Talk Radio, the Mainstream Press, and Public Opinion in Hong Kong

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Introduction

Communicating public opinion is one of the most important roles of the mass media in contemporary societies. While government leaders and politicians may have other means by which to gauge public opinion, and citizens can use interpersonal communication and observation of their surroundings to get a sense of what other people think about public matters (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995), all remain largely reliant on the media to inform them about what the society at large is thinking (Mutz, 1998). Media representations of public opinion may have strong or weak factual bases, but both politicians and ordinary people tend to act upon the public opinion as represented by the media (King and Schudson, 1995; Lang and Lang, 1983). As a result, media representations of public opinion are real in their consequences.

How public opinion is organized, communicated, and represented by the media therefore constitutes a core problematic in media studies. Although Hong Kong is not a fully developed democracy, a polling industry constituted by universities, political parties, social organizations, commercial companies, and sometimes the media itself is nonetheless active in producing information about public opinion. The news media regularly report on these opinion polls (Lee, 2006a). Beyond polling, the news media can also portray public opinion through people-on-the-street interviews. The proliferation of social media sites and user-generated content on the Internet offer additional raw materials for journalists interested in knowing and reporting on what ordinary people think about public affairs. When citizens engage in protests and rallies, news reports on such collective actions also provide the news audience a sense of where the public stands on specific issues.

In addition, the media provide platforms for ordinary citizens to express their views. While organized letters-to-the-editor sections are not widely adopted in Hong Kong newspapers, some newspapers do occasionally publish articles written by ordinary citizens in their columns or forum pages. Many news outlets set up forums on their websites or allow web readers to leave online comments on individual news stories. But these other types of media forums cannot match the impact of public affairs radio phone-in talk shows in terms of social prominence and influence over the last two decades in Hong Kong.

With a history of more than forty years in the city (Chan, 2009; Ngan, 2003), public affairs radio phone-in talk shows became highly prominent in the mid- to late-1990s, around the time the city returned to China. Specific talk radio hosts, such as Albert Cheng and Wong Yuk-man,[1] became influential public figures, or what the local media called "famous mouths" (*ming zeoi*, 名嘴),[2] by their sharp and daring criticisms toward the government and other power holders. The power of talk radio[3] arguably reached its peak in the year 2003. First, during the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak, talk radio became a site for both the hosts and ordinary citizens to monitor and criticize the government's handling of the epidemic. The news media even dubbed Albert Cheng, by then the most popular radio host in the city, the "Chief Executive [of Hong Kong] before 10 a.m."[4] On July 1, 2003, the second largest demonstration in Hong Kong's history occurred. Five hundred thousand people marched in the street to protest against the then imminent national security legislation as well as general government incompetence. The protest forced the government to postpone the legislation. After the event, it was reported that some Chinese government officials had identified a particular section of the news media, including "one newspaper, one magazine, and two mouths," as among the major mobilizing agents behind the protest. While the newspaper and magazine referred to *Apple Daily* and *Next Magazine*, respectively, the "two mouths" clearly referred to Cheng and Wong.

Less than a year later, amidst heated political debates surrounding democratic reform, Albert Cheng, Wong Yuk-man, and a third talk radio host—veteran politician Allen Lee—resigned from their post in quick succession. All three cited the political pressure they faced as an important factor in their decision. As in other controversies related to press freedom and media self-censorship in post-handover Hong Kong, there was no

concrete evidence proving that Chinese government officials had directly pressured the media organizations or the hosts. Media self-censorship is notoriously difficult to pin down (Lee and Chan, 2009a). However, by the time the controversy occurred, radio phone-in talk shows had already become important symbols of freedom of speech. Many saw the three resignations as signifying a huge setback to freedom of speech and civil liberties in general in the city.

Talk radio did not disappear from the scene though, even if its social prominence may have been seen to decline slightly in the years following 2004. In fact, talk radio remained an important channel for the communication of public opinion. This would continue to be the case at least until late 2011, which marked the end of the research project on which this book is based. Coincidentally, in November 2011, Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), the public broadcaster of the city, announced that it would not renew its contract with prominent radio talk show host Ng Chi-sum. Ng has been another talk show host famous for being a fierce critic of both the Chinese and Hong Kong governments. As in the case of the resignations of 2004, numerous commentators and politicians questioned whether RTHK's decision was politically driven.

This book is an attempt to make sense of the role that talk radio has filled in the political communication process in Hong Kong over the past fifteen years. It asks: How did the medium of talk radio take up its social and political significance? How did the social roles of the medium change over time, and how did the transformation of talk radio relate to the changing socio-political contexts? How did talk radio reproduce and communicate the voice of the people? How did talk radio interact with the mainstream news media? And how did the intermedia relationship and interaction shape the political significance of talk radio as well as the process of public opinion communication?

Tackling these questions contributes to a broader understanding of how public opinion is produced, communicated, and contested in the media and the public arena in Hong Kong. This book, in other words, is an attempt to use talk radio as a means to shed light on the processes of communication of public opinion. Although Hong Kong is not a democracy, the Hong Kong and Chinese governments have recognized the importance of public opinion to the governing process, especially after the aforementioned July 1, 2003 protest (Lee and Chan, 2011; Poon, 2008).

Yet in the absence of full democracy, polling may not enjoy the hegemonic status of being *the measure* of public opinion that it is in many established democracies. Rather, as Chan and Lee (2007a) explained, the discursive conception of public opinion is at least as important as the aggregative conception of public opinion in the Hong Kong context. The aggregative conception, as embodied in opinion polling, sees public opinion as the aggregation of individual opinions treated equally. The discursive conception sees public opinion as expressed through discourses. The discursive conception of public opinion calls our attention to claims and counterclaims made by and about "the people" in the public arena. The discursive politics of public opinion thus refers to the processes through which the claims and discourses compete with each other in the public arena, resulting in varying and often contrasting images of where "the public" stands on various political matters. These contrasting images then have to contest with each other for the status of being recognized as the majority view or even the social consensus in the society. Analyzing the communication of public opinion through talk radio should give us insights into the discursive politics of public opinion in Hong Kong.

Talk Radio Research: Forums, Discourses, Effects

Communication researchers have been interested in the audiences, content, and influence of talk radio for decades. In the United States, for instance, Crittenden (1971) wrote about radio phone-in talk shows as an "open-mike democratic forum" in the early 1970s. He argued that radio talk shows contribute to political communication by stimulating public discourses and formulating public issues. Early studies also focused on the characteristics of the phone-in talk show audience. These early studies did not necessarily focus exclusively on political talk shows, and their theoretical framework—derived mainly from uses-and-gratifications research—led them to focus on the personal motivations behind and the satisfaction obtained from talk radio listening and calling-in. These researchers emphasized not only the forum function but also the interpersonal function of phone-in programs (Armstrong and Rubin, 1989; Avery, Ellis and Glover, 1978; Tramer and Jeffres, 1983; Turow, 1974).

