

Click to Negotiate

*Online collective intelligence strategy and
social mobilization in China*

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Chinese Society and Politics

Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages

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No One Knows Everything, Everyone Knows Something

Pierre Levy

*The Chinese People of All Ethnic Groups Will Continue to Adhere to the People's
Democratic Dictatorship*

Constitution of the People's Republic of China

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Clicking to Negotiation

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Abstract

Although Chinese Internet sphere is under the strict censorship and control by the authority, it is certainly not difficult to observe the cases that Chinese individuals utilize the Internet and mobilize, develop influential power and exercise it against the dominant elites and deliver their opinion. This paper aims to analyze how the Internet promotes to crack down one of the strictest censorship and raise social mobilization in China by observing three different online social movements against the authority power and elites. And in order to discourse the power mobilization process and method, the theory of collective intelligence is applied.

The results illustrate that the Internet sphere and the features of the Internet promote the mobilization and development of collective intelligence in significant level. By the individuals' active online collective intelligence, the individuals could obtain and deliver the influential power more easily and effectively to the authority. The Internet sphere has higher capacity to democratize the information access and liberalize the action of the participation. By that, the Internet sphere shows high potentiality to raise the public's position to negotiable level against the authority in China.

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마지막으로 언제나 저의 가능성과 미래에 대해 믿고 포기하지 않으셨던 저의 아버지께 감사의 말씀을 드립니다.

Contents

1	Introduction and Methodology	1
1.1	Motivation	1
1.2	Research Question	3
1.3	Methodology.....	3
1.4	Outline	5
2	Theory	7
2.1	Collective Intelligence	7
2.2	Collective Intelligence and Public Sphere.....	11
2.3	Collective Intelligence and Internet.....	14
2.4	The Limitation of Collective Intelligence	16
3	Chinese Mainstream Media and politics	19
3.1	From 1978 to Pre-Tiananmen movement.....	19
3.2	Tiananmen Democracy Movement	24
3.3	After the Tiananmen Movement.....	26
4	The Internet, the Internet in China	31
4.1	The History of the Internet	31
4.2	The History of the Internet in China.....	35
5	HFS and Mass Public Investigation	39
5.1	What Is Human Flesh Search (HFS)?.....	39
5.2	Zhou Jiugeng and His Corruption Scandal.....	42
5.2.1	First publication of the policy and online public reaction.....	43
5.2.2	HFS investigation.....	50
5.2.3	The Central Media’s Involvement and the Result.....	56
5.3	Findings	57
6	Bypass Censorship with Microblogs.....	60
6.1	Microblogs: Twitter and Chinese Weibo (微博).....	60
6.2	Who is Ai Weiwei?.....	62
6.3	The Case: Ai and Microblog	65
6.3.1	What Happened?	65
6.3.2	Discovery of Quantitative Expansion	68
6.3.3	Discovery of Qualitative growth.....	75

6.4	Findings	88
7	Be a Newsmaker, Online Journalism	90
7.1	Online Journalism.....	90
7.1.1	What is Online Journalism?	90
7.1.2	Online Journalism in China.....	92
7.2	Case Process Analysis	94
7.2.1	Corrupted Mayor	94
7.2.2	Online Journalism and Public Power Mobilization.....	97
7.3	Findings	102
8	Conclusion.....	104
	Bibliography.....	108

1 Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Motivation

We are living in the digital empire. Without exception, China has been rapidly producing digital and Internet technology with its great economic power and open trade policy. I used to live in China and work for an IT company. At work, I learned the huge scale and potential of the Internet market in China. But, what most interested me were our portal (game portal) website's relationships with the users and the government. My colleagues were generating online news and controlling posts from users. My colleagues had a program with a search engine and guidelines to managing the public's content. Sometimes we received notice from the government before inspections so that we could prepare and enhance our control over censorship. From my experience at the IT-company, I realized that Chinese Internet censorship is not only strict, but also highly systemized in the way that it's administered. Many studies have also analyzed this topic, examining the strength of censorship in China.¹

Although there is strict control in the Chinese online sphere, there are numerous cases of individuals resisting state power or political corruption to highlight abuses of public power for private benefit.² For instance, a petition movement concerning a Chinese student, Zhu Ling, is an example of the public's resistance against the power abuses of the political elite. Qing Hua(清华) university student Zhu Ling was poisoned in 1994, her classmate Jasmine Sun was highly suspected of committing the poisoning. Due to Sun's family's political background, she was investigated but not charged in connection with the case and shortly left to the US. In 2013, similar case occurred Shanghai and Zhu Ling's case was once again brought up by the public. The public created a petition to the US White House. The petition demanded the deportation of Jasmine Sun to China. The petition gained over 135,000 signatures in less than a week, surpassing the 100,000 signature threshold needed for a US government response.³ The story quickly reached the media's attention.

¹ Qinglian He, *The Fog of Censorship: Media Control in China* (Human Rights In China, 2008); J. Zittrain and B. Edelman, 'Internet Filtering in China', *IEEE Internet Computing*, 7 (2003), 70–77.

² Vito Tanzi, *Corruption Around the World - Causes, Consequences, Scope, and Cures (EPub)* (International Monetary Fund, 1998).

³ 'Invest and Deport Jasmine Sun Who Was the Main Suspect of a Famous Thallium Poison Murder Case (victim:Zhu Lin) in China | We the People: Your Voice in Our Government'

Many story which similar to above case raised my curiosity. The Chinese authority practices online censorship in order to maintain and enhance political stability. And because the Chinese authority's power is highly centralized, censorship is practiced very strictly. Being the case, how could Chinese individuals break down such a critical condition and raise their opinion to the public agenda, mobilizing a social movement against such a powerful authority?

From the social protest context, it is said that the Internet offers the platform to raise citizen organizing.⁴ And by offering the higher possibility to organize social protests or mobilize public opinion, the Internet sphere attained a degree of institutionalization of social activism and recognized the importance of the institutionalization of new social forms.⁵ The Internet's multidirectional communication and cooperative activity promotes and mobilizes the public's social movement. According to Salter, the Internet enables social-movement groups and organizations to communicate, to generate information, and to distribute this information cheaply and effectively, allowing response and feedback.⁶ So, the Internet functions most importantly in the stage of raising the possibility and the capacity to organize social movements.

There are lots of discussions about the Internet as an alternative media that makes it possible for individuals to organize social protests. However, few studies discuss details about how the function of the Internet makes advantageous in forming social mobilization. Therefore, this study will try to make contributions in analyzing the Internet's role in the relation of the public and the state in China. I will do this by analyzing the influence of the Internet's fundamental features and characteristics on social mobilization. In order to discourse the role of the Internet, it is important to analyze how, with what functions, and through what process individuals utilize the Internet in social mobilization. So, I selected three different online social movements which were mobilized to resist the actions of political corruption and political elites. In this thesis, I will analyze the process of mobilization and the development of these three movements.

<<https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/invest-and-deport-jasmine-sun-who-was-main-suspect-famous-thallium-poison-murder-case-victimzhu-lin/Rd8C54p1>> [accessed 12 May 2013].

⁴ Guobin Yang, *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online* (Columbia University Press, 2009).

⁵ Yang.

⁶ Lee Salter, 'Democracy, New Social Movements, and the Internet', *Cyberactivism: Online activism in theory and practice*, 2003, 117–144.

1.2 Research Question

The goal of this project is to explore the role of the Internet in state-society relations in China.

How do features of the Internet promote the process of social mobilization in China?

In order to discuss my research question, I set the range of cases as protests that were toward political elites in the Internet sphere. By that, I attempted to discover how the Internet promotes social mobilization. During the analysis, I selected the collective intelligence theory by Pierre Levy to explain the mobilization and development of influential power in the process of social mobilization. In order to analyze the in depth process of influential power's development, I particularly divided quantitative development and qualitative growth based on the types of the power in collective intelligence.

In the field of research, the social and political impact of the Chinese Internet is discussed with different opinions. Some studies state that the Internet's consultative mechanism can realize the shift of the centralized political power structure and raise liberalism in China.⁷ On the other hand, some argue that the customization capacity of Internet technology can result in a much higher censorship than traditional media.⁸ As I stated above, my intention and the contribution of my research is not to state that the Internet leads democracy by arguing the opposite opinion. However, I try to examine the Internet's fundamental function by utilizing collective intelligence's quantitative development and qualitative growth, and answering how the Internet can maximize the influential power of Chinese citizens.

1.3 Methodology

In order to find the answer to my research question, I choose a qualitative case study.

Qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources.⁹ The qualitative case study methodology is advantageous to explore individuals or organizations, simple through complex interventions, relationships, communities, or program.¹⁰ Qualitative case studies are advantageous in

⁷ Peter Dahlgren, *Media and Political Engagement: Citizens, Communication, and Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁸ Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (PublicAffairs, 2012).

⁹ Pamela Baxter and Susan Jack, 'Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers', *The Qualitative Report*, 13 (2008), 544–559.

¹⁰ Baxter and Jack.

answering the “how” and “why” of questions.¹¹ My research question is posed to answer how Internet features influence social mobilization and its’ impact on the relationship between the public and the authority in China. Using qualitative case analysis, I can observe the correlation between social mobilization and the function of the Internet in China.

