NEUTRALISM IN CCTV NEWS PROBE
—A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE IDEOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS IN CHINA's INVESTIGATIVE TV REPORTING

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1. Introduction

As mankind enters the 21st century, the world increasingly accelerated the pace of globalization. The rapid development of high technology and communication has not only promoted the economic and cultural exchanges and sociopolitical integration around the world, but also changed the trend of human ideology. Now globalization has become a hot topic of the media layout and a focus of discussion in the academic circle. When you enter the term “globalization” in the search engine www.google.com, you will get a huge amount of items related to this topic.

The theme of my thesis is “Neutralism in CCTV News Probe — A critical discourse analysis of the ideological characteristics in China's investigative TV reporting”. So firstly, I think it is better that I should put this research in the light of globalization and the framework of China's media reform, explore the research question of the thesis in a broader theoretical sphere and multi-dimensional theoretical perspective.

CCTV News Probe — a famous TV news program in China, was born in the process of China's media reform and media globalization. It was these new trends that reshaped the human ideology in China's society and reconstituted China's economy and market. The transitions in society brought out the new ideology; the new ideology bred media products which can meet the needs of social development and ideological dissemination. Thus, CCTV News Probe — a typical investigative TV reporting program, became the focus of my thesis. The emergence of CCTV News Probe was the result of the dual effects of globalization and China's media reform. The development of China not only changed the status quo of the society and economy, but also affected the political arena and ideological realm. With the progress of time and the advancement of society, human development needed TV news to play the role of the mouthpiece of the public opinion in the media reform. The transition of China's social ideology supplied a favorable public opinion space to China's investigative TV reporting, CCTV News Probe was the output of this social context and requirement.

In this thesis, I chose CCTV News Probe as the main target of research to analyze the ideological characteristics in the field of China's news reporting — media neutralism, to examine the nature and practice of journalistic neutrality in TV reporting. I will briefly

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1 China Central TV Station
describe the social and ideological background of CCTV News Probe, which outlines the basic theoretical framework of this thesis. I chose the relation between media and ideology as my research approach in discussing some theoretical concepts and points of view on the political power, media public sphere and ideology. I try to base my discussion about the neutralism of News Probe on these theoretical structures. The second part of this thesis is the core content of my research. I will use critical discourse analysis to make a comprehensive analysis about the ideological characteristic in the discourse of News Probe — balance and neutralism in Chinese news reporting, and uncover how the notion and attitude of the neutrality is regularly conveyed by the concrete, balanced and neutralistic textual practices of the journalists and the coordinative interaction between the journalists and media participants.

Analysis is the means of the research. The intention of my thesis is to look over the relation between ideology and media discourse, analyze their political effect on each other, and furthermore, discuss the social meaning of the neutralistic ideological characteristic of China's investigative TV reporting.

The theories of China's new ideology, media reform and globalization which form the theoretical basis of this paper will be introduced in a section which discusses the theoretical background in the thesis. All the analysis is mainly based on the basic theoretical concepts of ideology, media power, and public space. The case study is CCTV News Probe — a typical investigative TV reporting program which was launched in 1996 by China Central TV Station. The reason I chose this program as the case study is that News Probe is the first and most successful investigative TV reporting program in China. It is presented in a Western style of news reporting, while maintaining the distinctive feature of China's investigative TV news reporting.

News is a mirror of politics. It not only publishes information, but also disseminates ideologies. As a typical political news program in the field of China's TV news reporting, News Probe was affected by the thought of Western democratization, but was born in the soil of China's society. The new ideology of China's society could bring impact to the content of News Probe and play a role in its development. Democratization required that News Probe should approach the basic reporting techniques of “investigative journalism” with a westernized, balanced and neutralistic stance. This ideological inclination could be seen clearly in the discourse of News Probe.
Critical discourse analysis is the main method of this thesis. Personally, I think, CDA² is a good and effective tool to make the ideological analysis in a TV news program. We can analyze the neutralistic characteristic of ideology in News Probe from various angles of the news discourse, for example, social context and textual practice (communication event, media power and access, lexicon, proposition, rhetoric) of discourse etc.

The focus of this research is to answer the following questions: What is China's new ideology? Under China's social system, how does China's new ideology affect the neutralistic ideological inclination of the news discourse in Chinese news reporting, such as News Probe? How does News Probe's coverage reflect its balanced and neutralistic ideological characteristic? And how does the discourse of News Probe speak for the social common interest through this balanced and neutralistic discourse?

The aim of this thesis is to study the impact of the transition of China's society on the content and form of China's news media from the angles of theory and analysis. Specifically, based on the theory of ideology and discourse, this thesis will examine the basic role which China's new ideology played in shaping the style of China's news reporting. Furthermore, the data and result of the analysis will lead to the conclusion that “neutralism” is the main ideological characteristic in the discourse of News Probe.

1. 1 Background of the research

1. 1. 1 CCTV News Probe and its morphology

News Probe is a famous documentary news program which was launched by the department of news commentary, China Central TV Station on May 17, 1996. News Probe came into being as a result of media reform within CCTV. At the same time, the development of CCTV News Probe is also an important symbol of the internationalization of CCTV's news reporting (CCTV 2009 : 1 ).

In the mid-1990s, China's media reform entered an important phase. As a state-run television station, CCTV is the ruling party's mouthpiece and leading channel of media propaganda. (CCTV 2009 : 1 )

In the process of media reform, CCTV inevitably became the key target of said reform.

² Critical discourse analysis
Adjusting the style of news reporting and strengthening the news commentary program was naturally put on the schedule of CCTV news reform (Liang 2007: 1). Previously, CCTV had a news commentary program called Focus. The aim of the news reform was to create a larger, in-depth news program based on Focus. The purpose of this new program was to report the current social hotspots and news events, make in-depth investigation on all sorts of social phenomena and provide a comprehensive analysis and commentary on news facts objectively, systematically and authoritatively. Thus, News Probe was born. (Liang 2007: 1).

News Probe — a critical, in-depth investigative program supervised by public opinion, is a 45-minute weekly program. When the program was first created, CCTV designed the task for News Probe as “reveal the truth, dig out scandals, and disclose social problems through the investigations by the journalists” (Zhang 2004: 1). “Explore the truth and fact”(Zhang 2004: 1) is the basic concept of production of News Probe. Every reporter in the News Probe team should adopt investigation as the means of news reporting, and select the facts to report as news through a method of investigative TV reporting that is personalized, independent, in-depth and complete. "Start from the scene, close to the truth" (Zhang 2004: 1) is their slogan for the program. News Probe thinks that three elements can be considered as the features of investigative reporting: first, the contents of investigation should be behaviors which are harmful to the public interests; second, such behaviors are intentionally covered up by some organizations and/or individuals; third, the investigations are carried out by the reporters independently (Liang 2007: 2).

The development of News Probe can be divided into four steps: in 1996, when News Probe began to broadcast in CCTV Channel1 and Channel News, thematic investigative reports were the core contents of the reporting. In 2000, News Probe entered its growth phase, during which "hunt the truth"(Zhang 2004: 1) became its slogan. 2006 was the 10th anniversary of News Probe, from then on, News Probe matured, and “real investigative reporting” (Zhang 2004: 1) finally became the direction of program production. Now, storytelling has become the main feature of the program. As News Probe's producer, Zhang Jie pointed out: the development of News Probe during 14 years has shown how its production orientation has transformed step by step from a news propaganda program to a real investigative TV news program (Liang 2007: 1).
2. The theoretical framework of the research

2.1 Media globalization

What is globalization?

Globalization is a broad and vague concept. In a broad perspective, globalization involves the fields of politics, economics, culture, science and technology etc. In a narrow perspective, globalization can be defined within a particular area, such as economy.

This research will adopt the concept of Held et al. They thought “the concept of globalization implies, first and foremost, a stretching of social, political and economic activities across frontiers.” (Held et al 1999:15)

In the academic circle, some scholars paid attention to the aspect of social and culture of globalization. Scholar Waters (1995:3) pointed out “Globalization is a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding.”

In my opinion, globalization is the reorganization of the world economic structures, the integration of political forces within countries, the rapid expansion in the aspects of science and technology, and the free dissemination of news, art, knowledge etc. in the general population.

In fact, no matter which perspective experts select in viewing global issues, one thing is certain: globalization means the shortening of time and recession of space. The concept of time and space becomes less and less important. The ways in which human beings communicate is increasingly being developed. The exchanges and contacts among countries are becoming more and more convenient, and the flow of information is becoming the most important feature of globalization. Because media is the world's most important communication tool, therefore, in this thesis, I naturally paid attention to media globalization, which is the background issue of this research.

In today's academic circle and media industry, “media” and “globalization” have become two popular words which are closely linked to each other. Many scholars like to use them together in discussing relevant questions. From the perspective of the media culture, it is thought that “globalization is a process in which worldwide economic, political, cultural and social relations have become increasingly mediated across time and space”. (Rantanen 2005:}
In this definition, we find that media has become the core of globalization. Here, it should be pointed out that although media globalization is an integral part of the process of globalization, media has also played an important role in promoting world economic globalization, political integration and cultural exchange. On the one hand, it has provided the material condition and ideological support in the process of maintaining the world's social, economic and political order; on the other hand, it has also effectively promoted democracy in countries all over the world.

The role of media globalization is reflected in four aspects. As Herman and McChesney (1997) pointed out: the first feature is the larger cross-border flows of media outputs, the growth of media TNCs\(^3\) and the centralization of media control; the second is the rapid dissemination of popular culture worldwide; the third is the prevalence of western values; the fourth is the positive effect of the application of new techniques, rich content and wider options, which brings benefits to the audience.

The direct result of media globalization is: homogenization and diversity of world culture. Although media globalization does not mean that the entire media community had commonly accepted a single global media system, it has also been said that the world has become a global village due to internet and satellite technology. However, “a loosely integrated, multi-layered system, within which we see a differentiation of media, their content and their audiences, but also increasing interconnectedness on different sociogeographic level: local, regional and global” (Hjarvard 2003: 49) is actually emerging.

Media globalization greatly increases the free flow of media products; effectively promotes media commercialization and dissemination of popular culture and consumerism in global scope. This has reshaped the global public sphere according to the standards of democratization, Westernization and Americanization. Meanwhile “globalization is influencing the foreign news process from top down”, (Holm 2001: 114) thus, “a profound impact at the level of media structure and media policy and resultant changes in media content are visible.” (Holm 2001: 114)

Globalization has caused two distinct phenomena in the media market: the globalized diffusion and localized appropriation of media products (Thompson 2003: 257). From my point of view, since media products are important carriers of social ideology, its distribution

\(^3\) Transnational corporations
inevitably increases the dissemination of ideologies. These two trends of the media market in the global sphere not only directly affect the structures of today's media market and consumers of the media products, but also change the ideologies of the media consumer and society.

Let us focus on China's media industry, and determine the effect media globalization had on China's news media, especially on investigative TV news reporting. After the year 2000, China formally entered WTO. The signing of WTO agreement greatly changed the market situation of China's media organizations. The internationalization of media standards and policies became the biggest challenge in the effort to integrate China and international media organizations, and to exchange products with different political norms and cultural values. In actuality, because of China's political system, the government still firmly refused to open the media market, and restricted foreign and private capital to gain control of media organizations. With the advent of internet and satellite technology however, the Chinese government's capability of controlling and monitoring the flow of information was obviously weakened. Because capitalization became the only option in the development of China's media industry in light of media globalization, China's media organizations had to face competition from foreign media in the process of entering the international market. Although the Chinese government made great effort to maintain its media as a propaganda tool, but the market displayed a trend of media development that was orderly and open in order to gain profit and capital. Therefore, China's media presented a singular image as a contradictory entity of “Market Media” in “the Party's China”, which was a large market for rising big media; while at the same time, serving as a watchdog's tool for propagandizing the ideologies of the CCP. (Yao 2009) In order to maintain this contradictory entity, systemic and management reforms became the primary task. Thus, China's media globalization not only brought commercialization to the traditional Chinese media kingdom, but also gave a great impact on the media system and ideological dissemination.

This was an important element which resulted in the diversification of the news content and form, for example, the birth of News Probe in China.

Communism has dominated China's political transition in the last 100 years or so. In this

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4 World Trade Organization
5 China Communist Party
period, media has always played a role as the watchdog and mouthpiece of ideologies. Media operated as an apparatus for traditional communist propaganda. Under the control of this media model, the closed media market and the polarized news media have for a long time segregated China's media products from the international market. After joining WTO, China's media faced an urgent task, i.e. it should integrate into the international market and participate in the international competition as soon as possible. As a national television station, CCTV represented the authority of China's news reporting. On the one hand, it sets the keynotes for adjusting national policies and the propaganda of the Party's ideologies; on the other hand, it pioneers media globalization in China's media society. One of its important tasks in media globalization was to adjust the content and form of news programs, speed up the internationalization of TV programs and explore the international market, while maintaining the characteristics of China's news media, continuing to play the role of the ideological propaganda and public opinion monitor. On this issue, investigative TV reporting was chosen as a means of CCTV's news globalization (Liang 2007: 1).

2. 2 China's media reform

Globalization has an enormous impact on the progress of the political system, the development of economy and the flow of ideologies and cultures in China. Most of the evidence supporting this point of view can be found during the process of China's social transformation.

China's reform and opening-up began in 1978 when Deng Xiaoping retook his leadership of the country and made a great effort to carry out his socialist reform and market economy policy. In the meantime, the world's economic globalization gave the impetus to China's reform and opening-up. As the mouthpiece and propaganda tool of the communist party, China's media kept abreast of this trend, and slowly pushed the start button of the media reform.

In my personal opinion, the so-called China's media reform was the social process of adjusting media policies, system and management structure in the relevant field. With the development of China's reform and opening-up, and the establishment of a socialist market economic system, the media industry has begun to change political policies, business scope,
industrial structure and management system. In order to achieve economic benefit, reduce the country's economic burden, and mobilize the self-development initiative of the media enterprises, China has begun to transform the ownership and function of the media from the propaganda tool of the Party to the enterprise of the commercialization.

Generally speaking, China's media reform could be divided into three steps: marketization, conglomeramation, and capitalization (Hu 2007). From 1980, under the influence of the economic reform, China's media began to change the role of political propaganda, adjust the administrative system and enter the market operation. From 1990, China's media passed through the process of conglomeramation, and gained rapid growth in the scale of China's media (Hu 2007).

After several years of observation and research, I think China's media reform had a historic, far-reaching impact to the media society. Its meaning not only involved the development of China's domestic cultural market, but also reshaped the thoughts, attitudes and concepts of social ideologies in modern China's society, therefore, reconstituted the media public sphere. The systemic and institutional reforms of China's media changed the rule of media operation, which recreated a new material space of the media market. It was more meaningful that the media reform directly resulted in a subtle transition of China's social ideology. The media reform triggered the transformation of social thought, cultural notion, norms and values etc, and brought about the diversity of ideologies in China's society. The unified communist ideology began to diversify. China's media theorists called this ideological model as "new ideology". With the development of the reform and the transition of ideologies, a large amount of Western social theories and concepts, such as democracy and human rights, freedom of speech etc. poured into China's market with the importation of a large number of media products. The traditional concepts and principles of China's journalism faced a great challenge. Media public space became more and more democratized (Pan 2005: 1)

The democratization of ideologies inevitably affected the media content and form. From the 1990s, with the rapid development of investigative reporting in newspapers and news magazines, investigative TV news reporting began to enter China's news industry market as a foreign import. The new generation of China's TV journalists felt a fierce competition from the investigative reporting in traditional media (newspapers and magazines), but at the same time, was attracted by the new style and the market potential of some
investigative TV programs. They valued the strong social effect of these programs, and began to consider the developmental problems of China's investigative TV reporting. It is in this circumstance that News Probe was born.

