The Portrayal of Crime in Chinese TV Crime Infotainment Programs

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Abstract

This thesis is an empirical study of the portrayal of crimes in Chinese television crime infotainment programs. In this study, the portrayals of crime, criminals, victims, and police are each analysed. The criminal ideology conveyed in these programs is also discussed with reference to theoretical models and existing research in the field. A major aim of this thesis is to process the empirical materials collected from three crime infotainment programs, to analyse these findings, and to discuss the results in light of critical theories that cover the relationship of media and crime. The thesis is part of the research field of media & crime. Existing studies in these fields have primarily been conducted in the UK and the USA. Thus it is interesting to conduct a study about crime and the media in a Chinese context.

The main research question of this work is: How do Chinese TV crime infotainment programs portray crimes? The purpose of this study is to examine the portrayal of crimes in Chinese TV crime infotainment programs and to investigate the crime ideology conveyed in these programs. It uses quantitative content analysis and qualitative critical discourse analysis as research methods. The materials I use for this study are selected from three Chinese TV crime infotainment programs: Front Line, Legal Report and Courtroom. The analysed sample consists of 67 episodes from these three programs. The results of this study suggest that certain types of crime are over-reported in the analysed programs. The portrayals of crime, criminals, victims, and police are subjective and emotive. The concept of the spectacle is crucial for understanding these programs. Moreover, a conservative ideology of crime and conservative solutions to crime are found to be central elements in the portrayal of criminalities in all three programs.
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1. Introduction

In recent years, TV crime infotainment programs have become popular in China. These are a combination of crime news and entertainment programs. Crime events are presented to the public in the form of stories and documentaries. Ideology plays a crucial role in these programs. Criminal ideology is constructed through the portrayals of crime and in the comments given by the anchors; visual and auditory elements are carefully combined to convey an ideological perspective to viewers, yet this remains invisible to the general viewer. Comments such as “Because of his greediness and cruelty, a mother lost her son. He is going to pay for what he did with his life, and he is condemned by others...” (Courtroom, 2011.12.24) and “These two young men should have earned a living by hard work. Instead, they chose to commit crime...” (Legal Report, 2011.12.21), are conveying a conservative ideology of crime. This treatment of crime is common in these programs. From the examples, I find that the portrayal of criminals, and victims are powerfully emotive. Criminals are scapegoated, and viewers are encouraged to sympathise with victims. Moreover, the ideologies conveyed in the examples are typical to a conservative crime ideology. The question is, are these findings in the examples typical? This thesis will address this question with reference to the sample studies, previous researches, and actual crime statistics.

1.1 Research Question and Purpose of the Study

The interest of this research lies in the portrayal of crimes and the constructed ideology of crime and criminal control in TV crime infotainment programs. According to this research interest, I construct one main research question and one secondary question.

Main research question: How do Chinese TV crime infotainment programs
portray crimes?
The portrayal of crimes includes the portrayal of victims, criminals, police, and the portrayal of different types of crime. In the examples, it is interesting that I can trace the emotions and judgments towards crimes, criminals and victims. Through this research question, I intend to find out whether there is a typical portrayal of criminality on Chinese crime TV programs, and what that typical portrayal is. Similar study about Chinese crime TV programs does not exist. However, there are some studies about the media portrayal of crimes in the West. For example, Chermak and Chapman's (2007) study shows that violent crimes are over-represented in the media, while misdemeanor crimes are under-represented. Greer (2007) indicates in his study that the media tend to choose the “ideal victim” to report. Also, Marsh and Melville (2009) study the types of criminals which most commonly get media attention. According to these scholars' studies, when reporting crime events, the media tend to follow certain trends. I intend to identify the trend in Chinese TV crime infotainment programs by addressing the research question I outlined above.

Secondary research question: What ideology of crime is conveyed in these programs?
Usually, from the portrayal of crimes in a program, the program's crime ideology can be traced. These two elements are closely intertwined, a fact which will become clear in light of the examples in the body of this thesis. Criminals are routinely blamed and criticised. They are accused of committing crimes because of their personal defectiveness. This is a typical conservative ideology, but is it the typical crime ideology conveyed in Chinese TV crime infotainment programs? I shall find the answer through the secondary research question.

Overall, the research purposes of this thesis are to:
1. Examine the portrayal of crimes in Chinese TV crime infotainment programs.
2. To investigate the ideology of crime conveyed in these programs.
Thus, this study falls into the field of media and crime study. One of the most important works in this field is *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, The State and Law and Order* (1978) by Stuart Hall et al. It rigorously investigates the ideological role of the media between the state and policing agencies and the public. Another foundational work is Stanley Cohen’s *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (1972/2002). It introduces the concept of moral panic and describes the relation between crime, media, and the public. These works emphasise on the importance of ideology in understanding the mass media's role in constructing crime, crime control, crime justice, and policy-making, and have had considerable influence on contemporary research in this field. For example, cultural criminology takes the essence of their study and moves further into the study of cultural aspects of crime, more specifically, the symbolic meanings of carnival crime and the idea of addressing deviance as spectacular. Now the role of media is not limited as the medium of conveying ideology to the public; it also forms a platform for presenting crime. The flourishing of crime shows and online criminal videos indicate the public's increasing fascination with illicit subcultures. Within several decades, the study of media in the criminology domain has gained more and more legitimate status. It plays a pivotal role in helping us understand deviant subcultures and their influences on central value systems and policing making processes. Moreover, there are also many studies about media portrayal of crimes which have been conducted by Western scholars (Chermak, 1994, 1995; Chermak et al., 2006; Chermak and Chapman, 2007, Greer, 2007; Jewkes, 2003, Marsh and Melville, 2009 et al.). These studies have sought to identify: which types of crime are over reported, and which other types are under represented?; what an “ideal victim” looks like, and what kind of victim is most reported?; what a “typical criminal” looks like? What kind of criminal is over represented?; How does the public view the police? I am going to compare my findings with their study results in Chapter 6.
1.2 Significance of the Study

In the Western criminological domain, the study of mass media construction of crime and criminal justice has been developed for several decades. Such studies in the Chinese criminology domain are far less mature. "Foreign, comparative and cross-cultural criminological studies, especially from an indigenous perspective are rare" (Hebenton and Jou in Wong 2009: Chapter 1) due to "the inception, the focus, methods, theories and style of criminology scholarship in and about China are clearly and pre-dominantly Euro and Anglo-centric" (Wong 2009: Chapter 1). Currently, dominant media and crime theories derive from Western ones, especially those from British and American academia. The theories are established based on Western media practices, which makes it an interesting question of how apt they are as tools for investigating the Chinese media. Moreover, there is no specific study on Chinese TV crime infotainment programs at this point. Therefore, this thesis is academically relevant, as well as being a timely and interesting topic. Since the media have great influence on the public, it is useful for both policy makers and the public to understand how the media are able to manipulate ideologies through programming. Thus, this paper has a double implication for Chinese society.

1.3 Paper Structure

Apart from this introduction, this paper is divided into six chapters, which are as follows: In Chapter 2. Chinese Ideologies of Crime and Crime Control, I will introduce the history and development of Chinese crime and crime control ideology. In Chapter 3, I will give a general description of the theories pertaining to the field of media and crime. I will introduce the research methods for this study in Chapter 4. I will use quantitative content analysis and qualitative discourse analysis as my primary research methods. I will select 67 episodes of infotainment programs from three Chinese TV crime infotainment programs as my study materials. The materials will be processed in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, I
am going to analyse and discuss the findings using my established theoretical framework, and referring to previous studies. In the final chapter, I will provide a conclusion to the rest of the thesis.
2. Chinese Ideologies of Crime and Crime Control

“Previous research suggests that the foundation of Chinese thinking about crime is erected on three assumptions: that humans are social by nature; that socially inculcated thoughts determine actions; and that, as social products, human actions are malleable. These assumptions are deeply rooted in Chinese culture, it is held, because they derive, if in different ways, from the traditions of both Confucianism and communism” (Troyer in Cao and Cullen, 2001).

As Troyer observers, the Chinese ideologies of crime derive from both ancient China and Peoples’ Republic of China. Within this time, there appeared many different schools of thought, which constructed the criminal thinking system we have today. Therefore, when exploring ideologies of crime I must take into account a thorough consideration of the entire history of Chinese civilization. I am going to investigate the various forms of crime ideology found from the era of Imperial China to contemporary China. In the following parts of this chapter, the form and the changes of the Chinese criminal world will be presented and I am going to see how people in the past and the present see crime. According to Li (1991) and Wang (2008), I can pursue the exploration of ideologies of crime chronologically. There are two major eras: the imperial period and the modern period.

Before going any further, I have to make clear what the word ‘crime’ means literally in Chinese language. Unlike alphabet based languages, every Chinese character has its own meaning, words can be composed of one character, or two, or even more. The word ‘crime’ in Chinese translates as ‘犯罪’ (zui), however it
usually comes with the verb ‘犯’ (fan) which means ‘commit’. ‘犯罪’ (fan zui) as a word means ‘commit crime’. Interestingly, if you change the order of these two characters into ‘罪犯’ (zui fan), then the meaning is changed into ‘criminal’ (a person who commits crimes). Another vital explanation is ‘违法’, which means ‘breaking law’. It often appears alongside with ‘犯罪’ (fan zui).

2.1 Ideologies of Crime and Control in Imperial China

“Scholars create chaos in the law with the pen, martial people violate prohibition by force.”

(Han Fei in Wong, 2008: 219)

Kam C. Wong states in his work the Study of Criminology in China: Historical Development Part I “in the 1980s the independent academic field of ‘criminology’ had just come to existence” (Wang 2008: 220). Nonetheless, the study of crime can be traced as far as 1100 BC. In imperial China, ‘crime’, ‘law’ and ‘punishment’ were parts of ruling process. The ruling class, ‘the royal’ (huang shi) and ‘the noble’ (shi zu) took them as a part of governance issues. According to Hsu, the idea of crime and punishment were “philosophically and theoretically” studied under the domain called ‘cosmic order’ (Hsu in Wang 2008: 220). There were many schools of thought that appeared in imperial China. However one thing that never changed was the absolute ruling status of emperors. The whole society operated under a strict hierarchical social system: a system which did not only entail law but moral judgment as well. The three cardinal guides (san gang) and five constant virtues (wu chang) were viewed as the foundational explanations for the system. The concepts of the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues were first introduced by Dong Zhonshu1 of Western Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD). The three cardinal guides (san gang) demand that ruler guides subjects, father guides son, husband guides wife and the five constant virtues

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1 《春秋繁露》 Chun Qiu Fan Lu
2 “The distinction between noble and humble, superior and inferior was to be based on three sets of criteria: talent, virtue and relations. Thus, an educated person was superior to an illiterate, a virtuous person
Virtues are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity. The concepts derived from Confucius' moral standard the emperor is the emperor, the minister is the minister, the father is the father, and the son is the son (jun jun chen chen, fu fu zi zi). Dong Zhonshu then officially established them as the fundamentals of feudal, hierarchical system and further confirmed the rightful ruling status of emperors, fathers and husbands. Following such a manifesto, many great thinkers put all their efforts into perfecting emperors’ rule. Crime, law, and order as an important part of emperors’ governance came to exist during the first slave dynasty and were continuously elaborated during the feudal dynasty for the purposes of the ruling classes. According to Li, (1991) there were four primary periods of Chinese imperial legal system: the exploration, the foundation, the formation and the development period (Li, 1991). In the following part, I am going to see how diverse ideas of crime, law, and order emerged throughout thousands of years of imperial civilization with the effort of countless great thinkers, philosophers and politicians. Through conflicts and compromises, some disappeared, some merged into other ways of thinking, while others stood out and were recognized by the ruling classes. Those winners gradually integrated into social practice and formed as the dominant paradigm. It is not only history I am talking about here. Still today, this paradigm has practical influence on the ideological system of crime, law, and order. Before I start to investigate the traditional Chinese crime ideologies, I must bear it in mind that the four periods I am about to go through were not segmented but internally consistent and coherent.

2.1.1 Exploration period (711 BC—20th Century)
In history, this period was politically considered as the ‘slave dynasty era’. Both the political and economic systems were based on slavery. The first law, order, and punishment system ‘li’ (礼) started there. ‘Li’ was one of the most crucial parts of Chinese imperial ideological system. It stood for social regulations and was also a primary form of law in the slave dynasty period. However compared
to official written law, 'li' is considered as the law of common sense (Li, 1991). It accumulated all the ancient customs and those which were in favor of the ruling class were refined and enhanced. Making them regulated and enforced, the ruling class armed themselves with a powerful ruling weapon. The primitive forms of 'li' were mainly used in Xia Dynasty (夏朝 about 2070-1600 BC) and Shang Dynasty (商朝 1600-1046 BC) and were known as 'xia li' (夏礼) and 'yin li' (殷礼). 'Xia li' and 'yin li' were religious concepts, centered by gods. The ruling classes in Xia and Shang paid great respect and felt great fear towards the Divine, and they brought their worship into their law and order system. Thus, Xia and Shang are called by scholars as 'the divine law era' (Li, 1991). Criminal behaviour was viewed as a form of disrespect towards the Divine and criminals were brought to temples and punished in front of the gods.

While Xia and Shang were ruled by 'the divine law', the first rational legal system was established in Zhou Dynasty (also known as Xi Zhou 西周 1046-771BC). According to Wong, the first traceable thought on law and order came from Zhou Gong of Xi Zhou (Wong 2001: 221). Xi Zhou was still ruled by 'li', Zhou Gong was the primary author of 'zhou li', unlike 'xia li' and 'yin li', 'Zhou li' was the blueprint and handbook of government practice, and it was more rational and analytical, when compared to the previous divine law system. The core of 'zhou li' consisted of three systems: Patriarchal Clan System (zong fa zhi), Enfeoffment System (fen feng zhi) and Hereditary System (shi xi zhi). These three systems constituted the political system of Xi Zhou. Guan Zhong integrated law and order protocols into governance. The legal system was bonded by the political system for the first time. Criminal law, civil law, lawsuit procedure, justice administration and penal philosophy must all follow the principles of the three systems (Li, 1991; Wong, 2001). At that time, law and order were embedded in governmental affairs and were without independent status. 'Zhou li' established a fresh model of governance which had a profound influence on the later dynasty (Li, 1991). The core spirit of 'always distinguish between the noble and the
humble, the elder and the younger’ was later adopted by Confucius, the father of Confucianism which is thought of as the dominant ideology of imperial China.

2.1.2 Foundation period (770 BC—581AD)
In ChunQiu ZhanGuo era (春秋战国 770—221BC), the society was undertaking dramatic changes. The slave system was collapsing, and the feudal system was gradually taking its shape. Accompanied by the transforming of the political system, the imperial legal system was also shaped anew. Under the slave-based system, law was not openly published. This meant that the ruling class could manipulate the law according to their needs (Li, 1991). Till ChunQiu, all kinds of social revolutions were put on the table, involving politics, economy, ideology etc. The publishing of law was one of the most important steps in the rise of the new noble period. It ended the monopoly of the old slave noble on the law and protected the new noble's rights over private property and others. The movement for the publishing of law began a new page in imperial law and order history (Li, 1991).

Later, in the Zhanguo period, the first handbook of the feudal legal system was born, and it was called 'fa jing' (法经). 'Fajing' was the blueprint of the legal system of Qin Dynasty (221-201 BC). Qin was the first power-centralised feudal dynasty in Chinese history. In about the 34th year of its rule, 'qin lv' (秦律)-a complicated, refined, complete law, which was based on ‘fa jing’ was completed and was implemented into justice administration. The ideology of the law derived from 'fa jia' (法家) (Li, 1991), a school of thoughts which was contrary to Confucianism. Instead of rule by right (li), 'fa jia' believed that good governance was ensured only by strict law and heavy penalty. At that time, crime was seen as serious behavior and the punishment was the most severe of all time. Confucianism lost its influence, due to the thriving of 'fa jia' law and suppression from the ruling class. This situation changed with the beginning of the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD). Under the rule of 'Han Wu Di' (the fourth emperor
of the Han Dynasty), Confucianism was elaborated to the highest status above all the other schools of ideologies. Its ideology became the handbook of governance and its *three cardinal guides* (ruler guides subjects, father guides son, husband guides wife) was the central tenet of Han law (Li, 1991). Disobedience towards rulers, fathers, or husbands was viewed as a serious crime. Class differences were further accentuated to enhance hierarchy in this system. Unlike the cruel physical punishment towards criminals in Qin Dynasty, the rulers in Han thought that simply threatening people with severe laws and penalties was not an efficient and safe way to maintain their empire (Li, 1991). In order to eliminate crime and rebellion, they also sought to educate people with ideas of hierarchy and make them believe that only by following the three cardinal guides and obeying the superior (ruler, father, and husband) could one truly live in an honourable life. Otherwise, they should be judged not only by law but also by moral standards. This concept of rule is similar to what Hall et al. point out, which is that the ruling class provides definitions of the social world and implants them into the minds of subordinate classes. This is beyond physical; it is a kind of mental control which protects the privileges and power of those in rule. As he observes, "those who govern, govern also through ideas; thus they govern with the consent of the subordinate classes, and not principally through their overt coercion." (Hall et al., 1978: 59). Hall et al. also mention Parkin's idea, which makes a valid point to what the rulers did in Han Dynasty. He says, "the social and political definitions of those in the dominant positions tend to become objectified in the major institutional orders, so providing the moral framework for the entire social system." (Parkin in Hall et al., 1978: 59).

The 'moral framework' which was implanted 2000 years ago was derived from the ideology of Confucianism. Viewed as the most prominent and influential ideological school in the Chinese cultural and sociological domain, Confucianism is imprinted on Chinese society and has resulted in the unique social protocol and Chinese way of living. However through thousands of years, Confucianism
has been changed, developed and refined for the purposes of different ruling classes. The Confucianism we see today surely is not what we would have seen 2500 years ago. So what was Confucius’ Confucianism like? Doctor Wong from Xavier University discusses Confucius’ ideas on crime and punishment in his work. He makes the point “Confucius’ biggest contribution to crime and punishment is the idea that people are born differently\(^2\). Some of them are intellectually, morally, or by birth superior, while others are, in these ways, inferior (Wong, 2001: 225). Those with superior status have the duty of educating and govern those with the inferior. Since man is born with desire, his wants and needs have to be satisfied. If the superior does not guide the way of the inferior, the inferior will seek other ways to satisfy their needs, hence crime occurs. Therefore, the efficient way of preventing crime is to control insatiable human needs. Since the inferior is intellectually and morally incapable, they must bow to those who are able, follow their instructions, and do their biddings. From the perspective of social control of crime, Confucius’ idea is to put out the spark before it turns into a big fire. With their needs controlled, the chance of committing crime will certainly go down. Who is there to put out the spark? The superior. Thus, the sovereignty of the ruling class was enhanced, and the idea of hierarchy was imprinted on people's minds. Confucius endeavored to seek good governance and his idea of virtue and honour are a great improvement to the society. Nevertheless, his way of thinking and treating fellow human beings (those who he thought were inferior) was not so wise from today’s point of view.

2.1.3 Formation period (581-907 AD) & the development period (960-1911 AD)

During the formation period, the feudalism-based political and economic system reached its climax. The thriving of the culture and economy ensured the development of law and the punitive system. Legal terms were refined and

\(^2\) “The distinction between noble and humble, superior and inferior was to be based on three sets of criteria: talent, virtue and relations. Thus, an educated person was superior to an illiterate, a virtuous person superior to a mean one and a father superior to a son.” (Chu in Wong, 2001: 225)
detailed. 'Tang lv' (Law of Tang Dynasty) is considered as equal to the Roman Law (Li, 1991: 97). It had a profound influence on the later generations as well as on the writing of law in other Asian countries (Li, 1991: 94). Another important development in this period was the perfection of the juridical system. The juridical procedure was more regulated than it had ever been before. At that time, China was under a relatively open regime both culturally and politically. Although the legal and punitive system was still mainly reflecting the strong hierarchical character of Chinese society, they became more rational and logical. However in the final period of Chinese imperial legal development, the tightening of political control resulted in more severe restriction on thoughts. Due to the fear of rebellion, words and thoughts pertaining to the rule of emperors were closely watched. Any behaviour or speech considered as disrespectful to the emperors would be severely punished. At that time, thoughts and speeches could become criminal offences. It is believed that social control of crime was so tight that it caused the stagnation of academic development. (Li, 1991)

The founders of imperial law and punitive systems kept adjusting and refining their works for the sake of better governance. As Wong observes, the difference between Western ideas of crime and Chinese thinking is,

“In the West, the unit of analysis is the criminal. The question is why do some people commit crime and others do not. In China, the unit of analysis is the society, that is, the government. The question is how does state policy or government (in) action contribute to crime and disorder.” (Wong, 2001: 228)

This statement is not only valid in the context of imperial China. I can see the similar way of thinking in contemporary Chinese crime ideology. Cao and Cullen find out from their research about Chinese ideology of crime and control “PRC
citizens are more likely to attribute criminal behavior to structural defects in the social order.” (Cao and Cullen 2001: Abstract).

2.2 Ideologies of Crime and Control in Modern China

The study of crime of modern China is commonly to be divided into three stages, before 1949; between 1949 and 1978; and after 1978 (Friday, 1998; Kang in Wong, 2008; Shaw, 2010). The three stages are connected by two major political junctures in Chinese Modern history, the establishment of PRC (Peoples’ Republic of China) and the ending of the Revolution Reform.