There have several options in what to focus on in the qualitative case study, it could be an analysis of an individual, program, process, or differences between organization...etc.¹² I will focus on analyzing the process of public power mobilization through an Internet medium to answer the “how” my question. By observing the process, I will also observe the Internet’s special features used for the power mobilization, which will explain the “why.”

To minimize over-generalization and to find any different strategies or performance in different situations, I will implement multiple case studies in the qualitative case study. In the multiple studies, it is important to have a clear view of both the similarities and differences, fundamental reasons to explain the case collection. I selected three different cases for this thesis. All three cases show a confrontation composition between the public and the political bureaucrats’ or the government’s corruption. By analyzing the public-bureaucrats’ corruption composition, we can find the shift of the public’s power and position. The differences between the cases are the individuals’ positions; the first case shows that individuals mobilized the power from the beginning to the end. In the second case, an individual with high social status (public figure) motivated the public to mobilize power. The last case is related to how an individual, without any public recognition, revealed a bureaucrat’s corruption. The functions of the Internet that were used in each case were also different; the first case is oriented by Human Search Flesh Engine, which is similar to a witch hunt method, the second case is focused on using Microblogs in order to maximize the broadcasting effect, the last case shows how online journalism is used to mobilize public power.

Fig 1.1) the choice of the cases

Case	Common	Differences	
		Who started?	Major method
Case 1	Public vs. bureaucrats and government corruption	Individuals (group)	Human Flesh Search
Case 2		Individuals with high-social status	Microblog
Case 3		Individuals without high-social status	Online Journalism

¹¹ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (SAGE Publications, Incorporated, 2008), v.

¹² Baxter and Jack.

In order to analyze the process of power development, I will choose different types of observational techniques, such as discourse/text analysis, basic data analysis (which will be basically the number of participants) and some unsolicited document analysis.

A good deal of the Internet content and data which I tried to find were already censored or manipulated by the government administration. It could be a challenge to analyzing the pure relationship between social movements and the function of the Internet. Many censored materials could be significant in illustrating the role of Internet's function during the development of social mobilization. The dilemma of censorship during material collection was a big challenge, especially in the Microblog case analysis. Many materials which were collected to illustrate the power of mobilization were censored one or two years after.

However, I also found the phenomena of bypassing censorship by individuals on the Internet, so I collected data which can also explain how the public bypasses censorship with Internet functions. In addition, in order to maintain all the information of the case development, I collected a great deal of news data to fill in this gap.

Another challenge was the types of data. Instead of having direct interviews with individuals or actual experiments, I collected my data mostly through news content and the public's online activities. This data has a weak background in explaining the individual's motive and why individuals used certain functions in the process of social mobilization in China. However, my research focused on the relationship between social mobilization's development and the role of the Internet, so it doesn't affect my major findings.

From the perspective of the Internet's penetration, China still has a lower penetration rate than other developed countries. However, the Internet access rate in China has been rising at a greater rate than developed countries. Therefore, to discuss the relationship between the public and the authority based on the impact of the Internet should not be considered as over-generalized.

1.4 Outline

Chapter 2, "Theory," is an overview of the theories I apply for my case analysis. I choose "Collective Intelligence" theory to explain power mobilization in the process of social movements through an academic approach. In order to analyze the concept of power in the

process of online social mobilization, I built quantitative development and qualitative growth concept based on the type of power development. Furthermore, I introduce Habermasian public sphere to explain the Internet sphere with spatial conditions.

Chapter 3 is “Chinese Mainstream Media and Politics.” This chapter introduces Chinese media history. This chapter explains the relationship between the authority, media and the public and discusses each other’s impact. The change in political ideology greatly affected the function of the media and the public’s position in China. This chapter is the background to understand the relationship between the authority, the Internet, and the public.

Chapter 4 is “The Internet, the Internet in China.” This chapter is a general historical overview of the Internet in general and in China. In addition, there is a brief overview of contemporary Internet usage and the features of the Internet sphere in general and in China. This introduction is given in order to give a background on the Chinese Internet sphere.

Chapters 5 through 7 are case analyses. Chapter 5 “HFS and Mass Public Investigation” analyzes one of the popular online phenomena in China called “Human Flesh Search (HFS).” I analyze how individuals mobilize and practice HFS to raise influential power against corrupted political bureaucrats.

In Chapter 6, I explain the role of the Microblogging in China. The case looks at how an individual with high-social status utilized Microblogs to maximize a social movement. In this chapter, I analyze how Microblogs are advantageous in bypassing the authority’s censorship and broadcasting movements from the media platform perspective.

In chapter 7, I choose the online journalism phenomena in China. This case is about a corrupted, former deputy mayor’s fall through online journalism. By comparing with mainstream journalism, I will try to analyze how and why online journalism is advantageous in mobilizing social movements and building the influential power to put pressure on corrupted bureaucrats.

In the last chapter, I will summarize the major findings and answer the major research question.

2 Theory

In this chapter, I will explain the academic theory with which I will frame my case analysis. I will present collective intelligence theory by Pierre Levy. This theory will be utilized to explain how power can be formulated by masses and will be used as a major theoretical framework in this thesis. By borrowing this theory, I will discuss how the Chinese public could obtain power from the perspective of process analysis.

In the first segment of this chapter, I will briefly introduce about collective intelligence. Secondly, I will introduce about the theory of public sphere, and its' connection with collective intelligence. Thus the second segment will be applied to analyze *where* a power is mobilized, which in this research is the Internet sphere. Followed by second segment, I will further explain about Internet as the sphere of collective intelligence. At the last part, I will discuss about the limitation of collective intelligence and different opinions of Internet's social impact.

2.1 Collective Intelligence

Collective intelligence has similar but dissimilar definitions. It is defined by Heylighen as an ability of a group to solve more problems than its individual members in cybernetics.¹³ In the field of business study, Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams called collective as a mass collaboration. Combined with innovation theories and new business mechanism, conceptualized the ideology of the Wikinomics.

Pierre Levy,¹⁴ a French sociologist and philosopher theorized the behavior of mass collaboration from anthropological, epistemological and other aspects. He conceptualized collective intelligence as: "*A form of universally distributed intelligence, constantly enhanced, coordinated in real time, and resulting in the effective mobilization of skills.*"¹⁵ He stated "*resulting in the effective mobilization*" as a precondition of collective intelligence, this

¹³ F. Heylighen, 'Collective Intelligence and Its Implementation on the Web: Algorithms to Develop a Collective Mental Map', *Computational & Mathematical Organization Theory*, 5 (1999), 253–280.

¹⁴ Pierre Levy (1956-): a French sociologist and philosopher. He specializes the cultural and cognitive implications of digital technologies and human collective intelligence. He published *Cyberculture* in 2001.

¹⁵ Pierre Lévy, *Collective Intelligence: Mankind's Emerging World in Cyberspace* (Perseus Books, 1999).

means that not all mass collaboration refer to collective intelligence. For instance, Mackey¹⁶'s definition of mass collectivity describes delusional result such as economic bubbles or witch-hunts generated by spreading rumors. These outcomes are excluded in the scope of Levy's collective intelligence. In other words, it could be assumed that collective intelligence is different in the form of simple mass collaboration based on a quality of output from collective behavior.

So to speak, what Levy emphasized was that collective intelligence must not be confused with totalitarian projects involving the subordination of individuals to transcendent and fetishistic communities.¹⁷ This understanding can be considered as an additional definition of collective intelligence by describing the status of the individual actors. The equality of individuals is very important in collective intelligence. "Totalitarian project" means the involvement of external forces. The ideal process of mobilization is autonomous, and the purpose of mobilization should be recognized by the individual actors which mean that the collective behavior of an incognizant public, but resulting positive outcome cannot be counted as collective intelligence. The status of the actors is an essential criterion for Levy's collective intelligence. The actors in collective intelligence can be explained in Tarde's concept of public. Tarde conceptualized public and crowd-based intelligence on the status of the individuals in the collective. While both public and crowd are collective mobilizations, a public is formed by individuals gathered with a cognitive understanding of what they are trying to achieve and why. On the contrary, a crowd is mobilized by psychological contagion which stimulated by physical connection between individuals.¹⁸ Thus the actors of Levy's collective intelligence are the individuals who recognize the purpose of mobilization, which is same as the individuals who mobilize the public.

Carbonrally site well demonstrates the practice of above features in the collective intelligence. Jason Karas, a former entrepreneur launched a website www.carbonrally.com. This website offers individuals and groups variety missions (challenges) related to reduce CO₂ emission. Then the site analyzes reduced emission data from users and lists up the winners of the missions. It could be individual vs. individual's competition, group vs. group, and nation vs.

¹⁶ Charles Mackay (Mar 1812 to Dec 1889): A Scottish poet, journalist, author. Well known with his book <Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds>.

¹⁷ Lévy.