The emergence and development of investigative TV reporting program, namely CCTV News Probe, was due to a profound social, historical and economic changes in China's society. The wave of globalization and China's media reform in the nation's reform and opening-up movement was the driving force which led to the birth and development of News Probe. The transition of China's new ideology and the emergence of the democratized media public space was the soil in which the investigative reporting could take a root, survive and develop.

2. 3 China's new ideology

2. 3. 1 Ideology and discourse

In the early 19th century, French philosopher and economist Destutt de Tracy proposed the concept of "ideology" in his works. In that time, "ideology" usually referred to a general mindset, ideas and concepts of human beings which directly links to the economy and politics of the society. For a long time, the research of ideology always focused on the fields of philosophy, politics, sociology or socioeconomy. Researchers usually “consider ideology as an internal consistent system of beliefs and judgments serving to decide to explain, interpret and justify the situation of a historical social group, class or community” (Shi 2008:51).

However, in defining ideology from the aspect of its relation with media discourse, it is important that we should consider culture as the approach of the research.

From the perspective of language and communication perceptions, critical linguistic theorists, Kress and Hodge defined ideology as a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view (Shi 2008:51).

In modern society, with the rapid development of information and communication technology, media has become the most important channel in the dissemination of ideology. So in the eyes of many media scholars, media is a primary specimen for discussing and exploring ideology, and CDA can serve as an excellent method to conduct the ideological analysis of media discourse.
In this aspect, UK CDA scholar Fairclough, and Dutch scholar Van Dijk have made fruitful achievements in the ideological CDA.

As Van Dijk (1995a) pointed out: although ideologies obviously are social and political, and related to groups and societal structures, they also have a crucial cognitive dimension.

As a famous scholar in the area of ideology and discourse research, he defined ideology from a social cognition approach, and pointed out: “Ideologies are basic frameworks of social cognition, shared by members of social groups, constituted by relevant selections of socio-cultural values, and organized by an ideological schema that represents the self-definition of a group.” (Van Dijk, 1995a: 6).

Based on this concept, he found that ideologies not only have a social function of sustaining the interests of groups, but also a cognitive function of organizing the social representations (attitudes, knowledge) of the group, thus indirectly monitoring group-related social practices, and hence also the text and talk of group members. (Van Dijk, 1995a)

Fairclough (2003 : 9) regarded ideology as “representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation”. He emphasized that “ideologies are closely linked to power” (Fairclough 2001:2). He believed that ideological expressions in discourse must be studied in reference to social power.

I am more inclined to side with the viewpoints of Fairclough in this matter. Ideology in fact reflects the balance of power behind the discourse. The different distribution of social power among the social groups will affect the ideological structure and the order of the discourse in the media public sphere. It is the social power and the way or method of access to social power that plays a key role in forming the different ideological strata. So we can say that ideology is the incarnation of social power in the aspects of social structure, social practice and social cognition. It can be, to a large extent, reflected through the discourse.

Thus, the core field of the research in this thesis shall be discussed, i.e. the ideological characteristics and its close relation with the social power in the discourse of China's news program — News Probe.

In the public sphere of today's China, News Probe — a typical investigative, critical and in-depth TV reporting program, originates from the diversification of ideologies (pushed by the demands of politics, economy and culture). It has been playing a role of media monitor,
exerting the function of power of media in the public sphere. But how does News Probe express its ideology in the discourse and play this social role. The answer is: media neutralism.

2.3.2 China's new ideology and media neutralism

In this thesis, another important part of the theoretical framework is the theory of the new ideology which is fashioned in the research circle of China's ideology and discourse in recent years. Professor Pan Zhichang from Nanjing University and Li Yan from Zhejiang University can be considered representatives of researchers and scholars in this field. The so-called new ideology refers to the changes of social ideology in the transition period of the society; the old, traditional communism is being replaced by the new, democratic and adjusted social beliefs, ideas and opinions under the influence of globalization and social reform. In the process of rectifying and adjusting the communist doctrine, China's new ideology stresses on the values of human being, emphasizes the importance of social common interest, and the value of life and dignity of the people (Pan 2005: 1).

Pan Zhichang (2005) thought: the new ideology is an important part in the transformation of social structure; it is an ideological and theoretical foundation on which society maintains cohesion and the government reconstructs the legitimacy of political power. The narrative logic of the new ideology is implicit. The ideological change is occurring unconsciously, the transmission of the new ideology adopts a strategic model. Furthermore, he pointed out that the most obvious characteristic of the new ideology is the transition of the strategy of the media propaganda from coercion, indoctrination, control (the old ‘totalitarian’ type) to consent, consultation, call (the today's ‘authoritarian’ type); from ‘brainwashing’ to ‘public relation’. So it became known as the Public Relation-based ideology. (Pan 2005: 1)

According to the logic and method of the analysis of Fairclough's ideological theory, in the process of China's reform and opening-up, China's new ideology can be divided into four categories: nationalist/ruling party's ideology, elitist/middle class ideology, populist ideology and market/consumerist ideology. The class order and the relation among these categories also underwent a fundamental change. The nationalist/ruling party's ideology and the elitist/middle class ideology dominated the structure. The populist and market/consumerist ideologies are always persuaded and promoted by, and subject to its public relation with nationalism and
elitism (Pan 2005: 1).
Professor Li Yan (2004: 1) furthermore related the discussion of the new ideology with his discourse research. He summed up three discourses which correspond to the four groups of the new ideological strata: official dominant discourse ie. the nationalist/ruling party's ideology, elite professional discourse, ie. elitist ideology, and civil discourse, ie populist and market/consumerist ideologies.

A scholar of contemporary culture studies research, Stuart Hall pointed out that “the ideologies (beliefs, attitudes and values etc) were expressed at any time as universalizing the interests of dominant social forces” (Scannell 1998: 253). As the center of the question of ideology, media discourse was usually expressed by a biased ideological stance in order to meet the demands of the interests of different social groups. He proposed three types of possible ideological position of discourse presentation: “dominant, negotiated and oppositional” (Scannell 1998: 253)

Based on Hall's dominating ideology model, Professor Li Yan (2004: 1) further classified the order of discourse into three classes: in the top of the pyramid of ideology, official discourse dominates and manipulates the logic of media discourse. Under the domination of the official ideology, elite professional discourse complies with the official discourse and subordinates the nationalist/ruling party's ideology. Both coordinate each other in transmitting the dominant ideology from top to down. Civil discourse sits at the bottom of the classes and represents the field of discourse of civil society in the social structure, and accepts the consultation, call and persuasion of the official and elite discourses. The relationship model which involves confrontation, compromise and coexistence in these discourses outlines the basic order of media discourse in the realm of ideology (Li 2004: 1).

As was established from the ideological theories of Faircolough on power relation, social power is the basic ideological prism in all sectors of society. The distribution of power constitutes the basic structure of social ideology. Then, what is the difference between the old and new ideology? According to the viewpoint of Pan Zhichang (2005), the difference between the “class relationship” and the “interest relationship” is the watershed of the "old" ideology and the "new" ideology. The old ideology divides power among different social groups on the basis of “class relationship”, but differently, the new ideology distributes social power according to the criterion of social “interest relationship”, and regards "social
common interests” as its basic theoretical foundation and the goal of its pursuit.
For a long time, China's basic state structure was built on communist ideology. The ideology plays a fundamental role in maintaining social cohesion and the legitimacy of sociopolitical power.
In the past, China's ideology was actually a mixture of "-ism" and "state". It could be called the party-state ideology. This ideology only represented the "class interests" of parts of the social strata. It often used the “class nature” to define the state nature and the ideological characteristics. But with the changes of social structure and the transition of social thought, the class nature in the realm of China's social ideology was gradually diluted. As professor Pan Zhichang (2005) said in his article: On the one hand, China's Communist Party had completed the conversion from a revolutionary party to a ruling party in time, it emphasized that the ruling party should have control of public power and serve the society. In order to maintain the legitimacy of the party's administration, social ideology should pay attention to the plight of the common man at the grass-root. On the other hand, the common man would no longer only belong to the group of the “mass” and “public” in China's new ideology, but had become a “socialized citizen”, and should be directly embraced into the interest group of the state. In the new ideology, the hardships of life of the socialized citizen must be addressed, and only when it has been addressed could social order be maintained (Pan 2005).
In this process, the media as the mouthpiece of the party and the "promoter" of the public interest was positioned in the middle ground between the party and the common man, and served as a bridge between the two (Pan 2005).
Let's turn our attention to news media, especially investigative TV news programs. We can see that as a result of the reform and opening-up and the development of investigative news reporting, a mainstream discourse had emerged and always maintained a pioneering position in China's news discourse, that is, news should pay attention to the common interests of the society. We can list News Probe as an example. From the 1990s, the development of News Probe has represented the main features of China's investigative TV reporting. News Probe has insisted in maintaining the party-state ideology, while it stressed on exposing social problems and evils which occurred in the process of the reform, and proposed on promoting social justice and equality. Its core thought was “Speak for the people, serve the society” (Pan 2005: 1). News media should not only disseminate the mainstream ideology of the party
and the government, but also play a role of media monitor and democratic supervision. Media elite should act as a “tribune” which safeguards the interests of the ordinary, vulnerable, marginalized peoples at the bottom of the social strata. "Speak for the ordinary people" (Pan 2005:1), "tell the story of the ordinary people" (Pan 2005:1) were the most fashionable slogans with which China's media had won popularity in the nineties. News Probe was a bridge for communicating opinions which linked the will of the government with the demands of the ordinary people. It represented the common interests of today's China's society.

As McCrery and Newhagen (2004) pointed out: In modern media public sphere, the middle class and the elite was the center of political power. In the times of globalization and reform, media elite are the backbone of the society. Media elitism and professionalism occupy the position of “mediator” in the structure of China's new ideology. In order to truly become the representative and spokesperson of the social common interest, media elite should choose an appropriate inclination of ideologies and express the discourse which can not only convey the official ideology, but also represent the will and voice of the civil society. Take News Probe as an example, which is an investigative TV reporting program. China's media elite launched this program in order to meet the demand of propagandizing the new ideology, promoting social equality and justice and exploring the media market. From an overall perspective, "Speak for the people, serve the people" (Zhang 2004:1) became the guiding principle for this program. The journalist and the media organization play the main roles in expressing the discourse. In this program, the journalists who are the representatives of the media, usually stands at the core position, which gives them a unique advantage while reporting. Their mental structures or social representations dominate the discourse of News Probe; their attitudes, norms, personal knowledge and beliefs forms the basis of judgment regarding a particular news or event they are investigating. The journalists holds the political power (granted by the government) and power of the pen (granted by the media organization) to decide which media participant can access this program, opinions that can be expressed in the discourse and how they can be conveyed. So the journalist's own ideological tendencies can be seen as the ideological tendencies and perspectives of the news media or even social elites (Fairclough 1995).

As mentioned in News Probe production mission, the journalists want to play the social role of “mediators” between the different social groups (government, middle class, and ordinary
people) in the new ideological structure, safeguard the social common interest (propaganda the official ideology, promote elitism while, caring about the life and will of the ordinary people), promote social justice, equality, morality, and truth etc. In order to attain this goal, media elitists and news professionals must maintain neutrality in the discourse of News Probe (CCTV 2009: 1).

It is argued that the so-called “media neutralism” mainly refers to the concrete practices and techniques of news reporting. A journalist adopts an unbiased ideological stance to impartially deal with the different sources of news reporting—this practice can be called as “neutralism.” Normally, media neutralism will closely relate to the opinions, attitudes, inclinations, professional knowledge and social backgrounds of the journalists. It is the ideologies of the journalists and media organizations that will determine how the neutralism of the journalists will be presented.

As Mats Ekstrom (2006: 22) said that as one of the institutionalized practices and techniques in modern news journalism, objectivity (in some cases formulated in terms of impartiality, neutrality and/or matter-of-factness) has been highly claimed. These claims to objectivity permeate the linguistic practices (discourse) of the institution.

There is a common acknowledgement that has long been established among the Western news media circle, that, in order to promote democracy and freedom of speech, the journalist should maintain their ideological inclination of neutralism, and objectively and impartially conduct interviews and reports. This requirement had even been written into the national charters or Acts of law by some democratic countries. For example, the Broadcasting Act of UK required that TV or radio broadcasting organizations should maintain impartiality and balance in their coverage of news and current affairs, and should refrain from editorial comment on matters of public policy. There were legal documents which set the terms of reference for all broadcast journalism and penalties for infringement (Greatbatch 1998: 167).

Western media journalists believed that news media is a public sphere “where the exchange of information and views on questions of common concern can take place so that public opinion can be formed” (Dahlgren 1997:7). The public sphere “is a physical place where public opinion is formed and political power exercised” (McCrery and Newhagen 2004:189). Through the access to media, people gain the right of discourse and power of expressing their ideology. It symbolizes the degree of the democratization of a society. Media neutralism is a
symbol of social openness and democratization of the media public sphere. It represents the spirit of freedom of speech in the democratic society.

From my understanding, media neutralism mainly refers to the distribution of the right of discourse among different media groups. Media should hold a balanced and neutralistic stance amongst different media participants, appropriately distribute access to the media public sphere and the right of discourse among those involved, while avoiding the biased ideology of the media organization, and refrain from the direct expression of the media's ideologies and the involvement of the journalist's personal attitudes.

Media neutralism requires that the journalist should “(1) refrain from the direct assertion of opinions on their own or their employer's behalf, and (2) refrain from overt affiliation with, or disaffiliation from, those expressed by interviewees.” (Greatbatch 1998: 167)

I had lived in the age of China's media reform and witnessed the development of China's news media and the transition of the orientation of the news production. With the reform and opening-up of China's society and the transition of China's new ideology, China's social structure underwent a great change. In the media society, the change of the news content and form which was triggered off by the media reform was also obvious. For a long time, China's media was administrated by the Party's propaganda department, and served as the mouthpiece of the official policy. News media was only able to produce the magpie-type news program which only sang the carols for the government. There were seldom negative or investigative news which can be seen on the TV screen. The style of reporting also showed the official rigid face of the traditional news with the old ideological propaganda. The media did not play the role of bridging together the upper and lower class. Because the traditional method of news reporting lacked concern for the common interest of the society, the ordinary people were often suspicious and apathetic to the propaganda of the official ideology. Therefore, the public suffered a crisis of confidence towards traditional news reporting.

With the transition of China's new ideology and the development of the media reform, China's media elites became aware of the embarrassing situation in news reporting, and began to explore a new model of news reporting that will convey the voice of the public which cares about the common interest of the society. News Probe adopted the style of news documentary, embraced different ideological discourses into the program in a 45-minute duration. Through the live coverage and in-depth investigation of the journalists, News Probe tried to expose
social scandals, disclose truths behind certain news events, and promote social equality and justice. China's media elites believed that in order to change the outdated propaganda model, solve the crisis of confidence in the public towards China's news media, news programs should give priority to social justice and equality, shoulder social responsibilities, care about the common interest of the society, provide supervision of public opinion towards media. In order to attain this goal, News Probe should be a democratic media public sphere. Journalists of News Probe should maintain a balanced and neutral position in dealing with different news discourse, allow members from different social strata to access this media public sphere and appropriately gain their right of discourse in the program. This is the common practice of news reporting in a democratic society. So media neutralism became the important ideological characteristic of China's news reporting and fashionable pursuit of many investigative journalists in the context of China's new ideology.

