

## **MA Defence: “Environmental Communication with Chinese Characteristics: Crises, Conflicts, and Prospects”**

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It is always a little weird to report a news update about yourself. My MA thesis defence occurred on October 14th, 2014. Here is the abstract of my thesis “Environmental Communication with Chinese Characteristics: Crises, Conflicts, and Prospects”:

### **Abstract**

In the past three decades, the deterioration of our natural environment has stimulated heated debates and disputes, in which China has been regarded as a key player in contemporary environmental crises. This thesis examines how China’s environmental challenges and its government’s responses are discursively constructed in news media. At the theoretical level, China’s contemporary environmental crises are scrutinized through the lenses of environmental communication and political economy, which addresses the uniqueness of these environmental challenges compared with those in the Western context. At the methodical level, the thesis adopts a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective to analyze the presentation of social actors and the argumentation strategies in two high-profile environmental incidences in China: the air pollution in Beijing and the 2012 anti-PX protest in Ningbo. The empirical analysis shows that both cases indicate a lack of environmental justice perspective in China’s current environmental policies and media practices. They also reveal the necessity of abandoning urban-centric and elitist perspectives embedded in China’s contemporary media practices. Overall, this study adds to our understanding of the discursive and ideological underpinnings of China’s environmental challenges and the significance of developing “environmental communication with Chinese characteristics”.

### **Keywords**

Environmental crisis; environmental justice; China; critical discourse analysis; media discourse