¹⁸ Gabriel Tarde, *여론과 군중*(Yu Ron Gwa Gun Jung: Original title in French is "L'Opinion et la foule") (지도리, Ji Do Ri, 2012).

nation too. Interesting part in the site is the operation part. Many of the missions are actually suggested from the users, the ideas for the mission submitted autonomously which based on their enthusiasm and interests to change environmental issues. In here important point is 1) they are gathered autonomously with the consciousness of environmental issues, 2) they suggests ideas to improve environmental issues autonomously. As we see above, individuals in Carbonrally mobilize collectivities and produce effective results. And all of the mobilization process is autonomous and no one is subordinated by the others. It is because the individual actors interact and participate in almost every part of operation. Everybody can give ideas, everybody can support the ideas, and everybody can participate in the activities, this mechanism makes the relationship of individuals to be more equal.

Now we understand the criteria of a subject and the condition of outcome which defines the scope of collective intelligence paradigm. However, if socially conscious individuals themselves don't produce desirable outcome, then how is collective intelligence coordinated and developed the influential impact or power? All of these valid definitions of collective intelligence are producing influential power via behavior of communication and interactivity. Based on the two different paths of power development, I call the first type of path as "**Quantitative Development**," and the second "**Qualitative Growth**." It is not like quantitative happens first and qualitative later, and none of the paths are more important than another. These two different methods can be happened at the same time, or not. But both types of methods concentrate the impact of collective intelligence; quantitative development refers to the expansion of a social group, which ultimately increases the power of influence. As Rousseau wrote in his book *Social Contract*, men only unite and direct existing power to overcome the resistance in the state of nature, and the sum of forces can arise only where several person come together.¹⁹ Thus the force of an individual is much weaker than the sum of forces. This fundamental survival rule is also applied to more complex environment. For example, theoretically democracy always contains the concept that individuals hold a dominant power. That is because individuals formulate the sum of forces within the process of interaction and participation (i.e. vote). Thus it is said that collective intelligence is not only uniting ideas, but it also uniting people and it constructs society.²⁰ The process of "idea to be a mission" in Carbonrally site well illustrate the influential power of quantitative development. Two of users "Sandra Dee" and "canyongrengal" in Carbonrally posted their

¹⁹ Jean Jacques Rousseau and G. D. H. Cole, *The Social Contract* (Cosimo, Inc., 2008).

²⁰ Lévy.

idea to reduce CO₂ emission “make yourself or kids waste-free lunch for 1 month.”²¹ Then, the idea got 33 positive votes, and it is chosen to publish to the public and became a mission. In the end, the idea could be implemented as a mission because of the supports from the public. The idea was more convincing with 33 additional people’s support and approval than 2 people’s idea only. This is why this idea was promoted to be a mission among over 3000 ideas which still remains as ideas.

Secondly, qualitative growth raises the quality of information (对象) in collective intelligence.

Levy described that through interactions with facts, we develop skills, understanding, and knowledge which are three complementary modes of cognitive transaction.²² In the context of this paper, “skills, understanding, and knowledge” can be read as “intelligence” which is transformed from information via interactive mechanism. Intelligence is constantly adding on to its’ influential power via further interaction by the socially conscious actors. Back to the example of Carbonrally site, after the idea of “make yourself or kids waste-free lunch for 1 month” is promoted to be implicated as a mission, it was lacking the standard with idea itself. Everybody knows that it is beneficial to reduce CO₂ emission by produce less garbage, but it is not suitable to be implemented as a mission. The idea itself couldn’t offer us how much we could reduce by exercise it, because there was no measurement and standard to compete. Then, Carbonrally scientific advisers analyzed that by above idea, 6ounces of packaging garbage from each lunch for 20 school days or work days and 44.6lbs CO₂ emissions can be reduced.²³ From this interaction between the idea provider and the scientific adviser, simple idea gained specific data, and this combination made idea to be more convincible to the public of the website. The quality (or worth) of idea is raised, and the idea obtained stronger influential power. The simple idea got some people’s supports which ultimately attracted more attention and participation, and the idea increased persuasive power and the quality by the interaction by different field of people.

Qualitative growth is not only practiced in cases, but also observed on the theory itself. For example, the study field of research and development (R&D) conceptualized the theory of “Open Innovation Paradigm”²⁴; it means that participative and interactive mechanism

²¹ <http://www.carbonrally.com/challenges/24-waste-free-lunch>

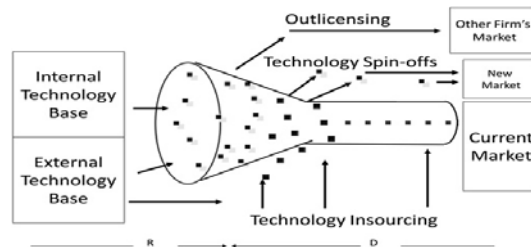
²² Lévy.

²³ <http://www.carbonrally.com/challenges/24-waste-free-lunch>

²⁴ Henry Chesbrough, Wim Vanhaverbeke and Joel West, *Open Innovation: Researching a New Paradigm: Researching a New Paradigm* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

between inflows and outflows could generate *additional worth* on the output in the part of worth creation or worth capture. In here additional worth could be referred as qualitative growth.

Fig. 2.1) an Open Innovation Paradigm



Source: <http://www.iriweb.org/> (Industrial Research Institute)

2.2 Collective Intelligence and Public Sphere

In above, I describe collective intelligence itself. The concept of public sphere is important to understand about collective intelligence from spatial perspective. By understanding public sphere, we can understand about environmental background to mobilize collective intelligence. The most popular concept of public sphere is perhaps from the German sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas. The “Habermasian public sphere” is “bourgeois public sphere.” He analyzed the end of 17th and 18th centuries of European public spheres, and conceptualized his understanding as below.

“The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor.”²⁵

First, the reason that he explained the scope of performers as “private people” is to exclude state authority; he used the word “public” to refer to the state that in the meantime had developed, under absolutism, into an entity having an objective existence over the person of the ruler.²⁶ In this sense, public and “state authority” are synonyms. In contrast, public also means “everybody” or “communal” in general. Habermas characterized this second definition of public as “private people.” But, as stated above, the condition of public in public sphere is limited to a bourgeois class; the reason for using social classes for membership is to keep

²⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (MIT Press, 1991).

²⁶ Habermas, P 11.

public sphere to be independent and autonomous from the state power. Thus, the concept of excluding state authority is a crucial condition in the Habermasian public sphere. As Habermas explains, political issues and public opinion in the 18th century were discussed and formed in coffee houses or debating places. Those debates and discussions could be developed rationally and influence public opinion in the political field. Based on the power of participants, actors had independent power in capitalism, economic freedom, and individualism.²⁷ If we refer to the power of state authority as “central power”, then power from capitalistic, economic, profits can be defined as “external power.” Bourgeois classes are classified among different levels of social members because of those external and indirect powers. Therefore, they obtained the capacity to decentralize state-concentrated power. As the concept of the decentralization of authoritarian hegemony is directly related to the idea of democracy, some even described the relationship between democratic regimes and the market economy as a “twins” relationship.²⁸

As the independence of coffee house and the individuals were needed to guarantee the quality of public opinion, independence from the authority is essential condition for collective intelligence too.²⁹ It is because independence decides the level of objectivity in collective intelligence. Not only that, independence is fundamental condition to mobilize the power also. According to Habermas, the public spheres in 17th and 18th century Europe were a means to keep check on governments by way of an informed and influential public opinion.³⁰ Without independence from the interferences of state power, space and individuals couldn't be counted as public spheres. Collective intelligence paradigm is in the same context as public sphere too. It is constantly coordinating its' influential impact or power by quantitative development and qualitative growth. Thus, guarantee of independence is directly related to collective intelligence's worth, because the worth in collective intelligence is realized by the influence of it. In sum, as independence in public sphere is essential background to practice the role of public opinion, collective intelligence also needs the independent space to mobilize its' worth.

Habermas stated that after a space became a qualified public sphere with guaranteed independence, it attempted to gather and systemize the ongoing discussions held by bourgeois

²⁷ Denis McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, Sixth Edition (Sage Publications Ltd, 2010).

²⁸ Mark P. Petracca and Mong Xiong, 'The Concept of Chinese Neo-Authoritarianism: An Exploration and Democratic Critique', *Asian Survey*, 30 (1990), 1099–1117.

²⁹ Lévy; Don Tapscott, *Macrowikinomics* (Penguin Group (Canada), 2010); James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2005).

³⁰ McQuail.

private people regardless of scale, topics and style. I call this tendency “Capacity of Organization” of a public sphere. And by organizing process, the idea becomes institutionalized and thereby stated as an objective claim.³¹ This institutionalized objective idea (public opinion) either realized or at least exercised a certain level of impact. In this sense, we can connect the collective intelligence paradigm as one of the development mechanisms of public spheres. The tendency of gathering and systemizing discussion in public sphere can also be explained as a collective intelligence method. Thus we can consider as “if the proper public sphere is formed, public opinion is developed, and one of the development methods is through a collective intelligence mechanism.”