Research more sharply focusing on political or public affairs talk radio proliferated in the early 1990s in the United States, largely as a result of

the changing political communication landscape in that country. The early 1990s saw the rise of various forms of "new media" in American politics, signified by independent candidate Ross Perot's "new media campaign" in the 1992 presidential election. Although Perot's campaign did not ultimately win him the presidency, it succeeded in persuading the mainstream media to take him seriously as a viable candidate (Zaller and Hunt, 1994, 1995).

It should be noted that, within political communication research in the early 1990s, the term "new media" was often understood in the institutional rather than technological sense. It referred chiefly to a range of unconventional platforms for the communication of political information and messages, including not only the then newly popularized medium of the Internet, but also television entertainment talk shows and other infotainment programs in the broadcast media (Davis and Owen, 1998). Talk radio was considered to be one of the more prominent types of new media in this context. Interestingly, the proliferation of political talk radio and other audience participation programs in the United States (and the United Kingdom) in the early 1990s coincided temporally with the increase in dialogues about the public sphere, public deliberation, and deliberative democracy within the academia.[5] With these issues in mind, one of the major approaches to analyzing and understanding talk radio at the time was to pose the question of whether and in what ways political talk radio contributed to democratic public deliberation. Herbst (1995), for example, argued that talk shows provide channels for a bottom-up, unstructured communication of public opinion, as opposed to the top-down, structured communication of public opinion in polling. In polling, the pollsters set an agenda and define the set of alternatives from which people are invited to choose. As numerous critics have argued, polling reduces the notion of "opinion" from a discourse to a standpoint and turns the idea of public opinion from a moral-political principle into a social psychological phenomenon (e.g. Bourdieu, 1979; Ginsberg, 1986; Habermas, 1989; Herbst, 1993). In contrast, citizens take the initiative in choosing to participate in broadcast talk shows. They are relatively free to express their views on their own chosen subject matters at length.

Other studies in the United States and Europe have supported assertions about the democratic potential of talk radio and broadcast audience participation talk shows in general. Livingstone and Lunt (1994) and

Leurdijk (1996) have emphasized that talk shows allow citizens to express their views in their own terms and in relation to their everyday life. Ross (2004) has shown that, from the callers' perspective, talk radio does provide channels for meaningful participation. The callers believe in the ability of the programs (and, by implication, in themselves as callers) to raise the political awareness of listeners. Page and Tannenbaum (1996) have further illustrated that, under specific conditions, talk radio could become a channel for "populist uprising" against elite consensus and mainstream media discourse.

Certainly, the above-cited studies do not claim that all audience participation talk shows are good or such shows constitute the ideal public sphere in which discussions are completely free and equal. They simply show that certain types of audience participation programs have democratic potential under certain conditions. Not all talk radio discourses are valuable to the broader processes of public deliberation. In fact, the talk shows that become the most prominent in a society may damage more than contribute to reasoned public debate. Turner (2010), for example, provided a very critical evaluation of the talk radio scene in Australia and the United States. He argued that, despite the medium's egalitarian rationale, "the diversity and tolerance one might expect to flow from [public] participation are definitely not markers of the format's performance in practice" (p. 9).

Here, it is important to consider the fundamental point that broadcast talk shows are after all media programs produced by organizations with their own interests and concerns. Commercial media may see attracting an audience as more important than contributing to public debates. Moreover, different programs have their own set-up and basic structures—for example, elite guests may or may not be present, the amount of time devoted to receiving citizen calls can vary, the show may set the agenda or allow the callers to raise their own concerns, and the professionals conducting the programs may adopt varying styles. All these factors can influence the discourses of a show.

These considerations are central to a second major approach to the study of broadcast talk shows, namely, the close analysis of the discourses within the programs. These studies were mostly conducted by applied linguists and communication researchers adopting various discourse analytical techniques. Given the conversational nature of talk shows, the

methodological approach of conversation analysis has arguably been the most widely used (e.g. Ekstrom and Patrona, 2011; Tolson, 2001). While some of the discourse studies of broadcast talk shows have addressed issues that are specific to the interests of linguists, there have also been studies that have informed social scientists how talk shows operate as public forums and how "public opinions" are generated by the programs. Hutchby (1996) provided an exemplar of this type of research. Analyzing a specific talk radio program in the United Kingdom, he found that talk radio conversations are mostly organized around a "first-second" sequence. The conversations he analyzed usually began with the caller presenting his or her opinion on a specific issue, with the host serving mainly as a "respondent" to the caller's viewpoint. Callers were expected to speak first, whereas the host typically took up the second position. With this basic conversational structure, it initially appeared that the callers had the privilege to set the agenda of the conversation. However, this sequence provided the host with a powerful role of critic. The host could avoid having to offer a specific point-of-view, while easily picking up on the weaknesses or mistakes in the caller's speech. The callers, as a result, often had to face skepticism, disagreement, or criticism from the host. Hutchby (1996) thus concluded that discursive power is not equally distributed between the hosts and the citizen-callers in radio talk shows.

Hutchby's (1996) study reminds us that public opinion is *mediated* through the talk radio programs. More critical scholars may even argue that public opinion is being manipulated, and audience participation is only a stage-managed façade created to attract audience attention (Carpentier, 2011, pp. 105–111). Certainly, not all scholars agree with this extreme judgment. Theoretically speaking, recognizing that public opinion is mediated through the program structure and hosts' management practices in talk radio does not necessarily contradict arguments about the democratic potential of the medium. One may argue that the expression of public opinion through talk radio is still *relatively* more "bottom-up" than "top-down" when compared to polling. Besides, while radio hosts may indeed exercise their power to favor certain views and suppress others, it is also possible for them to use various techniques to help the citizen-callers better articulate their viewpoint. Discourse analysts are not always critical towards broadcast talk shows; they simply point to a set of issues for researchers to pay attention to.

Finally, a third group of studies about talk radio is constituted by a huge body of research on the talk radio audiences and the effects of talk radio listening. Regarding the audiences of talk radio, American political communication researchers in the 1990s were mainly interested in revisiting the image of the talk radio listener generated by earlier research, one example being the talk radio listener as an alienated, lonely person seeking interpersonal companions (e.g. Armstrong and Rubin, 1989). Studies in the 1990s showed that, contrary to earlier understanding, political talk radio listeners had higher levels of political interests, internal efficacy, news attention, and political participation (e.g. Barker, 1998b; Hofstetter, 1998; Hofstetter and Gianos, 1997; Hofstetter et al., 1994; Hollander, 1996, 1997). On the whole, talk radio listeners are active participants in public life, and talk radio listening can reinforce their propensity to participate (Pan and Kosicki, 1997).