2.2.1 Before 1949—the Republic Era

In this stage, China was undergoing a tremendous political reform. The old dynastic system which lasted for over 2000 years came to its end. Under the invasion of foreign militaries and domestic modernization movement, the Qing Dynasty (1636-1911 AD) collapsed. China first engaged herself in the political form of the Republic in 1911. Accompanied by the physical invasion of Western world, its ideas, ways of thinking and means of control were spread. Intellectuals started to explore Western political, social and scientific thoughts. Under the new constitutional form of government, the old Confucianism tradition seemed to be outdated and inadequate. Since the start of the new republic, wars and chaos never ceased. Quoting from Wakeman, “Gangs and criminals were running amok” (Wakeman in Wong, 2008: 327). Criminology was introduced to help understand crime. Crime control and penology were studied by Chinese scholars and officials (Wong, 2008: 327). The understanding of crime and crime control ideology was changed dramatically under the influence of Western schools of thoughts. Wong gives us a clear picture of how the crime, crime control and crime punishment ideas looked like in the Republic Era:
“1. Crime has a legal as well as sociological definition. Legally, crime is to act against law. Sociologically, crime is conduct harmful to the society.

2. Study of crime must be done scientifically and objectively with the use of empirical data and grounded theory.

3. Crime can only be completely understood and effectively dealt with in cultural context. How criminals, victims and society perceived and received crime depends on cultural meaning assigned and feelings evoked.

4. Criminals are not born evil but a product of their social environment. People are born into pre-existing roles and relationships which affect their outlook and determine their action.

5. Prisons should not be an institution of punishment, but a place to reform offenders.

6. Prisoners should be treated individually. Collective treatment and punishment of prisoners with uniform rule, identical policy and fixed regulation will not be effective in reforming prisoners who suffer from different personalities, labour under disparate life circumstances and offend in unique situations.

7. Prisons should be staffed by social workers schooled in treatment of sick people and not prison guards specialised in the punishment of offenders.”

(Wong, 2008: 328)

2.2.2 Between 1949 and 1978 – the Mao Era

After the establishment of the Peoples’ Republic of China (PRC), the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was busy engaging in fights with the counter party, foreign imperialism, and feudalism (Wong, 2008: 329). Crime was of the least concern to the leadership. “In order to ensure the stability of the society and to
build a new China, intensive social control called upon people's behaviour and their minds as well” (Fairbank in Cao, 2007: 41). Crime was never a social problem during Mao's era. As Fairbank observes, “Social order was near perfect, and China was described as a society free of crime” (ibid.). On the other hand, the study of crime, law, and control had fallen into the domain of Marxism. The new leadership believed that the only right way of studying social issues was from a Marxist perspective (Wong, 2008: 330). Under the influence of Marxism, Mao devised the directive strategy that: “Contradictions between the enemies, as counter-revolutionary activities, need to be resolutely suppressed with coercive measures. Contradictions between the people, as routine conflicts and minor infractions, need to be patiently and carefully resolved with civil—mediation, education, administration—means” (Mao in Wong, 2008). Meanwhile, he launched a series of major anti-crime campaigns to wipe out crime (Wong 2008: 329). Some scholars believed that the “ostensibly crime-free Chinese society” at that time was merely a by-product of ruthless repression towards counter-revolutionary activities (Dutton, P. Liu and Situ, Whyte and Parish in Cao, 2007: 41). People were too frightened to commit crimes. Not only because of the heavy punishment, but also the mental stress – criminals would be openly despised and discriminated and shame would be brought to the family as well.

2.2.3 Ideologies of Crime and Control in the Peoples' Republic of China—after 1978

In 1978, with the replacement of leadership, an economic reform was launched. China went on to the road to socialist reform with a distinctively Chinese character. The core of this reform was to build a market-oriented economic system with the old one-party communist political system intact. This reform brought a series of social, political and economic changes in China. Academically, there are many criminal studies on this period: Cao, 2001; Deng and Cordilia, 1999; Friday, 1998; Jiang et al., 2007; Liu 2006; Shaw, 2010; Wong, 2008. They all share a common recognition of which the economic reform in 1978 is the
transitional juncture for the entire criminal discourse. This included changes in crime structure, crime control, legal reform, crime definition, et cetera. In this thesis, I will not cover all these perspectives. In this part, I will give a brief background introduction of contemporary development of crime/crime control ideology.

**Changes in Crime Rates and Crime Structure**

Since 1978, the crime rates keep climbing upward. According to Wong, in 1950, there were 513,416 recorded crimes. The number reduced to 56,300 in 1951 and remained low since then (Wong, 2008: 324). I can see from Figure 1, in 1989 crime rates rose from 55.7/100,000 (in 1978) to 181.5/100,000. Crime rates tripled after 11 years of reform. The recent data shows that, in 2009, there were in all 4,443,000 criminal cases; 12,000 homicides; 28,000 rapes; 6,064 arson; 37,000 robberies; 17,000 indoor robberies; and 88,000 assault and batteries (Fan et al, 2010: 1-2). From Figure 2 and Figure 3, I can see there is a clear trend that economic crime raises sharply in the past three decades. As Deng and Cordilia observe, since 1981, there has been a dramatic upturn in economic crimes (Deng and Cordilia, 1999): larceny increased 72%, serious theft 237%, fraud 239%, and counterfeiting 947%. White-collar crime also increased rapidly (Situ & Liu in Deng and Cordilia, 1999: 213). As to causes of this trend, they claim,

“Part of the reason may be found in the strong official emphasis on the radical new goal of making money, along with the unequal distribution and inadequate legal regulation of the means to economic success. Another factor is the loosening of formal and informal controls as a result of the changes in social structure that accompany economic reform.” (Deng and Cordilia, 1999: Abstract)
to report the crime, since the consequences tend to be more underreported, one reason is that property crimes (larceny, grand larceny, fraud) had a lower reporting rate than violent crimes, since it was well known that the actuality. Let’s call this effect the dampening effect on trends of property crimes.

For these analyses, the important feature of the effects was that it was higher for the crime rate in China has been increasing. Between 1981 and 1978, the crime rate was reduced to 56,300 crimes (5.9/10,000) and 57,482 crimes (4.2/10,000) in 1951 to 1952 respectively (He and Marshall 1997; Yu and Zhang 1006).

In 1950, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) recorded 513,416 crimes (Liu 2004). In 1950, the crime rate was reduced to 56,300 crimes (5.9/10,000) and 57,482 crimes (4.2/10,000) in 1951 to 1952 respectively (He and Marshall 1997; Yu and Zhang 1006).

Table 1

<table>
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Source: Liang in Wong (2008)

Figure 1

Crime Rates in China, 1950–2002 (per 100,000 population)

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Source: Liu (2006)
Figure 3

Source: Zhang et al. (2011)

**Social Problems and Crimes in Contemporary Chinese Society**

According to Cao, 2001; Deng and Cordilia, 1999; Friday, 1998; Jiang et al., 2007; Liu 2006; Shaw, 2010; Wong, 2008, the climbing crime rates in China have roots in the social problems China has had since 1978. When I discussed the economic reform earlier, I talked about the dramatic changes in economic form: a movement towards modernisation, marketisation and commercialisation. These all have contributed to the rapid economic growth in China. The average annual growth of real GDP has reach 10% since 1978 (Chen, 2004). In the meantime, it is also responsible for the emerging social problems and increasing crime. Social migration, income inequality, money driven value, lack of morality, and corruption are the major problems.

**Massive Social Migration**

With the rapid modernisation and urbanisation, thousands of people move from rural to urban areas. They consist of a huge part of labor force in major cities such as Shanghai, Beijing and Shenzhen. The scale of mobilisation is so massive
that “China has become a nation in motion” (Shlapentokh, 2002:243). This enormous trend of migration is perceived to create many social uncertainties, including increases in crime. Many migrants come from rural areas where education, especially legal education, is insufficient. They usually do not have the skills and knowledge to enable them to find a job that allows them to afford their urban life. In addition, migrants live outside the formal social structure, and it is difficult for police to track their residence records (Deng and Cordilia, 1999; Jiang et al., 2007). According to Wehrfritz, “by the late 1990s the migration had reached such a massive scale that about 120 million peasants have flooded cities in search of jobs, weakening a household-registration system that used to keep track of everyone” (Wehrfritz in Shlapentokh, 2002:243).

**Income Inequality and Dominance of Money Driven Value**

Under a planned economy, most people had the same level of income. Increases of income depended on working years instead of personal performance. This situation changes when a market-oriented economy starts. “People receiving different income rates leads to an extreme disparity between the rich and the poor” (Friday 1998: 298-300). Thus, Chinese society is currently undergoing a restructuring of social classes. As Friday indicates, “when economic marginalism is created, inter- and intraclass conflicts increase, property acquisition goals predominate, and market conditions define people as objects to be exploited for private gain” (Friday 1998: 300). “Getting rich is glorious” becomes a popular idea (Jiang et al., 2007) and capitalist and individualist value becomes twisted into pure money-driven value.

**Lack of Morality**

Newman and Berger observe, “as labor power is transformed into value through the exchange relations in markets, moral obligations and the altruistic concerns for others become subordinated to individual self-interests” (Newman and Berger in Friday, 1998: 30). The Cultural Revolution during the Mao Era did
devastating damage to the traditional moral system. When it ended, the reconstruction of the crumbling moral system deteriorated alongside the increasing craving for money. “Government officials openly state that China’s ‘moral life, to some extent, is disorderly and chaotic. There are no widely accepted new norms and new rules either in public morality or professional ethics” (Deng and Cordilia, 1999: 224).

**Corruption and Performance Driven Governance**

In China, wages are the primary indicator of governmental officials’ performance. Inevitably, regional governments become performance driven instead of geared towards contributions to the society and its people. The unpleasant byproduct of this is that many governmental officials commit economic crimes, including acts of corruption (Lu & Gunnison, 2003 in Jiang et al., 2007). This has become a major threat to CCP’s rule.

**Changes in Crime Control**

“Commonly there are two major ways of crime control: formal and informal control.” Formal crime control can be conducted by the law and legal agencies while informal control usually can be achieved through moral and social institutes (Jiang et al, 2007: Abstract). Since the imperial era, rulers have invested significant efforts in methods of informal control. As it is introduced earlier, ancient ideologies such as Confucianism compelled people to follow certain ways of behaviour which provided moral cohesion. Jiang, Lambert and Wang in their work point out that the proper way of expressing the position of Confucianism in formal and informal control is:

“Lead the people with governmental measures and regulate them by law (fa) and punishment, and they will avoid wrongdoing but will have no sense of honor and shame. Lead them with virtue and regulate them by the rules of propriety (li), and they will
have a sense of shame and, more, set themselves right.” (Terrill in Jiang et al., 2007: 262)

They continue, “collectivism is another correlate of the tradition of China’s preference for informal social/crime control” (Jiang et al., 2007: 263). It is a mechanism of behavioural supervision which relies on family, peers and neighbours. In imperial China, one’s misbehavior might cause co-punishment of family members and sometimes even peers and neighbors. Under Mao’s era of the PRC, China had a planned economy and industries were in collective and nationalised form. “The workplace is a key element of the vertical organizational framework through which the state rules over its citizens” (Troyer, Walder and Whyte & Parish in Deng and Cordilia, 1999: 219). Deng and Cordilia observe,

“The formal system of party and state control in pre-reform China was coordinated with an informal structure of control by friends, neighbors, and coworkers who were called on to report deviance and to “help” people conform. A person’s desire for the approval and respect of these people would restrain impulses to deviate” (Deng and Cordilia, 1999: 223).

When the economic reform began, everything became market-oriented and commercialised. With the old workplace, wherein the informal control structure that was relied on disappeared, the power and necessity of informal control declined and weakened. More recently, the importance of law has been accentuated and there is a rising trend towards legal apparatus for the control of crime.

According to Deng and Cordilia, “interface between formal and legal control has weakened”(Deng and Cordilia, 1999: 223) and crime rates keep climbing. In response to the situation, the Chinese government implemented the
“Comprehensive Management” approach (Friday, 1998; Situ & Liu and Zhang et al. in Deng and Cordilia, 1999). This approach is a crime prevention policy which includes formal and informal control actions. The policy focuses on,

1. Revival of informal controls: formalising of controls has been stressed (Friday, 1998: 307). Attempts to revive traditional Confucian and collective responsibility values can be traced in the policy (Friday in Deng and Cordilia, 1999: 225).

2. Educating citizens: government starts legal education through schools and via mass media. (Deng and Cordilia, 1999: 223; Jiang et al., 2007: 264)

3. Reforming social control organisations: crime prevention in communities and at the neighborhood level has been enhanced. “Examples of reinforcement of security through community committees and civilian security companies can be seen throughout urban sphere” (Friday 1998: 308).

4. Cracking down on serious criminals: “Several nationwide crackdown campaigns have been launched to ‘strike hard’ at crime and to severely punish serious offenders” (Situ & Liu in Deng and Cordilia, 1999: 225).

Changes in Crime Ideologies
According to Wong, since the economic reform, Chinese criminologists have been gradually shifting the center of criminology study from an ideological approach (mainly Marxism) to a more scientific approach. “The understanding of crime and its control is more multi-faced” (Wong, 2008: 333). First, there are various kinds of crimes and criminals and they cannot be explained in general, thereby, reactions to crimes cannot be understood simply in one manner (Kang in Wong, 2008: 334). Second, to understand crime, I should first seek the causation of crime (Wong, 2008: 334). Third, explanations of crime differ in relation to space (ibid.). Fourth, crime has radiating effects. It spreads via communication, and thereby, the media are responsible for the majority of its spread (ibid.). The importance of the media in crime control has been noticed. In
fact, in the Western criminology world, the media have been considered to have a crucial role in shaping crime and crime control ideology.

So far, I have surveyed the development of Chinese crime and crime control ideologies. The purpose of going through such a long history is to provide a thorough understanding of how China has viewed crime and its relevant subjects – crime control and punishment. It will certainly reflect on how they are viewed today and will be useful for later studies of contemporary Chinese thinking on crime. Moreover through the study of the past, I find that ideologies of crime and crime control are closely linked to the political systems and economic forms. In the next chapter, I will discuss some Western theoretical ideas of state and crime, and media and crime issues.
3. Theoretical Framework

The media frequently frames criminals and subcultures as dangerous because it questions the rules of society that are defined by hegemonic classes which citizens are expected to consent with. As one of the few sources where the public can get crime information from, media institutions take the role of reconciliation of criminal deviation by presenting, defining, and more importantly interpreting criminal events. In this chapter, I am going to form a theoretical framework in order to scientifically support data analysis and the results discussion in chapter 5 and chapter 6. The chapter will be divided into two major parts: state and crime issues, and media and crime issues.

3.1 State and Crime

3.1.1 Ideologies of Crime

*Social Consensus and “Folk Devils” Syndrome*

Every society has its ideological paradigm of crime. Here, “ideological paradigm” means the concepts, explanations, and common understandings of crime. It helps the public understand crime, law, and justice. It orchestrates public opinions towards criminals, victims and justice bodies. In *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, The State and Law and Order* (1978), Stuart Hall puts forward his understanding of “ideological paradigms”, “By ‘paradigms’ here, we mean the themes, premises, assumptions, the ‘questions presuming answers’, the matrix of ideas, through which the variety of public ‘opinions’ about crime take coherent form” (Hall et al., 1978:138). The “ideological paradigm” has its roots deep in the “social consensus” (or central value system) which we share as fellow men of societies. As members of a society, we share a common sense of culture; we stock the same knowledge of fundamental values, interests and concerns (Hall et al., 1978). The central value system helps us to understand events and behaviours we see in society. It denies and alienates the existence of criminal deviance. When disagreement and
deviance occur, power institutions reconcile them with legitimacy and institutionalisation. Hall argues that the content of social consensus is like “maps of meanings”. They already exist as the basis of our cultural knowledge. He assumes that our society has a consensual nature and that social consensus is “the process of signification: giving meanings to events-both assumes and helps to construct society as a ‘consensus’” (Hall et al., 1978:54-55). Therefore, when we encounter usual or unusual events, we will try to understand and explain them with these “meanings” we already have or are given. But who gives us these “maps of meanings”? The answer is complicated. Cultural, political and economical agents all have a hand in constructing consensus. Why do we need consensus? According to Hall et al., “the consensual view makes society appear to have no major conflicts between classes and no major breaks in cultural or social perspectives” (Hall et al., 1978: 55). Apparently, this view is the consequence of political consensus. The idea of a “national consensus” would make it easier to regulate and rule a society. The media, among other power institutions, are one of the most “active players” in practicing this view of “national consensus” (Hall et al., 1978: 55). When the media map meaning to events, they assume that the whole society share the understanding and knowledge which is drawn from basic structures. Having knowledge of these basic structures, we should all understand their interpretation.

As Hall et al. notice, “In the 1970s, the concept of consensus had been raised to an extreme ideological level” (Hall et al., 1978: 55). It is undeniable that we all share certain levels of consensus in the same society. However, we should not neglect other minority groups, nor should we seek to construct them as deviated. The problem of dealing with deviant subcultures is that we see them, in many societies, as a threat to our consensual societies. The media’s exaggerated portrayal of their “evil” image makes them the “folk devils”. The concept of folk devils is discussed in Stanley Cohen's work (1972/2002): Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers. From my understanding, “folk
devils” can be seen as a syndrome which is the consequence of labeling of non-consensual cultural. This labeling process is political, rather than cultural. It is Jewkes’ view that,

“those in power label minority groups as subversive with a view to exploiting public fears, and then step in to provide a ‘popular’ solution to the problem which, in the current rhetoric of populist punitiveness, usually amounts to getting tougher on crime.” (Jewkes, 2004: 69)

Minority groups feel more alienated from society. This causes more deviant behaviour and thus the media create more “folk devils”. This vicious circle is defined by Wilkins as a “deviancy amplification spiral” (Wilkins in Jewkes, 2004: 69).

Model 1

![Deviancy amplification spiral](image)

Source: Jewkes (2004) develops from Wilkins, 1964
In Hall et al.’s understanding of deviancy amplification spiral,

“the police will concentrate their resources on crimes with high detection potential. It amplifies the volume of these selected crimes, since the more resources are concentrated, the greater the number recorded. It will then create a crime wave. Then the crime wave is invoked to justify a control campaign. Then the impression of there is wave after wave of crime is sent out to the public by the media.” (Hall et al., 1978:38).

Criminality as a subculture is perceived as a deviant minority group, and is labelled as such by consensual society. In Hall et al.’s work, they explain how English ideologies of crime were formed. They introduce three existing perspectives for understanding crime: the conservative perspective, the liberal perspective and the conservative perspective. According to them, the conservative perspective is “a dominant ideological field” while “the liberalism is too distant and too academic to make connections with everyday experience” (Hall et al., 1978: 165). There is also a socialist ideology of crime which comes from their opinion. In the next part, I will briefly introduce the three ideologies.

**Explanations and Ideologies of Crime**

To aid the discussion of “English ideologies of crime” found in Hall et al., I will first discuss how Hall uses, and how I will use the term “ideologies”. To Hall et al., ideology lies in “the English way of life”. The core of this life is the notion which is connected with the conservative ideology of society (as opposed to the liberal ideology). It is of respectability: self-respect, self-discipline and Protestant value of English culture (Hall et al., 1978). What is the conservative ideology then? According to Hall et al., the conservative worldview has roots in ‘common sense’. The ‘common sense’ here represents “a traditional population conception of the world, a conception formed in the closest relation to practical, everyday life.”
Society is bounded by this conception or what we can call “ruling ideas”. Subordinate classes, ordinary citizens such as you and I are bounded with these ideas. Thus, they are institutionalised as laws, rules, regulations and moral standards and coincided by society. As subordinate class, we too have our own ideas about the world, and it is not necessarily the same as those of the ruling classes. “But we are still disciplined by them, for they are embodied in the dominant institutional order” (Hall et al, 1978). English common sense, to some extent, is equal to English social consensus. What are the English consensual explanations of crime?

The conservative explanation of crime focuses on human agency-the primitiveness of crime. In Hall’s words, “it is predicted on the eternal struggle between Good and Evil” (Hall et al., 1978: 168). In the conservative view, “human is born nasty and the evilness is embedded in human’s nature” (Hall et al., 1978: 168). Therefore, we must fight against our own evilness. Laws and moral rules are set to guide us in fighting badness and enacting goodness. Those who choose not to enact goodness and not to follow rules are defined as criminal, and they shall be punished by law. The assumption is similar to the Confucian assumption “man is born with desire”, which I talked in Chapter 2. Both assumptions indicate that criminal behavior is a personal choice. We must label it and punish it for the sake of warning others, hence social control. Conservatives suggest that the remedy of crime lies in law and order:

“The criminal represents a threat to us all, both to our physical safety, our moral duty and our social code. We must be protected against him. And a clear warning must be delivered to all others who for the sake of gain, impulse or base motive are tempted to follow him in this path to unrighteousness. There is a sort of calculus-both divine and utilitarian-by which the greater the crime, the more severe the punishment...” (Hall et al., 1978: 168).
On the other hand, the liberal explanations of crime see things differently, especially about the major agency which causes crime. From Hall’s understanding, I can conclude that, in the liberal view, crime is not explained by human primitiveness and is merely seen as a background of society. A human’s goodness or badness depends on social mechanisms. When the society is good, the majority of humans are good, and when the society collapses or has major social problems, we become vulnerable to crime. Thereby, crime rises from social problems. (Hall et al., 1978: 169). The control of crime lies in the remedy of social problems, not in the sole punishment of criminals. Liberalists claim,

“the individual agent is a weak vessel. Only the mechanisms of socialisation and good fortune keep the majority of us on the straight and narrow...Crime is at root a ‘social problem’...If the social or psychological processes can be remedied and improved, the possibility of such behavior recurring can be minimised... ” (Hall et al., 1978: 169).

