CONTENTS

List of Figures and Tables  ix
Acknowledgments  xiii
Abbreviations  xvii

1 Introduction  1
2 The Rise of a Nationwide Contentious Public Sphere  14
3 The Chinese State’s Turn to Law and Rights  35
4 Critical News Reporting and Legal-Media Collaborative Networks  69
5 Extending Liberalization from the Press to the Internet  104
6 An Emerging Online Public  129
7 The Chinese State Strikes Back  171
8 Conclusion  203

Appendix  221
Notes  247
References  259
Index  273
Introduction

In the early to mid-2000s, something new began to happen in online forums in China. Increasingly, contentious events were capturing widespread public attention, sparking heated discussion and even protests and other forms of collective action. Chinese citizens were coming together not only to converse and debate with one another, but also to challenge a government infamous for censorship and political control. One after another, these contentious events, or what Chinese people began to call “public opinion incidents,” came and went, like waves hitting the rocks.

In 2003, for example, Sun Zhigang, a twenty-seven-year-old man in Guangzhou, died in police custody after being wrongly detained and beaten by officers. His death triggered strong criticism, online and off, of the Chinese government. The synergy between media and legal professionals and Chinese netizens (wangmin), or Internet users, eventually led to the overhaul of unconstitutional detention regulations.

In 2008, the Chinese government ordered that all new computers be sold with preinstalled content-control software to prevent the viewing of pornography. Chinese netizens accused the state of infringing on their right to free communication, and the Chinese state decided to abandon the policy.

In 2012, the Propaganda Department of Guangdong Province interfered in the publication of Southern Weekly’s New Year special editorial. Published by the Southern Media Group based in Guangzhou, Southern Weekly is considered one of the most outspoken newspapers in China, despite being affiliated with the Guangdong provincial government. The original editorial, titled “Dream of China and Dream of Constitutionalism,” promoted notions of freedom, liberal democracy, and constitutionalism. Guangdong propaganda officers bypassed ordinary editorial practices to impose significant revisions. After journalists
disclosed this intervention, intellectuals, lawyers, media professionals, students, entrepreneurs, celebrities, and ordinary citizens protested vigorously against the censorship and voiced support for *Southern Weekly*. The original editorial publicly circulated online, as protesters, explicitly identifying themselves as citizens (*gongmin*), demonstrated outside *Southern Weekly*'s headquarters. Their protest banners and signs unequivocally demanded democracy, constitutionalism, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press.

I give these examples not to suggest the complete victory of public opinion in China. Indeed, the *Southern Weekly* protests ultimately led to the government tightening its control of the Southern Media Group in 2013. My point, rather, is to highlight the novelty and vibrancy of political communication, contention, and participation in and beyond China's public sphere that emerged during this period. I am far from a naïve observer of China's politics; nonetheless, the emergence of a contentious public sphere in China was a revelation to me because it defied the conventional image of political and civic life in an authoritarian country. China is arguably one of the more “politically closed” authoritarian regimes today, as it is one of the few without multiple political parties or national elections (Diamond 2002). Furthermore, international organizations that monitor and rank political freedom, such as Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders, consistently rate China as one of the countries with the least freedom of press and freedom of speech and one of the top “enemies of the Internet.”

Authoritarian states, by definition, undermine civil society—the basis on which the public sphere is built—thus conventional wisdom tells us that the conditions for political life and a public sphere in such contexts are likely to be quite bleak and suffocating (Habermas 1996, 369). Yet, when I looked at what was going on in China, I saw lively political discussion, contention, and engagement—in short, the emergence of a vibrant public sphere, against all apparent odds. Moreover, this public sphere did not look much different from the one I’d grown up with in Taiwan, a young liberal democracy, or the one in the United States, where I have been living for more than a decade—an ostensibly advanced liberal democracy. These seeming similarities deeply perplexed me.

Common indices used by social scientists to measure levels of freedom and to classify political regimes, such as Freedom House’s Freedom in the World Index, suggest that civil and political liberties have remained static in China since the 1989 Tiananmen incident, but such indices fail to capture a profound political, social, and cultural transformation that has occurred in the absence of regime change.

When I say that a nationwide contentious public sphere has emerged in China, I am referring to an unruly sphere capable of generating issues and agendas not set by the Chinese state, as opposed to a sphere mostly orchestrated and constrained by said state. Over time, China’s contentious public
sphere has been increasingly recognized by the Chinese state as a force to be reckoned and negotiated with. Starting around 2010, official media of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), such as the *People's Daily*, began to warn of a threatening public sphere mediated by cell phones, the Internet, and even some unruly voices within state-controlled media. The state’s awareness of these developments is precisely why I am careful not to overstate the stability or permanence of the newly emerged contentious public sphere. Indeed, this provocative public arena has encountered serious opposition and setbacks, particularly since 2013. Seeing the rise of such a sphere as a threat to national security and an indication of ideological struggle between the West and China, the Chinese state has taken comprehensive and combative measures to contain it. These measures include enhancing censorship and surveillance, attacking key actors, upgrading propaganda, and asserting China’s cyber-sovereignty. The scale and intensity of crackdowns on public opinion leaders, lawyers, journalists, activists, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and media are immense.

The Book’s Central Questions and Arguments

In this book I aim to demonstrate as well as understand these political, social, and cultural transformations. How can we explain the formation and development of China’s contentious public sphere, particularly in light of ongoing state control and repression? How did a political culture of contention emerge and extend to various social groups? And how durable is China’s emergent and contested public sphere? I argue that the rise of China’s contentious public sphere was an unintended consequence of the Chinese state’s campaign of authoritarian modernization. The government desperately needed to modernize in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. To do so, the state institutionalized the double-edged instruments of modern law, marketized media, and the Internet. It sought to utilize but also contain these instruments, recognizing the potential risk each posed of empowering professionals and citizens and destabilizing political control. Nonetheless, the state’s choices set in motion complex and interconnected processes beyond its control. Building legal and media institutions and adopting information technologies, paired with political fragmentation and marketization, increased the capabilities of citizens and professionals, encouraged the formation of multiple overlapping social networks of collaboration, engendered widespread legal and rights consciousness, and created a space for contentious politics. Through everyday practices and the production of so-called public opinion incidents (*yulan shijian*), media and legal professionals, public opinion leaders, activists, NGOs, and netizens translated individual grievances into collective contention—and in so doing, facilitated the rise of a contentious public sphere.
The future of this sphere remains unclear. Inadequate institutional protection means the state can still use the law, media, and information technologies for punishment, surveillance, and propaganda. How different political and social forces will work together—in creative, possibly even unexpected ways—over the years to come, in a changing global context, will shape the adversarial public space and determine its future.

My perspective departs from that of most research on the public sphere in that I accentuate and trace the connection between multiple institutional processes—the building of legal and media institutions and the adoption of information technologies—as well as the relationship between these processes and a broader historical and global context of modernization. Studies of the public sphere in different contexts tend to focus on the role of the media—mostly a specific type of media, such as television and, increasingly, the Internet—in mediating the public experience (e.g., Calhoun and Yang 2007; Dahlgren 1995; Papacharissi 2002; Shirky 2011). Few studies consider institutional processes in the legal field or the connections between different institutional processes. After studying this issue for more than a decade, however, I have become convinced that to understand China’s contentious public sphere, one has to weave together analytical strands usually kept separate by scholars in different disciplines, and then situate them in relation to China’s modernization in a global context. I argue that the oft-neglected connections between different institutional processes—namely, the development of a legal system, the marketization of media, and the adoption of information technologies—are key to understanding China’s contentious public sphere. These connections explain how contentious culture and practices emerged and spread across social groups and boundaries. Understanding the broader historical and global context of China’s modernization is also crucial to understanding how various actors—from the Chinese state to political elites and ordinary citizens—participated in these institutional processes.