In addition, numerous studies have analyzed whether talk radio listening can affect people's attitudes and opinions toward politicians, policies, and political institutions (e.g. Barker, 1998a, 1999; Barker and Knight, 2000; Bolce, deMaio, and Muzzio, 1996; Hall and Cappella, 2002; Holbert, 2004; Hollander, 1996; Jones, 1998, 2002; Lee and Cappella, 2001; Pfau et al., 1997; Yanovitzky and Cappella, 2002). The premise underlying this research effort is that talk radio provides the conditions for relatively powerful media effects (Barker, 1998a; Lee and Cappella, 2001; Owen, 1997, 2000): talk radio is not bound by the norm of objectivity, listeners tend to regard the hosts as credible sources of information and opinions, and talk radio messages are often legitimized by the audience members calling into the shows. Indeed, in the extant literature, significant relationships between talk radio listening and political attitudes have been repeatedly demonstrated.

Notably, some of the more recent research on the audiences and effects of talk radio in the United States have focused on specific prominent talk radio programs in the country, which are part of the conservative media enclave. According to Jamieson and Cappella (2008), media outlets including the *Wall Street Journal*, the Fox News Network, and several nationally syndicated conservative radio talk shows can be regarded as forming a conservative "echo chamber." Information and messages with the same ideological bias keep circulating and looping through the outlets constituting the echo chamber. The impact of conservative talk radio, therefore,

needs to be understood in terms of how it functions in coordination with other conservative media outlets.

This latter argument is illustrated by Holbert and Benoit's (2009) analysis of political campaign media connectedness. They found that audiences of one specific conservative media outlet were significantly more likely to consume another conservative media outlet, but were not more likely to consume other non-conservative media outlets. In other words, the consumption of media outlets belonging to the same ideological camp tends to reinforce each other. As a result, conservative media consumption can have important reinforcement effects on its audience. Similar findings can be found in Stroud's (2010) systematic study of partisan selective exposure. She found that partisans tended to select "likeminded" media outlets, and that such selective exposure can lead to more extreme political attitudes, higher levels of political participation, and adoption of a political agenda that would favor one's own side.

In sum, most of the studies on talk radio can be categorized as belonging to one of three groups. One group examined and evaluated broadcast talk shows as democratic public forums. Another group interrogated the characteristics of talk radio discourses, including how such discourses are structured by the institutional set-up and managed by the hosts. Yet another group focused on the effects of talk radio listening on people's attitudes and behavior, and some recent studies in the United States, in the tradition of "audience and effects" research, have tried to examine talk radio listening in relation to the consumption of other media outlets sharing similar ideological predilections. Certainly, the three approaches are interlinked. Studies of talk radio discourses can have implications on the analysis of effects, and analyses of discourses and of effects are pertinent to discussions of the democratic potential of talk shows. Insights from the different types of studies can be brought together for a more integrative analysis of the political significance of the medium in society.

This book draws upon insights developed in the research reviewed above. Talk radio is treated here as a site with the potential to contribute to public discussion, but with recognition that the expression of "public opinion" through the medium must be analyzed with attention to the organizational set-up and conversational dynamics of the programs. At the same time, characteristics of the talk radio audience and the effects of talk radio on listeners will also be examined.

In addition, this book goes beyond the conventional agenda of talk radio research in two ways. First, it emphasizes the role and significance of talk radio within its social and political contexts. Discussions about how social and political contexts shape the prominence and significance of talk radio do exist in the literature, but they have not received the amount of attention and systematic analysis that they deserve. Second, this book shares with some of the most recent studies of talk radio an emphasis on media interconnectedness. Talk radio is not treated as operating in a vacuum. Rather, a core contention of this book is the need to understand the political influence and significance of talk radio in Hong Kong through examining how talk radio situates within a broader media system and relates to the mainstream news media. The next two sections will elaborate on the issues of contexts and media interconnectedness.

Talk Radio in Varying Contexts

While radio phone-in talk shows exist in many countries around the world, the medium does not always enjoy the same level of prominence. Hence, there is the question of why talk radio could become a prominent medium in the political communication processes in specific societies at specific historical junctures. Answering this question requires that we put the medium into its social political context. For example, talk radio became a prominent type of "new media" in the early 1990s in the United States. Research on the audience and effects of talk radio may demonstrate the social prominence the medium has, but such research by itself does not explain its prominence. For an explanation, some researchers have pointed to the demise of the Fairness Doctrine in 1987, a regulatory provision that compelled broadcasters to produce balanced programming, as a cause for the proliferation of radio talk shows (Bobbitt, 2010). Berry and Sobieraj (2011), on the other hand, explained the continual prominence of talk radio into the 2000s by pointing to two major factors. Further deregulation of the broadcasting industry allowed chain ownership of radio stations to further expand, which encouraged the proliferation of nationally syndicated talk radio programs. In addition, advanced media technologies led to an increasing capability of ordinary people to control their own music consumption. Music programs became less profitable. In response, radio stations turned to the more profitable talk radio format.

While Bobbitt (2010) and Berry and Sobieraj (2011) focused on media regulations and the economics of the broadcasting industry, James Carey (1993) interpreted the talk radio phenomenon by focusing on the culture of political communication. He saw the rise of talk radio as representing a challenge to the traditional model of "journalism of information" adopted by the American news media. Journalism of information emphasizes factuality, objectivity, and journalistic detachment from the events and issues being reported on. Yet the practice of objectivity has resulted in its own biases against discussion of questions related to values and judgment (Hallin, 1994). Together with the trend of commercialization, electoral coverage by the mainstream media became dominated by a framework that treated elections as a horse race among self-interested politicians (Cappella and Jamieson 1997; Patterson, 1980, 1994). The public became more and more cynical toward politics and the mainstream media. Against this background, the prominence of call-in shows, for Carey (1993), signified the public's desire for a "journalism of conversation" that emphasized engagement and public debate. It was a demonstration of the public's attempt "to reform itself, outside the journalistic establishment, and to reassert both a public interest and public participation in the sphere of national politics" (p. 19).

Obviously, the contextual reasons for the rise of broadcast audience participation talk shows would be different in other countries. In East Asia, Taiwan constitutes an interesting case, though audience participation talk shows on television instead of radio tended to be more prominent in the island state. Sheng (2005) noted that, in the single week between October 20 and 24, 2003, there were a total of twelve political talk shows with audience participation aired by various television channels, attracting a total viewership of 8.6 million people. Sheng's own survey study found that 31 percent of the respondents reported listening to political radio talk shows occasionally or frequently, whereas 58 percent reported watching political talk shows on television occasionally or frequently.

However, audience participation talk shows on politics and public affairs had a relatively short history in Taiwan. The earliest radio political call-in show appeared there in 1987, whereas the first political call-in television show appeared in 1994 (Chang and Lo, 2007, p. 85). The emergence of call-in shows in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Taiwan was closely related to the island's democratization process. In fact, some of the

earliest radio talk shows were provided by underground radio stations supported by or supporting the political opposition (Yang, 2004). In 1987, the lifting of license restrictions opened the space for oppositional forces to publish newspapers and establish cable television channels. Then, the 1993 Radio and Television Act released a total of 151 frequencies for radio station, and the number of radio stations proliferated as a result (W. C. Lee, 2011, p. 52). These changes in media regulation coupled with the rise in political competition in general provided the ground for the rise of political talk shows.