The above was a concept of the ideal bourgeois public sphere which was conceptualized based on the phenomena from the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe. Then, how is the public sphere realized in contemporary society? A contemporary public sphere not only refers actual spaces such as coffee house or salon. Mass media is the key institution of the contemporary sphere, thus the quality of media decides the quality of the public sphere.³² Previous communication (discussion) like in coffee houses or salons is now termed as direct communication. After the mass media was involved, the communication mechanism changed to mediative communication.³³ Thus to evaluate the public sphere, it is not possible to avoid evaluating the media; the application of quality evaluation is the same as the Habermasian public sphere, the level of openness (transparency) of media, and the independence from the state power decide capacity of organization which ultimately influence the quality of public sphere itself and its outcome (public opinion).

Ironically, one of the criticisms which account the limitations in Habermasian public sphere theory is actually based on capitalism, which granted independency of public sphere in the 18th century in Europe. The issue is that the media, which is located between public and public opinion, tends to support the existing power structure, social order, and elite hegemony all over the world.³⁴ Thus the public sphere is now not only facing the challenges from the power of the state, but also the power of corporations (capitalism). The media itself is built on a commercial mechanism, Noam Chomsky examined commercial media in the United States

³¹ Habermas, p 36.

³² McQuail.

³³ Dong-Hoon Lee, ‘A Re-conceptualization Study on the Public Sphere of Online Personal Media and Social Media’, *Media and society*, 18 (2010), 110–145.

³⁴ Douglas M. McLeod and James K. Hertog, ‘The Manufacture of ‘Public Opinion’ by Reporters: Informal Cues for Public Perceptions of Protest Groups’, *Discourse & Society*, 3 (1992), 259–275.

and categorized five filters from the media structure which manufacture public opinion, three filters are built based on media corporations' profit purposes,³⁵ and two are based on political impact.³⁶ So media with corporative and political tendency, the public sphere and the public become more difficult to keep its' independence. The public sphere assumes advertising functions and is further deployed as a vehicle for political and economic propaganda the more it becomes unpolitical as a whole and pseudo-privatized.³⁷

The condition of "bourgeois" in the Habermasian public sphere is often criticized too. Fraser criticized the Habermasian public sphere from the perspective of structural feature; she stated that the bourgeois conception of public sphere restricted already existing democratic tendencies in early capitalist societies, it created hegemonic dominant sphere, and it also stratified society-oriented spheres. In her terms, public sphere should function to eliminate social inequality and develop multiple public spheres in both stratified and egalitarian societies if it wants to be the measure of democracy.³⁸ Young also agrees on the point that bourgeois public spheres are more like parochial enclaves with little ability to address issues across and between different social groups.³⁹ Thus the scale of a public sphere's appearance should not be limited, but extended. In other words, empowered people gathering public opinion via public sphere play the role of "watchdog" against the state power, but the boundary "powered people" exclude many other social levels and create deeper discrimination. Therefore many scholars find it's not ideal to link the elitism concept of Habermasian public sphere and democracy.

2.3 Collective Intelligence and Internet

Levy considered that Internet is ideal space to supply ourselves with the instruments for sharing our mental abilities in the construction of collective intellect or imagination with massive data resource and participative and interactive environment. Thus he attempted to apply collective intelligence to point the correct direction of information technology.

³⁵ Name of filters by corporational purpose: 1. Size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media, 2. The advertising license to do business, 3. Sourcing mass-media news

³⁶ Name of filters : 1. Flak and the enforcers, 2. Anticommunism as a control mechanism

³⁷ Habermas, P 175.

³⁸ Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', *Social Text*, 1990, 56–80.

³⁹ Tanni Haas, 'The Public Sphere as a Sphere of Publics: Rethinking Habermas's Theory of the Public Sphere', *Journal of Communication*, 54 (2004), 178–184.

Collective intelligence is everywhere in Internet; Wikipedia, Yahoo! Ask, online news and online journals, and previous example Carbonrally site etc.

Internet sphere has several advantages in different dimensions to promote collective intelligence. For instance, Internet sphere offers to users various channels to participate mass collaboration such as Blog, Micro-blog, BBS, SNS and Instant Message (IM). The speed of Internet increase the efficiency of the mobilization too, users are enable the simultaneous reception, alteration, redistribution of cultural objects which offers the environment to quickly mobilize collective intelligence.

Also, because of the Internet as a new media figure, it functions as the role of mass media too. Whereas the mass media is built via mediative communicational mechanism, Internet is built via both mediative and interpersonal (or direct) communicative mechanism, which promotes the pattern of interactive information traffic. Such pattern of the traffic ultimately creates consultative and conversational environment to individuals, everybody can be a receiver and a sender of information in Internet. In other words, such mechanism promotes the equality of participants which is the essential term of collective intelligence. The equality of participants is important to guarantee the autonomy and indecency of collective intelligence. Internet is not only promoting the equality of participants, but also equality of Information. Internet is more advantageous to access diversified inclination on same information, which offers collective intelligence to be more objective. Internet certainly appears to be an important resource when it comes to gaining knowledge in a couple of different but interrelated ways. For example Peter Dahlgren, by connecting a condition of civic culture and the feature of search engine technology, defines influence of Internet to young citizens. He explains that civic cultures are modeled as an integrated circuit with 5 parameters of mutual reciprocity, and one of them are “knowledge and competencies.” It means that higher accessibility of different information (opinion) on same fact can lead collective intelligence to be higher quality and worth.

From the territorial dimension, Internet is in the advantageous position too. Because Internet is possible to dislocate communicative action from the post of the nation, Levy mentioned that Internet is more advantageous to promote collective intelligence. As he said, intelligence is universally distributed, delocalization is needed. Thus he accounted that cyberspace would become the shifting space of interaction among knowledge and knowers in de-territorialized intelligent communities. He knows that Internet will not shatter territorial space, identities of

memberships and other boundaries which fix, separate, or blanket individual human qualities, but it can liberates them which provides everyone with the power to forge their own images.

Internet also has the features from the perspective of the different social level's coexist, object of communication (i.e. one to one, one to public, public to one, public to public). In the further chapter of case analysis, I will try to analyze how Internet sphere could promote and offers advantageous environment to mobilize and activate collective intelligence.

2.4 The Limitation of Collective Intelligence

Sometimes, collective intelligence is criticized from the different dimensions. Collective intelligence in online is criticized from the qualitative perspective. It means that the online collective intelligence and collaboration actually plays weak influence on the actual social and political field.⁴⁰ Whereas Levy's theory, some scholars argue that Internet sphere offers the opportunity to build national identities to the public who is imperfect membership in a dispersed nation (i.e. lost territory, large temporary overseas diasporas). I consider such phenomena are because members who use Internet are the people with territorial, cultural identities. So conversely, the members under several identities territorialize the non-territorialized medium. Levy considered that liberal environment of Internet sphere would influence human being, but it is passed over the possibility that the liberal but virtual environment could be influenced by the social characters of human beings. Therefore, as a result, Internet sphere promotes to build national or cultural boundaries rather than blur it.

I found out in the course of my research that collective intelligence requires difficult conditions. Collective intelligence in many different scholarships requires "diversity" and "independence" as essential condition to mobilize it. However, because of the censorship mechanism based on political and corporational purpose, a diversity and independence were difficult to be guaranteed in a traditional media field in general, Internet seems to be advantageous in its' diversity and independence duo to massive amount of data resource and user oriented environment. But what if all those diversity and independence are already filtered or manufactured by certain power? Hand and Sandywell accounted that government agencies and corporate bodies the so called elite hierarchies were quick to grasp that the control and policing of digital information systems represent a new form of political influence

⁴⁰ Ogura; Morozov.

and power in the modern world, the control is such as information production, shaping political communication. From this sense, it could be considered as Internet also has been maintained “controlled by elite” mechanism in certain level, which ultimately means that Internet can’t guarantee pure diversity and independence neither.

It seems that collective intelligence in online sometimes does not exercise influential power because of limited democratic activities, or the power is mobilized but not enough to be influential based on shallow interaction (discussion). Although it is said that Internet is maintaining the censorship mechanism of mass media, but it should not ignore the fact that Internet is the most individual oriented medium. Internet allows individuals to participate and interact with other people or information regardless the outcome (harmful or beneficial for society and democracy). From this point, Internet sphere sometimes promote the social problem, but the fact that Internet offers high capacity of power mobilization to individuals is not deniable. Therefore, this thesis does not state the negative impact of Internet. As dynamite could minimize the accident of mining field, and a weapon of mass destruction, Internet technology could promote democracy and provoke social problems based on the purpose of usage and other external circumstances (censorships, commercialization). As it is mentioned above, this thesis focuses on examining how Internet technology is utilized, and promote individuals to build collectivity via collective intelligence mechanism. And ultimately build their influential power, which raise their social level as “negotiable” against the authoritarian bureaucrats.

In sum, I have examined basic concept of collective intelligence and its’ connection with public sphere in this chapter. Collective intelligence is mobilized by conscious public and developed via interactive and participative behavior. The actors of collective intelligence constantly develop intelligence via collaboration. The collective intelligence develop its’ power with two different method; the first, I call “qualitative development.” It refers that the collective intelligence is constantly developing its power by recruiting more actors. The second method is “quantitative growth” which means the growth of information’s quality and persuading power. Public sphere explains the spatial condition rather than the conceptualized behavior. Habermas described that public spheres should be guaranteed their independence from state power. In the public sphere, these private people discuss political issues. Those process of discussion and the space where the space where the discussions take place should be separate from state power. The Habermasian bourgeois public sphere is often criticized

based on the equality of individuals to participate. But it is also often linked with democracy because of the concept of decentralizing authoritarian power. Internet as the most individual oriented medium, it has great potential to develop collective intelligence. Its diversity could stimulate collaborative activities and create resources which could recruit more cognized public by stimulating curiosity. However, it is also said that the Internet as, any other medium, can manipulate or manufacture resources and obstructs collective intelligence.