Briefly, there are four major components to my argument. The first two concern China’s modernization project and its constituent institutional processes, as well as their effects on the contentious public sphere. The final two components concern the mechanisms and conditions that have mediated boundary transgressions and the connections between institutional processes.

**CHINA’S MODERNIZATION PROJECT AND THE AUTHORITARIAN DILEMMA OF MODERNIZATION**

Situating the development of China’s contentious public sphere in relation to the Chinese state’s post–Cultural Revolution project of modernization is critical. Although Jürgen Habermas’s *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, analyzing the development of the classical bourgeois public sphere
in Europe, offers little discussion of the state, several scholars have since pointed out the need to examine the state’s role in the development of the public sphere, especially the role of the state beyond suppression (Eley 1992; Schudson 1994). In Paul Starr’s book on the creation of media communications in the United States, he argues that the developmental path of the American media and public sphere was shaped by cumulative and branching “constitutive choices,” by which Starr means “choices that create the material and institutional framework of fields of human activity” (Starr 2004, 1–2). His narrative shows that the state was a key player in making these constitutive choices—an argument highly relevant to the Chinese context.

The Chinese state likewise made constitutive choices, which must be understood in relation to the Chinese state’s pursuit of modernization in a global context. In J. P. Nettl and Roland Robertson’s work on globalization, they argue that societies engaged in modernization often compare themselves with other societies. Using Meiji Japan as an example, Nettl and Robertson show that “latecomers” to the project of modernization tend to encounter difficulties deciding which images of modernity should guide them and where they should look for inspiration. These difficulties are further intertwined with issues related to national identity (Nettl and Robertson 1966; Robertson 1992). In the case of China, globalization provides a critical context that has influenced the state’s understanding of modernity and how it has acted to achieve that end—especially the state’s adoption of and engagement with ideas, institutions, and cultures from elsewhere. Modernization in China was a defensive reaction to imperialism, initiated by nationalist elites to preserve the Qing dynasty state. Following a series of military defeats by the West and Japan, intellectuals and officials within China began to see their country as a latecomer to development, and they started looking to the West and Japan as major reference points. At first, modernization focused on learning Western science, technology, and education, but it eventually extended to include the adoption of Western legal and political institutions (Zarrow 2016).

China’s pursuit of modernization, despite being interrupted by revolutions, regime changes, wars, and other upheavals, has continued in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) era. Pursuit of socialist industrialization and elimination of exploitation and poverty were written into the preamble of the PRC’s first constitution, enacted in 1954. China amended its constitution in 1982. The amended preamble makes clear the nation’s most critical task: to “concentrate its effort on socialist modernization along the road of Chinese-style socialism”; in addition, the Chinese people are enlisted to “develop socialist democracy, improve the socialist legal system, and work hard and self-reliantly to modernize industry, agriculture, national defense, and science and technology step by step to turn China into a socialist country with a high level of culture and democracy.” Like China’s modernization projects in the late Qing
and republican periods, the PRC’s modernization project has also involved interacting with and even partially adopting ideas and institutions from other parts of the world, particularly the Soviet Union and increasingly the West, such as modern law that acknowledges the concept of rights. In addition, in the PRC state’s pursuit of political and economic goals, it has had to open itself to certain transnational institutions. For instance, to profit from international trade, the Chinese state subjected itself to the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO) when building domestic institutions (Bhattasali, Li, and Martin 2004; DeWoskin 2001; Lee 2003; Lin 2004; Pangestu and Mrongowius 2004; Wang 2001; Zhao 2008).

Despite influence from the West and transnational institutions, however, PRC’s modernization project is clearly still very much an authoritarian one (Atabaki and Zürcher 2004; Gel’man 2016). The project’s goals include a high level of socioeconomic development through rapid economic growth, as well as improved efficacy of governance through legal and political institution building—but all under the political monopoly of the CCP. And the ultimate goal of pursuing modernization and developing what leaders have termed “socialism with Chinese characteristics” is to strengthen the CCP’s legitimacy and secure its authoritarian rule.

Yet the Chinese state’s authoritarian modernization project has encountered what I call an “authoritarian dilemma of modernization.” On the one hand, the state has to build economic, legal, and political institutions to pursue socioeconomic development. The state also needs capable professionals and citizens to make institutions work, produce economic growth, and ultimately achieve the goal of modernization. These capable agents need to be educated and have knowledge, information, and even some autonomy to participate in the tasks designated by the state. For instance, to have a functioning legal institution, the state needs capable legal professionals as well as citizens who have at least some basic legal knowledge. To collect information about governmental problems on the ground, the state must create institutions to inform citizens about what they should understand as “problems” as well as enable citizens to communicate with the state or media (Lorentzen 2014).

On the other hand, institution building and the creation of capable agents can be politically risky. When the state attempts to emulate successful examples of development, it tends to look to those found in liberal democracies. Adopting institutional designs associated with liberal democracies, even selectively, can have undesirable consequences for the maintenance of political monopoly. In addition, expansion of capability enlarges citizens’ freedom to choose among different ways of living (Sen 2008). When agents become more capable, the state has more difficulty controlling their thinking and actions. Capable agents can identify loopholes in institutions and use knowledge, information, technology, institutions, and other resources for their own ends. They
can participate in and influence the state-initiated modernization project in ways that potentially contradict the state’s interests (Starr 2004). In addition, political elites, such as legal and media professionals, can promote their own versions of modernity that compete with the state’s version, often challenging the state’s ideal political and social order in the process. Of course, while expanding individual capability, the state can always seek to minimize such negative consequences, but the outcome remains uncertain. A vast literature debates the various political consequences of modernization, especially the relationship between modernization and democratization (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Inglehart and Welzel 2010; Lipset 1959; Przeworski and Limongi 1997; Welzel 2006; Welzel and Inglehart 2008). I discuss my findings in relation to this literature in the concluding chapter.

MEDIA AND LAW AS DOUBLE-EDGED SWORDS

The Chinese state’s institution building in the media and legal fields demonstrates the state’s authoritarian dilemma of modernization. As part of the PRC state’s authoritarian modernization project, building media and legal institutions had profound consequences for the development of China’s contentious public sphere. The state wanted to use media and the law to achieve its goals, but it was unable to prevent other actors from using the same tools to achieve other purposes. Understanding how this happened requires considering the double-edged nature of media and the law—specifically, in what ways and under what conditions do these institutions serve alternately as tools of empowerment and emancipation or as tools of control and suppression?

Many studies have pointed to the media influence on the development of the public sphere. In the Western context, scholars have repeatedly argued that economic power has entrenched media institutions, contributing to depoliticized public communication and politically alienated citizens (Boggs 2000; Bourdieu 2001). Yet research also suggests that when the media is able to mediate the discussion of fundamental societal problems, it can help to produce a more critical political culture and facilitate an effective public sphere (Gurevitch and Blumler 1990; Habermas 1989, 1996, 2006; Peters 2008). In the Chinese context, scholars have studied the political consequences of the state’s media policy. In the past, newspapers in China were fully subsidized by the state and expected to serve as mouthpieces of state propaganda. Faced with financial difficulty, the Chinese state began to substantially withdraw funding for the media starting in 1992, forcing newspapers to rely on advertising and sales to survive. Media marketization became an integral part of the state’s economic reform agenda. As a result of this process, newspapers remain state agencies responsible for propaganda, but they are also now market actors that must attract readers to survive. Scholars have studied the political implications
of this process, yet most studies have not found the expected liberalizing effects (Hassid 2008; Lee 2000; Zhao 1998, 2004, 2008).

