

In the Shadow of State Power: Citizenship Rights, Civil Society, and Media Representation in China, 2000–2012

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Using citizenship rights as the locus of research, this study examines the coexistence between the state and civil society in China by focusing on how the party and market media represented the issue between 2000 and 2012. Media representation of citizenship rights was scrutinized in connection to Internet development, economic growth, status of social conflict, and expansion of civil society organizations. Both comparative content analysis and extramedia data analysis show that the party newspaper incorporated citizenship rights into the political and economic arenas, conforming to the logic of performance legitimacy of the party-state. The market newspaper contextualized rights issues mainly in the field of civil society and correlated with status of social conflict and inequality. As such, there was a dialogical and contextual coexistence between the state and the civil society in China.

Keywords: citizenship rights, state power, civil society, coexistence, social power

In authoritarian countries where the state power dominates all aspects of life, the form and content of civil society have increasingly attracted attention. In the case of China, civil society has become vibrant over the past two decades, while the decline of state power or the democratization process expected by some scholars does not seem to be traceable. Recent scholarship has generally recognized that the state–civil society relationship in China is not fully separated and oppositional, but is overlapping, interactive, dynamic, contested, and even collaborative (Hsu, 2014; Spires, 2011; Teets, 2014). Intriguing puzzles then arise: To what extent and in which ways do the prevailing state power and the expanding civil society coexist and interact with each other? What are the structural factors affecting the state–civil society coexistence? And what is the driving force for the expansion of civil society in China? Answers to these questions have profound theoretical and practical implications for understandings of how civil society may play out in an authoritarian setting.

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Because the concept of civil society is an ideal type in the Weberian sense, it is more useful to be regarded as an analytical instrument of social structure (D. Yang, 2004). Anheier (2004) distinguishes three analytical categories of civil society: institutions, such as democracy, citizenship, and justice; organizations, including voluntary associations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), social groups, and informal groups; and individuals, such as citizens and participants. The three components connect with one another at different levels of abstraction. Most literature examines the organizational or individual level of civil society via qualitative methods, such as interview, case study, participant observation, and ethnographic fieldwork (Fu, 2017; Hsu & Hasmath, 2014; Shieh & Deng, 2011; Spires, 2011; Teets, 2018). This study focuses on the specific structural factors that could influence the state–civil society relationship and employs citizenship rights as analytical device to probe this relationship in China. For one thing, the application of citizenship rights as analytical devices is still underresearched in the Chinese context (Woodman & Guo, 2017).

Previous studies have focused on a certain type of rights, such as labor rights and land property rights (F. Chen, 2016; Lin, 2015), or on a specific demographic group, such as migrant workers and farmers (Li, 2010; Wong, 2011; Zhang & Wang, 2010); however, there seems to be a lack of a holistic approach to the public construction of citizenship rights and its relationship with structural factors such as economy and social conflict. In this study, we explored citizenship rights as seen through the Chinese media in a longitudinal fashion. Specifically, we sought to answer the following questions: (1) How did the party and market media represent citizenship rights between 2000 and 2012? (2) How did the structural factors that define the state–civil society relationship affect the media representation of citizenship rights?

Civil Society and Citizenship Rights

In a democracy, civil society is viewed as the indispensable context “within which elections function democratically” (Warren, 2011, p. 377), and both political tyranny and powerful private interests can be checked (Eberly, 2000). In the context of China, however, civil society organizations are not legally independent from the state (Weigle & Butterfield, 1992; D. Yang, 2004), but are incorporated into the subordinate institutions of political structure. A 1998 regulation clearly states that the State Council and governments above the county level are the chief management units of such social associations as NGOs and nonprofit groups (State Council, 1998). All civil society organizations should “register with the Ministry of Civil Affairs and a professional supervisory unit” (Teets, 2018, p. 126). In addition, the state sets restrictions on organizing and public fundraising to control the development and autonomy of civic organizations (Shieh & Deng, 2011; Spires, 2011; Teets, 2018). As such, civil society in China is largely sanctioned and controlled by the state in a complicated coexistence (Saich, 2000; Solinger, 1992).

The theoretical link between civil society and citizenship is inseparable and intertwined. As Eberly (2000) suggests, “Perhaps the concept that best builds the bridge between civil society and the political realm is the idea of citizenship” (p. 9). Civil society enables individual citizens and social groups to act in autonomous and voluntary ways. It offers mediating institutions between citizens and the state (Hyden, 1997). Furthermore, the most essential dimension in which civil society is rooted is individual citizens’ rights and freedom. As Giner (1995) notes, “Civil society is a historically evolved sphere of individual rights, freedoms and voluntary associations” (p. 304). A strong civil society provides particular institutional

structures to bolster citizenship (Janoski, 1998), such as neighborhood community, church, and voluntary associations (Berger & Neuhaus, 2000). On the contrary, a weak civil society is mostly dominated by either the state or the market.

By participating in civil society, citizens could obtain knowledge and skills “in mobilizing individuals and resources to achieve citizenry goals. In other words, they learn active citizenship” (Hsu, Hsu, & Hasmath, 2017, p. 1157). The exercises and claims of citizenship rights can in turn invigorate civil society, helping to balance the state–civil society relationship. Therefore, citizenship rights are considered the concrete realization of civil society (Seligman, 1992). Only if individual citizens’ rights and freedom are realized and protected can there be a robust civil society for citizens to negotiate with the state and the market.