3 Chinese Mainstream Media and politics

This chapter will present a brief overview of Modern Chinese media history and its' relationship with social and political status in China. Here, I will attempt to reflect the shift of the media system and its' influence on society. This chapter will be a concrete bridge to discuss the Internet's influence on society as a media outlet. In addition, it will offer a background to isolating key features of the Internet by comparing it with characteristics of mainstream media.

The historical overview of media in China will begin from the 11th National party congress in December, 1978 – a point which is described as a turning point in political ideology and promotion.⁴¹ From 1978, Chinese politics and the media environment experienced diversified changes. From the historical overview of this period, we can understand the relationship shift and influence between the authority, the media, and the public.

3.1 From 1978 to Pre-Tiananmen movement

A wave of promoting political and economic reform in China from the late 1970s has had a great influence on contemporary society. To understand how and why such reforms were actively promoted by the Chinese Communist Party, it is important to understand the previous period - the Cultural Revolution. The political structure of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution (Cultural Revolution) tried to reach “Absolute ideological unification”. Chairman Mao Zedong's ambition to unify ideology and gain self-reliance was corresponded by large and well organized masses. The movement to empower Mao's proletarian ideology proceeded and the strong antagonism amongst the public towards capitalism rose quickly and massively. Harsh suppression against elite groups (such as intellectuals and bourgeois) illustrates the pattern of this ideology's absolute unification. During the Cultural Revolution, media played an important role as a “medium of propaganda.” And it was the **only** function of media, every social field had to participate to unify ideology and the media field was no exception. Almost all newspapers and radio channels ceased publication and Red-guard (Party) tabloids flourished.⁴² In order to maintain an absolute, unified ideology, the media was strictly

⁴¹ 박용수 Park Yong Soo, *중국의 언론과 사회변동*(Joong-Guk Ye Un Lon Gua Sa Hue Byun Dong) [*Chinese media and Change of society*] (나남, 2000), P.98

⁴² Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line* (University of Illinois Press, 1998), P.17.

controlled. All remaining media only talked about the Cultural Revolution. It rigidly followed the “Mass propaganda and persuasion model.”⁴³ After Mao’s death in 1976, the Chinese hierarchy went through a transition period.

The Third Plenum of the 11th Party Congress in December, 1978, is considered one of the major political and social turning points in Chinese Party history,⁴⁴ Deng Xiaoping’s political ideology was officially accepted by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in this congress, and the position of Deng’s line became more concrete. As a result, it stabilized the system of power monopoly that had sprung from the transition period after Mao’s death. Open and reform-oriented ideology seized the upper hand on the political scene. This movement did not result in a decline of CCP power, the Party system continued to be centralized and run by the CCP in a monopoly pattern. Deng recognized the need to make up for the economic and political development delays caused by the Cultural Revolution. His solution was to open the country to the world and regain the nation’s reputation. This can be described as a shift from Mao’s ideological extreme radicalism to a much more flexible and loose neo-authoritarianism with economic reforms.⁴⁵ Deng was more pluralistic from a propaganda point of view. He realized the revolutionary radicalization during Cultural Revolution, especially the practice of absolute unification, was wrong.

*“If a party, a country, a nation approaches everything dogmatically, applies rigid thought, and superstitious, as a result, its vitality will stop. The party and the state will collapse.”*⁴⁶

Above is Deng’s presentation of the relationship between the public and the Party. By decreasing the forcibility of the regime, this sets the public and the Party in a negotiable relationship from the communicational perspective. By highlighting mutuality between the public and the Party, Deng’s policies tried to escape from imposing ideology on society as a whole.⁴⁷

⁴³ Tsan-Kuo Chang, Chin-Hsien Chen and Guo-Qiang Zhang, ‘Rethinking the Mass Propaganda Model: Evidence from the Chinese Regional Press’, *International Communication Gazette*, 51 (1993), 173–195.

⁴⁴ 박용수 Park Yong Soo. P 98

⁴⁵ 박용수 Park Yong Soo.

⁴⁶ Original contents from Deng Xiaoping, 邓小平文选 (Ren min chu ban she, 1983); Hsi-Sheng Chi, *Politics of Disillusionment: The Chinese Communist Party Under Deng Xiaoping, 1978-1989* (M.E. Sharpe, 1991).

⁴⁷ 박용수 Park Yong Soo.

Implication of this ideology shifted to suppressing over political dissident groups to satisfy the majority instead of promoting mass-propaganda such as during the Mao period.⁴⁸

According to Siebert, the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structure within which it operates.⁴⁹ So, the press system reflects the social control where the relation of individuals and institutions are adjusted.⁵⁰ The 1978 policy shift significantly influenced the Chinese media sphere. The relationship shift between the Chinese authority and the public influenced the function of media and development. As the society structure became more negotiable for the public, the scale of toleration towards the media sphere also became wider. Different types of subject and themed newspapers were published. However, by the beginning of the 1980s, the Chinese media sphere was still far from Western, liberalistic media. The Chinese Party also developed an elaborate media network, ownership of party organs network was also extended by implementing planting party organs with multi-level or pyramid-framed infrastructure.⁵¹ For instance, the SPPA (State Press and Publications Administration) was directly controlled and supervised by the Party propaganda department - thus, basically all press media was under censorship of the CCP.⁵² Nevertheless, compared to the Party's previous history, **“pluralism”** and **“toleration”** were the keywords that described the character of Chinese media in the 80s. The themes of media reports were broadened to human interest stories, disaster news, and crime news.⁵³ The quantity of publications also rose; by 1988, there were 852 newspaper titles, compared with 42 titles in 1970.⁵⁴

Hu Yaobang and his successor Zhao Ziyang are key individuals in Chinese political, and media history. Hu was the leader of institutes, newspapers, and professional associations, as well as the Party General Secretary from 1982 to 1987.⁵⁵

“Party press should be a mouthpiece of Party, but also be mouthpiece of public..... When we look back the history of our Party, we can say that it's very easy (position

⁴⁸ 박용수 Park Yong Soo.

⁴⁹ Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do* (University of Illinois Press, 1963).

⁵⁰ Siebert, Peterson and Schramm.

⁵¹ Zhao.

⁵² Zhao.

⁵³ Zhao.

⁵⁴ Paul Siu-nam Lee, 'Mass Communication and National Development in China: Media Roles Reconsidered', *Journal of Communication*, 44 (1994), 22–37, P. 23. (Original source from: China State Statistics Bureau various year

⁵⁵ Merle Goldman, *From Comrade To Citizen: The Struggle For Political Rights In China* (Harvard University Press, 2005), P-5.

as media⁵⁶) if Central Party is at the correct track. However if Party is on the wrong track such as Cultural Revolution, then it's turning to complicated stage, in such situation, the role of media as party's mouthpiece and the role as the public's voice are completely different,.....then Party and the public should co-operate and overcome the difficulties.⁵⁷

Above is Hu's definition of the role of the media. The role of the media became being the "public's mouthpiece", which means that the media gained the role of watchdog against the Party leaders. In the 1980s, reports of political corruption and abuse of political power – such as the Party Cadre's gross abuse of power in Heilongjiang Province - began to be published by the central media newspaper People's Daily.⁵⁸ Resultantly, media became the interactive bridge between the public and the government rather than an info-sending channel to the public. So, Chinese media changed from "hegemonic communication" to a "petitionary communication" model.⁵⁹

Period \ element	Party	Media	Public
Mao's period (Hegemonic communication model)	Sender	Bridge to public	Receiver
Post Mao (80s) (Petitionary communication model)	Sender/Receiver	Bridge from/to public	Sender/Receiver

Fig.3.1) Media Info-flow between the Party and public

Following the newly liberalized environment of the media, journalists became more daring in publishing direct criticisms and revealing the corruption of the Party. In 1986, Shenzhen Youth News called on Deng Xiaoping to retire.⁶⁰ And the media started to more closely serve in the role of the public's mouthpiece. To maintain this role, the need for freedom of speech was raised.

⁵⁶ Added by the author

⁵⁷ Hu Yaobang, 'About party news media work(关于党的新闻工作)', *People's daily* (People's daily, 14 April. 1985 ; Original text (它最重要的意义来说,用一句话来概括,我想可以说党的新闻事业是党的喉舌,自然也是党所领导的人民政府的喉舌,同时也是人民自己的喉舌.....至于说到我们党和国家自身的曲折发展的历史道路,那就还要看到,如果中央路线正确,事情好办,而如果中央路线不正确,比如在“文化大革命”中,事情就复杂了,就不能简单地作为中央喉舌和反映人民呼声是完全一致的了.但这是一种很特殊的例外情况.而且即使在这种特殊情况下,问题的解决,归根到底仍然只能依靠党和人民的集体奋斗,而不可能靠别的什么.这一点,不是也已经被历史证明了吗?.