In a similar vein, existing studies also consider whether and how information communication technologies (ICTs), especially the Internet, can positively or negatively affect the public sphere (Benkler 2006; Shirky 2011; Dahlgren 2000; Dahlgren 2005; Downey and Fenton 2003; Papacharissi 2002; Sunstein 2007). Technocrats in China embraced ICTs to pursue modernization despite the potential political risks (Tai 2006). Some scholars argue that opening the country to the Internet has had democratic effects (Lei 2011; Tai 2006, 289; Tang 2005, 87, 98; Yang 2009; Zheng 2008), but others find no democratizing consequences, contending that the Internet has remained primarily a playground for entertainment and is still under the control of the state (Kluver et al. 2010; Peters 2002; Yang 2009, 10). Still other, middle-ground arguments reflect ambivalence about the Internet’s impact (Zhao 2008; Zhou 2006).

In addition to the media, I emphasize the role of legal institutions in the development of the public sphere. The law is rarely discussed in the literature, but it must be incorporated into analysis of China’s contentious public sphere for two reasons. First, while the media can reach various social groups, the law can provide a culturally integrative interface under certain conditions. As Habermas (1996, 353–54) points out, law provides a common cultural medium and language for citizens to use in identifying and talking about problems across different spheres of life. To be sure, Habermas’s statement depends on many factors, such as the existence of a legal tradition and state efforts to diffuse law to citizens. In many authoritarian countries, legal principles and texts remain unknown to citizens and irrelevant to everyday life. Yet when law does penetrate society, it can serve as a common cultural medium.

Second, although the law is an instrument of domination, it can also be a symbolic resource for challenging the state’s power (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 112; Bourdieu 1994), and this has critical implications for explaining how resistance, contention, and opposition are possible in a politically restrictive environment. Given its institutional characteristics, the law is a resource that can be used against the state. Using codified law to govern is a form of symbolic domination through which the state imposes a common set of coercive norms (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 112; Bourdieu 1994). The dilemma facing the state is that it cannot reap the benefits of this domination without at least appearing to subject itself to the order of law (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu 1994). Existing studies show that when authoritarian states begin to use the law to govern the populace and to recognize citizens’ rights, citizens respond by learning how to mobilize the law themselves to negotiate and contend with the state (Lee 2007; Moustafa 2007; O’Brien and Li 2006). Furthermore, law’s cultural characteristic as a plastic medium enables actors to develop alternative discourse and thus facilitates political contention.
(Balkin 2009; Somers 1993). Legal reasoning is often indeterminate because the processes of fact finding, applying legal doctrines, and interpreting law are rife with opportunities for innovation and contestation (Balkin 2009). Citizens are not necessarily bound by the state’s interpretation of legal texts or principles. Of course, whether ordinary citizens are able to use the law as a resource against the state hinges on many factors, particularly support from legal professionals.

INSTITUTIONS, INDIVIDUALS, NETWORKS, AND CIVIL POWER

Another major component of my argument is that the linkage between different institutional processes in China’s modernization project played a key role in the development of China’s nationwide public sphere and the formation of “the public.” I argue that the conjunction of institutional processes in the legal and media fields not only led to individual transformation and empowerment but also gave rise to crosscutting, boundary-crossing social networks, which helped to spread contentious culture and practices across social groups. Collaboration across media and legal professionals, market mechanisms, and ICTs aided the creation of overlapping social networks. In short, sociologically speaking, institution and network mechanisms contributed to the social bases and formation of “the public” as a collective social entity.

The current literature suggests that a thriving public sphere depends on a favorable organization of citizenry (Calhoun 1993, 276). Habermas (1996, 369) contends that without a supportive civil society, the public sphere cannot discipline the political authority. In addition, the capacities of a public to identify, interpret, and present society-wide problems are rooted in “the voluntary associations of civic society and [are] embedded in liberal patterns of political culture and socialization” (Habermas 1996, 359). In Habermas’s (1989) narrative, the conjugal family that emerged in the transition to capitalism produced rational agents who believed in the autonomy of the market and their own independence, while also coming to value the noninstrumental aspects of life (Habermas 1989, 46). Other scholars focus on how socialization in voluntary associations produces capable agents. For instance, generalizing from social histories in Europe, Geoff Eley (1992, 296–97) points out that voluntary associations were key sites in and through which people expressed opinions, formed identity, and developed a political culture.

Together, the literature I discuss above underscores the need to explain how a public emerged in China. The Chinese state uses a technique of “divide and rule” to prevent social groups from joining and potentially becoming organized social or political forces (Perry 2007). Any explanation of the emergent public sphere thus needs to address the constituent processes of identity formation, capability development, politicization, and the establishment of social
relations among individuals and within and between social groups (Calhoun 1992; Dahlgren 1995, 2005; Fraser 1990).

Drawing from the sociological literature on networks and institutions, I analyze the coevolution of individuals, networks, and institutions to understand the emergence of a public (Owen-Smith and Powell 2008; Padgett and Powell 2012a, 2012b). Specifically, my analysis highlights the connections and forms of feedback between three processes: (1) the development of legal and media institutions, (2) the transformation of individuals, and (3) the emergence and overlapping of multiple networks. I contend that these coeval processes led to the genesis and expansion of a public by breaking down existing boundaries. Essentially, through tracing the coevolution of individuals, networks, and institutions, I am able to explain the development of China’s contentious public sphere and link historical processes that unfolded at and across multiple levels.

FRAGMENTED AND ADAPTIVE AUTHORITARIANISM

The final component of my argument concerns the conditions for the formation of crosscutting social networks and political contention. I argue that the fragmentation of the Chinese state opened a space for various actors to form overlapping social networks and to use the law and the media for contention. This argument builds on the fragmented authoritarianism model of Chinese politics. Instead of seeing the state as a monolithic entity, the fragmented authoritarianism model notes that government agencies across levels and localities may have different interests and political goals. The complex and sometimes conflicting relationships between government agencies shape bargaining and negotiation between levels and sectors and can influence policy implementation (Lieberthal 1992). In fact, each state agency often has its own problems with which it must cope. As such, research in this area sees the fragmented nature of China’s political regime as a weakness of the state. Political fragmentation can open a space for policy entrepreneurs, such as peripheral local government officials and media, to participate in and influence politics (Mertha 2009). The fragmentation of the Chinese state has thus made implementing its modernization project uncertain.

Nonetheless, the Chinese state has been adapting itself to address the problem of fragmentation. As Sebastian Heilmann and Elizabeth J. Perry (2011) argue, the Chinese state’s adaptive governance explains how the CCP has managed to endure in a drastically changing environment when many other regimes have failed. They contend that the CCP’s long revolution contributed to “guerrilla-style policy-making,” characterized by continual learning, experimentation, and transformation to cope with uncertainty and challenge. While Heilmann and Perry focus on policy adaptation, other scholars highlight the
Chinese state’s adaptability in making formal and informal institutions (Nathan 2003; Tsai 2006). The bottom line is that Chinese state agencies are able to troubleshoot continuously and respond to individual problems.