Nevertheless, little research has examined the state–civil society relationship from the perspective of citizenship rights, especially in the contentious society of contemporary China. Because the main purpose of this study was not to entangle the theoretical debate regarding how citizenship rights might be conceptualized or categorized in China, the departure point is a normative framework of the categorization of citizenship rights. Following the classification of citizenship rights protected by China’s Constitution (Han, 2008), the study groups citizenship rights into seven categories with 38 detailed indicators to constitute an analytical framework (see Table 1).

Table 1. Typology of Citizenship Rights in China.

Type of rights	Indicators of rights
Right to equality	Equal protections and punishments, equal rights and responsibilities, equal opportunities, equal gender, equal ethnic groups, etc.
Political rights and freedom	Rights to elect and to be elected, freedom of speech, freedom of publication, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of parading, freedom of demonstration, etc.
Freedom of religious belief	Freedom to believe or not to believe a religion, freedom to choose any religion, freedom to believe any sect, freedom to believe or not to believe religion at any time, etc.
Personal security and freedom	Rights to life, rights to personal security, rights to avoid illegal personal offense, human dignity not to be infringed, rights to reputation, rights to privacy, rights to residential security, and freedom of correspondence, etc.
Social and economic rights	Property rights, rights to work, rights to rest, social welfare rights, consumer rights, etc.
Cultural and educational rights	Rights to receive education and educational resources, cultural rights, etc.
Rights to supervision and claims	Rights to supervision, rights to criticism, rights to suggestion, rights to sue, rights to report, rights to claim, rights to appeal, etc.

Note. The table is summarized from Han’s (2008) book and was created for this study.

The State–Civil Society Relationship and Its Structural Factors

Previous research has mainly employed three theoretical perspectives to examine the state–civil society relationship in authoritarian regimes. First, Tocquevillian theory that originates from liberal democracy emphasizes that civil society is apart from and oppositional to the state, in which “citizens can pressure authoritarians for change, protect themselves from tyranny, and democratize from below” (Foley & Edwards, 1996, p. 46). Second, state corporatism theory focuses on the instrumentality of civil society organizations to the state’s authoritarian rule and its political goals (Hsu & Hasmath, 2014; Streeck & Kenworthy, 2005; Unger, 2008). Different from either the optimistic expectation of civil society on challenging the state’s authoritarianism or the pessimistic contention of civil society’s compliance to the state control, Spires (2011) employs the concept of contingent symbiosis that highlights the contingent mutual benefits between the state and civil society organizations, particularly in social welfare aspects. Teets (2014) further develops a model of consultative authoritarianism that emphasizes the dynamic and interactive relationship between the state and civil society. Far from challenging the state’s political rule, civil society could in fact reinforce its resilience and durability via optimizing social policy and improving good governance of the state (Teets, 2014). However, it does not conclude that the oppositional or corporative civil society no longer exists in authoritarian regimes, but suggests that the spectrum of the state–civil society relationship has gradually shifted from oppositional to cooperative. With regard to China, it is therefore reasonable to employ the theoretical approach to the state–civil society coexistence.

The existing scholarship has offered some explanations over the structural factors that could influence the dynamics of the state–civil society relationship in China. First, the developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs) empower ordinary citizens to participate in multiple types of public expression and civic engagement (W. Chen & Reese, 2015; Link & Xiao, 2013; G. Yang, 2003, 2009; Zheng, 2008), which open new opportunities for the expansion of civil society (Tai, 2006). Spires, Tao, and Chan (2014) examined 263 grassroots NGOs in China and found that more than 85% of them were founded around or after 2000, apparently after the rise of the Internet. Some NGOs were originated on the Web and then transformed to offline organizations.

Second, the economic reform and the market economy transition that started in the late 1970s helped bring about social and institutional changes (White, Howell, & Shang, 1996). Friedman and Friedman (1990) contend that economic freedom brought by voluntary exchange can influence freedom of speech because freedom is not separate but acts as a whole. Scholars also suggest that the general legalization of citizens’ rights is essentially “a byproduct of China’s economic reform and opening to the outside world” (Wan, 2007, p. 738). Similarly, protection of citizenship rights, in particular property rights, could foster economic growth in substantial ways (Leblang, 1996).

Third, the opening and reform policy since 1978 allowed some people to become wealthy and, at the same time, sacrificed other people’s interests, which widened the gap between the rich and the poor as well as the powerful and the powerless. For example, the wave of migrant workers from rural areas to big cities brought many types of rights deprivation, abuse, and infringements (F. Chen, 2016; Wong, 2011; Woodman, 2016; Zhang, 2002; Zhang & Wang, 2010). The rising trend of social conflicts alongside the lack

of effective real-life solutions jointly led to more public expressions and rights claims in the public arena, especially on the Internet (Cai, 2008; Perry & Selden, 2010; Yu, 2005).