⁵⁸ Allison Liu Jernow, *Don't Force Us to Lie: The Struggle of Chinese Journalists in the Reform Era* (University of Maryland School of Law, 1994).

⁵⁹ 박용수 Park Yong Soo. P.89

⁶⁰ Jernow.

After Hu Yaobang, another reformist, Zhao Ziyang, was selected for the position of Party General Secretary in 1987. Zhao tried to drop off the centralized power of the Party and adjust it to public. His reform concept was well expressed by his speech at the 13th National Congress in 1987.

*“Reform and open policy offered public’s spirit to new liberation, old concepts which choked public for a long time now got serious damage... Finally, our economic development will reach to the same level as developed capitalistic countries, also we will create much strong democracy than those countries too... There are serious fault with the system of leadership organization..... This is caused by over-centralized authority...”*⁶¹

He described the old authoritarian regime and ideology as “choking, pressure (窒息).” As a reformist, he considered the public to be suffering from the old regime and saw that it needed to be changed. What should be highlighted here is that he criticized the problems of the Party leadership directly. Zhao realized the serious problems of the Party’s corruption and that this corruption was caused by a centralized, absolute power of the authority. It is very rare that one of the top Party member attempts to decentralize the political power structure. This significantly influenced the media sphere as the media paradigm began leaning further to the public. *“We should let the public know about important issues, let the public discuss those important issues. (重大情况让人民知道, 重大问题经人民讨论)”*⁶² This famous sentence from the 13th National Party Congress represented the major role of the media in the late 1980s. From 1987 to 1988, press control was relatively relaxed. The Party allowed media press to publish more aggressive reports and ushered significant openness and attention to sensitive issues, while invigorating theoretical discussion.⁶³ In the late 1980s, People’s Daily published some of the best investigative journalism. A report on the sinking of the Bohai oil rig resulted in the resignation of the Minister of Petroleum, and the deputy editor-in-chief wrote editorials which denounced Mao’s personality cult.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Zhao Zi Yang, ‘13th National party congress report (在中国共产党第十三次全国代表大会上的报告)’, *People’s daily*, 4. Nov 1987.(Original text: 改革和开放, 也使民族精神获得了新的解放。长期窒息人们思想的许多旧观念, 受到了很大冲击。积极变革, 勇于开拓, 讲求实效, 开始形成潮流。也就是说, 我们最终要在经济上赶上发达的资本主义国家, 在政治上创造比这些国家更高更切实的民主 但在具体的领导制度、组织形式和工作方式上, 存在着一些重大缺陷, 主要表现为权力过分集中.....)

⁶² Zhao Zi Yang.

⁶³ Zhao. P.36

⁶⁴ Jernow.

During this period, the public gained their power by “knowing” and “discussing” the information delivered by the media – the media’s major role being “let the public know.” The Chinese media press and the public requested a more independent public sphere and freedom of discussion. Finally, in 1988, the Journalism Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Science, Capital Journalism Society officially requested constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press.⁶⁵

Such a rapid transformation of the Chinese media paradigm in the 1980s was not simply because of the shift of political ideology. A national economic shift was also one of major triggers liberalistic waves in 80s. Development of the market economy and capitalism had a great influence on the press system. By promoting economic reform, market forces allowed a certain exercise of power to the Party,⁶⁶ which offered the public an opportunity to also exercise their influence on the administration process. It is difficult to say whether Deng planned such result, but a rivalry pattern between the Party and the public & media appeared in the 80s. Formation of class is very undesirable phenomenon to a centralized-power structure. The bourgeois in the Habermasian public sphere could exercise power against the authority by relying on their economic and intellectual power. The rise of economic class in China promoted the idea of the need for a middle class of independent entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, and technological and cultural elites capable of securing and maintaining the foundation for democratic governance to become the dominant forces of society at that time.⁶⁷

Finally, the strongly centralized Chinese authoritarian power started to lose control. As a result, the Tiananmen Democracy Movement broke out in 1989.

3.2 Tiananmen Democracy Movement

Though one of the biggest, the Tiananmen Movement was not the first democracy movement in 1980s. In December, 1986, university students gathered together and demonstrated for democracy and political freedom in several major cities in China. The movement was suppressed before it attracted the public’s attention due to a lack of systemization and a slogan that was too direct against the Party in calling for a democratization of the political

⁶⁵ Jernow.

⁶⁶ 박용수 Park Yong Soo.P92

⁶⁷ Mark P. Petracca and Mong Xiong, ‘The Concept of Chinese Neo-Authoritarianism: An Exploration and Democratic Critique’, *Asian Survey*, 30 (1990), 1099–1117 .

system. The then General Secretary Hu Yaobang was removed from his position because of this.⁶⁸ After this event, Hu became the symbol of a pre-democratic politician. Hu's sudden death on April 15th, 1989, caused massive reaction from journalists, intellectuals, and students, with conspiracy theories regarding his death also appearing. Therefore, many scholars consider Hu's death to be the direct trigger of Tiananmen movement's outbreak.⁶⁹ On April 19th, the Shanghai based editorial "The World Economic Herald (TWEC 世界经济导报)" organized a memorial event for Hu. As Hu was a symbol of democracy, the event turned into a campaign for promoting democratization. TWEC tried to publish the campaign, but it was rejected by the government. This direct conflict between the media organization and the Party captured the attention of students and intellectuals. Furthermore, journalists realized that they should not ignore this matter, so several journalists gathered at the Xinhua news agency building and marched down from Chang'an Avenue to Tiananmen Square; the number of participants reaching 200 who were from 30 different media organizations - hundreds of journalists yelling the slogans "<People's Daily> are for people," "We support <TWEC>."⁷⁰

Compared to the 1986 movement, the reason the Tiananmen movement obtained so a large influence was partly because the major media's staff and journalists turned their backs on the Party's, refusing to be the Party's mouthpiece. An official petition with the signatures of 1,031 journalists from 30 different press organizations (Beijing based only) was delivered to the government. They requested the reform of media law and freedom of reporting.⁷¹ It could be assumed that the press's active collaboration with the public promoted the movement to exercise a much greater impact than it would have had with only students and intellectuals.

In the beginning, the Party didn't take a harsh reaction; General Secretary Zhao Ziyang even blamed the reason for the movement on the administration not being open enough to public.⁷² Zhao's comment raised journalist's confidence to publish about the movement more openly. With this push, the participants of the movement reached more than one million by May 17th.

⁶⁸ David A. Kelly, 'The Chinese Student Movement of December 1986 and its Intellectual Antecedents', *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 1987, 127-142; Park Yong Soo P,110.

⁶⁹ Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Politics of China: Sixty Years of The People's Republic of China* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), P.434; Kenneth G. Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform* (Norton, 2004), P.140; Jernow, P.31; 박용수 Park Yong Soo.

⁷⁰ Jernow.P.34-35

⁷¹ 박용수 Park Yong Soo, P-115.

⁷² 'We Need to Calm down and Solve the Problem Radically, and Based on Democracy and Law.(Original subject:现在最需要冷静理智克制秩序在民主和法制轨道上解决问题), *People's daily* (Beijing, China, 5 May 1985), translation by the author.

Flags with “Xiao Ping! Resign from Party! Give the real power to public!” flourished.⁷³

Almost all Beijing newspapers printed an open letter which stated support for the students and was addressed to Central Committee of CCP on May 18th; it was signed by 14 news organizations which included People’s Daily, China Daily, CCTV, and Xinhua. Resultantly, the movement developed to the public level. Not only the media turned its’ back on the Party, some of the People's Liberation Army also joined the movement.



中國 士官생도 시위加勢 中國 인민해방군 사관생도들이 18일 학생들의 단식투쟁이 계속되고 있는 北京 天安門 광장의 민주화요구시위에 동참하고 있다. <北京新聞>

Fig 3.2: Some younger Chinese Army in Tiananmen democracy movement

Resource: Dong-A Daily headline of May.19th 1989 (picture from Beijing AP press)

On May 20th, the government announced official martial law and the whole situation changed. The Party hardliners immediately took over all control. Zhao Ziyang was expelled and Jiang Zemin took his position. With such a sudden and strong reaction from the Party, the Chinese media couldn’t dare to deliver the demonstration issue in the manner as before. Not only that, this was the recall to the people who had experienced times of extreme political repression. The movement was put down by military force on June 4th, 1989. This movement deeply alarmed the Party and established the recognition that they have to keep close eye on the media in the future. Thus, the Party immediately established a revised press and media law to nip in the bud ideas which went against the Party system.

3.3 After the Tiananmen Movement

⁷³ ‘China,urgent Conversation with Students (中國, 학생과 긴급 對話: Joong Guk, hak seing gua gin gep dae hua)’, *Dong-A daily* (Republic of Korea, 18 May 1985), p. 6.

