

How has the Internet Impacted on Traditional Journalism in the Context of China?

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Abstract

Two dimensions are cross-applied to discuss the effect of the internet on contemporary journalism. On the one hand, new technologies, including the internet, have influenced journalism as a whole and challenged, to some extent, its pre-existing forms. On the other hand, it is only to be expected that the effect of a new technology is shaped by the economic and political context in which this new technology works. Within these theoretical parameters, this study aims to explore the perceptions of Chinese journalists about their own experience of practice in order to assess the extent to which internet technology has impacted on traditional journalism in the context of China.

Qualitative semi-structured interviews are used as the research method in this study to collect data from 25 news media professionals, including those who work for traditional news media and those who work for the online news media. Thematic analysis is used as the approach to analyse the qualitative data generated from the interviews. In preparation, a pilot study was used to test the validity of interview questions and the possible thematic codes before the formal study.

6 core themes, each with respective subthemes, were identified from the data. Themes demonstrate that Chinese journalists are as conscious as their western counterparts of issues such as the decadence of traditional journalism, the competition between traditional news media and online news media and the potential of the internet as an important journalistic tool. However, core themes also reveal that the functions, the agenda setting and the censorship of Chinese journalism may have been influenced by the introduction of the internet. These issues have been much less discussed in existing studies. Moreover, the data shows online news media actually enjoy more editorial latitude in China than their offline counterparts.

The quality of the views provided by Chinese journalists can reveal much about the contemporary practice, role perceptions and values of Chinese journalism which cannot currently be found in literature and official reports. By conducting thematic analysis, the gap between existing journalism theories and Chinese specific context can be complemented by the discussion of the emergent core themes.

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How has the Internet Impacted on Traditional Journalism in the Context of China?

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Driven by new technologies and new social demands, many new professional fields have emerged within existing professions, and journalism is no exception. Within the realm of journalism studies, those newly emerged professions, and the possibility that they may have changed the existing understanding of different concepts, always constitute a valuable research theme for commentators. Analysts often focus on the influence of new technologies, as seen in the number of studies that have appeared on printing technology, broadcast technology, and now internet technology. However, since new technologies and the means of using them are developing and changing all the time, any new research into the influence of new technology can still exploit the opportunity to fill a gap within the existing literature. In journalism studies particularly, many findings related to the influence of internet technology provided by contemporary researchers continue to prove that assumptions

made through technological determinism and concluded by news media researchers prior to 2000 were too optimistic to make much sense in a more complicated social context (Steensen, 2009). In this sense, instead of universal research which simply highlights the advantages of the internet, more detailed study within a specific political-economic context should be conducted in order to offer new perspectives on the changing landscape of journalism.

Unlike western countries which have established relatively developed forms of democracy and constitutionality, China is still in transition. The institution of Chinese journalism is not as steady as its western counterparts, as many factors, such as new policies, new generations of leaders and even an Olympic Games, might affect the context in which Chinese journalism works (Akhavan-Majid, 2004; Hung, 2005). On the other hand, as Huang and other scholars have observed, globalisation, joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and China's open policy have allowed Chinese journalism to be positively affected by western journalistic professionalism (Huang, 2007). In other words, Chinese journalism is not a complacent system which merely serves Chinese culture and the Party's portfolio. Western journalistic theories and practice have influenced Chinese journalism over a long period since the late Qing Dynasty (19th century), and a number of scholars who study the Chinese news media also emphasize western literature and media theoretical frameworks. In terms of the internet, it seems that even the centralized Chinese authorities feel powerless to

control it as they controlled other news media before the 1990s, as former President

Zemin Jiang stated in an interview:

I'm getting old and sometimes I have trouble using a mouse. But my grandson is very good at navigating the internet. I tell him that there is a positive side to the internet, because it can help promote the spread of information and understanding. And there is a negative side, which is when misinformation is spread. So I tell my grandson that he should use the internet to enrich knowledge, and he should not use it to visit pornographic sites. But my grandson lives far away from me. I cannot tell him what to do. I can only advise him what to do. (Time, 2001)

This introductory chapter aims briefly to explain the structure of and ideas behind this research. It includes six sections: (1) an explanation of why this research is valuable; (2) an introduction to the research background for this thesis, especially the contemporary Chinese context for media studies; (3) an interpretation of core terms used in the research so as to avoid misunderstandings; (4) a brief discussion of the existing research into related topics; (5) a statement on the objectivity of this research; (6) an introduction to the importance of the research questions within this study.

1.2 Importance of the Topic

The influence of the internet in China's specific political and economic context has become increasingly salient in journalism studies. Wu believes such academic interest is the result of: (1) China's increasingly important status in world politics,

economic affairs and cultural exchange; (2) the significant boom in China in the popularization of online services, especially online news services, since the late 1990s; and (3) the growing number of both domestic and overseas scholars in mass communication studies who are interested in China (2005: p.215). Besides such academics, Chinese journalists and audiences are also paying close attention to the development of the internet in China, musing on whether the internet has influenced traditional news media and even changed (or will change) the media order to some extent. The validity of the issues listed above has resulted in the influence that the internet has had on Chinese traditional journalism becoming a valuable academic question.

Commentators tend to highlight how quickly the internet in China is developing and the size of the population of Chinese internet users so as to claim the importance of media studies related to the internet (note, for example, Wu, 2005; Tai, 2006; Xin, 2011). It is true that the impressive statistics concerning Chinese internet popularization should not be neglected by any researcher studying China's contemporary journalism, as the most recent report from the Chinese internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC) indicates that, by June 2012, approximately 538 million Chinese people could be regarded as internet users (CNNIC, 2012). According to Winfield and Peng, "Chinese media include 2000 newspapers, over 4000 television and radio stations, and over 10,000 magazines. The internet has also seen rapid development of ISPs (internet service providers) and ICPs (internet content providers)

companies, along with the traditional news media's some 800 websites" (2005: p.261). Such figures show that news websites have become an essential component within the landscape of the entire Chinese news media. However, fewer studies have so far stressed another important point in the popularization of Chinese online media, which is that an increasing number of young Chinese people tend to use the internet as their priority information source.

Scholars such as Bird have realized the importance of the younger generation in the future development of journalism. Bird states that "we can all agree that today's digital environment has transformed the print-based, one-way nature of journalism. Research shows that fewer people than ever read print newspapers, and young people who once could be expected to become newspaper readers as they matured, no longer do" (2009: p.293). The situation in China fits Bird's description. According to *the 30th Statistical Report on internet Development in China*, 82.3% of Chinese internet users are younger than 40 years old, with 73% of them claiming that the internet is their preferred method of consuming news information (CNNIC, 2012). Previously, *the 17th Statistical Report on internet Development in China* provided by the same organisation in 2006 had shown that 67.9% of Chinese internet users consumed online news information (CNNIC, 2006). By considering the increase in the number of Chinese internet users in the six years between 2006 and 2012 (from 111 million to 538 million), it can be seen that an enormous number of Chinese people have recently become consumers of online journalism. It is therefore important to study how the

internet impacts on traditional journalism not only because of the large number of Chinese internet users, but also because of the increasing number of young people who consume news online, which may make such research valuable for the development of journalism in the next generation.

On the other hand, a media system can to some extent be regarded as an extension of a nation's political philosophy (Huang, 2007). In terms of Chinese news media, by considering the tradition of state ownership and the position of the Department of Propaganda as the supreme authority in the media industry, studying how a new technology impacts on such a system will provide a worthy perspective to understand the Chinese political and economic context. Winfield and Peng argue that "political upheavals", "technology alterations" and "economic changes" are the three most crucial forces in any global media transition, and the development of the Chinese media system is actually being driven by reciprocities among these three factors (2005). In this sense, contemporary Chinese journalism is a much more sophisticated system than those which can mainly be driven by one single force, such as occurred in the former Soviet Union. There is little doubt that the complexity of Chinese news media allows researchers studying related topics to observe and analyse from various perspectives, which might mean that there are more opportunities to reveal new concepts and possibilities.

It is of note that this research will be conducted from an epistemological perspective rather than one of ontology. Here, the interpretation of epistemology will follow Ekström's understanding, as below:

“Epistemologies are developed and applied in all forms of social practice that produce and communicate knowledge. In philosophical inquiries the term ‘epistemology’ refers to theories of the nature of knowledge and of the possibilities and the principal foundations of truth in science. In a sociological study of knowledge producing practices – like the present one – epistemology instead refers to the rules, routines and institutionalized procedures that operate within a social setting and decide the form of the knowledge produced and the knowledge claims expressed (or implied)” (2002: p.260).

As journalism can be regarded as a combination of knowledge-producing practices and the communication of knowledge claims, this research will focus on three fundamental aspects of the epistemology of journalism: (1) form of knowledge, which means the characteristics of the knowledge that journalism produces under the influence of the internet; (2) production of knowledge, which means routines and external forces guiding the production of the kind of knowledge mentioned above; (3) acceptance of knowledge claims, which play an important role in evaluating the extent to which the internet impacts on traditional journalism in the context of China. The application of this form of philosophy will assist this research to provide an interpretation of Chinese journalism under the impact of the internet in a more practical manner.

1.3 Research Background

In the sense that this research focuses on issues in the context of contemporary China, it is perhaps necessary to understand the situation of the internet, especially of news websites in contemporary China. Two areas of background detail in terms of the online media are important in this research: the background to news media in general and the political-economic background of the internet.

On the one hand, as a part of China's news media system, the internet is inevitably influenced to some extent by the existing media order. Before the "reform and openness" policy was instigated in the 1980s, a role as the mouthpiece for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had been the only mission of news media in China. It has been questioned whether news media practices during this period in China's recent past can actually be seen as journalism, largely due to their deficiencies in professionalism of western models such as the watchdog function. However, since market forces were introduced to the news media in the 1980s, commercial profit began to be emphasized, a move which precipitated the development of journalistic professionalism. Such change is reflected in various details of Chinese news media productions, including the interpretations for some specific words which were generated in the context of revolution made by Xinhua News Agency (Pan, 2009). For example, investigative journalism which focuses on revealing the dark side of society has become an important form of journalism in China (Tong and Sparks, 2009).

Market forces have transformed the mouthpiece role as the only mission of journalism into one which is important but not absolutely dominant.

In this sense, news media in China now struggle between two main forces. For one thing, news media still work under the rules made by a one-Party government. The majority of traditional news media is still owned by the state. Doubtless, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) still strongly influences journalism practice in China. For another, as a result of the decrease in government financial subsidies, news media cannot avoid highlighting the importance of their audience in terms of expanding their circulation and advertising revenue (see for example: Chan, 2003; Zhao, 2008). Some commentators seem to be interested in discussing which one of these two powers overwhelms the other. One of the leading Chinese scholars, Professor Huang Dan tends to emphasize the influence of political power. He believes although the internet assists Chinese journalists to pursue professional autonomy such as “scrutinizing governments” to a great extent, such journalism practice is not able to entirely get rid of the control of the CCP (Huang, 2011). On the contrary, scholars such as Winfield and Peng hold a more optimistic view of the effect of market force, arguing that the new media market precipitates the transition of Chinese journalism moving from totalitarianism to market authoritarianism (2005). However, a more prudent argument, as Huang suggests, is to regard the current context for Chinese news media as a result of a changing negotiation between different forces without too much concern for

which single power dominates others (2007). In this sense, the media system in China is rather complicated, mainly determined by these two forces.

With regard to the political-economic background to the internet, due to the government's inconsistent attitude, it is worth discussing both positive and negative sides within this context. The Chinese government has undeniably played a crucial role in promoting the internet. The government has spent large sums of money on establishing the infrastructure of the online service, while it has also encouraged both state-owned media and private companies to develop their online services for commercial profit. The current progressive leadership within China seems to believe that the internet provides a vital opportunity for China's economic, political and social development in the 21st century (see for example: Hachigian, 2002; Kalathil and Boas, 2003; Tai, 2006). However, government control of the internet in China cannot be underestimated. Generally, the Chinese government controls the online information flow in four ways. First of all, the Chinese central government has established a number of powerful departments such as the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MII) to manage the internet. Political administration is emphasized so strongly by the government that it even established the State Leadership Group on Informatization in 2001, a body which has usually been headed by the Premier. Secondly, the Chinese government has issued a series of regulations to manage the internet, including one which forbids commercial websites from producing their own news coverage. These regulations show that the Chinese government has taken the

decision to punish those who disseminate harmful information via the internet, although the definition of “harmful information” is not absolutely clear. Thirdly, the Chinese government has built a powerful firewall, known as the Great Firewall, to filter information on the internet. The establishment of the Great Firewall implies that the government has developed technology to supervise internet users while it is simultaneously popularizing internet technology in general. Fourthly, the Chinese government is also conducting a form of indirect management of the internet. The government has induced commercial news websites to build a form of self-censorship which aims at controlling and filtering news and related information (see for example: Zhao, 2008; Zheng, 2008).

Based on the analysis above, it might be reasonable to state that the internet has been actively developed within a complicated media and political context in China. The interaction between different forces, rather than pressure from one particular lone force, has shaped the background to the internet. This research will be conducted within such a context, while the context itself is part of the research.

1.4 Terms to be Clarified in This Research

A number of new terms which are used to describe specific phenomena related to journalism in the era of the internet can be found in academic literature (note, for example: Singer, 2003; Spyridou and Veglis, 2008; Steensen, 2009). As Karlsson and

Stromback state, the introduction of the World Wide Web has dramatically changed the media environment and the conditions under which journalism operates, leading to challenges to existing ideas about both journalism practice and research into media studies (2010: p.2). Terms such as “online journalists” and “citizen journalism” are widely referred to by scholars, but the fact that there are differing interpretations of these terms has led to inconsistencies in defining them in academic circles. Although this research does not aim to define these new terms introduced to journalism studies by internet technology, it is necessary to clarify how these terms are interpreted in this thesis in order to avoid any possible misunderstandings. Thus, this research will not attempt to define these terms, but will instead discuss how commentators have debated their meaning and provide an appropriate understanding of these terms in the context of this research.

One of the most intense debates among scholars now is how to define “traditional” in the term “traditional journalism”, especially when this term is often used as a counterpart to another: “online journalism”. A number of very similar pairs of terms related to the comparison between traditional journalism and online journalism are also in wide use, such as “traditional newspaper” and “online newspaper” (Steensen, 2009), “traditional news” and “online news” (Karlsson and Stromback, 2010), and the even more complicated “online traditional media” and “original online media” (Krasnobokam, 2002). Although these researchers seem to imply that journalism and related internet-influenced concepts can naturally be

classified into two categories – a “traditional” category and an “online” category – it is still necessary to be aware, from a linguistics perspective, that the antonym for “online” is “offline” rather than “traditional”. Other scholars such as van der Wurff do use the term “offline media” as a counterpart to “online media” (2005), but it seems to have become the trend in recent years to contrast “traditional” with “online” in most academic articles published in *Journalism Studies*, *Journalism* and other core journals.

Although academics prefer the term “traditional journalism” to the term “offline journalism” when they describe a counterpart to “online journalism”, they tend to differentiate the two categories from a technological perspective. For example, a number of scholars regard online journalism as a competitor to “printed-newspapers” or “print journalism”, which obviously emphasizes the technological differences between the two forms of journalism (Krasnoboka, 2002; Bird, 2009; Steensen, 2009; Steensen, 2011). The philosophy behind such a taxonomy can be clearly traced in the work of these scholars: since online journalism can be regarded as the product of a technological innovation, and one which influences the journalistic field, it is reasonable to categorize different forms of journalism from a technological perspective to emphasize the characteristics of that newly-emerged news medium. Nevertheless, since the convergence of different media has been observed in modern journalism (for example, many printed-newspaper have an online version), it is not

sufficient to differentiate “traditional journalism” from “online journalism” only in terms of its medium. As Deuze and Dimoudi argue,

“Online journalism can be considered as journalism practised online – not as journalists writing about the internet. As a first step in researching online journalism, one has to establish that research into the characteristics and specifics of professional journalists within a single medium and/or genre makes sense in terms of its media logic” (2002: p.87).

In this sense, as a result of the awareness of different forms of media logic under which professional journalists work, whether an article is published in a newspaper or on a website is not the only criterion to distinguish “traditional journalism” from “online journalism”. Otherwise a PDF file of a page of newspaper uploaded on the internet would be seen as “online journalism” rather than “traditional journalism”, a view which is contrary to research practice. Moreover, Deuze and Dimoudi’s argument also suggests why “traditional journalism” is a more popular term than “offline journalism” in the existing literature, as the word “traditional” includes hints of the media logic and professional ideas of newspapers and broadcast, whereas the word “offline” emphasizes only the medium through which news productions are published. Thus, it seems reasonable to use the terms “traditional journalism” and “online journalism” in this research.

Another crucial issue is how to describe professionals working in different media since the emergence of online journalism. As the internet has blurred the boundaries between news consumers and news producers, more people claim to be “journalists”, making it more difficult to define what a journalist actually is (Brennen, 2009). One of

the most significant ideas within the discussion of how to define “journalist” can be found in the work of Singer. Singer states that journalist has never been a widely recognized profession, like doctor or lawyer, because it has “no entrance requirements, no discrete body of knowledge and no elite inner group with the ability to ‘de-press’ wayward members” (2003: p.143). However, media professionals who claim to be journalists tend to believe themselves “skilled, ethical, autonomous and estimable professionals”, although they may fail to convince the public of such (2003: p.146). “Online journalists”, those admitted by advances in internet technology, seem inevitably to have emerged, as “all professions in today’s society are being dramatically affected by the pace and the extent of technological, especially computer-based, change – and journalism is certainly no exception” (2003: p.143). In this sense, Singer’s argument seems to make online journalist an open profession, one that is shaped and transformed by developments in society.

However, even if the definition of “online journalist” is a topic of open debate within academic circles, and one that has so far produced no definitive answers, it is still a source of some confusion for scholars to define “traditional journalists” and “online journalists” in research practice. One noteworthy example is Quandt *et al.*’s comparative study into German and American online journalists. Quandt *et al.* found a dilemma in creating a sample of respondents for their survey as a result of difficulties in terms of identification. For their sample of American online journalists, Quandt *et al.* prudently selected members of the Online News Association (ONA) so

as to avoid controversy, since these online journalists are at least registered. However, this cannot be taken to mean that American online media professionals who have not registered with this organization are absolutely not online journalists. On the other hand, Quandt *et al.* did not find any public membership list of online journalists in Germany for their sampling purposes. Instead, they compiled a list of all German news organizations publishing online and created alphabetical criteria to select their respondents (2006). Although Quandt *et al.* attempted to solve the issue of identification of online journalists, it still proved problematic since it could not be ensured that the criteria used for American online journalists were the same as that for German online journalists.

Within this research, it may be more complicated to define online journalist because of the Chinese tradition of state-owned news media. Many media professionals who lack government-issued journalist certification but still work in the Chinese traditional news media are widely recognized as “journalists” in China, but so far no media professionals working for any online media, including those which are state-owned, hold accreditation granting them the officially recognized status of online journalist. In addition, it is possible that a media professional who basically practices online is actually working for a printed newspaper. In the light of this, instead of “traditional journalist” and “online journalist”, the terms “media-professionals working in traditional journalism” and “media-professionals

working in online journalism” will be used in this research in order to avoid misunderstandings.

The third important set of terms that should be discussed consists of “citizen journalism” and “amateur journalism”. These two terms are actually slightly different, as “citizen” is a rather political term (see Moyo, 2009), whereas “amateur” is an apparent counterpart to “professional” (see Atton, 2009). However, it may be stated that both so-called citizen journalism and amateur journalism have become much more popular due to the development of the internet, as a number of scholars highlight that such alternative online forms of journalism have become established in a series of online productions including online communities, blogs and forums (Atton, 2009; Moyo, 2009; Tong and Sparks, 2009). According to Moyo, citizen journalism is a form of alternative journalism operating in a “deprofessionalised, decapitalised and deinstitutionalised environment” where the process of news-production is driven by a desire to share information and is enabled by internet technology rather than by any professional routine or economic interest (2009: p.554). Therefore, no matter whether it is called citizen journalism, amateur journalism or alternative journalism, it is not a form of professional journalism.

Although the term “citizen journalism” is widely discussed in the context of online news media, this form of journalism is not an exclusive product of the internet. As Harcup suggests, the production of news by non-professionals can be traced back to the time earlier than the era of Marx and his collaborator Engels, while a number of

examples of offline citizen journalism can be found in the latter half of the 20th century (2013, p.12-13). Moreover, whether online citizen journalism should be regarded as a form of online journalism is still under debate. Historical perspectives suggest that journalism is always seen as a form of professional practice, no matter how radically its technology changes (Robinson and Deshano, 2011). Although internet technology can be regarded as a revolutionary technology, many contemporary researchers still focus on professional news websites rather than on online communities. In this sense, online citizen journalism is considered a form of communication rather than professional online journalism. However, as Atton proposes, citizen journalism should not be marginalized in journalism studies (2009). This research will readily use the terms “citizen journalism” and “amateur journalism” to discuss an alternative form of online news products which are contributed mainly by non-professionals since these terms have already been widely used in much scholarship and with little ambiguity. The understanding of citizen journalism will be further discussed in the literature review.

1.5 Existing Debates about This Research and Their Limitations

A large number of studies within the field of journalism studies have been conducted on how to understand journalism and how to evaluate the importance of

specific technology. With regard to this research, four key issues have been discussed: (1) understanding what journalism is, from both historical and cross-cultural perspectives; (2) understanding what Chinese journalism is through analysing its origin and its current conditions; (3) understanding how different technologies have influenced journalism; (4) understanding how the internet as a specific form of technology has influenced Chinese journalism. In terms of these four discussions, two main points of debate are worthy of emphasis in this section: the debate about whether journalism is or will continue as an Anglo-American model, and the debate about whether new technology can have a revolutionary impact on journalism.

1.51 Existing Debates

By comparing the development of the British press and the French press from a historical perspective, Chalaby believes that journalism emerged in Britain with the repeal of “taxes on knowledge” in the nineteenth century. He also states that British and American newspapers showed more journalistic professionalism than their French counterparts. Thus, Chalaby argues that journalism is an Anglo-American invention which emerged as recently as the late nineteenth century (Chalaby, 1996; Chalaby, 1998). Chalaby’s arguments imply that journalism throughout the world originated from the same model. Many other scholars also stress the importance of the Anglo-American model of journalism. They tend to conclude that a model of journalistic professionalism based on the principles of the Anglo-American model of journalism is increasingly dominant in the international journalistic field. The

convergence of different models of journalism has been widely discussed. The prediction that “different world media models are converging toward a liberal system which is like the system in Anglo-American countries to some extent” is highlighted in a number of articles (see for example, Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Although the assumption behind the convergence of journalistic models is not as radical as Chalaby’s argument, it does also suggest that one model of journalism dominates other models and may even substitute those models which are dominated.

Nevertheless, the significance of the Anglo-American model of journalism has been questioned by many scholars. For one thing, it is problematic to state that there was no journalism before the late nineteenth century. Many journalistic qualities found in the late nineteenth century can be found in the press of the seventeenth century as well. It seems that many scholars would prefer to use the term “new journalism” rather than “the emergence of journalism” to describe British journalism practice in the late nineteenth century (see for example: Hampton, 2004; Conboy, 2004). For another, scholars such as Hallin and Mancini have developed a cross-cultural perspective to analyse different models of journalism. Hallin and Mancini propose four key dimensions to characterize different media systems: the scope of the media market, political parallelism, journalistic professionalism and state intervention. Based on these four dimensions, most of the European and North America media are categorized into three models: the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model, the Northern European or Democratic Corporatist Model, and the

North Atlantic or Liberal Model (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). The analysis of different models of media implies that it is possible that models of journalism other than the Anglo-American model can be established within their own cultural backgrounds. Moreover, scholars find that differences between the Anglo-American model and other models of journalism do exist and have become more important than their similarities (see for example: Murscbetz, 1998; Mancini, 2005; Benson and Hallin, 2007). In this sense, it is far too early to assume there will be one model of journalism which dominates all other models.

Another important debate within this area of research is whether new technology will have a revolutionary impact on journalism. Technology has played a crucial role in the development of journalism. Without the invention of Gutenberg's printing technology, the press would not have emerged the following century. Broadcast technology and internet technology have changed the way people understand and practice journalism. However, the issue as to what extent technologies can influence journalism is still being widely discussed by scholars.

On the one hand, changes to journalism brought by new technology can be observed across history. Printing technology has enabled the large circulation of newspapers, resulted in the rise of the press and competition in the news market. Broadcast technology has enabled point-to-point communication over long distances in real time, and resulted in the linear structure of radio and television programmes. The internet has broken the temporal and spatial limitations on information, as well as

the technological boundaries between news producer and news consumer. Moreover, it seems reasonable to believe that new technology does influence previously existing media to some extent. Broadcast journalism seriously impacted on newspaper journalism by terminating the dominance of the press in the media market, while media professionals such as Rupert Murdoch even claimed that the death of newspapers will occur under the influence of the internet (Allan, 2006: p.2). It appears that new technology is always emphasized more than older forms.

On the other hand, it might not be appropriate to believe that changes brought by technology are influenced only by technology per se. An important point in any study into how different technologies influence journalism is to understand that technology itself is developed in its specific social and cultural context. It is the context of any given society which requires journalism to find a way of using new technologies to produce a readership and create more profit. In addition, each form of journalism will find a means to survive in the social and economic context in which it is situated. As Heyd suggests, the possibility of market segmentation enables different media of news service to coexist, meanwhile, the printed-newspapers now strive to provide more in-depth and background items rather than immediate news to transform in order to survive (2009). Just as broadcast journalism has not eliminated newspaper journalism, so the internet will not replace newspapers (see for example: Hills, 2006; Scannell, 1996; Winston, 2005; Briggs and Burke, 2009, Conboy, 2011). In this sense,

it is probably advisable to analyse the influence of technology under the specific context in which it operates.

1.52 Limitations

The existing research has provided a sound base for further related studies. Nevertheless, it can be seen that although western scholars have built a comprehensive theoretical framework for journalism, they have barely utilized their theories to analyse journalism practice in China. For example, few scholars have used the idea of characterizing different media systems, as provided by Hallin and Mancini, to analyse any media system besides those in European and North America countries. On the other hand, academics who study Chinese media focus too extensively on the context of China; they fail to consider their research from a well-established western perspective. In terms of the internet, few scholars have considered the interaction between the universal characteristics of internet technology and the specific context of China. These are the problems that this research will attempt to solve.

1.6 Objective of the Thesis

The main idea behind this thesis is to explore how a specific technology (here, the internet) impacts on established journalism in a specific context (here, the political and economic context of mainland China). The development of journalism is and has always been significantly influenced by the characters of different eras and different

cultural backgrounds. Journalism has been developed into various models in different countries. On the other hand, although this researcher will not introduce technological determinism as a perspective through which to understand journalism, the importance of technology in the development of journalism cannot be underestimated. The interaction between technology and political-economic context has largely shaped the means of practising journalism. With regard to mainland China, journalism was seen as an elite discourse during the late Qing dynasty (1840-1911), but has been transformed into a mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since the People's Republic of China was established in 1949. However, due to the commercialization of the news media, a process which began in the 1980s, journalism now plays a more complicated role in Chinese society, one which makes the role of political mouthpiece no longer the only mission of Chinese journalism. Commercialization of news media can be defined as an action or a process which aims to boost economic profit by focusing on consumers rather than citizens and interfering with news professionals' effort to extend public understanding of the reported issues (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009; Lee-Wright *et al.*, 2012). Although the commercialization of journalism is usually simplified as "making money by selling news" (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009: p.218), the consequences and implications of the process of commercialization are profound and controversial. According to Hadland and Zhang, almost every aspect of news media, "from content, ownership and diversity, to professionalization, ideology and the use of converging technologies, has arguably been affected to some extent by

commercialization and its consequences” in the last century (2012: p.316). However, the influence of commercialization in the western context observed by scholars might be different from the situation in the context of China. The power of the commercialization in China will not necessarily weaken the relation between journalism and political power as what happened in the western democratic countries (Hadland and Zhang, 2012). In this sense, the evaluation of commercialization of news media in China must be analysed by consideration of the specifics of Chinese journalism practice and its political background.

Moreover, the Chinese government actively promotes internet technology. Two key factors, the enormous number of Chinese internet users and the enthusiasm of the Chinese government for popularizing the internet, enable the internet to be an important news media form. As practitioners who have experienced the changing process described above, Chinese journalists can provide important inside views about the impact brought by the internet. Their role perceptions can provide a significant perspective to explore what has happened in the Chinese media system after the introduction of the internet and how journalists perceive such changes. To this end, this study aims to provide an understanding of the perceptions of Chinese journalists on how the internet has influenced traditional journalism within the context of China.

Within the main idea of this thesis, two contributions to knowledge are expected. Firstly, this study is to engage in dialogue between western theories of

journalism and Chinese journalism practice. A large number of western scholars have provided various studies on how journalism was developed and how different technologies have impacted on journalism from historical, cross-cultural and technological perspectives (see for example: Chalaby, 1996; Conboy, 2004; Hampton, 2004; Hallin and Mancini, 2004; Winston, 2005; Conboy and Steel, 2008; Briggs and Burke, 2009). These researchers have offered a comprehensive understanding on journalism in general and built a strong theoretical framework for further related studies. However, the adoption of these studies in analysing Chinese journalism practice is still a problem as there has so far been little research into this specific area. In this sense, it will be valuable if this study aims to contribute to filling the gap between western theories of journalism and journalism practice in China.

Secondly, this study will examine whether there is a Chinese model of journalism, especially in an online context. In other words, the research will try to ascertain if Chinese journalism, especially Chinese online journalism, can be seen as a distinct model of journalism. According to Siebert *et al* and Hallin and Mancini, it is reasonable to believe that different models of news media co-exist in the world (Siebert *et al*, 1956; Hallin and Mancini, 2004). In this light, it is possible that there is a distinct model of journalism in China. Moreover, both western and Chinese scholars have found that journalism in China has its own traditions and order (see for example: Cohen, 1974; Zhang, 2007). For example, Lee and Zhang hold that newspapers were originally established in China for elite discourse rather than commercial profit (Lee,

2005; Zhang, 2007). With regard to China's online journalism, scholars have suggested that the government's attitude to the internet is inconsistent, which results in a complicated political and economic context for online news media (see for example: Kalathil and Boas, 2003; Tai, 2006). A Chinese model of journalism has been shaped by internal cultural characteristics based on the philosophy of Confucianism and external forces from the liberationist ideas in the early 20th century to the Marxist ideas after 1949. In terms of a contemporary Chinese model of journalism, the ideology of how to conduct journalism is struggling to find a compromise somewhere between the Soviet model which emphasized the function of journalism as that of the Party's voice, the so-called professionalism introduced from western countries and the idea of enlightening the public inspired by Confucianism. Moreover, in considering how Chinese news organisations have continued to develop, Chinese journalism practice has been influenced by both political forces and market forces. Therefore, two key features of Chinese model of journalism need to be noted:

- 1) Chinese journalism serves the political powers as well as the public and readership;
- 2) Chinese journalism foregrounds the political hierarchy as well as economic profit.

In this sense, further explorations of the features of the Chinese model of journalism in an online context could prove invaluable.

1.7 Research Questions to be Addressed in This Thesis

In terms of the objective of this thesis, the research questions of this study are around Chinese journalists' perceptions of the influence of the internet on Chinese news media system. Three main research questions have been identified: (1) how do news media professionals' perceive changes in traditional journalism on account of the influence of the internet in China? (2) How do news media professionals perceive the model of Chinese online journalism as a competitor to Chinese traditional journalism? (3) How do news media professionals perceive the correlation between the preferences of the younger generation and the development of online news media? To answer the main questions, further detailed questions will be explored during the research:

- (1) Has the internet influenced the media order which was established by traditional news media in China?
- (2) Has the internet influenced the credibility of traditional journalism in China?
- (3) Has the internet influenced the news values of traditional journalism in China?
- (4) Has the internet influenced the practice of journalism by traditional news media in China?
- (5) Has the internet influenced state-owned traditional news media in China in general?

(6) To what extent has the internet challenged the dominant status of traditional journalism in China?

(7) To what extent has the internet changed the understanding and conduct of journalism in China?

(8) To what extent has the internet influenced the readership of traditional journalism?

The influence of the internet on traditional journalism in China's specific political-economic context provides a valuable research topic due to the fast growth of the internet in China and the increasingly important status of China itself. Existing studies have provided a solid platform to further research in journalism studies. Engaging in dialogue between western theories of journalism and Chinese journalism practice will provide an important approach to understanding what Chinese journalism is. However, the complicated background to the internet in China should not be ignored. It would be prudent for any research into this field to bear the characteristics of Chinese society in mind.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The pace of technological advances – advances which are accompanied by claims of a coming new era in news media and attention of a significant impact on society – has enriched the literature on both journalism and technology. This emphasis on new technologies seems even more prevalent when scholars and journalists discuss the development of journalism since the internet was invented and became more widely used in the late 20th century. It is almost certainly correct to suggest that technology is an essential dynamic in the development of journalism, a suggestion which can be supported by reviewing the interaction between journalism practice and related technology back to the early period when printing was developed in Europe by Gutenberg. However, it is worth noting that even the most revolutionary technology cannot work outside its specific social and cultural context. Historical changes within society and cultural differences are also essential dynamics which advance the pace of journalism, as Hardt and Schudson have both maintained (Hardt, 1990; Schudson, 1978). In this sense, it is appropriate to attempt to form an understanding of the nature of journalism by approaching the subject from two dimensions: a non-technological dynamic and a technological dynamic.

2.2 Historical and Cultural Understanding of Journalism

Journalism has been studied throughout the world since the latter half of the 20th century (Deuze, 2005: p.442), however, discussions of a cultural history of journalism which are based on “an understanding of the relationship between journalism and the social, economic and political conditions of society” are still needed to replace the heroic history of journalism which only focuses on each individual owners of news media(Hardt, 1990: p.356). From a historical point of view, scholars debate when journalism was invented: scholars such as Stephens and Golding assume that journalism was invented in Europe during the seventeenth century (Golding and Elliott, 1979: pp.21-28; Stephens, 1988: p.156), on the contrary, Chalaby argues that journalism emerged in the second half of the 19th century (1998: p.1). From a cross-cultural perspective, scholars such as Siebert, Hallin, and Mancini point out that there are various models of journalism based on different political and cultural backgrounds in the world (note, for example, Siebert *et al.*, 1956; Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Nevertheless, the possibility of settling on a single global dominant model of journalism is still controversial. In this sense, it is necessary to understand what journalism is comprehensively and comparatively in order to further any research about journalism.

This section tries to provide a comprehensive understanding of journalism. First of all, I will review the history of journalism to find out how it was developed. Then, I will analyze different models of journalism from a cross-cultural perspective. Thirdly,

I will discuss whether the Anglo-American model could possibly serve as that global dominant model of journalism. Finally, I will discuss how journalism itself differs from the concept of general news.

2.21 How was Journalism Developed?

According to Conboy, the word “journalism” entered the English language in 1833 in an article in the *Westminster Review* (2004: pp.121-122). Nonetheless, realizing exactly when journalism was invented as a distinct discourse is a controversial debate: on the one hand, Chalaby claims that journalism is a recent invention dating to the era in which the “taxes on knowledge” were repealed (1998: p.32). Chalaby states that the British press from the 18th century to the first half of the 19th century was a “pre-journalistic press” and argues that the prevailing discourse before the 1850s in the British press was more “publicity” than “journalism” (1998: p.3). In this sense, the discourse in the British press is not journalism and the purveyors of this discourse are “publicists” rather than “journalists” before the second half of the 19th century. Van Tuyl holds similar opinions to Chalaby’s: “Between 1830 and the 1880s, ‘the press’ was transformed into ‘journalism’” (2010: p.479).

On the other hand, many scholars believe that journalism had emerged in the British press before the “taxes on knowledge” were repealed in the mid-19th century: Hampton uses the phrase “New Journalism” to describe the press whose structure and content differed from that used prior to the 1880s (2004, p.36). His use of the phrase

“New Journalism” implies that something like “old journalism” had existed before the 1880s. Conboy also uses the term “journalism” when he describes the press before the 19th century (2004: p.44). Hampton criticises Chalaby’s opinion of the “invention of journalism”: for one thing, many journalistic qualities found in the press of the late 19th century could also be found in the 17th century. For another, instead of having “publicity” be substituted by “journalism,” “publicity” and “journalism” were renegotiated terms in the 19th- and 20-century press (2004: p.283). Hampton states: “It seems unlikely, however, that press historians will accept Chalaby's assertion that the mid-nineteenth century saw the ‘invention of journalism’” (2004: p.282).

Based on the discussion above, it seems reasonable to analyze the press before the mid-19th century in order to learn how journalism was developed. Since journalism changed dramatically in the second half of that century, I will analyze the development of journalism in three parts: journalism before the 1850s, the formation of the New Journalism, and journalism in the 20th century. Since the British modern press was developed earlier than in other countries, I will discuss the history of journalism only in the British context.

2.211 Journalism before the 1850s

Early journalism focused on printing events rather than “news” in the 17th century. According to Conboy, “Printers printed reports rather than composing them themselves and therefore they were often at the mercy of unreliable and contradictory

evidence which did nothing for the reputation of the news medium” (2004: p.22). Two main factors influenced the formation of journalism in the 17th century: politics and commercial profit. Before this, royal authority tried to control printing through laws such as the Act of Supremacy and via agents and guilds such as the Stationers’ Company. Under the control of authorities, “the powerful assertion of informed political opinion” and “the political pamphlets” led “the development of regular printed news” (Conboy, 2004: p.14). On the other hand, the rise of capitalism in England precipitated the trade in news: “News was increasingly being traded as a commodity in lubrication of other commodities” (Conboy, 2004: p.15).

The first significant stage in the development of journalism was the period between 1640 and 1660 which introduced extreme changes in the press (Siebert, 1952: p.3). The war between Charles I and Parliament and the fall of the Star Chamber provided an opportunity for the press to extend the freedom of journalism (Sparrow, 2003: p.9). There were two main changes in this period: first, instead of overseas news, domestic news became the main content in newsbooks; second, some journalistic values such as objectivity and reliability were emphasized for the support of readers (Conboy, 2004). The main reason of the aforementioned changes was the increasingly fierce competition among different printers. As Sommerville argues, “We cannot afford to forget that journalism is a business rather than a profession. The search for profits made news publishers ingenious” (1996: p.36). It seems the power

of market played a more important role than other dynamics in the development of British press of this specific time.

The taxes on knowledge, which began to rise in 1712, strongly influenced the formation of journalism. Such taxes had two consequences: firstly, they obstructed the development of the legal press through raising the price of newspapers; secondly, these taxes indirectly caused the creation of “the unstamped” which were illegally evading the imposts (Chalaby, 1998: p.12). In this sense, the legal press lost the advantage in the competition with the unstamped because only a few readers could afford the high price. The boom of the unstamped provided opportunities to publicists who were usually represented by and relied on specific political groups to express their opinions. The 1776 American Declaration of Independence and the 1789 French Revolution had begun to spread radicalism through the British newspapers and eventually promoted the popularity of radical journalism of the unstamped. As Conboy argues, “A new form of journalism developed, centered upon the editorial essay and concentrating not upon a relation of the events of the time but on building radical opinion on political issues” (2004: p.91). This argument implies that journalism moved its focus from reporting events to publishing opinions. The press became an approach to present standpoints for different interest groups, as observed, “The newspaper became an accepted means in some circles for the pursuance of disputes, possibly contributing to both a more peaceful and a more public means of

conducting political, social, economic and religious disagreements” (Black, 1991: p.293).

2.212 The Formation of the “New Journalism”

The second half of the 19th century witnessed the emergence of the “New Journalism.”¹ The structure and content of the discourse of journalism were changed dramatically in this period as journalism became a distinguished field with professional recognition (Brake, 1994; p.xii). The abolition of the taxes on knowledge was the beginning. All of the taxes on knowledge were repealed from 1833 to 1861. The consequence of the abolition of the taxes was that selling legal newspapers for a mere penny became possible (Chalaby, 1998: p.32). Thus, “the creation of a cheap press led to greatly increased consumer demand for newspapers” (Hampton, 2004: p.35). In this sense, a large market for the development of journalism had been established. The economic competition within the journalistic field in the market determined the discourse of the New Journalism. As Hampton argues, the features of the New Journalism were “a light of tone, an emphasis on the personal and ‘sensational’, and reliance on gimmicks to sell newspapers in high-stakes circulation wars” (2004: p.37). In this sense, newspapers emphasized de-contextualized news

¹ It is noteworthy that the term “new journalism” here has a different meaning from the one described by Tom Wolfe in the context of American journalism around the 1970s. Tom Wolfe’s “new journalism” is used to describe the adoption of a variety of literary techniques in the writing of objective even-handed journalism.

rather than the opinions of specific political groups. The press became much more commercial than ever before.

2.213 Journalism in the Twentieth Century

According to Hampton, “the press continued to develop along the lines of the New Journalism” in the 20th century (2004: p.39). On the one hand, the concentration of ownership in the press was intensified continuously. Media conglomerates and the press barons came into existence in Britain for the increasingly intense competition in the market; on the other hand, journalism was treated more as a commodity and readers were catered to as consumers. Therefore, instead of political news, entertainment was now increasingly emphasized in the journalistic field.

However, when compared to the New Journalism in the 19th century, two characteristics are worth noting as regards to the journalism of the 20th century. For one thing, “newspapers became more diverse in their content, including many ‘human interest’ items along with the now-abbreviated political news and opinion” (Hampton, 2004: p.40). In this sense, the content of newspapers tended to cover every aspect of people’s daily lives. A second characteristic was that tabloidization became a salient trend in both print and broadcast journalism. Tabloidization is a process of news media revision which ingratiate readers and advertisers’ preferences. This process reflects on the news coverage (more entertainment and soft news while less political and hard news), the presentation (more short stories and pictures while less long

stories) and the language (more use of widely accepted linguistic patterns from the working class rather than from the bourgeois class) (Esser, 1999: p.293, Conboy, 2006: p.13). As Conboy explains, “the label of tabloidization is given to the trend which has seen what critics perceive to be the chief characteristics of the tabloids transfer, infecting other forms of journalism” (2004: p.181). Tabloidization can be seen as a way for media to survive in times of increased competition driven by “technological innovation and market fragmentation” (2004: p.181). Obviously, the relationship between the press and readers was changed drastically in the twentieth century. The function of informing the public via this news source was not as important as before the role of entertainment gained in prominence.

Journalism has always been changing and adapting in any particular era. As Conboy argues, “Over four centuries, journalism has moved from the printing of events, to the publishing of opinion, to the reporting of news and then to the contemporary structured ideologies of narrative and readership” (2004: p.1). Journalism has always looked for a way to coordinate itself within economic, political and cultural demands and remain distinguishable from other media products: “if it is to survive, journalism must be able to assert a specific location within this media sphere, demonstrate that it can deliver a particular form of service to the public” (2004: p.224). It is worth noting that the market is always driving the development of journalism in Britain. The problem for journalism in the twenty-first century may very well continue the dual mission of providing a public service while maintaining profits.

2.22 A Cross-Cultural Discussion of Journalism

Based on the discussion above, specific characteristics of journalism such as commercialization and tabloidization are defined through analyzing the development of journalism in Britain. Nevertheless, it is indubitable that the history of journalism in Britain cannot be the same as the history of journalism in other countries. For example, the duty on paper was abolished later in France (Palmer, 2003: p.479) and the Spanish press showed an obvious underdevelopment compared with Britain at the beginning of the 20th century (Sánchez-Aranda and Barrera, 2003: p.490). “The press always takes on the form and coloration of social and political structures within which it operates. It reflects the system of social control whereby the relations of individuals and institutions are adjusted”(Siebert *et al*, 1956: p.1). It seems reasonable to believe that journalism is developed diversely in different political and cultural settings. In this sense, it is necessary to compare different models of media systems to understand “what is journalism?” more comprehensively.

2.221 From “Four Theories of the Press” to “Three Models of Media and Politics”

One of the most important theories which tries to answer why does mass media appear in widely different forms and serve different purposes in different countries is Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm’s *Four Theories of the Press* (Nordenstreng, 2006: p.35). Siebert et al propose four “beliefs and assumptions” to elicit the differences

between media systems: “the nature of man, the nature of society and the state, the relation of man to the state, and the nature of knowledge and truth” (Siebert *et al*, 1956: p.2). According to these scholars, there are four theories of the press: the Authoritarian theory, the Libertarian theory, the Social Responsibility theory and the Soviet Communist theory.

Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm believe that the latter two theories of these “four theories of the press” are improvements and adjustments of the former two (Siebert *et al*, 1956: p.2). The main difference between the Authoritarian theory and the Libertarian theory depends on whether the press is an instrument of government or not. The Social Responsibility theory is developed from the Libertarian theory by asking media to take social responsibilities to ensure that all sides of society are fairly presented, while the Soviet Communist theory is developed from the Authoritarian theory by emphasizing the “truth” as the Marxist “truth”. These three scholars believe that these four theories of the press have largely determined what kind of press the Western world has had (Siebert *et al*, 1956: p.6).

Although Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm’s work provides a systematical understanding of different models of journalism, the *Four Theories of the Press* is problematical. As Hallin and Mancini criticise, “one of the problems of *Four Theories of the Press* is that its scope is so grand that it is almost inevitably superficial” (2004: p.6). Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm did not “empirically analyse the relation between media system and social system” (2004: p.9). In this sense, *Four Theories of*

the Press analyzes the theories in which media systems legitimated themselves rather than the actual functions of media systems.

The other problem of *Four Theories of the Press* is that it was too influenced by the background of the Cold War to avoid respective bias in its analysis. “*Four Theories* was a child of the Cold War era, when the world was deeply divided between the capitalist West, socialist East and the underdeveloped South” (Nordenstreng, 2006: p.36). In this sense, *Four Theories of the Press* itself was constrained by the tensions of the world and the inevitably ideological bias of the authors themselves.

Compared with *Four Theories of the Press* of Siebert *et al*, Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini’s work provides a more systematical and empirical study of media models. Hallin and Mancini define media models based on the consensus of the basic premise of *Four Theories of the Press*: that “the press always takes on the form and coloration of social and political structures within which it operates.”, However, these two scholars emphasize the significance of genuine comparative analysis and focus on particular areas of the world, including most of the countries of North America and Western Europe (McQuail, 2005: p.266).

Hallin and Mancini argue that “one cannot understand the news media without understanding the nature of the state, the system of political parties, the pattern of relations between economic and political interests, and the development of civil society, among other elements of social structure” (2004: p.8). In this sense, Hallin

and Mancini propose four key dimensions to characterize different media systems: (1) the degree of the development of media markets, especially the development of the mass circulation press; (2) “political parallelism,” which is the degree and nature of the links between media and political parties; (3) the degree of the development of journalistic professionalism; and (4) the degree and nature of state intervention in the media system (2004: p.21). Based on these four dimensions, three models of media and politics are identified: the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model, the Northern European or Democratic Corporatist Model and the North Atlantic or Liberal Model.

The Polarized Pluralist Model relates to media systems of the Mediterranean region of Western Europe (e.g., France, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal). The Mediterranean region is distinguished from the rest of Western Europe because capitalist industrialism and political democracy were developed later in this area (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: p.89). Hallin and Mancini believe that the late and contested development of democracy in the Mediterranean region has produced a distinct pattern within its media systems: the elite-oriented press dominates the media markets with relatively small circulation. News media have a strong relationship with the main political parties so that it is rather difficult to clearly distinguish journalism from “political activism.” Also, the degree of the development of journalistic professionalism is low, while “advocacy journalism,” which focuses on political life, prevails and is much more popular than other models (2004).

