no exception. In comparison with Chinese television and the internet, ‘radio in China’ has been a poor cousin, invisible and largely unheard of in English-language scholarship. This thesis aims to fill this gaping hole by providing a systematic, comprehensive and critical study of radio in China. Focusing on the relationship between radio and social change in China in the decades of the economic reforms, the thesis investigates the role of radio in China’s profound social transformation. After a historical account of radio in the pre-reform period (including in both the Republic and Mao eras), the thesis traces the emergence of several new radio genres, formats and practices in the post-Mao decades. In particular, the genres of news, late night talkback, health infomercial and drive radio are critically examined with a view to identifying the key changes and continuities in the radio sector. The thesis identifies important ways in which radio at once derives from, embodies and contributes to China’s compressed transition from a socialist collective nation–state to a nation that, while still state-dominated, has moved a considerable distance towards becoming a privatised, globalised and individualised society.