After the suppression of the Tiananmen movement by military force, the Party realized the side-effect of autonomic, democratic policies - an intimidation to their authoritarian regime. Hardliners raised their power against reformers. Deng Xiaoping was essentially retired from substantial operation. The period from the suppression of the movement until 1992 can be called the “Media Depression period.” The media went through a large scale purge, the number of published newspapers declined from 1628 to 1459 in 1990. The Party took back all press cards, and issued new press card to journalists in November, 1990. The number of press card was reduced from 300thousand to 13thousand.⁷⁴ Freedom of speech was socially and politically forbidden to mention. The role of media became a “messenger of the government” only, and the Party tradition of positive propaganda media once again was responsible for providing the correct direction.⁷⁵ The end of media depression is difficult to define. Comparing current Chinese media with what it was in the 1980s, it could be considered that the media depression is still continuing. However, by Deng’s southern trip in 1992, the situation of the Chinese media had greatly changed. Deng’s trip, which put a focus on economic and market development, eventually changed the motto and the guideline of Chinese media. Market reforms after 1992 affected the media sphere but differently; it changed the function of media from a “Propaganda instrument” and “public’s mouthpiece” to an “industry,” from being “tools” to being “serving providers,” from leading the masses to serving the consumers.⁷⁶ The market economy campaign rapidly brought the commercialization boom media sphere.

After 1992, the pattern of media ownership also began to change and diversify. Ownership and Structure of media sources changed from directly state-owned to three alternatives; A) state owned, i.e. Xinhua News, CCTV, B) indirect ownership by collective and private businesses, quasi-government media, i.e. Chinese Industrial and Commercial News, Southern Weekly, C) publicly listed companies, fringe media. But, it is partly owned by the state in order to be controlled by the government, i.e. 21st Century Economic News, Cai Jing. Type A is a direct Party Organ and functions as the Party’s mouthpiece or propaganda, type B and C attempt to function as the “public’s voice” a little more than A. But, all types are owned by the CCP at different levels, which means that all press in China is directly controlled by government.

⁷⁴ 박용수 Park Yong Soo, P-115.

⁷⁵ Zhao, P-46.

⁷⁶ Zhao, P-50.

Different content themes began to reappear in the media. But as market economy became the major motivation of the media, media added entertainment reporting. This brought the media sphere financial independence, to a certain level. According to Park and other studies,⁷⁷ media's financial independency can grant the media sphere a certain power to act against the state's censorship, which can approach the liberalization of media. However, is not that simple to introduce such a pattern to the political and media spheres in China. Winfield and Peng argue that Chinese media model needs to be identified differently. The Chinese Communist Party just experienced the consequence of the media liberalization. So the Party separated clearly the financial power's impact from the political power. In other words, although the Chinese media gained certain independence through economic power, the Party developed advanced censorship controls by legalizing the censorship law under the name of "Inciting subversion" or "State secret." Thus it is said that in the 1990s, journalist could criticize specific points of economic reforms, but it was strictly forbidden to diametrically oppose the whole idea of economic reform.⁷⁸ Such standards of censorship are still maintained. The government puts pressure on media organizations through meetings with editors and news directors. By that, a direct and indirect guideline of censorship is set up. Those that do not confirm to these controls risk having their operations shut down or having certain editors and journalists removed.⁷⁹ Chinese news press is controlled by "censor before the publication" with self-censorship created through government pressure.

In 2009, the Chinese newspaper reader rate reached 63.9 %, ⁸⁰ the number of Chinese newspaper titles reached 1,928 and total 46.74 billion copies was sold in 2011. ⁸¹ In addition, China's cable TV subscribers exceeded 200million, a household penetration rate of 57%. ⁸² Thus, the Chinese government great invests attention to media control. To control a large scale media structure, the Chinese government built a systematic structure. The Party built

⁷⁷ Denis McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, Sixth Edition (Sage Publications Ltd, 2010); Siebert, Peterson and Schramm.

⁷⁸ Jernow, P-67 to 68.

⁷⁹ 'Mapping Digital Media: China | Open Society Foundations'

<www.opensocietyfoundations.org/reports/mapping-digital-media-china> [accessed 25 December 2012], P 71.

⁸⁰ 'Newspaper Readers Rate:我国成年人报纸阅读率为 63.9%、杂志阅读率为 50.1%--《新闻战线》2009 年 05 期' <<http://www.cnki.com.cn/Article/CJFDTotal-XWZX200905009.htm>> [accessed 29 December 2012].

⁸¹ 'Newspaper Circulation in China Still on the Rise'

<<http://www.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Asia/Story/A1Story20120710-358237.html>> [accessed 29 December 2012].

⁸² 'Mapping Digital Media', p 7.

more than 14 Central government ministries to involve in control of the media.⁸³; for example, General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) monitoring all print media, State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT) monitoring broadcast media, all of media monitoring organizations connected to Communist Party's Central Propaganda Department (CPD). CPD is the direct CCP organ and middle channel to delivering the Party's guidelines to all media mediums.⁸⁴

Although China was tied with Iran for the most jailed journalists in a single country, with at least 34 journalists imprisoned,⁸⁵ the Chinese media sphere is experiencing a big change with opened information and globalization. At the core of this change is the Internet. Digital waves have significantly changed Chinese traditional media; for instance, the Chinese government plans to begin slowly shutting down analog transmissions from 2015 and to discontinue them entirely in 2020.⁸⁶ Rapid growth of digitalization and the Internet's popularization provides Chinese citizens to opportunity to receive a variety of information. In the next chapter, I will introduce the history and function of the Internet.

In sum, I have given a historical overview of the media and the Party state's relationship in China. The shift of state policy significantly affected media and the public. Chinese media was mass propaganda and persuasion media model with the purpose of Mao's absolute unification policy during the Cultural Revolution. During 80s', Chinese media was more close to petitionary media communication model based on liberalistic and open policy. After 90s', based on the experience of Tiananmen pre-democracy movement, the media although became to be more pluralistic than Mao's period, but the government controls strictly the media content and develop the media sphere more to be market oriented.

The media is not only interacting with the authority, it also has a deep connection with the public as the bridge between the authority and the public. Authority, media, and the public are influenced by each other. When the authority attempted to instigate democratic and liberalistic policies, the media tended to side with the public - ultimately influencing the Tiananmen

⁸³ Michael Wines, Sharon Lafraniere and Jonathan Ansfield, 'China's Censors Tackle and Trip Over the Internet', *The New York Times*, 7 April 2010, section World / Asia Pacific <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/08/world/asia/08censor.html>> [accessed 18 November 2012].

⁸⁴ 'Media Censorship in China', *Council on Foreign Relations* <<http://www.cfr.org/china/media-censorship-china/p11515>> [accessed 18 November 2012].

⁸⁵ 'Iran, China Drive Prison Tally to 14-year High', *Committee to Protect Journalists*, 8 December 2010 <<http://www.cpj.org/reports/2010/12/cpj-journalist-prison-census-iran-china-highest-14-years.php>>.

⁸⁶ 'Mapping Digital Media'.

Democracy Movement. Therefore, it is important to understand the role of media and its' structure in order to understand the relationship of the authority and the public.

4 The Internet, the Internet in China

In this chapter, I will give a brief overview of the history of the Internet. I will first explain the general history and the Internet's contemporary status. Secondly, I will introduce the history and current circumstance of the Internet in China. This chapter will help readers to understand the subject of this thesis by giving an historical overview and examining the contemporary status of the Internet.

4.1 The History of the Internet

The Internet and digital technology are everywhere. However, the Internet was originally developed in the United States in the late 1960s, for military usage under a project named "ARPANET" (Advanced Research Program Agency Network). The ARPANET Project focused on developing a method to deliver information in the event of a nuclear attack. This is the origin of online post - or E-mail - services. By 1973, the word "Internet" was introduced for the first time by a project called "Internetting project" which focused on building networks. Thus, the paradigm of the Internet started to shift from "delivery" to a transparent form of "networking and communicate." From the 1980s, the Internet development institution changed to the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the United States. The NSF began to develop the Internet for academic purposes like research communication or database networks (sharing). Although commercialization and privatization of the Internet were promoted gradually from the early 80s, there weren't distinguishable changes, and the Internet market remained a nonprofit and non-commercial through the beginning of 80s.

After warming up to commercialization, from the late 1980s to 1990s, the Internet faced a critical turning point. The commercialization boom had arrived; the Internet quickly adapted a commercialization concept of development, and expanded its' market and technology rapidly. For instance, many major web sites were established in the 90s, such as search engine portal site Yahoo.com, online shopping and auction site Ebay.com, and online retail bookshop Amazon.com. Due to the exponential rate that the Internet was being commercialized at, the NSF turned the network over to private sector operators.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Janet Abbate, 'Government, Business, and the Making of the Internet', *Business History Review*, 75 (2001), 147-176.

Such a rapid commercialization boom can be explained by the United States' government's huge promotion of high-technology and the invention of Personal Computers in the late 1980s. Promoting Internet technology and online markets was one of the solutions for the US economic recession in the early 1990s. After stock markets crashed in 1987, GDP growth became slow and the unemployment rate was rising rapidly. Furthermore, the US's high tech sector was being threatened by the Japanese, particularly in the area of memory chips.⁸⁸ From the US government's point of view, commercializing Internet technology and services could develop a new type of industry (high tech industry), which held great potential to be an accelerator for economic growth. The Reagan and Bush administrations encouraged commercial outsourcing of government services to give a boost to the economy and private businesses.⁸⁹ In addition, some representatives of high technology industries began calling for a government co-ordinated 'technology policy,' which was a vague term for the use of government funds to provide things like tax incentives, research money, and antitrust waivers.⁹⁰ The US government was actively involved with the campaign for the industrialization of the Internet. State senator and Vice-president Al Gore's project named "Information Superhighway" in the 90s was one of the major campaigns from the government level promoting digital communication.