In contrast, the Liberal Model, which relates to media systems of Canada, Ireland, Great Britain, and the United States, shows completely different characteristics: the development of the commercial press was early and strong with relatively large circulation. Media institutions are independent from political parties and other “organized social groups.” The professionalization of journalism has been developed strongly with a tradition of fact-oriented journalism. State intervention in media systems is very limited (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: p.246).

The Northern European or Democratic Corporatist Model encompasses Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. It shows “coexistences” of the characteristics from both Liberal and Polarized Pluralist Models. First of all, strong mass-circulation commercial media and strong links between media and organized political groups are developed simultaneously. Secondly, both political parallelism and journalistic professionalism are very well-developed. Thirdly, both the importance of press freedom and the tradition of state intervention in the media are emphasized (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: p.196).

Hallin and Mancini’s three models of media and politics offer a cross-cultural perspective to understand what journalism is: on the one hand, Hallin and Mancini’s study supports Weaver’s argument that “influences stemming from political systems may be most important in shaping a given country’s journalistic culture” (Hanitzsch, 2009: p.420). In this sense, the normative expectation and tradition of journalism from

different political backgrounds may be obviously distinct even within the so-called democracy countries. On the other hand, Hallin and Mancini find that differences among the Three Models have diminished substantially over time (2004: p.251). In this sense, it is worth discussing the possibility of the emergence of a global dominant media model. Since the Anglo-American model of journalism “has clearly become increasingly dominant across Europe as well as North America” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: p.251), it is necessary to analyze this specific model to understand more about journalism.

2.222 Will the Anglo-American Model of Journalism Possibly Become a Global Dominant Model of Journalism?

Since Siebert *et al.* argued that “Great Britain, the United States and some of the British Dominions follow a common pattern in what has been described as the ‘Anglo-American tradition’” (1956: p.57), the characteristics of the Anglo-American model of journalism and its differences from other models of journalism have been widely discussed (Mancini, 2005: p.77). On the one hand, the popularity of the normative Anglo-American model has been emphasized by scholars: Hallin and Mancini argue that a model of journalistic professionalism based on the principles of the Anglo-American model of journalism such as “objectivity” and “political neutrality” is increasingly dominant in the international journalistic field (2004: p.252). Chalaby even claims that “journalism is an Anglo-American invention” and journalists in France and many other countries “progressively imported and adapted

the methods of Anglo-American journalism” (1996: p.303). In this sense, the assumption that “world media are converging toward a liberal system more or less like the system that prevails in the United States” is worth discussing (Hallin, 2009: p.332).

On the other hand, some scholars stress the numerous differences between the Anglo-American model and other models of journalism and question the dominance of this model: Josephi argues that “Research outside the Anglo-American orbit, which has so far shaped the dominant journalistic concepts, is now challenging these paradigms” (2005: p.576). Esser, Papathanassopoulos, Benson, and Hallin have found large gaps between the Anglo-American model and other models of journalism separately (Esser, 1999; Hallin and Papathanassopoulos, 2002; Benson and Hallin, 2007). In this sense, one must then evaluate to what extent the Anglo-American model of journalism influences journalism in other countries. It seems reasonable to discuss the potential of the Anglo-American model of journalism to become the global dominant model of journalism.

Compared to other models of journalism, the Anglo-American model has at least four advantages which indicate possible explanations for potential dominant position. Firstly, the Anglo-American model of journalism was developed much earlier than other models of journalism. Secondly, the Anglo-American model of journalism is more politically autonomous than other models. Thirdly, Anglo-Saxon culture has a historically privileged position in the world. Fourthly, the Anglo-American model

claims to act as the “Fourth Estate” which strongly connects with the normative claims of western democracy and enhances the capacity for accountability.

The mass-circulation press in Britain and the United States was developed much earlier than in other countries. According to Chalaby, newspapers in Britain and the United States provide more abundant information, especially foreign information, than do, say, French newspapers (1996: p.305). Chalaby points out that the advanced information-gathering services ensure that newspapers in Britain and the United States have more news to report than other countries: “Late into the 19th century, the French news agency Havas still dispatched translated abstracts of British newspapers to its clients” (1996: p.310).

In addition, journalism practices such as interviewing and reporting were invented with the Anglo-American model. Schudson argues that “the history of the interview is not only an account of the form’s modernity but its Americanness” (1994: p.568). Schudson’s argument implies that the interview was invented by American journalists. The theoretical concept of interviewing was spread to Britain during the 1880s (Chalaby, 1996: p.312), however, “only after World War I did European reporters adopt the American practice of interviewing—and never so fully as in the United States” (Schudson, 2005: p.99). In this sense, it is indubitable that the earlier development of journalism practices of the Anglo-American model strongly influenced the professionalization of journalism in other countries.

Furthermore, the Anglo-American model of journalism is more independent from literary influences and politics than are other models. Unlike French journalists' long struggle of independence from the literary field, literary values and norms are unable to be imposed upon British and American journalists (Chalaby, 1996: p.313). Chalaby argues that it is a tradition that literary figures and celebrities "were involved in journalism" in France; however, "neither in America nor in England did literary figures enjoy such access to the press" (1996: p.314). The strong link between journalism and literary influences obstructs the professionalization of journalism in France.

On the other hand, the Anglo-American model of journalism has a much more limited and weaker relationship with political parties than any other model of journalism. American journalists "enjoy a culture of their own, independent of political parties" (Schudson, 2005: p.98). The autonomy of the journalistic field in Britain and the United States precipitates the development of "objectivity" and "neutrality." According to Emery *et al.*, the number of "objective" stories rose from one-third of all stories to 80 percent between 1865 and 1934 in American news reports (2000: p.183). The discursive norms and values such as objectivity and neutrality resulted in that "the journalistic mode of writing became characterized by particular discursive strategies and practices" (Chalaby, 1996: p.304). In this sense, the Anglo-American model of journalism is more independent and professional than other models of journalism.

The third advantage of the Anglo-American model of journalism is the Anglo-American dominant position in the world: “American influence clearly intensified following World War II, as the United States became the dominant political and economic power” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: p.255). There are two aspects of the Anglo-American dominant position: dominant economic and political position, on the one hand; and the popularity of the English language, on the other; “The superiority of Anglo-American journalism and its influence in France reflected the Anglo-American dominant economic and political position in the world” (Chalaby, 1996: p.322). In addition, Josephi points out that the dominance of the Anglo-American model was “largely brought on by English being a world language” (2005: p.576). In this sense, it seems reasonable to believe that the central position of the Anglo-Saxon culture has had a positive effect on the dominance of Anglo-American model of journalism.

Fourthly, the “Fourth Estate” function which developed from the Anglo-American model of journalism can be regarded as a significant advantage of this model due to its strong connection to western democracy. According to Carlyle, the statement of seeing the press as the Fourth Estate following the other Three Estates in the Parliament was firstly given by Burke in the UK (1840). The idea of seeing a free and informative press as an essential part of democracy is also widely accepted in American journalism. The rise of a number of informative and independent newspapers in the USA between the 1870s and 1920s further broke the

previous model of political affiliation and informed citizens with much less biased information (Gentzkow *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, the “Fourth Estate” function enables journalism to make claims that it challenges the abuse of power and gives voice to the voiceless. “The impact of investigative reporting in the Watergate scandal and the role of the press in the exposure of Enron’s accounting irregularities, among other legendary episodes, buttress the view that journalists can make a difference” (Gentzkow *et al.*, 2006: p.188). In this sense, it is reasonable to regard the “Fourth Estate” function as a significant advantage for the Anglo-American model due to its importance for democracy and accountability.

Although the Anglo-American model of journalism has several advantages over other models, the possibility of an emergence of a single global dominant model of journalism based on the Anglo-American model is still questionable. There are two main factors that lead to the questioning of this possibility: numerous cultural differences among countries and bias in the analysis of Anglo-American model.

Numerous differences between the Anglo-American model of journalism and other models have been observed by researchers. By comparing French journalism with American journalism between the 1960s and 1990s, Benson and Hallin claim that “against expectations of powerful forces for homogenization, we find that French–American press differences in writing style, narrative schema, level of criticism and viewpoints represented do not diminish significantly” (2007: p.41). This argument seems to contradict Chalaby’s argument which advocates the dominance of

the Anglo-American model in the world. In southern Europe and Latin America, the “clientelism” of journalism, which has diminished in Anglo-Saxon countries, is still prevalent in the journalistic field (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos, 2002: p.185).

On the other hand, although journalism outside the Anglo-American model is strongly influenced by it, some characteristics of journalism in those non-Anglo-American countries should not be diminished. For example, Murscbetz believes it is still necessary to keep the state subsidies on news media to “secure a media system with a maximum number of independent units” in continental European countries (1998: p.308). As Mancini argues, “the differences between the Anglo-American model and the European one seem more important than their similarities and the common factors that they share” (2005: p.91).

The other problem with the dominance of the Anglo-American model of journalism in the world is the ideological bias of researchers. Hanitzsch criticises that researchers who work on comparative research as they “mostly compare other nations to their own countries by evaluating other cultures through lens of their own cultural value-systems” (2009: p.422). Hanitzsch’s criticism implies that the ideological bias is almost inevitable in comparative research because researchers are more or less influenced by their own values. Hanitzsch emphasizes the Western bias in the research of the Anglo-American model: “the Anglo-American dominance in journalism studies has resulted from the long tradition of journalism studies in America, accompanied by the concentration of academic and textbook publishers in

Great Britain and the United States” (2009: p.422). In this sense, the dominance of the Anglo-American model should be contested because researchers who work on this model are studying in an Anglo-American context. As Starck and Sudhaker argue, if standards of some specific countries are applied to other ones, “the result can only be a fundamentally unsympathetic view of the problems of journalism and journalists in those societies” (Hanitzsch, 2009: p.422). Based on the analysis above, it seems unreasonable to believe the Anglo-American model will become a single global dominant model of journalism so far.

2.3 How is Journalism Different from News?

Based on the analysis above, it seems impossible to find a universal standard to define “journalism”; from a historical perspective, journalism was always changing in different periods. During the second half of the 19th century, journalism was transformed from publishing opinions to reporting news, which caused the emergence of “New Journalism.” It is reasonable to believe that journalism will continue to change in the future because “the future of journalism is often conflated with the future of a particular journalistic medium” (McNair, 2009: p.348). From a cross-cultural perspective, there are also diverse models of journalism no matter in Siebert *et al.*’s “Four Theories of the Press” or Hallin and Mancini’s “Three Models of Media and Politics”. The characteristics of journalism are strongly influenced by

both political and economic systems in which the media operates. In addition, although the methods of Anglo-American journalism are imported and adapted by journalists in many other countries, it is still doubtful that a single global model of journalism based on the Anglo-American model will soon be dominant in the world.

Nevertheless, it is reasonable to understand journalism as a distinct discourse. As Conboy argues, “because of the complexity and variety of journalism throughout history, as well as its integral relationship with questions of political and economic power, it may be helpful to refer to journalism as an example of a discourse” (2004: p.3). The term “a distinct discourse” means that journalism can be differentiated from other forms of discourse such as literary discourse; however, it does not mean that journalism has completely no relationship with those other forms.

One of the most important differences between journalism and news is that journalism is a discourse, whereas news should be examined as a form of “socially situated text” (van Dijk, 2009: p.191). According to Chalaby, “in sociology, discourse should designate a class of texts” (1998: p.59). From this perspective, Chalaby points out that there are two differences between a text and a discourse: first, the text is the basic unit of the discourse: “a discursive unit.” Second, a text is the material component of a discourse, while the discourse itself is concrete but not material (1998: p.59). “Obviously, there is discursive diversity in journalism. Within a newspaper co-exist editorials, background commentaries, feature articles and even several

formats of news stories” (Chalaby, 1998: p.65). In this sense, it is reasonable to see news as a material component of the journalistic discourse.

The other important difference between journalism and news is that journalism is not always about news. In other words, “fact-centred” journalism is only one form of journalism: “opinion-oriented” journalism which was popular in 18th and early 19th century did little on producing news, however, the “opinion-oriented” journalism is still important in many non-Anglo-American countries in the world. It is worth noting that journalism and news were developed separately in the history: according to Chalaby, British and American journalists invented the modern concept of news in the 19th century because “the most important characteristic of the British press was the extent and accuracy of its information” (1998: p.305). However, based on the discussion of the history of journalism in this literature review, journalism had emerged before the “modern concept of news” was invented. In this sense, although journalism and news are strongly linked, it is not reasonable to regard them as a same concept.

2.4 How have Different Technologies Impacted on Journalism?

Understanding journalism via a framework of technology provides an important perspective to reflect on what journalism can and should be (Tsui, 2009: p.55). A

number of scholars believe that new technologies have brought various transformations into the journalistic field, changing the news-producing processes used by media organisations and altering the readership between the media and the public (Hujanen and Pietikäinen, 2004; Boczkowski, 2009). However, the role of technology in the development of journalism is intricate, combining with many other factors, and has resulted in much debate.

On the one hand, many journalists seem to believe that journalism practice is inevitably shaped by changing media technologies. “Journalists in general seem to view technology and technological development as inevitable, impersonal forces that directly cause many of the changes taking place within journalism” (Örnebring, 2010: p.58). Moreover, although scholars in social science are generally prudent in avoiding strong arguments for technological determinism, some academics nevertheless make an exception and seem to take a determinist stance when they estimate the influence of digital media technologies, especially the internet (Örnebring, 2010: p.58). For example, Pavlik, in his analysis of the changes in journalism wrought by the internet, states that both the content of journalism and the diffusion of news are driven by media technologies (2000: p.229). In this sense, it is reasonable to evaluate the role of media technologies in the development of journalism, especially how internet technology is impacting on the news media.

On the other hand, scholars such as Briggs and Burke question the importance of technological determinism in journalism studies. They state that the new media

technologies have not necessarily replaced the old ones, nor totally reshaped the characteristics of journalism. “Today’s television serials follow the model of radio serials, which in turn follow the model of the stories serialized in nineteenth century magazines” (Briggs and Burke, 2009: p.2). Conboy also doubts the relevance of technological determinism to journalism studies; he believes that journalism itself is shaped by “a particular combination of technology and public communication” (2011: p.81). Whether a new technology is adopted by society or not is determined by political, economic and cultural factors (2011: p.82).

Based on the analysis above, it seems advisable to place media technologies in their political, economic and cultural contexts to discuss how these different technologies have impacted on journalism. Since the contemporary popular media are newspapers, radio, television and the internet, this section will discuss the development of three technologies which shaped these media of journalism: printing, broadcast and the internet.

2.41 How has Printing Technology Influenced Journalism?

Although it was the Chinese mechanic Bi Sheng who originally invented and adopted printing technology with movable type in producing books in around 1041 AD, a printing mechanism with movable metal type which was independently invented by Gutenberg in 1456 AD seems to be more significant when scholars study the development of western publications (Rogers, 1986: p.27). According to Winston,

Gutenberg made two contributions to printing technology: a new recipe for ink and a new type of a reusable hand-held mould which enabled individual letters to be made (2005: p.7). The direct influence of this new technology was that the larger distribution of publications became possible; it took one year for a skilled scribe to transcribe only two books until the use of Gutenberg's technology accelerated the process of printing books to one book per day (Rogers, 1986: p.27). In this sense, more publications could be produced and distributed in less time, which enabled the emergence of publications with much larger circulations.

Gutenberg's printing press generated the technical foundation for the wide spread of literacy and the development of periodicals (Pavlik, 2000: p.229). The ever developing technology of the press made possible circulations which matched the increasing needs of the market. During the seventeenth century, by introducing a counter-weight to automatically raise patterns in the procedure of printing, the speed of printing machines increased from Gutenberg's 15 impressions per hour to 150 or even more. With this new technology, a shop with two presses could produce on average 2,500 sheets per day, which was more than the maximum weekly circulation prior to this new technology being adopted (Winston, 2005: p.46). In this sense, it was possible to issue daily newspapers instead of weekly periodicals since the new printing technology could ensure the production of a larger number of printed sheets.

The increasingly large circulation of periodicals enabled newspapers to play an important role in political debates. Winston suggests that the tradition of the freedom

of the press was established in the 1640s when periodicals began to oppose the authorities. “English journalism began, and has remained, obstreperous, argumentative, entertaining and vehemently competitive” (2005: p.48). Later, the London press developed as a political organ in the late eighteenth century, while the unstamped radical press was conducted as a propaganda vehicle designed to provide opportunities to the working classes, those people who were usually represented by and relied on specific political groups to express their opinions in the early nineteenth century (Asquith, 1978: p.106). In this sense, the large circulation periodicals had become a considerable force in the political field.

The next important advance in printing technology, according to Asquith, was the development of Koenig’s steam press in 1814. By introducing steam technology into the printing mechanism, this new printing technology enabled the production of 1,000 impressions per hour. Engineers continued to develop new technologies within the steam press once Koenig’s printing technology became widely used. As a result, printers could produce up to 8,000-12,000 impressions per hour by 1848 (Asquith, 1978: p.101). The advance of the steam press directly influenced the procedure of news production; the accelerated printing mechanism allowed papers to go to print much later, which implies that newspapers could contain more recent news than ever before (Asquith, 1978: p.101).

It is worth noting that the adoption of the new printing technologies allowed the press to impact on commerce and politics to some extent. On the one hand, new

printing technologies enabled periodicals to include extra pagination which allowed more scope for advertising. Scholars such as Williams, Harris and Lee find that revenue from advertising played an increasingly important role in the total income of the press, which pushed periodicals towards a more commercial style (Williams, 1978; Harris, 1978; Lee, 1978). By the first half of the nineteenth century, advertising revenue provided up to three-quarters of the total income of a national daily (Murdock and Golding, 1978: p.131). Commercial motivations had driven the newspaper industry away from “the traditional, small-scale, multiple structure towards a large-scale and more integrated one”, while the extra income from advertising allowed greater investment in improving technology which could result in the expansion of the press itself (Lee, 1978: p.119).

Based on the analysis above, printing technology influenced the journalism that it generated in terms of both the medium of the press and the content of newspapers. Nevertheless, as Briggs and Burke argue, printing technology itself required an appropriate social and cultural context in order to spread (2009: p.14). In other words, the development of printing was driven, to some extent, by the society in which it was located. From a historical viewpoint, it took more than a century to popularise Gutenberg’s printing technology in the press in Europe. One main reason why the impact of printing technology was so gradual was that only a small proportion of the European population was properly literate during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Rogers, 1986: p.28). The lack of a literate population implies a relatively small-scale

market for publications, which suggests it was not necessary to introduce new printing technologies to enlarge the circulations of publications. Asquith and Lee's studies show that the market rather than technology led the development of the newspaper industry. In addition, the market could even decide whether new technologies would be used or not (Asquith, 1978; Lee, 1978). For example, Asquith finds that as a result of their smaller market share, newspaper proprietors other than those of *The Times* were slower to introduce the steam press in the first half of the nineteenth century (Asquith, 1978: p.101). In this sense, it is reasonable to believe that such technology was not disseminated without any influence from the market.

On the other hand, printing technology was developed and spread at different speeds across diverse cultures. For example, the Chinese and Japanese were using woodblock moulds, very different from Gutenberg's movable metal mould, for printing for a long time because this method was appropriate for text written in ideograms rather than letters. Russia and the Orthodox Christian world introduced printing technology relatively late, while the Muslim world strongly resisted printing technology for religious reasons (Briggs and Burke, 2009: p.14). The facts above suggest that the invention and improvement of printing did not depend on technology alone. Printing was developed to accomplish the needs of specific societies at specific times.

2.42 How has Broadcast Technology Influenced Journalism?

The next significant technology for journalism following improved printing technology was that of telecommunications, beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It was Guglielmo Marconi who applied for the world's first patent for wireless telegraphy after he arrived in Britain on 2nd June, 1896 (Street, 2002: p.14). David Sarnoff and Arthur Burrows conceived the idea of using Marconi's telegraphy technology by providing alternative signals and transmitting news to the mass of the population in the 1910s (Street, 2002: p.17). Then, a number of broadcast companies such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) were established during the 1920s (Street, 2002; Scannell and Cardiff, 1991; Smith, 1973). Scholars agree that this new technology surpassed the print media through two advantages. First, it made possible point-to-point communication over long distances in real time (Starkey and Crisell, 2009: P.2). Second, compared with newspapers, it dispensed with the need for a well-educated and literate audience, thus providing opportunities for the masses to access the information offered by these new media, based on the new broadcast technology (Rogers, 1986: p.28). Both of these improvements enabled the new telecommunication technologies to develop new media for mass communication, which were, first, radio journalism and then television journalism.

Figures show that the rise of broadcast seriously impacted upon the press. In America, the number of newspapers sold per household decreased from 1.12 in 1960

to 0.88 in 1974 (Briggs and Burke, 2009: p.194). Newspaper advertising, on the other hand, declined from 45 per cent of all advertising in 1935 to 23 per cent in 1995 (Briggs and Burke, 2009: p.195). Furthermore, television journalism had taken the dominant position in the popular media by the early 1960s (Conboy, 2011: p.89). Evidently, the success of radio and TV broadcast terminated the dominance of the press in the media market.

Although many people claim that broadcast journalism was “essentially a combination and development of earlier forms” such as newspaper and advertising columns, the new technology has resulted in a number of significant transformations in the form of journalism (Williams, 1974: p.44). A number of scholars suggest that various changes to journalism have been caused by broadcast technology: Williams states that the sequence and priorities of news in television programmes are fundamentally different from their newspaper counterparts on account of the linear structure of television programmes. He also suggests that the characteristics of the way in which television presents news make some journalistic criteria such as neutrality more important (Williams, 1974). Another scholar, Pavlik, points out two influences from broadcast which have affected journalism: the way journalists gather news and the changing nature of news content (2001: pp.230-231). However, Conboy states that the rise of broadcast gradually enabled newspapers to develop new styles of reporting “quite at odds with those of broadcast.” “Broadcast journalism was mandated as a purveyor of a public service to provide impartial and balanced

approaches”; in contrast, newspaper journalism was able to develop individual viewpoints “which best captured the views and language use of their readers and to deal more provocatively and in a partisan fashion with what were selected as the dominant political and cultural topics of the day” (2011: p.85). In this sense, broadcast technologies enriched the structure of journalism by encouraging more styles to be developed across different news mediums.

Nevertheless, technological determinism is not the reason behind the success of broadcast journalism and its considerable impact on newspaper journalism. With regard to how to understand the changes brought by the new technology, a fundamental question, suggested by Williams, is whether the technology should be analysed as a cause of social changes or if the use of this technology should be considered to be an effect of the development of society (Williams, 1974: p.10). Like Gutenberg’s printing technology in the fifteenth century, broadcast technology was not immediately introduced as a medium of mass communication: “Radio’s appearance as a medium of expression was delayed because people persisted in thinking telephone when they should have been thinking phonograph” (Winston, 2005: p.253). Television, on the other hand, was regarded as an experiment when it was established in the 1930s (Briggs and Burke, 2009: p.211). Smith’s argument is a reasonable answer to the question of why the broadcast technologies were not immediately introduced as the media of mass communication: “the actual technical development of broadcast took directions which were dictated by a new configuration

of market forces and social beliefs about the nature of mass society” (Smith, 1973: p.17). It was social change which precipitated the popularity of broadcast (Starkey and Crisell, 2009: p.8). In this sense, it is necessary to evaluate the influence of broadcast technology within the specific social and cultural context in which it is found.

An appropriate example to demonstrate the argument above is the development of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Founded in 1922, the BBC has continued to provide a public service and is dependent on revenue from the television licence. Even when the BBC was faced with the rise of commercial broadcast competitors, its Director-General Hugh Greene still believed that “the more successful we were in the commercial field the more dangerous it would be...our independence must be based on the rock of our licence revenue” (Briggs, 1995: p.4). Marconi’s broadcast technology is not responsible for the characteristics of the BBC. As Smith suggests, “the BBC is an invention in the sphere of social science no less remarkable than the invention of radio transmission in the sphere of natural science” (Smith, 1973: p.50). According to Scannell and Cardiff, a political force had become involved within the BBC through the Sykes Committee which was established by the Post Office before the Corporation was founded. This Committee judged that the operation of such an important national service as the BBC should not be allowed to become “an unrestricted commercial monopoly” (1991: p.6). Thus, the broadcast licence managed by the Post Office was conducted as an indirect control by the state. “The

definition of broadcast as a public utility to be developed as a national service in the public interest came from the state” (Scannell and Cardiff, 1991: p.6). On the other hand, the characteristics of the BBC were also determined by the development of mass society and the needs of the audience in that particular society (Scannell, 1996; Smith, 1973). “Broadcasters must, before all else, always consider how they shall talk to people who have no particular reason, purpose or intention for turning on the radio or television set” (Scannell, 1996: p.23). Based on the analysis above, it is reasonable to believe that the influence behind broadcast is brought not only by the broadcast technology itself but also caused by the social context in which the technology works.

It is worth noting that the media based on new technology are not necessarily superior to the old media. The advent of new media does not mean the elimination of previously existing media. For instance, the radio programme *War Report* was more popular than its television counterpart in Britain during the 1960s because British radio was “relatively cheap and simple,” while television was “costly and cumbersome” (Briggs and Burke, 2009: p.206). In addition, the media based on the new technology could co-exist with the previously existing media to construct new forms of journalism. One important result of the co-dependence between newspapers and broadcast, as Conboy points out, is that newspapers provide previews and reviews of television programmes as well as stories about stars and commentary based on the television programmes (2011: p.88). In this sense, the “old” media may exploit the

new technological environment for its own interest and establish avenues of co-dependence with the “new” media.

2.43 How has Internet Technology Influenced Journalism?

The rapidly developing technology which emerged in the late twentieth century enabled the internet to become a new medium for journalism. Compared to the hierarchical organisation of broadcast which had dominated the popular media since the 1960s, the internet utilises a multiplex interconnection between internet users. Each internet user, no matter whether employed professionally within the news media or not, could be seen as a “node” in the network. “Links among nodes may be created or abandoned on an as-needed basis at any location in the system, and any node can be either a sender or a receiver of message - or both” (Lievrouw and Livingstone, 2006: pp.23-24). A number of scholars emphasise the distinct characteristics of the internet, resulting in various perspectives on how to evaluate the influence of the new media brought by the internet. On the one hand, researchers such as McNair and Pavlik stress the great challenge brought by internet technology to the previously existing media such as newspapers and broadcast. McNair states that internet technology is the most important development “of all the technological developments which have driven the evolution of journalism in recent years” (1998: p.136). Pavlik believes that journalism is experiencing, with the impact of the internet, its most fundamental transformation since the rise of the penny press (2001: p.xi).

On the other hand, the achievements of online journalism are contested by certain other scholars. For example, Matheson argues that although plenty of journalism is presented on the internet, only a small proportion of it is actually created by the internet media (2004). As Conboy proposes, the history of journalism indicates that it is not rational to claim that the introduction of new media causes the elimination of previously existing media, at least without observation over a long period of time (Conboy, 2011: p.102). In this sense, it is crucial to analyse to what extent the internet has impacted upon both the previously existing media and journalism in general.

Whether internet journalism will eliminate newspaper journalism is one of the most contested debates in regard to any evaluation of the influence of the effect of new technology on previously existing media, especially now in the early days of the internet. A number of scholars and media professionals speculate that newspapers will be replaced by new media based on internet technology. For example, in a speech to the annual meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in April 2005, Rupert Murdoch even stated that “scarcely a day goes by without some claim that new technologies are fast writing newsprint’s obituary” (Allan, 2006: p.2). Speculation about “the death of the printed newspaper” seems to be increasingly popular among researchers (Thurman and Myllylahti, 2009: p.691).

Much evidence does indicate that the printed newspaper has been threatened to some extent by internet journalism. Scholars have seen, from various perspectives, a

number of signs of the demise of the printed newspaper. Meyer finds that the weekday circulation of daily newspapers in the USA has fallen to its lowest point since 1945, while the average daily readership has declined to less than 50 per cent of the population for the first time since 1964. Based on these statistics, Meyer predicts that printed newspapers will lose all their daily readers by the 2040s (2004). On the other hand, Thurman and Myllylahti observe that online-only newspapers have already emerged in the United States, Australia, France, and Finland, whereas a number of printed newspapers such as the *Christian Science Monitor* have announced that they will abandon their printed newspaper editions to focus instead on their online newspaper business (2009). Moreover, an increasing number of printed newspapers and broadcasters have started to establish their online journalism editions. According to Conboy, newspapers such as *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* and broadcast companies such as the BBC began to provide their online services during the late-1990s (2011: pp.101-102). In this sense, it seems particularly evident that internet technology has impacted upon the previously existing media, especially upon newspapers.

Nevertheless, the rise of broadcast journalism did not eliminate newspaper journalism in the twentieth century, nor will the internet remove the newspaper. As McNair suggests, statements about the “death of print” were made throughout the twentieth century when new technologies such as film, radio, and television were introduced into journalism practice (McNair, 1998: p.137). However, none of the

technologies above has eliminated printed newspapers. In addition, although electronic newspapers have been introduced in several countries, they are still at the experimental stage. “The majority of Net newspapers look like stripped-down electronic versions of their printed parents” (McNair, 1998: p.138). In this light, it seems rational to state that the newspaper journalism will not be substituted by the internet as long as it can provide what the internet cannot offer.

Furthermore, it would be more suitable to analyse the impact of the internet on contemporary newspapers and on the potential future of newspapers within the process of the development of newspapers. The history of British newspapers since the 1640s indicates that newspapers produced readerships rather than news in order to survive in changing technological circumstances. Newspapers focused on disseminating the information from Parliament in their early period, and then gradually developed differentiated readerships based on gender, class and specific interests while the functions and conventions of newspapers through this process were constructed (Conboy, 2004; Conboy and Steel, 2008). “Many of the political, economic and cultural functions of newspapers today have survived from previous technological regimes and it is these functions which surely need to be secured if they are to survive through a period of radical technological reorganization” (Conboy and Steel, 2008: p.650). Newspapers have always been combined with technological, cultural and economic imperatives to share their beliefs and develop (Conboy and Steel, 2008). In this sense, it seems unreasonable to state that the death of newspapers

is imminent simply due to the new technology that is being widely used in journalism practice.

It is also worth noting that the role of the internet in political communication, especially in terms of building the public sphere, which is seen as one of the most important functions of newspaper journalism, has been addressed by a number of scholars. Discussion has taken place over whether it is possible for the public to take advantage of the internet in order to engage in democracy more actively. Dahlgren, for one, believes that the internet has extended and pluralized the public sphere in various ways (2005: p.147). He states that the internet has contributed to democratic communication in three dimensions: (1) the internet has broadened the communicative spaces relevant for democracy through its provision of access for civic use; (2) the internet has provided an online context for the public sphere in which internet users can raise questions and criteria “about media output for political communication”; (3) the internet has contributed to the interactions both between media and citizens and between citizens themselves. “With the advent of the Net, civic interaction takes a major historical step by going online, and the sprawling character of the public sphere becomes all the more accentuated” (2005: p.149) In this sense, it seems undeniable that the internet has contributed to political communication.

However, other commentators question to what extent this has actually occurred. Although the internet and its related technologies have the potential to revive the

public sphere, there is still a need for more research into the political uses of the internet before any conclusion can be delivered as to whether there is a public sphere in the context of the internet (Papacharissi, 2002). By analysing the performances of newspaper websites through a series of elections and campaigns, Singer finds that newspapers still play an irreplaceable role in political communication, whereas the internet does engage in precipitating democracy, albeit with many limitations (Singer and Gonzalez-Velez, 2003; Singer, 2006; Singer, 2009). “Despite the participatory nature of the medium, local newspapers’ efforts to facilitate the formation of an online democratic community remain tentative” (Singer and Gonzalez-Velez, 2003: p.433). In this sense, it is perhaps unreasonable to exaggerate the importance of the internet in political communication.

An important way to understand how internet technology influences journalism is to analyse the characteristics of the internet communication system itself. The internet is described as a “nodes system” in which every internet user is seen as a node; each node undertakes functions both as a sending system and a receiving system linked into the network. In this network, information travels to its destination by the quickest route through a series of such linked nodes (Lievrouw and Livingstone, 2006; Briggs and Burke, 2009). The nodes system utilised by the internet fundamentally transformed the previous mass communication model from “a hierarchical system” to “a decentralized communication system”, as Burnett and Marshall suggest, or from a “one-to-many model of print and broadcast” to a

“many-to-many model of the internet”, as Lewis believes (Burnett and Marshall, 2003; Lewis, 2003). Thus Burnett and Marshall and Lewis imply that the internet has blurred the boundary between information producers and information consumers.

A number of scholars, across various perspectives, find that the features of internet technology, particularly the ubiquity of the World Wide Web, have altered journalism (Koch, 1991; Burnett and Marshall, 2003; Lewis, 2003; Pavlik, 2001). Three influences carried by the internet are worthy of emphasis: (1) the internet has become an important tool which assists journalists to produce news; (2) the internet has changed the concept of news to some extent, especially in an online context; (3) the internet has provided an avenue to producing journalistic pieces for people who are not media professionals.

Scholars such as Pavlik, Machill and Beiler emphasize the importance of the internet as an instrument for producing news. Pavlik’s survey indicates that the majority of journalists have utilised online tools for researching and reporting, while only 2 per cent of respondents never use online technology (2001: p.230). Pavlik believes that the internet is an essential tool for gathering information and checking facts in a report, especially when journalists produce breaking news or face an upcoming deadline (2001). Machill and Beiler also suggest that internet technology, especially online search engines, is increasingly indispensable for journalists to conduct journalistic research. Although the credibility and reliability of online sources can be questioned to some extent, it is unreasonable to underestimate the advantages

provided by the internet, such as information without spatial and temporal limitations (Machill and Beiler, 2009). “Journalists have integrated computer-aided research tools into their daily research work on a permanent basis” (Machill and Beiler, 2009: p.200). Moreover, Koch states that online databases empower journalists by providing information “equal to or greater than” that possessed by the people whom they are assigned to interview. Such empowerment can transform journalism by breaking the previously existing editorial limits (Koch, 1991). In this sense, the internet has changed the way in which journalists gather information and carry out journalistic research.

Another important influence of the internet on journalism is that it has created a new genre of news in an online context. Scholars find a number of differences between online news and offline news, particularly that, compared with the offline media, an essential characteristic of the online media is the non-linear construction of the information flowing through the internet (Ward, 2002: p.23). Supported by the vast online resources and hypertexts linked to these resources, online news has weakened the boundaries between different news stories and abandoned the need for any choice of level of detail upon which to build a news story. News relating to the same topic is developed as a cluster of news items which reveals an emergent online news genre: “a theme-based group of news objects held together graphically, overlapping with other such groups, and undergoing progressive updating” (Lewis, 2003: p.97). In this sense, rather than providing single news and comments based on a

series of criteria, as newspaper and broadcast journalism does, online journalism trends to provide news clusters in which different news stories, pictures and contexts are linked to each other and together offer a whole understanding of a specific topic.

Furthermore, the interactivity of the internet allows users, either media professionals or media consumers, to actively search for news, communicate with each other and provide information for news stories (Ward, 2002; Burnett and Marshall, 2003). In this sense, online news is best described as information news which identifies different modalities of information retrieval and different kinds of information exchange through various dimensions such as e-mails and news websites (Burnett and Marshall, 2003: p.160).

In addition, the internet enables more members of the public to create journalistic productions which may fundamentally change the way of doing journalism. The so-called citizen journalism is a key concept in any analysis of this practice and its possible impact on mainstream media. Harcup suggests the term “citizen journalism” can be defined as the practice where non-professional citizens who actively participate in the process of producing news including collecting, analysing and disseminating information (2013: p.88). However, scholars’ interpretations of this term are not completely accordant to each other, as it is very difficult to define the term in the changing research context (Lewis *et al*, 2010: p.166). For example, Carpenter interprets citizen journalism by stressing its purpose of serving community interests (2010), whereas Allan demonstrates citizen journalism by emphasizing its

participatory nature (2007). In this sense, this researcher will provide a detailed interpretation rather than a brief definition for the theoretical framework of this term. There are two dimensions to understanding citizen journalism: an appreciation of alternative journalism and a historical perspective on citizen journalism.

It is important to discuss the concept “alternative journalism” because citizen journalism is a form of alternative journalism. It is usually used in opposition to mainstream journalism. As Harcup states, “the phrase alternative journalism today refers to the more journalistic elements to be found within alternative media; that is, media practices typically conducted in a relatively participatory, non-professionalised and non-commercial way that involve reporting and/or commenting on factual and/or topical events” (2013: p.13). It includes alternative local press, radical press and citizen journalism (Harcup, 2013). There are three main characteristics which can be used to differentiate alternative journalism from mainstream journalism. First, individuals who conduct alternative journalism are usually not media professionals. More importantly, these non-professionals may also be the participants in the events they are reporting. Second, the purpose behind practicing alternative journalism is different from that underpinning mainstream journalism. Alternative journalism usually does not directly seek commercial profit, whereas mainstream journalism emphasizes market forces. Thirdly, alternative journalism provides space for those whose voices are usually not delivered by mainstream media. In this sense, alternative journalism has various meanings, including the radical press, the non-mainstream

press and the non-professional press. However, as the understanding of alternative journalism in this section aims to provide us with a better understanding of citizen journalism, it is reasonable to emphasize its non-professionalism as the key feature of alternative journalism. “Alternative journalism is broadly conceptualized as the journalism of amateurs” (Atton and Hamilton, 2008: p.58). Therefore, alternative journalism can be defined as a form of media practice conducted by non-professionals which focuses on members of communities in other terms than as mere consumers.

It is noteworthy that alternative journalism did exist before the introduction of the internet. Nevertheless, the internet has empowered the practice of alternative journalism. As Harcup suggests,

“Alternative media have continued in other forms, most notably on the internet, utilising information and communication technologies that supplement and exponentially increase opportunities for sociality, community, mobilization, knowledge construction and direct political action. Publishing material on the internet removes the financial and physical burdens of printing and distributing alternative newspapers, although it still requires both capital and time” (2013: p.74).

In this sense, although alternative journalism is not a product of the internet, the internet has facilitated the popularity of this form of journalism and increased its importance. As a form of alternative journalism, citizen journalism has almost certainly also been empowered in the era of the internet.

A historical perspective provides another dimension to comprehend citizen journalism. A number of published newspapers before the introduction of the internet can be regarded as the early form of citizen journalism, as the reports published

within these newspapers were produced by individuals who had not been trained to be journalists. Harcup suggests that alternative newspapers published during the 1984-1985 miners' strike in the UK are significant examples for a study of citizen journalism because mainstream media left significant margins for reporting the event. One of these newspapers is called *city issues*. Although this alternative newspaper was not published regularly, its openness towards the striking miners made its audience realize the possibility that they too could be the producers of the newspaper. Another alternative newspaper which practiced citizen journalism is called *Leeds Other Paper* (LOP). This provided more original "alternative reportage" than did *city issues*. The LOP engaged significantly in the practice of citizen journalism. On the one hand, it recruited a number of volunteers and participants who were neither trained nor paid journalists. On the other hand, it produced rather rich news reports which allowed a large number of sources to provide information which was neglected by mainstream media (2013). Although the term "citizen journalism" was not widely used to describe newspapers such as *city issues* and *Leeds Other Paper*, these newspapers are in line with the characteristics which are used to define citizen journalism contemporarily. In this sense, it is reasonable to believe that so-called citizen journalism, an expression widely used to describe user-generated news information produced by non-professionals has existed as a form of alternative journalism for a relatively long time.

Nevertheless, scholars find little controversy in the idea that internet technology has significantly precipitated the spread and the influence of citizen journalism. Pavlik finds that the relationship between news organisations and their public has been changed; rather than the media-centralized model of communication in the newspaper and broadcast media, the process of producing news in an internet context is more like “a dialog between the press and the public” (2001: p.235). This change implies that the public has begun to participate in the production of news. More importantly, such change has significantly impacted on the content of mainstream media, as editors find that they should consider using news information provided by online citizen journalism when they play the gatekeeping role (Lewis *et al*, 2010). In addition, user-generated journalism, especially the non-professional news provided by the public in their weblogs, is emphasized by scholars such as Bivens. Bivens believes that blogs which provide alternative news stories are increasingly important, especially for conflict reporting such as the reports from the Iraq wars. She also suggests that news blogs have great value in countries where information control policies are extremely strict (2008: p.119). In this sense, it is rational to argue that the internet has modified journalism towards being a more participatory practice.

Nevertheless, although the internet has transformed journalism in various ways, it is not satisfactory merely to ascribe these changes to the nature of internet technology. It seems rational to see the transformation of journalism related to its online context as a combination between the development of internet technology itself

and socioeconomic needs. On the one hand, internet technology was not invented for journalism. However, it developed over several decades to become a new media technology. Originating as part of a military network in order to protect information when under nuclear attack, ARPAnet, the precursor of the internet, was not related to journalism at all when it was invented. The ARPAnet was developed slowly between the 1960s and the 1980s, during which period only a limited number of institutions, such as military and university research departments, were able to access this electronic network. The internet was not introduced into journalism practice until the World Wide Web was invented in the 1990s (Burnett and Marshall, 2003; Boczkowski, 2004; Briggs and Burke, 2009). On the other hand, the ideas of a consumer-oriented news business and participatory practices within journalism had been proposed before the internet became widely used. According to Boczkowski, due to the steady decline of the newspaper business, smaller profit margins from advertising and less homogenized consumer taste, American daily newspapers have been considering how to utilize new technologies so as to interact with their audiences since the 1980s. The socioeconomic context required journalism to find a way to use new technologies to produce a readership and create more benefits (Boczkowski, 2004). Therefore, based on the analysis above, it is reasonable to interpret the influence of the internet on journalism as a combination of two dimensions: the development of specific technology and the socioeconomic needs of a specific society.

2.44 The Identification of “Traditional Journalism” and “Online Journalism”

Terms such as “new media” and “new journalism” have emerged several times over the course of the development of journalism. Thus the contemporary period is not the first time that scholars have used the term “new journalism” to describe a form of journalism with dramatically changed professional principles or technological basis, while deploying “traditional journalism” to mean the form of journalism already in existence. For instance, a number of scholars assign the term “new journalism” to British journalism after the 1850s, a changed type of journalism that occurred as a result of the dramatically modified discourse within which journalism operated that was precipitated by the abolition of taxes on knowledge during that period (Conboy, 2004; Hampton, 2004). After this use of the term “new journalism” in Britain, it became a widely accepted description in the context of American journalism as exemplified by Tom Wolfe in 1970s. This term, in contrast to the earlier British use refers to a literary movement in which some journalists applied fiction writing techniques to non-fiction news reporting (Wolfe, 1975). The same term means different in the context of American journalism. According to Tom Wolfe, the “new journalism” is derived from four main devices. 1) “Scene-by scene construction” which means the necessity for journalists to witness the scenes first hand and recreate them for readers. 2) Recording the dialogue as full as possible. 3) “Third-person point of view” which means providing readers a real feeling of the news story and people

involved by treat a particular person of the event as a character in a novel. 4) The “Symbolic detail” which means the surroundings of the people who are involved are as important as the characters and the events (1975: p.46-47).

From a technological perspective, the 20th century witnessed much new technology which strongly influenced the development of journalism. Before the internet was invented, television, the “new media”, had a tremendous impact on the journalistic profession, while print journalism was seen as “traditional journalism” (Briggs and Burke, 2009). In this sense, it is necessary to define what “traditional journalism” is in a contemporary context before conducting any further research into the main topic.

The concept of “professional values” within journalism is one of the most important criteria used to differentiate “new journalism” from “traditional journalism”. “New journalism”, which emerged around the 1850s, as mentioned above, provides a good example to illustrate this principle. Compared with “traditional journalism”, which focused on expressing opinions for and on behalf of a specific political group, “new journalism” tended to report more on current affairs and pay more attention to people’s daily lives. “Professional values” is still used by contemporary scholars to define “traditional journalism”. However, scholars such as Heider *et al.* and Arant and Meyer claim that a new form of journalism called “public journalism” emerged in the late 20th century (Arant and Meyer: 1998; Heider *et al.*: 2005). According to Arant and Meyer, traditional journalism stresses values such as fairness and objectivity so as

to establish its credibility among readers and attract advertisers who want their products and services featured by such credible news media. “Public journalism”, however, “casts the press in a more active role of presenting information to the readers to motivate community action in order to solve problems and of creating the forum for citizens to become politically active” (1998: p.205). Rather than emphasizing the detachment of the press, public journalism engages the public more actively in local community life (Heider *et al.*: 2005). In this sense, by emphasizing different values, journalism has taken a number of different forms throughout its own history.

Besides professional values, technology is another essential criterion which differentiates “new journalism” from “traditional journalism”. As can be seen in the preceding analysis of the development of media technology, it is reasonable to believe that each new technological advance in the news media has to some extent changed the then adopted form of journalism and journalism practice. The internet is an oft-cited example of this phenomenon, particularly among scholars of journalism studies, because of its revolutionary “nodes system” (Lievrouw and Livingstone, 2006). A number of scholars define “traditional journalism” and “new journalism” through the characteristics of different forms of technology. According to Bardoel and Deuze, “The fourth kind of journalism - next to radio, television and print - is online journalism, seen as gathering and distributing original news content on the internet” (2001: p.93). Many scholars use the term “online journalism” to describe

internet-based journalistic discourse, while using “traditional journalism” for those forms of journalistic discourse that were originally offline, including both print and broadcast journalism (see, for example: Nguyen and Western, 2006; Matheson, 2004; Thomas *et al.*, 2004). Although these researchers can tend to either prudent or more radical opinions about the influence of the internet, they generally all use the terms “online journalism” and “traditional journalism” to grant their research greater clarity. Within studies of Chinese journalism, it seems that both the Chinese government and academics prefer to define “traditional journalism” and “online journalism” from a technological perspective (Hu, 2010; Qian, 2000). Thus, in this light, it seems reasonable to define “traditional journalism” and “online journalism” from a technological perspective.

Based on the analysis above, it is apparent that more than one criterion can be utilized to define the respective natures of traditional journalism and new journalism. The prevailing form of journalism has been changed many times by both cultural and technological dynamics. However, by considering the distinctive characteristics of the internet and by assessing the available literature, it seems more appropriate to define different forms of journalism from a technological perspective rather than from that of professional values for at least three reasons. First of all, unlike the forward-development of technology, the concept of professional values may repeat itself in history. Any currently popular value within journalism may not be new at all because it has already emerged many times before. Inversely, it is almost impossible

to find a new form of technology that has already been invented; nobody would argue that the internet was created before television. Secondly, in that research which focuses on the influence of the internet, “traditional journalism” is defined from a technological perspective because the internet itself is a new form of technology. Thirdly, considering that the Chinese government classifies journalism (newspapers, radio and television) from a technological perspective so as to be able to manage the news media in China, the rational choice would be to define “traditional journalism” and “online journalism” from a technological perspective in any study of Chinese journalism.

Chapter 3: History and Present: An Interpretation of Chinese Journalism

3.1 Introduction

Chinese journalism has developed for thousands of years, but the modern Chinese press did not emerge until the nineteenth century (Zhang, 2007: p.879). The literature in regard to the development of the Chinese press has contained much debate and varying perspectives. Historical studies have examined when both modern and general Chinese journalism emerged, and agree that the modern Chinese press emerged in the late Qing dynasty under the influence of Western missionary publications (Zhang, 2007; Fang *et al*, 2002; Bennett, 1983; Britton, 1933). The literature does, however, disagree about when the earliest Chinese journalism emerged (Fang, 1997; Ge, 1935). It is therefore necessary to analyse Chinese journalism's early development in order to understand its characteristics.

