

## MASTER'S THESIS

### Discourses on urbanism: "Reality televisions" by Jiangsu Satellite Television since 2010

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# Discourses on Urbanism: “Reality Televisions”<sup>1</sup> by Jiangsu Satellite Television Since 2010

## Abstract

Since 2004, the Chinese media scene has been dominated by what is called the “pan-reality television” trend. Reality television is capable of synchronizing the effects of all the political, economic, and cultural factors into the participants’ actions and becoming a powerful reconstruction of the social environment from which it emerges. The thesis takes Jiangsu Satellite TV (JSTV)’s golden hour reality televisions as the case to address the question of how they express, reflect and formulate the imaginations and understandings of urban living, focusing on the cultural, social, and political specificities of these reality television shows.

The thesis is an attempt to bring into discussions ignored aspects of popular television culture that can be potential source for furthering the understanding of urban conditions in China. The thesis finds that the images, the discursive fields, and the procedures of the games in the reality television shows and the governmental regulations imposed on them are part of the mechanisms to disassemble a set of discourses into the colloquial, the practices of urban lives, and possibly the imaginations of urban lifestyles. Emerging out of this dynamic process is the formulation of a way of life in the context of urban China – specifically, the linear, individual progressivity. The main body of the thesis will empirically show how the linear, individual progressivity is installed and enacted in the shows and political implications of that.

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<sup>1</sup> “Reality television,” or *Zhenren Xiu*, is a general concept that describes a category of television programs which allows hybrid of different television formats as well as various local adaptations of imitated foreign programs. Formats of game show, talent show, career show as well as dating show are several of the main forms to constitute a range of factually based television programs which at same time goes beyond simple factuality of the content. Different from the genre studies in Western research, the term “reality television” has attained culturally specific connotations as a result of how television industry has emerged in China since the 1980s. The specific connotations of “reality television” in the Chinese context will be explained in the introduction chapter and the literature review section.

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