In the socialist worldview, the source of crime is rooted in the hierarchical social structure. Class inequality and the unequal distribution of power are the true causes of crime. In a heteronomous society, the subordinate classes are reluctantly following the dominant class. However, “What the subordinate culture ‘owes’ to the hegemonic order is not a positive and grateful identification, but rather a reluctant confirmation of its hegemony.” (Hall et al., 1978: 155). The inequality in social wealth distribution causes many problems, such as poverty and crimes.

“In the historical sense, ‘crime’ was a well-articulated part of the working class cultural repertoire of the period: how some members of the laboring and casual poor ‘lived’ the contradictory
experience and exploitative relationships which characterise class relations as a whole...For the children of those families which had arrived at the terminal margin indeed between getting what they had to, legally, and scrounging where and however they could; and the margin, for all practical purposes, was not between ‘legality’ and ‘illegality’ so much as between survival and sheer destitution.” (Hall et al., 1978: 188).

The remedy for crime thus lies in the implementation of changes to social structure. Historically, there have been movements and efforts towards the changing of the mode of hegemony. Hall et al. introduce it in their work,

“the early beginnings of a ‘welfare state’ and the raising of the ‘social wage’ are, like the sinuous movements of Lloyd George, its great architect, pointed at the very same end-though operating through a different mode- to which the coercive regime was directed: establishing the terms on which the working classes were to be at one and the same moment enfranchised and contained.” (Hall et al., 1978:212)

When Hall et al. introduce these three different perspectives for explaining crime, they use the case of Handsworth (the mugging crisis case) and put them in the context of 1960s-1970s England. They observe from the media level, the popular consciousness level, the organised political level, and the legal apparatus level, that the debate about the crisis mainly comes from these three perspectives. However, they are, by no means, equally powerful. Liberalism is what he calls “fundamentally defensive”. (Hall et al., 1978). This defensive nature can also be traced when I turn to the study of contemporary Chinese crime ideology. Especially in the government’s control ideology, the focus on a revival of
informal control or the enforcement of legal education shows that in the dominant ideology, control of crime starts with improvements of people, not the social mechanism (Hall et al.).

3.1.2 State, Law and Crime
So far, I have talked about Hall et al.’s ideas of crime ideologies, and I find that the conservative explanation of crime is in dominance. Now, I will try to explain its status from the understanding of the relation between state, law and crime.

In general, people see crime as a breaking from social normality and as deviance against social consensus. There is no general normality and consensus for all of society. It changes with the change of space and time. As Hall et al. observe, “the definition of ‘crime’ has a social and economic content” (Hall et al., 1978: 187). If I look into the development of Chinese crime ideology, clear periodical differences can be traced. At different periods, under different modes of hegemony the definition of ‘crime’ changes. For example, in the slave dynasty era, disrespectful behaviour towards the Divine was considered as a serious crime and would be punished. Such behaviour certainly would not be seen as crime anymore, though, during the Cultural Revolution, misspeaking about the Party might be cause for a conviction. In contemporary China, freedom of speech is commonly accepted. Hall et al. make a similar point that the definition of crime shifted at different periods by way of the ruling classes for the purpose of “legal restraint and political control” (Hall et al., 1978: 189). This argument leads us into the connection between crime and crime control. Hall et al. observe that sometimes the change in the definition of crime or criminalisation is part of the government’s social control and repression strategy (Hall et al., 1978: 187). Social control is an effective instrument for leadership when it wants people to take certain idea for granted, to deviate in behaviour, or to normalise a regulation. People see crime control as a form of social control which “is best understood as a part of the ‘normalised repression’ of the state, and its defence of property, the
individual and public order” (Hall et al., 1978: 186).

As the definition of crime is periodical, the ideology of crime control is even more tightly bound up with modes of hegemony. From the history of crime control in China, I find that different governments used different ideologies of crime control. In imperial China, a strict government such as Qin implanted the ideology of ‘fa jia’ which advocated strict law and punishment, while with a relatively open government like Tang, law and punishment were more rational and logical. In modern China, the first republic was struggling to practice democracy, and so modern criminology was introduced. Till the PRC, the dominant ideology shifted into a combination of Marxism and Maoism. Interestingly, the practice of social control was like what Hall uses to describe the capitalist social control,

“the ‘criminalisation’ of political and economic conflicts is a central aspect of exercise of social control. It is often accompanied by heavy ideological ‘work’, required to shift labels about until the stick, extending and widening their reference, or trying to win over one labeled section against another” (Hall et al., 1978: 190).

In the Mao era, being a capitalist or a landlord would be considered as being an enemy of the people. The status of being wealthy was labeled as crime. It may sound unusual today, but contemporaneously the complicated domestic political and economic situation, the counter party threat, and international pressure decided government’s dramatic strategy of social control in the form of law. Social control was extended deep into the ideological level. Class struggle actions and movements were legitimised and legalised. People were educated with, and only with, the dominant ideology. As Hall et al. observe, law is “an effective instrument of power” and as well as “a principle public educator to a certain idea
of property” (Hall et al., 1978:191-192).

When applying Hall et al.’s ideas to the Chinese situation, I must identify the differences regarding the political, economic and social formations which might result in divergence, as well as the similarities which can be linked to the Chinese situation. Therefore, I will list some key aspects of Hall et al.’s crime/crime control ideology.

1. In the context of class society in 18th century England, the law is in place to serve the purpose of maintaining a class society and to protect private property. “The poor and propertyless are always in some sense on ‘the wrong side of the law” (Hall et al., 1978: 190).
2. Crime control, in class societies, means “the powerful and the propertied” exert authority on “the powerless and the propertyless” (Hall et al., 1978: 190).
3. Under the context of contemporary bourgeois society, “legal norm and rules will reflect and support bourgeois economic relations” (Hall et al., 1978: 196).
4. Any political, economic, or ideological form requires legal codes to institutionalise its juridical rightfulness (Hall et al., 1978: 201).
5. The purpose of crime control is to bring order. In Antonio Gramsci’s view, it is “an order of cohesion” (Gramsci in Hall et al., 1978: 202). It can be achieved either via “force and cohesion” such as law and regulation, or via “education, leadership, direction and production of consent (Gramsci in Hall et al., 1978: 202; Hall et al., 1978: 202).

In this chapter, I can conclude that the labeling and control of crime depend on the politically oriented social consensus. There are many agencies that can influence our definition of crime: the media, legal apparatus, academic authorities and etc. Nevertheless, as I have discussed so far, I can see that the
primary issue here is not to do the detailed work of defining crime, but to find out the why it has been defined in certain ways, and what is behind the process of definition. The ruling classes or the power agencies are precisely what we shall look into when I examine my primary issues. There are many aspects and apparatuses of the ruling classes; in this thesis, I do not expect to study them all. Instead, I will study it from the level of media. This will be done since the media play a role in between the powerful ruling class and the ordinary subordinate class. Academically, there are several approaches in the study of media crime. In the next chapter, I will briefly introduce some major approaches.

3.2 Media and Crime

Everyday, when we turn on the TV, open the newspaper, listen to the radio, surf the Internet, we see crime issues in the form of news, talk shows, or drama. Crime is constantly highlighted by the media. Crime is a matter of public concern. Scholars in media and crime studies often refer to the news-worthiness of crime (Hall et al., 1978; Jewkes, 2004; Marsh and Melville, 2009). The famous saying “when a dog bites a man is not news, but when a man bites a dog it is news” (John B. Bogart in Justin Kaplan, 1992: 554) indicates the high value that news media places on uncommon matters, and those of abnormality. Crime as a deviant behavior certainly meets the standard of “out of the ordinary” (Hall et al., 1978: 53). On the other hand, the media are the primary channel through which the public is able to access information about crime. In the USA, a study shows that 76% of the public forms their opinion about crime from the news (Dorfman in Marsh and Melville, 2009: 1). This outstanding figure indicates the crucial role of the media in orchestrating public opinion towards crime ideology. In the old days, when the mass media did not exist, the most influential agency in forming crime/crime control ideology was the authorities. In modern times, when scholars try to study crime and crime control, they must take the media into great consideration. In this thesis, my goal is more detailed and specific: it is to answer what the media are presenting about crime, and how it is doing it. Why
are they presenting it in a certain manner? And who is behind the process of media production? To answer the first question, I will have to use the data collected from the primary source of Chinese crime television. This material will be analysed in the later parts of the thesis. As to the rest of the questions, I will first have a theoretical discussion in general and provide a detailed analysis later. According to Jewkes (2004) and Marsh & Melville (2009), there are several major theoretical approaches in media and crime study. Based on their works, I will have a look at some major theories appearing in their times.

3.2.1 Media Effects Approach
In the early study of the mass media, most scholars attempted to explain things about the impact of media and, more specifically, the negative effects it has on audiences. According to Jewkes, this “effects research” derives from two theories: mass society theory and behaviourism. She believes “media images are responsible for eroding moral standards, subverting consensual codes of behaviour and corrupting young minds” (Jewkes, 2004: 5). Scholars have blamed the mass media for the increasing crime rate. They argue that mass media has had direct influence upon audiences and will cause certain behavioural changes. As it is referred to by Marsh & Melville, the famous “Invasion from Mars” seems to provide excellent evidence for their arguments. Many laboratory experiments were conducted to examine media’s effects on human behaviour. The upshot of this approach is that on many occasions media effects are over accentuated, while other facts which might influence behaviour are often neglected during experiments. Moreover, the argument regarding media’s direct influence over receivers denies people’s ability to form and maintain independent judgments and ideas. As Gauntlett argues, the media effects approach has two major flaws: “First, no direct effects of the media on behaviour have been found because there are simply none to be found.” The problem is that they tried to study a crime or violent behavior by connecting them with the media. “Second, media effects research has adopted the wrong approach to studying the mass media.” Most
researchers based their work on psychological theories. Gauntlett believes that the results of psychological experiments vary between individuals. Therefore, they cannot be applied universally. (Gauntlett in Marsh & Melville, 2009: 25-26). Although criticism and resistance over this approach is strong, its influence can be traced in mainstream media studies and even in media policies such as the censorship of violent or obscene content, age limitation laws (PG system etc.), and violence scene warning signs.

### 3.2.2 Dominant Ideology Approach

Up until now, this thesis has put a lot of emphasis on the ideological perspective of crime and crime control. Now as it turns to the area of media and crime, I will also take the dominant ideology approach as a starting point. Essential to this approach is its in-depth study of the “power agencies”. Politics and economy are the major pillars in public social life. They have a profound influence on every perspective society holds. When talking about “media power”, it will be inevitable to encounter its connection to politics and economy. Derived from Marxist models of media power, with the further development of Antonio Gramsci, the “dominant ideology” model (also known as “media as hegemony” model) was adopted by many criminologists and media researchers in the 1960s (Jewkes, 2004: 16). With the emergence of a new paradigm shift to postmodernism, the dominant ideology approach seems to be dropping in popularity among criminologists and media scholars. However, many of its thoughts and claims are still relevant on many occasions and it appears in many studies (Hall et al., 1978; Jewkes, 2004; Marsh and Melville, 2009) as fundamental, as well as remaining an important theoretical approach.

Marx claims that media corporations are in the hands of the capitalist elite, and that most media outlets are privately owned. This form of ownerships ensures that the characteristics of mass media and the ideologies expressed by it serve the interests of those who own media outlets; namely, economic elites.
Meanwhile, he proposes that the media possesses the power to control the public agenda, thus the capitalist elite class has the power over the public. According to Marsh and Melville, this claim is based on the “base-superstructure” model in Marxist thought (Marsh and Melville, 2009:27). In Marx’s view, society is constituted by two fundamental components: the economic base or the material base and the other superstructure is the non-material, often thought of as cultural world. The base is superior to, and feeds into the superstructure – economic conditions give rise to cultural ones. Those who control the economic base (in Marxism this is the ruling bourgeois elite) thus have the power to control the superstructure. The media belong to the superstructure, so they are controlled by the ruling class and thereby the ruling class is able to influence public opinion and popularise specific agendas (Marsh and Melville, 2009:27-28).

In China, the majority of media corporations are owned by the government. However, after the economic reform, commercialisation of the media began and government support has declined sharply since. Under this contradictory form of ownership, the Chinese media face a double control both from the government and the economic agencies (sponsors, advertisers etc.). The balance between the government regulation and censorship and its desperate need of economic support becomes the central struggle for the contemporary Chinese media.

On the basis of the Marxist model, Gramsci improved parts of its limitations by integrating it with his theory of hegemony. According to Jewkes, “hegemony refers to the process by which the ruling classes win approval for their actions by consent rather than by coercion.” That is to say, the media are playing a role in forming social consensus from the public at the level of ideology. Differing from Marx’s view that the media only operates in the interests of the ruling class, Gramsci argues that they have the power in “extending, legitimizing, celebrating or criticizing the prevailing discourses” (Jewkes, 2004:16). It is not necessary for them to operate in favour of the ruling class. As it is further discussed in Hall et al.’s work (Hall et al., 1978), the power of winning consensus gives the media an
outstanding role in defining crime and deviance. For example, Hall proposes that media has its own power in deciding what he called primary definer (it permits the definer to establish the initial definition or primary interpretation. Other arguments against the primary definition must refer to it as a starting point when they want to challenge it. Hall et al., 1978: 58-59).

In conclusion, all these works within the dominant ideology approach accentuate the role of media in shaping public opinion towards crime and deviance. It partly explains the process of the formation of social consensus. However, there is an anachronistic limitation in the approach which makes it inadequate to apply to a contemporary context. It neglects the influence of the public on the media. The media power model is a one-way down structure wherein the media represents the opinions of the superior class (leaders, legal authorities, experts, big business owners and so on) and consider the inferior class (the public, the working class, the ordinary readers, listeners, viewers and so on) as passive receivers.

3.2.3 Pluralist Approach
During the 1980s and 1990s, a new paradigm for understanding the mass media gained popularity and began to challenge the dominant ideology approach. In contrast to Gramsci’s “hegemonic model” of media power, pluralists believe that the media are not merely a puppet of the ruling classes. Rather, it has a positive status in embodying intellectual freedom and diversity. (Jewkes, 2004:21). Moreover, audiences are no longer passive receivers of mediated information. As Marsh and Melville observe, in pluralism the media cannot influence audience’s attitudes and viewpoints directly. Instead, they might be able to reinforce the idea they have already possessed (Marsh & Melville, 2009: 34). Pluralists think that all these changes are possible thanks to the economic changes in the media industry. In the last three decades, the media industry has been undertaking massive processes of deregulation and privatisation. Open competition is introduced into the media market and has resulted in the plurality of media
products. The public has more choices than they have ever had before. This situation leads to the struggle among the ruling classes for their power over public ideas, since this power is under threat. On the other hand, the class difference which is often considered in the dominant ideology approach has diminished. Pluralists believe “thanks to mass education, social mobility and the rise of the ‘celebrity culture’, the contemporary ‘ruling class’ is more culturally diverse than at any time previously” (McNair in Jewkes, 2004: 22). The existence of the dominant classes is not denied, but it is more often challenged by the subordinate classes. The media play a crucial role in encouraging and accelerating this trend. According to Jewkes, its effect has been seen in many government policing processes such as approaches to criminal justice (Jewkes, 2004).

The rise of the pluralist view is accompanied by socio-economic developments, and there have been many improvements in this approach. Yet, inevitably, there are also many criticisms of it. Both Jewkes (2004) and Marsh & Melville (2009) argue that to think that all minorities' interests can be acknowledged and served with the help of the explosion in number of the mass media channels is an “unrealistic vision”. Although the power over the media and the public has been diversified and the ruling classes' hegemonic power is diffused by many other agencies, the media are still under the control of certain agencies and are still serving their interests. Pluralists have failed to take account of media ownership and their control over these channels. Under deregulation and privatisation, the profit-oriented character of the media is further accentuated. Economic interests are served, rather than minorities' interests. Moreover, Jewkes observes

“critics argue that the media continue to provide homogenized versions of reality that avoid controversy and preserve the status quo. Consequently, ignorance among audiences is
perpetuated, and the labeling, stereotyping and criminalization of certain groups (often along lines of class, race and gender) persists.” (Jewkes, 2004: 23)

The reality of cultural diversity remains uncertain and there is also a question mark on the diminishing of class difference. For critics, it seems that in the new media market, channels are products which are only accessible to those who can afford them. Therefore I can argue that it is embedded in the hierarchical system in the first place. By Jewkes’ words, “pluralism, then, might best be viewed as an expression of how things could be, rather than how things are” (Jewkes, 2004: 24).

3.2.4 The Postmodernist Approach and Cultural Criminology

In the recent three decades, rapid globalisation has brought dramatic changes in the world’s political, economic, social, and cultural order. A new paradigm of social science is needed. The widely accepted one is postmodernism (Jewkes, 2004:25). The new paradigm provides a new way of theorising the media portrayal of crime, law and order. In comparison to ideological approaches, postmodern theorists no longer consider the media as reflecting and reinforcing dominant ideas. They propose that media are not only reflecting reality but also is itself a form of reality which is called virtual reality or hyper-reality (Jewkes, 2004). It also suggests that now it is the consumer who has the initiative and means to choose what they are in favour of, or opposed to. In the meantime, the primary goal of the media is to cater to consumers’ tastes. The depth of society seems to have vanished in the postmodern era due to the explosion of entertainment culture.

“This is the ‘society of the spectacle’ (Debord in Jewkes, 2004: 26) a hyperreality in which media domination suffuses to such an extent that the distinction between image and reality no
longer exists (Baudrillard in Jewkes, 2004:26). Mass media and the collapse of meaning have produced a culture centred on immediate consumption and sensationalized impact but with little depth of analysis or contextualization” (Osborne in Jewkes, 2004:26).

Therefore, for postmodernism, “crime and crime control can only be understood as an ongoing spiral of inter-textual, image-driven, media loops” (Ferrell in Jewkes, 2004: 33). In postmodernity, some crimes and deviance are infused with symbolic meanings of pleasure and spectacle. Terrorist suicidal bombings are an example of such a crime. This thought intrigued a new school of criminology: cultural criminology. This school of thought mainly studies the cultural aspects of crime, more specifically, the symbolic meanings of carnival crime and the idea of addressing deviance as spectacle. Now the role of media is not limited to a medium conveying ideology to the public; it becomes a platform for presenting crime. The flourishing of crime shows and online criminal videos indicate the public's increasing fascination with illicit subcultures. Within several decades, the study of media in the criminology domain has gained more and more legitimate status. It takes an important role in helping us understand deviant subcultures and their influence on the central value system and policing-making process. As Ferrell says, “policing has increasingly come to be understood not simply in its political or social context, but as a set of semiotic practices entangled with ‘reality’ television programs and the symbolism and the aesthetics of policy subculture themselves.” (Ferrell in Jewkes, 2004: 30) The social spectacle is an important concept which is related to cultural criminology. According to Guy Debord (1995), we are living in a “society of the spectacle”.

“Understood in its totality, the spectacle is both the outcome and the goal of the dominant mode of production. It is not something added to the real world not a decorative element, so to speak. On
the contrary, it is the very heart of society’s real unreality. In all its specific manifestations - news or propaganda, advertising or the actual consumption of entertainment the spectacle epitomizes the prevailing model of social life.” (Debord, 1995: 12)

Debord does not have a specific interest in the spectacle of the media. He focuses on the social spectacle of capitalism and consumerism. Douglas Kellner (2004) is one the scholars who engages this concept with the media. In his study, he gives more details on the concept of media spectacle. I will make use of this concept in the discussion section and I will present my own understanding, as well as Kellner’s understanding, of this concept in Chapter 6.

Apart from all the intriguing new ways of understanding contemporary society, it seems that postmodernism is in danger of going to the opposite extreme of the dominant ideology approach. The class characteristics of society have not yet vanished, but postmodern theory claims they have. The application and value of this approach is open to discussion. As for cultural criminology, in Jewkes’ words it “is still in its relative infancy and its long-term influence remains to be seen” (Jewkes, 2004: 30).

3.2.5 A Word on Moral Panic
Theoretically, the moral panic model falls under the domain of the dominant ideology approach. Then why do I single it out for discussion? Because the term, “moral panic” has been so often employed not only by academics but by the media in everyday life. It commonly refers to the public reactions to social problems such as crime, deviance, natural disasters, accidents and so on. The term first appeared in Stanley Cohen’s work (1972/2002): *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*. In the book, the definition of “moral panic” is somewhat narrower than its usage today. The beginning paragraph has been extensively quoted as Cohen’s way of understanding the term (Jewkes,
“Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folk-lore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way society conceives itself” (Cohen 2002: 1).