Chinese journalism stepped into a new era after the People's Republic of China was established in October 1949. Managed by a new government controlled by the Communist Party, Chinese journalism began to reposition itself in a changed social-economic context. The model of Chinese journalism was deeply influenced by the model deployed in the Soviet Union, especially before the policy of reform and

opening was applied in China in 1978. However, it seems unreasonable to claim that the model of Chinese journalism is just another example of the “Soviet Communist theory” described by Siebert *et al.* China had a different understanding of Marxism from that used in the Soviet Union even in Chairman Mao’s time (Chen, 1997). On the other hand, with the development of the domestic media market after the 1980s, market forces have become an important dynamic working on Chinese journalism, one separate and distinct from the dynamic shaped by ideological forces. A number of scholars have observed this significant difference and now use terms such as “Mao’s China” and “Post-Mao China” to interpret the two different eras that the People’s Republic of China has undergone so far (Lee, 2000; Zagoria, 1974; Zhang, 2000). In this sense, it is rational to analyse Chinese journalism in the People’s Republic of China through the generation of a framework that utilises two discrete time periods: Chinese journalism before 1978 and Chinese journalism after 1978.

Considering the special history and context of the Chinese press, however, it seems rational to argue that a specifically model of Chinese journalism does exist, although the key features of the model may have varied across different periods. The model in the late-Qing dynasty emphasizes the duty of enlightening the public from a higher status based on the philosophy of Confucianism, while it advocates the idea of free speech introduced from western countries to some extent. The comments and columns are as important as news reports in this model. The model during Mao’s era is completely different from the model of the late-Qing dynasty, as the main feature of

Chinese journalism has become the superior importance of serving the Party and the complete rejection of the media market. In terms of the contemporary model of Chinese journalism, such studies as Lee (2005) and Pan (2000) have concluded that both market logic and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) are shaping contemporary Chinese journalism. Chinese journalism serves both the political power and the readership in the contemporary model. Therein lies its contemporary distinctiveness. This chapter will therefore also examine contemporary Chinese journalism's characteristics and evaluate the extent to which the CCP and the market affect it.

This chapter presents a comprehensive understanding of Chinese journalism's history and current situation. Its two main topics are the origins of the Chinese press and the communist-capitalist model of contemporary Chinese journalism. Its first part discusses the origins of both the historical and modern Chinese press. Its second part analyses the characteristics of Chinese journalism in Mao's era. Its third part evaluates the current influence of the CCP and market forces on Chinese journalism.

3.2 The Chinese Press's Origins

Although most of the literature has concluded that the official gazette in imperial China, called *Di Bao*, was the first form of Chinese journalism, when the practice of journalism actually began is still a controversial subject (Zhang, 2007: p.12). Such studies as Fang *et al* (2002) and Ding (2002) have argued that the practice of

journalism in China can be traced to ancient times before the Qin dynasty (from 1644AD to 1912AD), but mainstream Chinese journalism studies agree that it began with *Di Bao* since the earlier journalism was not professional and was in the form of poetry and histories rather than news reports (Zhang, 2007: pp.13-14). It is therefore reasonable to approach early Chinese journalism by examining the influence of *Di Bao*.

In regard to modern Chinese journalism, however, both Western studies such as Bennett (1983) and Britton (1933) and Chinese studies such as Zhang (2007) and Fang *et al* (2002) have emphasised the significant impact of the Protestant missionary press in the late Qing dynasty and have maintained that this was its foundation (Volz and Lee, 2009: p.171). It therefore seems more relevant to analyse the effect of the Protestant missionary press in the late Qing dynasty than *Di Bao*, as it was more similar to the contemporary Chinese press.

It is therefore necessary to discuss both imperial China's official gazette and the Protestant missionary press during the late Qing dynasty in order to present a comprehensive picture of the origins of Chinese journalism. Since it had received no significant contact with Western journalism before 1815 (Zhang, 2007: p.12), this chapter will first discuss its development before 1815 and then in regard to the influence of the Protestant missionary press in the nineteenth century.

3.21 The Chinese Press Before 1815

The first Chinese newspaper was *Di Bao*, which was handwritten during the Han dynasty (from 202BC to 220AD) and then began to be printed during the Tang dynasty (from 618AD to 907AD) (Ge, 1935: p.24). Although the literature generally accepts that this was the case, the dynasty in which *Di Bao* first appeared is a matter of debate (Zhang, 2007: p.14). Fang *et al* challenged this because no reliable records of *Di Bao* have been found in Han dynasty documents and the first actual newspaper published in China appeared during the Tang dynasty (Fang *et al*, 2002: pp.4-6). Whether *Di Bao* first appeared in the Han dynasty or later, it was a handwritten document until the wide application of printing technology during the Song dynasty (Zhang, 2007: p.14). Neither the official gazette of the Han dynasty nor that of the Tang dynasty were therefore the actual beginning of the Chinese press.

The first significant stage in the development of Chinese journalism in imperial China therefore occurred during the Song dynasty, which governed from 960 AD to 1276 AD, when the development of printing technology enabled *Di Bao* to become a standardised official periodical gazette (Zhang, 2007: p.16). It underwent three main changes during this period. These were (a) that printing technology largely replaced handwriting in the publishing of newspapers (Journalism Studies Office of Fudan University, 1985: p.10), (b) that the imperial authority established what it called the Central Petition Court to manage official news distribution, and (c) *Di Bao*'s circulation grew and more people read it (Zhang, 2007: p.16).

The government's central bureaucracy then assigned the gathering, editing, and distribution of news to different departments within it (Zhang, 2007). The practice of journalism therefore became much more professional during this period as a result of an independent bureau managing news publication. Intellectuals as well as officials could read *Di Bao*, since non-governmental entities had permission to copy it. One of the most significant consequences of these changes was that it changed from being a channel for disseminating information to being the mouthpiece of the authorities (Fang et al, 2002; Zhang, 2007).

In addition to the development of *Di Bao*, an unofficial publication, which was called *Xiao Bao*, also emerged during the Song dynasty. *Xiao Bao* can be regarded as the tabloid of the Song dynasty, as it reported uncensored information, including gossip (Zhang, 2007: p.17). Although it was less important than *Di Bao* in imperial China, it remains noteworthy in regard to the development of the Chinese press. One reason for this is that its prevalence implied that a market for journalism started to emerge in the Song dynasty, as it emerged "as a result of a feverish demand for up-to-date news among the scholars", and the professional reporters who contributed to it could apparently also earn good livings (Zhang, 2007: pp.17-18). It emphasised the timeliness of its news to satisfy its readers' demand for political information (Fang et al, 2002: p.18), indicating that a potential market for journalism had emerged.

Another reason that the appearance of *Xiao Bao* is noteworthy is that the authorities did not censor it, even though it contained a type of commentary and even

criticism in regard to current affairs (Zhang, 2007; Fang *et al*, 2002). This means that unlike *Di Bao*'s role as an official mouthpiece, it had more freedom to report news. Although its publication became illegal later during the Song dynasty, imperial China was never able to eliminate this form of unofficial publication.

3.22 The Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missionary Press's Influence

Modern journalism came into being in China during the nineteenth century. Periodicals published by Western Protestant missionaries began to challenge *Di Bao*'s monopoly of the Chinese press and opened a new stage in the history of Chinese journalism (Zhang, 2007: p.30). The peace settlements between the Qing government and such Western countries as Britain and France guaranteed Western missionaries the freedom to operate in China, thereby enabling the development of a missionary press (Zhang, 2007: p.34).

The early Protestant missionaries' publishing activities, however, focused on Bible lessons and sermons in an effort to convert Chinese to Christianity rather than on journalism. It was not until the 1870s that the Protestant missionary press began to print more secular material (Volz and Lee, 2009: p.172), after which Wang Tao and other Chinese scholars openly acknowledged the Western model of newspapers and established their own periodicals (Mittler, 2004: pp.18-19). It is therefore reasonable to discuss the development of the Chinese press in the nineteenth century in three

parts. These are (a) the Protestant missionary press in the early nineteenth century, (b) the secularised Protestant missionary press in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and (c) the press that Chinese scholars established as a result of this.

3.23 The Protestant Missionary Press in the Early Nineteenth Century

The Protestant missionary press emerged before the signing of the peace treaties between the Qing government and the West. Volz and Lee (2009) found that “European and American Protestant evangelists had been publishing Chinese-language periodicals since the 1810s” (p.172). As noted earlier, however, they did not focus on journalism. The first publication that Robert Morrison, widely considered to be the father of the modern Chinese press, printed, for example, was a chapter of the Bible (Zhang, 2007: pp.35-36).

China Monthly Magazine, edited by Morrison and Milne in Malacca, was the first periodical in modern China (Zhang, 2007; Ding, 2002; Fang, 2002; Ge, 1935). Zhang (2007) noted that the most important reason why *China Monthly Magazine* should be considered to be the beginning of modern Chinese journalism is that “*China Monthly Magazine* carried current affairs, which was ... its most important journalistic feature” (p.37). *China Monthly Magazine*, however, along with two other missionary periodicals established in Malacca and Batavia, had only limited influence on the Chinese press. One reason for this was that only a few articles in them were news

reports. Fang *et al* could only identify two of *China Monthly Magazine*'s articles as news reports, while 84.5% of its content was religious messages (2002: pp.45-46). The purpose of these periodicals, furthermore, was to promote Christianity rather than to provide journalistic information, as preaching was the primary object of Milne's work (Britton, 1933: p.18). Although they had historical importance, these missionary periodicals in Malacca and Batavia had little impact on the Chinese press (Zhang, 2007: p.39).

Since Malacca was not in Chinese territory, however, it would be more reasonable to regard the journal *East West Monthly Magazine*, established in Guangdong in 1833 and edited by Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff, to have been the first modern periodical actually published in China (Zhang, 2007: p.881). Unlike *China Monthly Magazine*, most of *East West Monthly Magazine*'s content became secular, with religion playing a less important role (Fang *et al*, 2002: p.47). It did an excellent job of presenting facts in order to persuade the Chinese people of its point of view (Britton, 1933: p.23).

The appearance of *East West Monthly Magazine* marked the beginning of the process of the secularisation of the Protestant missionary press in China. It set an example for future missionary publications to follow with its emphasis on secular affairs and its "close connection with foreign communities and non-governmental lobbying organisations" (Zhang, 2007: p.41).

3.24 The Late-Nineteenth-Century Secularised Protestant

Missionary Press

The political environment in China became friendlier for Western missionaries after the 1860s. Shanghai's large foreign population and rapid growth made it unique among Chinese cities (Bennett, 1983: pp.17-18), so the centre of the missionary press in China moved there (Zhang, 2007: p.45). From 1861 until the end of the century more than 57% of the Chinese press was published in Shanghai (Fang, 1997: p.305).

Although Western missionaries had a more friendly environment for publishing periodicals in China during the latter half of the nineteenth century they did encounter four main challenges. These were that (a) they had to be proficient in the Chinese language, including vernacular Chinese and the various spoken dialects, (b) their limited resources and funding forced them to disregard their denominational and national differences and work together, (c) they had to indigenise Christianity to enable the local Chinese people to understand it and to persuade them to accept it, and (d) they had to introduce Western civilisation in a secularised way in order to promote evangelism in their non-Western environment, which could affect the content of what they published (Volz and Lee, 2009).

This situation led Young Allen, who established *Wanguo Gongbao* (*Chinese Global Magazine*), and many other missionaries to seek new ways to spread Christianity (Bennett, 1983: p.25). They emphasised the importance of timely

journalism, with Young Allen arguing that journalism was vital to their mission in China because it could answer people's needs (Volz and Lee, 2009: p.178). Although the prime purpose of the missionaries' work was to spread Christianity, their work therefore actually precipitated the development of modern Chinese journalism.

Wanguo Gongbao was the most influential periodical among all the missionary press publications in the nineteenth century (Zhang, 2007: p.46). Unlike earlier missionary publications, although its main purpose was still to spread Christianity it covered an extensive range of such timely topics as Chinese current events, local conditions, Sino-Western relations, Western life and institutions, and the reforms on-going in Japan (Bennett, 1983: p.172-189).

There are two main characteristics of *Wanguo Gongbao*. On the one hand, the news reports of *Wanguo Gongbao* suggested strong concern for the Chinese public. "Concern for the poor and appeals for contributions to charitable works were regular features of *Wanguo Gongbao*" (Zhang, 2007: p.48). On the other hand, *Wanguo Gongbao* paid much attention to China's weaknesses and the imperative for reform through its feature articles (Bennett, 1983). According to Zhang, *Wanguo Gongbao* played a significant role in advocating educational reform and the campaign for liberating women from foot binding (2007). It is worth noting that *Wanguo Gongbao* inspired Chinese scholars such as Liang Qichao and Wang Tao to establish their own press which means that the early newspapers established by Chinese scholars were influenced by *Wanguo Gongbao* more or less (Zhang, 2007: p.62).

3.25 Nineteenth-Century Chinese Scholars' Publications

Since the presses of most of the Western missionary publications were in China's treaty ports they influenced these areas more than other places. The early publications that Chinese people established were also published in these treaty ports. It is likely that their first newspaper was *Zhaowen Xinbao* in HanKou in August, 1873 (Fang *et al*, 2002: p.82; Ge, 1935: p.115), as such earlier newspapers in treaty ports as *Hui Bao* and *Shu Bao* were short-lived. Wang Tao's *Xun Huan Daily* was the first influential Chinese-published newspaper (Zhang, 2007; Fang *et al*, 2002; Cohen, 1974).

As "the leading newspaper in the first wave of the Chinese-run press", *Xun Huan Daily* was an entirely secular newspaper except for its Sunday issue (Zhang, 2007: p.63). One reason for its success was that it engaged in professional journalism practice in its news reports, which consisted of commercial news and general news. It presented its general news in the three subsections of excerpts from the government's *Peking Gazette* from Beijing, news from Guangdong Province, and news from other parts of China and foreign countries (Cohen, 1974: pp.77-78). Another reason for its success was that Wang Tao stressed both market and readership, putting its commercial section, which was usually twice as large as the general news section, on the front pages because he was aware of the value of the latest market prices and shipping information to Hong Kong (Cohen, 1974: p.77). He also published it as an evening newspaper to gain a 12-hour circulation advantage in advance of its competition (Fang *et al*, 200: p.86; Cohen, 1974: p.78).

The other important Chinese-run newspaper in the late nineteenth century was Liang Qichao's *Shiwu Bao*. The Qing government even decided that its officials were to receive a copy of *Shiwu Bao* as well as its official *Peking Gazette* in 1898 (Mittler, 2004: p.21). Its most influential part was Liang's original editorials, as these enabled it to become the best-selling periodical in China (Zhang, 2007: p.73).

Although these elite Chinese newspapers had little Christian content the Western missionary press, especially *Wanguo Gongbao*, did influence them. Wang Tao himself was a columnist of *Wanguo Gongbao*, and it and *Shiwu Bao* both had basically the same format (Zhang, 2007). It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the missionary press played an essential role in the emergence of modern Chinese journalism.

The transition from *Di Bao* to *Wanguo Gongbao* and then to *XunHuan Daily* and *Shiwu Bao* took Chinese journalism into a whole new era (Zhang, 2007: p.892). Although *Di Bao* was the earliest Chinese publication and had played an important role in the development of the Chinese press, modern Chinese journalism emerged from the influence of the Western Protestant missionary press, which both precipitated the modernisation of Chinese society and stimulated Chinese scholars to begin to realise the importance of newspapers. The missionary press also brought advanced printing technology to China, enabling the publication of large-circulation modern newspapers (Zhang, 2007). The earliest publishers of Chinese newspapers, furthermore, were either the missionary press's readers or its writers.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the development of the Chinese press was different to the development of the British press in its early stages. Unlike the Western press, politics rather than markets played the most important role in the Chinese press's early development, as *Di Bao*, the principal publication of imperial China, had no commercial content. Such early missionary periodicals as *China Monthly Magazine* also did not stress commerce, their main purpose being proselytising religion. As Volz and Lee (2009) noted, "Confucian literati despised business and emphasized their obligation to enlighten the masses, [while] missionaries regarded journalism as an evangelistic mission directed by strong religious beliefs, not by business" (p.179). Although Chinese scholars who managed newspapers such as Wang Tao began to address the importance of commercial market, the marketization of Chinese press was still developed rather slowly in the late Qing dynasty.

3.3 A Chinese Model of Journalism

The modern Chinese press has therefore been subject to Western influence. Although the missionary press had a strong impact on modern Chinese journalism, other influences were involved. The dynamism of the Confucian tradition also played an important role in the cultural transformation of the late Qing dynasty (Zhang, 2007: p.114). Lee characterised this complexity as a Confucian-liberal model of journalism.

This chapter will therefore now discuss the characteristics of this Confucian-liberal model of journalism in order to understand early Chinese journalism (Lee, 2005: p.108).

On account of the dramatic modifications to Chinese mainstream ideology since 1949, the social and cultural context within which Chinese journalism operates has seen many changes. Although Confucianism shares, to some extent, structural similarities with Maoism, Maoism is more a response in China to Leninism (Cheek, 1997: pp.3-10). Political power and the emphasis on media loyalty to the Party were the dominant forces behind Chinese journalism during the special period of Mao's time in office. However, it would be a simplification to regard Chinese journalism as another version of Soviet journalism without taking into consideration both Chinese culture and Mao's personal ideas. According to Huang and Yu, "Although media development in Communist China mirrored, on the whole, that of the former Soviet Union, the development of television as well as other forms of broadcast in China contained Maoist characteristics favouring [Mao's] radical political and ideological goals" (1997: p.563). Differences between the Russian and Chinese interpretations of Marxism-Leninism are reflected in various aspects of the respective societies, including the ideas behind managing journalism. In this sense, it is crucial to analyse the characteristics of Chinese journalism in the so-called "Mao's era of China" to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the specific model of Chinese journalism.

Although the Chinese Communist Party is still in power in post-Mao China, because the political background of the Chinese press has been changed dramatically since the 1980s by the policy of reform and opening, the characteristics of contemporary Chinese journalism have also been changed. Such studies as Latham (2000) have concluded that both the CCP and the market have influenced contemporary Chinese journalism, Latham noting that:

“The basic contradiction of media production is that the Party has consistently maintained the importance of the media as its promotional tool, prohibiting dissenting views, requiring support and explanation of Party policies and laying down strict codes of journalism practice. At the same time, it has required more and more media organizations to be self-financing and subject to the vagaries of the market which necessitates innovative, attractive journalism.” (p.634).

It is therefore necessary to evaluate to what extent the CCP and the market influence contemporary Chinese journalism. It is reasonable to assume that a Chinese model of journalism that is different to Western models has developed.

This section will therefore discuss three models of Chinese journalism. These are the Confucian-liberal model of the late Qing dynasty, Communist model of Mao’s era and the communist-capitalist model of post-Mao China.

3.31 The Confucian-Liberal Model of Late-Qing-Dynasty

Chinese Journalism

According to Weber, although Confucianism served the whole of society from the emperor to ordinary people, Confucian scholars believed that “Everything

depended upon the behavior of the officials and these men were responsible for the leadership of a society which was conceived as one large, patrimonially ruled community” (151: p.153). They therefore considered themselves to be among the leaders of society and responsible for enlightening ordinary people. Such Western liberal philosophers as Milton, however, advocated free expression and disdained censorship. Milton maintained that to avoid opening the mind to contrary opinions is to reject truth, making the purpose of a free press the finding of the truth (cited in Altschull, 1990).

Lee and Zhang have concluded, however, that both Confucianism and Western liberalism influenced the Chinese people who established newspapers in the nineteenth century (Lee, 2005; Zhang, 2007). Lee concluded that such important newspaper editors as Liang Qichao and Zhang Jiluan expressed both Confucian and liberal opinions in their editorials, and Fang *et al* found that Wang Tao had argued that China’s press should report affairs without censorship (Fang *et al*, 2002: p.80).

Liang Qichao maintained that the press should enhance the relationship between the authorities and ordinary people and make both of them better informed, and he and other newspaper editors stressed that their role was to enlighten people rather than to advocate for people’s rights (Lee, 2005). In this sense, Confucian intellectuals therefore asserted that they were in higher positions than ordinary people, that it was therefore their responsibility to educate people and serve the state, and that freedom of the press was for an elite group and not for everybody. This shows that although

nineteenth-century Chinese newspaper editors had begun to accept the concept of freedom of the press they still displayed Confucian characteristics.

3.32 The Communist Model within Mao's Era in China

Ideas of Marxism have been witnessed in almost every aspect of Chinese society since the People's Republic of China was established in October 1949. It was an inevitability that Chinese journalism would be transformed from its former model to the communist model during this timeframe. It is undoubtedly true that, because of the influence of the extremely specific political context initiated by Mao Zedong's authority, the model of Chinese journalism in this period can be seen to be significantly different from its counterpart in post-Mao China. However, this model of Chinese journalism is worth analysing for two reasons. On the one hand, conservative ideas about Chinese journalism in contemporary China are largely the successors to the ideas in Mao's era (Lee, 2000). It is thus reasonable to understand conservative ideas on contemporary Chinese journalism through analysis of the Communist model of Chinese journalism in place before the 1980s. On the other hand, Chinese journalism under an extremely centralized authority is radically different from its contemporary counterpart. Only when researchers learn how radical Chinese journalism was before the 1980s can they realise how significantly Chinese journalism has been changed by the market forces currently at work.

Since Chinese journalism was regarded as a model of Marxism journalism or Communism journalism, one of the most important ways to interpret the Communist model of Chinese journalism is to analyse how the ideas of Marxism regarding journalism have been developed and transformed from Marx to China via the Soviet Union. According to Chen, the original ideas about journalism provided by Marx and Engels are open and rational: Marx himself appreciated the journalistic ideas seen in democratic countries such as Britain and advocated freedom of the press and the abolition of censorship. Although Marx and Engels highlighted the ideology of the Communist Party in journalism practice, they believed it was essential to allow people to express disagreement towards the legislation of the Communist Party (1997). However, the democratic aspect of Marx's notions on journalism was not furthered by Lenin and Stalin when they established the role of journalism within the Soviet Union as a result of their own experience and political context. As Chen argues:

“Lenin, as a politician who had a democratic awareness, tried to establish a rational system for Party newspapers in the Russian Socialist Democratic Workers' Party but fell short of it. Afterward Stalin continued and kept Lenin's shortcomings and brought in a rigid way of journalism practices in the Soviet Union.” (1997: p.159).

Thus, it is apparent that the model of journalism deployed in the Soviet Union was different from Marx and Engels's original idea. In terms of Chinese journalism, although its theories were strongly influenced by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, they were based more on the specific political conditions and traditions of Chinese culture. Both external and internal dynamics caused differences between

Chinese journalism and Soviet journalism in Mao's era: for one thing, the conflicts between China and the Soviet Union forced Chinese politicians and other elite figures to reconsider what they had learned from the Soviet Union. Led by Mao Zedong, the Chinese elite constructed a distinctive interpretation of Marxism (Zagoria, 1974). For another, Mao Zedong himself and many other members of the Chinese elite during that period were inevitably influenced by Chinese culture, especially Confucianism (Fairbank, 1979). The educational background and working experiences of this elite allowed its members to combine the ideas of Confucianism with those of Marxism. Two main characteristics of Chinese journalism in this period can thus be observed.

The first is that the Chinese authorities underestimated the effect of the media market on the development of Chinese journalism, which caused the decommercialization of Chinese journalism. Instead of the concept of an "audience", the term "masses" was used to describe the readers and potential readers of the Chinese press. As Zhang remarks, "the audience is an institutionalized role relationship in the market-based media system that involves marketers, media producers and consumers of media products". However, "With the terms "masses" and "people", media became simply an avenue to objectify and strengthen the Communist Party's domination over people" (2000: pp.620-621). Lee also highlights the decommercialization of Chinese journalism in Mao's era. He finds that journalists were asked to serve two masters: the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party and the masses (2005). In contrast, the media market was despised by Mao Zedong and seen

as a product of capitalism and hence opposed to communism. In the light of this, Chinese journalism was developed along really quite radical lines during the Mao era.

The second point is that political forces and political conflicts played more important roles in Chinese journalism than ever before and even ever after. Mao embellished Lenin and Stalin's view of the press by claiming "politics takes command" to strengthen the authority of the Communist Party and his own position (Lee, 2005: p.114). Moreover, the political conflicts between Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi, who was the President of the People's Republic of China from 1959 to 1968, persuaded Mao to apply more radical ideas to Chinese journalism. To overcome Liu's ideas concerning journalism, Mao sent thousands of "bourgeois liberal" journalists to remote rural places in order to be re-educated by the masses (Lee, 2005). Although Mao claimed that this idea was developed from Marxism, it is reasonable to believe that internal political conflict was the true force behind such a radical idea.

Nevertheless, even under Mao's authority, journalistic professionalism was still emphasized by some Chinese Communist leaders and journalists. Upholding ideas about journalism unlike the radical ideas put forward by Mao, politicians such as the aforementioned Liu Shaoqi and Deng Tuo (the President of *People's Daily* from 1949 to 1958 and a ministerial rank officer) approved a more open concept of journalism. Liu highlighted both the importance of establishing systematic organizations for managing journalism and the professionalism of journalists to serve the readers better. He encouraged journalists to investigate true stories amongst local residents and even

argued that “having a lying paper is worse than having no paper” (Lee, 2005). Deng, an intellectual who was influenced by both Confucianism and Marxism, emotionally disagreed with Mao’s radical ideas. He stressed the importance of true facts in news reports and exhorted the press to make more effort on the public’s behalf to supervise the government’s work (Cheek, 1997).

It is also worth noting that a sense of investigative journalism, in the form of reportage, emerged in the Mao era. A number of journalists detected cases of bribery and abuses of power which had not been dealt with by the force of law and published such stories in the form of literature to avoid possible punishment. For example, Liu Binyan, a journalist for *China Youth Daily*, driven by a sense of journalistic professionalism and a desire for justice, published several such pieces of reportage, including the famous “Inside Story of the Newspaper” in 1956, to reveal the darkness then overwhelming Chinese society (Chan, 2010). In this sense, the idea of professionalism was heralded by Chinese journalists to some extent even early in Mao’s era.

Based on the analysis above, decommercialization and political-determinism are the main characteristics of the communist model of Chinese journalism in the Mao era. It is evident that both Leninist ideas and Mao Zedong’s personal authority shaped the model of Chinese journalism during such a special period. However, it is also worth noting that a sense of journalistic professionalism had already been recognised by a number of open-minded politicians and journalists even then.

3.33 The Communist-Capitalist Model of Post-Mao China

China's economic reforms have brought significant changes to the Chinese press in the post-1980s reform era. Zhao (1998) noted that:

“Economic reforms and an open-door policy introduced market logic into the Party-controlled news media system and led to a fledgling journalism reform movement and the emergence of discourse on media democratisation in the mid-1980s, which threatened to challenge the Party's monopolistic control” (p.2).

The Chinese press became more independent from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), more professional, and more responsible to its readership (Zhou, 2000: p.599). As noted earlier, the CCP and a market orientation have come to shape the Chinese press. Lee (2005) proposed that Chinese journalism is best understood as having become a communist-capitalist phenomenon combining communist ideological control and capitalist operations, and Pan (2000) noted that the Chinese news system has introduced market forces with no fundamental change in the current political system. The influence of the CCP and the market therefore needs to be analysed in order to understand Chinese journalism's characteristics in the post-Mao era.

It is evident that the CCP plays a significant role in the Chinese media. Media personnel have always had a close relationship with it. Although not all journalists are Party members, senior journalists and media managers usually are. Journalism, furthermore, is a route to promotion within the CCP and the state organisation. The chief editor of the *People's Daily* and the director of the New China News Agency, for example, are officials of ministerial rank rather than public figures (de Burgh,

2003: p.24). Membership in the CCP is therefore an influential tool for controlling the press. Another mechanism for controlling the press involves its ownership. In addition to their direct control over such state and Party-owned media as the *People's Daily* and China Central Television (CCTV), the authorities manage other media by controlling their licenses (Zhao, 2000: p.8).

Although the CCP plays an important role in controlling the Chinese media, communist ideology has little influence on it, as that ideology has become almost completely irrelevant to the lives of most Chinese citizens as their society has become increasingly market oriented (Zhou, 2001: p.603). Chinese journalists therefore aspire to press freedom and a new role other than of being mouthpieces for the CCP (Zhou, 2001: p.603).

Market mechanisms, however, have come to play a central role in Chinese media management since the 1980s, as news organisations have sought to profit from the reform policies: "News organizations have been trying to make money by taking advantage of the reform policies" (Li, 1998: p.311). Marketisation has had three major implications for the media. The first of these is that although the media have but limited autonomy, they have gained a significant amount of negative freedom, which means that they are operating increasingly according to commercial logic and less in obedience to state interference. This has resulted in journalists having greater freedom in reporting non-political news, although political coverage remains highly controlled.

The next major implication is that in order to increase their readership and thereby their incomes journalists have developed a high degree of media professionalism while continuing to follow the basic rules of state media policy. It therefore remains difficult and even dangerous for Chinese investigative journalists to reveal serious social problems.

The final major implication is that while liberating Chinese journalism to some extent, marketisation has also brought such ethical problems as corruption. Li Yuanjiang, for example, who developed the *Guangzhou Daily* into the largest and richest press group in China, was arrested for corruption (Lee, 2005: p.120-121).

Although the authorities stress the importance of communist principles in journalism practice, they also encourage media organisations to engage to some extent in market competition. The Chinese government, for example, has organised state media conglomerates to compete with transnational media conglomerates in the international market (Lee, 2003: p.10), and it has developed many semi-independent media organisations to compete in the domestic market (Huang, 2001: p.649).

Semi-independent media are semi-official Chinese media that have autonomy in regard to editorial, personnel, and financial matters but are not legally independent. These can be (a) media that license-holders contract out, (b) major Party organs' subsidiary media that they have commercialised, (c) joint-venture media organisations, and (d) industry-based media. The authorities fundamentally manage all of these, but with a stress on market logic. Their establishment constitutes an effort to make the

once highly monopolised media industry profitable (Huang, 2001: p.662). In this sense, although the Chinese authorities encourage the media to engage in market competition, therefore, their motive for doing so is profit rather than having a liberal press.

3.4 How has the Internet Influenced Chinese Journalism?

3.41 The Political-Economic Context of the Internet in China

As with any other media, the internet plays out its role under the influence of a specific political-economic context. One way to understand how the internet works is through, for example, analysis of the political-economic context of the internet in China. A number of scholars find that the Chinese government's attitude to the internet has been inconsistent. On the one hand, conservative officials worry that the internet will threaten the established political and media systems. The only interest of these conservative officials in introducing internet technology to China is to use the internet as a tool for surveillance (Kalathil and Boas, 2003). On the other hand, the progressive leadership within China believes that the internet provides a crucial opportunity for China's economic, political and social development in the 21st century (Kalathil and Boas, 2003; Tai, 2006). In this sense, it is crucial to emphasize the

tension between political control and economic modernization when discussing the political-economic context of the internet in China.

Similar to governments in many other authoritarian countries, the Chinese government has established various bureaus to control the development of the news media. Scholars hold that the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a steady expansion and strengthening of government agencies responsible for both the structure of media systems and mass communication content. Under the State Council, a number of administrations and departments such as the State Press and Publications Administration (SPPA) and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MII), both of which are still in operation today, were constituted (Kalathil and Boas, 2003; Zhao, 2008). The Chinese leadership even took over the management of the media more emphatically by formally establishing the State Leadership Group on Informatization in 2001, a body which has usually been headed by the premier (Zhao, 2008). However, due to the explosion of the internet, the role of the Chinese government has been further extended. New departments were added to the established media control administrations “with the responsibilities of monitoring internet news and Bulletin Board Services (BBS) and directing Party-state propaganda on the internet” (Zhao, 2008: p.23). In this sense, the importance of controlling the internet has been stressed through the state administration system.

Besides this state administration, the Chinese government has also issued several regulations and established the Chinese Firewall, known as “the Great Firewall”, to

control news and information on the internet. Since the first official policy paper, which was titled “Regulations for the Protection of Computer Information System Safety in the People’s Republic of China”, was issued by the State Council in 1994, a series of regulations have been set out (Tai, 2006). One of the most influential regulations, according to Yin, is that commercial websites without any mainstream news media background have been forbidden to engage in news coverage since 2000 (Yin, 2009: p.377). This regulation implies that independent commercial websites can only post news reports made by other news organizations. The significance of these regulations, as Tai states, is that “they make it clear that information considered to be deleterious on the internet in China is punishable”. However, there has been no clarification of what harmful information is and what is not (2006: p.98). Moreover, in order to strengthen direct control over news websites, the authorities demanded that internet corporations sign the Public Pledge on Self-Discipline, a pledge which would enable the establishment of self-censorship within the websites themselves (Zheng, 2008: p.65). On the other hand, the Chinese government filters news and related comments via the state’s firewall system. The Great Firewall and related technology can easily block websites or specific news in China (Tai, 2006; Hachigian, 2002). For example, the website of the *New York Times* had been blocked for years, until its editor complained directly to President Jiang Zemin (Hachigian, 2002: p.48). In this sense, the Chinese government has built a powerful system with a variety of means to control journalism on the internet.

Based on the analysis above, it is evident that the Chinese government emphasizes the significance of managing information on the internet, especially online news and comments. Nevertheless, political authoritarianism is just one dimension within the political-economic context of the internet in China. A number of scholars find that the Chinese government actively promotes the development of the internet for economic benefit and even political openness (Kalathil, 2002; Hachigian, 2002; Kalathil and Boas, 2003; Tai, 2006; Zhao, 2008; Sparks, 2008). “In contrast to some other authoritarian countries, the commercial growth of the internet is strongly encouraged” (Kalathil and Boas, 2003: pp.23-24). Market forces are also important for the development of the internet in China.

Market forces were introduced to the Chinese news media before the popularization of the internet. According to Massey and Luo, China began to commercialise its newspapers in the 1980s by decreasing the state subsidies which newspapers had received for a long time (2005: p.359). “The co-existence of market-driven media and political authoritarianism has lasted now for more than a decade” (Sparks, 2008: p.59). However, market forces seem to play a more significant role than other media in the development of the internet: the most important motive behind the introduction of the internet to China is commercial benefit, while the main purpose behind the establishment of the newspaper and broadcast media is propaganda for the Party. “The government’s enthusiasm about the internet has been largely driven by the realization that the internet represents a commercial gold mine

for the country's economy in the new century" (Tai, 2006: p.97). The government emphasizes the rules of the market when it promotes the internet. For example, the *People's Daily*, the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party, maintains a strong web presence that is much more flexible than its print counterpart in order to compete with websites owned by private companies (Kalathil: 2002).

It is worth noting that market forces are increasingly emphasized in online news media in China, while political authoritarianism is to some extent challenged by internet users and even journalists. Zhao finds that Chinese internet users had long learned how to penetrate firewalls to access forbidden content, while journalists and news media managers were utilizing sophisticated techniques to evade propaganda orders (2008: p.63). It is not a simple task to downplay these acts of resistance. For instance, internet reporting about an explosion at a school forced the government to revise the official version of the story (Zhao, 2008: p.63). In this sense, it is rational to regard the circumstances of the internet in China as a multi-dimensional context, in which no single force can dominate the others.

3.42 Censorship of the Internet in Chinese Journalism

Censorship of Chinese journalism is generally strict and follows a complicated procedure within the People's Republic of China. Current censorship of Chinese journalism includes three components: administration bureaus, law, and technology concerning the filtering and supervising of information on the internet. In this

research it is important to analyse censorship of Chinese journalism for two main reasons. First of all, censorship is a powerful tool that allows the government and the Party to control the flow of information in China; it affects the extent to which Chinese journalism can serve the public and monitor government work. Secondly, and in contrast, censorship of Chinese journalism is not an altogether steady and invulnerable system, especially in terms of online censorship. The vulnerability of the censorship system is an important reason why online journalism can strongly affect traditional journalism in the context of China. According to Hu, “in order to strictly control the free flow of information on the Chinese internet, the Chinese government enacts a set of laws and regulations which treat the internet in the same manner as traditional media” (2010: p.287). Hu’s argument implies that online censorship can, to some extent, be seen as an extension of censorship of traditional media. In this sense, it would be amiss to discuss online censorship without attempting to gain an understanding of the censorship of Chinese journalism as a whole.

The contemporary system of Chinese censorship is actually formed around administration bureaus led by the Department of Propaganda. Administrative means are the most important way of controlling the flow of information in China, where more than half the so-called laws and regulations are actually issued by the related governmental departments. Thus, interpreting the system of administration bureaus concerned with censorship is the first step towards understanding censorship of both online and traditional journalism in China. According to Zheng, censorship of

Chinese journalism is operated by parallel organisations at both Party and government levels: organisations at Party level include the Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (DOP) and local propaganda departments. Local propaganda departments, however, are answerable to both local committees of the Party and the Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee. Theoretically, it is the DOP's responsibility to ensure that the Chinese media work under rules in line with the Party's principles. On the other hand, a number of organisations work for the government under the State Council, including the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MII), Ministry of Culture, State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), State Press and Publication Administration (SPPA), State Council Information Office (SCIO) and the Xinhua News Agency (2008). It is noteworthy that the head of the DOP is usually a member of the Political Bureau, a state of affairs which has enabled the DOP to become the most powerful organisation controlling Chinese journalism. "It is the DOP that wields real control of the media under the rule known as the Party Principle, according to which the media must adhere ideologically to the Party line, propagate the Party message, and obey its policies" (Zheng, 2008: p.56). Thus, any form of Chinese journalism is controlled by both the Party and the government through this complicated system of administrative organisations.

Besides these administrative organisations, regulations and laws are also essential in the censorship of Chinese journalism. One of the most significant

problems of laws related to Chinese journalism is that so far there has been no independent press law passed by the legislature, a situation which has caused much criticism. Most of the regulations and laws related to Chinese journalism are issued by the aforementioned administrative organs, including the State Council, departments belonging to the State Council and even local governments (Hu, 2010). For example, the Interim Provisions on the Administration of internet Publication issued by the State Press and Publication Administration is more an administrative rule than an official law. As a result of the lack of legislation, regulations and policies related to censorship are unstable and sometimes paradoxical, which makes the policy determined by the DOP and the government an important criterion of censorship. Jernow observed a number of examples of the influence of such policy. For instance, an investigation into the Henan Province courtroom performed by the Shanghai Legal News was permitted by the policy of the local government (1993: p.90). Based on the analysis above, it can be thus argued that regulations related to censorship of Chinese journalism are generally not systematic but actually flexible in terms of detail.

Importantly, perhaps the most direct form of censorship exercised within Chinese journalism is self-censorship, operated by the newspaper or website itself. On the one hand, self-censorship in China is an essential way to filter false news, just as it is in the rest of the world. On the other hand, self-censorship also forms a vital means for Chinese journalism to serve the public while avoiding possible punishment. As Tong states:

“It is argued that the practice of self-censorship helps news rooms bypass political minefields, and at the same time increases the possibilities of the publication of reports on highly politically sensitive topics. In this sense, in the Chinese authoritarian media system, self-censorship has potentially become a force that increases media freedom instead of a threat to media freedom” (2009: p.593).

There can be little doubt that self-censorship is an approach that can lead to the control of Chinese journalism just as much as do the other methods within the overall censorship system. However, because of the increasing sense of journalistic professionalism, newsrooms which directly perform self-censorship are enabled to serve the public and criticize the government within the system by amending and re-constructing original reports to make the published reports acceptable to the authorities (Tong, 2009). In this sense, it is unreasonable to see self-censorship only as inhibitive to Chinese journalism.

In terms of censorship of Chinese journalism on the internet, there can be little doubt that it is a part of the censorship system as a whole. The related administrative bureaus and a system of regulations are responsible for the internet, since the Chinese government tends to manage online information by largely following the same idea as it employs for information in the other media (Hu, 2010). However, it is noteworthy that some bureaus and regulations are more important than others in administering censorship for the internet. Firstly, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MII), established in 1998 and re-constructed as the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology in 2008, is regarded as the regulator for the development of information technology in China (Zheng, 2008). Technically, MII is the core

authority which manages the operation of the internet; it has been granted the authority to offer or refuse licenses to internet service providers. Nevertheless, interests between administrations can be complicated and contradictory, especially when other bureaus such as the Department of Propaganda intrude into MII's field to serve political interests, although it must be noted that MII is responsible for supporting the development of the internet for mainly economic purposes (Zhao, 2008; Zheng, 2008). The phenomenon of such a paradox can be seen as a conflict between the political and economic dynamics surrounding the internet in contemporary China.

Secondly, it is important to highlight those regulations which specifically focus on the internet in order to understand the context of online censorship. According to Qiu, there have been three formal regulations issued by the central government concerning the internet in China: the first one is the Temporary Regulation for the Management of Computer Information Network International Connection, a regulation announced by the State Council in 1996. This regulation grants the Chinese government a monopoly on international network connections by forbidding any individuals or social groups to establish direct international connection by themselves. It also marks the first time that the Chinese government formally forbade the dissemination of "harmful information" through the internet. The other two regulations are the Ordinance for Security Protection of Computer Information Systems and the Security Management Procedures in internet Accessing, which were issued by the State Council and the Ministry of Public Security in 1994 and 1997

respectively. These two regulations aim to protect national security and investigate online criminals; however, in addition, they strengthen the practical power of online censorship by granting the Ministry of Public Security the right to probe “harmful information” (1999/2000). These three regulations have led to a number of subsequent regulations issued by departments at different administrative levels. However, as Liang and Lu propose, these multidimensional regulations concerning censorship are implicit, changeable, overlapped and sometimes contradictory to each other (2010). For example, such a confusing system of regulations virtually approves the freedom of online journalism to some extent by making the framework of censorship vulnerable. For example, although Chinese government forbids commercial websites without a mainstream media background from employing their own certified journalists to investigate news reports independently, a number of reports have actually been filed by commercial websites using uncertified “journalists”; these websites have gone unpunished (Yin, 2009). Thus, the regulation system for online censorship seems rather problematic.

It is also noteworthy that censorship of the internet depends more on technology than does censorship of the traditional media. The importance of a systematic technological project known as the Great Firewall has been emphasized by many scholars because of its significant effect on censorship of the internet (Clayton et al., 2006; Liang and Lu, 2010). According to Clayton et al., the Great Firewall is one of the most sophisticated internet filtering systems in the world. It operates as follows:

“It works, in part, by inspecting web (HTTP) traffic to determine if specific keywords are present. These keywords relate to matters such as groups that the Chinese Government has banned, political ideologies that they consider unacceptable and historical events that the regime does not wish to have discussed” (2006: p.20).

The main purpose of establishing this firewall is to prohibit internet users from accessing content concerning specific topics. Thus, a news report which stands in contrast to approved political principles cannot be read by internet users online even if this report has been posted. There can be little doubt that the Great Firewall is a more direct and efficient means of censorship than are the orders and regulations issued by administrative bureaus. Moreover, it seems the government tends to filter “harmful information” through the Great Firewall to stem provocative discussions rather than to accuse people who disseminate “harmful information” online and thus break the regulations established by online censorship, particularly if such information has not tremendously affected Chinese society (Zheng, 2008). Therefore, taking into account the lack of legislation passed and the advantages provided by the Great Firewall, it seems that the Chinese government controls the internet more from a technological perspective.

Self-censorship is also important with the internet. In addition to establishing technological restrictions on internet information, the Chinese government exerts high levels of pressure on commercial companies allowing it to inspect information published on their websites (Liang and Lu, 2010). Therefore, commercial websites are actually forced to share responsibility with administrative departments for online

editorial censorship. However, the practice of self-censorship on the internet is significantly different from self-censorship within the traditional media for two reasons: first of all, a website can contain much more information than can a newspaper or TV channel, which makes self-censorship for the internet more difficult and slower. More importantly, self-censorship for the traditional media always works before the publication of newspapers or broadcast of radio and television shows. However, self-censorship for the internet is largely put into operation after the publication of the online information, which provides opportunities for more information to appear on the internet.

The censorship of Chinese journalism is systematic and strict. Nevertheless, any control of the internet is more difficult than control of traditional journalism in contemporary China. This can be demonstrated by considering the characteristics of such censorship. The conflicts of interest between different departments and the contradictory regulations concerning online censorship provide more opportunities for online free speech. Moreover, although the Great Firewall is one of the most sophisticated internet filtering systems in the world, it can be penetrated by a number of technological methods. As Ling suggests, “a market-based approach that focuses on innovation of technologies” could provide a feasible method for overcoming online censorship (2011: p.175). Clayton et al. have proved that, as the core part of the Great Firewall, the TCP reset packets technology is problematic and thus creates many ways to bypass the censors’ inspection (2006). Liang and Lu also claim that

there are various less professional ways to penetrate the Great Firewall, including the use of proxy servers and private emails and the manipulation of search terms (2010). Thus, it is reasonable to argue that the dissemination of online information allows more freedom than is to be found in the traditional media in the context of China.

3.43 The Influence of the Internet on Chinese Journalism

The analysis above shows that China has a distinct political and economic context for the development of the internet. However, as Xin argues, “China’s special socio-political context does not mean that the impact of the weblog phenomenon on the country’s political and media system is less dramatic than in Western democracies” (2011: p.181). Considering that most Chinese internet users (75.8%) choose news as their most important online information, the internet seems to possess some potential in terms of influencing Chinese journalism (Wu, 2005: p.216). Scholars such as Chen *et al*, Massey and Luo believe that the internet can either be a beneficial tool for mainstream journalism organizations or provide an alternative approach for producing and disseminating news (Massey and Luo, 2005; Chen *et al*, 2006). Moreover, a number of academics point out that the practice of providing news by non-professionals, a practice called “citizen journalism”, has contributed much to the public sphere and has even impacted on mainstream journalism practice to some extent in China (Nip, 2009; Xin, 2011, Reese and Dai, 2009).

Considering that the primary motive behind introducing the internet to China been for commercial profit, as well as, since the 1980s, the commercialization of newspapers and broadcast, it is perhaps not surprising that the internet has played an important role in extending the influence of mainstream news media for economic purposes. According to Wu, news websites with a mainstream news media background represent one of the most important parts of the online news media landscape in China: “The traditional news media’s online service still possesses the privilege in news gathering and news distributing” (2005: p.219). The operation of these news websites follows the general strategy of the mainstream media they are based on. Massey and Luo’s research indicates that websites with a traditional news media background follow the least-cost model, which implies that media spend the least they can to attract the largest audience they can for their advertisers (2005: p.362). Websites based on newspapers have quite similar content to their newspaper editions, whereas only limited internet features are displayed due to the need to control expense (Massey and Luo, 2005). In this sense, rather than compete with other news websites, news websites with a newspaper background operate as online editions of newspapers, largely in order to extend the influence of their news organizations as a whole.

Moreover, the internet extends the influence of the mainstream news media not only for commercial benefit but also for political purposes. Political authoritarianism strongly influences both those websites owned by the mainstream news media and

commercial websites owned privately. Although commercial profit is emphasized on the traditional news media's websites, these websites have to sacrifice their traditional role as the Party's mouthpiece when economic competitiveness directly conflicts with political correctness (Wu, 2005: p.219). In addition, even commercial online news services have to regard political correctness as the most essential criterion when they report momentous political affairs such as Taiwan's presidential elections. For example, by comparing the news website of the *People's Daily* and one of the most popular commercial websites, *Sina*, Han found that "online news frames are identical with the frames underlying traditional mainstream media when it concerns coverage of Taiwan" (2007: p.40). In this situation, the internet has become an important tool for disseminating news produced by traditional news media.