There are also rising citizen awareness and rights consciousness in China, especially in crisis situations and contentious interest conflicts (Li, 2010; Lorentzen & Scoggins, 2015; Shieh & Deng, 2011). Teets (2009) found that citizens' awareness of their social responsibilities was strengthened by participating in voluntary relief work in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. Link and Xiao (2013) indicate that various kinds of public events in daily life promote people's sense of citizenship rights. Given that a nationwide examination of citizen awareness or rights consciousness is practically difficult, if not impossible, this study shifts the focus to the growth of civil society organizations to probe the status of civil society.

These structural factors that could potentially influence the state-civil society relationship and citizenship rights could be summarized as follows: ICTs development, economic growth, increasing social conflict, and expanding civil society organizations. Beside those factors, the agency of civil society actors plays an indispensable role in fostering civil society in China. For example, Saich (2000) illustrates how civic organizations use political connections and loopholes in administrative services to strive for organizational benefits, to maximize their own strategic objectives, and even to influence relevant policy-making process. Cheng, Ngok, and Zhuang (2010) scrutinize the informal politics, hidden rules, and tactical interactions between civic groups and government agencies, and suggest that the sensitivity to these politics, rules, and tactics could substantially influence the survival of civic organizations. Spires et al. (2014) show that almost all of the 263 grassroots NGOs in China could actively mobilize voluntary human and social resources to serve organizational objectives. Xu (2016) indicates that voluntary service organizations adopt rational compromise strategies to achieve legal status and to enhance their organizational autonomy in various aspects.

The Party/Market Media and Citizenship Rights in China

Perhaps the most fundamental role the mass media play in civil society is expanding the limited "physical organs of existence" (Calhoun, 2011, p. 317) for citizens to discuss and act in the public space. In the process of communicating and sharing information about social life, civic associations are strengthened and civil society is advanced. In the sociology of news, mass media have long been considered an important type of political institution, playing substantial roles in public life, governmental policy, and even the judiciary process (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Hall & Taylor, 1996; Liebman, 2011; Park, 1941/1955; Schudson, 2002). As an indispensable institution to bridge the state and citizens, media play an important part in constructing public knowledge of citizenship rights and shaping citizens' cognitions and attitudes toward social and legal issues (Stockmann & Gallagher, 2011). Through selection and highlighting, they offer primary frameworks for the public to identify, perceive, interpret, and preserve certain parts of social life (Adoni & Mane, 1984). In China, there are mainly two types of media—the party and market media—that roughly represent the two major sociopolitical forces in society: the state power and the market power, respectively. The party media serve the party-state's political purpose and thus construct the official version of social reality that stands for the dominant definition and interpretation in society.

The relationship between the state and the market media is complicated and dynamic. The media enjoy considerable economic privilege at the cost of political loyalty (Lee, He, & Huang, 2007). Since the media reforms in the late 1980s, the market media have sprung up and obtained considerable economic autonomy. They live on direct support from economic and social arenas rather than political endorsement, and compete in the market for the attention of various audiences. The picture that market media construct would therefore be largely influenced by capitalistic logic and journalistic professionalism. Nevertheless, the market media are politically state-owned and institutionally supervised by central and local government propaganda departments with regard to editorial guidelines and personnel arrangements (Stockmann & Gallagher, 2011). The structural constraints set the political boundary of the market media's journalistic practice. Under these circumstances, the market media clearly reside both within the state and the market spheres, as well as their overlapped space. There are thus constant conflicts in the market media's construction of social reality, which might challenge the official definition of reality, but should still keep the "alternative" construction within the political boundary.

With regard to the issue of citizenship rights, the complexity of the relationship between the state and civil society as well as the party and market media should be noted. First, rights issues are essential to the government's diplomatic policy because the issue has long been one of the most important contentions between China and Western democratic countries (Baker, 2002; Kinzelbach & Thelle, 2011; Wan, 2001; Zhou, 2005). Second, rights conflicts in domestic politics have become highly prominent in the last decade (Esarey & Xiao, 2011; Stockmann & Gallagher, 2011), which have been largely brought to attention by market media practitioners and active citizens. As such, both the party and market media have to respond to the political and social needs regarding citizenship rights appeals. We thus expected to see dynamic coexistences and interactions between the two types of media representation of citizenship rights.

Method

In this study, we first conducted a longitudinal, comparative content analysis of the coverage of citizenship rights in two representative newspapers in China from 2000 to 2012, with the *People's Daily (PD)* standing for the party newspaper and the *Southern Metropolis Daily (SMD)* for the market newspaper. Second, we collected four sets of extramedia data to chart the relationship between party and market newspapers' coverage of citizenship rights and those structural factors (i.e., ICTs development, economic growth, social conflict, and expansion of civil society organizations) to determine the contextual relationship of the state-civil society in contemporary China.

