

Zhang, Rong, University of Tokyo, Japan

**Innovation of Dialect News Broadcasting in Chinese Local TV Stations:
Examining J. Habermas's concept of 'Equivalent Political Public Spheres'**

This paper examines Jürgen Habermas's concept of 'equivalent political public spheres' using a case study of a Chinese local TV Station. Since 2004, dialect news broadcasting has become quite popular in the economically developed Yangtze River delta region. Common people (citizens) begun to obtain the right of free speech and discuss "nonpolitical" social issues in their local dialects on television.

From the mid-1990s, the concepts of "civil society" and "the public sphere" have come into popular usage within China. Habermas(1999) suggested the concept of 'equivalent' political public sphere and pointed that the "political" possibly exists in citizens' everyday life. Consequently, a lack of news broadcasting focusing on politics and the bureaucracy does not necessarily mean that media 'de-politicization' is taking place.

This paper proposes that news broadcasting in local dialects allows citizens to participate in rational public discussion, through which a process of 're-politicization' equivalent to Habermas's public sphere, occurs.