Therefore, the process of democratization and the concomitant weakening of state control of the media allowed the proliferation of relatively free political discussions and thus political talk shows in Taiwan. At the same time, such talk shows played a role in furthering the democratization process by providing channels for the expression of minority and oppositional views (Yang, 2004, pp. 12–13). As Rawnsley and Rawnsley (1998) wrote in the late 1990s, new media outlets such as cable television at the time provided Taiwanese "with alternative information, opinion, and via the popularity of call-in programs, greater opportunities to participate in the political process" (p. 117).

The case of Taiwan illustrates the implications of social and political contexts on the roles and functions played by the medium of audience participation talk shows in a society. In democratic countries, discussions about the political roles and functions of audience participation talk shows tend to focus on the capability of the medium to expand public participation and sustain political deliberation. In authoritarian societies, political phone-in talk shows may also exist, but they are likely to serve a different set of functions. In Singapore, for instance, radio talk shows incorporated an educator and government facilitator to help the government communicate its policies to the general public. Critical content is predictably subdued (Fitzgerald, 2007).

In transitional societies, broadly defined here as societies undergoing the movement from an original political system to a new one, the key question has become whether the medium has played a role in generating and/or shaping the process of transition. Besides the case of Taiwan, several writers have mentioned the role of talk shows in their broader discussions of media and political transition in specific countries, though studies focusing specifically on broadcast talk shows in political transition

are rare. For example, when describing the end of the Park Chung-hee regime in South Korea after 1979, Kwak (2012) pointed out that "there were attempts by the media to voice the importance of press freedom and freedom of expression" (p. 16). Among such attempts were the Korean Broadcasting System's talk show programs, which "aired free discussions on the form of the new government, basic rights and judicial independence" (p. 16). Similarly, writing about the political transition in Spain after the Franco regime, Gunther, Montero, and Wert (2000) pointed out that the percentage of Spanish radio listeners rose from the early 1970s to the early 1990s. They pointed to the "proliferation of highly politicized talk shows, in which reporters and journalists engage in often lively arguments about political matters" (p. 69). They also remarked that the "tone of these debates is often quite contentious and goes well beyond the bounds of what would be tolerated in the print media" (p. 69).

Beyond academic writing, there are other sites where commentary can be found on the role of political talk shows in the processes of political transition or reform. In July 2003, *Time Magazine*'s Asia edition published an article entitled "Making Waves" (Beech, 2003). The author discussed talk radio—including both phone-in and non-phone-in shows—across Asia, providing anecdotes and examples from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, China, and Indonesia. The author concluded: "This region is tuning in as never before to talk-radio hosts whose medium delivers powerful messages like no other outlet." Another example of writing that points toward phone-in talk shows in particular, a Wikipedia entry on Kantor Berita Radio 68H, "Indonesia's only independent national radio news agency," introduces the station as "a unique initiative to assist Indonesia's transition to democracy by facilitating open and informed discussion among millions of people throughout the archipelago." It then further states that:

> The popularity of their phone-in programs—with dozens and sometimes hundreds of text messages and phone calls being received from all over the country during a single program—attests to the great enthusiasm with which listeners respond to this opportunity to have their say. Programs broadcast nationwide include weekly interactive talk shows on legal reform and human rights, health, religious tolerance, environment and economics, and others address topics such as religion and tolerance and education. A toll free phone number

> and text messaging facility encourages participation in all of these
> programs by listeners regardless of their economic, social or political
> status and a platform from which to state their views.[6]

Finally, political and social contexts also shape how talk radio relates to
other media platforms within a specific country. This seems to be another
issue on which a contrast between democratic and transitional societies
exists. Going back to the case of the United States, as noted earlier, into
the 1990s and 2000s, the most prominent national radio talk shows in the
United States have often had a strong conservative bias. Such talk shows
link with specific television and newspaper outlets to form a conserva-
tive echo chamber (Jamieson and Cappella, 2008). This phenomenon has
been partly a result of the loosening of regulatory constraints in the 1980s
and partly a result of the proliferation of media channels since the 1990s.
When people face virtually unlimited choices in the media arena, it may
no longer make sense for media outlets to attempt to catch the attention
of the *mass* audience. Instead, media organizations are increasingly con-
cerned about attracting a group of core followers, and having a sharp and
extreme political stance can help (Turner, 2010). In addition, conservatives
in the United States believed that the mainstream media in the country
had a "liberal bias." The rise of conservative media, therefore, was also
partly the result of the conservatives' efforts to construct their own media
platforms (Bobbitt, 2010; Jamieson and Cappella, 2008). Conservative
radio talk shows are often highly critical toward the mainstream press.
It is therefore not surprising that, from the other way round, profes-
sional journalists in America have held largely negative views toward the
conservative radio talk shows or radio talk shows in general. Journalists
tended to see the programs as platforms for the communication of una-
shamedly biased views, while some journalists might also see talk radio
as infotainment programs that trivialize politics (Cappella et al., 1996).

In contrast, when writing about the political and media transition in
Hungary in the 1980s, Sukosd (2000) stated:

> In Hungary, the pluralistic values and opinions originally character-
> istic of only the smaller-circulation media slowly infiltrated the mass
> media over the course of the 1980s as the frontiers of what could be
> said publicly were pushed further back each year. One expansionist
> strategy was for some journalists and editors in the large-circulation
> media to cover issues on the fringes of legality by referring to topics

that had been discussed in the lower-circulation press, on talk shows, and so on (p. 136).

Sukosd's (2000) description pointed to an alliance-like relationship between the mainstream mass media and "smaller-circulation media," including talk shows, at a time when its media system was liberalizing. As the mainstream media and professional journalists struggled to expand the sphere of free expression, talk shows and other alternative media became useful resources because of their willingness to address sensitive topics.

In fact, Hong Kong is another example where an alliance has been observed between a freedom-fighting or freedom-defending mainstream press and talk radio, which can serve as an outlet for critical and politically sensitive views. As Lee, Chan and So (2003) have observed, the mainstream news media in Hong Kong have been facing increasing political pressure due to the change in sovereignty in 1997. Media self-censorship has become a serious concern since the early 1990s. Meanwhile, the most prominent radio phone-in talk shows in Hong Kong in the past fifteen years have constituted a platform mainly for the expression of liberal and pro-democracy views. Hence radio talk shows have also tended to attract a pro-democracy audience (Lee, 2002). Given this situation, one strategy for journalists and media organizations to continue to address sensitive political matters was to draw upon the critical voices expressed through talk radio. Therefore, journalists in Hong Kong adopted a largely positive view toward talk radio. Based on a representative survey of journalists in 2001, Lee, Chan and So (2003) found that most journalists rated "radio programs" as the channel most representative of public opinion when compared to newspaper forums, government departments, and legislators' offices.