Comparative Content Analysis

The *People's Daily*, the most authoritative party newspaper, and the *Southern Metropolis Daily*, arguably the one of the most active market newspapers in China, are comparable in terms of their sociopolitical influence and the similar roles to set keynote for other mainstream media when covering rights issues. The data of the *PD* were collected from the *People's Daily* full-text database, and the stories of the *SMD* came from the WiseNews database. News stories that contained both the keywords *citizen (gongmin)* and *rights (quanli)* were selected. We first obtained 3,540 news stories from the *PD* and 4,524 stories from the *SMD*. Second, we used constructed week sampling to choose two constructed weeks for each newspaper

per year, which yielded 26 weeks (182 days) in the 13-year study period. The sample for the *PD* consisted of 130 news stories, and the *SMD* sample resulted in 156 news stories. The sampling unit was a single news article, excluding pictures. The unit of coding was a single paragraph with any of the three keywords (*citizen/rights/citizenship rights*). Based on the criteria, we used 361 paragraphs from the *PD* and 440 from the *SMD* for the comparative analysis.

For intercoder reliability, the Krippendorff's alpha of the variables were as follows: type of content, 1.00; topic, 0.75; presence of keywords in title, 0.87; type of rights, 0.81; emphasis, 0.62; essence, 0.76; actor, 0.83; context, 0.94; and type of statement, 0.78. Except the variable *emphasis*, all variables had acceptable reliability. As such, the inference regarding the emphasis of newspaper coverage on citizenship rights should be exercised with caution.

Extramedia Data Analysis

Corresponding to the four structural factors that might influence the state-civil society relationship, we collected, based on annual reports of key indicators, four sets of extramedia data as follows.

ICTs development: Development of ICTs was observed via Internet penetration rate, which measured the number of Internet users per 100 people. The data were collected from the World Bank database.

Economic development: Economic development was observed from a single indicator (GDP per capita) and a complex index (economic freedom index). GDP per capita is the fundamental measurement of economic development in a nation. Economic freedom measures "the degree to which an economy is a market economy" (Berggren, 2003, p. 194). The data of GDP per capita (US\$) were collected from the World Bank database. The economic freedom index was collected from the *Economic Freedom Rankings* published by the Fraser Institute.

Social conflict: Social conflict is a complex concept to measure. This study used the Gini index and the number of legal cases received by courts nationwide as indicators of social conflict. As the income gap in a society, the Gini index is used to indirectly measure social instability, conflicts, and polarization thereof. Gini coefficients in China were collected from the World Bank database and included 10 time points from 2000 to 2009. The National Bureau of Statistics of China offers consecutive yearly data of the Gini coefficient from 2003 to 2012 (10 data points). We merged the two data sets by combining the consecutive yearly data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics of China from 2003 to 2012 and the World Bank data from 2000 to 2002, resulting in 13 continuous data points.

The number of legal cases received by courts nationwide indicates the intensity of legal disputes and the extent of possible rights infringements in society. We collected the data from the *Law Yearbook of China* as recorded in China's statistical yearbook full-text database.

Civil society development: Given that there is little systematic and longitudinal measurement of civil society development across nations, this study used the most basic single indicator—the number of civil

society organizations—to evaluate the growth of civil society. We collected the total number of three types of registered civil society organizations in China (i.e., social groups, civilian nonenterprise units, and foundations) from the *Law Yearbook of China*, as recorded in the China statistical yearbook full-text database. The four sets of data are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Extramedia Data, 2000–2012.

Block	Variable(s)	Data source
ICTs development	Internet penetration rate	World Bank
Economic development	GDP per capita	World Bank
	Economic freedom index	Fraser Institute
Social conflicts	Gini index	World Bank & National Bureau of Statistics of China
	Court cases (<i>N</i>)	<i>Law Yearbook of China</i>
Civil society development	Civil society organizations (<i>N</i>)	<i>Law Yearbook of China</i>

Newspapers' coverage: We used both single newspapers and newspaper aggregates to collect the yearly number of coverages of citizenship rights. For the single newspapers, the *People's Daily* and the *Southern Metropolis Daily* were analyzed. The yearly news coverage analyzed here was based on the population rather than the sample. Following the same search method, we included news stories containing both *citizen* and *rights* in the text. In addition, we used two aggregated databases of Chinese newspapers, the China Core Newspapers full-text database and the WiseNews database. The China Core Newspapers database has recorded more than 700 newspapers in 31 administrative regions in Mainland China since 2000, covering most party newspapers and industrial newspapers. The WiseNews database has recorded more than 380 newspapers in Mainland China since 1999, covering both party and market newspapers.

Results

Representing Citizenship Rights in Political and Social Arenas

The 13-year coverage of the *People's Daily* and the *Southern Metropolis Daily* demonstrated growing numbers of rights issues, suggesting increasing mainstream media attention on citizenship rights over time. The results of the comparative analysis are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Statistics of the People's Daily (PD) and the Southern Metropolis Daily (SMD) Coverage of Citizenship Rights, 2000–2012.