From this definition, I can take away some important points. First, deviance or crime is a definition that is given to behaviour which appears to be a threat to consensual values and interests. Second, such behaviour is firstly mannered and fashioned by the mass media according to those in positions of power and public figures, and then presented to the public. Therefore, the nature of this (deviant) behaviour is stylised or even exaggerated. Third, some moral panics do not last for long, while others might have profound influences and lead to changes in legal and social policy. Based on Cohen’s work, Jewkes concludes the five defining features of moral panic model,
“1. Moral panics occur when the mass media take a reasonably ordinary event and present it as an extraordinary occurrence.
2. The media set in motion a ‘deviancy amplification spiral’ in which a moral discourse is established by journalists and various other authorities, opinion leaders and moral entrepreneurs, who collectively demonize the perceived wrong-doers as a source of moral decline and social disintegration.
3. Moral panics clarify the moral boundaries of the society in which they occur, creating consensus and concern.
4. Moral panics occur during periods of rapid social change, and can be said to locate and crystallize wider social anxieties about risk.
5. It is usually young people who are targeted, as they are a metaphor for the future and their behaviour is regarded as a barometer with which to test the health or sickness of a society.”

(Jewkes, 2004: 67)

Jewkes also points out there are many limitations of this model. When Cohen introduces the model, he is speaking about a specific type of moral panic. That is, the emergence of the deviant youth culture in Britain after the Second World War (Cohen 2002: 1). The political, economic, social, and cultural contexts are, thusly, fixed. If I want to apply them to different contexts, then adjustments and improvements will be needed.

3.3 Conclusions
So far, I have discussed state and crime, and media and crime issues from theoretical perspectives. Among the many approaches I mentioned in chapter 3.2, I will choose the dominant ideological approach. With the emergence of the
new paradigm of postmodernism some might argue that the dominant ideological approach is outdated. It is true that there are fewer scholars concentrating on this approach than there were in the last century. Nevertheless, some of its theories and models are still worth studying even in today’s context. Especially so when I study state, crime, and media relationships in China, where the dominant ideological approach is a suitable point of departure. As I mentioned above, Chinese media are struggling between governmental censorship and competitive market pressure. The media are undergoing multiple influences from government and authorities, advertisers and sponsors, as well as from the public and the audiences. Therefore, the dominant ideological approach seems more applicable to the Chinese situation, and it will be interesting to see to what extent it can be applied to the situation there, and what adjustments will need to be made.

Since it is impossible to use all theories and concepts in the dominant ideological approach, in this thesis I will use three major models that describe the relationship between state, media and crime: media as hegemony model, the deviancy amplification spiral, and the moral panic model. Model 2 (below) is a simplified display of the combination of these three models. Basically, it illustrates the influential agencies in forming crime ideology and its relations. On the top of the model is the leading or primary influence. Political, economic, and cultural institutions which are led by the ruling classes, the authorities have a strong influence in shaping social consensus and as well as power of control over the media. Meanwhile, they also have a direct influence on the formation of crime ideologies as well as deciding control strategies. On the other hand, as powerful as they are, sometimes they will have to compromise with existing social consensus and the public opinion conveyed through the media. In the bottom of the model, it can be seen that crime and crime control ideologies are also shaped by social consensus and the media portrayals and explanations. Though the relations in this model are hierarchical, the influences between all
aspects are by no means one-way directed. Since Model 2 combines all three models, it also can be used to explain the interactions and conflicts between these models. In the hegemony model, the power of the ruling class over the media is accentuated. Therefore, the ideology of crime is conveyed from the ruling class to the public through the media. The ideology that the media is controlled by the ruling class conflicts with those in the moral panic model and the deviancy amplification spiral. In these two models, the power of the media is accentuated while the control from the ruling class is overlooked. Nevertheless, in all three models, the important role of the media in influencing public opinion is accentuated.

Model 2
In this chapter, I also introduced three types of explanations of crimes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Source of crime</th>
<th>Remedy of crime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative ideology</td>
<td>Problems of the individual: bad morals, characters, etc.</td>
<td>Law &amp; order, tougher sentences, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal ideology</td>
<td>Problems in society: social problems, government policies, social control, education systems, etc.</td>
<td>Educational and social programs combined with government policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist ideology</td>
<td>Class inequality and unequal distribution of power</td>
<td>Abolition/Diminishing of class inequality and the unequal distribution of power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theoretical Results of the Three Models in Dominant Approach

Model 3. Media as hegemony model

Model 3 displays the procedure of how governments achieve public approval of social control agendas by consent:

1. Policy makers want to promote their social control agenda through media propaganda.

2. Policy makers put pressure on the editorial level. The editorial level makes production decisions and produces media products to support and promote government control activities.

3. Mediated information of control activities is sent to the public and results in the public panicking about certain events and believing in the necessity of the control activities.
Model 4. Deviancy amplification spiral

1. An instance of deviant behaviour occurs and the control agency defines it as a criminal behavior.
2. The media pick up the story and report it with certain salient aspects.
3. The story raises public interest and the media starts to over-report it. In order to compete with each other, the media start to exaggerate, distort the story and a stereotype of the crime is formed.
4. The public feels threatened and calls for control of the crime. In an effort to build public image and increase government performance, politicians start to get involved into the incident, responding to public fear and making policies.
5. The police respond to public and politicians’ demands and concentrate their resources on the selected crimes.

6. The deviant group feels alienated and attacked. They commit more crimes.

7. More crimes are reported by the media and the group’s status as criminals is formed.

Model 5. Moral panic model

Model 5 demonstrates how moral panic occurs

1. An ordinary crime occurs.

2. The media pick up the story and report it selectively according to their needs (news values and worthiness). To achieve their needs, the seriousness and scale of the crime is exaggerated and distorted.

3. Journalists, authorities, opinion leaders and experts define it as moral decline and social disintegration.

4. The public receives the mediated information and forms a distorted image towards the crime. Moral panic occurs among the public.
4. Description of Research Methods

In this chapter, I am going to introduce the research methods. As I discussed in the last chapter, the media have been considered as having a crucial role in shaping crime and crime control ideology. Therefore, my goal in this thesis is to analyse the Chinese media’s portrayal of crime. To do so, I must first collect materials, then use scientific methods to analyse these materials. For this thesis, I will introduce two study methods: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and content analysis.

4.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

4.1.1 Introduction to CDA

In an effort to find out how the media are portraying crime in China, I am going to choose materials from the Chinese mainstream media. From the materials, I want to examine, 1. their attitudes towards criminals, victims, and officials (the police, judges and prosecutors); 2. the commentaries on crime events, their social influence and relevant social control issues. These studies involve a significant measure of linguistic analysis. Therefore, I am going to use critical discourse analysis. By studying language use and tone in the examples, we can find out what kind of social programming angles the media employs, and attitudes that underlie them. “Critical discourse analysis starting as a linguistic study tool now has been used by scholars with various backgrounds. It offers the opportunity to adopt a social perspective in the cross-cultural study of media texts” (Dellinger, 1995:3). As Wodak and Meyer point out, “CDA takes a particular interest in the relation between language and power” (Wodak and Meyer, 2001: 2). It meets my need to examine how the media are using language and image presentation to form the images of criminals, victims, authorities, etc. In Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, Wodak and Meyer (2001: 53) lay out a series of steps for the practical approach to discourse analysis:
1. "brief characterisation of the sector, of the discourse analysis"

In this step, basic information regarding the sample or text is given. For examples, since I am analysing television programs, I will provide information regarding the producer, audience rating, and so on.

2. "establishing and processing the material base or archive"

According to Wodak and Meyer’s (2001: 54-55) analytical procedure for newspaper materials, I outline a similar procedure for my study with some adjustments:

2.1 Subject portrayals: criminals, victims, authorities (the police and the judges), experts and other relevant subjects (families, neighbors, friends, colleagues and witnesses). In this step, I will use both linguistic analysis and image analysis to examine the linguistic descriptions and visual presentations of the different subjects. For instance, I will study how they describe the victim/criminal/etc., and what kind of images is displayed when they present the subject.

2.2 Monologues and commentaries (using rhetorical means): “1. Kind and form of argumentation, argumentation strategies 2. Implications and insinuations 3. Collective symbolism, metaphorism, etc. 3. Idioms, sayings, clichés 4. References” (2001: 54-55). 4. The usage of background images. These are the necessary rhetorical tools for doing linguistic analysis. They can be of assistance in understanding tone and expressions in the dialogues of a TV program.

2.3 Ideological statements based on contents: “1. What notion of, for instance, illegal activities does the episode convey? 2. What kind of understanding of, for instance, society, do the episodes convey? 3. What is the future perspective (for instance, legal acts, social control) which the episodes convey?” (ibid.). In this step, I will analyse the ideology conveyed in the program or segment, and discuss how the particular presentation of topic invites or encourages changes in law,
or softer mechanisms of social control.

2.4 Summary: classify general types of presentation and messages collected from above steps. “Conclude and interpret the entire discourse strand with reference to the processed material used” (ibid.).

3. “Structure analysis: evaluating the material processed with regard to the discourse strand to be analyzed” (ibid.). This step involves bringing the findings of the past steps to bear on the discourse strand to be analysed.

4. “Fine analysis of one or several articles which are as typical as possible of the sector” (ibid.). In this step, I can choose some typical samples according to the generalised discourse strand I got from the last step.

5. In this step, I make an overall analysis of the segment with reference to each of the steps, and draw conclusions.

4.1.2 CDA plan
Before actually doing the critical discourse analysis, I must first plan a detailed design describing all the steps that will inform the material analysis. My plan follows the basic steps provided by Wodak and Meyer (2001: Chapter 3).

Step1. Test assumptions
The media will choose certain types crimes to report. According to Smolej, (2010), the media have their “ideal victim”. So I assume that when the Chinese media portray a crime, victim, criminal, the police, etc., they will have their ideal choices.

Step2. Sampling design
2.1 Brief characterisation of the sector
For this study, I choose real crime programs from the national TV station. Callanan (2005) defines this type of crime as “crime infotainment programs”,

“a hybrid of entertainment and news programming. The presentations usually take one of two approaches: a
documentary style format in which the details of the crime are given, often through re-enactments; or actual coverage of the event, most often centering on the apprehension of the criminal suspect by the police.” (Callanan, 2005: 74)

The reasons for using crime infotainment programs, as per my materials, are: first, in China, these types of crime programs have been solely investigated by mainstream media scholars or criminologists; Second, according to Callanan, in infotainment programs, crime events or criminal offenders are accentuated rather than the judicial procedures that follow the crime (court hearings, sentencing, etc.). Portrayals of offenders and victims are often biased, and programming angles and viewpoints are usually set in one program while crime control issues are mainly about law enforcement (Callanan, 2005:74-75).

2.2 Sample choice
I will choose three crime infotainment programs from CCTV (China Central Television) Internet archive: Legal Report (Jin Ri Shuo Fa), Front Line (Yi Xian) and Courtrooms (Ting Shen Xian Chang). From each program, one-month volume (2011.12.5-2012.1.7) episodes will be recorded from CCTV official Internet archives. Legal Report (Jin Ri Shuo Fa) and Front Line (Yi Xian) are daily programs while Courtrooms (Ting Shen Xian Chang) is a weekly program. Therefore, the whole episodes I am going to use will add up to a total of sixty-seven. Because I will use every single episode in one continue month, I can have a reasonable comparison between the three programs.

2.3 CCTV background introduction
The reasons of only choosing programs from CCTV is that CCTV is China's biggest national television network and one of the most authoritative media outlets in China. Its broadcasting covers the entire area of China. It is the most suitable choice for the general study of media presentation of crime in China.
China Central Television is also China’s national television station. Its first broadcast was on May 1st, 1958 (Baidu Baike). CCTV is described as one of the most important propaganda machines of the Chinese government; the throat and mouth of the Chinese Communist Party; a major platform for conveying and exchanging ideas and thoughts and one of the most competitive mainstream media corporations in China (Baidu Baike). It plays the roles of public information service, entertainment, education, etc.

*CCTV ownership and structure:* CCTV is owned by the Chinese government. It is a deputy ministerial level agency. Therefore, characteristically, CCTV can be seen as a government department. Inside CCTV, there are 16 centres: the chief operation centre, chief editorial centre, human resources, financial centre, the Party and bureaucracy centre, news program centre, overseas program centre, social and educational program centre, cultural and entertainment program centre, sports program centre, children and teenage program centre, advertisement centre, Internet centre, technology office, producing centre and broadcasting centre (Baidu Baike).

*CCTV audience base and audience rating:* CCTV’s broadcasting range covers 95.9% of the Chinese population. Its total audience number is over 1.18 billion people. Its average rating within national market is over 30%. Moreover, in China, CCTV is the biggest television station which broadcasts internationally. There are now over 10 international channels broadcasting in more than 120 countries (Baidu Baike).

2.4 Three crime infotainment programs background introduction
The reasons of choosing these three programs are that from the brief

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3 Chinese version of Wikipedia
introductions of the three programs, I can see that they represent three types of program focus angle setting: Legal Report—educating the public on legal matters; Courtroom—focusing on sentence procedure and accentuating the “courtroom”; Front line—investigative reports on crime events with a focus on ‘digging-out’ the truth. These three types cover all the crime infotainment programs on air on CCTV now, and the three programs I have chosen have the highest rating in their respective categories (www.cntv.cn).

**Legal Report (Jin Ri Shuo Fa)** focuses on educating the public, supervising criminal justice, and promoting policymaking (CCTV.COM, Legal Report).

**Legal Report** was first on air on February 1st, 1999 on CCTV 1. It is a daily-based program. On air time: Monday to Sunday, 12:40 (CCTV.COM, Legal Report). Its aims are to 1.interpreting laws and government policies; 2.educating the public on legal matters.

**Courtroom (Ting Shen Xian Chang)** aims to record the sentence procedures and show the public how the procedures work in courtrooms (CCTV.COM, Courtroom). Its editorial standard is to objectively present the sentence procedures and give a “real” experience to the audience. It is a weekly-based program. On air time: every Saturday: 20:07 on CCTV 12.

**Front Line (Yi Xian)** is an investigative report program on true crime cases. It aims to conduct professional and deep reports on hot criminal issues as well as to analyse relevant laws and policies (CCTV.COM, Front Line).

**Front Line** is the first legal program which conducts investigative reports on hot legal and crime issues. It is a daily-based program on CCTV 12. On air time: Monday to Sunday, 19:30 (CCTV.COM, Front Line).

**Step 3. Processing the material for the structure analysis**

3.1 General characterisation of the three programs
3.2 Overview of the characterisation of all 67 episodes

3.2.1 In this step, my aim is to generalise and categorise the different types of portrayals of key elements (crime, criminal, victims, etc.) in all 67 episodes. Table 1 to Table 4 will give us a clear image of how each program portrays the key subjects (victims, criminals, police and judge) of a crime. During the categorising process, I seek to analyse patterns in their portrayals. This will help my analysis of the salience of crime stories as well as the programs’ bias towards crimes. Table 5 will help to demonstrate the overall image and style of the programs and will work as a complementary feature when I am defining the discourse position of each show. Table 6 and Table 7 are developed from Hall’s idea (1978). In the theory section, I have discussed three types of ideologies of crime that were presented in Hall et al.’s work: the conservative ideology, the liberal ideology and the socialist ideology. Through Table 6 and Table 7, I want to find out what ideologies are implanted in each program and how do they affect their presentations.

Table 1. Portrayals of victim (Developed from Smolej, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portrayal of victim</th>
<th>Legal Report</th>
<th>Courtroom</th>
<th>Front Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introducing the victim</td>
<td>Describe: how do they introduce the victim, both vocally and visually</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The appearance of the victim at the crime scene</td>
<td>Describe: how do they portray the victim at the crime scene, both</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portrayals of criminals (Developed from Barnett, 2003)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>reconstructed crime scene</strong></td>
<td>vocally and visually</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life condition of the victim after the crime</strong></td>
<td>Describe how do they portray the victim’s life after the crime, both vocally and visually</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Means of recovery</strong></td>
<td>How does the victim (or his/her family) recover from the crime?</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.** Portrayals of criminals (Developed from Barnett, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portrayal of the criminal</th>
<th>Legal Report</th>
<th>Courtroom</th>
<th>Front Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introducing the criminal</td>
<td>Describe: how do they introduce the criminal, both vocally and visually</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The appearance of the criminal at the crime scene or the reconstructed crime scene</td>
<td>Describe: how do they introduce the criminal, both vocally and visually</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life condition of the criminal after the crime</td>
<td>Describe: how do they introduce the criminal’s life after the crime, both vocally and visually</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Portrayals of the police

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portrayal of the police</th>
<th>Legal Report</th>
<th>Courtroom</th>
<th>Front Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The appearance of the police at the crime scene or reconstructed crime scene</td>
<td>Describe: how do they introduce the criminal, both vocally and visually</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police interrogations</td>
<td>Describe: how do they portray the police during interrogations</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of the police</td>
<td>What images of the police are reflected during the interviews: authoritative, informative, or weak?</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Portrayals of the court and judges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portrayals of the court and judges</th>
<th>Legal Report</th>
<th>Courtroom</th>
<th>Front Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The image of the court</td>
<td>The arrangement of the court: the criminal, the plaintiff, the prosecutor, the judge</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image of judges</td>
<td>The appearance of the judge</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Other relevant elements in the programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background and setting using</th>
<th>Legal Report</th>
<th>Courtroom</th>
<th>Front Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studio settings, opening and ending style</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monologue style</th>
<th>Legal Report</th>
<th>Courtroom</th>
<th>Front Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What kind of monologue is used and when do they use monologue?</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anchor style</th>
<th>Legal Report</th>
<th>Courtroom</th>
<th>Front Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What standing point does the anchor take? What commentary does the anchor</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reference style
In what form do they bring out experts? What kind of information and comments does the expert give?

Programming structure
The whole structure of the program: starts, narratives, climax, endings...

Table 6. Explanations of crime (Developed from Hall et al., 1978)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservative ideology: problems in person: bad morals, characters, etc.</th>
<th>Liberal ideology: problems in society: social problems, government policies, social control, education system, etc.</th>
<th>Socialist ideology: class inequality and unequal distribution of power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal Report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Line</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. Remedies for crime that they suggest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conservative ideology: law &amp; order, tougher sentences, etc.</th>
<th>Liberal ideology: educational and social programs combined with government policies</th>
<th>Socialist ideology: diminish class inequality and unequal distribution of power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Report</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Courtroom</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Front Line</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.2 Summary of 3.2.1; I will find patterns for each program and summarise their angles of portrayals of crime and reporting salience. I will also define discourse position of the three programs. According to Wodak and Meyer (2001: 49): “the category of discourse position, referring to a specific ideological location of a person or a medium.” Margret Jäger also gives her definition of the category of discourse position as:

“With discourse position I understand the [ideological, S.J.] location from which the participation in the discourse and assessment of it for individuals and/or groups and institutions result. It produces and reproduces the special discursive entanglements, which feed on the hitherto experienced and current life situation of those involved in the discourse. Thus, the discourse position is the result of the individual had been subjected and which it has processed into a certain ideological position during the course of its life (Jäger in Wodak and Meyer's
2001: 49). What applies to the subject correspondingly applies to the media. They, too, form certain discourse positions, which shape overall reporting with varying degrees of stringency” (Wodak and Meyer’s 2001: 49).

**Step 4. Processing the material for the sample fine analysis of discourse fragments of episodes, which are typical of the discourse position of the programs**

4.1 Institutional framework: ‘context’
   - 4.1.1 Brief description of the selected episodes: time, length, stories, etc.
   - 4.1.2 Justification of the selection of the episodes: why they are representative

4.2 Content ‘surface’
   - 4.2.1 Episode name
   - 4.2.2 Themes of the episode
   - 4.2.3 Image layout: how images of criminals, victims, authorities, backgrounds, etc. are spread

4.3 Rhetorical means
   - 4.3.1 Kind and form of argumentation, argumentation strategies
   - 4.3.2 Implications and insinuations
   - 4.3.3 Collective symbolism, metaphors, etc.
   - 4.3.4 Idioms, sayings, clichés
   - 4.3.5 References
   - 4.3.6 Corresponding image to the appearance of subjects (victims, criminals, police, etc.)

4.4 Ideological statements based on contents
   - 4.4.1 What notion of, for instance, illegal activities does the episode convey?
   - 4.4.2 What kind of understanding of, for instance, social problems or moral
problems, do the episodes convey?

4.4.3 What is the future perspective (for instance, legal acts, social control) which the episodes convey?"

4.5 Other important findings

4.6 Summarise all the analyses and put them into the context of discourse positions

Step 5. Conclusion
5.1 Illustrate all the findings
5.2 Interpret findings and the entire discourse

4.2 Content Analysis
Content analysis is often used as a quantitative method to study the content of communication in the domain of social science. “Traditionally, media studies have examined either the presentation of crime news or the organizational processes used to generate stories. Each type of study uses a distinct methodology. Presentational studies rely primarily on content analysis; process studies use ethnography or interviews.” (Chermark, 1995: 2) Since this study will examine the presentation of crime news, content analysis will be an appropriate method to use. According to Arthur Asa Berger’s definition, “content analysis is a research technique that involves measuring something in a random sampling of some form of communication.” (Berger, 2005: 133) Similarly, McCain Cole defines content analysis as a “method of analyzing written, verbal or visual communication messages” (Cole in Elo & Kyngäs, 2008: 1). In this thesis, content analysis will be used as a data complementary method for statistical purposes.
According to Riffe et al (2005), the research design of content analysis is guided by its research purpose. Different purposes lead to different designs. Therefore, before I design my content analysis, I must clarify what I want to find through the content analysis. My goal is to examine crime story salience in crime infotainment programs. Riffe et al gives out a series of steps for designing a content analysis (Riffe, 2005: Chapter 3):

**Step 1. Test assumption**
The formal design is to make sure the content analysis can answer the research questions and fulfill the research goals. The test assumption for content analysis is that the media will choose certain crimes to report and usually over-report them.