In the following part of this thesis, I will use the method of CDA based on two episodes of CCTV New Probe to conduct a concrete analysis about this ideological characteristic in China's investigative TV reporting.

3. Methodology

3.1 The theories of CDA — Fairclough and Van Dijk

Critical discourse analysis is a research branch of critical linguistics, which studies and analyzes the connection between discourse, social cognition, and social structures, and explores the relationship between power and ideology of the society, underlying the given text.

Critical linguistics was developed by a group of linguists in the late 1970s. In 1979, Fowler, Kress & Hodge first mentioned the phrase “critical linguistics” in the academic circle. In 1989, Fairclough proposed the concept of “critical discourse analysis" in his book Language and Power. CDA linguists thought that language is a complex system which has close relation to social behavior and context, and is often driven by ideology and social power. Language structure and grammar are often selected according to the ideological tendency of the language practitioner. The task of CDA is to analyze and reveal the power relations and the hidden ideological meanings in the discourse from the angle of linguistics, sociology, and
psychology (Fairclough 2001).

Fairclough has been considered as a core representative of the CDA theorists circle for the past 20 years.

“A discourse is the language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view” (Fairclough 1995: 55). The aim of CDA is to explore the relationships between discursive practices and texts in the background of sociocultural structure, and reveal the ideological meaning and power relation underlying the discourse.

Dutch CDA scholar Van Dijk is another important person in the research field of CDA. His sociocognitive model of CDA is being widely adopted by researchers in analyzing discourse from the linguistic, psychological, social and cultural approach.

Van Dijk's analytic framework is based on these three levels: the textual and structural, as well as production and reception processes. He not only placed importance on the analysis of lexicon item, syntax, grammar, rhetoric, structure and semantic coherence, topic etc of the news discourse, but also intentionally linked the discourse with the wider social context, and tries to probe their power relationships at the microstructure and macrostructure levels (Van Dijk 1998).

When we begin to discuss the views of Fairclough and Van Dijk in the CDA field, and use their theories to analyze the ideological characteristic in China's news reporting, ie. media neutralism, we must look at some basic concept, such as power, media access, order of discourse etc. in the research field of ideology and discourse.

From my point of view, media neutralism is a common practice of news production in a democratic media public sphere. In essence, media neutralism refers to the media's attitudes towards news events, the power relationship of the media society and the distribution of media discourse. Biased or neutralistic position of the journalist and media organization can determine the power relation among the different media participants and the order of discourse of social groups in this media public sphere.

In Fairclough's theories of CDA, power is the core of the research. In his theoretical structure, a large part of research content refers to the concept of power, which concentrated on the social, political and cultural fields. Fairclough thought that ideology essentially reflects the power relation behind discourse. Three components decide the power relation behind discourse: discourse types, orders of discourse and discourse access. (Fairclough 2001).
Usually, “Social practices networked in a particular way constitute a social order… An order of discourse is a particular social ordering of relationships amongst different ways of making meaning, ie, different discourse and genres and styles.” (Fairclough 2003: 206)

He argued that the order of discourse in a society is maintained by power.

Fairclough divided the order of political discourse into several groups. He said “thus contemporary political discourse articulates together the orders of discourse of the political system (conventional, official politics), of the media, of science and technology, of grassroots sociopolitical movements, of ordinary private life and so forth” (Fairclough 1998:147)

In Fairclough's ideology theory, access to discourse is another element which affects the power relation behind discourse. As he said: who has access to which discourses, and who has the power to impose and enforce constraints on access constitutes the basic power relation in the discourse (Fairclough 2001:52)

In his theories, he proposed a concept “agent” which refers to the role of the person who has access to the media public sphere, and pointed out “a way into the articulated structure of mediatized politics is to identify the main categories of agents that figure in mass media politics.” (Fairclough 1998:148)

He listed professional politicians, journalists, experts, ordinary people etc, as the chief agents in the media discourse, (Fairclough 1998:148) and thought all these agents constitute the potential power structure in the media society, thus, reflected the order of discourse—for example, the political discourse, academic and scientific discourse, journalistic discourse, popular discourse etc (Fairclough 1998:148)

He even particularly pointed out: “journalists have a prominent political role in their own right, they do not just ‘mediate’ others” (Fairclough 1998:148). So it is obvious that in the theories of Fairclough's political discourse analysis, media and journalists occupy a dominant position in the ideological structure in the media discourse. The opinion and attitude of media will manipulate the mainstream ideology in the media discourse. Whether the ideologies of the journalist or media are biased or balanced and neutralistic will become the criteria of which we judge the truthfulness, objectivity, authority and social value of the media discourse.

In the research of modern CDA, a communication event is an important place where media agents access the media public sphere in a specific media setting and social context to carry
out social interaction. So who has access to mass media and what implications his/her discourse may have on the context of the communication events have a decisive meaning in the ideological expression of the discourse. As Fairclough (1995) argued, there are many individuals and social groups who do not have equal access to the mass media in terms of writing, speaking or broadcasting. In view that the journalist and media organization behind the journalist holds the advantage of policy, technique and knowledge in the media production, the ideologies of the journalist and media become very important.

Similarly, Van Dijk (1995b) also believed that: usually, different social groups and peoples with different social backgrounds, knowledge and social status, have different rights of access to media power. The officials or professionals have more rights of access to media than the civil class. The power of media discourse of the ordinary people normally is controlled and constrained. Although the ordinary people may make use of the news media, they generally have no direct influence on the news content, nor are they usually the major actors of the news reports. The elite groups or institutions, on the other hand, may be defined by their broader range and scope of patterns of access to public or other important discourses and communicative events (van Dijk, 1995b). Social groups may be attributed social powers by their active or passive access to the media discourse. By controlling the access of media discourse, media power attains the result of affecting the ideology (van Dijk 1995b).

From the quotation of Fairclough and van Dijk's viewpoints about media access and power, we can see that the journalist and media organization (which had been defined as the backbone of the social elites and professionals by Fairclough and van Dijk) play an important role in controlling the media discourse and ideological dissemination in modern society. The balanced and neutralistic position of the journalist and media organization can assure the equality of media access of the different media agents to the media public sphere, satisfy the demand of the ideological expression of the different social groups in the discourse, maintain the justice, fairness, objectivity and authority of media discourse. This balanced and neutralistic ideological characteristic of media discourse can also be presented through a specific sociocultural structure of discourse and textual practice— the appropriate application of linguistics, for example, the selection of lexical item, proposition, rhetoric etc. Our task in the next part of this thesis will be focused on this aspect.
3. 2 Method

In this thesis, my analysis will be mainly based on the 3-dimension model of Fairclough (text practice, discourse practice and sociocultural practice) (Fairclough 1995). I will analyze the news discourse in the program scripts of News Probe and reveal the ideologies hidden in these texts.

My approach of CDA will be based on two aspects: the distribution of the discourse in a specific communication event and the textual practice. As Mats Ekstrom(2006: 29) pointed out that the journalist can influence the utterance of a news program in three level of the news discourse—choice of words and syntax, modality and discursive techniques (text practice) and context (sociocultural practice). In order to reveal how the neutralism of the journalist and media is maintained in the social and textual structure of the discourse, I think that it is better that we should adopt these two perspectives to make the analysis. The concrete practices can be divided into four steps:

Firstly, by sampling two episodes of News Probe — 4 billion donation and The truth of “World Pass” , I will outline the basic model of the communication events. I will base on the sociocultural dimension in the theories of the political discourse order of Fairclough to analyze how the different media participants access the media public sphere and how the power relation will be reflected among them through the media discourse. According to these results of the analysis, I will categorize the basic order of the discourse of the new ideology in News Probe and explore how the media maintains this order of discourse through the balanced and neutralistic stance of the ideological expression in the discourse.

A good way to illustrate the distribution of the discourse of News Probe would be to conduct a CDA about the speeches of its different agents.

Speech is an important part of media discourse. The news participants express their ideological inclinations directly through a verbal process. The best way to examine the ideological characteristics in the discourse is through the speeches. What can be expressed? How will they be expressed? To what extent can they be expressed? These aspects can reflect the ideological attitudes of the discourse.

Many researchers thought that the specific manner in which speech is expressed is the main channel to express the personal opinion of the agents (participants) and present their
ideological tendency in the discourse. The speeches represent how the right of access among
the agents of the news events is distributed and how the news ideology is processed and
reflected in media through the different social actors.

The different percentage of the speech expression also can reflect the ideological distribution.
A good method to analyze the speech would be the theory of Halliday's Systemic Functional
Grammar.

Under SFG\textsuperscript{6}, there are five methods of speech in public discourse: direct discourse; indirect
discourse; free direct discourse; free indirect discourse; speech acts of narrative relayed.
Among them, “direct discourse” (original quote) and “indirect discourse” (indirect report)
are the most common ways in the discourse of News Probe. Our task in the next section of
this thesis is to analyze the different methods of speech and their distributions in the two
previously mentioned News Probe episodes under their respective communication events and
social contexts. From this sociocultural approach, we can check how the neutralistic stance of
the discourse in said episodes is maintained by the journalists and media.

The textual practice of journalistic neutrality in television news reporting is an important way
in which the journalist maintains the objectivity and authenticity of the news content. Through
the application of specific textual practice, for example, lexical selection, proposition,
syntactic structure, semantic move, schematic structure etc. during the process of interview,
the neutrality is conveyed in the interaction between the IRs\textsuperscript{7} and IEs\textsuperscript{8}. So after finishing the
analysis of the distribution of the discourse, a detailed textual analysis will be made of the
ideological characteristic in News Probe. I chose three basic aspects of the discourse structure,

\textsuperscript{6} Systemic functional grammar
\textsuperscript{7} Interviewers
\textsuperscript{8} Interviewees
the reason these particular words were chosen. The aim is to see is how the journalists choose
the specific lexicons to maintain the neutralistic stance in News Probe.

The selection of lexical item is a basic way in which the speakers or authors of the discourse
express their own ideology. But the analysis of the ideological meaning of the individual
lexicon which is isolated from the concrete linguistic environment is doubtable. Because the
language is constructed by certain grammar rules, words, propositions, clauses and sentences
— these basic elements should combine with each other according to rules of grammar,
therefore, form the specific propositions, syntactic structures and semantic moves, and
express the particular ideological meaning of the discourse.

As Van Dijk (1998:32) said “concepts and their expressions in lexical items usually do not
come alone, but combine into propositions expressed by clauses and sentences…”

The third step will, most importantly, try to analyze the proposition.

In the process of media production, it is the journalist and media organization that will decide
to choose the proposition in the news reporting, therefore, the selection and expression of the
propposition can show the different attitudes and ideological inclinations of media to the news
events. The journalist's neutralism can be presented more effectively through the application
of the specific proposition. In this step, it will be determined how the journalist strategically
maintains the neutralistic posture through the practices of the proposition, for example, avoid
affirming or disaffirming the utterance of the IEs, distance himself/herself from the IEs,
intentionally withdraw from the story or formulate new questions etc.

The last step of the analysis will look at the usage of rhetoric in the media discourse. Rhetoric
is a particular practice of grammar to convey the meaning in the news discourse. To the
neutralism of News Probe, the application of rhetoric can not only implicitly and strategically
express the ideologies of media, persuade the audience to consent to them in the discourse,
but also continue to maintain the formal neutralistic stance of media and keep the authenticity,
objectivity and acceptability of the news content. In the context of China's news ideology,
rhetoric is a good means which help the journalist of News Probe to maintain their formal
neutralistic stance in the news program, while continue to propagate the official ideology.
Some examples will be highlighted in the discourse of the two episodes, for example, the
application of metonym, data, detailed description etc. to substantiate my arguments.

In this thesis, I only talk about the ideological characteristics in the discourse of News Probe.
The materials of the analysis will be totally based on the scripts of the episodes in News Probe. Since its launching in 1996 to date, almost one thousand episodes of News Probe had been aired. Therefore it is not only unrealistic to pretend to analyze all of the News Probe episodes, it is also unnecessary.

TV is different from newspaper and magazine. Mainly, there are two ways which the journalist can rely on to interpret ideological meaning or discourse: text and appearance. I personally think that text has an advantage in ideological expression over appearance, however I do not deny that appearance also aids ideological expression, and sometimes, provides a vivid and intuitive way of expressing ideology. Appearance express the connotation of the discourse through visual signs and images. Semiotic feature is its basic research content. In view that ideologies stress on the cubic dimension of thought, relate to semantic meaning, social cognition and logical reasoning, language has the advantage in this aspect. The discourse analysis in this thesis will seldomly refer to the semiotic field of CDA, but instead will be limited to text, specifically, the script of News Probe.

TV program is an audiovisual media. Our textual analysis of ideology which excluded audiovisual signs has its obvious limitation. Because News Probe is a conversation-based TV news program, usually, the neutralistic stance of the journalist will not only be presented through a simple textual expression, for example, the utterances of the media participants, but also be conveyed by the application of specific audiovisual signs on the screen. In the process of interview and dialogue, the audiovisual representations of the discourse, for example, the interaction, turn-taking, behavior, facial expression, handling of pause and posture, controlling of the volume, tone and rhythm etc. of the media participants also implies how the neutralism is maintained. Research in this aspect also has meaningful value. But in order to maintain the length of the thesis and the research from losing focus, discussion on the discourse analysis of TV audiovisual language had to be avoided, and give focus on textual analysis.

3.3 Material

In 2006 — the 10th anniversary of News Probe, the official website of CCTV specially published web pages to introduce News Probe, which contained a large amount of relevant
background information, historical introduction, TV rating, program data and statistics etc., including scripts and video clips of the program. The materials of this thesis were collected from this website. As it is the official information of CCTV and News Probe, the source is reliable.

The official articles of News Probe introduced its historic development. The analytic materials on the social context of the program were selected from those articles. For example, the transition of production orientation shows the typical ideological feature from the thematic report to the negative event investigation, from truth investigation to today's story investigation. This transition can be very helpful in understanding the close relationship between China's new ideology and the neutralistic ideological characteristic in the program. These relevant introductions and data of News Probe will be used to support my point of view.

In addition, the neutralistic ideological characteristics in the discourse of News Probe should also be studied by way of historical analysis. A large number of evidence and statistics from the analysis refer to the background and history of News Probe. Some viewpoints and comments made by journalists during the development of this program were randomly chosen in making the ideological analysis to support my arguments. The relevant results will be discussed in the general analysis on the neutralistic practices in the program. For the concrete case study, two News Probe episodes were chosen, namely “4 billion Donation” which was broadcast on May 23, 2009 and “The Truth of World Pass” which was broadcast on November 14, 2009, 12 samples of scripts for these two episodes were obtained from CCTV News Probe official website.