Variable	Indicator	PD	SMD	Total	Chi-square test	<i>p</i>
Type of content, %	Opinion	45.2	79.8	64.2	$\chi^2(3) = 150.21$	<.001
	News	25.5	18.6	21.7		
	Government documents	22.7	1.6	11.1		
	Law/regulation	6.6	0.0	3.0		
Topics, %	Society/human interest	23.3	52.7	39.5	$\chi^2(6) = 111.35$	<.001
	Law/regulation	29.3	20.5	24.5		
	Politics/diplomacy	28.8	6.8	16.7		
	Foreign affairs	6.4	6.8	6.6		
	Education/arts/culture	5.0	8.0	6.6		
	Economy/trade	6.9	5.0	5.9		
	Entertainment	0.3	0.2	0.2		
Presence of keywords in title, %	No	96.4	92.5	94.3	$\chi^2(1) = 5.57$	<.05
	Yes	3.6	7.5	5.7		
Type of rights, %	General	47.6	47.5	47.6	$\chi^2(8) = 46.22$	<.001
	Political rights and freedom	14.7	13.4	14.0		
	Personal security and freedom	4.4	16.1	10.8		
	Mixed	12.2	5.2	8.4		
	Rights to supervision and claims	6.9	5.0	5.9		
	Social and economic rights	5.0	6.2	5.6		
	Right to equality	4.4	4.3	4.4		
	Cultural and educational rights	3.1	2.3	2.6		
	Freedom of religious belief	1.7	0.0	0.7		
Emphasis, %	Discussion/debate	56.0	81.4	69.9	$\chi^2(2) = 78.66$	<.001
	Quotation of law/documents	34.3	9.3	20.6		
	Historical review/event description	9.7	9.3	9.5		
Essence, %	Protection	60.7	58.6	59.6	$\chi^2(4) = 11.48$	<.05
	General description	27.4	33.2	30.6		
	Practice	5.3	2.7	3.9		
	Mixed	4.7	2.1	3.2		
	Objections to rights abuses	1.9	3.4	2.7		

Actors, %	Other/unidentified	34.6	25.0	29.3	$\chi^2(8) = 60.25$	<.001
	Citizens	19.1	27.3	23.6		
	Chinese government	29.6	17.3	22.9		
	Professionals	4.4	14.8	10.1		
	Media/journalists	2.8	5.4	4.2		
	Foreign governments	3.1	3.9	3.5		
	Legal institutions	2.2	2.9	2.6		
	Social groups	1.7	3.2	2.5		
	International organizations	2.5	0.2	1.3		
Context, %	National	81.1	66.6	73.2	$\chi^2(3) = 56.49$	<.001
	International	13.6	9.3	11.2		
	Municipal or lower	2.5	17.5	10.7		
	Provincial	2.8	6.6	4.9		
Type of statements, %	Judgment	36.3	66.6	52.9	$\chi^2(2) = 74.02$	<.001
	Report	63.4	33.0	46.7		
	Inference	0.3	0.4	0.4		
Total (N) ^a		361	440	801		

^a Entries are the total number of paragraphs that contained the keyword(s) in the *PD* and the *SMD*.

Type of Content

Both newspapers covered opinion as the major type of content, 45% in the case of *PD* and 80% for the *SMD*. A major difference between the two lay in the proportion of government documents: The *PD* represented 23% of rights issues via official documents, whereas the *SMD* showed less than 2% of this type. Similarly, the *PD* presented more law/regulation than did the *SMD* (7% vs. 0%). The types of law/regulation and government documents jointly occupied 30% of the *PD*'s coverage, but only amounted to 1.6% of that of the *SMD*, indicating that the *PD* discussed citizenship rights via many more official documents than did the *SMD*. The different patterns of content in the two newspapers suggest two versions of definition and interpretation of citizenship rights. The *PD* mostly employed the official and formal construction of rights written in government documents and legal codes. The *SMD*, however, represented rights issues in free and diverse opinions, which implied more alternatives or challenges toward the official rhetoric.

Topics

The differences in topics between the two newspapers provided evidence of the party/market inclinations. The *PD* emphasized law/regulation (29%) and politics/diplomacy (29%), whereas the *SMD* focused on society/human interest (53%) and law/regulation (21%). Despite the essence of rights issues as involving law/regulation, the two newspapers were clearly inclined toward politics and social topics, respectively. The biggest difference was further revealed by the proportion of politics/diplomacy, with 29% in the *PD* and only 7% in the *SMD*. Given that the rest of the topics were similarly distributed in the two

newspapers, the *PD* demonstrated an evident inclination toward politics, whereas the *SMD* visibly focused on topics of society/human interest. It is therefore inferable that the *PD* addressed the rights issues primarily in the political context, and the *SMD* embedded the rights issues in a more societal context.

Presence of Keywords in Titles

The salience of rights issues in the newspaper representations can be indexed by the presence of keywords in titles. Although neither the *PD* nor the *SMD* displayed the keywords in most of the articles' titles, the proportion of *SMD* with keywords in the titles was still double that of the *PD*, at 8% and 4%, respectively. This suggests that the *SMD* discussed rights issues in more direct and salient ways than did the *PD*.

Type of Rights

With regard to the specific types of rights discussed by the two newspapers, their major differences were in areas of personal security and freedom and mixed. In terms of the former, the *SMD* represented 16% of the total, whereas the *PD* reported less than 5%. With regard to the latter, the *PD* covered more mixed types of rights than did the *SMD* (12% vs. 5%). Examples of the *SMD* coverage of personal security and freedom were personal privacy, human dignity, right to marriage, right to gender, self-defense, and personal electronic information protection. The *PD*, however, emphasized little regarding privacy and human dignity but focused more on general personal security. This suggests that the meaning of personal security and freedom was widely extended in the market newspaper but not in the party newspaper. The rest of the patterns shared commonalities. The topic of freedom of religious belief was not mentioned at all in the *SMD* coverage, and the *PD* covered the issue in only five articles. All of the five articles did not refer to any practical discussions of religious belief, but were about diplomatic or political policy conveyed by the government. The issue of religious belief thus was largely overlooked in the coverage of both newspapers.