But the Chinese state’s adaptability can also increase fragmentation along temporal and ideological dimensions. Top leaders in the Chinese state initiate adaptations to address various problems at different points of time, often coming up with new ad hoc policies, theories, and practices, without formally repudiating or revising previous ones. As a result, contradictory policies, theories, and practices can be enacted, creating opportunities for capable agents to exploit such contradictions to pursue their own agendas. In short, I argue that the Chinese state’s fragmentation and adaptivity have influenced the development of China’s contentious public sphere by creating or closing opportunity structures available to various political and social actors.

A Note on Data and Research Methods

Analyzing the development of China’s contentious public sphere has been a daunting task. Given my training in sociology, I was well aware of the limitation of relying on a single research method or a single source of data. As such, I have employed multiple methods of analysis and triangulated various types of data. This strategy enabled me to gain a broader picture of the development of the contentious public sphere, while also helping me to understand various components of the historical process and their relationships to one another. Since most of my empirical chapters have their own distinct data sources and research methods, I describe data sources and research methods in detail in an appendix. Here, I briefly describe how I analyzed various data sources and what I gained from such analysis.

**Newspapers**: I analyzed the content of national and local newspapers published in China between 1949 and 2015 across localities. Newspapers analysis was particularly helpful in terms of detecting trends over time, such as patterns in reports on public opinion and the growth of rights discourse in China. By analyzing newspapers in different localities and different types of newspapers, I was also able to identify variation in news reports and moments of divergence between official discourse and alternative discourse.

**Yearbooks, laws and regulations, and other official documents**: I examined volumes of the China Journalism Yearbook, published between 1983 and 2014; the Law Yearbook of China for the years 1987–2014; gazetteers published by local governments; and Party Congress reports. Reading through these materials helped me to understand the Chinese state’s modernization project and institutional processes in the media and legal fields. I also analyzed top Chinese leaders’ speeches and writings to understand their rationales when making constitutive choices.
Interview data: Between 2009 and 2016 in China and in the United States, I conducted more than 160 in-depth interviews with ordinary citizens and informants, including media and legal professionals, local and central government officials, legal and communication studies scholars, public opinion leaders, grievants, and activists. Qualitative analysis of interview data allowed me to understand the thinking, decisions, and actions of actors who have participated in China’s modernization project and shaped China’s contentious public sphere. Interview data also helped me to uncover the formation of social relations between different actors.

Online text in Internet forums and social media data: I extracted textual data from web pages of online discussion forums in China from October 2007 to 2010, analyzing them both qualitatively and quantitatively. I drew on such analysis to understand the formation of contentious events, or public opinion incidents, as case studies. I also extracted data from Chinese social media, or Weibo. I drew on techniques of content analysis and social network analysis to identify the political orientation of and connections between public opinion leaders in China.

Survey data: I employed statistical techniques to analyze the 2002 Asian Barometer Survey, the 2008 Asian Barometer Survey, the 2003 AsiaBarometer Survey, 2006 AsiaBarometer Survey, the 2005–2008 World Values Surveys, and the 2008 China Survey conducted by Texas A&M University. Because most of these data sets were nationally representative, they allowed me to succinctly describe the demographic background, social networks, political attitudes, and political behavior of Chinese netizens. My statistical analysis is complemented by my findings from in-depth interviews and analysis of online texts and social media data.

In short, the combination of multiple research methods and analysis of various data helped me to trace and understand the multifaceted and multilevel processes that have shaped the development of China’s contentious public sphere. In my writing, I have put a heavy emphasis on evidence and chosen a more detached, impersonal voice to let the evidence speak for itself.

Chapter Outlines

The chapters of the book systematically establish the empirical phenomenon to be explained, and then outline the multistage processes that constitute my explanation. In chapter 2, the first empirical chapter, I marshal evidence to establish my starting point: the rise of a nationwide contentious public sphere in China, a development I trace to the mid-2000s. Then, in chapter 3, I situate and explain the Chinese state’s turn to the law and rights as part of the state’s authoritarian modernization project, as well as the rise of legal and rights consciousness in a longer historical context. In chapter 4, I detail how the
state’s use of media to disseminate law and report on certain local problems, paired with political fragmentation and the marketization of the press, provided conditions for certain media and legal professionals to build networks and collaborate. Such collaboration pushed the boundaries of critical news reporting and expanded the concept of rights beyond socioeconomic issues. In chapter 5, I show how the Chinese state’s regulation of the press market unexpectedly elevated the importance of Internet companies as news providers and facilitators of public opinion, while also amplifying the influence of politicized, proliger media and legal professionals. In chapter 6, I then demonstrate how critical culture and practices were extended from legal and media professionals to ordinary citizens through the diffusion of the Internet. I also demonstrate the rise of an opinionated, critical, and politically active online public, whose everyday practices and participation in public opinion incidents contributed to the rise of China’s contentious public sphere. Finally, in chapter 7, I discuss how the Chinese state, particularly the Xi Jinping leadership, has strategically responded to a rising contentious public sphere in China. Throughout, I highlight the novelty and significance of these developments. The emergence of a contentious public sphere in China is a remarkable event—one that warrants further investigation precisely because its future remains so unclear.
INDEX

NOTE: Page numbers followed by f indicate a figure; those with t indicate a table.