On the other hand, the internet has provided an alternative way of conducting journalism by a variety of means in China. Although news websites amplify the influence of the traditional news media on which they are based or follow the state's political directions on important political affairs, it does not mean that news websites have not made any changes to journalism practice. The characteristics of internet technology enable news websites to provide more attractive content and user-friendly interfaces for their audiences. Massey and Luo suggest that news websites spend as much as necessary to show how different they are from the newspapers they are based on, especially by showing internet features such as multimedia content (2005). In regard to political affairs such as the Taiwanese presidential election, although even

commercial news websites are controlled by the criterion of political correctness, these websites focus on different frames from the traditional news media in order to compete with them. In terms of the cooperation between the news website of the *People's Daily* and the commercial website *Sina*, "being more market-oriented, *Sina* selected more sensational coverage, whereas *People* duplicated the tone of the *People's Daily*, the organ of CCP" (Han, 2007: p.54). These studies imply that the internet has challenged the monopoly and the order of the traditional news media.

Furthermore, the internet has enabled commercial news portals to enjoy the elasticity of aggregating news via many various sources and diffusing the news through their internet features (Wu, 2005: p.219). Considering the fact that regional traditional news media are constrained by a serious degree of censorship when they report local negative news such as crime and corruption, and that the state newspapers and broadcasters always see their role as the Party mouthpiece as their principal mission, commercial news websites have influenced the traditional news media by providing unlimited news reports and comments and disseminating news across geographical boundaries. Xiao and Polumbaum's research into crime coverage on commercial news websites shows that "the expanse of additional factual information" and related discussions on the internet have actually challenged the tone of the traditional news media on the same topic. "The internet's unlimited space and allowance for simultaneous interactivity among many voices are leading to qualitative changes in public communications as well as quantitative increases in information

flow” (2006: p.54). The internet has thus offered alternative means for journalism practice.

It is worth noting that the increasing credibility of online news services has impacted on traditional journalism. Chen *et al.* (2006) point out that journalists believe that the traditional media’s news websites are more credible than commercial news portals. However, one important reason for this evaluation is that journalists try to defend the established authority of the traditional news media, an authority which has been challenged by commercial news websites: “Given the tight political control of the mainstream media, there is indeed a tendency among Chinese journalists to see (or perhaps wish for) online media as an alternative institution” (2006: p.941). The increasingly credible commercial news websites have influenced the Party’s model for journalism and its related values. “Webpages no longer wait for Xinhua News Agency’s official version of issues but instead take the lead to make news” (Chan, 2003: p.170). Changes brought by the internet may even reform the profession of journalism and the construction of news (Chen *et al.*, 2006).

Besides information offered professionally by news websites, the practice conducted by non-professionals of providing news and related information, known as online “citizen journalism”, is also highlighted by a number of scholars. Although it is a controversial issue as to whether citizen journalism can be seen as a genre of journalism, when considering China that has the largest number of internet users in the world, it is not appropriate to underestimate the influence of such user-generated

content on the news media (Xin, 2011). The interactivity among different voices and the efficient diffusion of news have enabled the internet to influence both agenda setting and the public sphere functions of the traditional media.

Several researchers have found that the internet plays an important role in agenda setting. For one thing, the efficient diffusion of news allows the internet to make certain topics popular across the country. For example, in the case of “the death of Sun Zhigang”, although the story was first reported by a local newspaper called the *Southern Metropolitan News*, it was the internet which spread this story to other parts of the country on the same day and precipitated a nationwide discussion of this topic (Zhao, 2008; p.255). Since the *Southern Metropolitan News* was not allowed to be sold outside Guangdong province, stories it reported could not set agendas for audiences across the whole country without the influence of the internet. For another, information and comments provided by internet users online can also set the media agenda. News related information and comments on the BBS in China often question arguments or opinions made by the traditional news media, which enables people to focus on these doubts and even force traditional news media to supplement their previous reports (Nip, 2009). For example, Nip found that citizens’ posts on the Wenchuan earthquake “led to a search for facts about whether the government was covering up the prediction of the earthquake, a search which both citizens and professional journalists alike were to follow” (Nip, 2009: p.100). In this sense, online citizen journalism has influenced the form of the traditional media’s news reports.

Moreover, as Dahlgren points out, the internet has extended the existing public sphere and even provided an online context for that sphere in which internet users can raise questions (2005). According to Wang and Bates, the public sphere is a kind of space which involves public and private discourse, “providing the marketplace of ideas vital to a democracy” (2008). With regard to the context of China, since traditional news media have a long history of playing the Party mouthpiece role, the internet seems important in building the public sphere. Scholars such as Zhao and Yang have discovered a number of cases which indicate that the internet has played a significant role in the public sphere in China (Zhao, 2008; Yang, 2009). In his analysis of a case concerning discrimination, Yang found both that the internet provided opportunities for powerless citizens to voice their experiences and that online interactivity and discussion concerning these experiences brought other related issues into the public sphere (2009: pp.40-41). In terms of the increasing popularization of the internet in China, it seems reasonable to emphasize the importance of the internet in shaping the public sphere in China.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Pilot Studies

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the design of research methods for this thesis in detail in order to prove the rationale and effectiveness of the methodology. Three major components are included in this chapter. The first part describes the aims of this research and specifies the research questions. It will explain what exactly this study focuses on. The second part justifies the rationale of research methods adopted in detail: 1) it will explore research methods which have been used in related studies in order to clarify the gap which can be filled from a methodological perspective; 2) it will discuss what methods are used and how they are conducted in detail, including the way of collecting data and the way of analysing data. The third part is an analysis of pilot studies. It aims to test the effectiveness of the research methods in practice and figure out possible improvements for further stages.

4.2 Aims and Research Questions of the Study

This research aims to estimate the extent to which internet technology has impacted on traditional journalism in the context of China by exploring insider views given by Chinese news media professionals. As discussed in the literature review, the

term “traditional” is interpreted from a technological perspective in this study, which indicates the three main offline media (newspaper, radio and TV) which had existed before the internet was invented. To be specific, the term “traditional news media” indicates newspaper, radio and TV as platforms of publishing news. The expressions of Chinese journalists will be highly focused to explore how these professionals evaluate the change of Chinese journalism. Scholars have discussed a number of ways in which pre-existing forms of journalism have been impacted upon by internet technology in the literature. However, the literature rarely investigates journalists’ perceptions of these assumed changes, especially in specific political-economic contexts. As Creswell proposes, research questions should build on the body of existing literature in critical studies (2009). Changes in traditional journalism under the influence of the internet described in the existing literature can be tested by asking media professionals to evaluate if such descriptions can be applied in China’s specific political- economic context. In this sense, the researcher has established the first research question as follow:

Research Question 1: How do news media professionals perceive that changes in traditional journalism are a result of the influence of the internet in China?

Furthermore, according to Chan *et al.*, as well as many other researchers, journalists who have experience working for traditional news media (newspaper, radio and TV) usually hold different views from those journalists who have experience only in online news media in terms of evaluating the influence of the

internet in China (2006). This is because traditional news media are offline and state-owned in China. It is noteworthy that the differences in the way that journalists rate the extent to which the internet impacts on traditional journalism are based on their diverse experiences and how they conceive of journalism. This researcher believes that the evaluations provided by journalism professionals who have experience of working for traditional news media may, in a defense of the values found in such media, measure the influence of the internet differently when set against the opinions of journalism professionals who have experience of working for online news media only. Thus, the researcher has posed the second research question as follows:

Research Question 2: How do news media professionals perceive the model of Chinese online journalism as a competitor for Chinese traditional journalism?

In addition, as implied by many scholars' research and reports offered by the Chinese government, such as the CNNIC, imply that there is a correlation between the development of online news media and the preferences of younger generations in their consumption of news, it is reasonable to explore how Chinese journalists perceive this correlation in the context of the Chinese media market. Therefore, this researcher has posed the third research question as follows:

Research Question 3: How do news media professionals perceive the correlation between the preferences of the younger generation and the development of online news media?

4.3 Rationale and Design of Research Methods

4.31 Research Methods within Existing Research

Research methods which have been used in existing studies concerning the internet and its effect on journalism will be discussed in order to rationalise the research method used in this work. On the one hand, although deviations and limitations cannot be completely prevented, the limitations apparent in the existing research can assist the researcher in avoiding having to face the same problems. On the other hand, an analysis of research methods which have been used in such research can help to inspire a new perspective towards methodology design based on the approaches considered by previous scholar. In other words, such an analysis would assist the research in filling the gaps within the existing research in terms of methodology. Since both quantitative and qualitative research methods can be found in existing research, the researcher will analyse both of their research methods separately.

A number of scholars have applied quantitative research methods in their research into the internet's influence on news media. For instance, Chan *et al.* used quantitative surveys as their methodology to study how China's journalists estimate the credibility of Chinese news websites (2006). Massey and Luo employed quantitative content analysis in their research to test market-based theories of online journalism by studying the relationship between printed Chinese newspapers and their

web editions (2005). Nicholas *et al.* utilised quantitative surveys as their research method to study the impact of the internet on information seeking for journalists in a British context (2000). Besides journals, the use of quantitative statistics in books implies that quantitative research methods are generally used by authors in their studies concerning the effects of the internet, although some of these books do not have a chapter solely devoted to methodology (Yang, 2009; Tai, 2006).

Quantitative research methods are suitable for so-called “description research” which explores knowledge of the nature and shape of society, as these methods collect data from a large scale of respondents (Vaus, 2001). According to Creswell, quantitative strategies provide a “numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (2009: p.12). In other words, quantitative research methods such as surveys and content analysis can allow researchers to use numeric data to measure the landscape of news media in the light of their chosen topic. In terms of the research mentioned above, for example, Chan *et al.*'s research describes traditional journalism's responses to the development of online journalism in China by quantifying journalists' perceptions and the use of online news media, while Massey and Luo's research demonstrates the correlation between a Chinese newspaper's circulation and the technical complexity of its website by analysing quantitative data relating to the content of the website (2006; 2005). Both these studies successfully present the interaction between traditional journalism and online journalism.

Nevertheless, the existing research also reveals several limitations in the use of quantitative research methods to study the influence of the internet on Chinese traditional news media. The most significant limitation, as demonstrated by Mitchelstein and Boczkowski, is that quantitative methods are not usually able to explain in-depth the reasons behind the phenomenon, which then often leads to superficial conclusions in the research (2009). One important reason behind this kind of limitation is the trend towards a convergence of different media technologies (print, broadcast and web-based) “has not been uniform across organizations, industries, and countries as a result of different patterns in the merging of the old and new logics of content production that mark the various media involved” (Mitchelstein and Boczkowski, 2009: p.570). Another reason for this limitation is that previous quantitative studies, especially those which use quantitative surveys, fail to provide in-depth internal insights into the complex journalistic production process which encompasses a diverse range of activities (Machill and Beiler, 2009: p.179). Furthermore, although a quantitative methodology may be appropriate for measurement research, by considering the rather large populations involved in studies of Chinese media studies, the reliability of research samples must be questioned. The Chinese government has authorised around 260,000 press cards to recognise the legal status of journalists. Besides, there are a lot more media professionals conducting journalism practice without such certificates. With the permission of news organisations, they also do interviews, publish their reports on newspapers, broadcasts and the internet, which means that the number of Chinese journalists is in fact much

larger than 260,000. In Chan *et al.*'s study, for example, the scholars selected journalists from only two Chinese cities (Shanghai and Hangzhou) as their sample to represent the population of all Chinese journalists. Since both cities are large cities in the economically advanced east part of China and the whole population of Chinese journalists is rather large, it creates a dilemma as to whether such research can accurately describe the situation of Chinese journalism or not.

Qualitative research methods, especially interviews are also widely used in researching perceptions of journalists concerning changes in journalism. For example, Bivens applies qualitative observations and interviews as her methodology to explore how new media are transforming traditional journalism (2008). Huang uses qualitative interviews as his research strategy to study the development of a semi-independent press in the context of a rapidly changing China (2001). Thurman and Myllylahti use in-depth interviews and newsroom observation to study the influence of the internet on printed newspapers by conducting research into Europe's first online-only newspaper, *Taloussanomati* (2009). Qualitative research methods, especially interviews, can also be found in a number of theses. For instance, de Burgh explores the process of news production and journalistic beliefs in China by interviewing Chinese journalists (2001). Hung estimates the impact of the internet on Chinese public opinion by interviewing staff who work for Chinese major portal websites (2005). It seems apparent, then, that the use of qualitative interviews represents an appropriate approach to research concerning perceptions of journalists.

Compared with quantitative research, qualitative research methods are more suitable for so-called “explanatory research” which aims to explore and interpret the meaning social groups or individuals relate to a specific problem in human society (Vaus, 2001; Creswell, 2007; Creswell, 2009). According to Snape and Spencer, qualitative research aims to provide “an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories” (2003: p.3). At least two essential advantages of using qualitative research methods within the approach of this research in journalism studies in an economically and technologically changing China are revealed by the existing research. First, a relatively small scale sample can provide sufficient data through the use of qualitative research methods (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Snape and Spencer, 2003). Since the total population of Chinese internet users and Chinese journalists is enormous (approximately 538 million and 260 thousand respectively), a quantitative research sample may fail to represent the real situation of the whole population, whereas a qualitative research sample can soon achieve saturation point in its collection of sufficient data (Deacon *et al.*, 1999). None of the five studies mentioned above features more than 40 interviews with journalists; however, these studies still provide rich data and discussion to explain the trends they focus on. Second, qualitative research methods successfully avoid the “uniformity problem” caused by quantitative methodologies, as mentioned above by Mitchelstein and Boczkowski: “Qualitative scholars find that outcomes are mixed at best, because technological and organizational changes following the introduction of the internet

into news work might cause stress and frustration” (Mitchelstein and Boczkowski, 2009: p.570). In this sense, qualitative research methods can provide more evidence and credible data about the impact of the internet on Chinese journalism.

However, the limitations of qualitative research into the influence of the internet on the journalistic field should not be underestimated. The most salient problem to be found in the qualitative research conducted thus far is that these studies do not compare the internal insights from journalists who have experience of working for traditional news media (newspapers, radios and TV stations) to those of journalists who only have experience of working for online news media (news websites). For instance, Thurman and Myllylahti’s research includes interviews solely with journalists who work for the online-only newspaper *Taloussanommat* (2009). Since perceptions of the interviewees reflect their subjective experience and working contexts (Silverman, 2006), it would be better if researchers compared data collected from journalists who have experience of working for traditional news media with those who only have experience of working for online news media.

4.32 Design of Research Methods

In line with the research questions and the successful examples provided by the existing research, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are available for this research. Unlike the methodology of natural science, it is difficult to judge a research method as invalid if it can provide meanings within the social context in

which it works (Halloran, 1998). However, as this research focuses on exploring journalists' perceptions, the qualitative interview is the most reasonable method to collect data for the research purpose. As Byrne argues, "qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals' attitudes and values" (2004: p.182). Chinese media professionals' perceptions and interpretations of their perceptions are the core of analysing this study on account of research questions established above. Therefore, in-depth interview is an appropriate method for this research. The detailed rationale and design of research methods are as follows:

4.33 Design of the Interviews

Qualitative interviews will be used as the major research method to answer research questions in this study. According to Mason, the term "qualitative interview" usually refers to "in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing" (2002: p.62). A semi-structured interview permits "a high degree of openness" and "the recording of detailed information", which makes it a superior way of collecting data with analytical meanings (Hopf, 2004: p.204). As journalists' perceptions of changing traditional journalism in the context of China have not explored much, semi-structured interviews can generate much data for new analytical themes. Moreover, semi-structured interviews can be regarded as conversations with topics and purposes which indicate that interaction between the interviewer and interviewees plays a significant role in the process of interviewing (Burgess, 1984; Marshall and Rossman, 1989). Unexpected meanings can be created in an interaction,

so the researcher can not only mine knowledge from the interviewees but also construct or reconstruct knowledge in the process of that interaction (Mason, 2002: p.63). Since the research questions relate to the perceptions of Chinese journalists, qualitative in-depth interviews will be used to allow the collection of qualitative data regarding internal perspectives and experience.

About twenty Chinese journalists and other journalistic professionals were planned to be interviewed in this research by means of the semi-structured interview format. Their opinions were analyzed in terms of the research questions. Before the formal interviews were conducted, three pilot interviews were carried out to prove the validity of the research itself. The data from the pilot studies will also be considered in the final analysis.

4.34 Population & Sampling

The population for the semi-structured interviews comprises the three main positions of Chinese news media professionals, including journalists, editors and administrators. According to Deacon *et al.*, sample sizes for qualitative research tend to be comparatively small because “qualitative studies are less concerned with generating an extensive perspective than in providing intensive insights into complex human and social phenomena in highly specific circumstances” (1999: p.43). Deacon *et al.* imply that a saturation point, where new ideas would not be revealed even in further interviews, can be quickly reached after as few as a dozen interviews (1999:

p.43). According to analysis of existing research, 20 to 30 interviewees can provide sufficient data to answer the research questions even for a large population such as that of the Chinese journalistic profession (Hung, 2005; Huang, 2001). In this sense, 20 to 30 interviews may be sufficient to reveal answers to the research questions.

Two elements should be considered in the sampling work for this research: non-overlapping categories which divide the research population into distinct groups, and convenience (Deacon *et al*, 1999). The population for this research can be separated by the difference of media professionals working experience. In this sense, there are two categories of the population of this research: media-professionals who have experience of working in traditional journalism (newspaper, radio and TV) and media-professionals who only have experience of working for online news media. As Chan *et al*. suggest, the frequency at which Chinese media professionals use the internet, as well as whether they feel a sense of being adapted to it, are positively related to their evaluations of the influence of the news websites upon traditional news media as platforms (2006). In this sense, the differences of working experience may lead to a diverse range of understandings of the impact of the internet upon traditional journalism. As the subject is journalists' perceptions of the influence of the internet, professionals who only have experience of working for online news media may provide more favourable assessments than their counterparts who have had experience of working for traditional journalism. In contrast, it is also possible that

media professionals who have experience of working for traditional journalism feel more pressure from the challenges brought by the internet than the other group.

Moreover, interviewing Chinese media professionals including administrators, journalists and editors provides a more complete process than interviewing Chinese journalists only. Although journalists, editors and administrators might share similar values and experiences to some extent, they experience the changes to Chinese journalism brought by the internet from different perspectives and to different degrees. It can be assumed that the administrators of news media organisations with official ranks might provide more information related to government policy, a policy about which journalists and editors might not be fully informed, while journalists and editors may have a stronger sense of the influence of the internet on regular journalism practice. Moreover, since Chinese government officers hold internal insights on and statistics about the government's attitude to the internet but generally respond negatively to applications for interviews, administrators with official ranks working for news media make suitable and available substitutes who can provide perspectives from a governmental level.

In addition, as Potter and Deacon *et al.* suggest, convenience is important for researchers who want to collect data efficiently (Potter, 1996; Deacon *et al.*, 1999). As Potter states, "researchers need to collect some evidence and the people or texts that are most available provide the greatest convenience" (1996: p.105). It is reasonable to select samples randomly from each category. It is also unnecessary to

consider regional differences within Chinese journalism because of the system of centralized authority used in Chinese politics. Interviewing the most easily available people within each category is a much more feasible method. It should be stated here that the actual number of interviewees in each group may be slightly different from the numbers in the model shown above.

4.35 Setting of Interviews

As an approach which combines structure with flexibility, a form of interaction which is largely determined by the relationship between interviewers and interviewees cannot be neglected in interviews (Legard *et al.*, 2003). It is the nature of an interview to be a form of conversation between the researcher and the respondent whose experience is valuable (Legard *et al.*, 2003; Silverman, 2006). It is valid to assume that following the nature of an interview is the best way to collect such valuable data. According to Creswell, “qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study”, while “the researchers have face-to-face interaction over time” in a natural setting (2007: p.37). In this sense, it was decided for the purposes of this research to conduct face-to face interviews rather than interviews through email and online social network for the following reasons:

First of all, the researcher can collect more data through face-to-face interviews than through online or telephone interviews as a result of being able to observe the

interviewees' body language and facial expressions. It is much easier for the researcher to conduct interviews more fluently and prevent misunderstandings in face-to-face interviews than in conversations communicated by text or voice only. Moreover, due to the fact that some older media professionals in China may not be accustomed to online social networks and email, face-to-face interviews can provide the rapport which is regarded by many scholars as a significant prerequisite to of conducting a successful interview (Lidz, 1989; Silverman, 2006; Creswell, 2007). In contrast, interviews conducted by email or telephone are more like alternative text analysis, whereas interviews conducted through chat software such as Skype or MSN may not accessible for some interviewees. It seems that qualitative interviews, in the form of face-to-face interviews, represent a better approach to collecting data in this research context.

Nevertheless, two essential points should be highlighted before the formal interviews are conducted. On the one hand, as Lidz proposes, "the ethnographic concern with good rapport may arise less out of scientific methodological needs than from other sources" (1989: p.54). Over-interest in a close relationship between interviewers and interviewees might possibly negatively influence the objectivity of the qualitative research. To this end, the researcher will explicitly state the purpose of the interview to inform each interviewee of the nature of the conversation. On the other hand, since the researcher and interviewees are not living in a same region, it may not be possible to interview every one of them face-to-face because of limitations

in time and finance. Consequently, online video interviews will be used to complement the face-to-face interviews in this research.

This researcher will state the purpose of the interview, the ethics clearance of the study and the rights of the interviewee at the very beginning of interviews. Approximately ten minutes warm-up talk is needed before starting to ask formal interview questions to build a more friendly relationship and make interviewees feel free to talk. The interviewee's right to remain anonymous is extremely important to declare in the interview. On the one hand, the right of keeping anonymous is one of the most essential parts of research ethics which will be further elaborated in the following section. On the other hand, interviewees may feel safer to provide more information if they are ensured of anonymity in the research. In terms of this project, interviewees are more likely to answer questions related to some specific topics such as government censorship and allow the researcher to record the interview if they are anonymous. However, interviewees will be asked in which way they want to show their identities again at the end of the interview. It can be totally anonymous or in a limited way such as by probably only a family name.

4.36 Research Ethics

For this research method, the ethics behind the interviews need to be clear. As Fontana and Frey argue, "because the objects of inquiry in interviews are humans, extreme care must be taken to avoid any harm to them" (2008: p.142). Although the

research ethics form has been approved by the research supervisor and another two professionals, and although the interviewees within this research are all adults, the researcher still has to be careful on several issues: (1) the researcher has to ensure that all interviewees are informed about the purpose of the interview; (2) the researcher has to ensure that the privacy of all interviewees is protected; (3) the researcher has to ensure that the interview questions will not be harmful to the interviewees either physically or psychologically (Fontana and Frey, 2008). In this sense, the researcher is responsible for protecting the interviewees' human rights in the interview process and must use the data when appropriate, anonymously. It can be assumed that the researcher will be able to achieve these standards since the research topic and research questions are not particularly politically sensitive or ethically controversial.

4.37 The Position of the Researcher

A key feature which distinguishes in-depth interviews from other forms of research method is the remarkable level of involvement of the interviewer him or herself (Rapley, 2004). According to Johnson, "to progressively and incrementally build a mutual sense of cooperative self-disclosure and trust the interviewer must offer some form of strict or complementary reciprocity" (2002: p.109). It is understandable that a sense of reciprocity is beneficial for the interview as a process for collecting data since the interviewees may be encouraged or inspired to provide more information in an atmosphere of trust. In terms of this project, the interviewer particularly needs such "cooperative self-disclosure and trust" when posing interview

questions related to negative experiences that the interviewees have had, such as the censorship they have encountered, if meaningful answers are to be obtained. However, in order to avoid bias in the research, an interviewer should be aware of his or her position when he or she faces the issue of reflexivity.

Reflexivity is one of the core questions that researchers inevitably encounter in social science studies since the researchers themselves are part of the social world they are studying. As Byrne argues, “reflexivity involves critical self-scrutiny on the part of researchers, who need, at all stages of the research process, to ask themselves about their role in the research” (2004: p.184). A researcher’s personal experience and knowledge can help in being able to understand interviewees. However, researchers have to remind themselves that their knowledge can be wrong. “Reflexivity in research requires that the impact of both similarities and differences on the research be examined” (Byrne, 2004: p.184). With regard to this project, although this researcher has not worked as a formal news media professional in China, reflexivity should be highlighted here. This is because a long period of education in journalism studies and experience of an internship as a journalist in the Chinese news media have shaped this researcher’s opinion on certain specific questions to some extent. Hammersley and Atkinson propose that making an effort to remove the influence of researchers themselves within interviews is useless since it is inevitable that researchers will find reflexivity issues; they are, after all, part of the same overall social environment (1983). Nevertheless, to avoid bias in the process of collecting and

analysing data in this study, this researcher has prepared several tactics to monitor and minimize the negative effects of reflexivity: 1) recording every interview, with the interviewees' permission, in order to review the interaction in the interviews; 2) showing an awareness of reflexivity at every stage of the research from interview question design to data analysis; 3) double checking the meaning of any implicit descriptions given by interviewees through emails and telephone calls after the interviews.

4.38 Design of the Interview Questions

To ensure the interview questions provide the perspectives and facts needed to address the research questions, a hierarchical system of questions is included in this research. Each research question leads to a number of sub-divided guide questions, while several core questions within the interview structure are designed by consideration of the sub-divided guide questions. General research questions and sub-divided guide questions will not be asked directly of the interviewees but will be used to remind them of the purpose of the interview and as a guide to the interview questions for the researcher. However, the core interview questions do not include every question asked in the formal interview pilot since a semi-structured interview should be flexible enough to allow impromptu questions based on the very specific conversation context. For the purposes of comparing evaluations provided by news media professionals working in traditional journalism with those given by news media professionals working in online journalism, some interview questions will be placed

in a group of two sub-questions for the two different categories of media-professionals respectively. The structure of the questions is shown below:

Research Question 1: How do news media professionals perceive that changes in traditional journalism are a result of the influence of the internet in China?

Sub-divided Guide Questions for Research Question 1:

(1). Has the development of the internet influenced the content of traditional journalism?

(2). Has the development of the internet influenced the market and business strategies of traditional journalism?

(3). Has the development of the internet influenced the responsibilities and expectations of traditional journalism?

(4). Has the internet influenced the public sphere which is expected to be provided for by traditional journalism?

Core Interview Questions for Research Question 1:

(1). Do you think the development of the internet is a trend within the Chinese news media?

(2). Could you talk from your own experience about how the internet has influenced your journalistic work?

(3.1). Do you think the structure and content of news reports produced by your department have been influenced by the internet? (for media professionals working in traditional journalism only)

(3.2). Do you think online news information provided by your department can influence the structure and content of news reports produced by traditional journalism? (for media-professionals working in online journalism only)

(4). Do you think it is a trend for online information to become an important source for traditional journalism? Has this phenomenon happened in your department?

(5.1). Do you think your company has been challenged by news websites in terms of readership and the advertising market? Have you developed any strategy to compete with them? (for media professionals working in traditional journalism only)

(5.2). Do you think your company is competing with traditional news media for readership and the advertising market? Have you developed any strategy to compete with them? (for media-professionals working in online journalism only)

(6.1). Do you think your responsibility, for example, as the voice of the Party, or the way you perform your designated responsibility has been affected by

the development of online journalism? Have you found any new responsibilities for traditional journalism in the era of the internet? (for media professionals working in traditional journalism only)

(6.2). Do you think the development of online journalism has influenced the responsibilities of traditional journalism, such as its role as mouthpiece of the Party, or the way it performs such responsibilities? Have you addressed any responsibility which has not been emphasized by Chinese traditional journalism? (for media-professionals working in online journalism only)

(7). Do you think Chinese traditional journalism needs the internet to build its public sphere in the contemporary era?

Justification: The interview questions above aim to explore the perceptions of Chinese media professionals about the way in which the internet affects Chinese traditional journalism. The researcher will encourage the interviewees to share their own experiences and knowledge related to the research question by asking them very open questions such as the second question listed above. However, to make the research analysis more detailed, the researcher will provide a number of possible ways in which Chinese traditional journalism could be influenced to remind and inspire the interviewees to share their knowledge concerning these specific issues. It is possible that the interviewees might provide unexpected answers to reveal unexpected approaches. The third, fifth and sixth questions are designed as a group of two sub-divided questions for media professionals working in traditional journalism

and media professionals working in online journalism, respectively. This is because the researcher believes it is better to ask the interviewees to answer these questions from their own working positions. It is also noteworthy that the fourth question is based on the data collected by content analysis. The interviewer will show the data from the content analysis to the interviewees while asking this question.

It is noteworthy that the term “public sphere” mentioned at the interviews is not exactly the same as the description of Habermas’ “bourgeois public sphere”. Habermas’s public sphere is developed as an academic term which generated from a German specific social context. This researcher neither expects the Chinese journalists who are interviewed to completely understand Habermas’ theory, nor believes it is reasonable to explain this academic term to interviewees in such a limited time. Instead, a modified term “public sphere” will be used in the interviews to collect Chinese journalists’ perceptions of the influence of the internet on Chinese democracy. For this research, the public sphere will be described to interviewees as a space which does not only allow ordinary people to discuss public affairs, but also precipitates citizens’ discussions to influence public policies, thus to make the policies match public interests better. In other words, it is a platform for Chinese citizens to discuss public affairs and promote governmental policies to reflect public interests when the public opinion of a specific issue is strong enough.

Research Question 2: How do news media professionals perceive the model of Chinese online journalism as a competitor of Chinese traditional journalism?

Sub-divided Guide Questions for Research Question 2:

(1). In general, does the development of the internet consolidate traditional journalism or challenge it?

(2). Might it be possible for the internet to completely replace traditional journalism in the future?

(3). Might it be possible for the internet to become the most popular approach to consuming news?

(4). Might it be possible that the development of the internet will lead to the reform of traditional journalism itself?

(5). To what extent can the advantages of the internet influence both traditional journalism and Chinese journalism as a whole?

Core Interview Questions for General Research Question 2:

(1). How do you understand the term “online journalism”?

(2). What do you estimate to be:

(2.1). the relationship between traditional news media and online news media as a whole, from your own working experience?

(2.2). the relationship between traditional journalism and news websites with a traditional news media background?

(2.3). the relationship between traditional journalism and independent commercial news websites?

(3.1). Have you ever felt competition from online news media? (for media professionals working in traditional journalism only)

(3.2). Have you ever regarded your work as competition for traditional news media? (for media professionals working in online news media only)

(4). How do you evaluate the idea that the internet is being used as an important tool in producing journalistic products on traditional news media?

(5). Do you think the responsibilities of traditional journalism have been shared by online news media? To what extent?

(6). There is a phenomenon that online news information can lead to the publication of formal news reports in newspapers. How do you evaluate this phenomenon? Do you find the same situation in your work?

(7). What do you think is the influence of the internet on reporting news which has been censored after a series of initial reports?

(8). How do you estimate the future of traditional journalism in competition with online news media?

Justification: The interview questions listed above aim to provide data to answer the second research question. The researcher will explore the extent to which the internet has impacted on traditional journalism. The interviewees will be encouraged to estimate a number of identified effects brought by the internet through describing their own experiences related to these effects. Two important points need to be emphasized in these interview questions. Firstly, the influence of different forms of online news media will be specified and evaluated respectively as Question (2) shows; secondly, the evaluations of the impact of the internet on news reporting will be classified into two categories – the initial impact and the post-censorship impact – in order to provide respective evaluations, as shown in Question (6) and Question (7). It is reasonable to ask both the media professionals working in traditional journalism and their counterparts working in online journalism the same questions so as to make the data comparable. In this sense, only Question (8) is designed as two totally different sub-divided questions to be asked separately of media professionals working in traditional journalism and media professionals working in online journalism.

Research Question 3: How do news media professionals perceive the correlation between the preferences of the younger generation and the development of online news media?

Sub-divided Guide Questions for Research Question 3:

- (1) Do different age groups show different preferences on choosing platforms of consuming news?

(2) Do younger groups show evidently different preferences in consuming online news from older groups?

(3) If the answer for question (2) is “yes”, do journalists believe it is co-related to the development of online journalism in the future?

Core Interview Questions for General Research Question 3:

(1) How do you evaluate the argument that implies older people prefer consuming news published by traditional offline news media, while younger people prefer consuming online news?

(2) Do you think the younger generation’s preference for consuming online news will influence the development of online news media?

(3) If the answer to the question 2 is “yes”, how do you rate such influence?

Justification: The interview questions listed above aim to provide data to answer the third research question. As this question is more direct than the first and second question, the researcher will ask the interviewees to think in 2 steps: 1) if there is a difference of preference of consuming news between different age groups as interview question 1 shows; 2) if the difference of the preference will influence the development of online news media as a competitor for traditional news media as interview question 2 and 3 show.

4.4 The Means of Analysing Qualitative Data

A vital component of any methodology design is the approach utilised for analysing the collected data, especially for research which uses a mainly qualitative research method. As Miles and Huberman argue, the nature of qualitative data determines that such data is not directly accessible for analysis, but usually requires a process of encoding (1994). The accessibility of data analysis is extremely significant for this research as semi-structured interviews are used as the main approach for collecting data. It should be noted firstly that researchers find it difficult to achieve direct access to, or immediate interpretations of, facts and events which serve the research purpose from the transcripts of interviews. Secondly, interviewees usually provide representations of their experiences rather than their bare views and opinions to the researchers, leading to a need to reveal a more precise character and meaning for such representations (Byrne, 2004; Kitzinger, 2004; Rapley, 2004). Thus it is clear that raw transcripts of the interviews themselves cannot provide strong evidence to support the arguments of a research study. As a result, an appropriate approach for interpreting and analysing the qualitative data is essential for this study.

A number of scholars have described various methods for analysing raw data from interviews. For example, Mason introduces an approach which allows the encoding of the raw text from the transcripts of interviews in order to abstract what the interviewees truly mean from one sentence to another (2002). Silverman introduces more detailed ways of analysing qualitative data collected from interviews.

He classifies three perspectives for reviewing interviews: those of positivism, emotionalism and constructionism. Each of the perspectives focuses on different aspects of an interview: positivism aims to reveal the potential of an interview so as to generate data from known facts about the world; in contrast, emotionalism switches the focus from obtaining objective “facts” to eliciting “authentic accounts of subjective experience”; constructionism criticises both positivism and emotionalism for their negligence in that interviewees’ accounts are not only representations of the real world but part of the world they indicate. However, positivist and emotionalist views critique the constructionist approach as actually denying the value of treating interviews as data that can reveal any other reality and as a method that cannot precisely answer “what” questions in the same way that positivism and emotionalism can (2006).

Mason and Silverman’s work provides valuable perspectives on how to review transcripts of interviews. It is therefore reasonable that raw data from interviews needs to be encoded and abstracted to provide direct access to facts and opinions. However, the above cited studies do have certain limitations. On the one hand, such suggestions about analysing data collected by qualitative interviews isolate the interview as a research method from the theoretical framework which provides the context for analysing related topics for the research project. Mason, Silverman and many other academics seem to neglect the idea that not every research project can start with a number of interviews and generate grounded theories without the direction

offered by related existing theories or prior studies (see, for example, Byrne, 2004; Mason, 2002; Rapley, 2004; Silverman, 2006). On the other hand, the classification of the three perspectives for reviewing interview data (positivism, emotionalism and constructionism) is problematic in practice, since an interview usually contains both standardized questions, as positivism asks, and open-ended questions, as emotionalism asks. This means that, in practice, it is neither possible nor necessary to analyse raw interview data from only one perspective of the three mentioned above. A much more appropriate approach to data analysis would connect the theoretical framework based on prior academic work and the encoded data based on the researcher's field work.

In order to set a series of codes which might connect the theoretical framework taken from previous research and the interview transcripts from the study in hand, a coding scheme which guides the process for analysing qualitative data is essential. Seale proposes that building such a scheme is the very first stage to deal with raw interview data:

“The initial stage when faced with an interview transcript, or with a set of notes describing observations, or some other qualitative material, is to develop a set of codes that both reflect the initial aims of the research project, and take into account any unexpected issues that have emerged during data collection. That is to say, a coding scheme emerges both deductively from pre-existing concerns, questions and hypotheses, and inductively from the data itself” (2004: p.313)

Here, unlike Mason and Silverman who partially emphasize the inductive process of qualitative data analysis, Seale implies that a coding scheme should

involve those pre-existing studies related to the researcher's topic. In order to make the qualitative analysis systematic, a particular methodological approach is needed. Thematic analysis is one of the available ways for transforming qualitative data under this requirement (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Boyatzis, 1998; Seale, 2004). The detailed reasons for this are as follows.

First of all, thematic analysis is one of the most commonly used approaches in social science research, an approach for which its feasibility as a means of analysing qualitative data has been tested many times by researchers in media studies, psychology, management and many other subjects (Boyatzis, 1998). Miller and Crabtree point out that thematic analysis can be used in any qualitative research tradition (grounded theory, ethnography, ethology and so on) to analyse and interpret information, no matter what ontology and epistemology the researcher holds (1992). This approach describes what qualitative researchers actually do while also granting legitimation to the researchers' data encoding processes (Seale, 2004). Secondly, thematic analysis allows the "themes" which guide the coding process to be either generated deductively from pre-existing studies or generated inductively from raw interview transcripts (Boyatzis, 1998). This allows the approach to provide a bilateral way both to test prior theories in a specific research context and to generate new findings to amend former academic perceptions and even create new theories. In addition, deductive themes are particularly useful for researchers to prepare their formal interviews based on the theoretical framework that they have established.

Thirdly, in this research, as part of the theoretical context is based on studies of the western media, both deductively theory-driven and inductively data-driven methods are needed to evaluate the applicability of pre-existing theories in a specific Chinese context and the possibility of other theories emerging from newly collected data.

4.41 Theoretical Framework and Theory-driven Coding

Scheme of Thematic Analysis

The analyses in Chapter 2 (literature review) and Chapter 3 (Chinese context of journalism) allow this research to be developed on a theoretical basis derived from prior studies. Further, there are two major objectives for such theoretical analyses within the methodology design: to provide a theoretical framework for the theory-driven thematic analysis and to contextualise the interpretations of the results, as suggested by Coffey and Atkinson (1996).

Although little has yet been done in terms of analysing qualitatively the perceptions of the influence of the internet in contemporary China, there is voluminous literature on the universal influence of the internet as a new form of technology and the possibility of a Chinese model of journalism. On the one hand, scholars who study “the universal influence” of the internet on news media may be limited by their chosen individual context and that of the sample, although they may fail to emphasize that their research focuses on a specific case. On the contrary, scholars who study the specific model of Chinese journalism emphasize the Chinese

historic and political-economic contexts too much by underestimating the importance of the regular pattern of technology. On the other hand, scholars have not reached any level of consistency relating to the influence of the internet, leading to a number of debates such as whether or not newspapers will be replaced by news websites. Despite the limitations of the existing literature, as mentioned above, the conducted research does provide a number of theories and topics which might systematically guide the coding process of theory-driven thematic analysis, and these theories will be tested and adjusted for the data collected in this research. Two clusters of theories can be identified in this research based on the theoretical analyses in Chapters 2 and 3: the influence of the internet on journalism and how the Chinese news media are struggling between political and market forces.

It is worth noting that thematic analysis is not a separate methodology from the interviews used in this project. It is part of the entire qualitative research method, as Boyatzis proposes (1998). According to Boyatzis, a qualified thematic code should have five elements to allow “the maximum probability of producing high inter-rater reliability and validity”. Those elements are: “1) a label, 2) a definition of what the theme concerns, 3) a description of how to know when the theme occurs, 4) a description of any qualification or exclusion to the identification of the theme, and 5) examples, both positive and negative, to eliminate possible confusion when looking for the theme” (1998: p.31). Given that there is little data at this stage, exclusions and examples cannot be developed before the formal interviews are conducted. Labels and

definitions are developed to guide the interviews. In addition, although descriptions to identify the appearance of the themes cannot be ensured at this stage, such descriptions can be assumed and predicted to remind this researcher of the possible opportunities for collecting related data in the interviews. The theory-driven thematic codes are as follows.

4.411 The Influence of the Internet on Traditional Journalism

One of the most crucial objectives of this project is to identify and categorise the ways in which media professionals perceive how the internet technology impacts on traditional journalism within the Chinese media system. Commentators have tried to answer this question from remarkably different perspectives. At least four major possible ways in which traditional journalism has been influenced by the internet can be recognised in literatures: 1) the shape of traditional journalism has changed; 2) the content of traditional journalism has changed; 3) the working route of traditional journalism has changed; 4) the democratic function of traditional journalism has been precipitated. Themes and definitions are listed below:

Theme 1:

Label: Shape

Definition: The form and structure of traditional journalism which may have been transformed by internet technology.

Sub-theme1:

Label: Elimination of the press

Definition: The possibility that the press, radio or TV may be replaced by online news media.

This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) predict any form of traditional journalism could be replaced because of the popularity of the internet; 2) feel anxious about the survival of any form of traditional journalism

Sub-theme2:

Label: establishing dialogues

Definition: An emphasis on interactivities between news media and the public.

This may be indicated when the interviewees admit they are trying to establish better dialogue with the audience.

Theme 2

Label: Content

Definition: The content of news reports in traditional news media which may have been influenced by the internet.

This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) state they use online information or online news sources in their news reports published in traditional news media; 2) agree that specific terms generated for an online context are used in reports created for traditional journalism.

Theme 3

Label: Working route

Definition: The working process within traditional journalism newsrooms may have been changed by the internet

It may be indicated when the interviewees 1) mention that the internet is used regularly as an important tool when they work; 2) state that it will become difficult for them to do their work if they cannot use the internet; 3) agree that internet skills have become necessary in any stage of their working process.

Theme 4:

Label: Public sphere

Definition: The online public sphere constructed by the internet has influenced the role of traditional journalism in promoting democracy or the dialogue between the authorities and the public.

This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) mention the effect of the online public sphere; 2) mention the dialogue between the authorities and the public through news media.

4.412 The Possibility of a Model of Chinese Journalism

Another major objective of this project is to evaluate the extent to which the media professionals perceive the internet has impacted on traditional journalism in the context of China. The literature review in Chapter 2 demonstrated that the effect of a specific form of technology on journalism is always shaped by the political-economic context in which it works, and the internet is no exception (see, for example, Briggs and Burke, 2009; Conboy, 2011; Winston, 2005). Thus, an understanding of the Chinese context for journalism is vital at this stage to estimate the extent to which the internet has impacted on traditional journalism. Chapter 3 provides rich theoretical discussions related to the possibility of a model of Chinese journalism (see, for example, Lee, 2005; Zhou, 2000). Although this study does not aim to define a model of Chinese journalism, theories related to such a model can both contextualise interpretations of the interview data and guide an evaluation of the degree of the internet's influence. Three theories need to be highlighted here for the thematic analysis: 1) censorship by the Chinese government, which reflects the political forces imposed on Chinese journalism; 2) marketing competition faced by Chinese journalism, which reflects the economic forces impacting on Chinese journalism and is leading to an increased professionalism within the Chinese media; 3)

self-censorship of the news media, which reflects the flexibility of Chinese journalism at a time when it is struggling between political and market forces. These themes and definitions are listed below:

Theme 1

Label: Censorship

Definition: The system of news media censorship managed by the Chinese government as applied through laws, policies, software and hardware.

This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) mention any experience of their reports being halted, criticized or forbidden by the government; 2) mention any experience of the government asking or suggesting that they file or not file reports.

Theme 2

Label: Marketing

Definition: Any effort or reform made by the news media to face competition in the market.

This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) feel competition from online news media and traditional news media; 2) show concerns about the readership; 3) mention improving levels of professionalism.

Theme 3

Label: Self-censorship

Definition: Journalists, editors or news organisations review and adjust news reports before the reports are sent for assessment by the government censorship mechanism in order to avoid possible trouble.

This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) mention how they review their work before it is published; 2) mention departmental principles for avoiding conflict with the government policy; 3) state how they have work published even though it is against the relevant government officer's will.

4.42 Data-driven Coding Schemes of Thematic Analysis

Themes developed from the literature for deductive theory-driven thematic analysis are central in guiding the analysis of Chinese news media professionals' perceptions of the changes in Chinese journalism. Nevertheless, the literature does not cover or predict every perspective relating to the experiences and insider viewpoints of such professionals, leading to the possibility that previously undetected phenomena and theories may emerge from the interview data. In contrast to deductive coding schemes in which the data is analysed based on the existing theoretical framework, inductive thematic analysis involves discovering "patterns , themes and categories" through "findings [that] emerge out of the data" (Patton, 2002: p.453). It is reasonable to believe that data-driven thematic analysis is indispensable for this project in filling

the gap between existing theories and the perceptions of Chinese news media professionals within a contemporary context. Although this researcher is unable to decide on a particular data-driven coding scheme at this stage since there is not enough data to generate possible new theories, such a process can be expected and prepared for the fieldwork. As Crabtree and Miller propose, “researchers can develop codes only after some initial exploration of the data has taken place, using an immersion/crystallisation or editing organising style” (1999: p.167). If, for example, interviewees begin to talk about stories or viewpoints which are little shown in the literature, the data-driven coding scheme will be developed from such discourse.

Contextualisation is particularly important in the process of inductive thematic analysis as context can ensure the data is interpreted fairly and accurately (Wolcott, 1994). Several approaches can help to contextualise the data, including bearing the research questions in mind, being connected with an external authority, and observing how the interviewees express their answers when they are responding. (Wolcott, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). According to Patton and Strauss and Corbin, the core means of establishing a coding scheme through the inductive process is to ask questions and compare responses from different interviewees (Patton, 2002; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). On the other hand, it may be more prudent to conduct the inductive thematic analysis “after or alongside the deductive phase of analysis” (Patton, 2002: p.454). In terms of this project, as the theory-driven coding has been

developed before the fieldwork, conducting the deductive analysis in the first place is rational and accessible.

4.5 Pilot Interviews and Analysis

Data collected in the pilot interviews will be counted in the final data as well as the formal interviews. However, the purpose of the pilot interviews at the initial stage is different from that of the formal interviews: 1) the pilot interviews are to test whether the research questions are valid for the study; 2) the pilot interviews are also used to test whether the set interview questions work in practice; 3) thematic coding will be tested and further developed in the analysis of pilot interviews. Although the pilot interviews have their own specific purposes, they follow the discipline of the formal interviews in terms of procedure.

Three news media professionals were interviewed at this pilot stage. According to the convenience principle, these three professionals were the earliest three who accepted the application of interview in each set category: Mr. Xu, who has approximately 30 years working experience and now works as the head of the radio department, can be classified in the group termed “administrators” (news media professionals with an official rank); Miss Cai, who has over 2 years working experience and is now an editor of a news website, can be classified in the group called “editors”; and Mr. Zhao, who has worked as a journalist at a TV station for 4

years, can be classified in the “journalists” group. Alternately, both Mr. Xu and Mr. Zhao have experiences of working for traditional journalism, while Miss Cai only has experience of working for online journalism. With just three interviewees, although the scale of the pilot interviews was rather small, the researcher attempted to ensure the representative nature of the interviews.

All of these three interviewees were contacted through email in the first place. Because of geographical constraints, both face-to-face interviews and online interviews were used at the pilot stage. It is worth emphasizing that the online interview was assisted by video chat software to imitate the conditions of a face-to-face interview.

4.51 The Validity and Value of This Research Topic

One of the most important purposes of the pilot interviews is to test the effectiveness of the qualitative method designed for this research in terms of study into the internal perspectives of Chinese journalism professionals. The answer to the question about media professionals’ perceptions of the influence of the internet on traditional journalism in China is vital to this research. This is because, if the answer to this question is negative, further study into this research topic will become less meaningful. All three interviewees agreed that the internet has impacted on Chinese traditional journalism, although they supported this argument to different extents. As Miss Cai argued:

“You can see the profit in traditional journalism has been decreased. The market has narrowed down. Audience numbers have narrowed down. People who read newspapers or listen to radio or watch TV are becoming older. On the other hand, young people tend to use the internet to get information and they have the capacity to consume. I think the market is the main force but the government also helps, more or less” (29th Oct, 2011).