These two episodes were chosen as the samples for the research after considering the ideological characteristics of the discourse. In selecting these samples, the following criteria were taken into consideration: representability, generalizability, timeliness and social value. Since this thesis aims to probe the neutralism in media discourse, specifically in China's news reporting which is closely connected to the background of social reform and globalization, the concept of social justice and moral in the context of China's new ideology should be emphasized in the research process. These two episodes highlighted the new phenomena and problems of China's social reform and market economy. There is less official interference and propaganda than thematic reporting. Thus, the social value and neutralistic expression will be
better represented and characterized. During the program's 14 years of development, although its production orientation maintained uninterrupted transition from thematic reporting to Westernized investigative TV reporting, the mission of the program remained the same, which is to objectively and impartially promote social justice and equality. The ideological expression of the discourse maintained its characteristics. Since the basic feature and style of investigative TV reporting in most News Probe episodes were similar, the research of CDA on the two previously mentioned episodes can also be generalized. From the aspect of its timeliness, both episodes had certain social effectiveness, and though broadcast in 2009, had research value which remained relevant despite rapidly changing social attitudes and opinions. Sample scripts will be provided in the analytical section of this thesis, along with the specific criteria for its selection, ie. the discourse should represent the ideological inclination and demonstrate the specific interaction between different media participants during the interview. The different media agents express their ideology through their respective ways based on their social backgrounds. In order to see how neutralism is maintained in the discourse, the relevant sample scripts were chosen according to the relation and interaction between the IRs and the IEs in the specific context. For example, in order to show the neutralistic practice of the journalist, the lexical analysis of the discourse will concentrate on the narrative section of the journalist (sample1); in order to probe the neutralistic stance in the aspect of proposition, scripts which contain dialogues that typically reflect how the journalist (IRs) and IEs maintain neutralism in a supportive or hostile situation were chosen (samples 4-9); and in order to reflect the characteristic of formal neutrality in the discourse, discussion between the media agents that carry rhetoric meaning were chosen (samples 10-12). The analysis on the neutralism of the discourse of News Probe is generally based on these materials (12 samples in total). In view that News Probe is a 45-minute program, paragraphs containing commentary and interview dialogue from these two episodes were intentionally chosen as the focal content in analyzing the ideological characteristics of the discourse. Nonetheless, the analysis was conducted based on the content of the entire program in order to ensure that a complete, comprehensive and rational result is achieved. In the theoretical aspect of the ideological analysis, Halliday's SFG was used to analyze the ideological inclinations in which different speeches were expressed in the discourse.
Fairclough's three-dimensional model of the discourse analysis was also introduced in order to analyze and describe the neutralistic characteristic in the discourse of News Probe. In addition, Van Dijk's viewpoints on ideological analysis were also applied in some places. The respective data and statistics were presented in charts in order to give the reader a direct impression and understanding of the matter. These data and statistics also scientifically and fully illustrate the factual basis of the ideological expression in the discourse of News Probe.

4. The ideological analysis of the cases— media neutralism

4.1 Two examples of News Probe

The content of both of the two episodes— 4 billion donations and The truth of “World Pass” reflected the new problems and phenomena in the economic field under the social background of China's reform. 4 billion donations discussed a special case regarding charity and social welfare. The aim of this episode was to investigate a case of stock donation, disclose and expose the deficiencies of China's social system and institutions in the process of the reform and opening-up and social development, while, discussing different life values, social values and money perceptions in the circumstance of market economy. The truth of “World Pass” on the other hand dwelled on a particular case of commercial crime. It focused on the investigation of a company which sold a product named “World Pass” through an illegal pyramid scheme, and subsequently disclosed the fraud and illegal practice of the public security department.

In 4 billion donation, Mr. Cao Dewang acted as a famous, billionaire ‘glass king’ in China. He was born from a poor family and experienced difficulties in life. After the reform and opening-up, by virtue of his hard work and business skills, he achieved success in his career, became a famous entrepreneur, and established his company, Fuyao group. In 2008, he made a decision to donate the 4 billion shares which he held in his company's stocks to a local charity organization in order to set up a new non-public charity foundation under his name. The problem however was that there are presently no established legal rule or law which can guide the transfer of shares to charity organizations. At the same time, society misunderstood and became suspicious of Mr. Cao's donation. Some even accused him of intending to evade taxes through this private foundation. This episode highlighted the different attitudes that
members of society held towards his great wealth. In Cao Dewang's mind however, it was the
country and society that gave him the opportunity to succeed in his career; he was among the
lucky few who could take advantage of business and get help from the society. To him, it was
not good for a private family to idly possess too much social resources, it should be returned
to the society and shared with the public. Some members of society applauded his actions, but
most were suspicious of it. They thought that Cao was only putting on a “show” like some
hypocritical upstarts; they even predicted that he had an ulterior motive. Some even asserted
that Mr. Cao was ever a miser, so this donation was a fraud. In the eye of some experts, his
huge donation was a double-edged sword; it not only could be used to benefit the society, but
could also become a tool of tax evasion through illegal business means. In this news event,
though government officials expressed support for his donation, they emphasized that they
were unable to approve the establishment of the new foundation at that moment.
Similarly, in The truth of “World Pass”, the different media participants also showed their
different attitudes towards the event that took place.
In this episode, the characters involved were of different groups and social status, which
included police officers, journalists, experts, ordinary peoples, local agencies, the boss and
staffs of the company. These different groups of people held different opinions towards the
commercial criminal case. The police officer with a background of bureaucracy, naturally
expressed his opinions in an officialdom way, stated that: the company, the product and the
mode of operation were illegal; thus the criminals should be punished. The experts and the
public stood on the same position, and demanded that the police's violation of the law and the
company's fraudulent practice should be investigated seriously. Local agencies, the boss and
staffs of the company held their own positions, and emphasized that they did not violate the
law and were selling a high-tech product.
From the brief description of the two episodes, it is clear that the different media participants
had very different ideological inclinations, sometimes even polarized, and spoke only for the
interest of members within their same social group. The power relation among them was
maintained in situations of conflict in the episodes.
The media participants in the two episodes were given the social status of IEs, and played a
passive role in the question-and-answer sessions with the IRs. Their right of discourse was
limited or even disempowered, they lost the dominant position in the ideological structure of a
media public sphere, such as News Probe (political officials have political power, but not technical power). In media public sphere of News Probe, the social status of the journalists in the episodes are IRs, they are the active party in the process of interview. As the media elite in the social structure of China's new ideology, they are the linkage between the official policy and the will of the ordinary people in the society. According to the viewpoints of Fairclough, they own the institutional and technical power, occupy the dominant position in the ideological structure of News Probe, and can control and manipulate the ideological expressions in the discourse. So the roles of the journalists and the media organization behind the journalists appear to be more and more important in the power structure of the media public sphere. The opinions and attitudes of the journalist and media to the news events will dominate the global ideology in the discourse of the programs.

In News Probe, the journalist owns several social identities: investigator, reporter, host of the scene, story narrator and interviewer, the entire content of the program will revolve around the actions of the journalist. The journalist will witness, follow and carry out the whole process of investigation. They are the protagonist in the program, play the role of narrator, discoverer, explorer, witness, investigator, judge and commentator. The ideological stance which the journalist held in the process of interview will affect the global ideological inclination of the program.

As we had introduced that the purpose and mission of News Probe is to investigate the truth of the news event, find the news fact, disclose social problems, expose the insider, promote social justice, fairness and morality, “speak for the people, serve the people” (Zhang 2004:1) was chosen as the slogan of the program. In order to attain this goal, News Probe believes that the journalist as media elite should represent the common interest of the society. He/she should adopt a balanced reporting style and make great efforts to maintain a neutral position in the process investigating and reporting

4.2 Communication event and its context

Van Dijk mentioned that when we begin to conduct an ideological analysis in the discourse, the best method in doing so is as follows:

Firstly, we should examine the context of the discourse; secondly, analyze the power relations
of the social groups; thirdly, look for the ideological textual practice and so on (Van Dijk 1998:61)

So when entering the process of our analysis, firstly, let's examine the context of the discourse in 4 billion donations and The truth of “World Pass”.

4. 2. 1 The communicative context

According to Van Dijk (1998:62), in order to understand the ideological position of the author (writer or speaker), it is important we firstly describe the communicative context. Through the contextual occasioning or functions of the discourse, its ideological functions may be spelled out.

Normally, the communicative context consists of at least the following major categories: group membership(s) of the author, the aims of the communicative event, the genre, the intended audience(s), the setting (time, location), the medium, and so on.

According to this formulation of the analysis of the discourse, I roughly describe the communicative context of 4 billion donations and The truth of “World Pass” as below:

Overall interaction: news interview and reporting
Aim: promote social morality, justice and fairness
Genre: Investigative TV reporting
Location: TV news room and news locations
Date, Time and timing: May 23, 2009 and November 14, 2009, 22:30, 45 minutes.
Group membership or categories of participants: government officials, journalists, experts, the general public, news participants etc.

4. 2. 2 Media participants, power relations and media access

As the second step in Van Dijk's analytical model, from now on, we analyze the power relations of the social groups in the discourse of News Probe.

Our analysis on the neutralistic ideological characteristic in 4 billion donations and The truth of “World Pass” will be carried out on the basis of this communicative context. As media participants play a major role in the ideological dissemination of the media, we must first examine the media access of the participants, the distribution of power and the structure of the order of the discourse resulting from the access to the media public sphere.
News Probe is a typical investigative TV news program, its most important social function is media monitor and supervision of public opinion. News Probe proposes to be a watchdog of social justice and equality, and makes great effort to interview, investigate and inspect the various social phenomena and news events in a full range of the social space, search for the fact, uncover the truth, and affect the social thought of the audiences.

In order to achieve this mission, firstly, the journalist and media should reasonably adjust the power relation of the discourse in News Probe, control the access of the different media participants to the media power and objectively, truthfully and impartially report the new events. Let's see how the journalist did so and what kind of order of discourse was formed.

In 4 billion donations and The truth of “World Pass”, the journalist designed a basic pattern—narrate a news story based on the investigation and spread the plots of the news events revolving the activities of the journalist's investigation. In the 45-minute program, the reporter's investigation was the main content. The main participants in the program could be divided into four groups: government officials; journalists; experts; some participants and the general public. These groups represented the different ideological categories respectively in the news discourse; the government official represented the official ideology; the journalists and experts—elite ideology; the participants and the general public—mass ideology. By conducting interviews or being interviewed in the program, these persons of social groups gained the right of expressing their opinions and views in the news events, therefore, they in fact gained the right to enter the media public sphere and partly accessed media power. In the process of interview, the journalist was the center role, he/she held the institutional and technical power (which were granted by the government and media organizations) to manipulate the media discourse and ideological expression. By controlling the different speech expression of the different media agents (including the journalist him/herself), the journalist formed his/her basic ideological inclination.

In 4 billion donations and The truth of “World Pass”, normally, the total discourse can be divided into two groups: one is the narrative discourse of the journalist; the other is the interview. The former can be regarded as “Indirect discourse” of media organizations and media participants (journalist and media's commentaries and indirect report of the IEs), the latter are “Direct discourse” of media participants (interview dialogues between the IRs and IEs). The grouping of these speeches can be categorized as below:
a. Government official's speech represents the official ideology;
b. Journalist, media, and expert's speeches represent the elitist ideology;
c. Media participants and the public's speeches represent the populist ideology.

Here, I should particularly point out that: in the narrative discourse of the journalist, although we did not see the speaker on screen and the discourse was expressed in a narrative way, but the narrator did cite or relay the words and opinions of the journalist and media organization, its factual speaker was the story narrator behind the screen who appeared in the program as a virtual third party speaker. Its discourse belonged to “Indirect discourse”.

The entire script of 4 billion donation has 8460 words (6248+2014+198). Among them, the interview dialogue is 6248 words; the commentary of the journalist is 2014 words; the indirect report in the commentary is 198 words. The truth of “World Pass” has 8887 words (6104+2496+287). Among them, the interview dialogue is 6104 words; the commentary of the journalist is 2496 words; the indirect report in the commentary is 287 words. The breakdown of the different ways of speech expression is illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 below:

*Figure 1: Breakdown of speeches in 4 billion donation in percentage*

*Figure 2: Breakdown of speeches in The truth of “World Pass” in percentage*
Figures 3 and 4 below shows the breakdown of the distribution of speech expression among the different media participants.

**Figure 3:** breakdown of speeches made by different media participants in 4 billion donation in percentage

![Diagram showing speech distribution](image)

Note: 1: official discourse; 2: journalist discourse; 3: expert discourse; 4: Cao Dewang-Cao Hui-Chen Xiangming's discourse; 5: public discourse; 6: other (comic dialogue)

**Figure 4:** breakdown of speeches made by different media participants in The truth of “World Pass” in percentage

![Diagram showing speech distribution](image)
After analyzing the ways of speeches in the script of 4 billion donation, (fig. 1) we can see that “Direct discourse” which has 6248 words, represents 74%, while “Indirect discourse” is only 2212 words (2014 +198), making up 26%. Similarly, in The truth of “World pass” (fig. 2), “Direct discourse” is 6104 words, equivalent to 69%; “Indirect discourse” is 2783 words (2496+287), making 31%. In the two episodes, the source of all the “Direct discourse” can be ascertained clearly, but for “Indirect discourse”, only the journalist's commentary clearly belongs to the source of media, everything else came from an implicit source.

In figure 3 and 4, the elite discourse of the journalist and experts have the lion's share, at 51% (43%+8%) and 52% (44%+8%) respectively; the participants of the news events and the public discourse made up 41% (38%+2%+1%) and 37% (34%+3%) respectively; the statements and comments of the government officials formed 8% and 11% respectively. The two figures shows us that in the structure of the discourse, the elite and public discourses occupy the main part, with more than half of the discourse belonging to the journalists and experts, while the media participants and public society also have a relatively big share of the discourse (more than one-third). We can see that the media gives more right of discourse to the elite class and the public in the programs. Meanwhile, the officials on behalf of the government also have 8% of the right of discourse. This shows that the media does not neglect official views.

From the data in the above figures, we can see an obvious ideological stance in the expression of the discourse: the media holds a balanced and neutralistic stance to the different media participants. In the treatment of the different ideologies and the distribution of the news discourse, the media tries to keep an unbiased attitude in order to maintain its justice and
equality, that all members can access the program to express their voice and opinion on behalf of their own social groups’ interest, and therefore, gain their right of discourse accordingly.

Two phenomena presented in these data can be used to support my point of view. The first, is the balanced distribution of the discourse among the different media participants.

According to Pan Zhichang and Li Yan's theories of China's new ideology, China's media discourse can be categorized into three orders: official, elite and civil discourse according to the respective social groups. They constitute a relationship of the persuader (government and media elite) and the persuaded (ordinary people). The official discourse and media elite discourse occupy the dominant position in the ideological structure.

As a media public sphere, in order to achieve its ideological intention (speak for people or other respective groups), News Probe subtly selects the different media agents into the program, and distributes the right of the discourse through the interview dialogue. As Mats Ekstrom (2006:29) pointed out, although quotation can never be completely neutral, but it can be crucial to the maintenance of formal neutrality. Quotation technique can serve as a perfect way of reproducing other's voices, accentuate the distance between the IRs and IEs, therefore, uphold the neutralistic standpoint of the journalist. Interview dialogue of News Probe (or "Direct Discourse") is a form of ‘quotation’ within a TV program. It occupied the majority (74% and 69%) of the total discourse in the two episodes. These discourses directly express the different opinions and ideological inclinations of the different media agents through their verbal process, thus form the basic neutralistic ideological structure in the discourse of News Probe.

Because these media agents represent their social member groups, speak for the interest of their social groups, neglecting to include any particular media agent will result in an unbalanced and biased expression of ideologies. From the two episodes, we can see that the journalist had interviewed (directly or indirectly) the IEs with the different social and personal backgrounds: government officials, experts of charity bodies, billionaire and his son, the boss and staffs of the company, police officers, local agencies, software designer etc. All of the social member groups (official, elite and civil people group) were well represented in the program. In the process of investigation and interview by the journalist, these media agents can freely express their viewpoints and attitudes to the news event in the standpoints of their “in-group” interests, so the programs reflected the different voices coming from the
different social strata. From the data in the above figures, we can find that the distribution of the discourse among the different media agents constitutes a proportion of 1:1:4:4 (official : expert : journalist : ordinary people), thus, forms a relatively symmetrical structure (6:4) of power relation between the persuader (official, expert, journalist) and the persuaded (ordinary people).