**Step 2. Define relevant content and sampling plans**
Since the content and samples I am going to use are the same as I will use in CDA, I am not going to discuss it here repeatedly.

**Step 3. Specify formal design**
According to Riffe et al (2005), pervious studies can guide us in designing my research. Similar studies have been conducted by Callanan (2005), Chermark (1995 & 1998), Chermak & Chapman (2007). They find out that,

a) “the number of victims affected by a crime was the best predictor of increased story salience.” (Chermark, 1998: Abstract)
b) “the type of offense also had some influence.” (ibid)
c) “journalistic decision-making on crime news was influenced primarily by the seriousness of the offense.” (Chermak & Chapman, 2007: Abstract)
d) “the occupation of the criminal was important in influencing journalistic decision-making” (ibid.)

e) “Other variables tested, such as victim and criminal characteristics, had very little influence on the space and attention provided to newspaper crime stories.” (Chermak, 1998: Abstract)

Chermak & Chapman (2007) observe that seriousness of the offense is exaggerated and over-reported, and that violence is a salient point to the media. Therefore, these two variables will be tested in my study. Additionally, as I spoke of in the theory section, some major social problems such as social migration and money craving result in crime rates climbing. I will add these two variables to the test.

2.1 Testing method

2.1.1 Frequency table: I am going to use a frequency table to sort out the data.

Frequency tables (developed from Chermak & Chapman, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime variables</th>
<th>Legal Report</th>
<th>Front Line</th>
<th>Courtroom</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic crime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other felony</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crimes</td>
<td>Traffic accidents</td>
<td>Civil cases</td>
<td>Victimless crimes</td>
<td>Weapon used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Here I consider any felonies or civil cases as money related cases if the motivation is money. For example, robbery is a felony, but it is also money related.

### Table 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criminal variables</th>
<th>Legal Report</th>
<th>Front Line</th>
<th>Courtroom</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-adult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>criminal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim variables</td>
<td>Legal Report</td>
<td>Front Line</td>
<td>Courtroom</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-adult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Permanent resident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent resident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.2 I will use logistic regression (Odds) to test the relationship between violence & report salience, seriousness of the offense & report salience, social
migration & report salience, and money craving & report salience. The statistic model of odds is

\[
Odds = \frac{\text{Probability that the event happens}}{\text{Probability that it doesn't happen}}
\]

(Moore et al., 2009: Chapter 14). I am going to test four events:

- Probability that violence happens: murder and other violent crime
- Probability that a matter of serious offense happens: weapon used, death occurred and injured occurred
- Probability that money related cases happens: money related cases
- Probability that criminals are immigrant populations: Non-permanent resident

**Step 3. Conclusion**

3.1 List all the findings
3.2 Interpret findings

**4.3 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have designed my methodological framework: a combination of qualitative (critical discourse analysis) and quantitative (content analysis) methods. The reason for using these two methods is to scientifically collect and process materials, and to test the assumptions I have raised in chapter 3. In the next chapter, I am going to process and analyse materials based on the designs which I made in this chapter.
5. Material Analysis

In this chapter, I am going to process materials. Since the materials are all in Chinese, following quotations are translated into English by the author of this thesis.

5.1 Content Analysis

5.1.1 Data Processing

Table 11 shows what types of crime are presented in the program. From the table, I can see that no misdemeanor crimes are reported. There are 27 violent crimes (including murder) in 67 episodes. The number of other felonies is 23, and among them, there are 8 children stealing and selling cases. There are 30 cases involving weapons use, 20 cases of death and 14 cases of injury. The number of money related cases are 43.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime variables</th>
<th>Legal Report</th>
<th>Front Line</th>
<th>Courtroom</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other violent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic crime</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other felony</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanor crimes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic accidents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil cases</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimless crimes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon used</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death Occurred</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury Occurred</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money related cases*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Here I consider any felonies or civil cases as money related cases if the motivation is money. For example, robbery is a felony, but it is also money related.

Table 12 shows the statistics of criminals. The male-criminal numbers are triple the female numbers. In all 127 criminals, there are only 3 non-adult criminals. White-collar and highly educated criminals are rare. 44% of criminals have prior criminal records. Criminals who are non-Permanent residents triple those who are permanent residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12. (Total number of criminals: 127)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non-Permanent resident  |  17  |  11  |  3  |  31
Permanent resident    |  39  |  40  |  8  |  87

* in *Courtroom* 2012.1.7 episode, there are 12000 victims and 41 criminals. They are excluded from the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life condition of the criminal before the crime is described</th>
<th>Legal Report</th>
<th>Courtroom</th>
<th>Front Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detailed description: character, family condition, etc.</td>
<td>In one episode, the criminal was also a victim of domestic violence. In another episode, a woman killed her sister and her family.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>In one episode, the criminal who was a juvenile offender who killed his father. In another episode, the criminal was also a victim of domestic violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple description: age, birth place, resident place, etc.</td>
<td>25 episodes</td>
<td>6 episodes</td>
<td>27 episodes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I am going to use the statistics in the frequency table to compute the odds of
violence, matters of serious offense, and money related cases happening, and the probability that the criminal is a non-permanent resident.

1. Probability that violence happens: murder and other violent crime

\[ Odds = \frac{P(\text{violence happened})}{P(\text{violence not happened})} = \frac{\frac{27}{67}}{(67 - 27)/67} = 0.675 \]

Interpretation: in total 67 episodes, the odds of violence happening in the reported crime is 67.5% of the odds that it did not happen. Probability that violence happens in 67 cases: 40.3%

2. Probability that a matter of serious offense happens: weapon used, death occurred and injured occurred

Weapon used

\[ Odds = \frac{P(\text{weapon used})}{P(\text{weapon not used})} = \frac{\frac{30}{67}}{(67 - 30)/67} = 0.811 \]

Interpretation: in total 67 episodes, the odds of weapon using are 81.1% of the odds of it not being used. Probability that weapon was used in these 67 cases: 44.8%

Death occurred

\[ Odds = \frac{P(\text{death occurred})}{P(\text{death didn’t occur})} = \frac{\frac{20}{67}}{(67 - 20)/67} = 0.426 \]

Interpretation: in total 67 episodes, the odds of death occurring are 42.6% of it not occurring. Probability that death occurred in 67 cases: 29.9%
Injury occurred

\[ Odds = \frac{\text{Probability that injury occurred}}{\text{Probability that injury didn't occurred}} = \frac{14/67}{(67 - 14)/67} = 0.264 \]

Interpretation: in total 67 episodes, the odds of injury occurring are 26.4% of it not occurring.

Probability that injury occurred in 67 cases: 20.9%

3. Probability that money related cases happened: money related cases

\[ Odds = \frac{\text{Probability that money related cases happened}}{\text{Probability that money related cases not happened}} = \frac{43/67}{(67 - 43)/67} = 1.79 \]

Interpretation: in total 67 episodes, the odds of money related cases happened are 179% of it not happening.

Probability that money related cases happened in 67 cases: 64.2%

4. Probability that a criminal is of an immigrant population: Non-permanent resident

\[ Odds = \frac{\text{Probability that a criminal is immigrant populations}}{\text{Probability that a criminal is not immigrant populations}} = \frac{93/127}{34/127} = 2.74 \]

Interpretation: in total 67 episodes, the odds that a criminal is part of an immigrant population are 274% of the odds that the criminal is not.

Probability that a criminal is non-permanent resident in 127 criminals: 73.2%

---

4 Here immigrant population means people from other places in China who are not permanent residents of the place where the crime happened.
5.1.2 Findings from the Statistics

From frequency tables and odds computing, I can find out that in total in 67 episodes:

1. Violent crime is most reported by all three programs
2. Children stealing and selling cases are also often reported
3. In every 3 cases, 2 are related to money (stealing, robbing money, selling children for money, etc.)
4. The seriousness of offense is taken into consideration when a crime is reported.
5. In every 4 criminals, 3 are non-permanent residents.
6. White-collar crime and juvenile crime are rarely reported. Most of the criminals are adult and blue-collar or professional criminals. Their educational level is low.
7. Detailed description of the criminals’ life before the crimes is rare. In most episodes, there are only simple descriptions such as birth information and bad habits. Their character and family conditions are often neglected.

Other findings:

1. There are many episodes reporting police anti-crime campaigns and operations: 8 episodes of anti-children stealing and selling campaigns, 4 episodes of anti-drug dealing campaigns, 1 episode of an anti-gang campaign, 1 episode of a large police operation towards illegal fund-raising, 1 episode of a large police operation towards illegal Internet person-to-person sales, and 1 episode of a large police operation towards gang robbery.
2. In legal report, there are 4 episodes out of 31 promoting good deeds done by ordinary citizens and 1 of these in Front Line.
3. In Front Line and Courtroom, violent crime takes up over half of the total number of episodes.
5.2 Descriptive Analysis

5.2.1 General Description of the Three Programs

Programing Style and Focusing Angle

Legal Report

*Legal Report* uses the form of story telling combined with expert interpretation. In the beginning, the anchor gives a shot description of the story. Then the crime is reconstructed with monologue narrative, crime scene replay, real crime scene photos and interviews and self-narrative from victims, criminals, families and the police. Following the replay/reconstruction of a crime is an in-studio expert interview conducted by the anchor. Experts give their interpretations of crimes and educate people about relevant laws. The ending part is where the anchor gives out a short comment on the crime in the episode. It usually reveals the program’s attitude towards the crime. There are two things worth mentioning about this program: 1. It accentuates the process of a crime by detailed story telling and crime scene replay. It tells its viewers when and where the crime happened, how it happened, why the criminal did it, what happened to the victim and his or her family, and how the police apprehended the suspect, etc. 2. It introduces experts into the studio who are there to interpret crimes, educate viewers about laws, and explain government policies. Therefore, the viewers are not only informed but also educated. Like it says in its producing code: its aims are to: interpret laws and government policies and educate the public about laws.

Front Line

In *Front Line*, the whole episode is constructed of police operation scenes and interviews with victims, criminals, families and the police. Similar to *Legal Report*, every episode in *Front Line* starts with a short description of a crime. It is followed by the main part: crime construction. In this part, it usually introduces the crime scene first. Then the program goes on to show how the police crack
down on the case: investigating the crime scene, examining the body (if the victim is dead) or interviewing the victim (if the victim is alive), questioning witnesses, collecting evidence, tracking down suspects, capturing and interrogating the suspect, identifying the criminal etc. In the end shots, the anchor also gives out a comment regarding the crime. The most unique characteristic of this program is that instead of mainly using story telling and crime replay to portray a crime (as in Legal Report), Front Line mostly uses police operation videos and photos to construct the whole process of case solving (it also uses crime replay, but only in a small portion). The producers follow the police to record their operations. Sometimes, the police will provide their own recordings as well. This way of portraying crime meets their producing code, which is to: “go deep into the front line of crime scenes and investigate the truth behind crimes” (CCTV.COM, Front Line).

Courtroom

Compared to Legal Report and Front Line, Courtroom uses a totally different programming structure. The major part of the program concentrates on trials. Its name Courtroom reveals what this program is about. In every episode, it begins with a 3 to 5 minute introduction of a case. Then it follows with the trial procedure: part 1 opens the court; part 2 gives evidence and questions evidence; part 3 is courtroom debate; part 4 announces the sentence. In-between trials, there are also some crime scene replays and interviews to describe the background to crimes. In the ending part, the anchor gives comments, as with Legal Report and Front Line. Courtroom has a unique programing structure. It focuses on providing its viewers with real trial scenes and lets its audience know what happens in the courtroom, and how a trial is processed.

Background and Setting Usage

Title:
From shot 1 to shot 6, I can see that the title and studio setting styles of the three programs are quite similar.

**Monologue Style**

In all three programs, monologue is used as a narrator introduces the crime scene, victim, criminal, etc. It is always accompanied with videos such as reconstructed crime scenes, etc. In all 67 episodes, the monologue is read by men with deep and sound voices.

**Anchor Style**

There are two male anchors in Legal Report, two male and two female anchors in Front Line and one female anchor in Courtroom. Their age is between 30 to 50 years old. In the programs, they always wear formal suits. One of the two major functions of the anchor is the joining shots in-between two different parts of the
program. Another function is to give comments on crimes. As I have observed through 67 episodes, none of these anchors possesses a strong personal style. Their hosting styles are rather similar and uniform.

**Reference Style**

There are usually two types of referencing: references from the police and from university professors. They mainly serve two purposes: providing information and interpreting laws and policies. They usually appear in the footage. However, in *Legal Report*, one part of the program is to introduce experts into the studio and interpret crimes, laws, and policies in the form of an interview (shot 7 and shot 8).

![Shot 7](image1.png) ![Shot 8](image2.png)

**5.2.2 Fine Sample Analysis**

In spite of all the differences in programing styles and angle in the three programs, I find that the portrayal of victims, criminals, the police and judges are similar. In all three programs, the dominant ideology of the explanations and remedies for crime are similar to the conservative point of view. The socialist ideology and liberal ideology are nowhere to be found. In this part, I am going to examine these aspects in fine detail by using samples.

**Portrayal of the Victim**

*Introducing the victim*

The purpose of introducing the victim is to inform the audience about the life of the victim. By getting know the living conditions, the character, the personality,
the associations and social status of the victim, the audience can familiarise
themselves with the victim. They can see him or her as a real person who they
know, rather than a figure on the screen. For example, a victim of a fraud, Mr.
Zhang is described by the anchor as,

“In Nanjing, there is a man, Mr. Zhang. He is 70 years old. He and
his wife divorced many years ago and he has been alone since
then. So he is eager to find someone to accompany him in his
elderly life. Finally he met someone who he really liked and he
invested much in this relationship. In the end, he found out that all
this was nothing but a lie, an elaborately designed lie.” (Legal
Report, 2011.12.9)

Xiaoli was the victim of a robbery and she was killed by the robber (Front

“The victim was 16 years old. She was at her best before she was
brutally killed...”—the monologue (shot 9).
“I do not understand why he killed her. She is a normal little
girl...(crying)”—the victims’ mother (shot 10).
“She was a nice girl. She never got into any trouble...”—the
victim’s father (shot 11).

In the footage, the parents look sad and desperate. Their voices are trembling.
Gao Zhenxin was killed by a thief when he tried to capture him. (Courthouse, 2011.12.24)

“Gao Zhenxin was 22 years old. He was worked as an assistant police officer before he was killed. His mother told us that he was a good man, caring and honest...”—the monologue

“We were on the phone two hours before. He told me that he was going to go back home the next morning. I did not think that he would lose his life... (Trembling)”

“He was such a nice boy. He always helped with housework. He was so nice... (Crying)”

--the victim's mother (shot 13)

In the introduction, the victim is portrayed as a good and caring man. In the picture (shot 12), he looks like any common young man, smiling. Shot 13 is a part of the footage which the victim's mother is being interviewed. She looks to be in serious grief and she cries when she talks about her son.

Shot 12.  
Shot 13

Life condition of the victim after the crime

In the monologue, Mr. Zhang's (the victim of the fraud) life after being deceived with all his savings is described as follows:

“Mr. Zhang now lives in a poor studio in the rural area. He has
been living there for three years after he was deceived by the woman. Now he has no money, no families and no friends. Ever since he got to know this woman he lost everything he had…”  
*(Legal Report, 2011.12.9)*

Accompanying the monologue is the footage showing the living conditions of Mr. Zhang in the dirty and noisy rural district. From shot 14 and shot 15, I can see there are trucks parking in front of the building he lives in. Sewage and trash are over the street. Right outside his window, there is a warehouse. Trucks come and go every day and night which is noisy and annoying. Inside his studio (shots 16), the room is empty with no decorations; only a table, four chairs, a refrigerator, an electric fan, a bed and small TV.

Shot 14.  
Shot 15.  
Shot 16.

In Mr. Zhang’s interview, he says,

“She owes me a lot. My retirement life has been totally ruined by her. I should have a comfortable and quiet elderly life, but now I am desperate... Now I do not have anyone to talk to except to the TV. I am like a ghost now.” *(Legal Report, 2011.12.9)*

In the footage of his interview, Mr. Zhang sounds angry and helpless. Although his face is covered, we can still get a sense of the gauntness of his face and his sadness from his body language. For example, he looks woodenly out the window
(shot 17). He smokes with his wrinkled figures, which are stained with yellow and black which is caused by nicotine (shot 18 and shot 19). *(Legal Report, 2011.12.9)*

![Shot 17](image1)

![Shot 18](image2)

![Shot 19](image3)

In the program, Xiaoli’s (the victim of the robbery) parents’ *(Front Line, 2011.12.17)* life fell apart after she was killed. In the video, her mother is in deep sorrow and looks gaunt (shot 20 and shot 21).

“I hate him so much. I want to eat him piece by piece...(crying)"

“I always think of my daughter. It was so pathetic...(vacant expression)”

- The victim’s mother *(Front Line, 2011.12.17)*

![Shot 20](image4)

![Shot 21](image5)

Li Zhimei was the victim of a traffic accident. The criminal fled the scene after he hit her. She died because of a lack of immediate medical attention. *(Courtroom, 2011.12.31)*

“My daughter was the mother of two children. She was the pillar
of my family. What shall we do without her (crying)—the victim’s mother.

“The whole family was in deep sorrow. Her two little children lost their mother, her old parents lost their daughter and her husband lost his beloved wife...”—the monologue.

In the footage (shot 22), the mother looks so desperate and she cries loudly. It seems that she is going to faint. In another piece of footage (shot 23), the victim’s daughter is with his grandfather. Although it only shows her back, the dismal atmosphere is accentuated with the monologue and sad music.

The appearance of the victim at the crime scene or the reconstructed crime scene

The typical way of reconstructing the crime scene with a living victim is to combine the reconstructed crime scene with the victim’s narrative. For example, in the shot 24, there are two actors playing the role of the victim—Mr. Zhang and the criminal, picturing the crime scene. Then, the footage turns to shot 25 where Mr. Zhang talks about how he was deceived by the criminal. It again goes back to the play, and the monologue continues Mr. Zhang’s story (shot 26). (Legal Report, 2011.12.9)
“She was stabbed more than 20 times...”

“She lies in the blood...”

--Monologue *(Front Line, 2011.12.17)*

In the footage (shot 27 and shot 28) Xiaoli (the victim of the robbery) lies in the blood. Her face is covered with blood and her eyes were open. The scene looks horrible, scary, and brutal.

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“A large quantity of blood of the victim's was found the crime scene (shot 29 and shot 30)” (the victim of the traffic accident) “The victim was not sent to the hospital immediately. She was dead right after she was sent to the hospital. Her injury was too serious (shot 31)”

-- The policeman *(Courtroom, 2011.12.31)*

In the footage, the crime scene is covered with victim’s blood. From a police officer's description, the victim was not sent to the hospital immediately and it resulted in her death. The scene gives the viewer an image that if the criminal sent the victim to the hospital immediately instead of fleeing, she might have survived. His mistreatment of her, and his neglect afterwards caused her death.
Means of recovery

The footage (shot 32 and shot 33) gives viewers the image that Mr. Zhang is struggling with his life. The crime that the criminal committed hurt him so badly that he could not recover from it.

“I blame myself to falling into her trap. I am too ashamed to contact any of my relatives or friends. I have been avoiding my daughter for three years...” (Legal Report, 2011.12.9)

The parents cannot recover from the death of their daughter (Xiaoli was the victim of the robbery, Front Line, 2011.12.17). The mother looks in deep sorrow (shot 34) and the room is messy (shot 35).
“I missed her so much. I cannot get to sleep at night...(shot 36)”—the victim’s husband (*Courtroom*, 2011.12.31)
“Every time I think about her, I cannot help crying. What will happen to my grandchildren? They are so little and they already lost their mother...(shot 37)”—the victim’s mother in law (*Courtroom*, 2011.12.31)

It is difficult for the family to recover from the loss of a daughter, mother and wife. The grief towards the dead and the anger towards the criminal are all over the video.

From these examples, I find that a victim of a crime is often portrayed as an ordinary person with families. The victim might be a husband, a wife, a son, a daughter, a father, a mother or a good friend. His or her life is interrupted. The victim families’ ordinary life is interrupted. They are described in the programs as not being able to recover from the incidents. They are still in anger, fear and anxiety even after a long time has passed. Many victims in the programs are old.
persons, adolescent girls, young children, a working mother with young children, or the only son of a family. They are either vulnerable or a key member of a family. The question here is why they are selected and reported. Walklate observes,

“the identification as an ‘ideal victim’ is connected with vulnerability and innocence. The nearer an individual fits the ideal stereotype the more attention they are likely to receive from victim support workers, the criminal justice process, and from the media” (Walklate in Smolej, 2010: 81)

According to his observation, the victims in the examples are what are called “ideal victims”. In the programs, the producers use powerfully emotional images to portray the victims and their families. Sadness, anger and fear are all over their expressions and in their words. The families of a dead victim are crying in front of the camera. The mother fainted in the court. This kind of image is a typical “hook” of the program. These images can raise sympathy from viewers and catch their eye.