However, the interviewees emphasized different forces which can influence the effect of the internet itself. Mr. Xu tended to highlight the importance of market forces, whereas Mr. Zhao showed his concern about the changing policy of the Chinese authorities:

“The government still has its dominant power in the news industry, as it controls the freedom of press and censors speech. I believe if we measure which factor is more influential in the trend of the news media in China, the development and openness of the internet or a top-down media control system, I'd say it is the system” (20th Aug, 2011).

The disagreement between the interviewees accurately reflects the argument within the literature review which suggests that the internet itself is influenced by specific political and economic contexts. In the case of China, the development of the internet may be a struggle between political power and market forces, more so than in western democracies. In this sense, it is valuable to further this research in order to estimate to what extent the internet influences traditional journalism in China.

4.52 Tests of Interview Questions

Another important purpose of conducting pilot interviews is to test if the interview questions work in practice, especially whether news media professionals

can provide valuable perspectives about the data collected through content analysis of a Chinese newspaper. In other words, the aim is to test the validity of combining a qualitative research method with quantitative data. All three interviewees claimed it was not surprising that an influential national newspaper should frequently quote online information in its text. As Mr. Xu stated in his supplementary interview:

“It is a trend. Everybody can be an online journalist by posting news information through the internet. Online media enjoy a relatively free environment to publish more news than traditional media. In this sense, it is not surprising that traditional journalism frequently quotes online information in its journalistic product” (12th June, 2012).

More importantly, the researcher successfully encouraged the interviewees to provide more detailed information about how the internet impacts on traditional journalism. The interviewees explained how online journalism works in the initial stages of reporting news and the later stages when related news can be censored. All three interviewees agreed that censorship for online journalism is no less serious than for traditional journalism in reporting significant political events, although online news reports can enjoy a short time to disseminate information before it is removed. However, Mr. Xu pointed out a way for online news media to break the censorship and the Crisis Public Relations policy conducted by local government:

“There is one very important situation. Local newspapers, for example, are usually censored by local government in reporting some serious accidents and corruptions. Journalists working for national newspapers and newspapers from other cities can also be prevented from accessing the core interviewees because these professionals are easily identified by the local government. However, the online news media can break the geographical limitation. They can get the news

and publish it with less obstruction from the local government” (12th June, 2012).

The pilot interview proves that showing quantitative data to interviewees is a feasible way to gain more detailed information so as to estimate the extent to which the media professionals believe the internet has impacted on traditional journalism. However, some questions were found to be too academic for the interviewees, making them too cautious to provide evaluations based on their own experience. For example, the question “Do you think Chinese traditional journalism needs the internet to build its public sphere in the contemporary era?” provided a dilemma for the pilot interviewees. They either asked the interviewer to explain what a public sphere is, or stated that they did not completely understand this term before giving an answer based on their own understanding. Since the term “public sphere” was developed and interpreted from various scholastic perspectives, the interviewees could provide only a general interpretation of this term in the limited interview time. However, it was felt that the interviewees could be encouraged to answer this question based on their own understanding and thus provide much information. As Mr. Zhao stated in his supplementary interview:

“I don't know what the meaning of public sphere is exactly. It is too academic. But as to my knowledge, my answer is yes. It is because the internet provides more extended space for the public to discuss events. It is beneficial to democracy” (7th June, 2012).

As a result, it seemed reasonable to retain this question in the formal interviews. However, this researcher will endeavour to find a more understandable interpretation of the term to encourage the interviewees to provide even more detailed information.

This researcher also found a few interview questions were regarded as inappropriate and unnecessary. It seemed inessential, in the first place, to ask the interviewees whether they felt, subjectively, that traditional journalism had been affected by the internet or not. As Legard *et al.* suggest, “To understand the interviewees’ perspectives fully, they need to have an opportunity to give more than their first thoughts on a subject” (2003: p.149). It was also found that the pilot interviewees felt unready to answer the question concerning their feelings on the influence of the internet as the very first question. Therefore, it was decided not ask this question in the formal interviews.

4.53 Tests and Improvements to Thematic Coding

Pilot interviews are also used to test the effectiveness of thematic codes and engage in a pre-analysis of qualitative data. There are two major objectives of the pilot analysis: to improve the theory-driven codes which have been established based on the literature and to explore possible inductive data-driven codes. The qualitative data analysis software NVivo (10.0 edition) is used to assist the researcher to transform qualitative data into quantitative descriptions. The findings and discussions are as follows:

Table 1: Shape

Table 1

	Xu	Zhao	Cai
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Scoring of sub-theme 1: Elimination of the press	Negative	Negative	Negative
Frequency of sub-theme 1	3	2	1
Scoring of sub-theme 2: Establishing dialogues	Presence	Absence	Absence
Frequency of sub-theme 2	2	0	0

Table 1 indicates the pilot interviewees' perceptions of the possibility of changing the form of traditional journalism through the impact of the internet. For sub-theme 1, all of the three interviewees believed that the development of the internet would not lead to the elimination of traditional journalism, and are marked as a "negative" attitude in the table. The frequency of the interviewees' responses to sub-theme 1 will not be compared with each other as all of the interviewees provided negative attitudes about the possibility of the elimination of the press whenever their responses were related to this sub-theme. The responses imply that Chinese media professionals do not hold a radical technologically deterministic viewpoint when they consider the influence of the internet on traditional journalism. On the other hand, only one interviewee with work experience in traditional news media provided information for sub-theme 2. However, he mentioned that his department emphasizes the importance of "outdoor" activities to communicate with the public more closely. This description leads to two further questions: 1) Is such a phenomenon popular in China? 2) If this phenomenon is popular, do Chinese

journalistic professionals believe that it is correlated with the development of the internet? More interviews are required to explore these two questions.

Table 2: Content

Table 2

	Xu	Zhao	Cai
Scoring of sub-theme 1: Trigger	Presence	Presence	Presence
Frequency of sub-theme 1	2	4	3
Scoring of sub-theme 2: Quotation	Presence	Absence	Presence
Frequency of sub-theme 2	2	0	1

Table 2 demonstrates the pilot interviewees' perceptions about the way in which the internet influences the content of traditional journalism in the context of China. According to the descriptions supplied by the three respondents on this topic, two sub-themes can be developed: sub-theme 1, labeled 'trigger', means traditional journalism is encouraged by online news information to explore certain events and report them in traditional news media; sub-theme 2, labeled 'quotation', means online information is quoted directly or indirectly in reports published through traditional journalism.

For sub-theme 1, all of the three respondents believed it a common occurrence that traditional journalism is encouraged by online news information to cover certain events; such a view is marked as ‘presence’ in the table. It suggests Chinese journalists believe online news information has become an important source for traditional journalism to find valuable events which might possibly be reported. For sub-theme 2, Zhao did not mention any experience of quoting online information in his newsroom, but Xu argued he had such experience. Cai also mentioned that she had found that some news information initially published on her website had been quoted in traditional journalism. In terms of frequency, the respondents emphasized sub-theme 1 much more than sub-theme 2. In this sense, further data will be needed to analyse whether the concept of a ‘trigger’ is the most prevalent way for the internet to influence the content of traditional journalism.

It is noteworthy that both Xu and Cai mentioned that the influence of the internet on the content of traditional journalism was limited to some specific coverage. They both believed social and entertainment news enjoyed more freedom in terms of using online information, whereas news about national and international politics was constrained within a few specific official news sources such as Xinhua News Agency. This difference could be developed into a new theme if more evidence is found in further interviews. It might also be seen as an alternative form of censorship as such restrictions are part of the government’s policy. It will be further discussed in the analysis of theme of ‘censorship’.

Table 3: Working Route

Table 3

	Xu	Zhao	Cai
Scoring of sub-theme 1: Necessity	Presence	Presence	Absence
Frequency of sub-theme 1	2	1	0
Scoring of sub-theme 2: Regular use	Presence	Presence	Presence
Frequency of sub-theme 2	4	2	1

Table 3 illustrates how the pilot interviewees evaluated changes in the working process within traditional journalism newsrooms have been influenced by the internet as a powerful tool. According to the respondents' descriptions, two sub-themes are developed under this topic: sub-theme 1, labelled 'necessity', includes arguments that traditional journalism cannot be further developed without the assistance of the internet as a tool; sub-theme 2, that concerning 'regular use', includes statements that the internet is used regularly in traditional newsrooms.

For sub-theme 1, Xu and Zhao, who have experience working in traditional journalism, perceived that it would be indispensable for traditional journalism to use the internet as a tool if it wants to survive in the future. Cai did not provide any comments on this subject. However, considering Cai has no experience of working in

traditional journalism, her lack of comments cannot simply be seen as a negative attitude about the necessity of using the internet, since she may just have found it difficult to offer thoughts on a topic with which she was unfamiliar. On the other hand, for sub-theme 2, all three interviewees believed that the internet has been regularly used in traditional journalism newsrooms as an important tool. A number of advantages such as timeliness and the breaking of geographical limitations were mentioned by the respondents as reasons for using the internet as a tool. Thus, further evidence is needed to explore which advantages the internet offers that lead to such regular use. This could then be developed into a new theme in further analysis of the formal interviews.

Table 4: Public Sphere

Table 4

	Xu	Zhao	Cai
Scoring of sub-theme 1: Online public sphere	Presence	Presence	Presence
Frequency of sub-theme 1	1	1	1
Scoring of sub-theme 2: Public sphere of traditional journalism	Presence	Absence	Absence
Frequency of sub-theme 2	2	0	0

Table 4 shows the pilot interviewees' perceptions about the Chinese online public sphere and its impact on the Chinese offline public sphere established by traditional journalism. There are two sub-themes under this topic: sub-theme 1 is indicated when the interviewees admitted the existence of an online public sphere in China; sub-theme 2 is indicated when the interviewees argued that traditional journalism now places more emphasis on the importance of establishing dialogue between the authorities and the public.

All of the three interviewees believed that an online public sphere has been established in China and can exert an influence to some extent. However, only one interviewee mentioned that traditional journalism is trying to establish a dialogue between the authorities and the public. The absence of such an argument from the other two interviewees regarding sub-theme 2 leads to two further questions: on the one hand, although Xu claimed that a large number of local radio stations have programmes which invite government officers to answer questions asked by the public through a telephone hotline, more evidence is needed to prove that such a trend is becoming popular in China. On the other hand, it is difficult to find the correlation between the development of an online public sphere and the dialogue between the authorities and the public being established within traditional journalism. As such, the researcher will emphasize the related questions in the formal interviews to discover how exactly Chinese media professionals evaluate such a phenomenon.

Table 5: Censorship

Table 5

	Xu	Zhao	Cai
Scoring of sub-theme 1: Universal censorship	Absence	Presence	Presence
Frequency of sub-theme 1	0	5	1
Scoring of sub-theme 2: Alternative censorship for traditional journalism	Presence	Absence	Absence
Frequency of sub-theme 2	1	0	0
Scoring of sub-theme 3: Less serious censorship online	Presence	Presence	Presence
Frequency of sub-theme 3	4	1	1

Table 5 demonstrates the pilot interviewees' evaluations of censorship in China. All of the three respondents believed that censorship of the news media is very serious, no matter what kinds of media are considered. However, they provided their concerns about China's media censorship from three main perspectives, which have been developed as 3 sub-themes: sub-theme 1, labelled 'universal censorship', indicates statements that both traditional and online journalism are censored in China without making any specific difference between the two forms of journalism.

Sub-theme 2, that of ‘alternative censorship for traditional journalism’, shows specific policies made by the Chinese government to control the channels for gathering news for traditional journalism rather than censorship of news reports when they are ready to be published. Sub-theme 3, labeled ‘less serious censorship online’, indicates arguments that news websites enjoy more freedom in reporting news to some extent.

It can be seen that censorship is generally seen as very serious in China. None of Xu’s description is classified in sub-theme 1 because Xu intended to emphasize the differences in censorship between traditional journalism and news websites. For sub-theme 2, only one interviewee mentioned an alternative form censorship for traditional journalism, which is that it can only relay news provided by Xinhua News Agency on certain specified topics at specific times. This approach to controlling Chinese journalism can be further explored in the formal interviews since it is rarely mentioned in the literature and might be developed into a new finding, but at this stage the evidence is insufficient to prove whether this policy is common in China or not. For sub-theme 3, all of the three respondents agreed that censorship of news websites is more vulnerable than its counterpart for traditional journalism. However, they provided this argument from different perspectives. Zhao and Cai believed that news websites enjoy only a little less censorship than traditional journalism. The advantage that news websites possess in evading censorship is based on the gap between the time that news is published and then deleted. “It does a little better than

newspapers because at least there are always some people who can read the story online before it is deleted” (Zhao, 7th June, 2012). On the other hand, Xu believed news websites can break local censorship regulations and publish local news outside that region. This is because the local government can, in practice, censor the local news media and stop non-local traditional news media before the news gets published; however, it is much more difficult for local government to prevent an online news report from being published since they simply do not have enough time to react. This researcher has found that such perceptions of avoiding censorship for Chinese media professionals are rarely mentioned in the literature. In this sense, further evidence is needed to explore why Chinese journalists believe news websites can enjoy more freedom from the serious levels of censorship in China to understand the context of Chinese journalism in a more detailed way.

Table 6: Marketing

Table 6

	Xu	Zhao	Cai
Scoring of the theme: Marketing	Positive	Positive	Positive
Frequency of theme	10	4	4

Table 6 demonstrates whether or not the pilot interviewees believed traditional journalism is in competition with news websites. All of the three respondents agreed

that traditional journalism and online journalism are competitors. However, it seems that the media professionals who have experience of working in traditional journalism felt a stronger competition existed than did the one who has never worked in that field, as they used, on average, more words that emphasized such competition. The assumption cannot so far be proved since there were only three respondents in the pilot study. More interviews are needed to collect sufficient data to evaluate this assumption.

A few limitations were found in the analysis of this theme in the pilot study. First of all, the term 'market' needs to be more specific, since media professionals may give quite different evaluations about readership and advertising markets. As Cai pointed out: "Some readers of our newspaper have turned to our website. But for advertising, I don't think the internet has taken advertising profit from traditional journalism" (29th Oct, 2011). Nevertheless, the interviewees did not usually differentiate between readership and advertising by themselves, leading to ambiguous answers about marketing. Consequently, related interview questions will be asked in a more specific way in the formal interviews to allow for clearer responses and the development of more detailed sub-themes.

On the other hand, it would make more sense if the researcher asked the interviewees to evaluate the importance of market forces for Chinese media organisations by comparing them with political forces and to provide more

information about how they work in terms of these two forces. Such questions could provide new themes in the formal interviews.

Table 7: Self-censorship

Table 7

	Xu	Zhao	Cai
Scoring of the theme: Self-censorship	Presence	Absence	Presence
Frequency of theme	1	0	1

Table 7 indicates the perceptions of the pilot interviewees on self-censorship in their work. Xu and Cai mentioned the issue of self-censorship, while Zhao did not. Since Xu has experience of working in traditional journalism while Cai has only worked for a news website, it seems reasonable to assume that self-censorship exists in both traditional and online forms of journalism. However, more data is needed to evaluate whether self-censorship is common or not in the context of China.

Besides the analysis based on theory-driven thematic codes discussed above, a number of possible data-driven thematic codes can be assumed from the pilot interviews. However, the small number of respondents was insufficient to provide enough data to develop totally new themes. This researcher will analyse these possible themes at this stage and further develop them in the formal interviews.

Firstly, based on an analysis of the theme labelled 'shape' above, it seems Chinese media professionals do not think traditional journalism will be completely replaced by online journalism in the short-term. This suggests that arguments about the elimination of the press offered by certain scholars in the literature have not been accepted by Chinese journalists. However, it might be reasonable to substitute the phrase 'elimination of the press' for a much less radical assumption: it is possible that the internet will become the most popular approach in consuming news information. The interviews will explore Chinese media professionals' perceptions about this argument. In the pilot interviews, Zhao agreed with this assumption: "Well, it must be. It is now, isn't it?" (20th Aug, 2011). Although Xu and Cai did not mention whether the internet might become the most popular approach for consuming news, they were not asked to evaluate this assumption. Thus, a new data-driven thematic code can be assumed as follows:

Assumed theme 1:

Label: Dominant approach

Definition: The possibility that the internet will surpass the press, radio and TV to become the most popular approach for consuming news.

This will be indicated when the interviewees: 1) predict online journalism will gain the largest readership in the future; 2) believe the internet is the most popular approach for consuming news now.

Secondly, when the interviewees were asked about the influence of the internet on the media market, both Cai and Xu mentioned that the younger generation of news consumers act as a vital dynamic which is precipitating the development of the internet and narrowing the market for traditional journalism. “I mean more young people prefer consuming news from the internet. When aging people die, these young people may be the dominant group of news consumers. This is why I say the internet does impact on traditional journalism” (29th Oct, 2011). The preference of the younger generation could possibly be an essential element for the influence of the internet, especially in long-term development. The existing literature does not discuss this dynamic at any length. In this sense, a new data-driven thematic code can be assumed as follows:

Assumed theme 2:

Label: Preference of younger generation

Definition: The preference of young people for consuming online news is a significant dynamic of the influence of the internet on traditional journalism.

This will be indicated when the interviewees: 1) emphasize the influence on traditional journalism of the younger generation’s preference for consuming online news; 2) mention that the younger generation is important in the media market both now and in the future.

Thirdly, although all of the three pilot interviewees believed that traditional journalism does compete with online journalism in the Chinese market, such competition is macroscopic and conceptualised. In terms of a specific news website, it does not necessarily compete with another traditional news organisation. Rather, it means that, for a specific news website, the most important competitor could be another news website. It is not reasonable to emphasize the competition between traditional journalism and online journalism while neglecting the competition between online news media. Cai, the only pilot interviewee who has worked solely in online journalism, argued: “We have not made any strategy to compete with traditional journalism, because we have played the game by following the rules of the online world so far” (12th June, 2012). In this sense, a new data-driven thematic code can be assumed as follows:

Assumed theme 3:

Label: Competition within online journalism

Definition: Specific online news media aim to compete with other online news media rather than with traditional news media.

This will be indicated when the interviewees: 1) emphasize that their departments’ strategies are to compete with other online news media; 2) describe their specific experiences of competition with other online news media; 3) believe their

companies' marketing strategies do not directly regard traditional news media as their priority competitors.

All of the three assumed thematic codes above require more interviews to be conducted before they can become reliable codes. On the other hand, questions related to the assumed data-driven themes and the possible new sub-themes of the theory-driven themes will be supplemented into the formal interviews. The pilot study demonstrates that the set thematic codes generally work well in analysis, although the reliability of these codes needs to be further proved by another coder.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to outline the process and results of the data analysis of the collected interviews in order to establish valid thematic codes for further discussion in the next chapter. Two major components will be included in this chapter. The first section will describe the process behind the analysis of the interview data. It will demonstrate the categorisation of the themes in the light of the extant literature, methodology and the researcher's capabilities. The second section will indicate the findings from the interview transcripts. The findings will then be guided by categorised themes which will be labelled, defined and described in this section. Six major themes will thus be identified in this section with a number of sub-themes under each one.

5.2 The Data Analysis Process

In line with the methodology design demonstrated in the previous chapter, besides the 3 pilot interviews, 22 further interviews with Chinese journalists were conducted so as to provide data for analysis. The interviewees were labelled journalist 1 to journalist 22. Thematic analysis of the 22 interview transcripts is based on the

guidelines suggested by Ryan and Bernard (2003) and Folkestad (2008) so as to clarify the process through explicit steps. Based on a constructionist theoretical perspective of qualitative interviews, there are three stages to the data analysis: 1) repeatedly reviewing the data to understand the meaning of the respondents' thoughts and to gain an awareness of significant expressions related to the research questions, especially those related to the thematic codes developed from the existing literature and pilot interviews; 2) developing open themes based on the significant expressions extracted in the first stage; 3) refining and categorising the open themes into core thematic codes for further discussion.

To facilitate the establishment of open themes, the transcript of each interview was read and reviewed many times in order to achieve a familiarity with the meaning of the respondents' words. This researcher is aware, however, that a comprehensive understanding of the interviews cannot depend only on the number of such reviews. The need to understand the material and to highlight the data from the raw transcripts which is appropriate for analysis was met by three factors. First of all, the researcher himself can be regarded as an instrument for conducting the analysis. This meant that the experience and research capability of the researcher counted within the process of data analysis. This researcher has studied journalism for almost 10 years since he was an undergraduate student. The experience of being a research student granted a consciousness of important issues around the research topic. His working experience of being a journalist within the Chinese news media meant that Chinese journalists

became more accessible. This advantage allowed the researcher to understand the meaning of the interviewees' answers. Secondly, the researcher reviewed the interview transcripts by keeping the research questions in mind. This allowed data which was not apparently related to the research to be filtered. Thirdly, this researcher had already developed a number of thematic codes from the literature and pilot interviews such as the decline of traditional news media and the censorship of Chinese journalism. Although these open themes required further tests in order to be verified, the codes provided a guide to assist the researcher to extract data which could then be categorised under these themes or be of relevance to them.

The raw data includes all of the words which compose the questions and answers during the interviews. In order to extract open themes, the raw data was reduced by this researcher in the first place. Based on the three advantages indicated above, three steps are set to reduce the data: 1) dialogues which are apparently not related to any core interview questions are not considered for further analysis. Such dialogues mainly consist of warm-up questions and related answers, answers digress from the topic and dialogues which aim to show friendship. For example, this researcher asked every interviewee his/her position and seniority although he had already known before the interview. These questions assisted interviewees to start talking, but these dialogues did not provide open themes for the research purpose. 2) Highlighting data which is related to the pre-set themes of the pilot study conducted before. It is because such data is significant for developing pre-set themes to become focus themes. 3)

Underlining data which is related to the theoretical framework since the data is crucial to develop theory-driven themes. 4) Highlighting contents which directly reflect the perceptions to the core interview questions set in the methodology design. To sum up, the raw data was reduced by stressing significant data which was related to the research questions and the pre-set themes.

In total, 19 open themes were found at first. Group discussion with another two social science PhD students (Ms Jin and Ms Zhang) was used to assist with the identification and classification of the open themes. These two PhD students both have a strong academic background in social sciences: Ms Jin is a third year PhD student of journalism studies. She has made a very successful academic career in a Chinese university and published several papers in English and Chinese. Ms Zhang is a second year PhD student of linguistics. She has a well developed ability to point out the meaning of words and classify them. The remaining and re-categorised themes will be demonstrated in detail in further sections. However, the themes which are to be excluded will be explained in the following section:

- 1) The special nature of Party newspapers

Journalists 1, 6 and 12 explicitly mentioned the special characteristics of Party newspapers. As organs of the Communist Party of China, from its central committee to more local committees, Party newspapers play a hugely important role in advocating the Party's policies and achievements. The Chinese government provides economic and political support to its newspapers, permitting them to operate in quite a

different way from commercial newspapers. When interviewed about the competition between traditional news media and online news media, three journalists proposed the idea that the Party newspapers are not strongly influenced by market forces. Mr Yan, a senior editor who has worked at *The People's Daily* for more than a decade, stated:

“Although competition between newspapers and news websites does exist, Party newspapers such as *The People's Daily* do not emphasize competition in the market too much. *The People's Daily* gets a lot of financial support from the government, so circulation is not a priority of our work. Because of the special nature of the Party newspapers, journalists do not need to worry about circulation, while their salaries are guaranteed by the government. It makes the Party newspapers lack a sense of competition.”

The nature of Party newspapers can provide a particular perspective for understanding the Chinese Communist Party's idea of propaganda. Nevertheless, this research does not focus on a narrow group of Chinese newspapers, and the interviews do not provide adequate data to further explore the reasons why Party newspapers are so special. As this issue is not related to the research questions, this research will not develop the special nature of the Party newspapers as a core theme.

2) The importance of using the internet as a tool in news media

Data analysis of the pilot interviews shows that journalists perceived that, because of the now fierce levels of competition in the market, it is indispensable for even the most traditional journalism to use the internet as a tool. In order to further explore how internet technology impacts on the work of journalism newsrooms, this researcher has collected data concerning the way in which the internet influences

journalism practice such as fieldwork and internal organisation. The formal interviewees also provided their evaluations of the importance of using the internet as a tool in their journalistic work. They either argued that traditional journalistic organisations cannot survive if they do not use internet technology at all, or stated that the capability to use the internet proficiently is now an essential skill for journalists. Mr Jiang, a senior editor who has worked for a local broadcast company for more than two decades, argued:

“I believe using the internet as a tool in journalistic work is indispensable. If we did not have the internet right now, many media professionals would be at a loss as to what to do. If a traditional news media organisation does not use the internet at all, it cannot develop further. It is because if you do not read online information and communicate with your audience through the internet, you will lose them sooner or later.”

However, the aim of this study is to discover what aspects of journalism practice have been influenced by the internet rather than to evaluate how important the effects are. In one sense, though, there is an overlap to some extent in that the journalists stated that the internet is important to their work after they described how their work has been influenced in the context of interviews. However, it was decided not to further analyse the importance of using the internet in news media as a theme. Instead, the study focuses on the way in which journalism practice has been influenced.

3) The difference between online news media emerging from traditional journalism backgrounds and more recent independent online news media

The Literature Review showed that Chinese online news media can be categorised into two groups: online news media with a traditional journalism background and more recent independent online news media. The interviews demonstrated that Chinese journalists were conscious of this classification. 18 of the 22 interviewees mentioned the difference between these two categories, with the exception of journalists 1, 2, 4 and 14. The other 18 journalists agreed that the online news media emerging from traditional journalism backgrounds do not constitute competition for traditional news media. In contrast, independent online news media do compete in the market with more established traditional news media. Mr Zhou, an editor with an independent online news media named 163.com, stated:

“A website with a traditional journalism background is not a real independent news medium. It is only a platform for the content of newspapers. They are invested in much less than their mother media. They do not have much influence in the market, especially those which are operated by local daily newspapers. They actually consolidate their mother newspapers rather than challenge them. They cannot even compete with independent online news media without the support of the traditional news media they rely on. In contrast, the independent online news media do challenge traditional news media in the market.”

Nevertheless, this research does not further explore this issue for two reasons. On the one hand, the difference between online news media which form part of the operation of more traditional journalism and independent online news media has already been discussed by scholars in both Western and Chinese contexts (Chan *et al.*, 2006; Herbert, 2000; Huang., 2001; McNair, 2009). Reaffirming this issue from the perspective of Chinese journalists provides nothing new for the academic field. On

the other hand, the difference between separate categories of online news media cannot answer the research question, as the research focuses on the correlation between the internet and off-line journalism. Therefore, this study will not develop this issue as a core theme.

The remaining open themes were categorised and redefined after group discussion with other two researchers. Six core themes, each with respective subthemes, were identified from the data. The label and definition for each theme and related findings will be interpreted in the following section.

5.3 Results

1. The ascendancy of the online news media

Both the Literature Review and the pilot study showed the elimination of the press to be a popular theme discussed by journalists and scholars. The interviews demonstrated that Chinese journalists tend to hold a negative attitude towards the elimination of the press, as only two (journalists 10 and 18) of the 22 interviewees stated that traditional forms of journalism, especially newspapers, will be completely replaced by online news media. Mr. Jiang (journalist 10), who has worked for a local TV station for more than 24 years, believed that the medium of journalism such as printed newspaper and broadcast will be replaced by the internet eventually. He maintained that online newspapers will substitute printed newspapers, while online

videos will replace television. However, the two interviewees provided rather weak reasons to support their predictions. They both argued that the closure of some American printed newspapers can be regarded as a sign of the elimination of the press. Journalist 10 also mentioned a book predicting that printed newspapers will no longer exist after 2040, which is almost certainly the book written by Meyer (2004). None of them provided any evidence or examples of eliminating newspapers in the Chinese press, nor did they mention any other literature which supports the idea of Meyer's book. In other words, these two journalists' perceptions concerning the existence of traditional journalism are narrowed down too much by the influence of very limited literature and examples they have gleaned from the American model of journalism. As the examples and literature mentioned by the interviewees have already been discussed in the Literature Review, it is not necessary to analyse them again.

It is noteworthy that the Chinese journalists' perceptions cannot determine the survival of traditional news media. As this is qualitative research, because all of the interviewees disagreed about the elimination of the press, this cannot provide solid evidence for the prediction. There was actually little consistency within the views of the journalists. Miss Hu (journalist 18), an editor of a commercial news website, criticised the repetition of predictions of the elimination of traditional journalism based on some American examples, although she explicitly stated that the traditional news media will be completely substituted by online news media. She proposed:

“It makes little sense to discuss whether newspapers will be eliminated or not. Both traditional news media and online news media

have their own problems. The capability of spreading information efficiently is the most significant dilemma for traditional journalism, while establishing high credibility is the most urgent mission for online journalism.”

Scholars and journalists have already argued at length concerning the possibility of the elimination of the press, ever since online news media were established. Chinese journalists’ perceptions can provide little new evidence to support either side of the argument. In addition, such predictions can never be confirmed or proved false until the points in time mentioned in the predictions, such as the year 2040, actually arrive. It seems unnecessary to discuss this either-or assumption further in this research. Nevertheless, it is clear that Chinese journalists would rather describe the ascendancy of the online news media than simply give an absolute positive or negative judgment concerning the elimination of the press. They argued that the dominant position of traditional news media as a whole has been strongly challenged by online news media. Journalist 4, the secretary for a city broadcast bureau who holds the rank of county official, emphasized the trend within online news media:

“Traditional journalism and online journalism will co-exist for a long period. However, I do believe online news media will become the most popular channel for consuming information. Text, pictures, sound tracks and videos are converged within online news media, which makes it a perfect platform to disseminate news in different forms. With the acceleration of internet speed, the momentum towards becoming the mainstream media is quite obvious for online news media. It can be expected that online news media will surpass newspapers and broadcast to become the mainstream media in China.”

In the light of this, this researcher decided to adjust the pre-set theme labelled the elimination of the press to a new core theme labelled the ascendancy of the online news media. The definition is as follows:

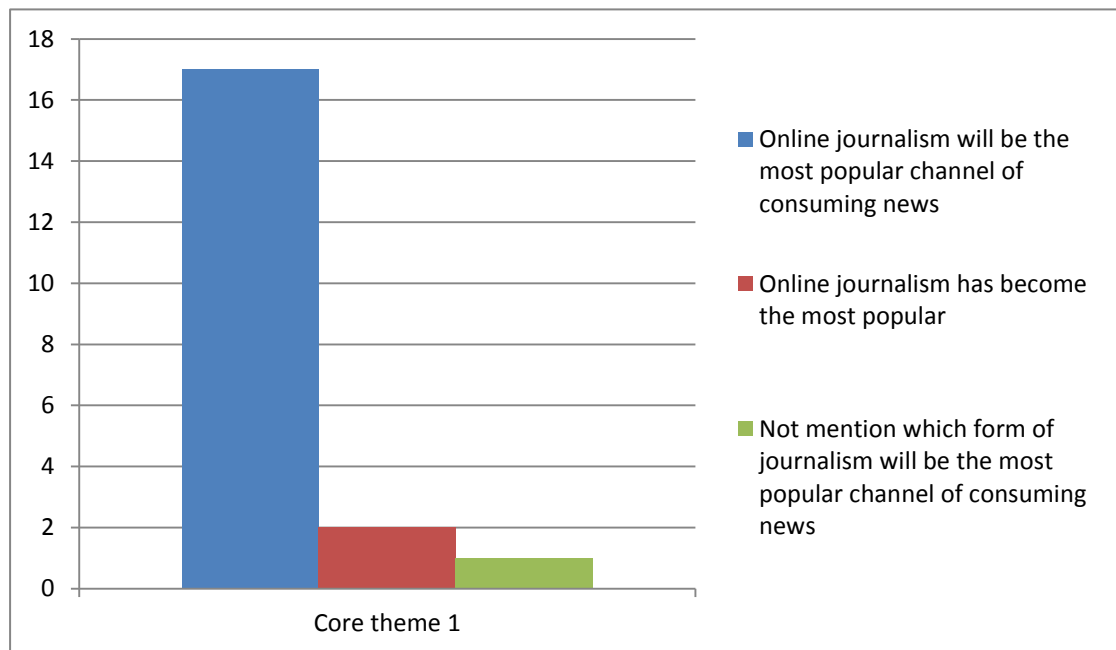
Core theme 1

Label: The ascendancy of the online news media

Definition: The online news media will surpass the traditional news media to become the most popular channel for consuming news, with the condition that the traditional news media will still exist.

Description: This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) state that online news media will become the most popular channel for consuming news instead of traditional news media; 2) state that online news media have already become the most popular channel for consuming news; 3) mention personal experience of using online news media as the main way for consuming news to imply the domination of the online news media.

Histogram 1



Histogram 1 demonstrates journalists' perceptions concerning the ascendancy of the online news media with the condition that the traditional news media will still exist. Only one of the 20 journalists (journalist 14) who believed traditional journalism will co-exist with online journalism did not explicitly state which form of news media will become the mainstream. Two journalists (journalists 9 and 22) argued that online news media have already surpassed traditional news media to become the most popular channel for consuming news. However, the other 17 journalists proposed that online news media will become the mainstream media in the future, which implies that traditional news media still currently dominate Chinese journalism. Journalist 6 mentioned that she already uses the internet as her major channel for consuming news, although she has worked for traditional news media for 27 years and receives free newspapers in her office. She stated:

“My company used to order newspapers every year, as our authorities asked us to receive newspapers as a matter of course. Now we do not get them anymore. It is a waste of money because nobody reads those newspapers in my company. We just like to consume news from the internet.”

This argument suggests that Chinese media professionals perceive online news media to be a more efficient and convenient platform for consuming news. Otherwise they would not spend their time on online news media rather than printed newspapers. However, it seems that government approval is one of the key prerequisites for online news media to be regarded as mainstream media, even if it is the most popular channel for consuming news. Several interviewees implied that the status of online news media is still below that of the traditional news media in China. Journalist 9, a vice chief editor of a local evening newspaper, pointed out:

“It is true online news media provide a larger number of news items, but the government prefers releasing important news of its decisions through traditional journalism, whereas it prevents online news media from getting involved too much...The Chinese government trusts traditional journalism more than online journalism.”

This argument shows that online news media are not treated on a par with traditional news media by the government. In other words, the Chinese government does not yet perceive online news media as mainstream media, although the readership of online journalism is becoming larger. In this sense, it is reasonable to argue that online news media tend to be the prevailing channel for consuming news from the point of view of Chinese journalists, although their status is uncertain in comparison with traditional journalism.

2. The access granted to online news media

According to regulations issued by the General Administration of Press and Publication of the People's Republic of China, a media professional without a press card cannot legally interview and publish original news reports. Moreover, current regulations related to the news media forbid journalists who work for news websites, especially commercial news websites, from gaining the necessary qualifications for press cards in China. In other words, such regulations actually forbid news websites from producing exclusive reports in practice. These regulations are explicitly issued and published by the Chinese officials, leading to the argument that Chinese online news media do not have the right to conduct interviews. The literature shows that this issue has been much discussed in terms of Chinese media administration (Hu, 2010; Yin, 2009; Zhao, 2008; Zheng, 2008). Much of the scholarship holds that such regulations have strongly influenced the development of Chinese online news media, since the regulations are explicitly interpreted and officially issued by the authorities. However, little within these discussions focuses on how Chinese journalists deal with the regulations in practice. In this sense, it is an essential theme to explore within the data.

Core theme 2

Label: The access granted to online news media

Definition: Regulations and journalism practice related to permission and prohibition concerning interviewing and publishing by online news media

Description: This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) state they are conscious of the regulations which prohibit online news media from conducting independent interviews; 2) argue that they are influenced in practice by the regulations mentioned above; 3) mention the way in which they get access to news reports when they are working for online news media.

Although the literature does highlight the existence of regulations which forbid online news media from interviewing subjects independently (Hu, 2010; Yin, 2009), it would be prudent to use the data to test if Chinese journalists are fully aware of these regulations in their work. In this sense, a sub-theme is developed to discuss Chinese journalists' awareness of the regulations:

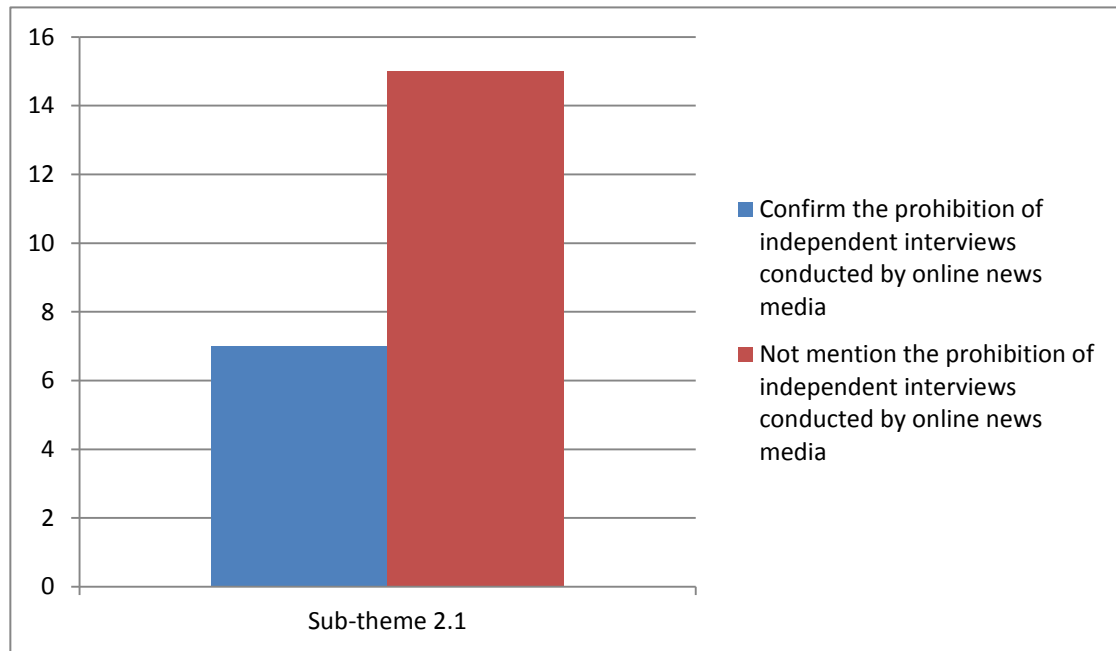
Sub-theme 2.1:

Label: The existence of the prohibition

Definition: The prohibition which prevents Chinese online news media from conducting interviews does exist and is implemented.

Description: This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) confirm the existence of the prohibition; 2) confirm the administration implements this prohibition to supervise journalism practice.

Histogram 2



Histogram 2 demonstrates Chinese journalists' awareness of the regulations which forbid online news media to conduct interviews independently. 7 interviewees (journalists 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 15) explicitly confirmed that online news media are prohibited from conducting independent interviews in China, while none of the 22 interviewees denied the existence of the restriction. Considering that journalists 7, 8, 11 and 12 work for the online news media outlet of a traditional news organisation background while journalists 13 and 15 work for independent commercial websites, it seems reasonable to conclude that the regulation influences all kinds of online news media. As journalist 7, the deputy editor of a news website with a local broadcast background, argued:

“Journalists who work for news websites in China do not have press cards. Maybe only journalists who work for People.com and Xinhua.com have related certification. In other words, news websites' resources depend on traditional journalism...To be honest, the social

status of journalists who work for online news media is relatively lower. The public may not share this judgment, but official departments still think journalists who work for traditional news media are superior.”

No public official report is provided by Chinese authorities to list which news websites are authorised to interview independently so far. However, journalist 7’s argument above can be verified by journalist 11 to some extent. Journalist 11 stated: “Not all of news websites have been authorised to interview independently. The government only grant a few news websites to conducting interviews through special approvals, such as Anhuinews.com.” This argument suggests it is not popular for Chinese news websites to access interviews legally, although there are a few more news websites are authorised to interview independently other than People.com and Xinhua.com. As all of the traditional news media are authorised to conduct interviews in China, the prohibitions actually lower the status of journalists who work for online news media in journalism practice.

It is to be expected that Chinese journalists who work for news websites would be conscious of the prohibition of interviews since the regulations have been issued and explicitly interpreted by the authorities. However, the interviews show that the awareness of this regulation does not necessarily result in compliance. Several journalists (journalists 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 17) described how or suggested that journalists who work for news websites do interview and produce exclusive reports in practice without any punishment as a result of violating the law. This finding means the arguments which propose Chinese journalists who work for online media cannot

conduct interviews, arguments which depend only on research into legal issues, are problematic. In this sense, a data-driven sub-theme is developed to grant further understanding of the access allowed to online news media:

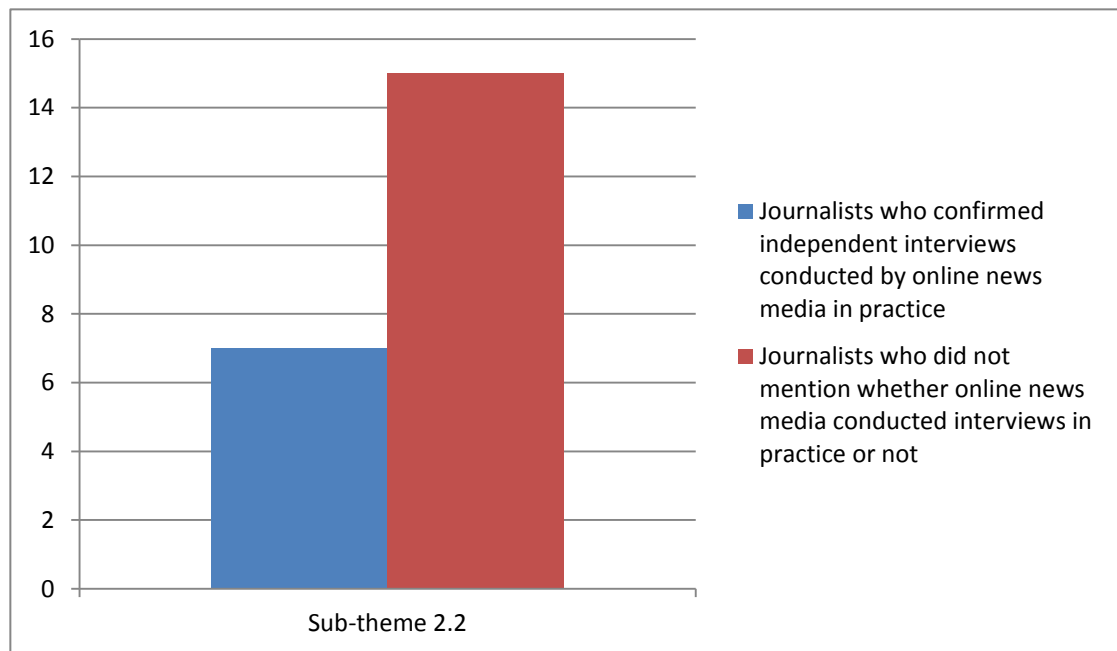
Sub-theme 2.2:

Label: Interviews in practice

Definition: Online news media interview subjects independently and produce exclusive reports in practice.

Description: This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) mention they have noticed journalists who work for online news media interview people or produce their own reports; 2) describe how they have interviewed people when working for online news media.

Histogram 3



Histogram 3 demonstrates Chinese journalists' perceptions of the independent interviews conducted by online news media in practice. Three journalists (journalists 9, 10 and 17) who work for traditional news media and four journalists (journalists 11, 12, 13 and 14) who work for online news media confirmed that online news media can interview people independently, although two of them (journalist 10 and 17) had not even noticed that there was a prohibition to forbid such practice. All three interviewees explicitly argued that this practice has not yet been punished by the authorities. In contrast, it seems local governments approve the online media's right to interview and report to some extent since online news media are frequently invited to participate in conferences held by such government. Journalist 17 commented that:

“I do not know if there is a prohibition against interviews, but I am sure news websites can interview people independently in practice. I found journalists who worked for online news media interviewing people many times when I was sent to collect my own material for reports. You can also find these journalists doing interviews in some conferences and activities held by the government. For example, news websites send journalists to report independently on the Confucius Cultural Festival, which is one of the largest activities held by the local government. They are surely treated independently as well as the traditional news media.”

Moreover, although online news media professionals were generally aware of the prohibition, they have engaged in interviews and exclusive news reports without too many problems. Journalist 11, an editor who works for a news website without the authorisation to interview subjects, stated that it is “popular” for online news media to conduct interviews independently. Journalist 14, a financial reporter who works for Sina.com, one of the largest commercial websites, a site which does not have

authorisation to interview, implied that Chinese society accepts the right to interview for online news media. She stated:

“I can interview people. Many interviewees, including some director-generals of top corporations and economists, are willing to be interviewed by us. It is the real situation in China...My work includes interviewing people and reporting events related to finance. I also participate in and report on some top international conferences including the Boao Forum and the Davos.”

Based on the arguments above, it is possible to claim that the prohibition against interviews issued by the General Administration of Press and Publication of the People’s Republic of China does not hold the approval, to some extent, of local government and the public. In other words, Chinese news websites are actually permitted to interview independently in practice in some situations. This finding implies that Chinese online news media may have their own codes to work with, despite their own rules violating the regulations issued by the authorities. More importantly, such industry rules are so widely accepted by society that the public and even local government ignore the contradiction with the law.

The interviews indicate that Chinese journalists are unable to explain fully why online news media can conduct interviews independently without facing any consequences from breaking the prohibition. Journalist 11 explicitly claimed he did not know the reason behind the paradox. However, he implied that competition in the market may provide an explanation:

“Not every news website enjoys the right to interview, and only a few news websites such as Anhuinews.com are specifically authorised

by the government. Online news media want to collect their own material by themselves, so they interview people and produce original reports. Nevertheless, I really do not know the reason.”

Journalist 11 suggested that it is essential for the operation of a news website to provide exclusive reports. Otherwise the news website will be in an inferior position in terms of competition with other websites, especially those with specific authorisation. In order to survive in the market, online news media are forced to interview independently. However, journalist 11’s argument cannot explain why those conducting illegal interviews have not been punished.

