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Neo-socialist Realism, Cultural Hegemony and Chinese TV Drama

This paper investigates the evolution of official realism in the context of Chinese most recent social and cultural transformations. By focusing on the case study of the TV drama *Provincial Secretary*, I argue that a new official approach of representing reality has emerged –what I define as *neo-socialist realism*. Neo-socialist realism revives some of the old socialist realist norms and integrates them into a new dominant representational mode in the contemporary Chinese cultural domain. This paper aims at examining the characteristics of this new official realism in terms of characters’ re-orientation, narrative tactics and spectators’ position. In film theory and media studies, the issue of realism has generated much debate. My argument on *neo-socialist realism* seeks to find some “middle ground” among the polarized notions of realism, e.g. socialist realism and classic realism, through which our understanding of realism and postsocialism in the Chinese context can be broadened and complicated.