**Portrayal of the Criminal**

*Introducing the criminal*

One of the typical ways of introducing the criminal is through the police operation. For example, Yang Yongxu is the perpetrator of an indoor robbery case (*Legal Report, 2011.12.21*). His first appearance in the episodes is from the police database (shot 38). Then in the following footage (shot 39), one police officer says,

“He was sentenced to 5 years’ imprisonment for theft in 2005”

It gives viewers the image that he is an incorrigible offender. In shot 40 and shot
I see the criminal in person. He sits behind the bar, wearing prisoner’s clothes with handcuffs on his wrists. Although in the background introduction he is introduced as “the suspect”, in the footage he surely looks like a criminal and a prisoner.

“Liu XinQiao, from Hunan Province, born in 1974. He was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment for robbery in 1997 ...”—monologue (Front Line, 2011.12.17)

“He has lots of bad habits, drinking, gambling. His salary cannot satisfy his needs...”—the policeman (Front Line, 2011.12.17)

The criminal (the robber who killed Xiaoli) is introduced with his photo looking harsh (shot 42). The monologue gives his basic information and his prior criminal record. The viewers are given the information that he is a habitual criminal. Then the policeman describes him as a man with lots of bad habits who is often robbing for money (shot 43). Then it follows him as he is taken to identify the crime scene (shot 44). In the footage, he is held by two fully armed policemen and has his wrists handcuffed. The crowd at the scene is pointing and
criticising him.

“People gathered at the scene to criticise and condemn his cruelty” — monologue (Front Line, 2011.12.17)

Shot 42. Shot 43. Shot 44.

In the footage, the first direct appearance of the criminal (the man who killed Gao Zhenxin) appears when he is taken to the court (shot 45). He is wearing a prisoner’s vest and has handcuffs on his wrist.

“The criminal, Wang Long was born in February, 7th 1979 in Heilongjiang Province. Han, middle school educational level. He was sentence to 1 year imprisonment for intentional harm in 2005... (shot 46)” — the monologue (Courtroom, 2011.12.24)

Shot 45. Shot 46.

The appearance of the criminal at the crime scene or the reconstructed crime scene
The typical way of reconstructing the crime scene from a criminal’s angle is to
use CCTV (closed-circuit television) footage, crime scene photos, reconstructed crime scenes by actors, and criminal narrative. For example, in the monologue, it says,

“It happened at midnight. Mr. and Mrs Chen were asleep (Shot 47). Suddenly the bedroom door was opened as two men broke in. They stabbed Mr. Chen and his wife several times in the belly and on the legs. The blood is all over the bed (Shot 48)...” *(Legal Report, 2011.12.21)*

The crime scene looks terrifying. The bed is covered with blood. Then, the image changes to the CCTV footage. It shows the criminal driving a motorcycle and fleeing the crime scene (Shot 49). It follows with shot 50 in which the criminal is narrating what he did,

“Before I robbed them, I went there several times (pause) and finally decided to rob this family. They seemed rich (pause) Then I went into the house and just did it...” *(Legal Report, 2011.12.21)*

In the narrative, the criminal sounds hesitated and nervous and he never looks into the camera from the front. He looks guilty.

Shot 47.  
Shot 48.
"I saw a man stabbing the girl. I called out at once and he fled..."—witness (*Front Line*, 2011.12.17)

"I approached her with a knife. She asked me what did I want. I stabbed her... I thought that if she were alive, I would have to pay for medicine. So I stabbed her to death... "—the criminal (*Front Line*, 2011.12.17)

The criminal (the robber who killed Xiaoli) at the reconstructed crime scene is portrayed as a brutal and cold-blood murderer. In the footage, he is strangling the victim (shot 51) and then stabbing her repeatedly (shot 52). The background music is thrilling. Then the footage turns to his narrative. He is sitting at a bar with handcuffs and prisoner’s vest on. The sound bite: “I thought that if she were alive, I would have to pay for medicine. So I stabbed her to death...” makes him look like a cold-blooded murderer who has no respect for life whatsoever.

“I did not know I stabbed him. I just waved my knife to scare him off...” —the criminal (*Courtroom*, 2011.12.24)
“He went out at night to get money from the victim, with a sharp knife in his pocket...”—the monologue (Courtroom, 2011.12.24)

Differing from Legal Report and Front Line, Courtroom concentrates more on the court. The construction of the criminal theme is mainly relayed through the criminals’ narratives in the court (shot 54), and is sometimes combined with crime scene reconstructions with monologues (shot 55). However, the appearances of criminals at crime scenes are the same: 1. They are always in handcuffs and prisoners’ vests 2. They are described as dangerous, deceiving or cold-blooded.

Life condition of the criminal after the crime
The life of the criminal featured in a criminal case is always portrayed as behind high walls and without any freedom (shot 56 and shot 57). Accompanying these images, the monologue says,

“Instead of hard work, he chose to commit crimes for a living. Now he has to face a very long time of imprisonment...” (Legal Report, 2011.12.21)
In the footage (shot 58), the criminal is escorted to the prison. The monologue comments that,

“If he did not commit the crime, he may have a great life, but now he has to spend many years of his life in prison…” —the monologue


In *Courtroom*, sentence to every case is given, for example (shot 59),

“The criminal is sentenced to death…” —the monologue

(*Courtroom*, 2011.12.24)
In general, criminals are portrayed negatively. Some of them are portrayed as cold-blooded killers, some are greedy con men and some are lowly educated young people with little sense of the law. Their actions are often described as “terrible”, “cruel”, “greedy”, etc. Their appearances in the program are always highly criminalised. They are wearing prisoner's jackets and handcuffs, and are escorted by armed policemen. This portrayal makes them look guilty and dangerous. Their personalities and their roles as family members are often overlooked (table 14). Their actions in the description of crimes are accentuated. Viewers are given the image of their being criminals, dangerous to others and to society. They always have to pay for what they did by imprisonment or death. This has an alarming effect on viewers. However, I have also noticed that in two episodes the criminals are also the victims of domestic violence. These two women lived under threat of abuse from their husbands. Instead of calling the police, they killed their husbands. When the anchors and the experts describe these two women as criminals, they used a rather softer tone. They show sympathy towards these women. Nevertheless, they also claimed that they shouldn’t use this extreme method to solve their problem. Society and the relevant government department should pay more attention to victims of domestic violence, the program suggests. Either way of portraying criminals has its “catch”. The negative way shows the ugliness of human beings. The other shows the vulnerability of the criminal and raises sympathy in viewers.

From the statistics, I can see that most of the criminals that appear in the programs are adult males with a low level of education, who are often immigrants from other cities. It appears that there is a stereotype about most criminals. They are portrayed as a group of people who are easier to become criminals. The society shall pay more attention to those people, educating them about laws and moralities. On the other hand, white-collar crimes and juvenile crimes are rare in the samples. Only three white-collar criminals and three
juvenile criminals are reported.

**Portrayal of the Police**

*The appearance of the police at the crime scene or reconstructed crime scene*

In crime infotainment programs, there are usually three ways of portraying police operations: 1. The actual scene of the crime, recorded by the police; 2. A reconstruction operation scene played by actors or policemen themselves. 3. A police officer's narrative. For example, one of the episodes of *Legal Report* (2011.12.06) shows the typical portrayal of the police operations. It uses the recording provided by the police to construct the scene of the police capturing the suspects. In shot 60 and shot 61, the policemen are spotting the suspects. I can hear them talking, “focus on the car”, “attention, attention”, “take cover, take cover” “get him, get him”… The atmosphere is intense. The producer uses intensive and exciting background music to accentuate the excitement and enhance the tension of the whole operation and to make it more dramatic. Shot 62 and shot 63 show the scene of capture of the suspects and the drugs they are about to sell.

Images such as shot 64 and shot 65 show the reconstruction of the scene of
operation, which has been replayed out later by the policemen. In such scenes, the police are usually portrayed with a dedicated image.

“The detectives walk through all the possible sites, talked to many informative persons, and investigated every suspicious point...” (Legal Report, 2011.12.06)

In the policemen’s narratives voiced-over the police operations shots, there are two basic types of image construction: 1. blurring the face of the policeman (shot 66) 2. A clear image of the policeman showing on the screen (shot 67) (Legal Report, 2011.12.06). All the policemen that appear in the narrative part are wearing police uniforms and look serious. Their narratives are fluent and their voices are always steady. It sounds like they have had rehearsals beforehand.

I can see another example from Front Line (2011.12.17) where the police try to capture the robber who killed Xiaoli. In the footage, the police show their dedication and hard work. It uses footage of police investigation, the investigator’s narrative, and police operations.
“The police sent out a large force to track down the robber. They inquired after every suspicious vehicle at the gateway of the city border... (shot 68)”

“The investigators asked every possible witness around the crime scene... (shot 69)”

“The police broke into the house and captured the suspect... (shot 71)”

—the monologue

(Front Line, 2011.12.24)

In Courtroom, the focus is on the court. The police operation is a small part of the program. Nevertheless, the image of the police which does appear in the program is similar to those in Legal Report and Front Line. They are dedicated, serious and usually in their uniforms (shot 72 and shot 73, Courtroom, 2011.12.27).
Police interrogations

Police interrogations occupy a small part of the programs. Usually, there are just one or two shots. The interrogation videos are normally provided by the police. For example, shot 74, 77, 78, and 80 are the real interrogation scenes recorded by the police. Shot 75, 76 and 79 are criminals’ depositions.

(Legal Report, 2011.12.21)
Shot 74.
Shot 75.
Shot 76.

(Front Line, 2011.12.24)
Shot 77.
Shot 78.
Voice from the police

In some episodes, the police will talk about their view of the crimes. In the interviews, they are always wearing police uniforms and appearing authoritative. For example, in one episode, the chief officer of the local police is talking about the negative influence of drug dealing to the society (shot 81),

“Drug dealing is a dangerous crime for society. We as the police must have zero tolerance to such crime...”—the chief policeman

(Front Line, 2011.12.15)

The chief policeman from another local police branch talks about the anti-gang campaign in one episode (shot 82).

“Ever since we launched the anti-gang campaign, the police force has sent out a large force to hamper gang related crimes. Gangs are a great threat to the people, but with all our efforts, we will wipe them out...” —the chief policeman (Legal Report, 2011.12.06)
In general, the portrayals of the police are positive. In all three programs, the police appearances can be categorised into three image types: information provider, law executor, and peoples' protector. They are usually wearing uniforms and 99% of them appearing in the programs are men. The image of a policeman is authoritative, caring, courageous and dedicated. No negative images of police are shown in the programs. Recently, there have been hot debates about police using violence during interrogations. However, in the total 67 samples, images of police interrogations are rare and they all provided by the police.

**Portrayals of the Court and Judges**

The portrayals of the court and judges occupy a small part of the programs *Legal Report* and *Front Line*. Usually, there are just one or two shots. In comparison, *Courtroom* uses a large proportion of episodes to portrayal the court. For example, in *Legal Report* and *Front Line*, scenes such as shot 83 (*Legal Report, 2011.12.9*) and shot 84 (*Front Line, 2011.12.17*) show the typical image of courts and judges.
Images of the court and judges are similar in all three programs. However, as I introduced before, Courtroom uses a large portion of an episode to present the trial procedure. For example, open the court (shot 85 to shot 87); give evidence and question evidence (shot 88 and shot 89); courtroom debate (shot 90 to shot 92); announce sentence (shot 93 and shot 94). (Courtroom, 2011.12.24)
In all three programs, the court and judges are portrayed as a sacred and serious. Before sentences, criminals usually will read letters of confession. In most episodes, criminals look regretful. Cameras are closing in on their faces with scars and tears.

*Explanations of crime*

Table 15. Explanations of crime (Developed from Hall et al., 1978)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conservative ideology: problems in person: bad morals, characters, etc.</th>
<th>Liberal ideology: problems in society: social problems, government policies, social control, education system, etc.</th>
<th>Socialist ideology: class inequality and unequal distribution of power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Legal Report</em></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Courtroom</em></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Front Line</em></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

The explanations of crime conveyed in *Legal Report* are similar to the conservative point of view, which believes that crime and deviance occur because of criminals’ misdoing, bad morals, wrong thoughts, characters, or other people's instigation, etc.

“These two young men should have earned a living by hard work. But they chose to commit crime...” (*Legal Report*, 2011.12.21)

“Because of their greediness, they put other lives in danger...”
“(Legal Report, 2012.12.13)”

“Because of his greed, a mother lost her son. He is going to pay for what did with his life, and he is already condemned by others…” (Courtroom, 2011.12.24)

“They were driven by money and killed a happy family, now they have to face the ruthless law…” (Courtroom, 2011.12.17)

“A fight caused by impulse ended a life and put another into prison for the rest of his life. His actions resulted in the misery of two families. Impulse is a devil which lives deep down in your heart. We should learn how to control it, otherwise it will come out and hurt others and ourselves.” (Front Line, 2011.12.17)

From these examples, I can see that they all convey one idea: the problem of crime is innate in certain persons. We shall suppress the devil inside of us. Only through hard work can our desires be fulfilled. Never let desire carry us away into criminal behavior. However, I also notice in one episode (Legal Report, 2011.12.7), the anchor and the inviting experts are talking about the decline of social morality as a cause of crime, and that it is becoming a major problem for Chinese society.

Remedies of crime they suggest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservative ideology: law &amp; order, tougher sentences, etc.</th>
<th>Liberal ideology: educational and social programs combined with government policies</th>
<th>Socialist ideology: diminish of class inequality and unequal distribution of power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 16. Remedies of crime they suggest
When turning to remedies of crime, the idea in these three programs is also dominated by the conservative point of view. The liberal or the socialist ideology is nowhere to be found. One key remedy of crime is through massive education and moral construction. Laws & regulations and police operations are the other key remedies used for the purpose of eliminating crimes. I can see examples of anchors’ end-comments reflecting these goals and remedies:

“Young people should always remember that only through honest working can one live in a decent life…” \(\textit{(Legal Report, 2011.12.21)}\)

“We should enhance moral education in school, society, and family…” \(\textit{(Legal Report, 2011.12.7)}\)

“We hope that relevant laws and policies can be launched to regulate this behaviour. We urge the police to enhance their law enforcement to stop such behaviour which continues to endanger our society…” \(\textit{(Legal Report, 2012.12.13)}\)

“We wish the law enforcement department would enhance their operations and give the public a safer Internet shopping environment…” \(\textit{(Courtroom, 2011.12.17)}\)

“This police operation successfully stopped the gang robberies in Linyi District, and returned a safe and harmonious environment to the people in Linyi…” \(\textit{(Front Line, 2011.12.9)}\)

From these examples, I can see all three programs have a dominant view of the conservative ideas of crime explanation and crime control, and none of them take
a liberal or socialist view of crime.

**Samples of Special Themes**

*Moral education*

“Diaona—the most beautiful girl” *(Legal Report, 2011.12.7)*

This episode tells a story about a young woman who tried to assist an injured woman and got injured during the process. It happened at a traffic accident scene, the woman was hit by a car and lying in the middle of the highway. Cars were driving by and she was likely to be run over again. Diaona came to help her and was hit by a car. This incident was reported by all the major media. They praised Diaona for her noble actions. In the episode, doing good deeds was considered as a noble gesture and every citizen was encouraged to follow her example. Meanwhile, they set up a debate about why others at the scene did not give their assistance. A legal expert and a media man were invited into the studio. They criticized those people did not help and they also discussed the social problems and policy problems behind the moral decline.

In the 67 episodes, there are four more episodes similar to this episode. As some scholars argue (introduced in Chapter 2), moral decline has become a major social problem in China. The government attempts to revive traditional Confucian and collective responsibility values. Educating the public via the media is one of their ways to stop this trend of decline. Program like “Diaona—the most beautiful girl” is a typical example of promoting the government policy. On the other hand, in such a program, the decline of morality is often extended to an extreme level. One good deed is over-reported and it creates an illusion that few people are doing good deeds and that most of us are cold and morally bereft. Then experts and opinion leaders go to the media, talking about moral decline and social disintegration. This chain of actions results in social anxieties and moral panic.

Large police operations in anti-crime campaign
In chapter 2, I also introduced moral decline in response to the climbing crime rate since the economic reform, and mentioned that the Chinese government has launched several nationwide anti-crime campaigns to crack down on crime and to severely punish serious offenders. These campaigns are recorded and broadcast on crime infotainment programs. In my statistics, 16 episodes out of 67 are related to anti-crime campaigns. For example, the episode in *Front Line*, 2011.12.9, is about a provincial-level police operation on gang robbery. The whole episode follows the police operation from investigation to capturing the criminals. In the episode, the police look efficient, dedicated and courageous. They are portrayed as the protectors of the public. This is a type of government image building in order to increase public confidence in the Party and the government.

5.3 Findings
In this chapter, I have processed all 67 episodes of materials. Statistical and descriptive analysis has resulted in some interesting findings.

1. Discourse positions of *Legal Report, Front Line* and *Courtroom*
Overall, all three programs hold a similar ideological position which is the conservative ideology towards crime. That is, crime is a vicious behavior, which has great negative influence on the Chinese society. The conservative ideology has a zero tolerance policy regarding such behaviour. Crime is thought to occur because of a person’s wrong desire or taking wrong approaches to fulfill their desires. The right way of get what we want is through hard work. Since crime appears to be a great danger towards the society, the government must make appropriate laws and policies to regulate behaviour. The enforcement departments, such as the police, must enhance their operations in order to maintain the order of the society. On the other hand, formal control alone cannot put an end to crime. Informal control has been found to be even more important. The public should have sufficient legal and moral education. The government and the public should work together to construct a moral society.
In detail, the three programs use different programing styles and points of focus to convey this ideology. *Legal Report* is more educational and entertaining. It uses story telling and expert interpretation to entertain and educate its viewers. *Front Line* focuses on showing real crime scene and finding out truth behind crimes. Audiences can have a more in-depth view of police operations. *Courtroom* brings its viewer into the court. It lets them see how a trial is processed.

2. Stereotypes in the portrayal of crimes

First, crime types are limited; violent crime is most reported. 3/4 cases are Money-related. On the other hand, misdemeanor crimes, white-collar crimes and juvenile crimes are rare. Second, the programs construct a stereotypical criminal who is a male adult who is a blue-collar worker or professional criminal, with a low level of education, and perhaps a criminal record. 73% of the criminals are non-permanent residents. Third, the police images are all positive and police anti-crime campaigns occupy a big portion of the program content. Fourth, all cases in 67episodes are closed cases.
6. Discussion

6.1 Comparison to Previous Studies

6.1.1 The Selection of Crime for Coverage

Previous researchers suggest that the media report crimes selectively. According to Chermak and Chapman, studies conducted by Ammons, Dimmick, & Pilotta, 1982; Antunes & Hurley, 1977; Barlow, Barlow, & Chiricos, 1995; Chermak, 1994, 1995; Graber, 1979, 1980; Jerin & Fields, 1995; Jones, 1976; Sheley & Ashkins, 1984; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981 and Smith, 1984, have shown that the selection of crime coverage is not necessarily proportional when compared to the actual crime statistics (Chermak and Chapman, 2007: 352). Violent crimes are overly reported while misdemeanor crimes, white-collar crimes, and property crime are under represented (Chermak and Chapman, 2007: 353). Chermark and Chapman have observed from Chermak & Gruenewald, 2006; Johnstone et al., 1994; Weiss & Chermak, 1998, that

“the general conclusion that seriousness of the incident is an important newsworthy characteristic. Homicides that are particularly serious, such as those involving multiple victims, and terrorism incidents with casualties, are much more likely to receive news attention and get more space.” (Chermak and Chapman, 2007: 353)

Since the large body of researchers, which has shown the distortion in proportion of crime and its coverage (Biressi and Nunn 2003; Chermak and Chapman, 2007) is based on British or American background, I wonder how different, if at all, these findings are from my own research and from crime reportage in China in general. The recent research conducted by Chermak and Chapman (2007) uses quantitative content analysis to predict the salience in
crime reporting. The results of their studies are,

1. “journalistic decision-making on crime news was influenced primarily by the seriousness of the offense.” (Chermak and Chapman, 2007: Abstract)
2. “the occupation of the defendant was also important.”(ibid.)
3. “there was considerable variation depending on the size of city. Specifically, the seriousness of a crime event had a limited impact in cities with lower crime rates.” (ibid.)
4. “violent crime was overrepresented in the media and nonviolent crime was underrepresented in the media when compared to official crime data.” (Chermak and Chapman, 2007: 357)

The study method and selection of materials in these studies are different from those in my study. They use statistical inferences to process 826 crimes stories in 14 days from 5 newspapers published in the U.S.A. Now I am going to compare my findings in this thesis to the four results given by Chermak and Chapman (2007). Result one can be found in my findings. In the total 67 episodes, 44.8% of crimes involved weapons, 29.9% of crimes involved death, and in 20.9% of crimes the victims were injured. Similarly results of violent crime report are also discovered in my study. From the statistics, I find that 40.3% of crime stories involved violence. However, according to Fan et al. (2010), in 2009 there were 277,000 violent crimes in all 4,443,000 criminal cases. The actual percentage of violent crimes that occurred is 6.2%, a dramatically different percentage than what was represented in the three television shows. On the other hand, the actual number of misdemeanor crimes (non-criminal crimes) was in total 8,275,000. The number is almost as twice the total number of criminal cases, but this type of crime was not represented at all in my sample. Results two and three are not obvious in my study. It may be the result of using different media. In
Chermak and Chapman's (2007) study, they use five local newspapers. The location of a crime story, such as in which city or even which neighborhood might be of great concern to their readers. The samples I use are from a national TV station, location might be less of a concern to viewers.