On the other hand, journalist 9 believes that the paradox is a product of the margins of the press law in China. Enforcement of the regulations issued by the government can be rather weak since such regulations are not legislated by the National People's Congress. He argued:

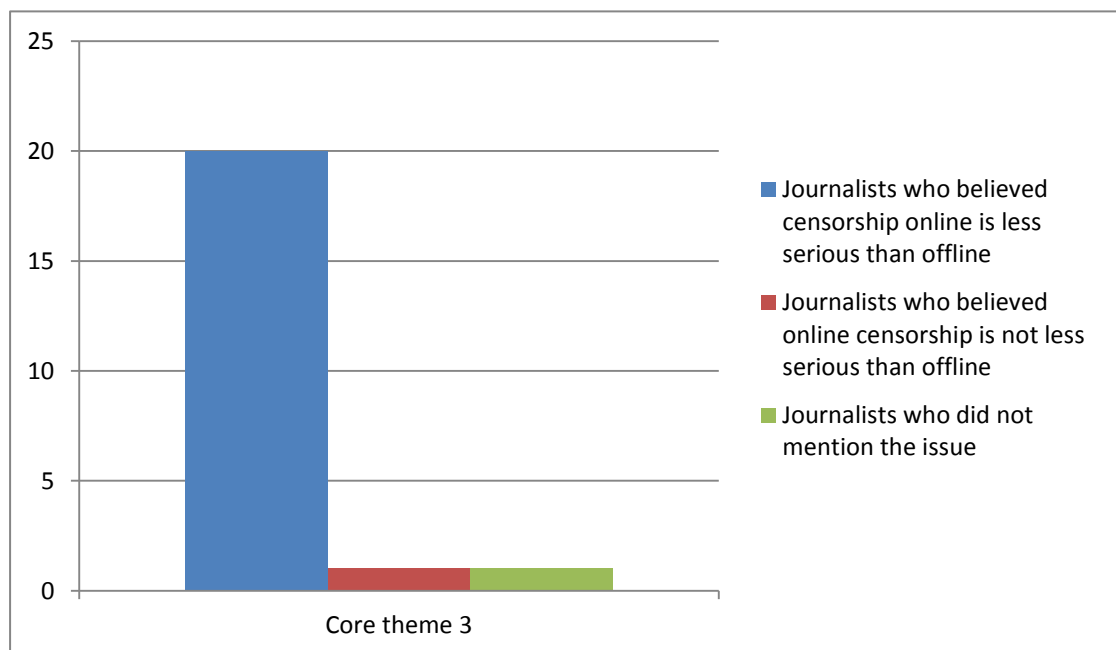
“There are various legal loopholes in Chinese legislation. The Chinese legislature has not issued a press law so far to guide the management of news media. The prohibition of interviews is a policy rather than a law. It is not legislated by the National People's Congress, so it does not have much power to restrict the behaviour of journalists. For example, the journalists who work for the website with the backing of our newspaper also enter the exam for the press card. Although the administration of the province does not allow them to join this examination, these journalists can state they work for the newspaper organisation and get a press card. The examiners do not check their background strictly. Commercial news websites such as Sina.com also interview and produce exclusive reports...It is just too difficult to manage so many journalists based on this rather weak regulation.”

In this sense, it seems reasonable to believe that the enforcement of non-legislative press regulations hardly restricts the behaviour of Chinese journalists.

In addition, the government itself seems to be troubled by the law it issued when it deals with interviews conducted by online news media. The Chinese journalists' perceptions are not sufficient to explain the deeper reasons behind this paradox. However, it is evident that online news media are able to interview independently in China while being respected and accepted by society.

3. The difference between censorship of online news media and traditional news media

Histogram 4



The censorship of Chinese journalism has been discussed extensively in the literature as an essential context in terms of understanding Chinese news media more broadly. It is not necessary to re-confirm that censorship is executed seriously in China. However, data from the pilot study suggested that online news media enjoy more freedom in publishing news reports than do traditional news media as a result of

differences in the practice of censorship. In this sense, it can be expected that news reports which are not allowed to be published in traditional news media may be published on news websites. The interviewees' perceptions confirmed such expectations. As histogram 4 shows, 20 journalists argued that the trend for news websites to publish reports which are not allowed to be published through traditional journalism does exist. Only journalist 12, who works for a local news website, argued that she did not find such examples in her department, while journalist 21, who works for a commercial news website, simply refused to answer any questions around censorship. A data-driven theme is developed as follows:

Core theme 3:

Label: Less serious censorship online

Definition: Censorship of news websites is less robust than its counterpart for traditional journalism.

Description: This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) state that filtered news in traditional journalism can be published on news websites; 2) explain the difference between censorship of online news media and traditional news media.

6 of the 20 Chinese media professionals (journalists 1, 3, 6, 9, 14 and 17) confirmed the phenomenon and argued that it is "popular" or "frequent" to see online news media publish news that is filtered in traditional journalism. Considering journalists 1 and 3 are both senior journalists with official ranks and have worked for

more than 30 years, it is creditable that such occurrences happen more than just occasionally in the Chinese news media. In addition, since the interviewees who confirmed the pattern are from different newsrooms across the country, it seems that this trend is widely perceived by Chinese media professionals.

Moreover, apart from journalists 14 and 19, who have worked for the news media for less than five years, the rest of the 20 interviewees tended to explain why censorship of online news media is more vulnerable in China, especially the more senior journalists. Chinese journalists' perceptions of the reasons why online news media enjoy more freedom to post news provide an essential perspective to interpret how exactly censorship works in China. It also provides an important context to understand how the internet is influencing Chinese traditional journalism since censorship is regarded as a restriction of journalism. Therefore, a sub-theme is developed as follows:

Sub-theme 3.1:

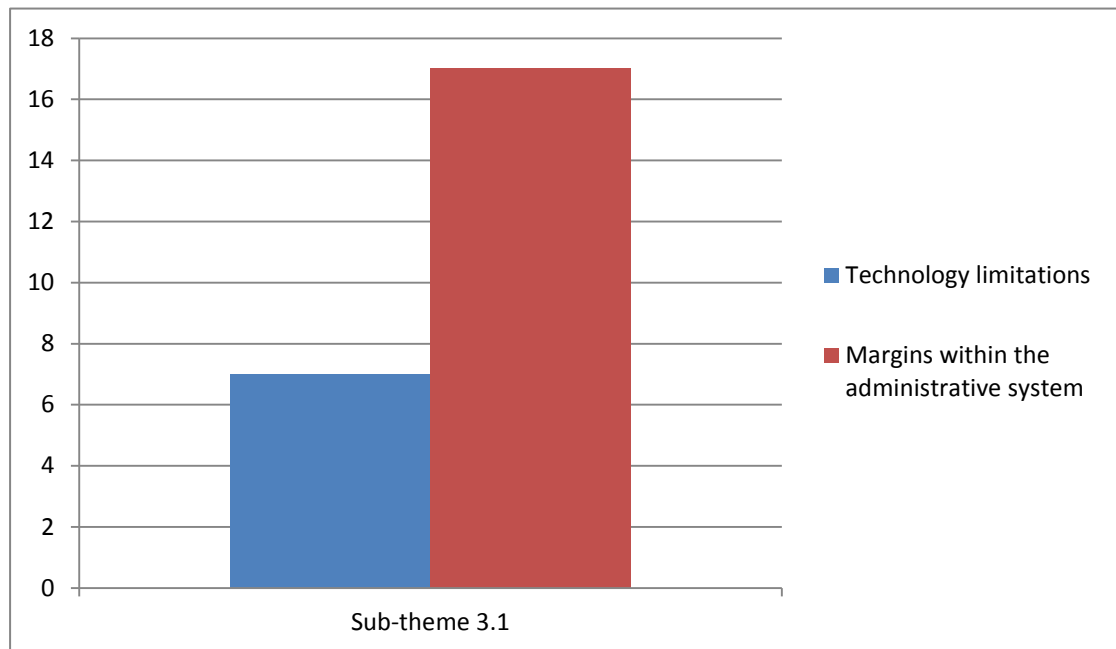
Label: Reasons for the differences in censorship

Definition: The explanation of why censorship of online news media is more vulnerable than that for traditional journalism in China.

Description: This may be indicated when the interviewees discuss 1) why some news can be published online while it is filtered within the traditional news media; 2)

directly describe the differences in censorship between online and traditional journalism.

Histogram 5



According to the interviews, the reasons for the distinction can be classified into two categories showed in the histogram 5: technological limitations and the margins within the administrative system. 7 of the 18 journalists (journalists 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 16 and 22) emphasized that technological limitations lead to inconsistencies in censorship, while 17 Chinese journalists highlighted the idea that the margins around the administrative system lead to less serious online censorship. Mr Li, the chief editor of a local news website who previously worked in broadcast organisations for 23 years, claimed that technological limitations were the only significant reason for the relative ineffectiveness of online censorship. He argued:

“I do not believe the administrative system plays an important role in the issue of the more fragile online censorship. I would rather state that because of the massive amount of information published online, the effort of trying to inspect every piece of news is in vain. Actually the Department of Propaganda also asks news websites to censor every piece of news before publishing it, just as traditional journalism does, but in fact not a single online news media can achieve this goal. It needs an enormous censorship team to monitor the massive amount of online information, which cannot be realistic.”

Mr Li’s argument implies that the key reason for the differences in censorship is technological limitations. The Chinese government has built a large electronic infrastructure which is called the Great Firewall to filter political sensitive online contents and block specific websites. Technically, the filtering technology is strong enough to influence every internet users in China. However, since the Great Firewall filters information based on its database of so-called sensitive words related to the topics, issues and individuals which are forbidden to be discussed online, it is highly possible that internet users publish news information which the government disapproves of without using these words. In this sense, large amount of human labour is indispensable to filter every piece of disapproved news. Filter technology such as the Great Firewall is not able to judge every piece of news automatically, while it is even more impossible to inspect the massive amount of online information by human labour. In contrast, there is much less information in a newspaper than on a news website, making the censorship of every news report possible for traditional journalism. In this sense, it is not surprising to find that news censored for traditional journalism can be published online.

On the other hand, more Chinese journalists highlighted the idea that the margins around the administrative system lead to less serious online censorship. Except for Mr Li, the other 17 interviewees emphasized that in practice the administrative structure for online news media is quite different from that for the traditional news media. Journalist 7, a deputy editor of a local news website, explicitly interpreted the margins of the administrative system for online news media:

“There are two governmental departments managing online news media: one is the so-called online policeman of the police office, and the other is the internet management office of the propaganda department. The online policeman usually only pays attention to news related to the national leaders and information which may violate criminal law, such as drugs, whereas the internet management office is only authorised to supervise the websites which are registered by the office. Thus, you can see that there is a grey area for some information which cannot be published by traditional journalism to survive online. The censorship of traditional journalism is more influential because there is no margin in the administrative system.”

This line of argument points out that although online news media and traditional news media share the same censorship regulations to some extent, news websites enjoy more freedom of speech as the margins within the administrative departments allow them to publish some specific information without being censored or punished. It is noteworthy only those laws passed by the National People's Congress are enforced as legislated laws. The enforcement of regulations and policies issued by the administrative departments are weaker and less stable than legislated laws. Considering that there is no such legislated press law so far in China, the regulations and policies of censorship are rather fragile without enforcement by related

governmental departments. Thus, it is rational to perceive that the margins around the administrative system are a possible reason for the more vulnerable nature of online censorship.

Moreover, 9 interviewees (journalists 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 17 and 20) specifically highlighted the idea that the conflict between local propaganda departments and non-local news websites also allowed online news media to publish with less obstruction. Local news is usually strictly controlled by the local propaganda department, leading to a situation where local traditional journalists are unable to report local news with negative social effects if the government does not allow them to do so. However, online news media spread information without geographical limitations. Local government is simply not authorised nor has enough time to prevent the dissemination of news occurring in its jurisdiction on a website outside the region. Journalist 3, the chief editor of a local broadcast bureau, interpreted the issue as follows:

“Because disseminating information through the internet is not restricted by time or geography, it is very difficult for a local government to interfere with reports on a website outside its territory, even if the news event happened within the region. On the other hand, even though traditional journalism actively grabs exclusive news, it is not problematic if news websites produce exclusive news which is not published by traditional journalism. It is just how journalism works.”

Journalist 3 and other 8 interviewees suggested that local government plays an essential role in censorship in China as most of the Chinese news organisations are local media. Geographic limitations allow news websites to produce a large number

of news reports which would be filtered for local traditional journalism, while such stories are hardly punishable if the news events do not lead to a national negative influence, one which may draw the attention of the central government. Thus the conflict between local propaganda departments and non-local news websites can also be regarded as a result of administrative margins.

Furthermore, the different processes involved in news production also affect the consequences of censorship. 8 journalists (journalists 2, 7, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17 and 22) stressed that the implementation of censorship before or after the publishing of news reports makes a significant difference on Chinese journalism. Since news reported online is usually censored after being published, the information is at least spread to the public, even though it may be deleted later. On the contrary, news with a high risk of being deleted can never be disseminated through traditional journalism since every piece of news is censored and self-censored before being published in the traditional news media. Journalist 7 explained this difference in terms of his own experience:

“I have two radical examples. I used to produce two news reports which criticised the performance of the government. I got direct orders from the local Department of Propaganda which asked me to delete the news immediately within 2 hours. In other words, those reports only survived 2 hours online. However, I am afraid such news cannot even get a chance to be published through traditional journalism. My website allows such news to survive for a while at least, even if it is only two hours. Online news media can still take a chance to spread information to a part of the public.”

These 8 journalists felt that the process of censoring online news reports is also a reason why news filtered in traditional journalism is disseminated online in China.

They explained that it makes a difference that even though such online information may survive only a short time it is still technically spread to the public. The delay in censorship can also be regarded as deriving from the margins within the administrative system.

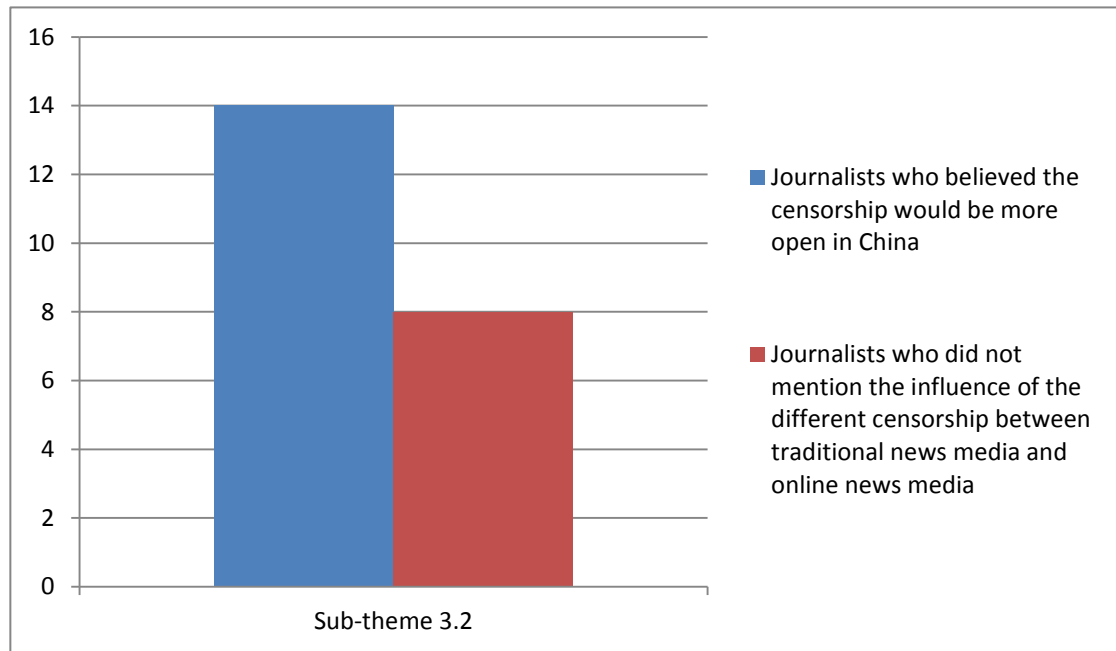
It is noteworthy that most of the interviewees who discussed the issue of censorship believed the trend of disseminating online information filtered within traditional journalism will certainly precipitate the reform of Chinese journalism censorship. 14 journalists agreed that the idea and practice of censorship will become less strict under the influence of the development of the internet. This is because government officers have realised that blocking news reports is becoming less possible than before since information can be disseminated to the public through online news media which are difficult to censor. In this sense, a sub-theme is developed as follows:

Sub theme 3.2:

Label: Increasingly open censorship

Definition: Chinese censorship is expected to become more open due to the influence of the trend in which online news media can disseminate information which is not allowed to be published through traditional journalism.

Histogram 6



Histogram 6 illustrates Chinese journalists' perceptions whether the different censorship between traditional journalism and online journalism will impact on the current censorship system. 14 Chinese journalists explicitly argued that such differences would lead to the reform of Chinese censorship, while others did not mention the issue. The Chinese journalists, especially those senior journalists who have worked for more than two decades, tended to suggest that the situation for journalism in China is more liberated than before as a result of the development of the internet. Their perceptions show that the spread of the internet is breaking the monopoly of traditional journalism, which is strongly controlled by the government, and is forcing the Chinese authorities to update their ideas about censorship and practice more openness in informing the public. The monopoly means traditional journalism used to be the only way of consuming professional news reports for

Chinese audience, while every piece of news is censored before publishing. The online news media break the monopoly just simply by providing new channels of consuming news reports which are mainly censored after publishing. In this sense, audience can choose which news to consume and believe by comparing information provided through different channels.

Journalist 8 argued that he feels the administration of journalism is “much more reasonable than 20 years ago” because it is being forced to reform by the internet. Journalist 4 provided more details on how the government is changing its attitudes towards and practices for managing journalists:

“The development of the internet has challenged the old way of managing journalism as performed by the Party and the government. On the one hand, governments at every administrative level have now established a spokesman system to inform the public and news media of important events. It is because the government will find itself rather disadvantaged if it does not deal with the increasingly influential internet. On the other hand, the government is also finding that news websites are an appropriate platform for revealing and announcing significant issues.”

In this sense, Chinese journalists’ perceptions indicate a correlation between the development of the internet and the reform of censorship. They believe the Chinese government is being passively forced to reform its methods of managing the flow of information through news media rather than actively updating its practices of censorship. Maintaining a monopoly on news through controlling traditional journalism seems increasingly unfeasible in China since more news can be found online, especially local events.

4 The transformed journalism practice

The internet has become an important everyday tool in Chinese journalists' work. The pilot study indicates that the working methods and functions of traditional journalism have been influenced by the development of the internet. However, since a pilot study necessarily includes only a limited amount of data, it cannot show how exactly how the internet affects the practice of traditional journalism. Thus, the formal interviews were designed to provide more data to explore, through Chinese journalists' perceptions, those aspects of journalism practice which have been influenced by the internet. The interviewees described the influence of the internet on journalism practice from various perspectives. It seems the operation, organisation and several other aspects of traditional journalism have been transformed as a result of the development of the internet. Therefore, a core theme is developed as follows:

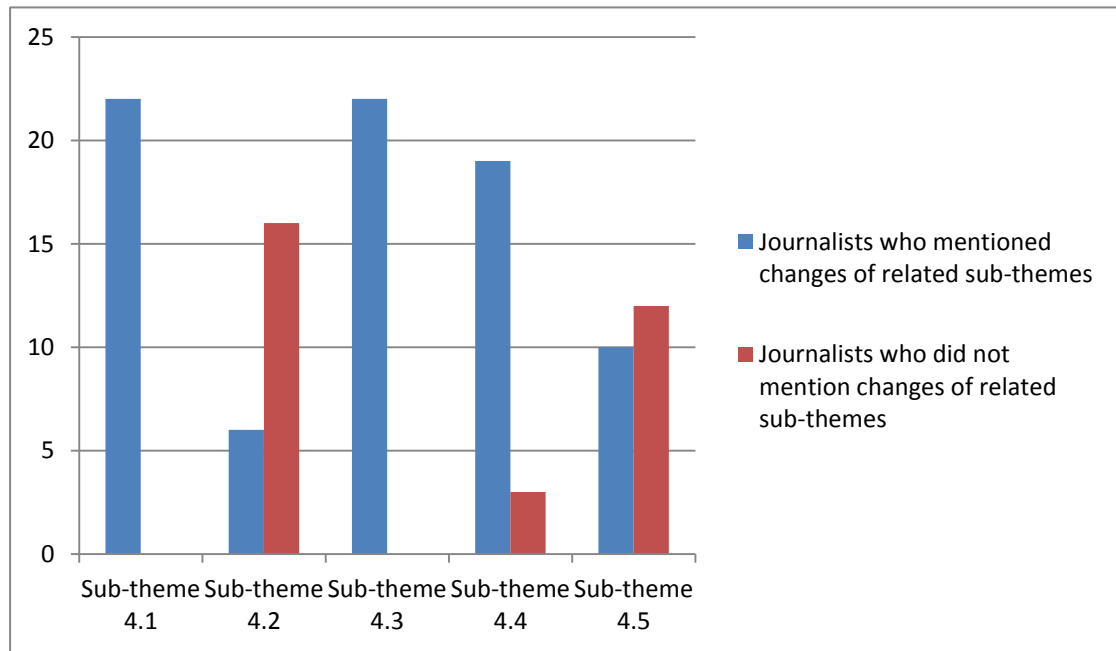
Core theme 4:

Label: Transformed journalism practice

Definition: The practice of Chinese traditional journalism has been transformed as a result of the internet.

Description: This may be indicated when the interviewees mentioned their experience and knowledge about any aspect of journalism practice that has been influenced by the internet, including 1) the working routines, 2) functions, 3) organisational structure, 4) news values and 5) other specific aspects.

Histogram 7



Histogram 7 demonstrates Chinese journalists' perceptions concerning the transformed journalism practice. None of the 22 Chinese journalists denied that practice within traditional journalism has been transformed under the influence of the internet as based on their own working experience. However, they focused on different aspects of journalism practice, which can thus be classified into five categories: 4.1) the operation of traditional journalism, 4.2) the organisational structure of traditional news media, 4.3) the highlighted functions of traditional journalism, 4.4) the evaluation of news values and 4.5) agenda setting. Each of the categories is worthy of development into a sub-theme.

The operation of traditional journalism

The transformation of the operation of traditional journalism was the most popular focus among the interviewees' perceptions. All of the 22 interviewees

mentioned that the process of producing and disseminating news has been affected by the use of the internet as a tool. In this sense, a sub-theme is developed as follows:

Sub-theme 4.1:

Label: The operation of traditional journalism

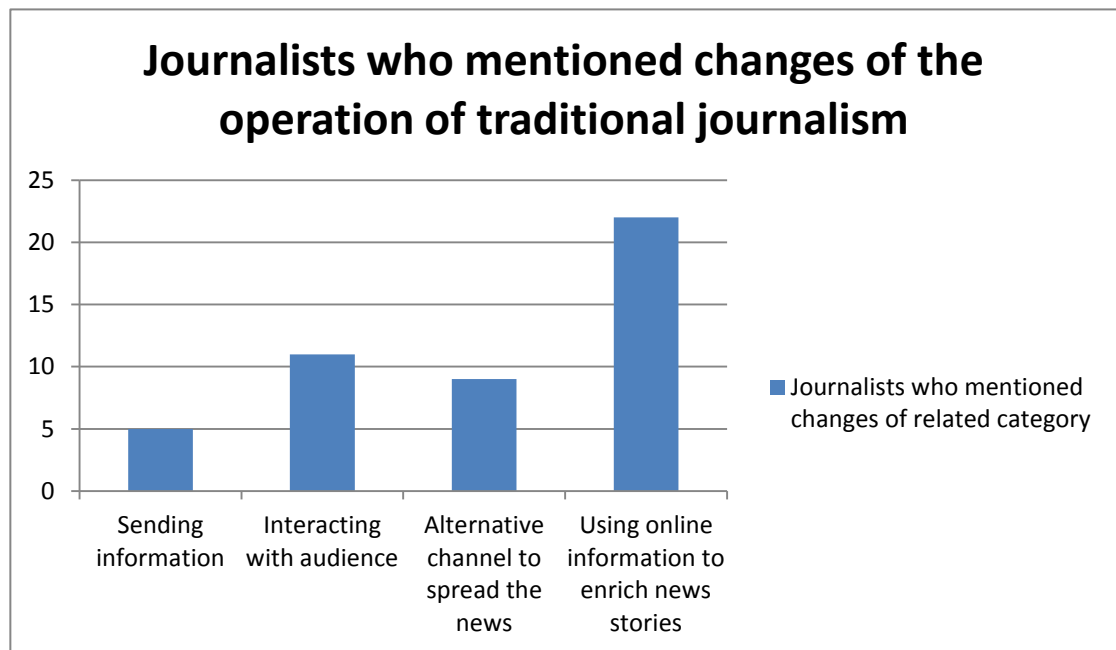
Definition: Using the internet as a significant tool for producing and communicating news has influenced the pre-existing route for the same work objectives.

It seems that senior journalists who experienced the introduction of the internet in the late 20th century had deep feelings about this sub-theme, as they could see the changes more comprehensively by comparing their working routines across two periods, that before the introduction of the internet and that after. Mr Sun (journalist 3), who has worked in broadcast journalism for more than 30 years, described step by step how the internet has been used in journalistic operation:

“My first time to touch the internet was in 1998. In the first place it was used as a convenient tool for sending drafts of news reports to editors and communicating with superiors. Gradually we found it was a good idea to collect information from all over the world through the internet because it provided us with background material for the news we produced. Subsequently, we began to communicate and interact with our audience through the internet. In 2006, we realised that online news media could provide an effective platform to expand the influence of our news organisation. Therefore I proposed to establish a news website in order to provide an alternative channel to spread the news and activities we made.”

Mr Sun's statement pinpoints four aspects of the operation of traditional journalism which have been transformed by the use of the internet in the newsroom: 1) sending information and communicating within the news organisation, 2) collecting online information to enrich reported stories, 3) interacting with the audience, 4) establishing a website as an extra channel for spreading information in order to expand the influence of the traditional parent company. Limited in terms of position and experience, not all interviewees emphasized all of these four aspects: five journalists (journalists 1, 3, 4, 7 and 20) mentioned sending information; 11 journalists (journalists 2, 3, 6, 8, 10, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22) spoke of interacting with the audience; nine journalists (journalists 3,6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18 and 19) discussed an alternative channel to spread the news; all of the interviewees mentioned using online information in news stories published through traditional journalism. The statistics are showed as follows:

Histogram 8



The Chinese journalists indicated that the operation of traditional journalism has been positively altered by using the internet as a tool. They believed sending information and communicating through the internet within the news organisation to be much more efficient than using faxes and mail. Journalist 4 suggested that sending reports through the internet helped journalists working in the field meet their publishing deadlines. On the other hand, the journalists regarded the internet as a more effective tool for interaction than hotlines and letters. They felt high quality interaction between journalists and audiences to be particularly beneficial in improving news production, especially for broadcast journalism. Journalist 16, an editor and host of a local broadcast show, stated:

“I must emphasize the importance of the interactivity of the internet. Traditional journalism actually communicated with the audience inadequately in the past. Mail was usually too late to reflect the audience’s opinion of the program. By interacting with the

audience through internet tools such as Weibo, I can get immediate feedback when I am transmitting news and comments. It has certainly improved the way new stories are expressed and made the news reports more acceptable for the audience.”

The comment above shows that Chinese journalists are aware of the importance of interactivity in terms of producing high quality news reports since the audience’s feedback is regarded as an essential part of the content of news. Using the internet has transformed traditional journalism and permitted more interactivity so as to meet the needs of the audience. Moreover, the 9 journalists who argued that the internet has provided an alternative channel to spread news seemed to imply that online news media with a traditional journalism background should be regarded as online platforms for spreading the products of traditional journalism rather than as independent media. These interviewees believed that news websites and social media accounts established by traditional news media support the operation of traditional journalism. Journalist 9 argued:

“It is a fact that the circulation of most newspapers is restrained by administrative region. However, the internet can break these geographic limitations. The transmission range of the newspaper is actually expanded by spreading its news reports through the internet. It is beneficial in improving the influence of a newspaper.”

It is worth noting that although the journalists emphasized different aspects of the operation of traditional journalism, none of them ignored the practice of using online information in news published by traditional journalism outlets. The interviewees believed it to be popular for traditional forms of journalism to quote

news information and internet users' comments. Journalist 10 described this trend as follows:

“Finding useful online information to enrich the news stories published by traditional journalism is very popular in China. For example, even hard news broadcast by China Central Television quotes online information. A large number of the comments provided by CCTV are from the internet.”

As the practices of China Central Television (CCTV) are usually regarded as some of the most important criteria within the operation of traditional journalism, since the organisation is the official news media of the central government, it seems reasonable to argue that the trend of quoting online information is becoming prevalent and acceptable for both the government and the press. The journalists generally evaluated this kind of operation positively since information found on the internet can enrich news stories and improve the efficiency of journalistic work. However, it can also lead to other, more negative consequences. For example, journalist 9 claimed that a dependence on online information has caused several cases of fabricated news appearing in newspapers.

Most of the Chinese journalists did not point out specific reasons why using online information within news published through traditional journalism was so popular. They argued that it was just simply convenient to do so. Nevertheless, the lack of copyright awareness may partly explain the trend. Three journalists (journalists 3, 7 and 9) emphasized that the blurry regulations for news copyright has led to the prevalent practice of sharing information. Mr Sun argued:

“I regard this phenomenon as information sharing. We used to pay royalties for news stories in the past in order to show the emphasis on copyright. However, copyright over online information has not been regulated by law so far. The State Press and Publication Administration used to ask traditional news media to pay the copyright for downloaded online material, but this requirement seems never to be implemented...I believe any kind of media can use shared information to construct their own news reports. It is a positive way of using the internet in journalism practice.”

In this sense, quoting online information within traditional journalism occurs partly because of the rather lax regulations concerning news copyright. Chinese journalists prefer sharing information to claiming copyright for news stories. Therefore, the use of online information tends not to be punished by law or administrative departments. This operational practice is generally acceptable for both the authorities and the public.

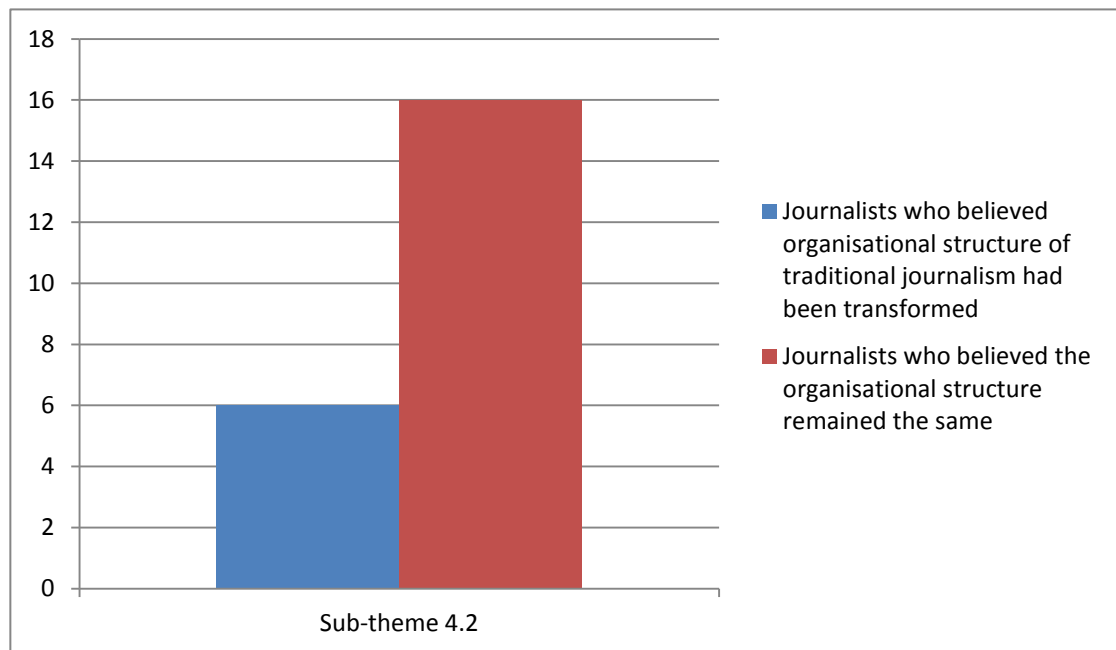
The organisational structure and arrangement of human resources

Sub-theme 4.2:

Label: The transformed organisational structure

Definition: The organisational structure and arrangement of human resources have been altered by the influence of the internet.

Histogram 9



The histogram 9 shows that the Chinese journalists felt the organisational structure for traditional journalism to be relatively stable under the influence of the internet. Most of the departments established before the introduction of the internet have continued their work and are still currently in place. However, 6 interviewees (journalists 1, 2, 3, 4, 9 and 16) provided examples concerning transformed arrangements for human resources.

The influence of the internet on the organisational structure of traditional journalism seems to depend on the perceptions of administrators as the journalists described the changes in their departments in quite different ways. Journalists 1, 2 and 16 held that the most obvious change was that fewer frontline reporters and technicians than before were needed to finish the regular work. This was because internet technology now assists Chinese journalists in editing and disseminating news

more easily. These three journalists suggested that there was a correlation between the reduction in human labour and the transformed operation discussed in sub-theme 4.1. Journalists 1 and 2 commented that sending information and contacting editors through the internet had reduced the number of staff who used to assist frontline journalists in communicating with their editors back in the newsroom. Journalist 16 stated that his department now sent fewer journalists to collect frontline material because interactivity with the audience could provide information for a variety of specific topics such as traffic jams and accidents.

Journalist 4, who is in charge of a local broadcast programme, highlighted the “flattening of the organisational structure”. This concept is one in which editors and administrators delegate frontline journalists more authority to deal with reports in order to publish news more rapidly. Journalist 9 mentioned that a number of local newspapers have established a new department, usually called “the internet business department”, to co-operate with news websites. It is noteworthy that none of the transformations mentioned above can be verified as a widespread trend within Chinese traditional journalism since any change in organisational structure is determined by each individual organisation and its administrators. However, the above perceptions do still indicate two points: on the one hand, Chinese journalists are conscious of the importance of reforming the organisational structure and arrangement of human resources to suit themselves in the era of the internet. On the

other hand, it seems to show how internet use in an organisation is correlated with the form of that organisation's structure.

The transformed functions of traditional journalism

The Chinese journalists emphasized social responsibility and functions such as reflecting public opinion and acting as a watchdog for society, just as occurs in western news media. In addition, based on the idea of the CCP's propaganda policies, Chinese traditional journalism is also asked to perform the role of the voice of the Party. All of the interviewees believed it to be crucial to undertake such responsibilities in journalism practice. However, their perceptions show that some functions have been strengthened and others weakened by the influence of the internet.

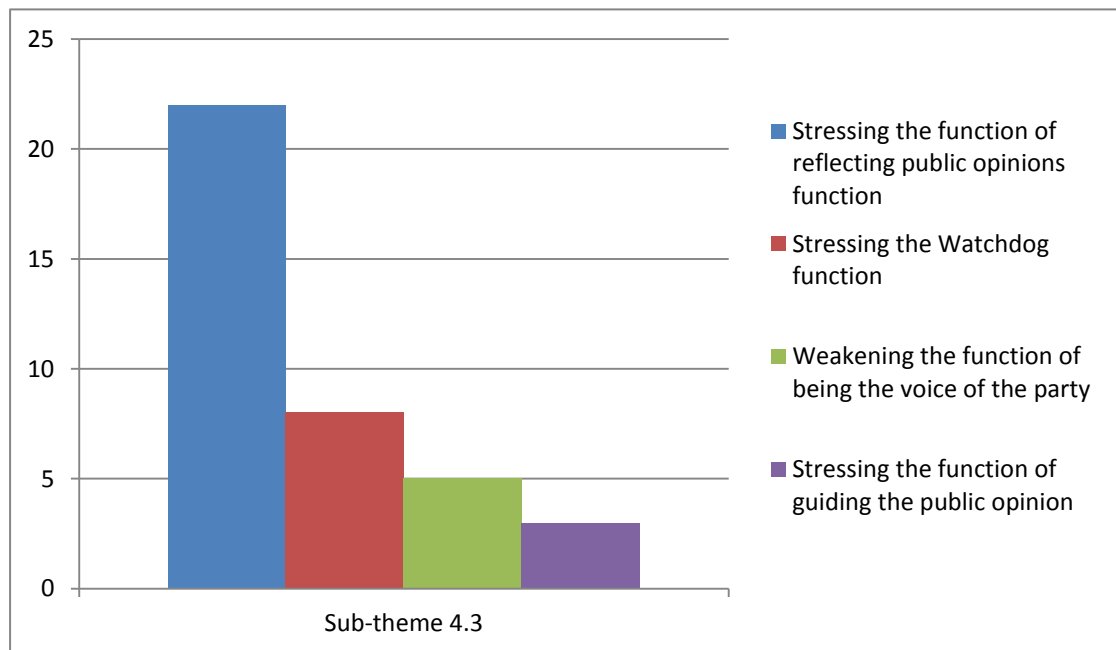
A related sub-theme is developed as follows:

Sub-theme 4.3:

Label: The transformed functions of traditional journalism

Definition: The perceived functions and social responsibilities of traditional journalism have been strengthened or weakened by the influence of the internet.

Histogram 10



Histogram 10 indicates the Chinese journalists' perceptions towards the transformed functions of traditional journalism under the influence of the internet. It shows some functions are more emphasized by Chinese journalists, whereas some others are less focused. All of the 22 journalists believed that it is an essential function for Chinese traditional journalism to pay more attention on reflecting public opinions. 8 journalists stressed the watchdog function, which mainly indicates reveal corruptions and abuse of power. It is evident that Chinese traditional journalism still highlights the function of being the voice of the Party. However, 5 journalists suggested this function had been weakened to some extent. In addition, 3 interviewees mentioned the function of guiding public opinion was emphasized. The discussion is as follows:

All of the interviewees admitted that traditional journalism was trying to establish a dialogue with the public in order to highlight reflection of public opinion. They believed that the internet has provided a relatively free space for interest groups and people with different viewpoints to express their opinions and draw the attention of wider society and the government. This advantage held by online news media has forced traditional journalism to focus more on public opinion in order to compete with online media. On the other hand, using the internet as a tool for interactivity allows traditional journalism to communicate efficiently with the public. Thus, the internet is also extending the capacity of traditional journalism to reflect the audience's ideas.

Journalist 4 argued:

“The internet has provided a platform to enable the public to discuss what they care about, complain about what they feel dissatisfied over and appeal for what they need. The government can learn about these opinions from the internet in order to improve its service...This trend is forcing traditional journalism to pay more attention to this function. Traditional journalism itself did have this function before the introduction of the internet. Now we have more hotlines for the audience to express their opinions on broadcast programmes...The news media cannot survive without contact with the audience. Traditional journalism must make more effort to reflect the needs of the public.”

Therefore, the function of reflecting public opinion has been strengthened by the development of the internet. Several journalists also mentioned other functions which are being reinforced in contemporary traditional journalism. In particular, the watchdog function were emphasized. Eight of the journalists (journalists 1, 5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17 and 22) stressed the significance of the watchdog function in Chinese

traditional journalism. In China, this function allows news media to emphasize the importance of publishing news stories which are opposed to corruption and any abuse of power. The journalists admitted that there were many restrictions to prevent traditional journalists from reporting news which was overly critical of the government. However, in that online news media play an increasingly important role in anti-corruption, traditional journalism has to stress this function to suit the public mood. The function named “the guiding role of public opinion” is a unique term for Chinese journalism, as is the “voice of the Party”. The former means that traditional journalism must take responsibility to refute rumours and provide an official description of the event in question. Journalists 3, 9 and 10 argued that this function has been given more emphasis by the traditional news media, probably because there are is too much fabricated news and too many rumours which appear on different websites, thus intensifying the responsibility of traditional journalism to clarify the truth. The government encourages traditional journalism to perform this function as such rumours can undermine the reputation of the authorities and the stability of society.

Nevertheless, another unique function of Chinese traditional journalism, that of serving as “the voice of the Party”, seems to have been weakened. Five journalists (journalists 8, 9, 11, 13 and 17) explicitly stated that this function was still mentioned as a vital role of journalism, but that it had lessened in importance to some extent in

practice. Over-emphasis of the role of the spokesperson of the Party may lead to a loss of readership. Journalist 9 argued:

“If the news media do not reform themselves alongside the development of society and public awareness but only perform as the loudspeakers of the authorities, they will gradually lose their market. Even the national news media such as CCTV have reduced the number of reports concerning the government leaders’ activities.”

This argument implies that market forces have precipitated the reform of Chinese traditional journalism. Market forces in China consist of two main parts: the market of readership and the market of advertising. On the one hand, although Party newspapers do not emphasize their circulations and advertising revenues as they are supported by the government, these specific newspapers desire to attract readers to consume news from them. On the other hand, readership and advertising revenues are crucial to the more commercial traditional news media such as the evening paper in terms of surviving in the face of competition. Performing as the loudspeakers of the authorities is not beneficial for traditional journalism in the market. In this sense, the Chinese traditional news media have started to downplay their function as the voice of the Party in practice, although it still remains a requirement of the Party’s policy. The Chinese journalists’ perceptions cannot prove that the internet has led directly to the changes in the functions mentioned above. However, it can be said that the journalists have demonstrated correlations between the development of the internet and the transformed functions of journalism.

The evaluation of news values

Only three journalists (journalists 4, 18 and 22) argued that there has been little influence on the news values of traditional journalism as a result of the development of the internet. Such a conclusion is based on the belief that the criteria of news values are universal. However, the rest of the journalists tended to believe that ideas about news values have altered within Chinese traditional journalism in practice. Mr Bi (journalist 17), a director of a TV channel, argued that:

“Contemporary traditional news journalism pays more attention to the value of the news event itself, which is more similar to western news values. In contrast, news in the past emphasized the Party’s propaganda policy too much.”

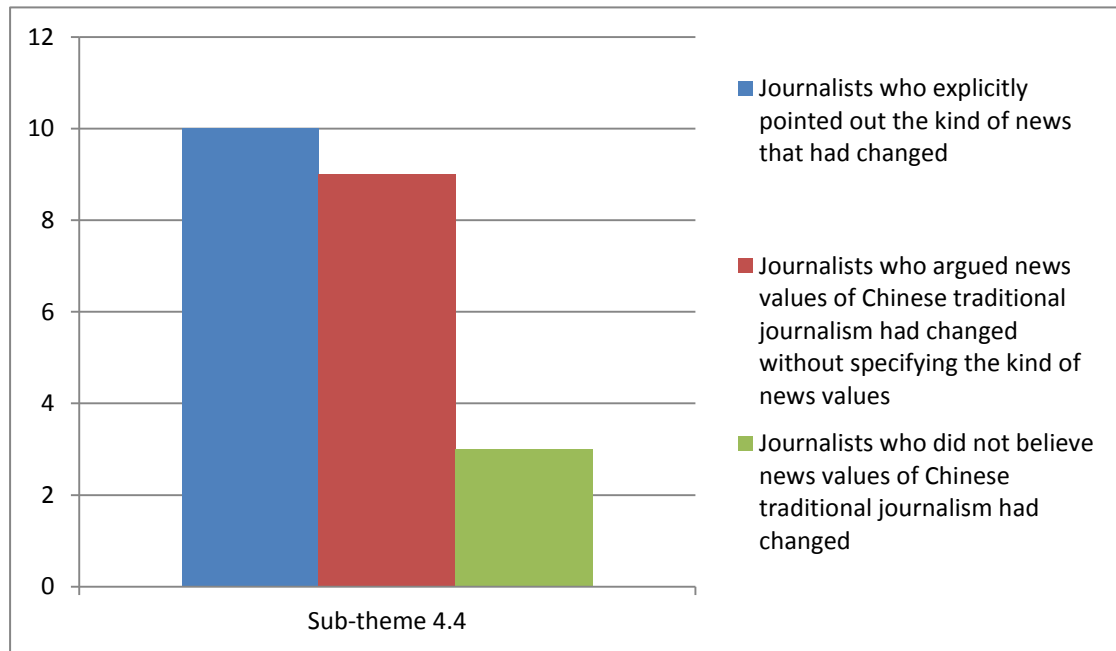
Journalist 17 thus implied that both Party propaganda theories and western news concepts influence the criteria of Chinese news values. However, it seems the propaganda theory is not as dominant as was in the past. As most of the interviewees believed that news values have changed within journalism practice, it is rational to develop a sub-theme as follows:

Sub-theme 4.4:

Label: The evaluation of news values

Definition: The criteria for judging news values have altered as a result of the development of the internet.

Histogram 11



Histogram 11 indicates Chinese journalists' perceptions concerning the evaluation of news values. Except the three interviewees who did not believe news values of Chinese traditional journalism had changed, although there were 19 journalists who agreed that news values had changed in traditional journalism, only 10 of them specifically indicated the kind of news that had changed. Six journalists (journalists 5, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 17) claimed that news of government leaders' daily performances had been diminished. Journalist 5, a senior editor for a local news media, described the changes to news types in traditional journalism:

“News reports used to stress the activities of the Party's organs and governments. The importance of the news was evaluated based on the administrative level of the protagonist. However, contemporary traditional journalism does not highlight the government leaders' daily activities as much as before. The type of news now featured takes into consideration more the influence of the news event itself.”

This argument shows that the previous position of traditional journalism was rather bureaucratic and stereotyped. It indicates that previously traditional journalism used to value the performance of the government and the image of the leaders rather than the rest of society. In other words, it is an idea of propaganda which shapes positive images of the government rather than informing an audience of the circumstances of the society. However, the news value which overemphasizing the government's achievement has been reformed. News reports on the authorities' daily activities have been reduced. On the other hand, journalists 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11 maintained that news relating to the public interest has gained in importance. For example, journalist 3 claimed that news reports about natural disasters are now usually set as the headlines within traditional journalism because such events can strongly affect people's lives. Thus, it seems that traditional journalism has transferred its focus from government leaders' daily work to the public's everyday life.

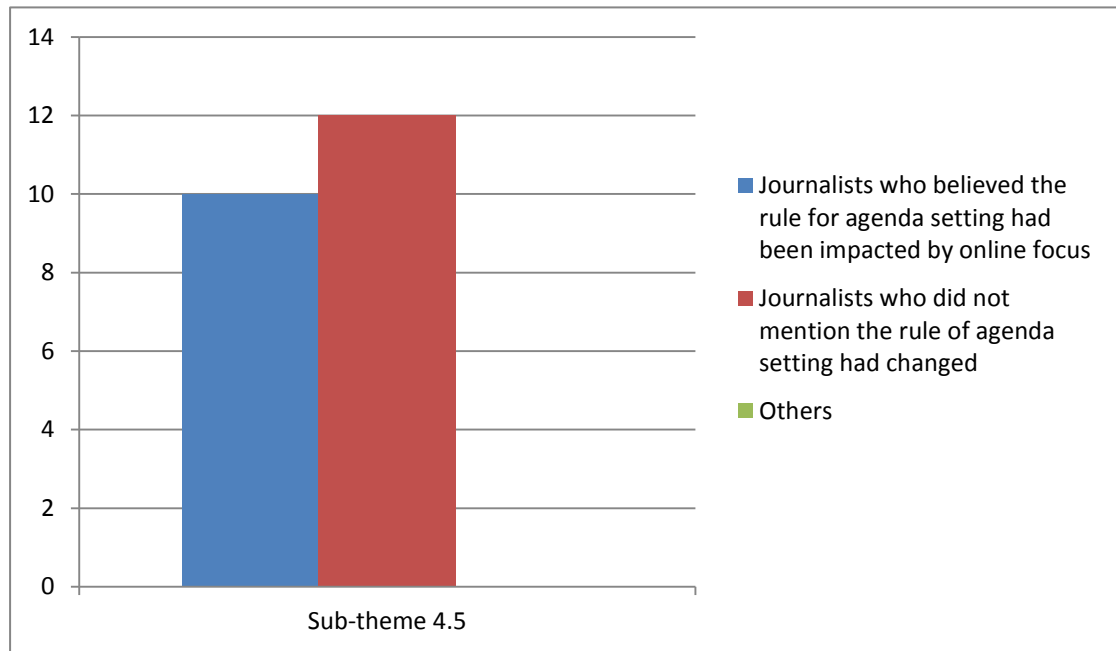
The rule for agenda setting

Sub-theme 4.5:

Label: The rule for agenda setting

Definition: Traditional journalism's rules for agenda setting have been influenced by online focus.

Histogram 12



Histogram 12 demonstrates the interviewees' perceptions whether the rules of agenda setting of traditional journalism have been influenced by online information. 11 interviewees (journalists 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16, 20 and 22) argued that it had become common for Chinese traditional journalism to explore online news information in great depth so as to provide more professional reports. Such perceptions verify the expectations concerning the pre-set theme within the pilot study, which was labelled as a "trigger". This suggests that those events under the spotlight online may also become the focus of traditional journalism. Thus, online news media to some extent actually set the terms of discussion for both traditional news media and the public. In other words, online information has influenced the agenda setting of traditional journalism.

