How effective is political control over the news media? Political censorship and news production in authoritarian China

How effective is political news control in China? The talk shows that political news control in China remains rather effective, although news organizations have gained considerable autonomy in the reporting of some types of issues. Besides, it suggests that the CCP has a firm grip on the issues that can potentially be detrimental to the legitimacy of the party-state, but provides leeway to the news media when reporting on other issues. When reporting the issues tolerated by the party-state, the more commercialized news organizations – that is, nonparty news outlets – have tried their best to expand the boundaries of reporting. However, when facing massive news stories which can threaten state legitimacy, they are unable to make any breakthroughs. The talk also illustrates that, in countries like China where media marketization is led by the state, the key to political news control is to focus on issues essential to the legitimate ruling of the regime while loosening the constraints on the reporting of wrongdoings of local governments and cadres. This maintains and improves the ruling capacity of the state as well as bolstering its legitimacy.

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