| Administrative Litigation Law (1989), 46, 68 |
| adult literacy rates, 53, 249n34 |
| advocacy journalism, 84–88, 102, 197, 250n9. See also critical news reporting |
| Alford, William, 45 |
| All-China Journalists’ Association (ACJA), 86 |
| All-China Lawyers Association, 139, 141, 199–200 |
| Anhui Internet case, 184, 255n44 |
| anticorruption initiative, 47–52, 83–84, 140 |
| antisystem populist nationalism, 219 |
| Arab Spring, 172, 210 |
| AsiaBarometer Surveys, 12, 105, 107t, 247n6(Chi) |
| Asian Barometer Surveys, 12, 133, 247n6(Chi); on perceptions of state’s legality, 136; on rule of law, 36; on trust in political institutions, 105, 106t, 136, 242–43 |
| authoritarian rule of law, 162, 211–13, 215, 218 |
| back-door access and decryption, 180 |
| Baidu, 152 |
| Bandurski, David, 16, 34 |
| Behind the Scenes at American Newspapers (Hu), 86 |
| Beijing, 69; critical news reporting in, 71, 72t, 74–78, 96–99, 102, 222; hierarchical bureaucratic structures of, 96–97; media censorship in, 96–98; newspaper market of, 98 |
| Beijing Aizhixing Institute on Health and Education, 153 |
| Beijing Daily, 58f |
| Beijing Daily News Group, 96 |
| Beijing Evening News, 72t, 75t, 76t |
| Beijing Morning Post, 59f |
| Beijing News, 198, 222 |
| Beijing Olympics of 2008, 147–48 |
| Beijing Times, 72t, 74, 75t, 76t, 199–200 |
| Beijing Yirenping Center, 153, 191–92 |
| Beijing Youth Daily News Group, 96 |
| Between Facts and Norms (Habermas), 15 |
| Big Vs, 122, 182, 186–87, 189, 199, 251n19, 255n39. See also public opinion leaders |
| “black” netizens, 174, 181–94, 199–200 |
| Bo Xilai, 217 |
| Bröckling, Ulrich, 218 |
| bulletin board systems (BBSs), 110–11, 137, 214 |
| business and finance media, 81, 118–19, 250n6 |
| business rights, 62t |
| Caijing magazine, 81, 85–86, 118; on public opinion incidents, 153, 198; on state suppression, 199 |
| Caixin Media, 198, 199–200 |
| Calhoun, Craig, 170 |
| capable agents, 6–7, 11, 12 |
censorship and surveillance (continued)
  laws and regulations, 121. See also Department of Propaganda
  Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress, 195
  Central Leading Group for Cyberspace Affairs, 176–77, 180
  Changjiang Times, 148
  Chen Feng, 119
  Chen Guangzhong, 199
  Chen Jianfu, 38, 40
  China. See Chinese central party-state;
  Imperial China;
  Republic of China
  China Business News, 81
  China Central Television, 120, 186; investigative journalism on, 119; legal programs on, 63; staged public confessions on, 182, 187, 199–200; as state mouthpiece, 188
  China Economic Times, 152
  China Enterprise News, 152
  China Journalism Yearbook, 11
  China Survey, 12, 133
  China World Value Survey, 133, 134–36
  China Youth Daily, 96, 97, 119, 198
  Chinese Academy of Sciences, 110, 254n16
  Chinese central party-state: adaptive
  capacity of, 11, 171, 215–18; authoritarian rule of, 6–7, 47, 55, 80, 103; on China’s international role, 174; “Chinese dream” agenda of, 173–74, 195–96, 197; class struggle doctrine of, 42–45, 79; concept of “rights” in, 36, 57; consolidation of Internet regulatory agencies of, 175–77, 216–17, 254n16; on constitutionalism, 124; constitutions of, 39–40, 43, 44, 55, 57; control of Internet news by, 111–14; control of media by, 188–90; corruption in, 48–52; declining public trust of, 105, 106, 107f, 128, 133, 136, 165–66, 168, 232, 242–43; divide and rule policy of, 9–10, 92, 209; Four Cardinal Principles of, 195, 257n92; fragmented bureaucracy of, 10–11, 82, 175–77, 202, 205; ideological fragmentation of, 217–18; mass line politics of, 17–18, 20, 40; media mouthpieces of, 3, 17–18, 20, 97–98, 188, 193; modernization and economic reform campaign of, 3–9, 34, 39, 43, 45–52, 79–80, 204–15, 248n9, 258n1; national security agenda of, 171–74; official response to public sphere in, 3, 32–33, 171–202; party strengthening policies of, 193; perceptions of state’s legality in, 28, 136; post-Mao liberalization of, 16–17, 34, 207–13; publicly expressed opinion in, 15–16, 22–24, 26–28, 32–34; publicly expressed opposition to, 93; ranking of Internet freedom in, 104; ranking of political freedom in, 2, 247n2(Ch1); relations with Soviets of, 19, 172; Resolution of 1981(on the Cultural Revolution) of, 41–43, 45, 248nn8–10; rule by law in, 36–37, 47, 54–55, 160, 210–13, 215, 218; “seven don’t mention list” of, 73, 124; social inequality in, 72, 156–57, 158; social stability agenda of, 41, 43, 45, 133, 138, 158, 171–74, 217; supervisory institutions of, 47–52, 83–84, 90, 140; tax reforms of 1994 in, 26; transnational institutions in, 6, 111, 115. See also Cultural Revolution; Department of Propaganda; legal institutions; media institutions; synergy of institutional processes
  Chinese Civil War, 39–40
  Chinese Communist Party (CCP). See Chinese central party-state
  Chinese General Survey, 36
  Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), 70–71
civil power, 214–15
civil rights, 60–63, 68, 72, 73f, 77f, 140
civil society, 2, 92–93, 208. See also social networks
  Clark, David, 211
  Clark, Helen, 148
class struggle, 42–45, 79
  Clinton, Bill, 109–10
  Communist Youth League of China, 96, 195, 198
  Confucianism, 38
civilian connections. See synergy of institutional processes
  constitutionalism, 123–24
  Constitution of 1954, 39–40, 43, 57
  Constitution of 1975, 40
  Constitution of 1978, 43, 44
  Constitution of 1982, 55
car consumer rights, 47, 60–61
  content-control software, 1
contentious public sphere, 1–13, 203–19;
devolution of social networks in, 9–10, 71; emergent civil power of, 214–15;institution-building and, 7–9, 206–7; international implications of, 174; organizing principles of law and individual rights in, 35–68, 73, 204, 206, 212–13, 215; politically liberalizing impact of,
INDEX

207–13; politicized netizens of, 1, 129–60, 247n(Chi); popular nationalism in, 197, 202; state affirmation of, 32–33; state containment of, 171–202, 204; state’s role in development of, 4–7; trajectory of public opinion in, 14–34; uncertain future of, 4, 208, 218–19; as unintended consequence of modernization, 204–7, 258n1; unruliness of, 2–3. See also Internet; legal institutions; media institutions; public opinion incidents; suppression of the contentious public sphere; synergy of institutional processes

Corporation Law (1993), 47
corruption, 48–52, 83–84, 140, 143

Counterterrorism Law (2015), 179–81

Court Today, 64

crackdowns. See suppression of the contentious public sphere

The Creation of the Media (Starr), 216

crisis (definition), 41
critical news reporting, 1–2, 69–103, 221–28; advocacy journalism in, 84–86, 102, 197, 250n9; analysis of, 71–78, 225–28; in Beijing, 71, 72t; 74–78, 96–99, 102, 222; collaboration with legal professionals in, 86–103, 121, 128, 208–9, 250n11; cultivation of civil society through, 93–95; definition of, 71, 224–25; fragmented state bureaucracy and, 89–90, 93–95, 188, 215–16; growth of public opinion incidents and, 144; in Guangzhou, 71, 72t, 74–78, 88–96, 98–99, 102, 222, 250n11; on Internet portals, 103–4, 118–28, 144, 229; interviews with informants on, 228, 229; marketization of the media and, 78–86, 102, 104, 223–24; recruitment of journalists for, 118–21, 127; on the Sanlu milk scandal, 152–53, 162–63, 244–46; self-censorship in, 95–96; in Shanghai, 71, 72t, 74–78, 99–102, 222; state censorship of, 1–2, 35, 70–71, 82–84, 86, 94, 96–97, 105–6, 122, 187–91. See also media institutions
crony capitalism, 72, 73t, 77f
cross-locality, 154–55, 162–63
cross-temporality, 154–55, 162–63

Cultural Revolution, 3–4, 14; CCP’s Resolution of 1981 on, 41–43, 45, 248n8–10; class struggle practices of, 43–45; constitutional revisions of, 40; destruction of legal institutions in, 36, 40, 53; economic reforms after, 34, 39, 43, 45–52, 79, 248n9; “five black categories” of people of, 185; legal reforms after, 43–47; mass mobilization of, 55; newspaper closures of, 79; public opinion reporting during, 20; staged public confessions of, 187
cyber-civilization volunteers, 195, 198

Cybersecurity Law (2015), 177, 180–81, 193–94
cyber-sovereignty, 3, 196–97

Cyberspace Administration of China, 176–77, 180–82, 189–91, 196, 198, 200

Decision on Strengthening Online Information Protection, 180

“The Declaration of Internet Citizen’s Rights,” 138–39
de facto public sphere, 216

Democracy and Legal Times, 153

Democracy Wall movement, 14, 21, 32, 45, 54

Deng Liqun, 47

Deng Xiaoping, 17, 21; crisis narrative of, 41; on economic development, 248n9; Four Cardinal Principles of, 195, 257n92; ideological shifts under, 217; on instrumental role of law, 45–46; on mass mobilization, 55; outlawing of cross-sectoral connections by, 109; on restructuring institutions, 43; on rights of counter-revolutionary members, 45; on rule of law, 55; socialist market economy of, 45–48, 80; Southern Tour of, 47, 80; on supervision of government, 50–51