Although this discussion by no means constitutes a formal comparative analysis of the talk radio phenomenon in different countries, it highlights the variances in the talk radio phenomenon and the importance of understanding such variances in relation to broader social and political contexts. It also helps broaden our points of reference beyond the Anglo-American scene. Most importantly, it raises the question of the relationship between talk radio and the mainstream media. In fact, one of the most important contentions of this book is that the significance and prominence of talk radio in Hong Kong have to be understood by interrogating into the

talk-radio-mainstream-media nexus. A substantial part of the empirical analysis presented in this book is an attempt to interrogate into that nexus. The next section further elaborates on this contention and introduces the conceptual framework for analyzing the talk-radio-mainstream-media nexus.

Media Interconnectedness and Remediation

The seemingly congenial relationship between the mainstream media and talk radio in Hong Kong is crucial because the significance and prominence of talk radio in the city is unlikely to be explained solely by the nature, contents, and effects of the medium itself. This is not to say that the medium's own contents and effects on listeners do not matter; but even in its heyday, the most popular radio phone-in talk shows in Hong Kong had a daily audience of about 450,000.[7] Comparatively, each of the most widely circulated newspapers in the city—*Apple Daily*, *Oriental Daily*, and nowadays a number of free dailies distributed around the city—had a readership of at least one million per day, whereas the early evening newscasts offered by the free-to-air broadcaster Television Broadcasting Ltd. (TVB) also had a daily audience of 1.5 million or above. The limited audience size of talk radio means that the direct effect of talk radio on what people think is relatively limited at the aggregate level.

However, in the post-handover years, the mainstream media have arguably helps promote the prominence of talk radio in the public arena when they regularly report on content raised by talk radio programs. Such coverage gives talk radio content wider circulation. Media coverage also confers to the citizen-callers the status of being legitimate "representatives" of the general public. In moments of controversy related to radio talk shows, media coverage may even help construct the programs and their hosts as political symbols, signifying the socially cherished values of freedom of speech and of the press.

The above suggestions, of course, need to be empirically substantiated. Recognizing the importance of the nexus between talk radio and the mainstream press urges us to pose a number of questions: Why was a largely congenial relationship between the mainstream media and talk radio established? How can we understand this relationship within the changing political contexts of the city? What are the implications of this

relationship to the significance of talk radio and to the communication of public opinion in the society?

Notably, research addressing the inter-relationships between media types or outlets is not new in media studies. Researchers interested in the agenda-setting function of the news media, for example, have examined the notion of intermedia agenda setting for two decades (e.g. Roberts and McCombs, 1994). Journalism scholars are also well aware of how the mutual monitoring by news outlets can shape news content (Bockowzski, 2009). Yet research premised on media interconnectedness remains arguably the minority. When Holbert and Benoit (2009) developed their theory of political campaign media connectedness, they argued that media effects research has either focused on the impact of a single media type or attempted to compare the relative impact of different media types. Both approaches do not pay enough attention to the inter-relationships between media types, and the possibility that different media can mediate the effects of each other. Similarly, as discussed in the previous sections, in research about talk radio in particular, analysis that centered on the way talk radio relates to other media platforms appeared only in recent years.

To tackle the questions about the relationship between talk radio and the mainstream press in Hong Kong more systematically, this book develops a framework for analyzing the processes and effects of "remediation." In media studies, the term remediation was made famous by the seminal work of Bolter and Grusin (1999). They defined the term as "the representation of one medium in another" (p. 45). The premise underlying their analysis is the interconnectedness among media:

> A medium in our culture can never operate in isolation, because it must enter into relationships of respect and rivalry with other media. There may be or may have been cultures in which a single form of representation . . . exists with little or no reference to other media. Such isolation does not seem possible for us today (p. 65).

As cultural theorists and literary scholars, Bolter and Grusin (1999) developed the concept of remediation in their examination of the artistic and stylistic characteristics of new media. They were interested in constructing a framework critiquing new media forms and evaluating the cultural implications of new media technologies. Their focus is on how new media appropriate and sometimes refashion old media forms. For example,

cybersex can be understood as the remediation of the pornographic novel, and certain online games can be analyzed in terms of their remediation of cinematography. For Bolter and Grusin, remediation is driven by both economic considerations (e.g. the incentive to take the advantage of familiarity) and social factors (e.g. the incentive to acquire the status already enjoyed by an old media form). Through remediation, new media often define themselves in terms of their superior capability in accomplishing existing goals. At the same time, old media would also remediate the forms and contents of newer media technologies.

Nevertheless, there is no reason why the term remediation should be restricted to the analysis of new media technologies. When defined broadly as the representation of one medium in another, remediation can be considered as an umbrella term encompassing a wide range of more specific empirical phenomena. This has been illustrated by the range of empirical studies employing the conceptual label. Beyond studies on new media technologies (Kirkland, 2009; Scott and White, 2003; Silvio, 2007), others have employed the notion when analyzing the transnational appropriation of popular culture (Novak, 2010) and how parents and children play pretending games based on stories from children books (Prior, Hengst, Roozen and Shipka, 2006). Another typical example of remediation that has long existed in the media industry is repurposing, such as the production of films and television dramas based on novels or other types of writings (Wertheim, 2009). Remediation also occurs when traditional media thematically discuss the risks and opportunities associated with new media technologies. As Burgess and Green (2009) stated in relation to YouTube, the mainstream media's "struggle to comprehend and make sense of the meanings and implications of [the new medium] not only reflect public concerns, but also help to produce them" (p. 16). Although Burgess and Green (2009) did not use the word remediation, their argument points to the importance of examining how YouTube is represented in other media if one wants to understand the evolution of the website's social meaning and significance.

This book thus uses the term remediation because it can highlight the crux of the issues being addressed. The notion allows us to talk in terms of how the mainstream press remediates political talk radio. It is a useful conceptual label for a summary description of the phenomenon. Certainly, as remediation is defined at a high level of generality, additional concepts

are needed to guide the empirical analyses by pointing to the more specific ways through which remediation works in the case of the relationship between talk radio and the mainstream press in Hong Kong. I argue that the mainstream press has remediated talk radio mainly through thematic representation and content adaptation. Thematic representation refers to cases in which the mainstream press discusses the talk radio medium, personalities, and/or the programs in general instead of focusing on specific program contents. Thematic representation usually occurs when major news events related to the talk radio medium and/or involving major talk radio personalities happen. These can become "critical incidents" (Zelizer, 1992) during which intensive public discourses surrounding the medium arise to construct, negotiate, and contest its symbolic values. In Hong Kong, thematic representation has happened when talk radio became objects of controversies, as in year 2004 when three radio hosts resigned in quick succession due to perceived political pressure.

Content adaptation, meanwhile, refers simply to the process through which a media platform (i.e. the mainstream press in this case) appropriates the materials and discourses from another media platform (i.e. talk radio), incorporating them into its own content. Content adaptation can therefore be treated as synonymous with repurposing. The news media may use citizen-callers' opinions as "vox pops" in news stories. When politicians or government officials appear in talk radio programs, important information or messages may be communicated. In some cases, heated conversations between officials and callers or verbal mistakes made by politicians during a radio program can become news stories by themselves.