Emphasis

Both newspapers presented rights issues mainly in the form of discussions or debates rather than by neutral reviews or quoting from law or documents. However, the proportion of discussion/debate was much higher in the *SMD* than it was in the *PD* (81% vs. 56%). The gap in discussion was further seen in the proportion of the quotation of law/documents, with the *PD* quoting them 34% of the time, whereas the *SMD* quoted them only 9%. The results are in line with the types of content, in that 30% of the *PD*'s coverage involved law/regulations and government documents, and the *SMD*'s involved only 1.6% of these two types. This suggests that the *PD* functioned more like a legal information channel, but the *SMD* offered more space for free discussions and debates.

Essence

Unlike the differences discussed above, the essence of the rights discussion showed similar patterns between the two newspapers. Both outlets focused on rights protection (61% in the *PD* and 59% in the *SMD*), followed by general descriptions (27% in the *PD* and 33% in the *SMD*). The remaining three aspects of content demonstrated marginal differences between the two. Neither paper placed adequate emphasis

on the practice of rights and objection to rights abuses, with the total proportion of the two indicators at 7% in the *PD* and 6% in the *SMD*. Beside the minor differences, they did share common ground when discussing citizenship rights. Even the arguably most liberal daily newspaper in China presented little discussion of the practice of rights or critical reflection of rights abuses, which implies that the overall level of citizenship rights remained at a low level of development. Claiming rights and rights protection remained the theme of the public discussion of rights issues.

Actors

The two newspapers demonstrated both similarities and disparities regarding the main actors in the rights discussions. First, both represented the same top two actors: the Chinese government and citizens, in addition to other/unidentified actors. They also exhibited visible differences between the two types of actors, as the *PD* outnumbered the *SMD* in representing the Chinese government (30% vs. 17%), whereas the *SMD* outnumbered the *PD* in representing citizens as actors (27% vs. 19%). Furthermore, there were major differences with regard to the representation of professionals, with 4% in the *PD* and 15% in the *SMD*. If we add the proportion of social actors such as professionals, social groups, and media/journalists, the *SMD* outnumbered the *PD* by 15%. By contrast, when representing political actors (i.e., the Chinese government and foreign governments), the *PD*'s percentage was 13% higher than that of the *SMD*. The data suggest that the *SMD* paid more attention to diversified social actors than the *PD*, demonstrating the clear distinction between the state and the market regarding citizenship rights.

Context

Both newspapers mainly represented rights issues at the national level, with 81% in the *PD* and 67% in the *SMD*. The largest disparity lay in the municipal or lower levels of discussions, with the *SMD* representing these levels six times more than the *PD* (18% vs. 3%), and the additive proportion of provincial and municipal or lower levels (regional levels) in the *SMD* was four times more than that of the *PD* (25% vs. 6%). This indicates that the *PD* was much less attached to local issues, whereas the *SMD* was more locally oriented, particularly in Guangzhou. The difference in focus on locality was influenced by the attributes of the newspapers. The *PD* is a national newspaper, and the *SMD* is nationally published but is locally oriented.

Type of Statements

The last category shows the continued conservative/liberal inclinations of the two newspapers. Despite the fact that both newspapers rarely discussed rights issues in the form of inference (0.3% in the *PD* and 0.5% in the *SMD*), the patterns of reports and judgments were opposite. The *PD* preferred objective reports to subjective judgments (63% vs. 36%), whereas the *SMD* preferred judgments (67%) to reports (33%). The reverse pattern between the two newspapers indicated the different proportion of discursive space. The *PD* tended to be more conservative regarding subjective opinions and judgments, and the *SMD* functioned as an opinion market for diverse ideas to express in public.

In summary, the *People's Daily* revealed its status as being the foremost party newspaper in the discussion of citizenship rights, and the *Southern Metropolis Daily* demonstrated a more liberal and market-driven stance toward rights issues. It is not surprising that the two newspapers showed different inclinations and stances toward the same issue. What is more meaningful and illuminating are the ways in which they presented these differences. The *PD* represented citizenship rights according to comments that inclined toward the documentary type, generally discussing in the sphere of consensus (i.e., political and legal spheres), referring to more general types of rights, quoting political actors, and preferring objective reports to subjective judgments. The *SMD* was the opposite: It employed discursive opinions instead of documents, discussed rights issues that mainly concerned social spheres rather than political ones, quoted more concrete and diverse social actors over government actors, focused more on the local level of discussions, and presented more subjective judgments than objective reports. To put it briefly, the *SMD* represented rights issues in ways that were more liberal, direct, debatable, diverse, and concrete, whereas the *PD* preserved its conservative, politically oriented, and implicit style on rights issues.