Department of Propaganda, 17, 25, 176, 250n8, 254n16; Beijing Olympics of 2008 and, 147–48; on cross-locality and cross-industry reporting, 188; law dissemination campaigns of, 54, 56, 60, 249n47; media control and censorship by, 70–71, 82–84, 86, 94, 96–97, 105–6, 122, 198–99; monitoring of public opinion for, 177–78; regulation of Internet by, 105–7, 176–77; Sanlu milk scandal and, 147–49; “seven don’t mention list” of, 73, 124. See also censorship and surveillance

Ding Lei, 110

disadvantaged groups: exclusion from the public sphere of, 201, 208–9; rights protections of, 72, 73t, 77f
discourses on rights. See rights protections

“Dream of China and Dream of Constituionalism” (Southern Weekly), 1–2, 105

Economic Daily News Group, 96

Economic Observer, 81, 118, 119

economic reforms: CCP focus on, 34, 39, 43, 45–52, 79–80, 248n9; corruption and,
economic reforms (continued)
48–52; economic lives of ordinary citizen consumers in, 47, 60–61, 62–63, 68;
fiscal reforms of 1994 of, 52; instrumental role of law in, 47, 60–61; Internet and,
110; labor contract system and, 52, 188; restructured state-owned enterprises in,
26–27, 52, 60; socialist market economy policies of, 45–48, 80; Tiananmen demo-
cratic movement and, 47, 48. See also modernization campaign
Eley, Geoff, 9
Employment Promotion Law (2007), 256n74
England’s de facto public sphere, 216
environmental activism, 141
EU Network and Information Security Directive, 180
First Opium War, 38
fiscal reforms of 1994, 52
Fluctuation period (2013–2015), 30–32
food safety issues, 24, 131, 143, 151, 155–57.
See also Sanlu milk scandal
Ford Foundation, 88, 249n62
Fraser, Nancy, 247n5(Ch1)
Fujian Shaoan County Internet cases, 183–84, 255n43
Gallagher, Mary E., 127–28
Gamson, William, 163
Gang of Four, 20, 36, 41, 53, 79. See also Cultural Revolution
Gao Minguan, 199
Gao Xingjian, 44
Gao Zhen, 65, 249n62
gender equality activism, 192, 200–201
General Administration of Press and Publication, 82, 254n6
General Office of the CCP, 188, 193
globalization, 5, 219
Global Times, 105–6
Gmail, 176
Google, 146, 176
“gray” netizens, 174, 194–96
Great Firewall of China, 138, 179
Guangdong provincial government: economic reforms of, 88–89; fragmented
bureaucracy of, 89–90, 93–95; local media control by, 89–90, 190; official newspaper of, 79; on the Southern Weekly editorial, 1–2, 35, 105–6, 122. See also
Southern Media Group
Guangming Daily News Group, 96
Guangxi Internet case, 184
Guangzhou, 69; competitive newspaper market of, 78–80, 88–90, 94, 98; critical
news reporting in, 71, 72t, 74–78, 88–96, 98–99, 102, 222, 250n11; fragmented
bureaucracy of, 89–90, 93–95; labor activism suppression in, 192–93; media
censorship in, 94–96; respected journalism of, 97, 100
Guangzhou Daily, 89
Guangzhou Daily News Group, 89
Guanxi Internet case, 184, 255n46
Habermas, Jürgen, 4–5, 203; on civil society’s support of the public sphere, 9,
247n5(Ch1); on expansion and demographic shift, 169; on law as cultural medium, 8; on public opinion, 15–16, 247n1(Ch.2)
Hainan Tianya Community Network Technology Company, 146
Halliday, Terence C., 211–12
Han Qixiang, 172
Hassid, Jonathan, 84, 250n9
Heilmann, Sebastian, 10–11
hepatitis B activism, 139, 191–92, 256n74
A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China (Lin), 15–16, 203–4
HIV/AIDS activism, 139–40, 153, 191–92
Hua Guofeng, 42, 43–44
Huang Wenyu, 78–79
Huaxi Metropolitan Daily, 80–81
Hu Jintao, 172, 189
hukou system, 70–71
Hundred Flowers Campaign, 14, 21
Hu Qiaomu, 44–45
Hu Shuli, 81, 85–86
Hu-Wen administration, 31, 138; Internet commentators of, 195; Internet regulation agency of, 176; people first agenda of, 189; response to contentious public sphere by, 171–74, 188–90, 201
Hu Yaobang, 44, 55, 93, 108
Imperial China: feudal and patriarchal tradition of, 57; imperialist challenges to, 5, 38–39; intellectual scholar-officials of, 85; legal system of, 38–39, 43, 66–68; Outline of Imperial Constitution of, 39
INDEX 277

information communication technologies (ICTs), 4, 204; development of the public sphere and, 8, 9, 209–10, 214; research on, 12. See also synergy of institutional processes
Inglehart, Ronald, 205–6
Institute of High Energy Physics, 110
institutional processes. See legal institutions; media institutions; synergy of institutional processes
Internet, 8, 104–28; back-door access provisions for, 180; blocking of Google, Gmail, and VPNs on, 179; bulletin board system (BBS) sites of, 110–11, 137, 214; critical news reporting on, 103–4, 118–28; demographics of users of, 131–36; development in China of, 109–11, 209; expanded associational lives of individuals through, 209, 214–15; fragmented government bureaucracy for, 175–77; Great Firewall of China of, 138, 179; interviews with informants on, 228–46; market for online news on, 107, 111–16; pro-democratic potential of, 109–10; public opinion incidents and, 31–32, 103, 111–16, 121, 126–28, 142–70, 198–99; real-name registration policies for, 179–80; rise of public opinion and, 16–17, 28, 29f, 33–34, 103; state-controlled media on, 111–13; state crackdowns on, 17, 31, 35, 104–7, 122, 124, 127, 138, 174–202; state regulation of, 105–7, 112–14, 121, 138, 175–81. See also netizens; Weibo
Internet portals, 105–7, 110, 111–28, 127; access to capital markets by, 114, 119; advertising revenues of, 115; citizens’ rights coverage on, 121; critical news reporting on, 118–28, 143; interviews with informants on, 229–46; liberal political influences on, 123–25, 126f, 127–28; online discussion forums of, 12, 114, 117, 121–22, 137, 203; online news services of, 114–16; public opinion incident coverage by, 198; published disclaimers on, 106; readership of, 119, 127; recruitment of media professionals by, 118–21, 127; social media (Weibo) and, 12, 114, 116–18, 121–26, 214; state regulation of, 112–14, 121, 138; state suppression of, 190–91
interview data, 12, 228–46
Japan’s Cybersecurity Basic Act, 180
Jiefang Daily, 58
Jiefang Daily, 58f
Jiang Hong, 200
Jiang Hua, 248n10
Jiang Ping, 46, 199
Jian Guangzhou, 148
Jiang Zemin, 51, 52, 172, 217
Jiefang Daily News Group, 99
Jin Evening News, 59f
judicial independence, 72, 73f, 77f
Judicial Opinions of China website, 183
Kong Qingming, 57
Krasmann, Susanne, 218
Kuomintang (KMT), 39–40, 48
Labor Contract Law, 52, 188
Labor Law (1994), 47
labor rights activism, 52, 61, 62–63, 192–93, 199
Lanzhou Morning Post, 148
Law and Morality, 63
law dissemination campaigns, 53–69, 102, 213–15, 249n40, 249n44, 249n47; on citizens’ rights, 56–63, 249n48–49; media’s role in, 69–103, 249n40, 249n44, 249n47–49; on obedience and suppression of crime, 54–56, 57; unintended consequences of, 71, 102
Law on Chinese-Foreign Equity Joint Ventures (1979), 46
Law on Protection of Consumer Rights and Interests (1993), 47
Law on Township Enterprises (1996), 47
Law on Urban Real Estate Administration (1994), 47
Law Yearbook of China, 11
Lawyers Law (1996), 87
Leading Group of Maintaining Social Stability, 172
Lee Ching Kwan, 66
Lee Ching Kwan, 66
legal-aid programs, 64–66, 87–88, 152–54, 191–92, 214, 249n62. See also rights defense lawyers
Legal Daily, 139, 141, 199
legal illiteracy, 53–54
legal institutions, 4, 7–9, 34–68, 161, 206–15; challenges to state’s power by, 8–9; citizen mobilizations and, 66, 68; class struggle structures and, 43–45; collaboration on critical news reporting by, 88–103, 121, 128, 208–9, 250n11; conflict resolution role of, 52–53; constitutional protections and, 39, 40, 43, 72, 123–24; Cultural Revolution destruction of, 36, 40, 53; detention regulations reforms and, 1, 35, 119; development of legally conscious citizens and, 36–37, 50, 53–68, 102, 213–14, 249n40; instrumental role
legal institutions (continued)