Content adaptation can occur regularly, especially when the reporting of talk radio content is routinized in the news making process. Therefore, content adaptation also tends to be more mundane and less conspicuous. Content adaptation is important because regular and frequent appearance of talk radio content in the news media can serve as a constant reminder to readers about the presence and presumed significance of talk radio. Regular content adaptation can also amplify and potentially redefine the significance of the messages conveyed through a medium. Generally speaking, the circulation of influential images and memorable discourses in the public arena in contemporary societies often involve the continual recycling of the images and discourses from one platform to another,

forming what some scholars called "media loops" (Manning, 1997) or what linguists may call "intertextual chains" (Solin, 2004). Without being continually appropriated by various media, an item can quickly become irrelevant to and be forgotten by the public as new waves of information and images keep coming up. Content adaptation is crucial in giving images, information, and discourses wider circulation and a longer lifespan in the mediated public arena.

Based on the above conceptualizations, the empirical studies reported in this book will focus on content adaptation and thematic representation respectively. But it should be added here that, no matter through thematic representation or content adaptation, remediation is essentially a selective process. A controversy involving talk radio or regular talk radio content may be reported to different extents and in different ways by different media outlets. In addition, when other news media report on talk radio contents, the contents are detached from the original conversational flow in talk radio and inserted into the flow of the news items. There is no single correct way for one medium to represent another. As a result, the remediated talk radio can appear very differently in different media outlets depending on the practical norms, operational routines, and/or ideological predilections of the appropriating outlet.

Therefore, an important part of the analysis of remediation of talk radio in Hong Kong would pay attention to the similarities and differences in how various mainstream news outlets thematically represented the medium and adapted its contents. In the Hong Kong context, analysis of differences among news outlets is crucial because the local press system exhibits a significant degree of media-political parallelism (Hallin and Mancini, 2004); different media outlets represent the viewpoints existing along the political spectrum in the society. Besides, the mainstream media, especially newspapers, can also be differentiated according to marketing positions, with a number of newspapers representing the highly commercialized, mass-oriented press and others constituting the elite-oriented, professional press. We can expect these newspapers to appropriate talk radio contents differently. This type of analysis also follows a long tradition of political communication research in the city (e.g. Chan and Lee, 1991; So and Chan, 1999).

Nevertheless, there should also be similarities in how the mainstream media outlets remediate talk radio. Despite their different political

and marketing positions, mainstream newspapers should share some "common interests" because of their being part of the mainstream media in the city and their fundamental similarities in being large-scale bureaucratic organizations charged with the task of producing a news product regularly. This may lead to similarities in how different newspapers appropriate talk radio contents. For instance, compared to having journalists going into the street to do people-on-the-street interviews, reporting on what citizen-callers said on talk radio is a cost-saving method to produce "vox pops." News media should also share the commitments to basic journalistic values such as a concern for press freedom and the need to report on issues that affect the society at large. Media outlets may be committed to these values to different degrees, but it is difficult for a mainstream media outlet to completely ignore them. These basic values may drive the media to relate themselves to talk radio in a specific way given the broader social and political context. Moreover, past research has shown that, when dealing with what Lee and Chan (2011) have called "energized public opinion" during major political events, media outlets that usually support different political stances may converge to support the same viewpoint. Hence different media outlets may appropriate talk radio content or represent the medium in similar ways when major events happen.

Finally, this book examines the effects of remediation. Conventional media effects research focus on how exposure to a certain medium would affect people's attitudes, opinions, and behavior. The notion of remediation points to a different type of media effects: to the extent that a medium is remediated by another medium, then people's consumption of the remediating medium may affect their perceptions and understanding of the characteristics and social significance of the medium being remediated. In the case examined here, we will be looking into how consumption of the mainstream media may relate to people's perceptions of the importance of talk radio in political communication.

In sum, an important part of this book's analysis will focus on how the mainstream press remediates talk radio through content adaptation and thematic representation. Media outlets are expected to demonstrate both similarities and differences in how they remediate talk radio. Remediation is also expected to affect how individual citizens evaluate and perceive talk radio as a medium. It should be noted that the concrete empirical

analyses presented in various chapters in this book will draw upon additional conceptual tools from the fields of political communication research, journalism studies, and discourse analysis. But the concepts of remediation, content adaptation, thematic representation, selective appropriation, and remediation effects constitute the outline of a framework for analyzing the relationship between talk radio and the mainstream press in Hong Kong.

Structure of the Book

This book attempts to examine the rise and transformation of talk radio in Hong Kong and how public opinion is communicated through the medium. Phone-in talk radio provides opportunities for ordinary citizens to express their views in the public arena, but the medium does not present a totally unstructured platform for public opinion expression. Rather, the voices of the people are mediated and shaped by the programming structure and interactive dynamics of the shows. Yet talk radio and the opinions expressed in it are further remediated by the mainstream media. In fact, I contend that talk radio has continued to maintain its prominence and distinctive significance over the past fifteen years in Hong Kong largely due to the changing social and political context of the city, which has led to the formation of a specific type of congenial and cooperative relationship between talk radio and the mainstream press. Remediation by the mainstream media occurs mainly through thematic representation and content adaptation, and different mainstream media outlets remediate talk radio in both different and similar ways. Remediation also influences how ordinary citizens evaluate and perceive the social roles and functions of talk radio.

Chapter 2 begins the empirical sections of the book with a historical analysis that demonstrates how talk radio has taken up varying characteristics and significance in the changing social and political contexts. Emphasizing the "multilevel interactions" between the media and its environment, the chapter shows that talk radio began as a channel for citizen-official communication in the late 1960s in Hong Kong. It was transformed into a platform for public discussion in the 1980s, and then became a critical watchdog in the 1990s and early 2000s. In most recent years, talk radio has become a channel for citizen-official communication

again, with a new emphasis on the accountability performance by political leaders.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine the mediation of public opinion within talk radio. Chapter 3 focuses on the case of the liberal-oriented *Open Line Open View* (*OLOV*). This chapter discusses the basic set-up of the program, and through a conversation analysis of a sample of program episodes, illustrates how the liberal and critical character of the program was produced through the conversational dynamics of the show. Chapter 4 then examines another type of radio talk shows in Hong Kong, what I will call the "accountability shows." This type of phone-in programs typically involves government officials and politicians as studio guests, and is therefore particularly newsworthy. Using three episodes of an annual program as a case study, the analysis focuses on how the hosts' conversation management shaped not only the voices of the people expressed but also the performance of the attending official.

Chapter 5 begins the analysis of remediation. It first further substantiates the argument of a congenial relationship between mainstream media and talk radio by drawing upon two representative surveys of professional journalists. It then presents a textual analysis of how newspapers reported the voices of the citizen-callers from talk radio as "public opinion." It illustrates the textual strategies employed to construct the callers as reasoning and engaged citizens and their views as substantive, representative, and potentially influential.