The different representations of citizenship rights can be attributed to the party/market inclination and the associated function of the two types of newspapers. The *SMD* is a market-oriented newspaper and is highly responsive to specific social issues and conflicts. It constantly holds Western journalistic professionalism as its guiding principle, emphasizing objective facts, balanced reporting, and free market of opinion (Hassid, 2011). The *PD*, however, subordinates to the party's directives and represents the party's voice. Therefore, it is reasonable to observe that citizenship rights were covered in less debatable, more political, and implicit ways. The divergent means of representing the same issue of citizenship rights and the different storylines behind texts of the two types of newspapers suggest a dialogical coexistence between the strengthening state legitimacy and the expanding civil society. In addition, both newspapers share similarities and divergences in their longitudinal representation of citizenship rights, which are the exact subtleties to hint at the dynamics of the state-civil society relationship in China.

Correlating With Economic and Social Conflict Factors

To determine the longitudinal relationship between newspaper coverage about citizenship rights and the four sets of structural factors, we employed time-series statistical analysis to first examine the stationarity of the data to avoid spurious regression, and then conducted a Granger causality test to examine the pairs of relationship among variables. We treated the four sets of newspaper coverage as dependent variables and the six societal factors as independent variables. Because the Granger causality test does not examine the "real causality" among variables, we mainly used the method to explore the patterns of correlation between dependent and independent variables.

The sequence charts of all of the variables demonstrated generally increasing trends, along with irregular fluctuations in some variables. To make the nonstationary time-series data stationary, we first log transformed the data and then applied first- and second-order differencing to help stabilize the variance of the data. As shown in Table 4, the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test showed that all of the variables became stationary after second differencing at the 1% level of significance, except civil society organizations, which was stationary at the 10% level of significance.

Table 4. Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test at Second Difference.

Variable	<i>t</i>	MacKinnon critical value			<i>p</i>
		1%	5%	10%	
1. Internet penetration	-3.101830	-2.82	-1.98	-1.60	.0058
2. GDP per capita	-3.860144	-2.85	-1.99	-1.60	.0016
3. GINI index	-5.169021	-2.82	-1.98	-1.60	.0002
4. Economic freedom	-6.878773	-2.89	-2.00	-1.60	.0001
5. Court cases	-5.920069	-2.82	-1.98	-1.60	.0001
6. Civil society organizations	-1.776000	-2.85	-1.99	-1.60	.0732
7. <i>People's Daily</i>	-6.414149	-2.82	-1.98	-1.60	.0000
8. <i>Southern Metropolis Daily</i>	-6.350196	-2.82	-1.98	-1.60	.0000
9. China Core Newspapers database	-4.586317	-2.89	-2.00	-1.60	.0006
10. WiseNews database	-11.30979	-2.82	-1.98	-1.60	.0001

After stabilizing the data, we employed a Granger causality test to explore the patterns of correlation on each of the 24 pairs of relationship between dependent and independent variables. Because we mainly focused on the influence of societal factors on newspaper coverage, the Granger causality test results in Table 5 display only the independent-to-dependent variable tests rather than the two-way ones. As shown in Table 5, six pairs of relationship succeeded in rejecting the null hypothesis at the 5% or 10% of significance, and suggest that the Granger causality ran (1) from GDP per capita to the *People's Daily's* coverage; (2) from the Gini index to the *Southern Metropolis Daily's* coverage; (3) from Internet penetration, Gini index, and economic freedom index to the China Core Newspapers database; and (4) from GDP per capita to the WiseNews database.

The results indicate that the party newspaper *People's Daily's* coverage of citizenship rights was correlated with the economic development in longitudinal terms, whereas the market newspaper *Southern Metropolis Daily's* coverage was correlated with changes of social conflict and inequality. As to the two aggregated newspaper data sets, the China Core Newspapers database correlated with ICTs development, social conflict, and economic development; and the WiseNews database correlated with economic development. As such, the WiseNews database shared certain similarities with the *People's Daily*, both corresponding to economic development, whereas the China Core Newspapers database shared similarities with both party and market newspapers by corresponding to three of the four sets of structural factors.

Table 5. Granger Causality Test.

Null hypothesis	Obs.	F	p	Direction
Internet penetration (IP) does not Granger cause <i>People's Daily (PD)</i>	9	0.05738	.9450	
GDP per capita (GDP) does not Granger cause <i>PD</i>	9	6.10796	.0608	GDP → <i>PD</i> *
GINI index (GINI) does not Granger cause <i>PD</i>	9	0.68832	.5535	
Economic freedom (EF) does not Granger cause <i>PD</i>	9	0.19873	.8274	
Court cases (CC) does not Granger cause <i>PD</i>	9	2.09802	.2382	
Civil society organizations (CSO) does not Granger cause <i>PD</i>	9	1.28382	.3709	
IP does not Granger cause <i>Southern Metropolis Daily (SMD)</i>	9	0.40691	.6905	
GDP does not Granger cause <i>SMD</i>	9	1.34734	.3570	
GINI does not Granger cause <i>SMD</i>	9	4.11547	.1070	GINI → <i>SMD</i> *
EF does not Granger cause <i>SMD</i>	9	1.70352	.2916	
CC does not Granger cause <i>SMD</i>	9	2.06573	.2420	
CSO does not Granger cause <i>SMD</i>	9	0.41604	.6853	
IP does not Granger cause China Core Newspapers database (CCN)	9	5.02561	.0810	IP → CCN*
GDP does not Granger cause CCN	9	0.26102	.7824	
GINI does not Granger cause CCN	9	5.11163	.0791	GINI → CCN*
EF does not Granger cause CCN	9	10.8312	.0243	EF → CCN**
CC does not Granger cause CCN	9	0.19207	.8324	
CSO does not Granger cause CCN	9	0.68283	.5557	
IP does not Granger cause WiseNews database (WN)	9	0.91453	.4709	
GDP does not Granger cause WN	9	7.41259	.0451	GDP → WN**
GINI does not Granger cause WN	9	0.53845	.6208	
EF does not Granger cause WN	9	0.08319	.9217	
CC does not Granger cause WN	9	0.04960	.9522	
CSO does not Granger cause WN	9	2.62548	.1870	