In comparison to Chermak and Chapman's (2007) study, then, I find some similar results, while others are different. This could be for two reasons: first is the difference between newspaper reporting and TV infotainment programs. Compared to newspapers, infotainment programs are more entertainment-oriented and commodified than they are information-oriented. Instead of concentrating on words and phrases, TV programs use images to deliver messages and attract viewers. The more impact the image can bring, the better chances it has of attracting a greater audience. Violent crime usually comes with bloody images and even casualties. As cultural criminologists observe, the public are obsessed with the fascination of crime and deviance. They are enthralled by the spectacle of violence. They want to see these narratives represented in the media. TV crime infotainment programs are specifically designed for such purposes. Superficially, it is just catering to audience preferences. However, one might also argue that it is the media who created this craving for the spectacle of crime and violence in the first place. Now it seems to be a chicken and egg problem, because these two phenomena each appear to be the cause of the other. Which came first? Are the media catering to the audience's desire for certain types of spectacle, or are they creating those desires? Different schools of thought yield different answers. In Chapter 3, I introduced several schools of thought which attempt to explain this phenomenon. The media effects approach claims that the media have negative impacts on viewers. Thus, media effects scholars might answer the question by arguing that the media originates audience desire for spectacle. They put violent images on the screen. The audiences watch them and are affected. Audiences will grow more attracted to such images and even become more violent themselves.
To a pluralist, the situation is more complicated. People have many choices with the explosion in the quantity of media products. The media are no longer in control of an audience’s ideas. Instead, they are enforcing the ideas which are already possessed by their audiences. People think violence is dangerous and it happens frequently. They want to know when and where it happens. So the media give them what they want. The media are in a fierce competition for viewers and people have set ideas about what they will choose to watch from so many media products. From a postmodernist and cultural criminologist perspective, such craving for violence both by the media and the public is the result of the need for spectacle. In fact, we are living in a “society of the spectacle” (Debord, 1995). Last but not least, the dominant ideology approach helps us to understand that the presentation of crime in the media is not only a relation between the media and their audience. It also involves other social aspects such as politics and economy. From model 2 (in Chapter 3), I can see that there is a complicated process in forming an ideology of crime. The media and their audiences are only part of it. In many studies, the spectacle in media presentation of crimes is mentioned (Chermak and Chapman, 2007; Greer, 2007; Marsh and Melville, 2009) and it is also applicable in my study. Thus, the ideology of crime and crime control has been taken into account. Therefore, in this study, I will not only look for the spectacle in the media portrayal of crime, but also seek the hidden ideology behind images.

Second, I also have prominent findings which have not been mentioned in any of these previous studies. The percentage of money related crimes is as high as 64.2%. The reason might be related to the one of the major social problems I discussed in Chapter 2. With the latest economic reform, income inequality and dominance of money driven value have become serious social problems. They are parts of the reason causing the climbing crime rate (Fan et, al., 2009). This is a special situation found in China. Therefore, it is reasonable that I did not find it in other studies which were conducted with reference to British or American
crime rates and media coverage.

6.1.2 The Portrayal of Victims
The portrayal of the victim is an important part of a crime story. In 67 episodes, there are only 6 episodes without a specific victim. In the other 61 episodes, the victims are portrayed in an emotional and sentimental way which encourages sympathy towards them. As with the selection of crimes to cover (ideal crimes), the media also have their standard of an “ideal victim”. Christie describes the “ideal victim” as

“a person or category of individuals who – when hit by crime – most readily are given the complete and legitimate status of being a victim’. This group includes those who are perceived as vulnerable, defenceless, innocent and worthy of sympathy and compassion.” (Christie in Greer, 2007:22)

In addition, Greer introduces a hierarchy of victimization:

“Hierarchy of victimization is a pecking order of sorts, representing the differential status of particular types and categories of crime victim in media and official discourses, including ideal victims (for example, some child murder victims) at the top of the hierarchy, and non-deserving victims (for example, habitually violent youths injured in a drunken fight) near the bottom.” (Greer, 2007:23)

In Greer’s work, he uses case studies to describe what an “ideal victim” looks like. He conducts his study in the U.K. and uses samples from newspapers such as the Daily Mirror and the Daily Mail. In my study, I use statistics which evidence the same outcomes. Taking the data I got from the sample, the portrayal of the “ideal
victim” can also be traced. First, I will describe the type of victim. From table 13, the number of male victims seems larger than the number of female victims. However, in more detailed statistics, among the 62 male victims, 22 of them are young children who were stolen and sold. Another 19 persons are elderly victims of robbery, murder and fraud. If I consider females as a vulnerable group, then the proportion of ideal victim in my sample is as high as 82.2%. On the other hand, the number of strong young men represented as victims is only 4. Other victims are middle-aged men and teenage boys. According to Greer (2007:35-39), young victims, especially young black people, victims of white-collar and corporate crime are under represented. Police officers and prison officers, on the other hand, are over-represented as crime victims. Compared with my data, the number of young men represented in the samples is low and the number of young women as victims is significantly high (18 victims). However, the issue of ethnicity and race is not prominent in the samples. Corporate and white-collar crimes are overlooked. The reason for this could be that in China white-collar people are always considered to be decent citizens. People with well-paid jobs are not suspected of committing crimes. On the other hand, poor people are demonised as criminals because they are seen as having poor judgment, and because of their bad living conditions. Such biases can be found in the labeling of criminals. As to the claim that police and prison officers as crime victims are over-represented, only one assistant police officer was reported as a victim. No other evidence is found in the samples to support this claim.

Now that I have described the types of ideal crimes and victims in media representation, I turn to a discussion of how they are portrayed. As I described in Chapter 5, the images of victims and their families are shown in a sensational way. They are full of sadness, fear, and anger. During many interviews, they are crying. Pictures of their wounds and scenes showing them in the hospital are most common when portraying victims. The background introduction of victims not only establishes their innocence, but also creates a link between victims and
viewers. This is done by representing these victims as ordinary persons like viewers. The scenes of their wounds or dead bodies create or enhance victims’ vulnerability and increase viewers’ sympathy and compassion.

6.1.3 The Portrayal of Criminals

Like “ideal victim”, the media also create certain images for “typical criminal”. This image changes when time, place, or social values change. During the Cultural Revolution period of the People’s Republic of China, being a capitalist or a businessman was considered as criminal or at least as potentially criminal. Workers, farmers, and revolutionaries were presented as the decent classes. Now, the concept has been reversed. Businesspeople belong to the white-collar class, which has become respectable. Workers and farmers are blue-collar, which we have shown to be susceptible to criminal portrayal in the media. Revolutionary is a word for a daring and dangerous person. Like Marsh and Melville suggest, “it is a fair guess to assume that most people’s picture of a ‘typical criminal’ would not be a middle class, old, white woman living in a small rural village” (Marsh and Melville, 2009:72). In their recent work, they have studied the media portrayal of criminals in Britain. They use case studies as their major research method. Their study is conducted in the U.K. and they choose their materials from the Daily Mail, The Guardian, and The Daily Telegraph. I am going to compare their findings with my own.

Age and Criminal

According to Marsh and Melville, young offenders including adolescents and young adults are more susceptible to conviction than older offenders are. The media over-report youth problems and cause public moral panic with respect to delinquent youth behaviour. Young people are labeled as a group who are more likely to commit crimes. (Marsh and Melville, 2009:73). Similar findings appear in my samples: of 127 criminals, 87 persons are between the ages of 18-35. However, only 3 juvenile criminals appear, and they are not portrayed as evil
kids. They look rather innocent and vulnerable, perhaps as adolescents misled by adults. In the footage, unlike most of the criminals, they are wearing normal clothes and do not have handcuffs on during the interviews. From the samples, we can see that young people, but not juveniles, are typified as criminals by the media. We can often hear anchors’ comments that they educate the young to work hard for their lives and warn them not to commit crimes. On the other hand, I can also see the media’s efforts in protecting non-adults. Their attitudes towards juvenile criminals are rather mild.

**Gender and Criminality**

Women are always considered as vulnerable and innocent compared to men. According to Marsh and Melville (2009: 75-78), common sense assumes that females are represented as caring, warm, and maternal. This image is reflected in the media portrayal of a female criminal. They point out the “emotional and irrational nature of female crime, whilst male violence was presented as ‘normal’ and ‘natural’” Marsh and Melville (2009: 78). From my samples I can see that statistically there are only 25.2% criminals being female. Among the 32 female criminals in the sample, 6 women committed crimes against persons they were close to: boyfriends, sisters, husbands, etc. Compared to the portrayal of male criminals, female criminals (especially those 6 women) were portrayed in the media with more insight into their personal life and background. For example, in one episode a woman had killed her husband. However, the husband was portrayed as a deserving victim. He was drug addicted. He had affairs with other women, and he often beat his wife. In the episode, the wife is portrayed as a victim of domestic violence. She looks tiny and vulnerable. Unlike most of the criminals, she is wearing normal clothes and does not have handcuffs on during the interviews. She said that, she took up living her husband for her children’s sake. Now that they had grown up, she did not need to suffer anymore. The media gave her a role of endearing mother and a tragic victim who used the wrong method to protect herself. Like Marsh and Melville observe, “the focus of
media attention then is often on the woman (rather than the crime); success at fulfilling her role as a mother, housewife, wife, not the crime in question” is portrayed as important (Marsh and Melville, 2009:82). The male criminal’s role in family, on the other hand, is often neglected.

**Class and Criminality**

Many studies suggest that social class has an influence on media presentation of criminals (Chermak and Chapman, 2007; Jewkes, 2003; Marsh and Melville, 2009, etc.). White-collar people are considered as decent citizens and enjoy high social status. They are less likely to be considered as criminals. “Newburn (2007) suggests that the higher status white-collar offenders are especially likely to enjoy considerable protection from prosecution because of their status” (Newburn in Marsh and Melville, 2009:82). It is the same when the media presents white-collar criminals. They are commonly under-represented. Such a situation is also evident in my samples. Of a total 127 criminals, there are only three white-collar criminals, and among them only two of them went to college. On the other hand, the percentage of blue-collar criminals and professional criminals is 94.5%. Criminals with low levels of education are as high as 98.4%. Low-educated groups are certainly portrayed as more likely to commit crimes than highly educated, white-collar groups. The bias is statistically prominent.

In my studies, race discrimination in the portrayal of criminals is also mentioned (Chermak and Chapman, 2007; Marsh and Melville, 2009, etc.). In my samples, no immigrants from other counties appeared. Evidence of race discrimination has not been found.

**The Typical Criminal Group**

From the statistical analysis of the samples, I observe a typical type of persons who will be portrayed together as a criminal group. They are young male adults who are blue-collar workers, or professional criminals, with low educational
levels, and perhaps a criminal record. In addition, 73% of them are non-permanent residents. Why is this group of people being defined as criminal? I can assume one reason lies in the social problems of contemporary Chinese society. As some scholars argue, there are several major social problems: massive social migration, income inequality and dominance of money driven value and lack of morality. Among other people, the typical criminals are most vulnerable to these problems. In the samples, the media often create a picture like this: a young man with a poor education newly arrived in the glamorous city. He has no certification, no experience, and no money. He can only struggle in the big city while watching others enjoy their wealthy and bountiful life. He craves that kind of life, but he cannot afford it. He does not have a decent job to support this life. So he envies those who have it, while his desire is growing and growing. Finally, he chooses to commit a crime in order to get money. He is the victim of the social problems, yet he is portrayed as the victim of his own desire and the bringer of these social problems. He represents a group of people who are seduced by their desires and become a huge threat to the society. They are picked and labeled as criminals by the media, and the rising concern over such groups can be found in many studies (Cao, 2001; Deng and Cordilia, 1999; Friday, 1998; Jiang et al., 2007; Liu 2006; Shaw, 2010; Wong, 2008).

6.1.4 The Portrayal of the Police

For most of people, the media are the primary point of access for information regarding police operations. The image of the police presented in the media, negative or positive, is going to be the image in most people’s head. Chermak et al. observe “it is clear that citizens are many times presented with conflicting images of police and police effectiveness, leaving the question of how such presentations affect public attitudes toward police open” (Chermak et al., 2006: 262).

In 2006, they conducted a research called “Media coverage of
police misconduct and attitudes toward police”. In order to “examine how celebrated cases affect attitudes toward police, controlling for key demographic, police contact, and neighborhood contextual variables, they collected data by telephone from residents living in three areas. The result suggested that news consumption of this celebrated case had no significant effects on general attitudes toward police, police services, and concerns about police harassment. Media coverage, however, did effect citizen evaluation of the guilt of the officers involved in the case. The more a citizen read a newspaper or read about the case, the more likely she was to think that the officers were guilty.” This study was conducted in the U.S.A. (Chermak et al., 2006: Abstract)

According to them, some scholars claim that the media over-represent police’s efficiency to the point of it being unrealistic, while others argue that the media draws attention to police misconduct. According to some, the police’s image is usually negative in the media (Chermak et al., 2006: 262). The results from my study obviously contradict this view. All the cases in all three programs are solved by the police. The media never portray the police in a negative light. In the programs, they are unrealistically efficient, dedicated, authoritative and courageous. In the total 67 episodes, there are 15 episodes involved with police anti-crime operations. The police image is even more heroic in these episodes, wherein they are like protectors of the people. Without a doubt, in the three programs I am using, the media show a strong bias for the police. I might have a valid guess as to the reason why the police’s image is so positive in the media; in China, the police represent the government. They are authorised by the government to enforce the law. Their image is a part of the government’s image. Of course, the government will not be happy if the media show negative police images to the public. Additionally, the three programs are broadcast on the government television stations (CCTV). Therefore, it is more difficult to show
negative images of the police in these programs.

There is an important issue regarding the portrayals of victims and criminals. In my samples, I find ways of portraying victims and criminals consonant with previous studies. However, the actual statistics which relate information about victims and criminals cannot be found in any official Chinese database which is open to the public. Therefore, I cannot claim that the representation of “ideal victim” and “typical criminal” are exaggerated, despite their correlation with previous studies. The problem of government transparency in China is well known, and I realise that this issue is a limitation for this study.

6.2 Interpretation of the Results

6.2.1 The Spectacle in Media Portrayal of Crime

As I briefly introduced in Chapter 3, media spectacle is an important concept in cultural criminology. Spectacle comes from a part of the chosen reality. It amplifies it and makes a certain part of reality prominent. Because we are surrounded by realities, we often neglect them. They are like breathing to us. We take them for granted. The spectacle, on the other hand, is the reality which is visible to us. It is the partial reality accentuated, and amplified purposely by social agencies such as governments, the business sector, and the media. In Debord’s view, the spectacle is attached to modern consumerism and commodity. He says,

“The world the spectacle holds up to view is at once here and elsewhere; it is the world of the commodity ruling over all lived experience. The commodity world is thus shown as it really is, for its logic is one with men’s estrangement from one another and from the sum total of what they produce.” (Debord, 1995: 12)

In Debord’s study, he analyses the social spectacle in the context of Western
capitalist society. He mainly studies the spectacle of capitalism and consumerism. When Debord discusses the spectacle of the commodity world, he does not specify the role of the media. The media themselves are commodified and most of time can be viewed as consumer products. Although Debord does not take spectacle further into the media sphere, other scholars like Douglas Kellner (2004), engage the idea with the media. In his work, he examines specific media spectacles such as the “Clinton sex scandals” and the “9/11 terrorist attacks”. He observes, “experience and everyday life are shaped and mediated by the spectacles of media culture and the consumer society” (Kellner, 2004:3). According to Kellner, there are many kinds of media spectacle such as the “commodity spectacle”, “impeachment spectacle”, or “Terror War spectacle”. Similarly, I can interpret the various spectacles appear in my samples. But first, let’s conclude some key elements of spectacle: 1. entertainment: according to Kellner,

“Entertainment has always been a prime field of the spectacle. Building on the tradition of spectacle, contemporary forms of entertainment from television to the stage are incorporating spectacle culture into their enterprises, transforming film, television, music, drama, and other domains of culture, as well as producing spectacular new forms of culture such as cyberspace, multimedia, and virtual reality.” (Kellner, 2004:6)

2. controversies, struggles and conflict resolution: they include “media extravaganzas, sports events, political happenings, political scandal and contestation, seemingly unending cultural war, and the new phenomenon of Terror War” (Kellner, 2004:3). 3. sensationalism: Kellner observes, “those attention-grabbing occurrences that we call news -- a phenomena that itself has been subjected to the logic of spectacle and tabloidization in the era of the media sensationalism” (ibid.). 4. celebrities: Kellner says claims that “celebrity is
manufactured and managed in the world of media spectacle” (Kellner, 2004:4). Now I am going to compare the spectacles found in the examples with these elements.

1. The spectacle of violence: according to the recent research of Chermak and Chapman (2007:357), “violent crime was overrepresented in the media and nonviolent crime was underrepresented in the media when compared to official crime data,” and the seriousness of a crime was an influential factor in whether it would be reported by the media. I have similar findings in my research. Zero misdemeanor crimes were reported, and violent crime and crimes involving weapons make up over 40% of total 67 episodes. However, from figure 2 and figure 3 in chapter 2, it is clear that the number of violent crimes is significantly lower than economic crimes and other criminal cases. The climbing trend is also not as dramatic as other crimes. Despite the fact that the actual percentage of violent crime is only 6.2% in my samples, violent crimes are mostly reported. Hall et al. and Jewkes give their answers from the perspective of news values:

“The news value which is arguably most common to all media is that of ‘violence’. Violence fulfills the media’s desire to present dramatic events in the most graphic possible fashion, and even the most regulated media institutions are constantly pushing back the boundaries of acceptable reportage when it comes to depicting acts of violence.” (Jewkes, 2003: 53)

“Any crime can be lifted into news visibility if violence becomes associated with it, since violence is perhaps the supreme example of ... ‘negative consequences’...The use of violence marks the distinction between those who are of society and those who are outside it ... The State, and the State only has the monopoly of legitimate violence, and this ‘violence’ is used to safeguard society
against ‘illegitimate’ uses. Violence thus constitutes a critical threshold in society; all acts, especially criminal ones, which transgress that boundary are, by definition, worthy of news attention.” (Hall et al., 1978: 68)

The samples I use are infotainment shows. They are a combination of information and entertainment. The “news value” can only explain a part of its production. The idea that the crime is turned into spectacle in the media can offer another explanation. Violence always accompanied with blood, injury or even death. The spectacle of violence is, in fact, the spectacle of brutal image: in 67 episodes, there are 20 cases of death and 14 cases of injury. The crime scenes are usually bloody and have great visual impact. Brutal scenes create a spectacle of an ordinary crime. With CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) footage, mobile phone videos from witnesses, and other graphic images, the crime scene can be reconstructed. Brutal scenes are powerfully emotive and can have a huge impact on viewers. As Jewkes observes, “there are many different types of violence and it tends to be acts of violence that have a strong visual impact and can be graphically presented that are most likely to receive extensive media coverage” (Jewkes, 2003: 54). Visual impact creates an excitement and meets the public's increasing fascination with illicit images. “Crime and violence have become objectified and commodified, and thus desired, to the extent where they are widely distributed through all forms of media to be pleasurably consumed” (Jewkes, 2003: 54). Crime infotainment programming is a type of media product, which, as a “product”, means it is no different to any other commodity. The more spectacular a program can be, the more it will sell, and of course producers are more willing to produce programs which can attract broader audiences. In the end, when it boils down to the bottom-line, the Chinese media are profit driven, just like British or American media. Although the censorship and political control in Chinese media sphere is still severe (Zhao, 2008), the commercialisation and marketisation of the media industry are pushing it into the direction of becoming
commercially-driven media.

As I stated before, the spectacle is only a part of reality but it is one which is amplified by the media. Thus, the over-representation of violence might create an illusion that we are living in a dangerous world. If we think from a dominant ideologist’ view, then we will find ourselves fed with the impression that crime and violence are common. We will be overwhelmed by fear. This false impression is deliberately created by the power classes who have control over the media. The process is stated in “Media as hegemony model” (model 3), only here the top agenda is changed into a business agenda. Step 1. The TV station wants more profit. It sets the agenda at the editorial level. Step 2. The producers know that the more spectacles the program can display, the better it can attract audiences. Therefore, they select more violent crimes to report. Because comparing to non-violent crimes, violence has more striking images. Step3. The violence in crime stories is accentuated. Step 4. The public is fed with the image that violent crimes are occurring often. While in fact, violent crimes occur far less often than misdemeanors do.