Chapter 6 continues the analysis of content adaptation, but with an emphasis on selective appropriation and therefore the differences between newspapers with varying marketing and political positions. It presents a content analysis of how frequently different types of talk radio materials were used by different newspapers. Then, drawing upon the analysis of reported speech and constructed dialogue by applied linguists, the chapter discusses how news articles construct society-wide dialogues through organizing the discourses from talk radio with discourses from other speech contexts. It shows how the political stances of the newspapers are embedded in such constructed dialogues.

Chapter 7 goes beyond the reporting of talk radio contents in daily news and examines what is called the life cycle of iconic sound bites in the media arena. Talk radio can be a source of prominent sound bites, such as verbal blunders made by politicians in the show. The sound bites are not

only reported in news; they can also be recirculated in media and public discourses. Focusing on the case of a verbal transgression committed by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong government in 2008, the chapter examines how a sound bite originated from talk radio was negotiated and appropriated in the media arena over time.

Chapter 8 turns to thematic representation and examines three key moments in the past fifteen years during which the symbolic value of talk radio was constructed and negotiated: the physical attack of Albert Cheng in 1998, the resignation of three radio talk show hosts in 2004, and the non-renewal of Ng Chi-sum's contract in 2011. The analysis illustrates the extent to which and the ways in which talk radio was defended by the press when it was perceived to be under attack. It shows how talk radio was articulated with the notion of freedom of speech. The similarities and differences among the three cases also illustrate the changing symbolic status of talk radio in Hong Kong.

Chapter 9 turns to survey data to examine the characteristics of talk radio listeners. More important, the chapter examines public perceptions of talk radio and analyzes the presence or absence of remediation effects by looking into the relationship between perceptions of talk radio and mainstream news media consumption. It provides evidence showing that the remediation processes analyzed in Chapters 5 to 8 do matter.

Finally, Chapter 10 discusses the theoretical implications of the book on the analysis of media interconnectedness and remediation, and the implications of the findings in relation to the broader problematic of the communication of public opinion in Hong Kong. It also comments on the most recent and possible future development of talk radio in the city.

Notes

1 Introduction

1. The family name of a Chinese name is presented upfront.
2. Throughout this book, Chinese characters are represented by their Cantonese pronunciation and italicized. All the alphabetic representations of the pronunciations of words were derived from the website http://humanum.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/Lexis/lexi-can, operated by the Research Institute for the Humanities at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.
3. In Hong Kong, there are phone-in talk shows not focusing on public affairs, and there are radio talk shows on public affairs without a phone-in component. At the same time, phone-in shows on public affairs can also be organized by television. But to avoid repetition and verbosity, throughout this book, unless stated otherwise, the term "talk radio" is used as a shorthand to refer to radio phone-in talk shows on public affairs, whereas sometimes the term audience participation talk shows or broadcast talk shows is used to refer to talk shows on both radio and television involving the participation of common people.
4. Albert Cheng's show *Teacup in the Storm* was broadcast from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. at the time.
5. This explosion of interests in deliberative democratic theories and the concept of the public sphere was, of course, partly driven by the publication of the English translation of Jurgen Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* in 1989. Throughout the 1990s, the prominence of the overlapping and/or inter-related notions of public sphere, deliberative democracy, dialogic democracy, and discursive democracy is evidenced by the publication of numerous influential works by political theorists such as Amy Guttmann and Dennis Thompson, John Dryzek, Iris Marion Young, James Bohman, and James Fishkin, among many others.
6. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kantor_Berita_Radio_68H.
7. "Ratings dropped; rumors about sales are spreading," *Sing Tao Daily*, July 3, 2005, p. A02.

2 Historical Transformation

1. This chapter is based on a Chinese article written by the author and Gary K. Y. Tang, published in the Chinese journal *Communication & Society*.
2. The New Territories were mostly rural areas at the time and many villages had their own customs and traditions. Hence the colonial government established a distinctive administrative system for the New Territories. The District Office in the New Territories was established in 1907 and was in charge of collecting land taxes, communicating with the major village clans, and resolving conflicts between Hong Kong laws and Chinese customs. During the 1966–67 riots, social stability was largely maintained in the New Territories. The colonial government attributed this to the work of the District Office and hence decided to adopt the system in the urban areas (Tsang, 2004).
3. The original interviews were conducted in Cantonese. Direct quotes from the interviews, when presented, were translated by the author or his assistants.
4. The English name is the author's own literal translation. The literally translated name is used here because it is illustrative of the characteristics of the show.
5. The Chinese government saw such infrastructure projects as attempts to use up the financial reserves of the Hong Kong government before the handover.
6. One of the most important measures in Patten's political reform, for example, is to expand the voter base of the "functional constituencies" of the legislature to cover virtually all working citizens in the city. The functional constituency elections thus became virtually direct elections based on occupational sectors.
7. This refers to the official English title of the program. The Chinese title of the program, if literally translated, would be *Freedom Wind, Freedom Phone*. The official English title, with the emphasis on openness, also captures part of the core meaning of the Chinese title.
8. One example in November 1998 involved the wife of Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa. An airline employee called into the program saying that Mrs. Tung had just traveled on a plane she served. She claimed that Mrs. Tung requested to be seated at A1, the front seat, which was already occupied by another customer. When the air stewardess tried to explain to Mrs. Tung, Mrs. Tung replied, "Do you know who I am?" The mainstream press further investigated the story and turned it into a minor scandal.
9. The program was aired between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m., but with a 30-minute newscast inserted in it.
10. The audience size of CR's morning talk show declined reportedly from the peak of 450,000 to about 150,000 after *Teacup* was replaced by *Clear Day*. "Ratings dropped; rumors about sales are spreading," *Sing Tao Daily*, July 3, 2005, p. A02.
11. The document is the Broadcasting Authority's information note no. 4: Codes of Practices for broadcasting programs. The document can be accessed at www.hkba.hk/en/doc/ba_info_note_e4.doc.

12. Submissions by major broadcasters regarding the *Draft* were archived by the Legislative Council. It was accessed at http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr00-01/english/panels/itb/papers/cb1-106-05e.pdf.
13. The backdrop was specifically designed for showing the logo and name of the station when the studio is filmed by television.
14. Wise News is a commonly used electronic news archive in Hong Kong that incorporates the contents of all local newspapers since 2000.
15. This figure was already boosted by news stories about RTHK's decision not to renew their contract with Ng Chi-sum in 2011.

4 Performing Accountability in Talk Radio

1. This chapter is based on an article written by the author and Professor Angel M. Y. Lin of the Faculty of Education of the University of Hong Kong. The article was published in the book *Talking Politics in Broadcast Media*, edited by Mats Ekstrom and Marianna Patrona.
2. The interviews were conducted in the latter half of year 2009.
3. Roughly speaking, as a public broadcaster, RTHK is not affected by commercial concern and its approach to news and public affairs programming is generally more "professionally journalistic." Metro Radio focuses relatively more on financial news and its news and public affairs programs are targeting at the better-educated audience. Commercial Radio, meanwhile, is arguably the most populist among the three broadcasters. Its programs are aiming at a more undifferentiating "mass audience."