The proportion of the data also tells us that: in the power structure or power relation of News Probe, a number of the discourses such as the discourse of the official and journalist (they own the majority of the discourse, 60%) occupy a preferable, significant, legitimate or natural position; others such as news participants, ordinary peoples (they own the minority of the discourse, 40%) struggle to gain social acknowledgement in the marginalized and oppressed status.

Comparing with the traditional news reporting in China's media, the obvious tendency of the ideological expression in News Probe which is presented by these data is the diminution of the official discourse and the increase of the civil discourse. This is a strategic maneuver of China's media in order to maintain the balanced posture of the ideological persuasion and promote the idea of the common interest of the society.

The data indicates that the official discourse with the style of the propaganda is only 8% and 11% of the total in the two episodes; it shows the dilution of the official ideology in the discourse of News Probe. Meanwhile, the journalist intentionally increases the percentage of the civil discourse of the ordinary people (41% and 37% of the total). This practice conforms to the mission and purpose of the program which is to promote social justice and equality and “speak for the people, serve the people” (Zhang 2004:1). Since the program can not only continue to propagate the official ideology in the discourse, but also give ordinary people more opportunity to express their ideologies in the program. So, the balance and neutrality of the ideological expression is maintained in the discourse of the program.

Another phenomenon which can be used as evidence to support my point of view is the method of expressing the discourse.

The data in figures 1 and 2 shows us that there were two ways mainly which the journalist adopted in the discourse of the program to narrate and describe the news story: one was “Direct discourse” (interview dialogue); another was “Indirect discourse” (media commentary and indirect reporting of other media participants.) The data indicated that the
ways of discourse expression between direct and indirect discourse roughly maintains the proportion of 3:1. Attention should particularly be given to “Indirect discourse”, since a large percent (26% and 28%) of “Indirect discourse” belongs to the media commentary which is produced by the media organization and expressed by the third party narrator behind the screen. Only a tiny percentage (2% and 3%) of “Indirect discourse” is spoken out by the other media agents. This is another strategic maneuver of News Probe in order to maintain the balanced posture of ideological persuasion in the discourse.

SFG thought that the different ways of speeches have different ideological functions. The different selection of speech can express the different ideological significance behind the discourse. “Direct speech” means the journalist quotes the speech directly from the source of speech and without duping his opinion. Since it is more concrete, specific and objective, it has more authorized, propagandized and persuasive function to the audiences. Inversely, “Indirect speech” is reported from the other source, is an indirect, generalized discourse, and needs to pass through the mental process of the journalist. The journalist has the power to control the way and content of the expression of the IE's speech, therefore, can manipulate the ideological expression in indirect discourse. As the discourse which can be relayed by the third party (the journalist or narrator behind the screen), if the ideology of the journalist or narrator as the third party in the discourse has neutralistic inclinations, “Indirect discourse” appears to be more balanced and neutral than “Direct discourse”.

Since the journalist represents the image of the media organization, his/her opinion will represent the ideology of the journalist and media organization. If the journalist expresses the ideology of the media organization on behalf of his/her employer's interest by way of “Direct discourse”, he/she will lose the neutralistic position of ideology in the program. This practice will obviously violate the guidelines and purposes of the program in essence, and cannot be accepted by the producers and audiences. In order to conform to the principle of production and demand of the market, when the journalist needs to express the opinions and viewpoints of the media organization as in 4 billion donation and The truth of “World Pass”, he/she will usually adopt another way of discourse expression—“Indirect discourse”. Normally, he/she will treat the opinions and ideologies of the media organization as “Indirect discourse” which seems to be narrated by the third party in the commentary of the program.

So we can see that the media commentary becomes the majority (26% and 28%) of “Indirect
discourse” in the two episodes. Meanwhile, in order to give the other media agents the opportunity for their ideological expression, the journalist seldom applies “Indirect discourse” to control the other media agent's discourse (only 2% and 3%), thus, the other media agents’ discourse can be spoken out objectively and freely in the program. This way, the program continues to maintain its balanced and neutralistic stance.

4.3 The textual analysis of media neutralism

After concluding the analysis of the context and power relation of a communication event, the third step of analysis according to Van Dijk's order of analysis, ie. the textual analysis will be applied.

4.3.1 The analysis of lexical item selection

As van Dijk (1998:31) pointed out “Traditionally best known in studies of ideology and language is the analysis of lexical items. Words may be chosen that generally or contextually express values or norms, and that therefore are used to express a value judgment”

As was introduced, the program was constituted with members of different social groups. The different media participants with different social background and personal cognition model represented the different group interests in the program. But when the journalists selected these participants and allowed them access to the media public sphere, she/he should form a basic ideological inclination and production theme in the whole scope. In 4 billion donation and The truth of “World Pass”, this overall ideological characteristic is to promote social equality and justice.

In order to fulfill this complicated social function of media, the journalist should maintain a balanced and impartial practice in the coverage of news interview and reporting; deal with the interview interaction with the different media participants equally. Media should impartially give the members of different social groups the opportunity to access media discourse, to express their opinion on the news event, while the journalist as the representative of the media organization should keep a neutralistic stance and avoid directly asserting his/her own opinion or displaying bias attitudes. This characteristic can be seen from the selection of lexical item of the journalist in the discourse.
In the script of News Probe, we can see, the journalist's discourse can be divided into two main parts: the story commentary and interview dialogue. The interview dialogue shows a characteristic of discretion, but the narrative commentary usually presents the main opinion and attitude of the journalist and media. In view that we focus the analysis on the ideology of the journalist and media, excerpts of the commentaries in 4 billion donation (which represents the journalist's voice) were chosen as samples.

Sample 1

Commentary: Cao Dewang, China's glass king. Fuyao Group Company which he owns produces two-thirds of China's automotive glass. In February this year, he announced his intention to make a one-time donation of 70% of the shares he held in his company and set up a charitable foundation. Calculating by the current share price, the amount of the donation totaled to about 4 billion Yuan. This news caused a great concern in the society. But after three months, the donation of 4 billion yuan was still not made. People cannot help but wonder: Will this be another "charity show"? Donation only involves a simple procedure of transferring money, why should it be so difficult? Journalists of <News Probe> has investigated this matter.

In early May, we went to Fujian, and met with Mr. Cao Dewang in the headquarters of Fuyao Group.

Commentary: In February of this year, Cao Dewang's claims of donating 4 billion yuan had suddenly put himself under the media spotlight. Cao Dewang had not only been listed many times in "Forbes" magazine as one of China's richest, but also become the main focus of the charity row. In the Chinese mainland, there were none so rich who could make such a large donation to a charity foundation. People keenly observed whether he will fulfill his promise of donation in the end. After one news website reported this event, more than 2000 messages were posted by people in the news column. Some people applauded for his behavior, but more of them challenged his motivation and speculated his true intention. Everyone was talking about, even fiercely debating over this event.

Commentary: Less than a month after Cao Dewang declared his donation, Fuyao Group
published its annual report, and announced that it will not pay out the year's dividends to the shareholders in order to reduce their debt. Therefore, someone began to question: is Cao Dewang a philanthropist or "iron roost" in the end?

Commentary: After arriving in Fuyao Group headquarters, we learned that due to the anticipation that a financial crisis will lead to the shrinkage of market demand, Fuyao Group has initially shut down four production lines in the last year and accordingly made layoffs. Therefore, some employees of Fuyao Group published messages on the internet stating that since Cao Dewang had been very stingy to the staff of the group, then, it is certain that this generous contribution was promised with some particular intention.

Commentary: after the announcement of Cao Dewang's donation, voices in the media began criticizing that the majority of the rich in China lacked charity awareness. According to a survey by China Charity Federation, the rich who holds more than 80% of social wealth contribute less than 15% of charitable donations in China.

In these commentary paragraphs, we find that the journalist was trying to maintain a neutral attitude and balanced ideological inclination to Cao Dewang and his donation event. In the sample, she rarely used negative or positive words to express her own views and opinions, but simply described the cause and the process of the story to the audiences. This inclination can be seen in the lexical item selection, for example, the choice of verb. When she described Cao's behavior, she used the words “own, announce, want, declare” and other neutral words. It suggested that the journalist held no biased ideological inclination to the billionaire Cao and his wealth. She even expressed appreciation towards Cao's success in career success, for example, by using a number of positive words, like “glass king, great concern, spotlight, many times, major focus, such a large amount, actively” etc. to describe Cao's business kingdom and the basic experience of his life. From the practice of the journalist's lexical item selection, it is clear that she did not treat Cao as a controversial social figure and categorize him into the other groups (which groups?) simply. Her true intention was to dig out the inside story of Mr. Cao's life and the donation event, and tried to find the social meaning behind polarized concepts such as moral-immoral, justice-injustice, equality-inequality and so on.
In the discourse which we had sampled in the above, we can also find an interesting phenomenon: some sentences do not belong to the discourse of the journalist herself; she merely relayed the different opinions and words of other people. This discourse actually reflected the complicated attitudes of various people in the society to Cao Dewang's large donation.

Mr. Cao was a complicated public figure; his large donation was also a complicated news event. It was a normal phenomenon that the public society presented different attitudes towards Mr. Cao and his donation. In this episode, the journalist adopted “Indirect discourse” to relay the different opinions of the public. For example,

Sample2

“People cannot help but wonder: Will this be another ‘charity show’? Donation only involves a simple procedure of transferring money, why should it be so difficult?”

“Some people applauded for his behavior, but more of them challenged his motivation and speculated his true intention”

“someone began to question: is Cao Dewang a philanthropist or "iron roost" in the end?”

“some employees of Fuyao Group published messages on the internet stating that since Cao Dewang had been very stingy to the staff of the group, then, it is certain that this generous contribution was promised with some particular intention.”

These indirect discourses basically reflected the complex attitudes and minds of the civil society towards Mr. Cao and his donation.

Looking from the selection of the lexical items in their discourse, we find that there were a lot of negative words, such as: "‘charity show’, difficult, challenged his motivation, speculated his true intention, question, ‘iron roost’, stingy, particular intention” etc. in these discourses. Such words represented the attitudes of some snobbish people, expressed their envy to money and their apathy towards the rich. ‘Charity show’ was a rhetoric wording. The journalist likened some insincere promises of donations made by the rich to a TV show; criticizing them as hypocrites. ‘Iron roost’ also criticized the stinginess of the rich through a traditional Chinese idiom. “Speculated his true intention, question, challenged his motivation” showed
the people's doubts towards Mr. Cao's donation.

Meanwhile, from the journalist's relay of the civil discourse, we can also hear another voice from the public, that is, there was also an affirmation which the public held towards Mr. Cao and his donation. Society always values ethics, fairness and justice. To the rich who was truly undertaking the public welfare and helping the society with enthusiasm, the society also evaluated and appreciated them highly. So in the discourse, some showed their positive attitude towards Mr. Cao and his donation, for example, "applauds" for the donation event and regarded Mr. Cao as a "philanthropist". "Applauds" was a good word, "philanthropist" affirmed that the behavior of Mr. Cao was correct.

In this paragraph, the journalist used some positive words. The ideological meanings of these words were the opposite of the former selection of words. On the whole, the journalist used these different words (or polarized words) to interpret the different ideologies of the public society towards Mr. Cao and his donation event. Her aim was to maintain the balance and neutrality of the media's position, thereby, set up the criteria of judgment on the concepts of moral and immoral.

In *The truth of World Pass*, it is also clear that the journalists adopted a balanced and neutral position to interview the program participants. For this controversial commercial criminal case, the journalist took neither the official position, nor the position of "World Pass" company. He attempted to maintain an image of a witness, investigator and outsider, and made the investigation and analysis from an objective perspective. He neither hastily prejudged the legality of the enforcement by the police, nor did he take "World Pass" company as an illegal company. What he did was to show the process of the investigation, present the evidences which he collected, make his own analysis, confirm his view, demonstrate the complex nature of the case to the audiences, and let the audience make their own conclusion based on their respective ideological positions. It should be admitted that such an approach is successful; it can be more accepted by the audiences.

Usually, the lead and the introduction part of the program are the crux of investigative TV reporting, their role is to attract the attention of the audiences and leading the direction of the news story and the ideological expression in the discourse. The lead of this program is first selected for the analysis.
Sample 3

Lead: This summer, a company named "World Pass" was investigated by the police on the suspicion that it was conducting a pyramid selling scheme; the police believed this was the first case which involved such a scheme in 2009. But after the case was investigated, it also raised quite a controversy; some people thought that the police handled the case without evidence, and killed off a promising high-tech enterprise. What is the fact of this case? Today's episode of News Probe focuses on “The truth of ‘World Pass’.”

Commentary: On the day of this year's Dragon Boat Festival, the police of Zhenjiang city was handed a task by The Public Security Police of Jiangsu Province, and prepared to investigate a company called "World Pass" which was involved in a pyramid selling scheme.

On the internet, this case trigged off a debate. Some people supported "World Pass", others were against "World Pass", but both sides made their arguments fiercely.

What kind of a company was "World Pass"? There was a description of the company on its website: "World Pass" is a high-tech enterprise which sells LINK-WORLD's mobile software card exclusively. The card can achieve real-time mobile communications, video transmissions and other functions. Images of their advertisements were also found on the Internet.

So, what were the evidences on which the public security authority relied in judging the company?

Journalist: When did you begin to pay attention to "World Pass"?

Liu Dong (Deputy Secretary for Economic Investigation, Ministry of Public Security): In the second half of 2008, we received some reports, we also received some information from the economic investigation department of the local public security authorities and suspected there were pyramid selling activities in the company, After summing up the information, we considered that this was a new phenomenon.

Commentary: In early 2009, SAIC issued a letter to the economic investigation bureau of the Ministry of Public Security, which requested the ministry to make a joint investigation on "World Pass" on the suspicion of conducting pyramid selling.

Liu Dong: Both of us made a serious analysis together, and thought that this was a typical, so-called high-tech pyramid selling case conducted by the suspected criminal.

Commentary: after filing the case, the investigative task was assigned to the Zhenjiang city police in Jiangsu Province. After a month of preliminary investigation, in June, the police
raided the office of “World Pass” which is located in Shenzhen, Changchun, Hainan, as well as their agents, and arrested those who were responsible. This incident was beyond the anticipation of the company’s agents. Some of the agents sent messages to News Probe claiming that the police were handling the case in violation of the law. We tried to get in touch with the sender of the messages, but did not receive any response. However, these points of view of the agents were very representative.

In this sample, we can see that the journalist firstly described the background of the case to the audiences in the lead-in part of the script. There were different viewpoints in the society towards the case of “World Pass”. While there were some people who thought that the company had violated the law, there were also some who still regarded it as a high-tech enterprise and that the police was handling the case improperly. This was the point of suspense and the focus for the audience. Who is right? Who is wrong? Before the journalist begins his investigation and unravels the truth of this case, if he holds a biased and unbalanced attitude to narrate the news story, the ideological expression of the program will become unjust and unequal, and the audience will lose their interest in the program. So in the beginning of the program, the journalist did not indicate his attitude; he used words such as “controversy, debate, argument” which were neutral words. There was no clear ideological inclination in these three words, they only showed the complex nature of the case. At the same time, the journalist described the attitudes of the two different groups of people in the case: those who supported “World Pass” and those who were against it. So the journalist used two sets of words which were completely opposite from each other to express his balance and neutralistic posture. For example, “suspicion, pyramid selling activities, so-called, the suspected criminal”—these derogatory words obviously indicated that the company was conducting illegal activities, while “a promising high-tech enterprise” were the positive words the journalist tried to use to counter-balance the negative meaning of those negative words. The same can be said in regards to the attitudes towards the police. On the one hand, “raided the office, arrested those who were responsible” represented the legitimacy of the police investigation, but on the other hand, “handled the case without evidence, killed off, handling the case in violation” showed the doubt of the public society to the legitimacy of the actions of the police. “Arrest” is a positive word which is empowered by the law, but
“kill off” clearly implied the adverse consequences of the police's investigation, it was a negative word. The journalist put two words together to express his neutralistic attitude towards the investigation by the police.