Several journalists suggested that traditional journalism could be attracted to those events hyped by online news media. Such an online spotlight could direct public awareness, which would then force traditional journalism to pay attention to the issues. Mr Yan (journalist 1) explained why agenda setting for traditional journalism could be influenced by the internet:

“Every individual can express their opinions or stories and disseminate them all over the world through the internet. For example, the recent event of an indecent video about an official of Chong Qing city was published online by a citizen in the first place. A lot of online news information is published and discussed by the public. If traditional journalism does not focus on these events, it will neglect the public’s interest and lose its readership.”

Therefore, traditional journalism allows online information to influence its agenda setting as it attempts to attract readership from online news media. Mr Yan’s argument only points out one possible reason. The data shows that the Chinese journalists would rather describe the process of agenda setting than explain the reasons behind it. It seems that Chinese journalist believe this trend is occurring without a specific purpose, as the news media always try to find information which can gain attention, no matter whether it is online or not. For example, journalist 16 stated that although exploring online information was popular in traditional journalism, a number of issues just happened to be focused topics after being reported in depth by traditional news media. In this sense, it is more prudent to highlight the pattern of the influenced agenda setting rather than make claims about the underlying reasons.

5 The competition between traditional journalism and online journalism

The pilot study indicates that competition between traditional journalism outlets and online journalism outlets is an important theme for analysis within this research. The formal interviews show that journalists generally agreed that online news media has taken part of the market share from traditional news media since none of the interviewees stated that they were unaware of such competition. They verified the existence of the competition by using phrases such as “absolutely exists” (journalist 3) and “increasingly intense” (journalist 10). It is thus evident that this market competition is a crucial topic in Chinese journalists’ perceptions. In this sense, a core theme is developed as follows:

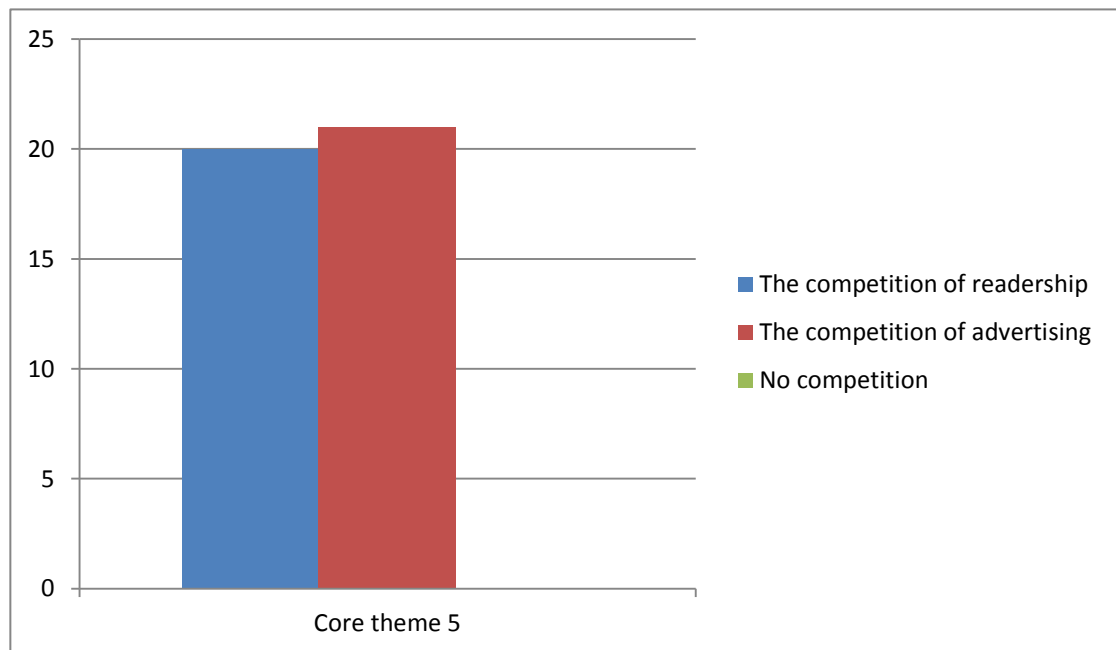
Core theme 5

Label: Market competition

Definition: Online news media has impacted on the market share of traditional news media to some extent. Traditional news media regard online news media as their competitors.

Description: This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) state they have felt competition from the internet; 2) provide statistics or examples of the competition between traditional and online news media; 3) mention they are concerned about losing readership or advertising.

Histogram 13



Histogram 13 indicates that it is apparent that traditional journalism has been challenged in the market by online news media. The Chinese journalists generally classified this competition into two categories: readership and advertising. Considering that they provided quite different viewpoints on the two categories, it is necessary to set sub-themes in order to analyse the data in detail. With the exceptions of journalists 1 and 13, who did not highlight the competition for readership, most of the interviewees believed that the readers of traditional journalism had largely transferred to online news media. Thus, a sub theme is set as follows:

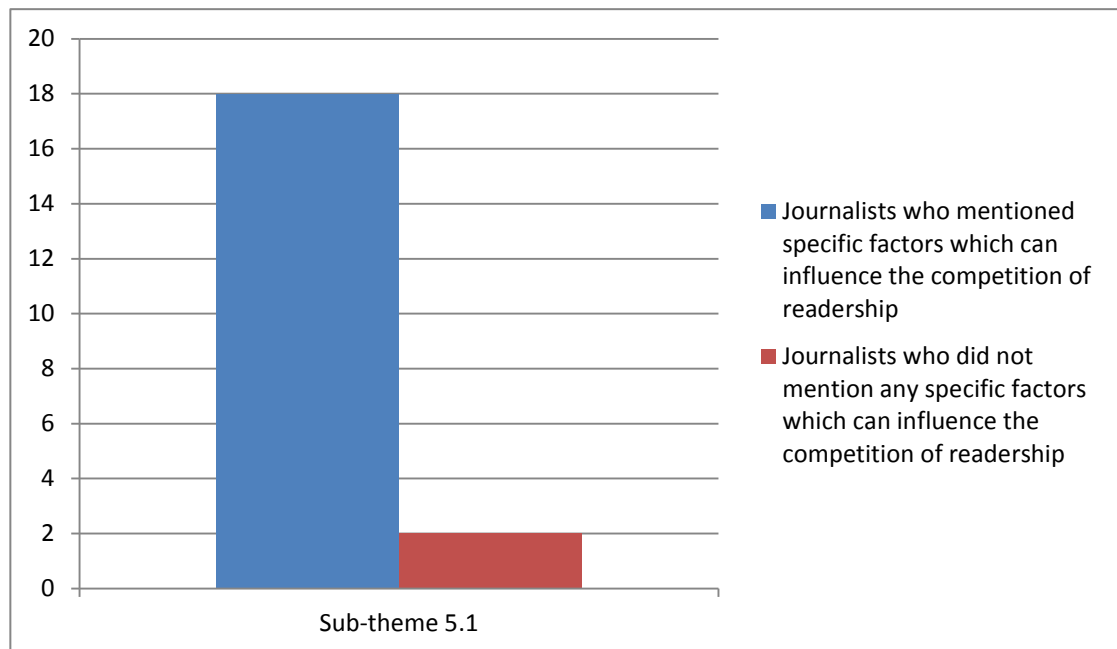
Sub-theme 5.1:

Label: Competition for readership

Definition: Traditional journalism has been challenged by online news media in the readership market.

Description: This may be indicated when the interviewees mention 1) they feel competition for readership in their daily work; 2) the readership for traditional journalism has transferred to online news media to some extent; 3) trends for news media readership.

Histogram 14



Histogram 14 shows the Chinese journalists' views concerning the competition of readership in China. It can be seen that only two journalists who confirmed the existence of the competition did not provide any factors which can influence the readership. The competition for readership is intense among the Chinese media, especially at a local level. Journalist 8, the chief editor of a local news website,

described the shifting pattern of readership, as based on the insider statistics he learned when he was a broadcast journalist:

“When I analysed the statistics of the TV ratings in 2008 I found a terrible phenomenon: the TV ratings had decreased a lot, while most of the remaining audience is older than 40. I never saw such trend before. I felt terrified because an older audience does not have as much business value as a younger one for advertisers. It will influence the development of traditional news media. I believe the lost readership has transferred to the online news media.”

Journalist 8’s argument demonstrates that age is an essential criterion in any analysis of the competition for readership between traditional journalism and online news media. Other interviewees verified this argument since they also believed that the trend concerning the readership for traditional journalism and online news media largely depends on the age of the audience. Although several journalists mentioned other factors which may influence readership, such as education, all of the interviewees who mentioned specific influential factors (journalists 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22) spoke of the importance of age. In this sense, it seems that online news media have already risen to dominance for readers under 40 years old, while the traditional news media are still superior for older people.

On the other hand, apart from journalist 15 who stated she did not know the situation within the advertising market because of an absence of investigation, all of the interviewees explicitly argued that competition between online news media and traditional news media for the advertising market did exist. They pointed out that the proportion of online news media revenue in the advertising market was increasing,

while, in general, its counterpart for traditional news media was declining. In order to analyse this trend, a sub-theme is established as follows:

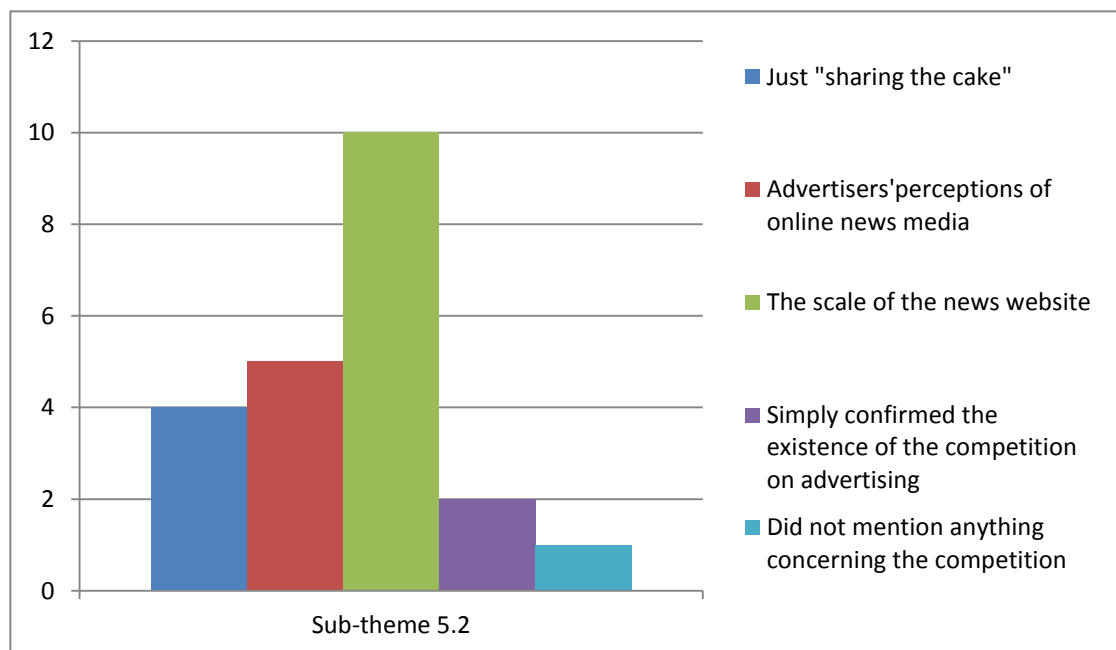
Sub-theme 5.2:

Label: Competition for advertising

Definition: Traditional journalism has been challenged by online news media in the advertising market.

Description: This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) mention they feel competition for advertising revenue in their daily work; 2) imply online news media share advertisers' spending with traditional journalism; 3) suggest the decrease in traditional news media advertising revenue is because of the development of the online news media.

Histogram 15



Histogram 15 demonstrates Chinese journalists' perceptions concerning the competition of advertising between traditional journalism outlets and online journalism outlets. Although all of the interviewees except journalist 15 agreed that traditional news media are now competing with online news media for advertising revenue, they stressed different factors which could influence this competition. Five journalists (journalists 2, 3, 4, 9 and 10) described the competition as "sharing the cake". They believed that online news media had broken the monopoly of traditional journalism within the market for advertising. Since online news media provide new options for advertisers, it is inevitable that these will compete with the old options provided by traditional journalism. However, since the "cake" itself is becoming increasingly large as a result of the growing economy, the competition might not necessarily decrease the revenue attracted by traditional news media.

Several journalists proposed certain specific factors that could influence such competition. On the one hand, five interviewees (journalists 5, 8, 16, 17 and 20) suggested that advertisers' perceptions of online news media were crucial for news media in terms of advertising revenue. The lack of knowledge concerning online news media may obstruct any growth of revenue. Journalist 8 supplied an example of this effect:

"Last year a local news website tried to get 200,000 Yuan by selling the title sponsorship of an activity to an alcohol company. The manager of the company, a young man whose father was the president of the board, promised to pay the fee to support the activity. Unfortunately, his father preferred spending this amount of money on

advertising in a newspaper because he knew newspapers better than websites.”

The story shows that advertisers’ recognition of online news media is significant to the market competition. Considering the age groups of the readership analysed in sub-theme 5.1, it is probably correct to state that older policymakers prefer advertising through traditional journalism. Such preferences have obstructed the growth of online news media advertising revenue. However, it also seems that advertisers from some specific industries pay more attention to online news media than do others. Journalists 16 and 17 suggested that advertising competition within such industries is more intense. Journalist 16 explicitly stated that the automotive industry prefers spending money on online advertising. In short, the competition within the advertising market is influenced by company policymakers.

On the other hand, 10 interviewees (journalists 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 17, 19 and 21) believed the competition for advertising to be influenced by the scale of the news website. Local traditional news media are usually superior in competition with local online news media in small cities. For example, journalist 3 felt local news websites in his city were not really competitors for local traditional journalism since the total advertising revenue of the two biggest local websites amounted to less than half of that of local broadcast companies. In contrast, national news websites and local news websites in larger cities have challenged traditional journalism in the advertising market to a much greater extent. Even local traditional journalism in small cities can feel the challenge from these superior news websites. In this sense, it can be said that

the challenge in the advertising market to traditional journalism comes mainly from national news websites and top news websites in metropolitan areas.

6 The correlation between the development of online news media and the credibility of traditional news media

A number of interviewees mentioned the deterioration of the credibility of traditional news media when they described how the online news media have influenced traditional journalism. These journalists believed that by breaking the monopoly of traditional journalism and providing information faster and in more detail, online news media have obtained more credibility while negatively influencing the reputation of traditional news media. In addition, inaccurate information provided by traditional news media can also decline the credibility of them if the public find more accurate information from online news media. As journalist 2 argued: “If an event is reported online, whereas traditional news media, especially local news media do not report it at all, the credibility of traditional news media will be negatively influenced.” The argument implies a correlation between the credibility of traditional journalism and the development of online news media in Chinese journalists’ perceptions. The researcher found 12 journalists perceived the correlation between the credibility of traditional journalism and the development of online news media, while only 3 journalists believed the credibility of traditional journalism can only be influenced by its own operation. In this sense, a core theme is developed to discuss such correlation:

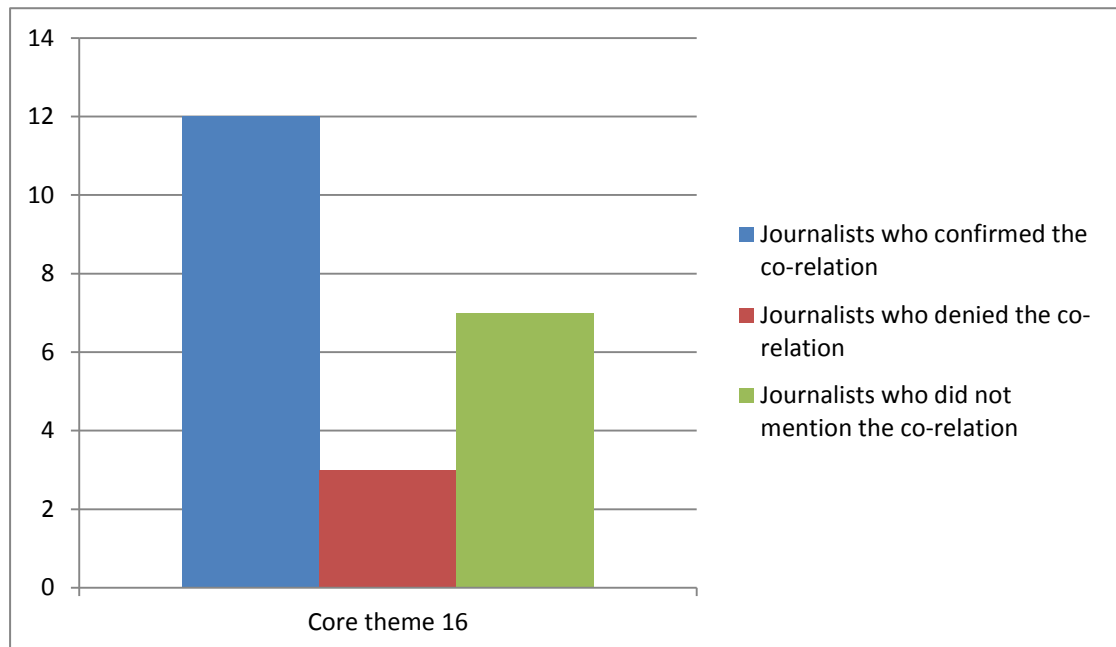
Core theme 6

Label: The credibility of traditional journalism

Definition: The credibility of traditional journalism is co-related with the development of online news media.

Description: This may be indicated when the interviewees 1) state the credibility of traditional journalism is impacted upon by the popularity of online news media; 2) provide examples which lead to deterioration of the credibility of traditional news media; 3) suggests there is a correlation between the credibility of traditional journalism and the development of online news media

Histogram 16



Histogram 16 demonstrates the Chinese journalists' perceptions concerning the correlation between the development of online news media and the credibility of

traditional news media. 12 journalists (journalist 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20 and 21) confirmed the existence of the correlation, although they explained from different perspectives. In contrast, 3 journalists (journalist 15, 16 and 19) did not approve the correlation. 7 journalists did not mention anything concerning the credibility of traditional journalism.

Except 4 journalists (journalist 12, 14, 20 and 21) who just simply stated the existence of the correlation between the credibility of traditional news media and the development of online news media, the rest 8 journalists further explained why they believed there was such a correlation. On the one hand, 4 journalists (journalists 6, 10, 13 and 17) argued the credibility of traditional journalism had declined because the development of online news media had broken the monopoly of traditional news media. Audiences do not have to absolutely trust traditional journalism since they can consume news from online news media and compare the quality between traditional news media and online counterpart. As journalist 17 pointed out:

“The credibility of traditional news media has been impacted. If online news media do not exist, audience can only believe the truth is what traditional news media describe without too much scepticism. Nevertheless, now audience can use the internet to search information in order to complement or question the news report published by traditional news media. It challenged the credibility of traditional journalism.”

The argument above implies that the credibility of traditional news media is challenged because online news media provide other opinions to find out what really happened. In other words, the credibility of traditional journalism may decline

because its online competitors may be more credible in some readers' opinions. This phenomenon does not necessarily mean traditional journalism is not credible. However, it can be understood that traditional journalism in China cannot announce it provides the only truth as it was before.

On the other hand, 4 journalists (journalist 2, 4, 5 and 9) explained differently why they believed the credibility of traditional journalism was correlated with the development online news media. They suggested the relatively less stable censorship of online news media allowed more news information to be published online, which negatively influenced the credibility of traditional journalism when audience cannot find the news from traditional news media. The influence is even stronger if the news is related to corruptions and serious accidents. Journalist 9 states:

“The credibility of traditional journalism has been challenged. For example, although an accident is published by a newspaper, there are still many people who search online information in order to verify whether the news is accurate or not. Moreover, traditional journalism had little effect on anti-corruption actions without the assistance of online news media. It is because it spreads information too slowly, while a lot of information has been censored before publishing. Audiences can see that online news media play an important role in anti-corruption.”

Journalist 9's argument above indicates the different censorship implemented on traditional journalism and online journalism causes the deterioration of the credibility of traditional news media. Audiences tend to question the credibility of traditional news media if they find news information they read from online news media cannot be found from the traditional counterpart. In other words, the

editorship of traditional news media filters information which audiences are interested in to some extent, making audiences feel concealed by traditional news media. In this sense, the credibility of traditional news media has been challenged by online news media which can report more events the audiences are interested in.

It is worth noting that both traditional journalism and online journalism have published inaccurate or even fabricated news. However, journalist 9 and 17 stated that fabricated news influenced traditional news media more seriously than online news media. For one thing, Chinese traditional news media, especially Party's newspapers are regarded as the voice of the government by the public. It is much more difficult to ask readers to tolerate the inaccurate news published on Party's newspapers than commercial online news media. Journalist 17 provided an example to describe such influence:

“Sometimes newspapers publish fabricated news in purpose. For example, Wang Lijun, the deputy mayor of Chongqing defected to an American consulate last year. However, the local newspaper stated Mr. Wang was on sick leave to explain why he disappeared from the public. Such fabricated news seriously damages the credibility of traditional journalism. Although there are pieces of fabricated news online, there is little online fabricated news concerning such a big political event with whole fabricated story.”

The example provided by journalist 17 implies that the fabricated news published on traditional news media has a broader negative influence than online fabricated news, especially when the news is concerning important events. The public expects traditional news media have higher credibility than their online counterparts since they are regarded as the voice of authority to some extent. However, as

fabricated news such as the event of Mr. Wang is revealed very occasionally, it can hardly be measured in this research.

Another point is that, it is evident the censorship and the working route between traditional news media and online news media are different. As a result of the technological differences in particular, it is more difficult for traditional news media to modify inaccurate news than online news media. As journalist 9 argued:

“Fabricated news damages traditional journalism more severely than online news media. Newspapers can be collected and preserved for a long period. A piece of printed fabricated news on newspapers can hardly be erased. In contrast, for online news media, you can just delete the inaccurate news and publish a new one instead...It is much easier for online news media to modify published inaccurate news to protect the credibility.”

The argument above suggests that traditional news media find it more difficult to retrieve credibility which is undermined by fabricated news since the evidence of publishing fabricated news can hardly be erased. In this sense, traditional journalism must be edited very carefully to protect its credibility.

It is noteworthy that although there are 3 journalists who did not perceive the correlation between the credibility of traditional journalism and the development of online news media, they did not provide any examples or reasons to interpret their viewpoints. In this sense, it is reasonable to argue the Chinese journalists tend to believe the correlation does exist. However, although the credibility of traditional journalism has declined to some extent, it does not mean online news media are more credible than traditional news media in journalists' and audiences' perceptions. It is

more prudent to regard the correlation as a result of the competition between two channels of consuming news.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 The Hierarchy of Chinese News Media and Journalists in Terms of Chinese Journalists' Perceptions

Since Chinese traditional journalism organisations are established by the Party and the government and the senior editors and journalists who work for these news outlets usually possess an official rank as government officers, it might reasonably be stated that Chinese journalists are working within a hierarchical system of news channels. However, the development of independent online news media has blurred the existing hierarchy of news media as commercial news websites are not related to the administrative ranks, leading to the situation that those journalists working for online news media are not treated equally, in the same way as their traditional counterparts, by the authorities. The interviewees within this research assessed the situation from various perspectives. For example, although online news media are becoming the most popular channels for the consumption of news, the government still prefers to release information about important political events and its decisions through traditional journalism, which makes the traditional news media more prestigious (as suggested by journalist 9 in the previous discussion of core theme 1). In addition, the social status of journalists who work for traditional news media is relatively higher than those who work for online news media, at least in the opinion of

the official departments (as suggested by journalist 7 in the previous discussion of sub-theme 2.1). In this sense, as a result of the existence of a hierarchy, Chinese journalists perceived that not all journalists are treated equally. In order to understand this issue, three aspects need to be analysed: the Chinese hierarchical system for news media, the influence of the Soviet model of journalism, and the struggle over Chinese journalism between political and market forces.

The hierarchical system embedded in Chinese news media is one of the main reasons why Chinese journalists perceive that the status of journalists is deeply influenced by the organisations they work for. Chinese news media were explicitly classified at different positions within a hierarchy from national level to regional level by the political powers before market forces were introduced into Chinese journalism (Winfield and Peng, 2005; Sun, 2012). There were three essential effects of this top-down classification system. First of all, the news media at superior levels were regarded as the supervisors of the news media at lower levels. Although regional and provincial media outlets did report on local political, economic and social affairs within their respective provinces and cities, they actually functioned to reinforce rather than challenge the domination of the central news media such as China Central Television (CCTV), *People's Daily* and the Xinhua News Agency. In other words, as Sun claims, "At that time, local and provincial media's relationship to the Centre was defined by subordination and submission" (2012: p.10). Secondly, the mainstream news media were bonded to a large extent with the government at the same regional

level. This meant that regional news outlets usually had an intimate connection with local government, while central news outlets had a strong relationship with central government and the Party's central committee. In this sense, journalists who worked for the mainstream news media were usually well treated by government officers, especially when those journalists who belonged to a news organisation at a higher administrative level visited a local government department at a lower administrative level. Thirdly, central news organisations were granted privileges to supervise the activities of local government to a certain extent. One such significant privilege was the capacity to report local affairs to higher authorities through a non-public news report called an "internal journal" which could be read only by officials holding a certain rank. For example, the *Reference News* published by the Xinhua News Agency was an important internal journal until it was made public in 1985.

The hierarchy of Chinese news outlets has been significantly impacted by the introduction of new technology and market forces since the 1980s. In this sense, satellite communications, the internet, and other forms of de-territorializing technology have broken the boundaries of the news media's previous coverage. For example, provincial satellite TV channels have begun to compete with central TV (Sun, 2012). In a similar vein, market forces now ask Chinese news outlets to pay more attention to their own readership rather than to achieve consistency with the central news organisations. Commercial news outlets which do not have direct relations with the government have thus begun to challenge the hierarchy of the media

(Pan and Chan, 2003; Winfield and Peng, 2005). As a result of the changes mentioned above, central news outlets are no longer regarded as supervisors of their regional counterparts. Moreover, the government has to share information with both Party-controlled news outlets and commercial news outlets. However, the hierarchy of Chinese traditional media has been weakened rather than eliminated. On the one hand, broadcasts and Party newspapers are still classified at administrative level. On the other hand, according to several of the interviewees who worked for traditional news outlets (who were anonymous for the purposes of this question), central news outlets still enjoy the privilege of reporting through internal journals to the central government. In this sense, the hierarchy of Chinese traditional news outlets does exist.

As well as the traditional news media, the journalists themselves who work for Chinese traditional news outlets are classified by administrative rank. 7 of the 22 interviewees within this research explicitly stated their official rank during the interviews (journalists 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10). They were either senior journalists working for traditional news outlets (journalists 1, 3, 4, 6 and 10), or administrators who had been transferred from traditional news outlets to online news branches (journalists 5 and 8). It is a fact that the highest administrative rank which a Chinese media professional can possibly achieve is ministerial level. In this sense, it is inevitable that the status of Chinese journalists and the treatment they receive from the government can be differentiated, as journalist 7 argued (in the previous discussion of sub-theme 2.1). The influence of a journalist's official rank is in many

cases more complicated in journalism practice when the news outlet's official rank is cross-considered. For example, a journalist with a relatively lower rank may still be highly respected by the local government if he or she works for a central news outlet such as CCTV which enjoys a high official rank. Journalist 3 described the situation as follows:

“The hierarchy of news outlets and journalists does influence journalism practice in China, especially in interviewing government departments. However, in considering the online news media, the social status of journalists also depends on the influence of the news media in which they are working. For example, journalists working for CCTV obviously enjoy higher status than journalists working for commercial online news media and any kind of local media. However, journalists working for the biggest news websites such as Sina.com and Sohu.com are usually regarded as more important interviewers than local journalists, even those working for a local Party newspaper. In general, journalists working for traditional news outlets are more welcomed by the government than are their online counterparts. A journalist working for CCTV with a certain official rank will be given a relatively high standard of reception by local government, such as in my city.”

Given that journalist 3 himself is the chief editor of a local broadcast station with a county level rank, his assessment serves to support the work of previous scholars (Sun, 2012; Winfield and Peng, 2005) and this researcher's argument concerning the existence of a media hierarchy based on administrative rank. Commercial news websites have challenged the existing hierarchy of news media, making the official rank no longer the only criterion for evaluating a journalist's status. Besides administrative level, readership and market occupancy are also essential factors for the government and the public to evaluate the importance of a news outlet and the

journalists who work for it. However, the government still highlights the influence of the existing hierarchical system by treating journalists from different news organisations unequally in practice. It is necessary to discuss two issues in order to understand this situation more comprehensively: the tradition of Confucianism and the remains of the Soviet model of journalism.

A number of scholars suggest that Confucianism has influenced modern Chinese society and the hierarchical system of the press (see for example: Liu, 2003; Winfield *et al*, 2000; Winfield and Peng, 2005; Zhang, 2007). According to the *Analects*, Confucius believed that the best way to establish a harmonious society was to follow the *Rituals of Chou*, a series of principles through which nobles and intellectuals might behave in the proper manner. In simplified form, harmony means that the order of society has been established correctly, and the hierarchy behind that society is crucial to guarantee social order. Although the New Culture Movement of 1919 and the Great Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976 attempted to destroy Confucianism completely, the importance of a social hierarchy still meets with public approval to some extent. This is probably because the core value of this hierarchy is filial duty within families, and “the familial pattern extends to villages and towns and further to provinces and kingdoms” (Winfield *et al*, 2000). In terms of the press, Confucianism works on two main aspects of the news media: the flow of information and the belief system of the literati.

Unlike liberal ideas of communication, Confucianism prefers a unidirectional flow of information within the five core relationships of society: 1) from superior to subordinate; 2) from parent to child; 3) from teacher to student; 4) from elder to younger person and 5) from husband to wife (Winfield *et al*, 2000). In order to maintain the social order, the purpose of information dissemination is to enhance the authority of the rulers, such as superiors and fathers, rather than to encourage an equal exchange of ideas and valuable information. In this sense, the information provided by the higher levels of society is usually regarded as more valuable and creditable. These Confucian ideas of disseminating information influenced early journalistic publications in imperial China such as Di Bao. Di Bao simply informed the literati and officialdom what the central government believed they should know rather than reflecting changes to society and the public interest (Ding, 2002; Fang *et al*, 2002; Zhang, 2007). Another significant example of this influence is to be found in the origins of the modern Chinese press in the late 19th century. Zhang proposes that intellectuals such as Liang Qichao and Wang Tao saw the newspaper as an important tool to enlighten the public (2007). In other words, these intellectuals saw themselves as superior to the common people and felt responsible for disseminating information to the public in a unidirectional way. Winfield and Peng believe these Confucian ideas have been inherited so as to establish authoritarianism in the contemporary Chinese press system by the Chinese Communist Party. Despite the development of non-state controlled news media, the Party function of Chinese journalism can still be seen as a

unidirectional flow of information as it is difficult for the audience to argue with such a strong voice (Winfield and Peng, 2005).

Confucianism also led the Chinese literati to believe that success in officialdom was the best way to gain status and honour. According to Weber, China saw the establishment of a relatively centralised officialdom much earlier than did her European counterparts. As a result of the creation of a peaceful environment within the dynastic system, an environment that lasted for centuries, political power centred on government departments rather than fiefdoms. In other words, the state was operated by non-hereditary officials rather than the military. Therefore, in order to serve the country and be recognised by society, the literati who were educated in the Confucian school preferred to pursue position and official rank from officialdom over earning wealth through business (1951). Besides those literati who had been part of the hierarchy based on official rank, the rest who had not been granted official rank would also support the hierarchy as they expected to be able to join in the future. In this sense, the hierarchy was eminently stable as it was supported by almost every educated man within society. Scholars believe the Confucian idea of emphasizing the importance of position in officialdom still influences the hierarchy of contemporary Chinese society (Shenkar and Ronen, 1987; Zhang *et al*, 2006). “The Confucian philosophy continues to provide the foundation of Chinese cultural traditions and values, with the tenets of harmony, hierarchy, developing one's moral potential and kinship affiliation having relevance for interpersonal behaviour” (Shenkar and Ronen,

1987: p.263). Modern Chinese society still highly values the importance of official ranks in many professions, including journalism. Thus, journalist 3 and journalist 7 perceived the hierarchy underpinning the Chinese news media to effectively influence journalism practice when the government was involved.

The Soviet model of journalism is another main force which has influenced the hierarchy of the Chinese news media. According to Siebert *et al*, the Soviet press model emphasizes the “truth” as the Marxist “truth” by establishing authoritarianism in the press system and using the mass media as instruments of the Party and integral parts of the state (1956). Although Berry *et al* find that Marxist journalism has been transformed largely in practice by the changing information environment (1995), the Chinese government advocates that the core values of Chinese journalism should be Marxist journalistic values. It is noteworthy that Chinese journalists prefer the term “Marxist journalism” to “the Soviet model” when they describe these values. For example, several journalists within this research mentioned “Marxist journalism”, whereas none of them used the term “the Soviet model”. Despite the preference for particular terms, scholars believe the Soviet model of journalism has influenced contemporary Chinese journalism, especially in its efforts to establish a hierarchical system (Chu, 1994; Lee, 2000; Pan and Chan, 2003; Winfield and Peng, 2005). As Winfield and Peng argue:

“Authoritarianism in the Chinese press system persists with government control. In an authoritarian system the media are not allowed to communicate anything that could undermine the established authority or give offense to its political values. Despite the

current Chinese economic reality, the assumptions of an authoritarian system still hold: the government holds the absolute truth and remains infallible; media professionals are not independent; foreign media are subordinate to the established authority; and all imported media products are state controlled” (2005: p.266)

To be specific, the influence of the Soviet model of journalism works mainly in two ways on the hierarchy in the Chinese news media. On the one hand, the monopoly over the “truth” or at least significant policies and events allows the state-owned news media to occupy the higher positions within the hierarchy. The emphasis on the Marxist “truth” in the Soviet model actually allows the government and state-owned news outlets to provide the final versions of news events. According to the interviewees in this study, there are at least two popular ways of reinforcing this monopoly in contemporary China: 1) spreading a unified version of news reported by the Xinhua News Agency through all of the state-owned news outlets; 2) providing exclusive news to traditional news outlets which are trusted by the government, which then builds the credibility of these news media. Thus, it is understandable that the state-owned central news media and local traditional news media receive more support from the government in terms of providing information.

On the other hand, the Soviet model highlights the significance of using news media as instruments of the Party and integral parts of the state. The idea of establishing the news media system as an arm of the government is the main reason why Chinese traditional news media can be classified as regionalist. Before market forces were introduced into Chinese journalism, each administrative region from

county level to national level had three basic news media counterparts as its voice channels: a radio station, a TV station and a newspaper, all overseen by the local Party committee. This state of affairs still remains in the contemporary Chinese media system and assists in constructing the framework of the hierarchy of news organisations. Moreover, since the state-owned traditional news media are integral parts of the state, it is possible to transfer journalists of official rank to become officials working in government departments. For example, Mr Lu Wei, the current deputy head of the State Council Information Office, was previously a senior journalist with the Xinhua News Agency. In this sense, the hierarchy of the Chinese news media is closely connected to the hierarchy of the Chinese government. It is a strong reason why journalists working for Chinese traditional news outlets hold a higher status in the view of local government, as journalists 3 and 7 suggested.

It should be noted, however, that the Chinese news media hierarchy is currently experiencing both continuity and change (Chu, 1994). Firstly, as the media hierarchy was based on the Soviet model in which news outlets were fully financially supported by the government, it is reasonable to believe the introduction of market forces has precipitated the transformation of those traditional news outlets from governmental facilities to organisations more like business corporations. As Chu points out:

“In fact, local television and radio stations, cable and satellite television, foreign broadcasts, the many profit-making weekend supplements published by the major dailies in efforts to become self-sustaining, the rising number of evening papers, and other recent arrivals have formed China’s alternative media, which the Party has found to be disturbing but impossible to curb” (1994: p.9).

Secondly, new media technologies such as the internet have amplified the present revisions to the news media system and made the changes more irreversible (Chu, 1994). Commercial news websites excluded from this hierarchy based on official rank have changed the criteria for judging the status of journalists to some extent and made the existing hierarchy less important in society by building their own readership and market share. Even the bureaucratic local government in China has had to consider the influence of those conglomerates of online news media and grant value to the interviews conducted by journalists with no rank. Nevertheless, the existence and the remaining influence of the hierarchy of the Chinese news media should not be underestimated. An understanding of this hierarchy is crucial in explaining some forms of specific journalism practice in China, such as the levels of respect journalists receive in interviews.

6.2 The Grey Area within Chinese Journalism Practice for Online News Media

From the thematic analysis of the interviews, it is difficult to judge whether the operation of Chinese online news outlets is consistent with Party and government policies in terms of specific journalism practice. In other words, Chinese journalists perceive that online news media conduct their journalism practice within certain grey areas in order to develop their business while avoiding punishment for violating a

number of specific policies issued by governmental departments. According to core theme 2, the practice of collecting news material for online news media is usually undertaken in a way that allows policy to be disobeyed without being punished. It is a frequent occurrence for Chinese journalists working for commercial news websites to conduct interviews independently, although regulations enacted by the General Administration of Press and Publication of the People's Republic of China have forbidden online news media from conducting such practice since 2000. Moreover, as a result of the lack of regulation to protect the copyright of news reports, online news media have reproduced many articles from traditional news media without permission. In terms of online censorship, analysis of core theme 3 shows that online news media tend to use the margin of the administrative system to publish more news stories than do their traditional counterparts. In this sense, it is reasonable to argue that the news producing process of Chinese online news media operates in a grey area between legality and illegality. Independent interviews and the possibility of reporting news which cannot be published on traditional news media allow online news media to challenge the traditional news media, to become serious competitors. Therefore, it is crucial to discuss further the perceptions provided by Chinese journalists in order to understand their views of the influence of the online news outlets.

It is common sense that news reports are the core productions of news websites. In order to satisfy readers, an online news report can either be an original created independently by the online news outlet or a story transferred from the traditional

news media. However, the Chinese government tends to confine the journalism practice of online news media by prohibiting them from conducting independent interviews. This limitation was first emphasized by the General Administration of Press and Publication in 2000 and then specified in a regulation termed the Administration of internet News Information Services Provisions as issued by the Information Office of the State Council and Ministry of Industry and Information Technology in 2005. In this sense, the Chinese government expects online news media simply to reprint news published in offline news media or to generalise and edit those news stories as an alternative way of making their own news reports. There are multiple explanations as to why the Chinese government restricts the right of interview for online news media. According to the articles of the regulation issued in 2005, the authorities refuse to regard online news websites, especially commercial news websites, as legal “press work units” in the context of China. Instead, news websites are described as “internet news information services”. As Article 32 of the Administration of internet News Information Services Provisions states:

“For the purposes of these Provisions, “press work units” means the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and news agencies established in accordance with the law; and “press work units of the central government” includes the press work units established by the various departments of the central State authorities” (2005).

Therefore, the regulation accepts only traditional news outlets as “press work units” which are permitted to conduct journalism practice independently. In other

words, online news media, those not regarded as “press work units”, automatically lose the right to conduct interviews. However, this logic does not work in practice. One core example of the failure of this regulation is that many state-owned news websites are operated commercially and conduct independent journalism practice. For example, People.com, originally based on the People’s Daily, claims it has already sent its journalists all over the world and published various independent news reports on its webpage. It is not reasonable to believe that online news media are prohibited from producing independent reports just because they are not “press work units”. A more rational reason, as Sohmen argues, is that the authorities intend to control the flow of information and protect state-owned news media, especially those long-established traditional news outlets (2001). Weber and Lu also hold the same perspective on the regulations applied to Chinese online news media. They believe that all of the regulations made to manage Chinese online news outlets are intended to retain the political integrity of and protect established state-owned news media in the context of globalisation (2007). These arguments serve to explain why, in general, the Chinese authorities prohibit commercial news websites from conducting interviews independently. Since traditional news media are controlled by the government through ownership and censorship, online news media which merely reprint news stories which have already been published in newspapers or broadcasts can hardly challenge the established flow of information and the monopoly of traditional news media.

Nevertheless, evidence does show that this prohibition has been broken in practice, with few news websites being punished. In terms of the Chinese journalists' perceptions, core theme 2 shows that it was generally believed that online news media frequently conducted independent interviews. Journalists 11, 12 and 13, who work for online news media, explicitly claimed they were fully aware of the prohibition but had continued conducting independent interviews without so far being stopped. Journalist 10, a senior broadcast journalist who has worked for more than 20 years, stated that he found the instances of online news media conducting independent interviews to be so common that he was unaware even of the existence of such a prohibition. Furthermore, content analysis conducted by Zhou indicates that approximately one-third of news reports published on top privately-owned commercial news websites such as Sina.com and 163.com had been produced independently (2012). In an earlier study, Wu and Chen also found that the use of original news produced by news websites was becoming increasingly prevalent, although state-owned national commercial news websites such as Xinhuanet.com provided more independent news stories than did privately-owned news websites (2005). Therefore, it can be confirmed that there is a grey area in which online news media conduct independent interviews.

Economic profit is one of the most significant forces which precipitate the paradox between regulation and practice. Market forces operate on two levels within this contradiction. On the one hand, the Chinese authorities themselves have been struggling between encouraging the development of online news media to create more

economic benefit and controlling the flow of information to protect the established political system, as it does with traditional news media. As Sohmen suggests, commercial news websites are regarded as “an area in which China has the potential to develop rapidly and to compete with the West, providing an attractive proposition to leadership intent on fostering economic growth”, but the capabilities of the internet concerning “access to much that the government has attempted to insulate China from” is pushing the Chinese government inevitably towards choosing to supervise and direct the practice of these online media (2001: p.17). In this sense, although certain Chinese governmental departments such as the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology have issued regulations to restrict online news media in terms of interviews and other journalism practice, other departments and local governments which place more emphasis on economic profit may not co-operate completely over the application of such regulations. This may be why the Chinese journalists found online news media had also been invited by the government to report conferences just as had traditional news media. On the other hand, market forces are pressing commercial news media to produce independent news reports in order to survive in competition with other news media. Reprinting news reports from traditional news media allows such traditional news media to control the sources of information for online news media, thus making commercial news websites seem inferior in competition with their traditional counterparts, those from whom they buy news stories. As journalist 13, a senior editor working for 163.com, one of the top privately-owned commercial news websites, suggested:

“Commercial news websites must produce independent reports to survive in the competition. Although online news media have not been allowed to collect news materials independently, we actually conduct journalism practice just as our traditional counterparts to gain our own credibility. Once we establish our credibility, society will not question us, just as if we were from traditional news media or online news media. For example, last year I produced a series of reports on a person named Lin Chunping independently, leading a lot of newspapers and even the Xinhua News Agency to follow my reports. Neither the government nor the traditional news media question if a commercial news website can legally produce news independently.”

The argument implies that Chinese commercial news websites would rather have traditional news media reprint their news reports than vice versa. Conducting interviews independently is an inevitability if online news media wish to gain a higher readership and the economic benefits brought by an increased readership and an established reputation. Further, such practice conducted by online news media is seldom punished by the authorities, even if such independent reports draw much attention from the public.

Although it is common for news websites to conduct independent interviews in order to produce their own news reports, the majority of news stories published online are reprinted from traditional news outlets. Online news media pay traditional news media for a large number of these reprinted news stories. However, not every item of news information is reproduced online with the permission of the original traditional

news outlet. Many traditional news media have found their published news stories and comments reprinted without their authorization. For example, the Beijing News, a commercial newspaper, claimed that a commercial news website called Tom.com had approximated about 25,000 of its news reports between 2003 and 2006 without permission being granted. Chinese journalists believe it to be common for online news media to reprint information from traditional news media without specific permission. However, such reprinting is widely tolerated by journalists working for traditional news media, especially those working in local news organisations (Wen, 2012). In this sense, there is also a grey area for online news media to reprint news information.

Although Chinese journalists tend to think that reprinting without permission can morally offend the original news media, they do not believe it is essential to claim copyright in their work. In the interviews in this research, the Chinese journalists admitted that the main reason behind this pattern was a rather weak consciousness of news report copyright. The chief editor of a local broadcast channel (journalist 3) and the deputy chief editor of a local commercial newspaper (journalist 9) both stated that Chinese journalists were generally unaware of copyright issues in terms of reprinting news reports online. Moreover, some traditional news media find their reputation to be enhanced through the spreading of their original news online, no matter whether or not the reprint was officially permitted. This can encourage Chinese journalists

working for traditional news media to further tolerate or even precipitate the online reprinting of their news reports without permission. As journalist 9 proposed:

“We want our news reports to be reproduced online to some extent, no matter if the news website applies for our permission in the first place. It is because journalists and directors from our newspaper believe our news reports will be more influential if they are reprinted online. On the contrary, in some particular cases, if we find a piece of news which takes a lot of our resources is not reprinted online, we will feel rather disappointed as our work has not been widely approved...The core reason behind this perception is that Chinese journalists do not emphasize the importance of copyright. Chinese journalists would rather consider the practical interests than judge if reprinting news reports online violates the regulations or not as those regulations themselves are riddled with ambiguity and loopholes.”

Studies into copyright issues within Chinese journalism have found it to be highly frequent for Chinese journalists to neglect the copyright of news reports. As Wen suggests, there are two difficulties for Chinese traditional news media in protecting their stories from being reprinted by online news media without permission. Firstly, Chinese traditional news media take advantage by allowing online news media to reproduce their news reports and comments in order to amplify their influence through the internet. In other words, Chinese journalists generally do not regard themselves as merely the victims in copyright issues. Secondly, the existing law protects the copyright of the author rather than the news organisation in which the

author works. It could cost the traditional news outlets huge sums of money if they appeal the court to judge on copyright issues (2012). Therefore, the ambiguity of the existing law and the lack of awareness of Chinese journalists in this area have created a grey area for online news media to reprint news from traditional news media without permission.

Besides the grey areas in collecting news information, Chinese online news media are also struggling over decisions concerning self-censorship. As core theme 3 demonstrates, censorship of online news media is less easily enforced than that governing their traditional counterparts, meaning that online news media enjoy more freedom to decide which news reports can be published on their websites. A number of scholars highlight the technology and the regulations used in terms of Chinese online censorship (see for example: Bertot et al., 2010; Tai, 2006; Weber and Lu, 2007). However, the regulations relating to online censorship are generally problematic, making their enforcement rather weak. As Sohmen points out, the unstable and vague legislation and policy are “combined with unpublished regulations and inconsistent enforcement”, a situation which “has created an uncertain regulatory environment, hindering long-term growth” (2001: p.17). This argument implies that online censorship can be unstable in the practice, as the law enforcement agencies may find it difficult to punish online news media without the benefit of a strong legal basis. In other words, online news media are able to publish more so-called negative news reports which expose the dark side of society, such as corruption.

The uncertainty and ambiguity of the current Chinese legislation concerning online news media has helped to form the basis for the grey area of censorship. Besides the lack of formal legislation about journalism issued by the People's Congress, the established regulations are not strong enough to allow the Chinese government to censor online news media as strictly as it does traditional news media. According to Liang and Lu, there are three issues with the current regulations for online news media: 1) the key words of the regulations often lack accurate definition; 2) the regulations fail to suit the rapidly changing internet technology and online environment, with some of them losing their meaning due to not having been revised for a number of years; 3) many policies and regulations overlap or contradict each other, leading to confusion and redundancy. This sense of confusion is reflected in practice as "the lack of coherent and consistent decision-making processes and inconsistent enforcement" (2010, p.109). Again, then, a grey area of legislation has been created as a result of problematic regulation.