Legal Report, 63, 65

Lei Yang, 201

Lemke, Thomas, 218

Lenovo, 146

LGBT activism, 192, 200–221

liberal democracy, 218–19

Li Changchun, 25

Li Changjiang, 150

Li Congjun, 174

Lieber v. McDonald’s Restaurants, 159

Liebman, Benjamin L., 87

Li Fan, 66

Li Fangping, 139, 187, 191

Li Lianjing, 66

Lin Yutang, 15–17, 139, 187, 191, 199–200

Li Congjun, 167

Liu Fuzhi, 55

Li Xingbing, 187

Low Visibility period (1949–1986) of public opinion, 19–21

Lu Jun, 191–92

Lu Wei, 173–74, 177, 182

Ma Huateng, 110

Ma Juaide, 193–94

Management Provisions on Electronic Bulletin Services on the Internet, 111

Mao Zedong, 16, 42, 173; antireligious movement of, 40; on class struggle, 44; communist ideology of, 217–18; Cultural Revolution and, 42; death of, 41; on “five black categories” of people, 185; on mass line journalism, 17–18; public opinion under, 34

Marriage Law (1950), 57

mass line politics, 40; anticorruption programs of, 50–52, 83–84, 90, 140; class struggle tactics in, 42–45; mass mobilizations of, 52–53, 55; media role in, 17–18, 20

Mass Politics in the People’s Republic (Liu), 16–17, 34

McDonald’s coffee case, 159

media institutions, 4, 7–9, 28, 69–103, 206–15; advocacy journalism of, 84–88, 102, 197, 250n9; collaboration with legal professionals by, 86–103, 121, 128, 250n11; critical news reporting by, 69–101, 143, 208–9, 221–28; declining trust in, 105, 106t, 107t, 128; freedom of the press and, 1–2, 35, 79, 157; international affairs coverage by, 197; journalistic practices of, 79, 84–86, 90, 250n1, 250n9; journalist shortages at, 118; lack of national market-oriented daily newspaper and, 108, 113–14; law dissemination and legal reporting of, 63–66, 69–103, 249n40, 249n44, 249nn47–49; liberalization of the 1980s of, 79–80, 93, 108–9; local print markets of, 80–82, 109; marketization of, 7–8, 28, 34, 71, 78–86, 102, 104, 108, 127–28, 207–9; party-state affiliations of, 108; post-Tiananmen restrictions on, 79, 80, 108–9; research on, 11; rise of the Internet and, 103–28, 209; role in mass line politics of, 17–18, 20; self-censorship by, 95–96; Soviet model of, 78–81; specialized publications of, 81, 108–9, 118–19, 250n6; staged public confessions on, 182, 187, 199–200; state control and censorship of, 188–90; state mouthpieces of, 3, 17–18, 20, 97–98, 188, 193; use of social media by, 194; watchdog role of, 83–84; Western influences on, 84–86, 250n9. See also censorship and surveillance; synergy of institutional processes

Meiji Constitution, 39

Mencius thought, 67

Merton, Robert, 14
Microblog Communication Index (BCI), 122–23
middle-class netizens, 183, 199–202, 219
Ministry of Civil Affairs, 194
Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, 176–77
Ministry of Information Industry, 111–12, 124n16
Ministry of Public Security, 176, 182, 254n16
Ministry of State Security, 176, 254n16
Ministry of Technology, 176–77
National Computing and Networking Facil-
ity of China (NCFC), 110
National Internet Governance Coordina-
tion Group, 176
Nationalization of Internet technology in, 199–200; state suppression of, 199–201; surrounding gaze practice of, 145. See also Internet; Sanlu milk scandal; Weibo
Netttl, J. P., 5, 219
New Citizen Movement, 186–87, 191
New Zealand Fonterra Group, 147–48
nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), 214; foreign control of, 193–94; funding sources of, 191; state suppression of, 187, 191–94, 199
O’Brien, Kevin, 66
Occasionalism, 34
Office of the Central Leading Group for Cyberspace Affairs, 176–77
Olympics of 2008, 147–48
online discussion forums, 12, 114, 117, 121–22, 138, 203
online public. See netizens
Online Public Opinion, 177
online public opinion analysts, 176–77
Open Constitution Initiative, 152–53, 154, 186, 192
opinion leaders. See public opinion leaders
Opinion on the Work of Strengthening Party Building in Social Organizations, 193
Oriental Entrepreneur, 118
Oriental Morning Post, 118
Outline of the Imperial Constitution, 39
Padgett, John, 214–15
Panyu Workers Center, 193
peasants: legal program viewership among, 64–65; legal rights education of, 61, 62–63; rightful resistance of, 66
Peng Zeng, 53–54
People’s Daily, 3, 17–34, 105, 221; Contained Growth period (1998–2005) of, 25–28; critical news reporting in, 74–78; on dangerous public opinion leaders,
People’s Daily (continued)
INDEX 281

Ren Jianyu, 187
Ren Zhigiang, 189, 200
Republic of China (ROC): Constitution of, 39; legal institutions of, 39–40; newspapers of, 78, 85
responsive authoritarianism, 218
rights defense lawyers, 31, 35, 92, 185, 211–9
responsive authoritarianism, 218
rights defense lawyers, 31, 35, 92, 185, 211–9