2. The spectacle of children: children are considered as a vulnerable group which can easily catch people’s attention. Child related crimes are salient in my samples. 26.3% victims are children. Jenkins argues, “child victims who, he says, not only guarantee the newsworthiness of a story, but can ensure the media’s commitment to what might be called ‘morality campaigns’” (Jenkins in Jewkes, 2003: 57). From my samples, I find that, out of 67 cases, 8 ones relate to child stealing and selling, and 1 case is about child abuse. Among them, 3 cases cover nation-wide police anti-child stealing and selling campaigns. The frequency of child related crime appearing is extremely high. According to Jewkes (2003), juvenile crime and pre-teenage crimes have become newsworthy to the media in the past two decades. However, in the samples, children appear as victims of crimes and only three teenagers appear as criminals. Two of them are described
as victims of bad influence who were vulnerable to seduction. The other who is portrayed is a victim of child abuse. Overall, from the samples, it is clear that the Chinese media tend to portray children and teenagers as innocent and vulnerable, they must be protected by the society and educated with morality and correct worldviews.

Why do children receive more attention? It is not like the spectacle of violence with all its brutality. On the contrary, children can create an emotional spectacle - the spectacle of sensation. We all were once children, and some of us care for children. Such experiences make it easier to connect with the vulnerability of children. Whenever we see children involved in a crime, we sympathise with them. We know that it is difficult for them to protect themselves. It is similar to the sensational feelings you feel for someone with a disability. Only maybe not as strong as it is to children, unless you are disabled, or are close to someone who does.

3. The spectacle of the bizarre: there are some crimes in my sample which neither caused serious consequences nor involved children. These are statistical outliers in the programming and represent the spectacle of the bizarre. For example, in one civil case, brothers and sisters fought for their father’s ashes. Another case is about a millionaire becoming a thief. One is a civil case and the other is victimless crime, and the amount of stolen money is not substantial. They were reported because such cases are rare or go against common sense. It is the spectacle of uniqueness. People like to see things they have never seen; things that are against natural rule or common sense and things they cannot explain. The reason why audiences enjoy such spectacles is similar to the reason for which people pay to see a circus. People enjoy this kind of spectacle because it is entertaining.

4. The spectacle of celebrities: another type of crime which is not serious
offender matter is found in my samples is celebrity crime. There are two cases involving celebrities in 67 episodes. One is a divorce case and the other is about a former Paralympic Games champion looking for his parents who abandoned him when he was a baby. The former one is a simple civil case which has no impact on society and the latter one is neither a crime nor a civil case. However they are still reported in the crime infotainment program, because they involve celebrities. Like Jewkes (2003) observes, celebrity matters are newsworthy to the media. “The obsession with celebrity is evident everywhere in the media and a story is always more likely to make the news if it has a well-known name attached to it” (Jewkes, 2003: 49). According to Kellner (2004: 4), “celebrity is manufactured and managed in the world of media spectacle. Celebrities are the icons of media culture, the gods and goddesses of everyday life”. Celebrities and the media have a cohabitant relation: celebrities are manufactured and raised by the media. In return, they feed the media with more spectacles.

In the samples, there is another interesting finding pertaining to spectacle. Some major types of spectacle crime such as joyriding, rioting, arson, clashes between police and citizens, etc., which usually attract media’s attention, cannot be seen in my samples. Such crimes are public counters to the government, threats to its authority, and will not be tolerated. The Chinese media has little coverage of such events due to the governmental censorship. The actual figures of such crimes cannot be found in the official data and papers which are open to the public. Under the instruction from the government, the media must use its power to shield the public from behaviour which is deemed anti-state. For example, the recent “Jasmine Movement” of promoting democracy in 2011 did not get reported by any media. According to Zhao (2008: 20), “If China boasts one of the fastest-growing economies since the 1990s, it also has one of the most oppressive regimes in using coercive state powers to control public communication”. Even money cannot beat political control. No matter how spectacular the crime seems, once it crosses the line and endangers the Party’s
rule, it gets censored and stays out of the public eye.

6.2.2 Ideology of crime: explanations and remedies

As I demonstrated in Chapter 2, China has a long history of being a law and order society. In that chapter, I introduced the ideologies of crime, law, and order throughout the entire civilized history of China. Historically, a right-wing conservative ideology was, most of the time, the dominant ideology. According to Jewkes’ conservative agendas

“in matters of crime and deviance, emphasizes deterrence and repression and voices support for more police, more prisons and a tougher criminal justice system. In addition, it appears that we now live in a society where political process and media discourse are indistinguishable and mutually constitutive. The symbiotic relationship between the mass media and politicians is illustrated by the support given by the former to the latter in matters of law and order.” (Jewkes, 2003: 58)

The conservative ideology holds that crime is rooted in the nature of people. Committing crime is a personal behavior. People’s evil desires are the motivations for crime. Criminals are those who succumb to their evilness, therefore they are dangerous to the society. In order to protect the rest and set a warning, they shall be prosecuted, and sentenced with severe punishment. In my samples, the conservative ideology takes a prominent position. From the statistics and the examples, it is clear that all the three programs conveyed a conservative ideology towards crime and its remedy. I will analyze the examples one by one,

“These two young men should have earned a living by hard work.
But they chose to commit crime... "—the anchor (*Legal Report*, 2011.12.21)

In the quote, it uses “chose” to stipulate that they commit crime as a willful act.

“Because of their greediness, they put other lives in danger...”
— the anchor (*Legal Report*, 2012.12.13)”

In this quote, it becomes clearer that people commit crime out of personal desire. Their evilness appears to be a threat to the society and to others.

“Because of his greediness and cruelty, a mother lost her son. He is going to pay for what did with his life and he is condemned by others...” —the anchor (*Courtroom*, 2011.12.24)

This quote is ideologically similar to the last.

“They were driven by money and killed a happy family, now they have to face the ruthless law...” —the anchor (*Courtroom*, 2011.12.17)

The cause of crime is seen as the criminals’ desire for money. In the quote, their punishment is also mentioned to warn others not to cross the same line.

“A fight caused by impose ended a life and put another into prison for the rest of his life. His actions resulted in the misery of two families. Impose is a devil which lives deep down in your heart. We should learn how to control it; otherwise it will come out and hurt others and ourselves...” —The anchor (*Front Line*, 2011.12.17)

This quote also warns people about the severe consequence of breaking the law. The criminal was set as a negative example to alert people.

When it comes to crime remedies and solutions, the conservative ideology holds
that people become criminals because of their desires. Instead of being hard working, they choose to commit crimes to fulfill their needs. Such behaviors should not be encouraged. Severe law and punishment should be enforced to stop criminal behaviour. More policemen should be used to protect the society. For example, in one episode, two criminals were arrested and sentenced to imprisonment for manufacturing poisonous oil. During the in-studio discussion, the expert claimed that such crimes were flourishing because relevant laws to stop them were incomplete. More severe laws and punishments should be legislated and the police should enhance their operations against such crime. “We should have no tolerance towards such crimes. They are major threats to the public’s health...”, said the expert (Legal Report, 2011.12.13). The quotes I selected in chapter 5 demonstrate typical examples of the conservative ideology.

“We hope that relevant laws and policies can be launched to regulate this behavior. We urge the police to enhance their law enforcement to stop such behaviour from continuing to endanger our society ...”—the anchor (Legal Report, 2012.12.13)"

In this quote, it is asking for more law and more police to deal with crimes. That is the only way to keep crimes from “endangering our society”.

“We wish the law enforcement department would enhance their operations and give the public a safer Internet shopping environment...”—the anchor (Courtroom, 2011.12.17)

Stronger law enforcement is demanded in the above quote, also.

“This police operation successfully stopped the gang robberies in Linyi District, and has returned a safe and harmonious environment to the people in Linyi...”—the anchor (Front Line, 2011.12.9)

This quote claims that the return to peace and safety, from an apparently unsafe
environment, is due to diligent police-work.

With such consistent results, one must wonder why all the samples convey a single (conservative) ideology. According to Jewkes, public interest is what matters to the media. However, in the meantime, the media must keep mutual interests with government. Media discourse sometimes is closely linked with a political agenda.

“The issue of public interest is rather more complicated and may involve external interference, such as corporate or, more commonly, political pressures. Although the press are hampered by very few limitations regarding what they may print, broadcasting is subject to a range of restrictions which are framed by notions of ‘impartiality’ (McQueen, 1998)....” (Jewkes, 2003: 38)

My data gives clear evidence that the media support the government in matters concerning law and order and especially support ideologies of crime and crime control. In Chapter 2, I introduced the notion of government crime control policies in China. The policy is combined with both formal (cracking down on serious criminals via anti-crime campaigns, and reforming social control organizations at the community level) and informal control (reviving traditional Confucian and collective responsibility values, and enhancing citizens legal educations). All these government efforts towards crime control are reflected in the media-sphere. In the analysis presented in this work, 15 cracking-down on crime campaigns are reported. Experts are introduced to explain laws and policies in the programs. Moral education is also accentuated. The government’s role in influencing media portrayal of crime is notable from this perspective. Law and order is important to the Chinese government, and the government needs a strong message to be sent to the public. In China, it is rather easy for the
government to get to the public via media control. According to Zhao,

“the party’s overarching power is also felt in the media’s everyday practices. The party’s central Propaganda Department (PD) is the omnipresent body, exerting its formidable power in sustaining the party’s dominance in the area of ideology and culture.” (Zhao, 2008: 24)

That explains why only the conservative ideology is conveyed in the media; because it appears in the form of propaganda. The Chinese media industry is now in a conflict situation. On the one hand, it is embracing commercialisation and marketing-oriented economic structures. On the other hand, the heavy political chain is still wrapped tightly on it. Many aspects of Chinese media such as market determination and profit-driving are similar to the qualities found in the Western media. However, the political control of communication has slowed the completion of a completely profit-driven media. Ideology and state propaganda still play a role in the Chinese media. Unlike democratic political systems, the election of the government is controlled by the CCP. One might speculate that the form of the single party government might be the primary factor causing the contradictory situation in contemporary Chinese media.

6.2.3 Applications of the Moral Panic Model

Moral panic in special episodes for moral education

As I discussed in chapter 5, there are five special episodes in the sample for moral education. In the episodes, good deeds are over-represented. Experts and anchors talk about moral decline. It creates an illusion that there are very few people out there doing good things. They claim that people do not want to do good things because they are afraid of being conned. This is a typical moral panic created by the media. In the past few years, there have been several cases reported about people who tried to help others being conned. These cases were
all over the major media and the Internet, and they started a huge debate. Media men, opinion leaders and experts were invited to shows and discussed the issue. Many of them claimed that this issue would lead to another moral decline and no one would dare to help others. This issue got extremely heated, and the debate is still ongoing in the media. In my samples, experts and opinion leaders are still debating this issue. The public keeps giving the false impression that helping others might be dangerous. The media have created a vicious loop: an ordinary con crime attracted media attention. They overly reported and created an illusion that it is a serious problem which is spreading. The opinion leaders, experts, journalists stood out claimed it as a moral decline. More debates on the issue were launched and more and more people got interested and more people talked about it. Thus, a moral panic occurred in the society. The media keep reporting it because the issue is still hot. This feedback loop is also traceable in my samples. Although it is a recognised fact that there has been a moral decline since the Cultural Revolution (Deng and Cordilia, 1999), is it really as bad as the media portrayal of it to the public? That may need further studies, but the good stories you read from papers and TV news will tell you otherwise. I also noticed an ironic conflict in the media, which is that they keep telling the public we are undergoing a moral decline and yet they have reported many good deeds on a daily basis. I am going to introduce a moral panic that is happening in China now.

An introduction to the example

The Penyu case occurred at the end of 2006 in Nanjin, China. It was a controversial case which caused a huge social debate in China. On November, 20th, 2006, an old woman, Xu Shoulan, fell in front of a bus stop. Pen Yu claimed that he helped her and sent her to the hospital. He said he did this out of goodwill, not because he caused the incident. However, Xu claimed that he was the one who knocked her down and sued him. The court found Pen Yu guilty and the case caused a hot debate. Later, many similar cases were reported throughout the entire country. (Hudong: www.hudong.com)
The application of the model

According to model 5, there are 4 steps of a moral panic. Step1. In 2009, an ordinary civil case occurred. An old woman sued a man for causing her injury in a car accident. The defendant claimed that he did not hit the woman. He saw the woman had been trampled and helped her to the hospital. Although without direct evidence that the defendant hit the woman, he was still sentenced as guilty. Step 2. The media picked up the story and reported subjectively. Their tunes were all in favor of the defendant. Headlines in the major media were like: *Nice Driver Was Found Guilty for Helping an Injured Lady, Conned for Helping, Conning Keeps People Doing Good Deeds* (www.chinanews.com, 2011), *Under the Pressure of Penyu Case, Where Shall We Put Our Consciousness?* (Gujun, www.wenming.cn). *To Help or Not to Help?* (Wangjie, www.wenming.cn), *Can We Afford to Help Others Anymore?* (Wujin, news.ifeng.com) and *Social Trust is Breaking Down* (Wujinting, news.ifeng.com). In the meantime, similar cases were over reported (for example, the famous Penyu Case). The truth about this accident has not been ascertained, and is still a mystery today. However, the media already reached their judgment. From the headline I can tell that the media were clearly on the defendant’s side. Their exaggeration and distortion of the case imprinted a false truth in the public’s minds. Although the victim won the case, she was portrayed as a deceiver and was criticised by the public. The court was also under a lot of pressure because of the public attention created by the media's excessive coverage. Step 3. Influential public figures and experts were invited to the media to debate the case. They claimed that cases like this one caused moral decline in the society. Social morale hit a new low. The negative effects of the cases were harmful to society, and would continue to influence it for many years. (news.ifeng.com, 2011) Step 4. The public received the messages sent by the media. A moral panic occurred. People gradually stopped helping others. According to an editorial article published by Fenghuang Net (2011), people had become reluctant to help others, because they were concerned about being
deceived, and possibly sued (as in the Penyu case). In this example, the five episodes in my samples played their roles in step 2 and step 3. As I described in Chapter 5, there are 5 episodes about moral education in my samples and they all discuss the phenomenon which developed from this case. In the episodes, they kept drawing a picture of how rare good deeds were and how cold most of the general public had become. The experts in the studio kept condemning the public for moral decline. The juridical system was also strongly criticised. It also caused lack of confidence in courts and judges (news.ifeng.com, 2011). The initial case occurred in 2009. These five episodes were on air 3 years later. After 3 years, this moral panic is complete and its influence is still growing. During its process, the media continued to lead the direction of public opinion. From the moment they chose to take sides, the result was decided. The media are supposed to be objective, yet I see no such objectivity in this case.
7. Conclusion

7.1 Answering the Research Questions

The purposes of this thesis are to,

1. Examine the portrayal of crimes in Chinese TV crime infotainment programs
2. To investigate the criminal ideology conveyed in these programs. To do this, I chose 67 episodes from 3 different crime infotainment programs as my study materials. A combination of quantitative content analysis and qualitative discourse analysis methodology was used to analyse the materials. After detailed analysis with theories, I can conclude the thesis with the following findings:

**The Portrayal of Crime on Chinese TV Crime Infotainment Programs**

When analyzing the portrayal of crimes, I find that the cultural criminologist approach, or to be more specific, the concept of the spectacle appears to be a suitable tool to use.

1. In the samples, not all types of crimes are included. I find an obvious selection criterion: producers tend to choose those crimes which appear to have a certain aspect of spectacle to them. Violent crime ranks highest over all other types of crime. The over presentation of violent crime was shown in many previous studies. Similar results have been found in my study as well. Child stealing crime is close behind violent crime, in second place. The over presentation of such crime is found in my study but hardly mentioned in other studies. Other types of crimes such as fraud, theft and civil cases also appear in several episodes, but they do not possess prominent positions. The under representation of misdemeanor crimes and white-collar crimes is a remarkable result, and is consistent with results from previous studies.

2. When portraying victims, the programs build an image of the “ideal victim”. They are usually vulnerable, innocent and worthy of sympathy. They are ordinary persons whom viewers can connect themselves with. This “ideal victim”
is similar to the image of victims found in previous studies.

3. When portraying criminals, the programs also define a group of “typical criminals”. They usually are young male adults who are blue-collar or professional criminals, with low levels of education, and perhaps a criminal record.

4. The portrayal of police is found to be overwhelmingly positive in my study. Their image is built as bringers of law and order, protectors, and even heroes.

5. Whether in the selection of crimes or the portrayal of crime subjects (victims, criminals, and police), the usage of spectacle is crucial in every episode. Image, music, monologue, and dialogue are all used to accentuate the sensationalism of the crime stories. An infotainment program is a combination of news and entertainment. In the programs, I sampled the element of news has been weakened, while the spectacle of entertainment has been accentuated.

**The Ideology of Crime Conveyed in the Program**

In order to answer my secondary research question, I used a dominant ideology approach to analyse the materials. I can conclude that,

1. The conservative ideology of crime and its proposed remedies are conveyed in all the samples. To be more specific, the conservative ideology holds that crime happens because of human desire. It has nothing to do with failures in society or political and economic structures. It is man alone who should be responsible for his deviant behavior. The rationale for this is that humanity’s evil nature is to blame. The remedy of crime is severe law and punishment. Only through harsh law and order can the state keep danger away from people. Law and punishment are also used in this context as precautionary measures, to ward off potential criminal activity through threat.

2. By using examples, I applied two major models derived from the dominant ideology approach: media as hegemony model (model 3) and moral panic model (model 5). These three models were approved to be applicable under Chinese
context.

**Some Critiques**

As I concluded above, the concept of spectacle and the dominant ideology approach are applicable in the Chinese context. However, due to the differences in modes of hegemony, and social and cultural context, the applicability is slightly different from British or American situations. In China, political control and censorship are much stronger compared to some Western countries. In the theories and approaches I have discussed so far, capitalist economy has always played a primary role in influencing media behaviour. In the Chinese situation, market-oriented economy also plays an important role. Meanwhile, political control, especially in the form of censorship, plays an equal or even more important role. As I have demonstrated, the reporting of crimes that include elements of a spectacle occurs when the media follows the rule of the market-the rule of competition. However, when the spectacle threatens government operation, profit and money must step back for political benefit. In China, the government takes a much stronger role over the media than they appear to in the West. When the government wants to their voice to be heard publicly, or suppress other voices, they always get what they want.

**7.2 Self-reflection on the Thesis**

The field of media and crime studies is not new. However, this field is rather young in the Chinese academic world. Studies on Chinese TV crime infotainment programs are rather rare. Therefore, it is interesting to see whether the existing theories are applicable to the Chinese situation. It is also interesting to compare my study results with previous studies conducted by Western scholars. My study offers an empirical study of Chinese crime ideology in the field of Chinese media and crime. Since similar studies on Chinese TV crime infotainment programs have not been found, my study could work as a starting point in this area. When writing the paper, I had a major problem during the data collection process. It
proved difficult for me to collect actual data relating to crime in China. I could not find any detailed and complete data of crime rates, criminal biostatistics, or information regarding victims from any official government websites. It appears that such information is not open to the public in China. Nonetheless, I have managed to find some data of crime statistics with the help of other scholars’ papers. Because the data on criminal convictions and victims is not available to the public, I cannot say that the portrayals of “ideal victim” and “typical criminal” are exaggerated based on anything other than the previous studies from outside China that I discuss. From my samples, I can only state that they tend to portray victims and criminals in certain fashions that conform to exaggerations in media representation from outside China.

The conservative ideology of crime conveyed in the samples is similar to the ideology of “fajia” (one of the ancient Chinese ideologies. See Chapter 2). They both believe that strict law and severe punishment are the only effective ways to control crime. Personally speaking, I really appreciate these ideologies. I, too, believe that only through formal control such as law and punishment can crime and deviant behavior be restricted. Therefore, I believe that the media in China are conveying a sensible crime control ideology. In Chapter 2, I described some periods of history when the ruling class made more use of law and punishment to control crime. For example, in the Qin Dynasty and in Mao’s era, the rulers were in favor of severe legal systems. From my findings, I see that there is a trend that the Chinese leadership is attempting to tighten their control over crime. Therefore, this study does not only contribute to the academic world, but also gives the society a signal that the Chinese legal system is heading towards even tighter restrictions. This finding of a new trend in representation of crime also questions the normativity of the representation of crime. It explains how people view crime in contemporary China from the perspective of the media, and through the media. I believe that, to some extent, Chinese people accept the conservative crime ideology since the mainstream media are promoting this
ideology. Since the Chinese government has editorial control over CCTV, it is a valid assumption that the government also wants to promote this ideology. However, more severe punishment in China might raise another issue: the international pressure towards China’s human rights problem. This could become an obstacle to more authoritarian government policing.

7.3 Limitations and Further Study

As it was stated above, my intention is to explore the ideology of crime in China. Nevertheless, the ideology is studied under media sphere, not real public sphere. Although both spheres are reflecting and influencing each other, there are many other external and internal powers influencing media production. The media-sphere usually exaggerates and distorts its reflection of reality. The public, however, tend to accept such reality as full reality, especially when it comes to events which they have few experiences with, such as crimes and wars. This thesis only focuses on the media sphere. I talked about how they portray crime and convey crime ideology. The audience sphere and the government sphere had not been further involved. This is a limitation for this thesis. Future studies can be expanded so that these two spheres can be included. As I mentioned above, another limitation in this thesis is that the actual data regarding criminal and victim information are missing. It would be a great improvement to this thesis if those data could be accessed. If, at some point, this data becomes available, I can then argue with more accuracy whether the portrayals of “ideal victim” and “typical criminal” are exaggerated or not.
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