The analysis of the ideological bias of lexical selection in the above gives us the basic impression that in the discourse of News Probe, there are two normal textual practice of lexical selection which the journalist often adopts. The journalist prefers to choose either neutral or polarized words in pair to express their ideological inclination, therefore, maintain the neutralistic stance. The neutral words can mitigate and dilute the biased ideological tendency of the discourse of the journalist and media organization, therefore, maintain the neutrality of the news program. Meanwhile, the selection of polarized words in pairs in the narrative of the news story can attribute the journalist the role of “mediator” in the discourse, the balance and neutralism of the discourse can be kept by the journalist and media's standpoint as “mediator”.

4.3.2 The analysis of proposition

A proposition can usually be regarded as a basic ‘idea unit’ in the discourse, which is in the form of a single sentence or several sentences, segmented simply from the whole news story (Lei 2005). It is the smallest independent meaning construction of the language and thought, which are typically expressed by single sentences or clauses (van Dijk 1988). In actuality, News Probe is a conversation-based political news reporting program, investigation and interview are its chief manners in reporting the story. For a political news program, the distribution of the discourse among the different media participants becomes the main characteristic of its ideology, since the discourse of the journalist and media hold a dominant position of the ideological expression in the discourse. What and how will the journalist express his/her opinion in the program? Will he/she be biased or balanced in the discourse? Will the ideology of the journalist and media be neutralistic or non-neutralistic? The practices of proposition of the journalist will determine the extent of the objectivity and authenticity of the news program.

In News Probe, the journalist is an investigator of the news event. In the whole process of the investigation, the journalist plays different roles in the program, for example, a host,
investigator, interviewer and media agent of the elite class. The main duty of the journalist is to uncover social problems, promote social justice and demonstrate the media's self-image of “tribune”. In order to achieve this aim of media communication, “IR should maintain a neutralistic stance by producing utterances that are at least minimally recognizable as ‘question’ and/or distancing themselves from evaluative statements by attributing them to third parties” (Greatbatch 1998: 168).

As a conversation-based news program, in order to satisfy the audiences’ curiosity towards the news facts, News Probe usually puts the audience on the unwitting position, tells them the whole story of the news events through the investigation and interview step by step. The journalist adopts a model of “question-asking” to express the discourse. The IRs sets out the question to the IEs, contemplates the answer of the IEs and all apparent phenomena which is found in the process of the interview in order to seek the truth of the news events. He/She does not easily express the posture of affiliating with or disaffiliating from the position of the IEs. In the discourse, he/she tries to mitigate and dilute the official and elitist nature, diminish the authority of media, adopt the practice of question-asking in order to conduct fact-checking instead of propagating the media's ideology. He/she often relinquishes his/her accountability for news content in order to attribute the audiences the role of witnesses or participants and let them make their own judgments respectively to the news events. Through these ways, the journalist always maintains a stance of investigator, questioner, fact-checker and observer rather than commentator or judge. Therefore, “question-asking” becomes the chief characteristic of the proposition, maintaining the neutrality and balance becomes an important technique of expression in the news discourse.

In News Probe, setting out the question becomes a common feature of all of the programs in the lead part. In making the following analysis, focus will still be on the lead parts of the two episodes. The sample below is a lead-in paragraph in 4 billion donations.

Sample4
Commentary: Cao Dewang, China's glass king. Fuyao Group Company which he owns produces two-thirds of China's automotive glass. In February this year, he announced his intention to make a one-time donation of 70% of the shares he held in his company and set up a charitable foundation. Calculating by the current share price, the amount of the donation
totaled to about 4 billion Yuan. This news caused a great concern in the society. But after three months, the donation of 4 billion yuan was still not made. People cannot help but wonder: Will this be another "charity show"? Donation only involves a simple procedure of transferring money, why should it be so difficult? Journalists of <News Probe> has investigated this matter.

In early May, we went to Fujian, and met with Mr. Cao Dewang in the headquarters of Fuyao Group.

In this lead part, the journalist adopted the narrative way to briefly introduce the basic background, information and conflict about the donation issue. As the narrator, her standpoint in the discourse was that of a bystander, observer and investigator, she stood neither on the side of Cao Dewang (she did not give any evaluative statements to Cao's donation event), nor on the side of the public (she put the wording of the public, “charity show?” in a question environment—“Will Cao's donation be another ‘charity show?’”), and attributed it to the third party—“people”), therefore, maintained her skeptical attitude to both sides’ versions. Her attitude of neutrality was obvious in the expression of the two distinctive propositions. This balanced tendency of ideological expression also can be found in the lead of the other episode, The truth of “Word Pass”

Sample5

Lead: This summer, a company named "World Pass" was investigated by the police on the suspicion that it was conducting a pyramid scheme; the police believed this was the first case which involved such a scheme in 2009. But after the case was investigated, it also raised quite a controversy; some people thought that the police handled the case without evidence, and killed off a promising high-tech enterprise. What is the fact of this case? Today's episode of News Probe focuses on “The truth of ‘World Pass’”.

In this short lead, the journalist also stood on the position of the third party to introduce the story. In the first sentence, he briefly introduced a fact—“‘World Pass’ was investigated by the police on the suspicion of conducting a pyramid scheme”, then he described the importance of this case—“this was the first case which involved such a scheme in 2009”.
Since this was not the opinion of the journalist or media, he emphasized this was the view of “the police”. In the following sentence, he turned his attention to the social backlash of this case, presented another viewpoint which came from a part of the public—this case involved malpractice of the police. Through presenting the two polarized opinions in the lead, the journalist intentionally distanced himself from the ideology of “the police” or “some peoples”, thus maintained his balanced narrative style and status of the investigator, and expressed his neutralistic inclination of ideology in the discourse.

In <News Probe>, the journalist is the center of the reporting task. In actuality, the reporting is the process of the investigation of the news events which revolves around the journalist. In the whole process of this investigation, the interview is the chief manner in which the journalist conducts his investigation. The dialogue and the interaction between the journalist and the IEs are the main methods in which the media participants express their ideologies in the discourse. In order to maintain his role and social status of the investigator and interviewer with his neutralistic and balanced ideological expression in the discourse, the journalist should always “refrain from the direct assertion of opinions on their own or their employer's behalf, and refrain from overt affiliation with, or disaffiliation from those expressed by IEs” (Greatbatch 1998: 167). Thus, the color of propaganda of the officials and media elitist was constrained, mitigated and diluted; the authority of the media was also diminished accordingly, but the objectivity, truthfulness and acceptability of the news content was greatly increased.

After we analyze the entire script of the discourse of 4 billion donation and The truth of “World Pass”, we find that “there is an almost complete absence of acknowledgement tokens (‘mm hm’, ‘huh huh’, ‘yes’ etc), new receipt object (‘Oh’, ‘really’, ‘did you’ etc) and assessment” (Greatbatch 1998: 168) in the scripts of these two episodes. The journalist never used “Yes” or “No” to affirm or disaffirm the viewpoints of the interview directly. Therefore, he avoided “responses which are characteristically produced by ‘questioners’, but which could be taken as indications of agreement or disagreement with what an IE has said.” (Greatbatch 1998: 168)

To the different media participants, the journalist insists on setting out different questions with a neutralistic position, “By these means, IR presents themselves as soliciting the opinions of others, rather than expressing their own views” (Greatbatch 1998: 168)

In the sample below cited from The truth of “World Pass”, the journalist investigated the
relevant persons about the practices of which “World pass” exaggerated its product properties and misled the consumers through its advertisements. The dialogue was conducted under a hostile interview environment (the journalist wanted to hunt down the truth of the case from the participants in a face to face manner), so the ideological expressions of the IRs and IEs can be more representative and obvious.

Sample6

Commentary: The evidences of the investigation show that the so-called technology which "World Pass" greatly promoted was non-existent. The propaganda of the publicity was too far from the actual functionality of the products. Did the company know of this problem? We interviewed some relevant persons who were detained in Zhenjiang Detention Center.

Journalist: Did you know the actual situation?

Qiang Kexing (former president of marketing for “World Pass ”): I took account of this technology. But because I was not sure, I contemplated on this issue; I thought my wording was still conservative.

Journalist: still conservative?

Qiang Kexing: We just said that it was our exclusive product, I remembered that I had also explained the problem to some of our agents, I said to them: “for example, your family has a bike, it was owned exclusively by your family too. This was your own thing.”

Commentary: the word game did not hinder the intensive propaganda of "World Pass", in order to promote their products, the company claimed to the outside world that they were an American investment consortium and were preparing to become China's Microsoft. Even until now, the boss of “World Pass ” Shi Yongbing would not deny their misleading propaganda.

Shi Yongbing (former chairman of “World Pass ”): I should admit, this information is not correct.

Journalist: There were errors?

Shi Yongbing: I did not pay attention to it.

Journalist: You meant you did not know it?

Shi Yongbing: Yes, I did not care about it.

Journalist: So, how can I understand what you mean? As a boss, if you thought this publicity was wrong, then won’t you ask the staff to change it?
Shi Yongbing: This matter was… after police advice, I realized there were errors, I was aware of this problem probably in the beginning, but I did not pay attention on it, because the development was too fast, actually I should say I was too busy all day.

In this sample, Qiang Kexing and Shi Yongbing were the company's key persons in charge, they were making efforts to come up with an excuse to shirk the responsibility of their fraud, it was clear that journalists did not agree with their claim. But in the interview, he seldom used the words, such as “yes, no, right, wrong” etc. to directly affirm with or disaffirm from the utterance of the IEs, neither were there any direct rebuttal towards the arguments from the IRs. The journalist was not supportive of or hostile to the position of the IEs, he insisted on maintaining a neutralistic position through an unbiased method of questioning according to the answers provided by the IEs. There were two places of which the journalist totally disagreed (Qiang Kexing: I also took account of this technology. But because I was not sure, I contemplated on this issue; I thought my wording is still conservative. Journalist: still conservative? ) or agreed with the utterances of the IEs, (Shi Yongbing: I should admit, this information is not correct. Journalist: There were errors? ).

Here, we can see that the journalist maintained a balanced and neutralistic position to the utterances of the IEs by doubtfully repeating the IEs’ own words ( “still conservative? ”, “There were errors? ”). By formulating these new questions, he strategically avoided directly asserting his own opinions and overt affiliating with, or disaffiliating from the IEs, therefore, solicited the IEs to continue to express their opinion, while conveying the IRs’ own ideology implicitly.

Usually, in the discourse of News Probe, in order to maintain the objectivity and truthfulness, the journalist seldomly comments on the IEs’ answers during the process of the interview dialogue, thus, avoids making their own judgments hastily. If the media needs to comment on the news events, the journalist will often try to avoid expressing this comment on the spot, but will put this commentary content in the narrative section of the news story and read out in the production studio by the third party narrator behind the screen. The journalist intentionally dilutes and mitigates the color of propaganda of the official and media ideology by the application of this indirect discourse through the position of the third party. In the above example, on one hand, the journalist kept a distance from the IEs through the neutral
questions; on the other hand, added some studio commentaries on the interview dialogue in order to express the media's evaluation on the matter:

Commentary: the word game did not hinder the intensive propaganda of "World Pass", in order to promote their products, the company claimed to the outside world that they were an American investment consortium and were preparing to become China's Microsoft. Even until now, The boss of "World Pass" Shi Yongbing would not deny their misleading propaganda.

In this sample, we can see that the attitude of the journalist is unbalanced in the discourse. After the detailed and strict investigation, and based on the evidences which he found in the process of the interview, the journalist seemed to reach a conclusion, ie. “World Pass” is a wrongdoer. But let's assume if the journalist himself presented this commentary and judgment which has an obvious ideological bias during the interview process, the audiences would not long regard him as an objective story-teller and fair-minded investigator, they may lose interest in what he introduced and described. In order to maintain his role of a neutral narrator, investigator and interviewer, the journalist strategically withdrew from this unbalanced ideological expression and placed the task of making these ideological comment on the third party—the narrator in the production studio of the program. Through this kind of treatment of the discourse, the IRs not only expressed the viewpoints and attitudes of the media on the news events through the third party narrator, but also conducted the interview dialogue with the IEs under a balanced and neutralistic environment, made the behavior of the journalist in the investigation more objective and truthful, thus the discourse of the program also appears to be balanced and neutralistic.

In another example of The truth of “World Pass”, we also find the practice of attributing the evaluative statements of the journalist or media to the third party.

Sample7

Commentary: According to the promise of "World Pass"—an agent can receive up to six times refund after clicking the ads, the police believed that this was a model of business operation which would not produce a substantive social output, it would bring about a huge risk. In view that there was no real social output in this business, its capital chain was bound
to collapse.

Li Jian: Clicking ads on the internet which is invalid, expired or experimental, can be said to be a labor without substantial outputs, their labor will not create social wealth, thus, it is a closed loop which is cycled in “World Pass”.

Journalist: So you think that it will not create wealth. To such a simple distribution and marketing as “World pass”, will it be prohibited by the country?

Li Jian: if it fails to create wealth, but consumes and frauds social wealth, this will be prohibited by the state law.

Commentary: After investigation, we found, the package of the third-party pay which "World Pass" vigorously promoted was actually the tools for advertising and promotional campaigns; in fact, there were no possibility of which it can be achieved. The police believed that the practice of which “World Pass” refunded the profit to the original agent with the money of the new agents who had been suspected of a commercial criminal.

In this sample, we see that because the journalist lacked sufficient evidence, and since he was not a law enforcement agent, the journalist did not categorize the company's behavior as a commercial crime directly, but only said that the company's product “was actually the tools for advertising and promotional campaigns; in fact, there were no possibility of which it can be achieved”, it was the police who judged the company's conduct as a case of commercial crime. All these opinions were expressed in the studio commentary through a third party's tone and voice.

In the process of investigation by News Probe, the points of view of the IRs and IEs sometimes aligned and sometimes conflicted with one another. In the second instance, the journalist usually hid his true attitude by the proposition practice of repeating the IEs’ words while persisted in pursuing the question in order to further explore the true idea of the IEs. If the journalist was in agreement with the IEs, he often used the narrative style to describe his discovery, withdrew from the facts of the story and began to make a further investigation, rather than to simply join in on the opinion of the IEs.

In the above example, in fact, the journalist agreed with the viewpoints of police officer Li Jian, that is “World Pass” failed to create wealth for the society, but he did not affirm with or disaffirm from the viewpoints of Li Jian. Based on Li's utterances, he turned to discuss the
attitude of the country to such activities of “World Pass”. The ideological attitude of media (or we can say it is the judgment of the journalist to the whole news event) — “State law prohibits the business of ‘World Pass’” is presented through the police Li Jian (with the legal social identity). On the one hand, the journalist expressed the attitude of media, while on the other hand, he maintained a posture of balance and neutrality in the interview.