*.10. **.05. ***.001. The lag length is 2.

In sum, the party and market newspaper divergently correlated with economic and social conflict factors in longitudinal fashions. Although both outlets were concerned with the performance legitimacy of the party-state, namely the economic growth and social stability, they reflected different logic of reasoning with regard to the coverage of citizenship rights. The party newspaper was more sensitive to the positive aspect of sociopolitical structure, whereas the market newspaper was more alert to social inequalities and the accompanied rights infringements. Given that economic development is not merely an economic issue, but more like a political issue in China, we could conclude that the findings of the extramedia data analysis were generally consistent with that of the comparative content analysis: The party newspaper represents citizenship rights more in the political arena, whereas the market newspaper constructs the issue mainly in

the social arena. Both sets of analyses suggest the contextual coexistence of state power and social power in terms of citizenship rights.

Discussion

This study examines the dynamic coexistence between the state and the civil society in China as seen through the perspective of citizenship rights between 2000 and 2012. First, the results demonstrate the party/market demarcation in covering citizenship rights in China. The market-driven newspaper *SMD* generally revealed more open, emphatic, and direct perspectives when representing rights issues than did the *PD*. The party newspaper *PD* was inclined to take an indirect and implicit stance toward rights issues. Moreover, the *SMD* discussed the rights issues in social arenas and in the context of civil society, whereas the *PD* concentrated on the issue in legal and political spheres from the perspective of the state. The distinct ways of covering rights between the two types of newspapers suggest that the social power that represents the market and the public has apparently obtained certain independence and autonomy from state power. Furthermore, the social power seen through the market newspaper implies that the market newspaper has contributed to the growth of civil society by highlighting critical elements such as civic participation, restraint of public power, and pursuit of citizenship rights.

Nevertheless, despite the variations in the newspapers' coverage, the two divergent newspapers represented certain detailed rights issues in similar patterns. The most visible similarity lies in the essence of discussion in that both emphasized rights protection instead of rights practice. Similar patterns of representation can also be found in the types of rights. This indicates that, with regard to the politically sensitive issue of citizenship rights, even the arguably most liberal market newspaper in China has been regulated to the official line. The political taboo of the issue of citizenship rights pushes the two types of newspapers toward the middle ground, which further reinforces the dialogical coexistence of state power and social power.

In terms of the relationship between newspaper coverage of citizenship rights and the four sets of structural factors, the data show that the party newspaper corresponds more sensitively to economic development, which is essentially a political concern. The market newspaper, however, contextualizes the rights issue against the discursive field of social conflicts and inequalities, correlating more with the social arena. The findings suggest again that there is a dialogical and contextual coexistence between state power and social power in China.

Four decades of economic reform have promoted "an increasingly robust society and a more adaptive party-state" at the same time (Gilboy & Read, 2010, p. 144). In many cases, we have observed that the pursuits of citizenship rights and the underlying expansion of civil society may not necessarily present threats to the state's legitimacy; instead, they offer opportunities for the leadership to further the reform process, and therefore would potentially strengthen the legitimacy of the party-state. Based on the findings, this study argues that the expanding civil society dynamically coexists with the strengthening party-state legitimacy in dialogical and contextual ways.

If the media representation of citizenship rights in China is any indication, the growth of civil society is largely influenced by the competing and shifting balance of the state and social power. In many ways, different social institutions are manipulated into competition to supervise the society and citizens on behalf of the party-state (Liebman, 2011). As a result, the growth of citizenship rights in China has been hindered to a large extent by the highly imbalanced power distributions across the state, society, and citizens. Moreover, the manifest progress in media supervision, citizens' rightful supervision, governmental transparency, and judicial independence could all latently strengthen the legitimacy of the party-state. In this sense, an institutional impulse to rights pursuit would be further restrained, which means that less space would be available within the existing political and legal system for top-down reforms on citizenship rights. Thus, individual endeavors or NGOs' agentic roles to rights pursuits would become more critical to the advance of citizenship rights in China. The key condition for those individual, grassroots, or bottom-up rights pursuits is civic awareness and common knowledge about citizens' lawful rights, in which media play crucial roles to broaden the space and channel for public discussions and debate. This again explains why media representations are particularly necessary to understand citizenship rights in China, and they should be constantly taken into rigorous research.

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