Rising Contention period (2006–2012), 28–29
Robertson, Roland, 5, 219
rule of law, 36–37, 47, 54–55, 210–13; Deng’s statement on, 155; in liberal democracies, 163, 213; “with Chinese characteristics,” 160, 162, 211–13, 215, 218. See also legal institutions
Rule of Law Index, 36–37
Rules on the Management of Information from Professional Activities of News Employees, 188
Sanlu Group, 146–50; bankruptcy filing by, 153, 154; penalties for scandal at, 158
Sanlu milk scandal, 145–63, 172, 244–46; alternative media on, 152–54, 162–63; connections to political rights issues of, 154–63; failures of legal institutions in, 157–62; official discourse on, 147–49, 161–62; official regulatory response to, 149–51, 156, 159–60, 162; scapegoating of farmers in, 158; in Taiwan, 159–60; Tianya Forum discussion of, 154–63, 253n33; victim litigation and compensation in, 149–54, 158–59, 186, 191–92; victim punishment in, 154, 159
sectionalism, 34
Setback and Suppression period (July 1989–1997), 24–25
Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), 157
Shaanxi Internet case, 184, 255n45
Shanghai: critical news reporting in, 71, 72t, 74–78, 99–102, 222; media censorship in, 100–101; newspaper market of, 99, 100; unified political structure of, 99, 100–101
Shanghai Morning Post, 72t, 74, 75t, 76t
Shen Deyong, 150
Shen Yang, 122–23
Shenzhen Chunfeng Labor Disputes Services Center, 192
Shijiazhuang city government, 147–50, 153, 158. See also Sanlu milk scandal
Shi Yunqing, 66
Shugan BBS, 110
Shuimu Tsinghua, 110, 111
Sichuan Daily, 58f
Sichuan Province, 195
Sina.com, 105–6, 110, 113, 121, 139, 152, 189–91
Snowden, Edward, 210
Social Longitude and Latitude, 63
social media. See WeChat; Weibo
social networks, 9–10, 71; in collaborative critical news reporting, 86–103, 121, 128,

For general queries, contact webmaster@press.princeton.edu
social networks (continued) 208–9, 250n11; in development of reporting on Internet portals, 120; emergent civil power of, 214–15; of public opinion leaders, 125–26, 128; research on, 12. See also synergy of institutional processes social-psychological conception of public opinion, 15

Stockman, Daniela, 127–28

Stock Exchange Executive Council (SEEC), 81, 250n6

Stockman, Daniela, 127–28

The Strait Metropolis Daily, 59f

Strike Hard anticrime campaign, 55

Strong Nation Forum, 110, 150

Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (Habermas), 4–5, 203, 247n11 (Ch.2)

Sun Zhigang, 1, 35, 119, 121, 186

supervision of government, 47–52, 83–84, 90, 140


Supreme People’s Court, 182–94

Supreme People’s Procuratorate, 182–83

surrounding gaze, 145

surveillance. See censorship and surveillance


Taiwan, 159–60

Talking about Law on the Spot, 64

Talking Politics (Gamson), 163

Tamanaha, Brian, 211

Tang Qiaoying, 143

TASS (Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union), 78
technology. See information communication technologies

telecommunications service sector, III, 115

Television legal programs, 63–65

Tencent, 106, 110, 113, 152, 189, 198

Teng Biao, 186–87

thin theory of rule of law, 162, 211–13, 215, 218

Thompson, E. P., 211

Tiananmen democratic movement of 1989, 14, 24–25, 33, 34, 172, 203; economic triggers of, 47, 48; government corruption and, 140; law dissemination campaigns and, 61–62; lasting impact of, 92; People's Daily leadership and, 108; press restrictions and, 79, 80, 108–9; purge of Zhao Ziyang and, 48, 50, 83

Tiananmen incident of 1976, 14, 20–21, 32

Tianjin explosions, 198–99

Tian Wenhua, 150

Tianya Forum, 110, 117, 145–47; influential users of, 146–47; Sanlu milk scandal discussion on, 154–63, 253n3; user demographics of, 146. See also Sanlu milk scandal

Tou Zhen, 190

transformation of individuals, 9–10

transnational institutions, 6. See also World Trade Organization

21st-Century Business Herald, 81

unconstitutionality, 72, 73r, 77f

United Front Work Department, 195–96

University of Science and Technology of China, 21–22

U.S. Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act, 180

U.S. National Security Agency, 210

virtual private networks (VPNs), 179

Wang Gongquan, 124, 187

Wang Xiujuan, 175

Wang Yongchen, 141

Wang Zhidong, 110

Wan Yanhai, 139

WeChat (social media), 117, 175, 185–86, 191–98, 210; official accounts on, 194; public opinion incidents and, 198; state cultivation of cooperative voices on, 194–98

Weibo (social media), 12, 113–18, 121–26, 175, 193, 214, 251n19; BCI information dataset on, 122–23; Big Vs of, 122, 182, 186–87, 189, 199, 251n19, 255n39; community building on, 133, 137–42, 169–70; encounters with grievances on, 137–38; official accounts on, 194; offline social capital and, 122; public opinion incidents and, 116–17, 121, 126–28, 130–31, 142–70, 198; public opinion leaders of, 3, 117, 121–27, 145, 167, 199, 251n19; state cultivation of cooperative voices on, 194–98, 200; state suppression of, 182, 189, 191; user activity on, 117. See also netizens

Wei Zhengfu, 199–200

Welzel, Christian, 206

Wenchuan earthquake, 155, 172

Wenhu-Xinmin Press Group, 99

Wen Ku, 179

Wenzhou train collision, 122

WiseNews database, 73, 223, 225

women's rights, 60–61, 62–63t

World Bank, 249n34

World Internet Conference, 196

World Justice Project, 37

World Trade Organization (WTO), 109–10; China's accession to, 6, 47, 115, 117, 126; China's negotiations for entry in, 111

World Value Surveys, 12, 133, 134–36

Wuwang Club fire, 155

Wu Yingnu, 123

Wuzhen Summit, 196

Xiao Qiang, 16

Xici Hutong, 110

Xi Jinping, 12, 30–31, 33, 171–202; on building a “clean online space,” 195–96; on China's fragmented bureaucracy, 175; “Chinese dream” agenda of, 173–74, 195–96, 197; on classification of netizens, 174; consolidation of Internet regulation and security under, 176–82, 216–17, 254n16; consolidation of power under, 219; on cyber-sovereignty, 196–97; on information technology, 176; on media loyalty, 188–89; on public opinion leaders, 125–26; on socialist core values, 218

Xinhua News Agency, 183; online public opinion analysts at, 177; Sanlu milk scandal reporting on, 148–51, 156; as state mouthpiece, 111, 174, 188; on Tianjin explosions, 198

Xinmin Evening News, 59f, 72r, 74, 75t, 76t

Xi Wenju, 80–81

Xue Manzi, 124, 182

Xu Zhiyong, 186–87

Yahoo, 114, 116

Yahoo China, 116
Yang, Guobin, 16, 138, 170
Yangcheng Evening News, S9f, 72t, 75t, 76t, 78–79, 89–91
Yangcheng Evening News Group, 89
Yang Jian, 190
Yang Xingfeng, 190
Ye Jianying, 41, 46
youth rights, 60–61, 62–63t
Yu Qiuli, 41
Yu Xiucai, 143

Zeng Feiyang, 193
Zhang Dongmin, 190
Zhang Hong, 70
Zhang Zai, 85
Zhao Dingxin, 92
Zhao Lianhai, 154, 159
Zhao Ziyang, 21, 26, 108; CCP purge of, 48, 50, 83; on citizen oversight of the state, 49–50, 52, 83; political reform agenda of, 92, 172; on public opinion, 25
Zhengzhou Legal Program, 64
Zhong Ying, 143
Zhou Enlai, 20, 41
Zhou Qin, 123
Zhu Xuqi, 122–23
Zhu Yu, 249n40
Zou Yu, 60
Zuo Fang, 79–80

For general queries, contact webmaster@press.princeton.edu