The news interview is an interactive activity between the IRs and IEs. As an investigative TV news program, the interview dialogues between the journalist and program participants are the important content of the program. Therefore, the content and mindset which the interview dialogue delivers constitutes an interactive relationship. During this process, the relationship of the coordination between the IRs and IEs should be established in order to maintain the neutralistic posture. No matter in the allied or hostile environments, the neutral inclination of the IRs and the coordinating attitude of the IEs to this inclination can be regarded as the basic approach in which the neutralism can be presented in the interaction of the interviews. On the one hand, the IRs should mitigate and dilute the adversarial or favorable posture in the proposition of the discourse and should not strongly convey an expectation or preference for the IEs answers (for example, attributing statements to the third parties, not a freestanding assertion; making the ‘interrupting' turn in the proposition; avoiding biased accusations or non-neutrality to the opinion of the IEs; giving the IEs more room for maneuvering his answer etc), while on the other hand, the IEs should adopt a collaborative way, which preserves or supports the interviewer's neutral stance.

As Greatbatch(1998: 168) pointed out  “The ability of an individual to occupy a neutralistic position in talk-in-interaction is thus dependent upon the collaboration of other participants. IE usually collaborate in the maintenance of the neutralistic stance advanced by IRs. They do not treat the utterances of IRs as expressing personal standpoint, but, instead, as soliciting their viewpoint on the issue.”

The example below is cited from 4 billion donation. It is a dialogue and discussion between the journalist and the government official. To the phenomenon of which the rich people of China did not actively participate in social welfare activities, the journalist expressed her opinion which represented the common viewpoints of some peoples in the society. To her utterance, the government official showed his different opinion.
1. Commentary: after the announcement of Cao Dewang's donation, voices in the media began criticizing that the majority of the rich in China lacked charity awareness. According to a survey by China Charity Federation, the rich who holds more than 80% of social wealth contribute less than 15% of charitable donations in China.

2. Wang Zhenyao: some of the rich came to meet me and spoke out their bitterness; they were not willing to make donations publicly, but instead make them furtively. After they publicly donated to charity, many people began to come to them with the hope of getting their contributions; it became bothersome to deal with these matters. Our charity organization is still in the process of development. So I encouraged them to set up more private foundations, asked professionals to manage the donations in a professional manner, which will be convenient.

3. Chai Jing: In China, one phrase is often used, “the heartless rich”. Many people thought that these rich people had no true motivation or sense of charity from a moral perspective.

4. Wang Zhenyao: But let us reflect, when we said “the heartless rich”, did you consider that it may have not been convenient for many rich people to contribute to charity? And that Mr. Cao's experience showed us that this system and culture made it very inconvenient for donating stocks?

5. Chai Jing: Did you mean this "benevolence" was not only a personal moral issue?

6. Wang Zhenyao: It not only concerned personal morals, but the institutional system itself.

From this sample, we can see that the collaborative relationship between the IR and IEs constituted a neutralistic stance in the discourse.

In sentence 1, the journalist expressed a common social viewpoint, while citing some concrete data to support the opinion. To her utterance, the government official held a different point of view, but he did not refute the opinion of the journalist directly. He strategically used the opinions of the third party— “some of the rich”, formulated it as a presupposition of a question to indicate the dilemma situation in the aspect of social welfare, and implicitly denoted that the reason the majority of the rich in China lacked charity awareness was that the government's system of social welfare was imperfect. In sentence 2, the government official showed a collaborative attitude to the journalist's question in a hostile environment; he firstly
denied the opinion of the journalist euphemistically (the official expressed his different opinion by relaying the indirect discourse of some of the rich; therefore, strategically showed his attitude towards the welfare issue. On the one hand, he avoided direct conflict with the opinion of the journalist, on the other hand, presented his own opinion— It was not the fact that the rich would not like to donate, they had their own bitterness and problems during the process of donation. Then, he implied that the utterance of the journalist was partly a fact (he confirmed the utterance of the journalist by the proposition — “Our charity organization is still in the process of development”), the relevant systems needed to be improved. Through this collaborative interaction of the IE, the discourse maintained a neutralistic stance.

In sentences 3 and 4, we can also see this practice. To the utterance of “the heartless rich” (the journalist attributed this utterance to the third party— “many people”), the official did not totally agree with this opinion (though he also did not totally disagree with it), but he paid his sympathy to the dilemma of the rich in a standpoint of the journalist and many people. By the application of the words “us” “we”, he affiliated with and coordinated to the position of the journalist, while at the same time, used the third party's experience to prove that the system was imperfect and the utterance of “the heartless rich” was incorrect. Thus the balance and neutrality in the discourse was formed.

In the discourse of some conversation-based news program, usually “IR uses a form of questions which strongly convey an ‘expectation or preference for particular type of response’ specifically, he uses a question frame which projects acceptance by IE of the proposition that follow it, a proposition with which the IE can be expected to strongly disagree— limit of neutralism”. (Greatbatch 1998: 178-179)

But in the discourse of News Probe, we can see that the journalist has a particular set of practices for dealing with these problems. For example, in the following case of 4 billion donation:

Sample9

Chai Jing: Some people may wonder that if the government wants to encourage charity work, then should not the registration open a green light? Let them register, everything will be settled, very simple.

Wang Zhenyao: This case concerns the innovation of a system, we cannot treat it as a special
case. Special case is resolved, then many people will follow this case, refer to this special case according to the law. If you simplify this case, the government think that this is public welfare, thus let you do it, I will allow you to do it, but without a standard, not a procedure, then it will become a chaos. This empirical management or extensive management will not be suitable to any field in the modern society.

Chai Jing: If you understand that real management is not based on experience, what should it be based on?

Wang Zhenyao: It should be based on a modern legal system, a modern standard system and a more transparent procedure; this is a model of the modern state administration

Chai Jing: if so, the people will have an expectation for you, they think that it is the government that needs the innovation of the system and improvement of the body, why can not you do more discussion, demonstration actively in order to complete the technical operation?

Wang Zhenyao: When I said these words concerning about system and innovation, have not you found that we are in the process of promoting the development of this matter? We have found a lot of researcher to discuss this topic? Actually we want to promote such a good thing as soon as possible, but we can not do it through an executive order and treat it as a special case.

Chai Jing: I am afraid I take the liberty, the Secretary, you had made many explanations, and do you not worry that some audiences will think that it is the government department who is delaying this issue and always looking for an alibi to avoid solving a very difficult problem?

Wang Zhenyao: In fact, we do meet a variety of misunderstanding, but as the Government, we should very frankly tell the public that this is a very special donation, needs a systematic way to make a study, to adjust some of our policy.

In this sample, the question of the journalist strongly conveyed an “expectation or preference for particular type of response of IEs,” (Greatbatch 1998: 178-179) (“should not the registration open a green light? », “why cannot you do more discussion⋯?” , “do you not worry that⋯.”). “These utterances often involved provocative propositions which counter to the expected, known and/or stated views of IEs” (Greatbatch 1998: 178-179), In order to mitigate the strong bias and preference in these utterances, the journalist would usually attribute these question to the utterance of the third party (for example, “Some people may
doubt that...”, “the people will have a expectation for you, they think that...”,”, or use a mitigated tone ( “I am afraid I take the liberty, the Secretary, you had made many explanations,” ) in the beginning of the question. Through these particular practices of the discourse, the journalist supplied the IEs with more room for maneuver, therefore, the IEs did not regard these question as non-neutralistic treatment. The biased inclination was neutralized. The balance and impartiality is maintained.

From the analysis of proposition to the expression of neutralism in the discourse of News Probe, we can sum up the findings as below.

As News Probe is actually a conversation-based, fact-checking news reporting program, it is inevitable that the journalist should embed some personal and media opinion to the news events in the discourse. What and how the journalist will express the opinions in the program is a key index of the ideological expression. The proposition can be regarded as an effective way in which the journalist manipulates the discourse and ideological expression. The analysis of proposition will be very meaningful in the search for the neutralistic characteristic.

In order to maintain the neutrality and balance, some normal and routine practices which the journalist can apply in the proposition of the discourse are:

(1) question-asking is the model which the journalist would adopt in contemplating the opinion of the other media participants during the process of fact-checking, by this way, the journalist intentionally distances his ideological position from the others; (2) the journalist intentionally dilutes the color of the media's propaganda, relinquish their accountability for news content and diminish their authority to the news events in order to achieve effective objectivity, truthfulness and acceptability; (3) the news interview is an interactive activity between the IRs and IEs. During the process of the interview, the IRs and IEs establishes a coordinative relationship in order to maintain the neutralistic posture. The consideration and particular treatment of the IRs to specific discourse environments (coordinative or hostile) and the collaborative, preservative or supportive attitude of the IEs will be very meaningful to the presentation of the IRs' neutral stance.

4.3.3 The analysis of style and rhetoric

Van Dijk (1991: 115) stated that style is “the textual result of choices between alternative
ways of saying more or less the same thing by using different words or a different syntactic structure. Such stylistic choices also have clear social and ideological implications.” Through this specific selection, the discourse constitutes the particular stylistic feature of the news reporting and conveys its special ideological meaning.

After analyzing the scripts of 4 billion donation and The truth of “World Pass”, we find that another important characteristic of the ideological expression in News Probe is that the discourse highlights media elitism and professionalism by adopting a large amount of stylistic descriptions and rhetoric, therefore, emphasizing the neutralistic stance of the journalist and media in the ideological expression.

In the production process of News Probe, there is a special group of script writers who are constituted by the journalists of the program with the support of some professional writers and famous scholars. All of these members belong to the elite class of today's China society. It is normal that the scripts written by these members show the elitist style. This phenomenon reflects one of the features of semantics in the text of News Probe. Under the pen of the writer of the program, China's elite class intentionally keeps a distance from the ruling party and ordinary people; they hold a critical attitude to the policies of the nation but a consenting attitude to the ordinary people. The elitist style of description in the news discourse pays attention to the singularity of the narrative of the news story, the neutrality of the ideological presentation and the in-depth meaning of the discourse.

Generally speaking, News Probe usually adopted a different approach in conducting the expression of the different discourses. The language which the journalist adopts during the process of interview and narration shows the different styles. The former adopts a popular, colloquial style in order to easily conduct the interview and the exchange of opinions between the news participants. But inversely, the narrative part, such as the leading presentation, background introduction, the story description and the commentary section are usually written in the formal language style.

As regards the interview, the journalist will conduct it under the situation of daily conversation and balanced face-to-face communication. In the process of the dialogues, the style of the life language (?) dominates its main characteristic. These dialogues are conducted under a specific story situation by the neutralistic and balanced way; therefore, it presents the journalese style, and shows the feature of media professionalism.
To the narrative and commentary discourse, *News Probe* uses the narrative language with a simple structure, emphasizes that the description of the investigation and the development of the story descriptions be interpreted objectively, straightforwardly, clearly and in detail. Normally, the personal thoughts, feelings and attitudes of the journalist should not be intervened in the discourse in order to keep the media neutrality and the discourse balance. Specific rhetorical structure is an adaptive path to maintain neutralism in the discourse. Classical rhetoric has the specific effect of controlling the ideological meaning of the discourse. For example, euphemism and mitigation can control the over-expression of ideologies; metaphors can imply the viewpoint of the author which is not directly expressed in the discourse; while statistics and data can reflect the objectivity of the media discourse. The semantic operations of rhetoric have a closer relation to media neutralism. This practice of rhetoric can enhance the balanced ideological position and persuasive function of the discourse.

In *4 billion donations* and *The truth of “World Pass”*, the journalist used the method of story descriptions to spread the news plots. The characters and the news details are the features of the program. To enhance the ability of the news persuasion, the journalists frequently used a large amount of rhetorical strategies, such as: the application of data, the detail selection of the source and the empirical material without any ideological biases, metaphors, understatements, and repetitions etc. In order to achieve the balance of the discourse among the different media groups, the journalist intentionally excluded contents which were inconsistent with the story's purpose, played down the out-group's opinion, diluted the color of the official propaganda, stressed the voice of media elite and showed the different opinions of the ordinary peoples. When they described the news events, the perspectives presented in the narration were usually consistent with that of the ideology. They cited the viewpoints from reliable, official, well-known news sources or from the persons, institutions with high credibility and objectivity. They adopted a writing style which mimics storytelling to repeatedly introduce specific and similar details from different angles, often relaying the words and sentences of the witnesses or the direct participants to support the opinion of *News Probe* and *The truth of “World Pass”*. The application of these styles can not only increase "authenticity", "reasonability", "truthfulness", "accuracy" and "credibility" of the news story, but also make the audiences and the public easily and without repulsion accept the ideology of
the media.

In *4 billion donations* and *The truth of “World Pass”*, the repetition might be considered as a very important rhetoric practice. It was also the main tool by which the journalists maintained their balanced and neutralistic ideological stance.

Repetition in discourse may affect text processing and formation of the ideological model in news discourse. Because the most important task of investigative TV reporting is to “hunt for the truth, dig out the insider” (Zhang 2004: 1), in order to achieve this aim, the journalist should observe and investigate a news event from different sides and perspectives. It may also provide the audiences with more time and angles to observe, hear and mull over the different facts from different angles. The balance of the discourses among the different media groups can be achieved by the application of “repetition”, so this is a necessary and objective reporting practice in investigative TV reporting.

In *4 billion donation*, it is clear that in order to dig out the truth of Mr. Cao's stock donation, the journalist repeatedly interviewed the different media participants using the same questions through the same angle (the participants being Mr. Cao, his son, his finance officer, the staff of the company, netizens, ordinary people, charity expert, foreign representative of Ford foundation and government official). Everyone gave their different statements, opinions and evidences to the issue of the stock donation. For example, to the topic of “charity show”, the journalist gave two suppositions about the social morality as regards to money: some rich people are true philanthropists, while others are “iron roost”, they merely pretend to make donations while all along intending to evade taxes through the private foundation. Was Mr. Cao a philanthropist or “iron roost” in the end? Mr. Cao himself did not care what the public thought of his donation and even gave himself a nickname—“diamond roost”. His son and his finance officer even showed their support to Mr. Cao. The public held different attitudes, some people thought Mr. Cao was doing a good thing, but others called him a “miser”, and thought that his donation was a “charity show”. The government official showed his compassion to Mr. Cao's situation, while the expert held a warning(?) and pragmatic attitude towards his donation. To this topic, the journalist repeatedly interviewed the different IEs about this same theme, looked for their different responses to the same social issue, compared each of their attitudes, opinions, and emotions against one another, therefore outlined a colorful and diversified ideological world.

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Detailed descriptions is another important rhetoric which the journalist often applied. There are several ways which the journalist can use to describe the news events in detail. The description of the fact and data may be the chief manner in which the journalist presents the process of investigation, and displays objectivity and authenticity. Since detailed descriptions can bring about the objectivity and authenticity, the neutralism and balanced position of the journalist and media can be presented through the objective and authentic description of the news story.

For example, in the narrative description by the journalist in *The truth of “World Pass”*, the journalist used a lot of facts and data to introduce the background, the casualty(?), the development and the status quo of the news event. In order to introduce the product of “World Pass”, the journalist focuses his investigation on two persons: one was the company's software designer, the other was a local agent. Both of them had close relations with the company and knew the insider of the news event. Through the interview with the designer, the journalist uncovered the whole process of development of “World Pass” and the nature of the product (based on facts which the designer introduced step by step). Through the interview with the local agent, the journalist exposes the product's basic mode of operation, and disclosed the insider(?) of the commercial fraud under the cover of high technology (based on the agent's experience, and the large amount of commercial data which he supplied). For example,

**Sample10**

*Commentary: The third-party accreditation organization also made an analysis on the bonus distribution system of "World Pass". Through mathematical calculations, we checked the profit record of a dealer; this man was called Chen Zhaohui, and his team had more than 6,000 down line agents, which accounted for half the number of all the agents in "World Pass"*

*Fei Suozheng: Can we look at his bonus?*

*Fei Suozheng: Yes, we can look at it. Here is the basic information of his down line agents; we can see these 15 pages of the agent list are about his down line agents, we can click on the bonus information of their performances. Now, we set a time period on June 30, 2009, here is the result of the bonus allocation of which he should distribute out, totally, there is more than*
Journalist: every record is 159.84 Yuan, is not it?