5 Talk Radio as Vox Pops

1. Some researchers have argued that, due to changing economic and technological conditions, there is a recent trend of increasing emphasis on ordinary people in the news (Weldon, 2007). Yet relatively speaking, mainstream journalism still has an overall emphasis on elites rather than common people.
2. The surveys were conducted by Professor Clement Y. K. So, Professor Joseph Chan, and the author, all at the School of Journalism and Communication at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Both surveys covered all major newspapers and news departments at radio and television broadcasters in the city. The sampling population consisted of all journalists working in these organizations for social, political, and economic news, regardless of whether the news is local, national, or international. Due to length concern, two versions of the questionnaire were created to ensure a better response rate. Some core questions were asked in both versions, and some were asked in only one of them. Thus numbers of respondents vary across questions. The questionnaires were distributed by individual journalists serving as "contact points" at each organization. They were asked to place a questionnaire on every journalist's desk, with the two versions distributed on alternate news

desks. Respondents finished the questionnaire by themselves in their free time. The "contact points" then collected the completed questionnaires and returned them to the coordinating research assistant. The 2006 survey had a total of 1,003 respondents and a response rate of 55 percent. The 2011 survey had 926 respondents and a response rate of 60 percent.

3. The question used the term "radio program" instead of phone-in talk shows. But given the topic, it is safe to assume that most respondents would take "radio programs" to mean phone-in talk shows.

4. In 2006, 91.7 percent of radio journalists and 83.6 percent of TV journalists who had given a valid answer opted for radio program. The corresponding figures from the 2011 survey are 96.8 percent and 83.5 percent respectively.

5. A technical qualification should be added here: the effective sample sizes of the two surveys vary because the media function items in Table 5.3 were included only in one version of the questionnaire in the 2011 survey. The result is that the effective sample size for the analysis is only about 450 in 2011. The smaller sample size certainly would make it relatively more difficult for the results to achieve statistical significance.

6. To derive a sample of articles, a keyword search, using the keyword set "'radio program' or 'phone-in program'," was done using Wise News. The search was restricted to articles in the main news, Hong Kong news, educational news, and political news sections. Given the ways Hong Kong newspapers usually differentiate among various news sections, these sections should have covered most local social and political news. Other sections that contain local news include "court news" and "financial news," but the latter sections are less relevant to the present study since the type of news stories reported in such sections is very unlikely to involve the appropriation of the voices of callers to public affairs talk radio. Thousands of articles came up from the search. The two coders were instructed to follow a systematic sampling procedure when locating articles to be coded: They start with the first relevant article of each month and then code every fifth article emerging from the search. If the fifth article is not a relevant article, the next article would be coded instead. Here, a relevant article refers to a news report which involved the coverage of radio program contents aired on the previous day. The final sample consists of 832 articles.

7. All items reported in this chapter have sufficient levels of inter-coder reliability (Scott's *pi* > .80).

8. All excerpts were translated by the author.

6 Reconstructing Social Dialogue

1. Part of this chapter is based on a published article: Lee (2013), Contents and effects of newspaper coverage of talk radio in Hong Kong: A study of remediation through content adaptation, *Mass Communication & Society*. The second half of this chapter is based on another published article: Lee, Francis L. F.

(2012), Remediating prior talk and constructing public dialogue: Newspaper coverage of political talk radio discussions in Hong Kong, *Journalism Studies*, *13*(4), 583–599.

2. It should be noted that these characterizations of the newspapers' political stances are just generalizations. Newspapers' performance in specific political events may not always follow their political stance closely. Also, there can be shifts or adjustments in the newspapers' political stance over time. *Ming Pao*, for instance, seems to have become relatively more outspoken and critical toward the government since the latter half of the 2000s.

3. The patterns and findings would remain substantively the same if the four newspapers were separated. As far as the characteristics summarized in Table 6.1 are concerned, *Apple* and *Oriental* are indeed similar to each other and at the same time distinctive from *MP* and *STD*.

4. Articles that read like transcripts of question-and-answer sessions do appear on some newspapers, especially the pro-government ones. The question-and-answer session format would present a picture of an official diligently answering questions posed by citizens.

7 The Life Cycle of Iconic Sound Bites

1. This chapter is based on a published article: Lee, Francis L. F. (2012), The life cycle of iconic sound bites: Politicians' transgressive utterances in media discourses, *Media, Culture & Society*, *34*(3), 343–358.

2. The Chinese newspaper contents were translated by the author.

8 Constructing the Symbolic Value of Talk Radio

1. The case has remained unsolved since 1998. The identities of the attackers remain unknown.

9 The Talk Radio Audience and Remediation Effects

1. Part of this chapter is based on a published article: Lee (2013), Contents and effects of newspaper coverage of talk radio in Hong Kong: A study of remediation through content adaptation, *Mass Communication & Society*.

2. Target respondents were all Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong residents aged between eighteen and seventy. People over seventy years of age were not included because senior citizens often had difficulties completing lengthy telephone interviews. A set of phone numbers was first generated by systematic sampling using the most recent residential phone directories. The last digit of the numbers was added by 1 to include non-listed numbers. The most recent birthday method was used to select the target respondent from a household. A total of 862 interviews were completed, yielding a response rate of 42.5% according to American Association of Public Opinion Research formula 3. Due to the proliferation of telephone surveys in Hong Kong, response rates

for telephone surveys are often low. The current response rates are typical of survey research in the city. When compared to the population, the sample does not differ from the population substantially in gender ratio and age distribution. But well-educated people with high income were over-sampled, so the sample was weighted according to income for the analysis.

3. Given the small percentage of people who have ever called in, the call-in variable was dichotomized, and hence logistic regression was conducted.

4. Technically, in order to avoid multicollinearity (i.e., extraordinarily high levels of correlation among the independent variables in a regression analysis), the interaction terms were centered around means.

5. All six items are significantly and positively related to each other. Nominally, the correlations between items belonging to the same conceptually-defined function are particularly high ($r = .53$ between items 1 and 2; $r = .45$ between items 3 and 4; $r = .63$ between items 5 and 6). However, in an exploratory factor analysis, the six items form only one single factor.

6. In fact, the performance of the news attention X talk radio listening variable is affected by multicollinearity (even with the centering procedure, the correlation between the two interaction terms is substantial because they share the same constituent). If the interaction between news attention and mass-oriented newspaper readership is removed from the model, the interaction between news attention and talk radio listening would become highly significant ($p < .01$).

7. Based on the regression results, for people who scored at 1 S.D. above mean on talk radio listening and who were readers of either *Apple Daily* or *Oriental Daily*, an increase of 1 S.D. in news attention would be associated with an increase in around 0.25 S.D. in perceived importance of talk radio.

8. Based on the figures in Table 9.9, an increase in 1 S.D. in news attention would lead to an increase in 0.32 S.D. in attention to citizens' views in talk radio among people who had average level of talk radio listening. But the same increase in news attention would lead to an increase in 0.61 S.D. in attention to citizens' views in talk radio among people who scored at 1 S.D. above mean on talk radio listening.

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