As a result of this legislative grey area, except for that news information which evidently violates the law such as online drug dealing, the censorship applied to much news is actually based on whether there is a government department which intends to investigate and punish a specific online news outlet. According to the Chinese journalists, as discussed mainly in core theme 3, such a situation creates a grey area in the journalism practice of online news media. On the one hand, the administrative departments at national level focus only on specific topics of news information, as

journalist 7 proposed. In other words, except for such specific news, there is no department appointed to supervise the rest of the news at national level. Thus, commercial news websites such as Sina.com and 163.com are able to enjoy more freedom to decide whether to publish a news report or not. On the other hand, local government plays an important role in censoring local news by filtering reports which may undermine the reputation of the local authorities. The Chinese journalists found the influence of local government over online censorship to be rather limited because its power is restricted to a certain region while online information is disseminated without geographical constraints. In other words, even if local government intends to censor that news information which is not specifically supervised by the national level authorities, it cannot stop local news from being published on news websites operated outside its administrative region. In summary, the publication of local news information which is not related to nationally supervised topics largely depends on the decision of the news website rather than the will of the local government, particularly if the news website is located outside the region where the news event happened.

In comparison with journalists in traditional news media, Chinese journalists working for online news media are less frequently punished by the authorities, even if their published information might be censored afterwards. According to Qiu, “Real-world punishments thus function mostly as potential deterrence rather than direct penalty-like message eradication, which hurts only the virtual existence of the netizens rather than their tangible life” (1999, p.19). The Chinese journalists

interviewed in this research approved such an argument. As journalist 7 stated, the government believes any negative influence produced by news information can be erased by deleting the information on the website. The journalist who published the information would not be punished too seriously as long as he or she then deleted the story. Qiu believes the reason behind the difference derives mainly from the difference between the voice of the Party function of traditional news media and the industry of the state function of online news media (1999). This means the political control of online news media is weaker than that for traditional channels. In this sense, Chinese journalists perceive that publishing online information is to some extent conducted in a grey area of censorship.

It is noteworthy that the grey areas within online journalism practice can be beneficial for online news media in the competition with traditional news media. In terms of the ban on conducting interviews, the only legal way for online news media to collect news information is to co-operate with traditional news media in order to reprint their news stories. However, co-operation over the news supply has actually reinforced the economic profits made by online news media while at the same time undermining the established readership and advertising relationships of traditional news media. According to Zhao, Chinese traditional news media have been handing thousands of pieces of news and comments they themselves produced to commercial news websites that then edit and re-construct such previously published news for free. Thus, online news media not only collect news information at relatively less financial

cost, but also gain readership and advertisers transferred from the traditional news media which supplied them with the news reports (2009). Since readers have found they can now consume news originally produced by trusted newspapers and broadcasters on news websites, it is clear that readers and those advertisers who focus on this audience will transfer their loyalty from traditional news media to online news media. In addition, the commercial news websites also highlight the importance of independent news production. As Chinese journalists believe conducting independent interviews for online news media is widely accepted by the government and seldom punished, the news websites with substantial financial support are able to produce their own news reports to establish their reputation and attract a greater readership and more advertisers. This means that online news media can provide both published news reports from traditional news media and original news information gathered independently to offer readers more information from various perspectives. In this sense, the grey areas surrounding news information acquisition for online news media have actually assisted such media in the competition with traditional news media, or at least negated the disadvantages created by restrictive policy.

Moreover, the grey area within censorship for news websites allows online news media to establish their credibility in competition with their traditional counterparts. As core theme 6 demonstrates, several senior journalists working for Chinese traditional news outlets perceived the decline of the credibility of traditional journalism to be correlated to relatively weak online censorship. The grey area in

online censorship allows news websites to publish news which cannot be published through traditional news media, although it may be deleted afterwards. Readers will suspect traditional news media to be concealing the facts on purpose if they read about a news event online while finding few reports from traditional journalistic outlets. In this sense, online exclusive news reports assist news websites in establishing high levels of credibility. Readers who are interested in topics which are usually censored on traditional news media, such as corruption and major accidents, will spend more time on news websites. Therefore, although the grey area of online censorship is relatively unstable, largely as a result of incoherent policies, it is beneficial for the credibility of online news media as long as it can allow them to publish more online exclusive news.

It is noteworthy that the grey area of conducting online journalism in China can also be regarded as a way of pursuing journalism professionalism in the cracks of the Soviet model. On the one hand, Chinese journalists have always had to practice professionalism under pressure from the government, even from the era of Mao. So-called reportage, which tells news stories in the form of literature to avoid being punished, was invented in Mao's era and was very popular before the introduction of the open policy in China. Journalists such as Deng Tuo and Liu Bingyan tried to pursue journalistic professionalism by investigating and reporting the corruption within society even at the time when the Soviet model was being closely followed prior to the 1980s (Chan, 2010). Since the Soviet model of journalism has been much

less emphasized by the authorities, and the western model of journalism introduced much more by academics since the 1990s, a sense of journalistic professionalism has become stronger than ever before. In this sense, it seems inevitable that more journalists are engaging in journalistic professionalism online, as the grey area for conducting online journalism is a bigger space than that of its traditional counterparts.

In contrast, the Soviet model and the Marxist theories of journalism have always been adapted and updated to serve the CCP and the government. In other words, neither Marxist theories nor the Soviet model is the only doctrine in the practice of Chinese journalism. As Zhao stresses:

“The CCP continues to articulate different Marxism and socialism, claim to build socialism with Chinese characteristics, and it continues to integrate Chinese media system with its programs of providing moral guidance to the population and engineering economic development and social change...the CCP...is actively using the media to shape the contours of Chinese modernity through its control of the media” (2012: p.152).

The above argument provides two valuable points to assist in understanding the grey area of online Chinese journalism. The first is that, although the Chinese government claims that that Marxist theories dominate the ideology behind practicing journalism, both the Chinese government and Chinese journalists understand that Chinese journalism cannot strictly depend on one single idea. In other words, cracks in the Soviet model have always existed in Chinese journalism since it was introduced into China. The second point is that, since one of the most significant purposes of controlling the media and applying Marxist theories is to serve Chinese modernity, it

is reasonable to allow online news media to conduct more journalism practice for the development of the Chinese internet industry. Therefore, although it is almost impossible for the Chinese government to admit to a correctness of the online grey area, it does allow journalists to pursue journalistic professionalism to some extent in their online journalism.

6.3 The Correlation between Readership Age Groups and the Increasing Ascendancy of Online News Media

As theory-driven themes based on the existing literature, core theme 1 concerns the ascendancy of online news media and core theme 5 the market competition between traditional news outlets and their online counterparts. These two themes were established to test Chinese journalists' ideas about related issues within the context of Chinese journalism. As demonstrated through the data analysis, the Chinese journalists found online news outlets to be in a growth stage whereas their traditional counterparts had declined significantly, particularly in terms of readership. Moreover, the journalists believed age segments to have played an important role in readership classification across different news platforms, where the main age group of readers of traditional news media is older than that for online news media. These findings show the accuracy of scholarship concerning the loss of readership for traditional news media products in China. However, the journalists did stress the importance of age

groups in terms of the development of online news media and the influence that this had on traditional news media in the sense of market competition. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the correlation between the age groups of news consumers and the ascendancy of online news media.

A number of scholars now believe there is a trend towards the polarization of different age groups of news consumers. They consider the majority of online news consumers to be under 40 years old, while the end-users traditional news media are held to be more elderly (Bachmann *et al.*, 2010; Bucy, 2003; Dutta-Bergman, 2013; Stromback and Kiouisis, 2010). Importantly, this academic view is largely consistent with *The 30th Statistical Report on internet Development in China* provided by the Chinese internet Network Information Centre in 2012 (CNNIC, 2012), as well as with the Chinese journalists' statements covered in core theme 5. In this sense, it seems clear that a polarization of different age groups of news consumers between online and offline news media does exist in the Chinese media market. Moreover, analysts find that the education level of news consumers can also influence their preferences for using different news media and their evaluations of the credibility of news items (Bucy, 2003; Dutta-Bergman, 2013; Mitchelstein and Boczkowski, 2010). More specifically, those individuals who have been educated to higher levels tend to consume more online news than those who have a lower level educational background. Several Chinese journalists also perceived a correlation between educational attainment and news consumption within the interviews conducted for this research.

However, it is noteworthy that the correlation between age group and education in China is different from that in the western countries which the previous literature discussed. For example, by stating “In general, older, more educated audiences tend to be the most critical of media, while younger, less educated news consumers are more likely to be accepting of news coverage and to evaluate the media as credible”, Bucy implies that the younger age group overlaps with the less educated segment (2003, p.250). On the contrary, the Chinese younger generation is better educated than the older generation. This is largely because the higher education system of China had been barely established before the 1960s and was completely destroyed during the catastrophic movement known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. Moreover, although the universities resumed their operations after 1977, the policy of the popularisation of higher education was not implemented until 1999. In the light of this, the opportunities for the younger generation, those under 40 years old, are much greater than those offered their older counterparts. In turn, this means that the younger age group overlaps with the higher educated group to a great extent in China. Therefore, it is reasonable to see age as a crucial criterion when analysing both the readership of online news media and the influence of such media.

A preference for consuming online news has influenced the younger generation’s political engagement and trust in online news reports. On the one hand, as Bachmann *et al.* point out, the internet has allowed increasing online participation through providing new technology-based opportunities for information-seeking and discussion.

“Activities such as creating, posting, and forwarding political messages as well as consuming information in the blogosphere promote discussion and participation” (2010, p.36). In other words, younger internet users would rather engage actively in dialogue surrounding consumed news than passively be informed about such news through websites. On the other hand, Bucy believes that the frequency of use of a particular media platform correlates with the believability of that specific news channel for individuals (2003). “Given that assessments of media credibility are strongly, and have been historically, associated with use of and reliance on a particular media channel, the believability accorded to Net news by people who are already online is not surprising” (Bucy, 2003: p.248). Assuming that younger news consumers spend more time on online news media than do their older counterparts, it might be concluded that younger people find online news reports more credible than do their elders. In this sense, the value ascribed to online news media by younger internet users tends to be high as they not only trust such media but also contribute to them.

It is worth noting that, in terms of the younger generation, online activities other than news consumption can strengthen the preference for online news media. The virtual space provided by the internet allows young individuals to “live online”, engage in “multi-tasking” and focus on “entertainment and socializing” (Bachmann *et al.*, 2010: p.37). Although playing online games and establishing online social networks are not necessarily related to online journalism, these activities can reinforce

a sense of reliance on the internet as a whole, a sense which makes the internet seem the primary tool in daily life, including for news consumption. The Chinese journalists stressed the influence of this reliance on the internet on news consumption.

As journalist 20, a young journalist working for a commercial newspaper, argued:

“Online virtual life has already become part of the individual’s regular life. For example, when I feel something is unfair, I will probably complain through online media such as Weibo. Since I cannot live without the internet, why would I not download some free applications onto my iPad instead of buying a newspaper?”

Journalists 6 and 7 also saw changes in reading habits as a result of frequent use of the internet. They both argued they would rather consume news from websites than read newspapers provided for free by their newsrooms because of their habit of searching for information through the internet. Thus, the preference for consuming online news has become solid among the younger generation.

According to the interviewees within this research, age composition of news consumers influences journalists’ expectations of online and traditional journalism. On the one hand, as young news consumers tend to concentrate on online journalism and actively engage in discussions of online news reports, it becomes difficult for traditional journalism to extend its existing readership, which then leads to declining circulations for newspapers and audience ratings for broadcasters. As Ahlers argues, “A growing concern is the media generation gap. Newspapers, news magazines, and television news are losing young consumers and are building business models that do not include them. Younger audiences have tuned out” (2006: p.48). The Chinese

journalists described much the same kind of pattern. For example, journalist 5, a senior editor who had transferred from a broadcast news outlet to a news website, claimed that although traditional journalism would hardly lose its current audience, it was struggling to find a new target audience from the younger generation. This suggests that the scale of readership and related circulation of traditional news media cannot be guaranteed to continue to grow in the long-term, when the younger generation, that which prefers to consume online journalism, matures. “In the short term, this will not pose much of a problem for the news industry (offline or online), but it is a major long-term concern. The effects will be felt in fifteen to twenty years as this cohort moves into middle age” (Ahlers, 2006: p.48). In this sense, the age groupings for news consumption correlate with the decline of traditional journalism in terms of readership.

Moreover, the Chinese journalists also doubted that the actual scale of traditional journalism consumption was the same as the circulation figures for traditional news forms. Journalists 6, 7, 8 and 20 reported that the subscribed newspapers provided in their workplaces were seldom read by them or their colleagues, while journalists 16 and 17, who both work for broadcast stations, claimed that an increasingly large audience uses radio and television for entertainment rather than for news consumption. This would suggest that although newspapers and broadcast stations still possess relatively large scale circulations and ratings, the traditional journalism provided by these offline platforms is not the main focus of their audiences. A core reason for this

situation, as journalists 1, 12 and 20 proposed, is that subscriptions to newspapers supported by the local government and other public service sectors have been protecting the circulation figures of Chinese newspapers, especially Party newspapers. For example, local governments are asked to subscribe to Party newspapers such as the *People's Daily*. Although such compulsory subscription has guaranteed the circulation of newspapers to some extent, it cannot ensure that staff actually read these newspapers. There are no statistics to support the interviewees' perceptions on this issue. However, the belief does influence the Chinese journalists' evaluations of the ascendancy of online news media, as the journalists felt people would consume online journalism rather than read the newspapers provided in their workplaces, even when they were free.

On the other hand, since the younger generation prefers to consume online news, it is inevitable that advertisers who focus on the younger age group will invest more in online advertising. Considering that growing advertising revenue is also a crucial sign of the development of online news media, the contribution of young news consumers to the advertising market has served to strengthen the correlation between this age group and the ascendancy of online news media. The Chinese journalists agreed that the advertisers' perceptions are vital to the advertising revenues for news media. Journalists 5 and 8 suggested that one main reason for the relatively low advertising income gained by online news media was that most advertisers were consumers of traditional journalism. Advertisers' own preferences and their

familiarity with traditional journalism can effectively influence their decisions about advertising investment. Journalist 8 believed the advertising revenues for online news media will inevitably increase with the rise of young advertisers who consume online journalism. Thus, the Chinese journalists also felt the growth of online news media to be correlated with the rise of the younger generation in terms of advertising revenues.

Importantly, the Chinese journalists not only testified to the accuracy of the existing arguments concerning news consumers' migration from traditional news to online news outlets, but also supported the academic viewpoint that a preference for one kind of news channel does not necessarily mean the exclusion of other kinds of media in China. A number of western researchers believe that many individuals actually consume news from both traditional and online news platforms, while online advertising is only an imperfect substitute for that in traditional forms of media as far as advertisers are concerned (Ahlers, 2006; Bucy, 2003; Dutta-Bergman, 2004). The Chinese journalists, as core theme 1 shows, agreed with the emerging ascendancy of online journalism but dismissed the idea of the elimination of traditional journalism; they shared the same opinions as those displayed in the academic literature. The head of a local broadcast bureau (journalist 4) argued:

“I believe people need multiple channels for news consumption, so traditional journalism based on pre-existing technology will not be completely replaced by newly emerging media. The news industry is not like other industries such as matchstick production. Matchsticks can be replaced by lighters because no one needs both of them to make fire. However, the public needs both newspapers and news websites to consume journalism under different conditions and to satisfy different

reading preferences. For example, you can take a newspaper anywhere, but you cannot find the internet everywhere you go.”

The interviews within this research show that Chinese journalists believe that only the co-existence of traditional news media and online news media can satisfy the reading preferences and specific needs of all news consumers. Nevertheless, it is evident that Chinese journalists generally perceive there to be a correlation between the younger generation’s preferences for news consumption and the development of online news media. In other words, the influence that young news consumers exert on the journalism market might to some extent determine the rise of online journalism.

6.4 Chinese Journalists’ Changed Perceptions of the Professionalism of Traditional Journalism

Existing literature concerning Chinese journalism found that the professionalism of Chinese journalism had been improved since late 1990s (see for example, de Burgh, 2003; Chan *et al.* 2004; Zhou, 2001; Pan, 2009). Here, the term “professionalism” is defined in a western journalistic context rather than a context of a Soviet model of the media. These scholars implied that the journalism practice conducted by Chinese journalists tended to introduce concepts from western news media such as the watchdog function and the emphasis of audiences’ real interests, whereas the ideology of communism was dramatically weakened. According to de Burgh, Chinese news media believe they are responsible for scrutinising society and making autonomous

decisions on what kind of news is the most important and attractive for the audience and what kind of journalism practice can actually contribute to the improvement of society (2003: p.84). The existing academic findings above are consistent with journalists' perceptions of this research, as many of the interviewees stated the importance of reflecting the public's interest and using western journalism's values in their practice as the core theme 4 demonstrated. It is evident that there is more than one reason for the changed practice and journalists' perceptions. The introduction of market forces, the de-emphasis of ideology conflicts and the reduction of the state subsidy provide a relatively liberated environment for Chinese journalism. Chinese journalists did not deny the influence of the whole context of the press when they mentioned their changed perceptions of professionalism. However, Chinese journalists perceived that the development of journalism's professionalism within traditional new media was correlated with the use of the internet and the development of online news media, especially by seeing online journalism as a significant competitor for traditional journalism in the market. In this sense, it is reasonable to further analyse the Chinese journalists' perceptions of journalism practice to understand what they believe to be changed and why some specific operations are changing.

The most straightforward influence of internet technology on traditional journalism lies in its being used as a tool for accelerating the flow of information. Scholars' arguments which suggest the internet has become an essential tool for

newsroom's regular operation have not caused controversial debates among existing literature (Machill and Beiler, 2009, Pavlik, 2001). Chinese journalists' perceptions are consistent with the scholars' arguments, although they emphasize different specific practice which needs the internet as a tool. According to sub-theme 4.1, the internet has been widely used in newsrooms of traditional news media to send information, interact with audience, gather online news information and provide alternative channels for audience to consume those published stories. The interviewees believed that they can do their work more efficiently by using the internet to accelerate the flow of information in general. Importantly, unlike other tools used in newsrooms such as telephones, Chinese journalists perceived the using internet had inevitably influenced media coverage and perceptions of news values. They claimed the traditional journalism cannot survive without using the internet in the contemporary context as they found journalists significantly relied on the tool. The reliance of the internet made Chinese journalists believe a number of their professional recognitions and practice has been transformed.

One of the main transformed aspects of the professionalism of Chinese traditional journalism is the agenda setting process. Besides using online information to enrich the news stories and check the accuracy of news reports, another essential purpose of gathering online news for journalists working for traditional journalism is to find valuable news clues. Chinese journalists perceived it was prevalent for traditional news media to compose their news stories based on the information

provided by the internet. One of the interviewees (journalist 5) even claimed over 80% of news stories published on local newspapers were conducted by exploring existing online news information. To be specific, there are three kinds of online information which actually influence the media coverage of traditional news media: 1) original professional online journalism conducted by journalists working for online news media; 2) online news information provided by non-professionals on internet bulletin boards; 3) reprinted professional news reports which were originally published in traditional news media. The influence of the reprinted news reports can be regarded as the side effect of an amplified influence of traditional news media through the internet, while the other two kinds of exclusively online information are regarded as new emerging elements of agenda setting by a number of scholars such as Li *et al.* and Song (see for example, Li *et al.*, 2003; Lee *et al.*, 2005; Song, 2007; Zhou and Moy, 2007).

Academics and Chinese journalists' interpretations concerning the correlation between online news information and agenda setting of traditional news media can be classified into two categories. On the one hand, public opinion reflected in discussions on online bulletin boards system (the BBS) have drawn much attention from journalists working for traditional news outlets (Lee *et al.*, 2005; Zhou and Moy, 2007). As Zhou and Moy proposed, "online discussions added meaning and news value to the issue; netizens introduced diversified frames to interpret it, thus transforming the case from an event to an issue that had drawn nationwide attention"

(2007: p.92-93). It implies online discussions can precipitate some specific events to be focused topics, while making the related news information more valuable for professional traditional news media to further explore. Chinese journalists believed a widely discussed topic online would almost certainly be reported by the traditional news media sooner or later. According to journalist 9, Chinese journalists highlight the news value of events around online discussions for two main reasons: “For one thing, we perceive an online focused event must have news values to some extent as it has already caused the public’s interest. For another, since the competition between different news outlets is increasingly intense, we must extend our channels of news gathering”. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue the added news value given by online discussions is one of the most important reasons for Chinese journalists to consider the online news information for the coverage of traditional news media just as the scholars’ findings. In other words, as it has already been a popular strategy for Chinese journalists to find news clues and sources from the internet, it is understandable that Chinese journalists found the online public opinion around events did influence their process of agenda setting.

On the other hand, the grey area of conducting independent interviews for online news outlets discussed above allows Chinese journalists working for online news media to compose their original news stories. The online professional original news stories also influence the agenda setting of traditional journalism as long as these stories can draw much attention from the public. As the online news media usually

provide more efficient platforms for interactivity than traditional news media, online original news stories are able to precipitate online discussions around the reported events effectively, which can add extra news values of the stories. By researching the changes of the media coverage of the anti-US protests in South Korea during 2002, Song found that the agenda setting of traditional journalism can be significantly influenced if online news media continue to pay much attention on some specific news events (2007). As Song suggested, Korean newspapers which tried to prevent the public to pay too much attention on the anti-US protests by providing few reports around the event in the first place were eventually influenced by the massive news reports provided by online news media (2002).

“That is, by giving scant attention to the incident in phase 1, the conservative mainstream newspapers might have tried to prevent the incident from expanding to affect related political issues, but they could not afford to ignore political issues as candlelight protests triggered by the not-guilty verdicts snowballed across the country. These newspapers then began to carry more coverage and actively engage in framing competitions with the progressive media outlets” (Song, 2007: p.89).

Thus, the influence on the agenda setting of traditional news media is not only from online public opinion provided by non-professional internet users, but also from media coverage established by online media professionals. Such influence also explains why news reports conducted by a commercial news website were followed by newspapers national-widely as journalist 13 described.

It is noteworthy that stating online news information can influence the agenda setting of traditional news media does not mean such influence is one-dimensional.

The competition between traditional news media and online news media leads to interactions of agenda setting between these two kinds of news outlets. “News media may set agendas by competing with, rather than following, each other in expanding or containing the scope or intensity of an issue according to their editorial orientations” (Song, 2007: p.89-90). By researching the media coverage of the mid-air collision between China and the United States, Li *et al.* also found Chinese newspapers such as the *People’s Daily* led the agenda setting at first, whereas the online news media became the main force of agenda setting on this event at a later stage (2003). It means the online news media and the traditional news media also compete with each other on the control of agenda setting to some extent. Zhou and Moy proposed that the political control of Chinese traditional journalism can effectively reduce the influence of online information on the agenda setting function if the government believed it was necessary (2007). In this sense, although Chinese journalists perceived the agenda setting function had been influenced by online news information, the effect is mutual between traditional journalism and online journalism.

According to the interviewees of this study, another crucial changed perception of journalistic professionalism of Chinese journalists is the justification of news values and its reflection on the media coverage. Chinese journalists perceived the number of news reports concerning readers’ interests and daily lives published on traditional news outlets had been increased, whereas the counterparts concerning the local government leaders’ regular activities had decreased. The descriptions which

compared the number of two kinds of news reports reflect the dissonance between the model of communist journalism and the journalists' perceptions of media professionalism based on the western model. "In the process of professionalization, many Chinese journalists treat their western counterparts as models" (Chan *et al.*, 2004: p.256). The struggling between different criteria of news values is co-related with the changed functions of Chinese journalism, as interviewees who perceived the change of news values described above also believed the voice of the Party function had been less emphasized in journalism practice, whereas the watchdog function and the function of serving the public had been more highlighted (see sub-theme 4.3 and sub-theme 4.4). The transformation of journalists' perceptions above has been contributed by a number of scholars (see for example, Chan *et al.*, 2004; Pan and Chan, 2003; Scotton, 2012; Zhou, 2004; Zhou, 2000). As the literature suggest, the ideological dissonance of Chinese journalism can be seen as a result of the paradox between the industry dynamic and the political dynamic in the era of reform (Zhou, 2004). However, Chinese journalists also believed there is correlation between the changes of their perceptions of professionalism and the development of the internet.

Mr Bi, a senior journalist working for a local television argued,

"I believe a major influence of the internet in China is inspiring on independent mind in individuals. In other words, the internet has precipitated openness and democracy within Chinese society. Therefore, the traditional news media must be aware of the changes and improve their level of professionalism. For example, journalists used to completely defend the government by criticising people who questioned the government as "a small group of people who are blind

to see the truth”. You can seldom see such bureaucratic words in contemporary newspapers.”

Mr Bi’s argument reinforced the opinion of scholars such as Scotton who believe the internet is able to precipitate a more democratic environment for conducting journalism in China (2012). However, more journalists explained the changes from the perspective of the need for competition. For one thing, the emphasis of online public opinion inevitably precipitates traditional journalists to transform their criteria of news values. By paying attention to topics which people are discussing, Chinese journalists have to re-build their news values concerning what kind of events is more important to the public. In this sense, the doctrinarism of the compulsory “voice of the Party” function has been found not suitable for attracting readership. For another, commercial online news media are seen as competitors to traditional news media by journalists. Although commercial online news media are asked not to challenge the authority of the Party in general, these profit-driven news outlets do not have the obligation to perform as the voice of the Party. The function of the voice of the Party does not work very well in the media market since most of the Party’s newspapers exist through subsidy and compulsory subscription. As journalist 13 stated, “Only the Party’s newspaper puts the government leader’s speech on the front page. However, it is obvious that the Party’s newspaper is not the main force of the development of Chinese journalism.” In this sense, the voice of the Party function actually is a disadvantage for traditional news outlets to compete with online counterparts to gain more readerships. In this sense, it is interpretable that Chinese journalists would rather

emphasize the news values and journalistic functions based on the western model than the Party's theory.

Nevertheless, Chinese journalists' perceptions concerning the extent to which the professionalism of journalism has shifted are quite diverse. As Zhou proposed, there are five models which allow Chinese journalists to cope with the dissonance between the Party's ideology and the professionalism of journalism:

“(1) living with dissonance in the public discourse universe; (2) striking a consonance with Communist ideology; (3) consonance in the public discourse universe but independent expression in the private discourse universe; (4) pushing boundaries in public discourse universe while keeping independent expression in the private discourse universe; and (5) radical reduction of dissonance by aligning with a different ideology and expressing deviant ideas in a different public discourse universe” (2001: p.599).

This research found journalists working for state owned news media tend to stress the necessity of performing as the voice of the Party which reflects on journalism practice such as the media coverage, while journalists working for commercial traditional news outlets prefer not to perform as the voice of the Party too apparently in their journalistic work. As journalist 9 argues, “If a newspaper really wants readers to consume the news about the government's achievements, it must change its style of expression to make readers believe the information is relevant to their lives”. In this sense, although Chinese journalists perceived that the internet has changed their sense of professionalism to some extent, the influence may vary a lot as a result of a different setting of the news media.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

Academics who studied the Chinese news media system had strong evidence to support their view that Chinese journalism has undergone a process of dramatic transition since market forces were introduced into China in the 1990s. However, there is still much debate concerning the extent to which these market forces have worked to shape the contemporary model of Chinese media. Those who stress the importance of new technology believe the internet has precipitated, if not determined, the transformation of the Chinese news media by challenging the structure, the value and the practice of traditional journalism. Nevertheless, those scholars who are less optimistic about the influence of the internet tend to emphasize the particular economic and political context in which this new technology works, especially by considering the continuity of the communist ideology embedded into the Chinese media system. The literature review within this thesis provides a strong theoretical framework for developing unique models of journalism based on different historical and cultural backgrounds. The main contributions to this framework include Siebert et al.'s *Four Theories of the Press* (1956), Hallin and Mancini's *Three Models of Media and Politics* (2004), and Lee's communist-capitalist model of Chinese journalism (2005). However, the landscape provided by these models of journalism for a

generalised communist world or an understanding of related media systems such as the Soviet model cannot fully explain the changes made to the contemporary Chinese news media. The findings of this study broaden understanding of what has happened within the Chinese media system through an analysis of contemporary journalism's values and practices, and explain, through the insider views offered by Chinese journalists, how the internet has contributed to the changes within these values and practices.

Within the theoretical parameters mentioned above, this study has explored the perceptions of Chinese journalists about their own experience of practice in order to assess the extent to which internet technology has impacted on traditional journalism in the context of China. In order to achieve the research objectives, this researcher analysed 25 transcripts of interviews with journalists who have experienced the transformation of Chinese traditional journalism and the impact made by the internet. The findings supplied by the journalists' perceptions can provide answers to the following research questions raised by this study: what are the changes to and continuities within Chinese traditional journalism according to journalists' own experiences?; to what extent has the internet influenced Chinese news media and contributed to the changes felt by Chinese journalists?; how has the online news media in particular precipitated the transformation of traditional news media based on the perceptions of journalists if regulations and censorship still restrict the journalism practices of the online media in China?

7.2 How do News Media Professionals Perceive Changes to Traditional Journalism on Account of the Influence of the Internet in China?

Scholars have developed a number of theories concerning the influence of the internet on traditional journalism but without giving a specific context. These theories aim to predict the trends relating to the development of traditional journalism under the influence of the internet in global terms. One of the most important findings of this study is that the researcher tested whether Chinese journalists were in agreement with these ideas in the context of China. The ideas included the ascendancy of online news media and the changes to journalism practice through the introduction of internet technology into the newsroom. Although these ideas were first posited by analysts in western countries who were almost inevitably influenced by the western media context, these theories seem, to a large extent, to be recognised and accepted by Chinese journalists.

The ascendancy of online news media and the possibility of the elimination of traditional news media are fully understood by Chinese journalists. According to this study, although Chinese journalists realise that the market in which the press in China operates is not as free as that for its western counterparts, they believe online news media have challenged significantly the domination of that market by traditional media. Losses of readership and increasingly intense competition in the advertising market have precipitated a number of debates concerning the survival of the

traditional news media, especially print newspapers. This research finds that only a small number of Chinese journalists believe that traditional news media will be replaced completely by online news media. More importantly, those journalists who predicted the elimination of the traditional news media implied they were influenced by related western theories such as that which predict the obsolescence of the American newspaper and western examples such as the closing of specific newspapers. However, most of the journalists believed the traditional news media would co-exist with online news media for at least two specific reasons: 1) the market still has space for traditional news media; 2) the specific state-owned system of traditional media in China will ensure the survival of newspapers and broadcast stations. In this sense, the idea of the ascendancy of online news media has been widely accepted by Chinese journalists. The Chinese journalists' perceptions on this issue were influenced by both western theories and the Chinese specific political economic situation.

Chinese journalists held quite similar opinions on the changes to journalism practice as influenced by the introduction of internet technology. They all believed the internet to have become an indispensable tool in the newsrooms of traditional media for the collection, research, dissemination and communication of information. These changes to the operation of traditional journalism are largely confirmed by sub-theme 4.1 in the data analysis chapter. Apparently, these ideas were generated from Chinese journalists' professional experience, especially for those older journalists who had

started working for traditional news media before the introduction of the internet. Although the journalists did not mention whether or not they had read western literature concerning the changing nature of operations in the newsroom, the data shows their perceptions to be generally consistent with the ideas of western scholars such as Pavlik (2001) and Machill and Beiler (2003) on such issues. In this sense, the literature review section about the changing operations of traditional journalism may also work in the Chinese context, or at least the Chinese journalists believed it could.

It is worth emphasizing that all of the above theories, as generated by theory-driven thematic analysis, imply that, although the Chinese political-economic context is quite different from that in western countries, Chinese traditional journalism is undergoing rather similar transformations to its western counterparts in certain specific respects. In other words, theories generated by western scholars can also work to some extent in the Chinese context. Nevertheless, evidence from the Chinese journalists cannot completely confirm trends such as the ascendancy of online news media as their opinions were based on different personal experiences and data. However, since Chinese media professionals approved these theories, it is reasonable to use such western theories as references to understand Chinese practice.

7.21 Chinese Journalists' Perceptions of Continuities in and Changes to Chinese Traditional Journalism

In order to further answer the core research question that explores how news media professionals perceive changes to traditional journalism on account of the influence of the internet in China, the findings of this research demonstrate that the communist theory of journalism, especially the Soviet model of journalism, has continued to influence the Chinese news media system. However, influenced by market forces and the popularity of the internet, the news media system and the criteria of practicing traditional journalism have been transformed to some extent within the framework of the existing model. The Chinese journalists focused on two main aspects to describe the continuities in and changes to Chinese traditional news media: the hierarchy of Chinese news organisations and journalists, and the professionalism of conducting traditional journalism in the context of China. On the one hand, they admitted the existing values of traditional journalism based on communist theories, such as the voice of the party function, were still functioning in their regular journalism practice. Some journalists even defended the importance of following these principles. On the other hand, the interviewed media professionals indicated the various transformations to traditional journalism which had been brought about by the introduction of the internet, or so they believed. For example, the hierarchy of Chinese news organisations and journalists which used to be categorised only by official rank has been challenged by the commercial news

websites. This research provides detailed analysis to demonstrate how Chinese journalists perceived their struggle between these continuities and changes.

The legacy of the communist model from Mao's era has strongly impacted on the Chinese news media system even after the introduction of market forces in the 1990s. Chinese journalists' descriptions of the hierarchy of Chinese news organisations and journalists reflect the characteristics of both Mao's model and the communist-capitalist model, which have been discussed by scholars such as Lee (2005) and Zhao (1998). To be specific, this study finds that the political force, and the structure of traditional news media which was established under the influence of that political force, still strongly affect Chinese journalists' professional experiences. The existing literature has demonstrated the existence of a hierarchy which categorises news organisations and journalists by official rank. However, few studies have shown how journalists perceive the influence of the hierarchy for their journalism practice. According to the data-driven thematic analysis, this study shows that the Chinese journalists generally believed that their official rank, as well as that of their workplaces, can significantly influence their social status and the attitude of interviewees when they are conducting interviews. To be specific, Chinese journalists perceived that a relatively high rank can assist them to gain better access to interview people, especially those interviewees who work for the government. In this sense, Chinese journalists still value the official rank held by journalists and news organisations, although such a hierarchy contradicts the free market.

More importantly, the Chinese journalists perceived that the hierarchy of traditional news organisations constructed by political power has been eroded by the rise of the commercial news websites. The findings of this research demonstrate that the competition between different news media brought on by market forces has broken the monopoly of political authority on any evaluation of the importance of news organisations. As this hierarchy was originally established only for traditional journalism, the online news media are not compatible within this system. As the commercial news websites cannot be related to official rank at all, it is not reasonable for journalists and interviewees to evaluate online news media and journalists working for online news media by the existing hierarchy. The Chinese journalists found that the social impact and revenue of the news organisations also influence their journalism practice. This suggests that a journalist working for a top commercial website such as Sina.com is no less important than a journalist working for a traditional news channel with a certain official rank. The study finds that both journalists working in traditional journalism and journalists working in online journalism have noticed this transformation. As the Chinese traditional news media are still state-owned, this political hierarchy is not likely to be eliminated for traditional journalism. Nevertheless, according to this research, the importance of this hierarchy has declined in the perceptions of Chinese journalists.

Besides the hierarchy, the findings also demonstrate that the journalism professionalism in practice and the journalists' understanding of the professionalism

needed in traditional news media have also changed to some extent. On the one hand, the function as the party voice is the most significant legacy of the communist theories for contemporary traditional journalism. Since all of the traditional news media are either state-owned or party owned, the Chinese journalists believed that journalism practice in traditional journalism can hardly avoid being influenced by the party voice function. This research not only approves the existing discussions concerning the importance of this function in Chinese traditional news media, but also finds that the Chinese journalists' perceptions on this issue were not exactly consistent: some journalists defended the function as the party voice as a core value of conducting traditional journalism in China, while others tended to stress that it was less emphasized in practice. This implies that the party voice function is no longer a solid value for all of the Chinese journalists.

On the other hand, the communist theory of journalism is not the only source for the journalists' understandings of professionalism. The findings indicate that the watchdog function and the idea of public opinion have also contributed to the professionalism of traditional journalism. The Chinese journalists described these ideas as western theories of journalism to differentiate them from the communist theory, although they may not have completely understood the development of these theories in the western world. This suggests that communist theory, including the party voice function, is no longer a monopoly in Chinese journalists' perceptions of traditional journalism. This study finds several changes to journalism practice which

reflect the transformation in journalists' perceptions of professionalism: 1) it is not necessary to report party leaders' activities and achievements as the most important news on the front page; 2) journalists working for traditional news media promote the dialogue between the government and the public rather than an advocacy of the government's policy; 3) news information provided by amateurs can be used to complement professional reports if the information can be confirmed; 4) stories which reflect the watchdog function and a concern about people's lives are seen as highly valued news reports. In this sense, the Chinese journalists believed that what they called western theories of journalism have played an important role in their perceptions and practice of journalistic professionalism.

The other phenomenon which can reflect the declined influence of the communist theory of journalism is the changed agenda setting process. The existing literature has argued that popular online topics may encourage traditional news media to explore further in producing professional news reports in the context of China (Zhao, 2008; Nip, 2009). Nevertheless, these studies did not focus on journalists' evaluations of such a trend. The findings of this research demonstrate that Chinese journalists perceived it to be widely accepted for traditional news media to follow the popular stories online. Although the journalists could not provide solid statistics to measure the proportion of news reports influenced by online information, they believed a large number of news reports produced by traditional news media to have been precipitated by online news stories. In other words, in terms of the Chinese

journalists' perceptions, the agenda setting process in traditional journalism has been significantly influenced by online news media. This implies that the existing literature may underestimate the extent to which agenda setting has changed. Moreover, journalists' perceptions on agenda setting also suggested that the influence of the communist theories of journalism has been weakened to some degree. The online information explored by traditional news media can be provided by non-professionals who have little sense of the communist theories of journalism. In this sense, the party's interests and the government's policy are not the only forces which can determine the agenda setting of Chinese traditional journalism. Although the Chinese journalists showed little willingness to violate the principles of communist journalistic professionalism, they perceived that any direct influence from these principles has declined.

This study also aims to explore why the internet has been seen as a force behind the changes to journalism professionalism mentioned above. The Chinese journalists strongly believed the changes to Chinese traditional journalism to have been brought about by the internet. Their perceptions of the correlation can be categorised into two points: on the one hand, the introduction of the internet as an important tool for the newsroom has made a number of journalistic activities more practical and convenient. Journalists perceive it to be much easier to communicate with the public via the internet than by hotline or written message. The new technology allows them to reflect public opinion much more than before. On the other hand, the online news

media has changed the audience's preferences for news reports. Since market forces began to play an important role in Chinese journalism, traditional journalism has had to change its existing journalism practice to meet the changing preferences of the readership. The findings demonstrate that the Chinese journalists believed the model of Chinese traditional journalism to have been reshaped by the impact of the internet. Market forces are one of the most essential factors which have challenged the existing news media system. However, according to the descriptions supplied by the Chinese journalists, they perceived the internet to have influenced traditional journalism more directly than have invisible market forces.

7.3 How do News Media Professionals Perceive the Model of Chinese Online Journalism as a Competitor to Chinese Traditional Journalism?

Another core conclusion of this study is the existence of the grey area for online news media in collecting and publishing news reports in the context of China. The existing literature has provided various discussions concerning the intensity of the regulation and censorship faced by Chinese online news media. The literature provides solid materials for the theory-driven thematic analysis of this study. Nevertheless, if the enforcement of the regulations in China had been completely implemented, the online news media would not have been capable of effecting

changes to traditional news media as they could hardly operate independently. As online news media are forbidden to conduct independent interviews, the only legal way of collecting news information should be collecting news stories from published reports produced by traditional news media. However, to protect the news copyright, it seems inevitable that online news media should make sizable payments to traditional news media for publishing the news reports on websites. In this sense, online news media can hardly survive in the competition with traditional news media. Nevertheless, the Chinese journalists perceived online news media as being strong competitors for traditional news media in the market. They believed there to be grey areas for online news media to develop independently and gain economic profits without being punished by the government or the law. Therefore, the Chinese journalists' perception of the grey area is crucial in order to understand the extent to which the internet has changed Chinese journalism.

The findings indicate that it is very common for Chinese journalists working for online news media to conduct interviews independently, although the journalists and the online news media are fully aware of the regulation which prohibits them from doing so. Journalists working for commercial news websites confirmed they had independently conducted interviews without being punished by any department of the authorities. Despite the prohibition, some governmental departments even encourage online news media to produce their original news reports by inviting them to participate in conferences and events held by the government. It is noteworthy that the

Chinese journalists working for online news media felt that conducting independent interviews was theoretically not legal. Nevertheless, these journalists also believed the enforcement of the prohibition to be so weak that they could neglect it in practice. The grey area in conducting interviews is an excellent example to demonstrate the contradiction between political power and market forces in Chinese news media. On the one hand, political power aims to control the flow of information. As the state-owned traditional news media are more trustworthy than the private-owned commercial news websites, for the government, forcing online news media to reprint the news reports produced by traditional news media can effectively manage the flow of online news information. On the other hand, market forces aim to generate more economic profit for the news media. It is inevitable that commercial news websites encourage journalists to produce exclusive news in order to attract a greater readership in the competition with traditional news media. Moreover, the growth of online news media is also beneficial for local government, which is seeking the development of the economy. Thus, the Chinese journalists believed it to be impossible to completely forbid online news media to conduct interviews in practice.

Another perceived grey area of conducting online journalism concerns the publishing of online news information. The findings show that the policies of censorship and self-censorship have significantly influenced the final product of journalists' professional work. The Chinese journalists stated it was neither wise nor possible to challenge the direct orders of censorship given by the authorities.

Although the regulations related to online censorship are as sophisticated as the censorship policies of traditional journalism, the journalists found online censorship to be actually weaker than the censorship for traditional news media in practice. There are two main aspects of the grey area in publishing. First, although publishing reprinted and reedited news reports which were originally produced by traditional news media may lead to legal disputes, online news media seldom pay traditional news media for the reprinted news. Second, the margin of administration allows online news media to publish news information which can seldom be published in traditional news media. The Chinese journalists perceived publishing online exclusive news to be one of the essential advantages for online news media in competing with their traditional counterparts even though some of the exclusive news may be deleted afterwards because of censorship. In this sense, the Chinese journalists' perceptions are generally consistent with the existing arguments which describe how serious Chinese censorship is. Nevertheless, their perceptions do not support the radical arguments which over-criticise the administration of online journalism since the grey area allows more news to be published online.

The findings about the grey area of conducting online journalism have three main meanings for this research. First of all, they fill the gap between the existing structure and regulations of the censorship and the journalists' perceptions of the enforcement of such censorship. In other words, they provide new ideas concerning how Chinese journalists perceive the enforcement of censorship for their professional

practice. Secondly, this exploration of the grey area provides a more comprehensive understanding concerning the competition between traditional news media and online news media in China. To be specific, online news media are more able to compete with their traditional counterparts in the market with their practice conducted in the grey area. Thirdly, the grey area for conducting online journalism is also an important reason for the changed ideas about traditional journalism practice. It becomes much less reasonable to censor some specific news stories produced by traditional news media since the related information can be found online anyway.

It is worth emphasizing that although market forces and the internet are two different forces which are leading the transformation of Chinese traditional journalism, the two powers are related to each other. By considering how the competition between traditional news media and online news media has contributed to the changes to Chinese traditional journalism to a large extent, it becomes clear that market forces are working on traditional news media partly through the development of the internet. In terms of using the internet as a tool in the newsroom of traditional news media, although online practices such as communicating with the audience by email cannot directly produce economic profits, the Chinese journalists believed that the introduction of new technology has been a crucial advantage for them to compete with other news organisations. In this sense, market forces have actually strengthened the influence of the internet in the context of China.

7.4 How do News Media Professionals Perceive the Correlation between the Preferences of the Younger Generation and the Development of Online News Media?

The existing literature has suggested that the correlation between age and the consumption of different news media offers a significant perspective for understanding the influence of the internet on traditional journalism. In terms of this correlation, the Chinese journalists' perceptions were generally consistent with existing western literature (see, for example, Bachmann et al., 2010; Bucy, 2003; Dutta-Bergman, 2013; Stromback and Kioussis, 2010). However, unlike the journalists' views about the ascendancy of online news media, there is little evidence to confirm that the Chinese journalists' ideas were influenced by western literature or examples of this issue. The interviewees perceived this correlation based on their own experience. On the one hand, based on their professional experience, the journalists pointed out that the circulation of the party newspaper was protected by compulsory subscription, although young people might not read these newspapers even they could get them free from their workplaces. On the other hand, based on personal experience, the journalists found their young family members to prefer to consume online information more than did their elders. They also believed the development of higher education in China made the young generation more capable of using internet technology to consume journalism than was the case for the older generation. Therefore, even the journalists who worked in

forms of traditional journalism believed the correlation between audience age and the consumption of different news media would lead to the ascendancy of online news media.

This study can reveal much about the contemporary practice, role perceptions and values of Chinese journalism which cannot currently be found in either the literature or official reports. Nevertheless, this researcher is fully aware that the perceptions of Chinese journalists are not equal to the reality of Chinese news media. The study of Chinese journalists' role perceptions can provide a new perspective to understand what has happened in Chinese news media. Moreover, it also suggests possible research topics for further studies to test whether the related perceptions are consistent with the objective reality.

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Appendix

University Research Ethics Application Form

Part B – The Signed Declaration

→ Title of Research Project: **insert project title here**

I confirm my responsibility to deliver the research project in accordance with the University of Sheffield's policies and procedures, which include the University's '*Financial Regulations*', '*Good Research Practice Standards*' and the '*Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue*' (Ethics Policy) and, where externally funded, with the terms and conditions of the research funder.

In signing this research ethics application form I am also confirming that:

- The form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- The project will abide by the University's Ethics Policy.
- There is no potential material interest that may, or may appear to, impair the independence and objectivity of researchers conducting this project.
- Subject to the research being approved, I undertake to adhere to the project protocol without unagreed deviation and to comply with any conditions set out in the letter from the University ethics reviewers notifying me of this.
- I undertake to inform the ethics reviewers of significant changes to the protocol (by contacting my academic department's Ethics Administrator in the first instance).
- I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data, including the need to register when necessary with the appropriate Data Protection Officer (within the University the Data Protection Officer is based in CiCS).
- I understand that the project, including research records and data, may be subject to inspection for audit purposes, if required in future.
- I understand that personal data about me as a researcher in this form will be held by those involved in the ethics review procedure (e.g. the Ethics Administrator and/or ethics reviewers) and that this will be managed according to Data Protection Act principles.
- If this is an application for a 'generic' project all the individual projects that fit under the generic project are compatible with this application.
- I understand that this project cannot be submitted for ethics approval in more than one department, and that if I wish to appeal against the decision made, this must be done through the original department.

→ Name of the Principal Investigator (or the name of the Supervisor if this is a postgraduate researcher project):

insert name Martin Conboy

→ If this is a postgraduate researcher project insert the student's name here:

insert name Tianbo Xu

→ Signature of Principal Investigator (or the Supervisor): **sign here**

→ Date: **insert date**

M Conboy 1/7/2011

J. Harrison
5/9/2011

Email the completed application form and provide a signed, hard copy of 'Part B' to the Ethics Administrator (also enclose, if relevant, other documents).