Fei Suozheng: Yes.

Journalist: 159 multiplied by 35,953. This is the amount of this bonus.

Fei Suozheng: Yes.

Journalist: huge amounts.

Fei Suozheng: Yes, we can look the bonus at the monthly statistics; we have just said that the bonus which he should get is more than 189,900 in June, in June 2009. Right, let's look forward again, in January 2009: it should be more than 530,000, in February, should be more than 830,000.

In this case, we can see that the journalist used a representative case to introduce the mode of operation of “World Pass” and its method of commercial fraud.

He presented a basic pattern of a business network through a concrete and detailed description and introduction, adopted a large amount of statistics, and calculated the rate of profit to show the audiences the basic outline of this commercial fraud.

From the above analysis, we can see that the concrete facts and detailed data are the important evidence of which the journalist investigates the news events. Because News Probe emphasizes the truth of the news story, values the evidence of the news case, so the detailed description becomes the common practice by which the journalist presents the investigative behaviors and processes, while keeping the neutral and balanced reporting style. The application of a large amount of the facts and data in the program constitutes the basic feature of the neutralistic discourse.

In the discourse of News Probe, another obvious rhetoric which the journalist applies is metaphor and metonymy.

Metaphor and metonymy is an important way in which the journalist expresses the media's ideological inclination and attitude while maintaining the neutralistic and balanced stance in the discourse.

As we have explained in the previous section, the media's ideology will usually not be expressed in News Probe by the journalist directly; it will expressed either in the third party's commentary or in the interview discourse indirectly in order to maintain media neutralism.
Metaphor and metonymy can serve as the best rhetoric which not only expresses the media's ideology, but also preserves the formal neutralistic position of the journalist and media in the discourse. According to Umberto Eco (1979:280), the difference of metaphors and metonymy depend respectively on the axe of paradigm and syntagm, the former is the substitution by similarity and the latter is the substitution by continuity.

In 4 billion donation, the journalist often adopted metaphor and metonymy to implicitly express her ideology. In the middle of the news story, she spent time in the program discussing and criticizing the topic of ‘moneyism’ amongst the different members of society, while illustrating the importance of money in the age of market economy. In order to convey her complex opinion and ambiguous attitude to money, she borrowed a segment from the famous comic drama of Uncle Zhao and Little Shangyang— We are not lack of money:

Sample11

(Comic drama scene — We are not lack of money)

Little Shenyang: money is an external thing. Do you know what the most painful thing in life is? Be dead when the money still had not been spent out.

Uncle Zhao: Do you know what the most-most painful thing in life is? Be alive when the money had been spent out.

The journalist cited this comic segment from a drama, placed this serious social issue into a comic situation, and through the irony and interesting dialogue between two actors, the journalist implicitly conveyed her attitude and opinion about money, ie. money is not a panacea, but without money, life can be very difficult. Although money is not necessarily a good thing, but there is no denying that everyone likes money. Through this comic situation, the journalist alluded and criticized the mindset that “money is panacea” in today's society. By the application of this rhetoric, the journalist implicitly expressed the ideology of media with a neutralistic stance. In the following commentary, she cited a famous saying of Andrew Carnegie: “The death in the wealthy is a disgrace ”. Through the application of this quotation, she spoke out her ideology (in order to maintain neutralism, she expressed the media's ideology through the words of a third party— Andrew Carnegie, who is a celebrity and has
authority in this issue), ie. the rich should reward the society, while the society should welcome and assist their donation.

In another section, the journalist came to visit Mr. Cao's luxury garden, she struck up an interesting dialogue with Mr. Cao about a mascot in front of the door:

Sample12

Cao Dewang: Pine represents longevity, cinnamon means rich and noble. The mansion is called Pine-Cinnamon garden. In order to decorate the door, I put an ancient animal, named Bixiu outside the door. Normally, no one dares to put a Bixiu outside their door, because it only takes but never gives out, it is very stingy.

Chai Jing: Really? It only takes, never gives?

Cao Dewang: Yes, it does not have a butt, so I dug a big asshole in there. As a mascot, it should not only take in something but also give out something.

Chai Jing: But someone might think that the wealth will leak through the asshole?

Cao Dewang: If you do not give away some of your wealth, you might be suffocated to death, isn’t that so? Money should be allowed to seep out.

Here, the sculpture “Bixiu” — a Chinese mythical ancient animal became the symbol of the metaphor. Because Bixiu is a taboo to a family in China's traditional culture, it does not have a butt and asshole. It is usually regarded as the symbol of stinginess and will be frowned upon by the society. Normally, no family would place it in front of their door as a mascot, but Mr. Cao intentionally used it to decorate the door of his luxury garden. Through this metaphor, the journalist painted Mr. Cao with the image of a good person, though stubborn and severe, still possessed a humorous nature. At the same time, she satirized the rich who were mean and misers with an implicit and neutralistic stance.

Similar practices can also be seen in other parts of the discourse.

For example, in the later part of the program, when the journalist interviewed the government officials and experts, in order to allude the complexity of the issue of the stock donation and the impact of the government's policy, scenes depicting alternatingly flashing traffic lights were shown repeatedly to suggest the problems and resistance in the development of China's public welfare.
Overall, the journalist of *News Probe* successfully applied a multitude of rhetoric structure. Through repetition, metaphors, understatement, hyperbole, exaggeration and data description etc., the journalist euphemistically conveys the media elite's ideology to the audiences with an implicit and neutralistic practice. The application of these rhetorical structures directly affects the discourse style of the program so that media professionalism and neutralism occupies a very prominent position in the discourse of the whole program.

### 5. Conclusion

Under the influence of globalization, the media world underwent a great change. The larger cross-border free flow of media outputs result in the globalized diffusion and localized appropriation of the media products, lead to the homogenization and diversity of media culture, bring out the wide distribution of popular media and Westernized democratic values, effectively promote media commercialization and sociopolitical democratization.

From the process of reform and opening-up, China's social system has undergone a subtle change. In the process of social transformation, the adjustment of social structure will inevitably change society's thinking and cognitive structure, and speed up the development of ideologies toward the direction of socialization, diversification, and democratization. China's new ideology was born in this particular social background of the media globalization and the reform and opening-up.

In the previous discussion and research, China's media globalization and reform as the social background has been adopted in trying to answer several questions raised in the introduction. Based on the relevant theories and basic viewpoints of Pan Zhichang and Li Yan, and from the perspective of theoretical framework, I find that China's so-called new ideology is an ideological product and a part of China's social transformation under the influence of globalization— which is the rectification and adjustment of the communist doctrine, that emphasizes concern on the social common interest, value of life and dignity of the people.

The emergence of the new ideology results in the further adjustments of social structure and social relations in China, therefore leading to change in the social power structure. This structural adjustment had been reflected through a specific media content and form, such as *CCTV News Probe* — a typical investigative TV reporting program.
Looking from the perspective of media discourse, the transition of the new ideology in China's society has directly led to the redistribution of the right of discourse in the different social strata. Democratization of China's news media is becoming more and more important and urgent. As the backbone of the structure of China's new ideology, the media elite hopes to play a role of “tribune” in the arena of media dissemination, promoting social justice and equality and “tell the story of the ordinary people” (Zhang 2004: 1) is the goal of their pursuit in news media. A typical practice in the discourse of media elitism and professionalism is to maintain balance and neutralism in news reporting, and give different media participants the opportunity of expressing their own opinion appropriately. The result is that the different members of the society have gained more or less the right of access to the power in the media public space. Their minds, wills, attitudes and opinions will also inevitably be reflected in the discourse of China's news media. This is how China's new ideology affects the neutralistic ideological inclination of the news discourse in China's news interview under China's social system. We can see this basic ideological characteristic clearly in a typical investigative TV reporting program, such as CCTV News Probe.

In this paper, two episodes that best represent News Probe, 4 billion donations and The truth of “World Pass” were selected as the examples for the analysis of the neutralistic characteristic in China's investigative TV news discourse. The aim was to find out how News Probe's coverage reflected its balanced and neutralistic ideological characteristic, and how the discourse of News Probe spoke for the social common interest through this balanced and neutralistic discourse.

According to the new ideological theories of China's media theorists Pan Zhichang and Li Yan as well as the theories of ideological analysis of Van Dijk and Fairclough, based on the script of 4 billion donations and The truth of “World Pass”, Halliday's SFG and Fairclough's three-dimensional model was adopted in analyzing the neutralistic characteristic in the discourse of News Probe from the two approaches of sociocultural structure and textual practice. Particular attention was given to the application of lexicon, proposition and rhetoric in the discourse of News Probe. After making a detailed analysis on these important elements, we can roughly outline the general practices and chief characteristics of neutralistic expression of the journalists and media in News Probe.

In the book of News from the Interview Society, Ekstrom et al (2006:14) pointed out that “the
news interview is a kind of ‘machine’, a social situation that compels replies and statements from the recipients.” It “is a form of interaction in which interviewers and interviewees have different roles, and together create a conversation with the help of methods for asking questions and giving answers” (Ekstrom et al 2006:13). In order to maintain their ideological expression, the journalist will develop “a set of techniques and institutionalized practices” (Ekstrom et al 2006:13) to manage the interaction within the interview and construct the media text, for example, controlling the media access through direct speech and report speech, and handling the interaction between the IRs and IEs by the textual practices or multimodal composition of the media text (Ekstrom et al 2006).

Based on these viewpoints, generally, I can categorize the findings and results of the general practices and chief characteristics of neutralistic expression of the journalists and media in News Probe as below:

Firstly, in the communicative event of News Probe, ideological expression will mainly depend on the power relation among the different media participants. Media elite as the backbone of the different social groups will dominate the distribution of the right of discourse among these media participants. In order to achieve their common mission of promoting the social common interest and maintain social justice, the journalist and media organization intentionally maintains the neutralistic posture in the news reporting by controlling and manipulating the ways and distribution of speeches of the media participants. This finding can be supported by the concrete analysis discussed in the previous section and the data presented in the charts.

Secondly, based on the analysis of the communicative event and its context, an analysis was conducted on the aspect of lexical selection in the discourse of News Probe, we can find that there were two normal textual practices of lexical selection which the journalist would often adopt in the discourse of News Probe. The journalist preferred to stand on the position of “mediator”, chose either neutralistic or polarized words in pairs to express their ideological inclination, thereby maintaining his/her neutralistic stance.

Thirdly, from the analysis of proposition, we can also see that in order to maintain the neutrality and balance, the journalist often applied some specific practices in the expression of proposition of the discourse, for example, question-asking became the key method which the journalist would adopt in his/her interviews; the journalist intentionally diluted the color of
media propaganda, diminished the authority of the journalist to the news events; and in the process of the interview, the journalist tried to establish a coordinative interaction between the IRs and IEs in order to maintain the neutralistic posture etc. Through the application of these practices of proposition, the journalist refrained him/herself from agreeing or disagreeing with the utterances of other media participants, avoided overly and overtly expressing the ideological inclination of the media organization to the media event, thus, put themselves in the neutral position of the persuader of China's news ideology propaganda.

Lastly, the rhetoric analysis is also another important part of the discussion of textual practice. From the research on the rhetoric in the discourse of two episodes, we find this phenomenon: in order to keep the objectivity, truthfulness, authenticity and persuasion of the news discourse, the journalist usually expressed the news story in the style of media professionalism, which emphasized the singularity of the narrative language, the neutrality of the ideological position and the in-depth expression of the meaning of the discourse by the application of a large amount of rhetoric strategically. For example, euphemism and mitigation, data description, detail statement, fact evidence, metaphor implicitness, repetitions persuasion etc. Through the application of rhetoric, the journalist and media maintained their neutralism while they persuade the audiences with the relatively objective, diluted, euphemized discourse.

Thus in conclusion, in the age of media globalization and the reform and opening-up process, China's news discourse, especially the investigative TV news discourse has been greatly affected by China's new ideology. Media elite discourse occupies the dominant position in the structure of media discourse (colluded with the official discourse). The social common interest becomes one of the chief concerns of news programs such as CCTV News Probe. In order to attain the goals of the news program, neutralism is relied on in the ideological expression in the discourse of China's investigative TV reporting. Usually, the journalist will stand on the position of a bystander, observer, objective narrator and mediator to describe the news story, make great efforts to avoid the overly and overt involvement of his/her personal emotion, attitude, opinion and the ideology of the media and government. As the investigator of news events, he/she will appropriately distribute the right of media access to the media participants, give them the opportunity to express their different voices pertaining their social group interests, while adopting a neutralistic and unbiased style of language to deal with the interview dialogue with the IEs. He/she will maintain an interactive and coordinative
relationship with the IEs but always distanced his/her arguments from the IEs’ position. By these neutralistic social and textual practices, the journalist tries to present a good image of “tribune” in the discourse of the program and speak for the “social common interest”. So after the abstract theoretical interpretation and concrete empirical analysis, I can present the final result of my research here, that is, media neutralism is the most basic and important ideological characteristic in the production and development of News Probe.

What we need to emphasize here is that there is an obvious tendency in the process of development of News Probe which we had neglected in the analysis of the neutralism in the discourse. Looking from the historic perspective of the development of News Probe, sometimes, the objectiveness and balance of the reporting in News Probe were disturbed by the official policy and censorship during its 14 years of development. The journalists made great efforts to maintain the neutralistic stances of the reporting, but their neutralism is relative and formal, and should be considered under a specific social context, for example, the transition of China's new ideology. To these particular cases, the social background and the domination of the official ideology play an important role. These elements should be taken into consideration in the analysis of the neutralistic expression in the discourse. However, this will be another topic which will not be further discussed in this thesis.

In Western countries, the media public sphere had undergone more than a hundred years of democratization development. But in China, the democratization of news reporting only started recently. Discussions on the so-called concepts of “news balance” and “objective reporting” and “news neutralism” began in the professional circle from the 1980s. However, this will not hinder our research as regards the neutralism in Chinese news interview. From the above analysis, we also find that the neutralism in News Probe has a basic difference to the normal concept of neutralism in Western news circles. In the democratic world, theoretically speaking, the concept of media neutralism means that media should give equal right of discourse to every different media participant. But in China, or we can say in the discourse of News Probe, which is dominated by China's new ideology, media neutralism is based on “social common interest”. In the section of the analysis, we saw that all the practices of neutralism of the journalist were based on this core concept of “social common interest”. Personally, I agree that only can the practice of media discourse speaking for the social common interest be called “neutralism”. If media did not give equal right of discourse
to every media participant, but expressed an unbalanced ideology on behalf of the social common interest, it can still be called “neutralism” (what if the utterances of the media participants will be harmful to the social common interest?). This ideological characteristic is a point of debate which deserves to be mentioned here, and should be taken into consideration in future studies.

This thesis is the preliminary result of my personal investigation on the ideological characteristic of China's investigative TV reporting. From the theoretical perspective, based on the theories of media globalization, China's media reform and China's new ideology, I systematically discussed the theoretical background of the development of China's investigative TV reporting, especially the birth and development of News Probe. From the practical aspect, based on the analytical model of Fairclough, Van Dijk and Halliday, a conclusion was reached after the analysis on the characteristic of media neutralism in the discourse as regards the social and textual practice. I hope this discussion can give a clear understanding about the ideological inclination and social function of China's investigative TV reporting, and in future, assist in the theoretical research and empirical practice in the field of news.

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