The fact that should be highlighted is the connection between the Internet and the economy. Although the excessive expansion of the Internet technology industry provoked a burst out of Dot-com bubble by the early 2000s, the Internet technology industry boom certainly had a positive effect on the stock-market and the US economy.⁹¹ A similar pattern of using the Internet as a market economy booster can also be observed in China. I will explain more in part 3.2 of this chapter.

The invention of the "WWW (World Wide Web)" in 1991 is another significant event in Internet history. The WWW was first introduced in 1991 by British computer scientist Tim Berners Lee.⁹² The WWW is also referred to as "The Web." The WWW is a system which

⁸⁸ Thomas Streeter, 'The Romantic Self and the Politics of Internet Commercialization', *Cultural Studies*, 17 (2003), 648–668.

⁸⁹ Abbate.

⁹⁰ Streeter.

⁹¹ 'The Dot-com Bubble | Stock Market Crash!' <<http://www.stock-market-crash.net/dot-com-bubble/>> [accessed 19 January 2013].

⁹² Tim Berners Lee (8th June. 1955- current): British computer scientist. He invented WWW also designed and programmed first web browser. Currently, he is the director of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the founder of the World Wide Web Foundation, a senior researcher and holder of the Founders Chair at the MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL).

allows users to update and receive content (texts, pictures, video etc.) via the Internet. Basically, anyone can upload data onto the web, and everyone can see it. Precisely, the Internet is a technology designed to connect people via a network (system), and the WWW is a technology to materialize and visualize the information to the public. Thus the conception of the WWW marked the starting point of the Internet as a “global linking” sphere.

Commercialization, popularization, and globalization made the Internet a valuable business domain. E-commerce and advertising became major forces of motivation for the further development of Internet technology. In 1996, Internet advertisement revenue estimated \$300million.⁹³ Comparing with mass media’s advertisement revenue, the Internet market has been growing much faster.

By the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century, the WWW had divided into two generations; “Web 1.0” and “Web 2.0.” The Web 1.0 was contents delivery (E-mail), information sharing or gathering by service providers (i.e. online news from portal website such as Yahoo) and virtual community (bulletin board, chatting service) environments. The latter was oriented by “*Collaboration*” and “*Human Network*” functions. The concept of Web 1.0 was based on information sourcing, but the concept of Web 2.0 was a participatory environment. Subsequently, UGC (User Generated Contents) and SNS (Social Networking Service) have become an integral part of the Internet with Web 2.0 boom. This made Internet Service Providers (ISPs) happy in that they could minimize input in creating content and increase marketing investment. There is no significant technology innovation between these two generations,⁹⁴ but Web 2.0 certainly realized a shift of the communication paradigm. By the Web 2.0 paradigm, the Internet started to become closely involved with the media field. The Internet, with the Web 2.0 oriented environment, received several names, such as “New Media” or “Alternative media.”

Fig 4.1) World’s 20 most influential websites in 2012

Rank	Website	Rank	Website
1	google.com (<i>Search engine, mail</i>)	11	taobao.com (<i>E-Commerce</i>)
2	facebook.com (<i>SNS</i>)	12	linkedin.com (<i>SNS</i>)
3	youtube.com (<i>UGC</i>)	13	blogspot.com (<i>SNS</i>)
4	yahoo.com (<i>Portal, mail</i>)	14	google.co.in (<i>Search engine, mail</i>)
5	baidu.com (<i>Search engine</i>)	15	Yahoo.co.jp (<i>Portal, mail</i>)

⁹³ Gorman and McLean, P 40.

⁹⁴ Tim Berners Lee claims that Web 2.0 cannot be marked as new generation of Internet history since it is no technological innovation rather than altered usage or purpose of WWW platform

6	Wikipedia.org (<i>UGC</i>)	16	sina.com.cn (<i>Portal, SNS</i>)
7	live.com (<i>Search engine, mail, IM</i>)	17	google.de (<i>Search engine, mail</i>)
8	qq.com (<i>Portal, mail, IM</i>)	18	yandex.ru (<i>Search engine</i>)
9	amazon.com (<i>E-commerce</i>)	19	msn.com (<i>Portal</i>)
10	twitter.com (<i>SNS</i>)	20	wordpress.com (<i>Open source blogging program</i>)

Source: <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/global> Accessed 27th nov.2012

Fig 4.1) “World’s top 20 sites” indicates how much the Internet environment is dominated by Web 2.0; among 20 sites, 8 sites⁹⁵ are 100% reliant on content posted by users and 6 sites⁹⁶ are partially reliant on content generated by users (most of the portal sites include Web 2.0 services such as blog, social network, Microblog).

By June 2012, Internet user reached 2.4 billion worldwide with a penetration rate of 34%.⁹⁷ This stable growth pattern is estimated to be maintained with the Smartphone boom. The popularization of Smartphone’s promotes the easy access of the Internet in great levels. The PC is no longer the single device with access to the Internet. By 2011, mobile cellular subscriptions reached around 6 billion people with 1.3 trillion USD in annual revenue,⁹⁸ which is almost 90% of the world’s population. Mobile phones now connect four times as many people as landline telephones. More importantly, mobile telephones also surpass landlines Internet devices by more than 3.5 billion users, and by 2016, it is estimated that more than 80% of broadband connections will be mobile. Also the estimated scale of growth is estimated to be 1million mobile connections being added every day by 2016.⁹⁹ For example, Facebook has more than 250 million people actively using Facebook through mobile devices, twice the activity of non-mobile users.¹⁰⁰ It could be also assumed that the trend of mobile devices as ICT (Information and Communication Technology) devices could bring a significant level of metamorphosis in the circulation of Internet contents; Internet users can access the Internet anytime and anywhere with mobile devices which is called the “on-the-go” trend.¹⁰¹ Overall, the promotion and popularization of mobile devices as Internet devices minimizes the boundaries of space and time at much more efficient level than the PC generation.

⁹⁵ Ranking No. 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

⁹⁶ Ranking No. 4, 7, 8, 15, 16, 19

⁹⁷ ‘World Internet Users Statistics Usage and World Population Stats’
<<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>> [accessed 25 December 2012].

⁹⁸ ‘The Global Information Technology Report 2012’, *The Global Information Technology Report 2012 | World Economic Forum* <<http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-information-technology-report-2012>> [accessed 8 December 2012].

⁹⁹ ‘The Global Information Technology Report 2012’

¹⁰⁰ ‘The Global Information Technology Report 2012’

¹⁰¹ ‘The Global Information Technology Report 2012’.

4.2 The History of the Internet in China

The Internet in China was introduced with E-mail service in 1987. After the WWW was introduced to the world in 1991, China launched their first website www.china-window.com.cn¹⁰² in 1994. Chinese Internet basically followed same steps as the US development course, with high commercialization. Same as the US government, the Chinese central government has actively encouraged agencies in the state bureaucracy, business schools, and private individuals to go online.¹⁰³ Informatization was one of the major policies in the Chinese open and reform policy (改革开放) in the 90s. Over 13 years, the Chinese government invested more than US \$ 680 billion in Internet infrastructure.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, foreign investment inflow appeared in the form of joint ventures with a Chinese state-owned media company. Within the government's promotion and the raised demand from the public by the open society policy, the Chinese Internet has been showing incredibly rapid growth. Right after the Internet's first commercialization, implemented in May 1995, the number of online users raised from 3000 to 40000 within 4 months, while the number of computers with Internet access rose from 400 to 6000.¹⁰⁵ Chinese Internet user reached 550 million with a penetration rate of 41.4 % in October 2012; this is more than 22% of the population of Internet users worldwide with a higher penetration rate than world average of 34.3%.¹⁰⁶

Smartphones have seen an even bigger boom in China than the West. In 2012, Internet users who access the web via mobile devices reached 388 million, which is greater than the 380 million users accessing the internet via PCs.¹⁰⁷ The number of active smartphones in China now exceeds the 321 million mobile phones active in the US. The Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology estimated that China's Internet population will reach 800 million users by 2015, and that Internet penetration is expected to be driven up by mobile Internet access as the country currently has over 1 billion (which is more than 15% of the

¹⁰² Zixue Tai, *The Internet in China: Cyberspace And Civil Society* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2006).

¹⁰³ Johan Lagerkvist, *The Internet in China: Unlocking and Containing the Public Sphere* (Department of East Asian Languages, Univ., 2006).

¹⁰⁴ 'China Seeks to Make the Internet Toe Party Line', *The Independent* <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/china-seeks-to-make-the-internet-toe-party-line-1322449.html>> [accessed 25 December 2012].

¹⁰⁵ 'China Seeks to Make the Internet Toe Party Line'.

¹⁰⁶ '29th Chinese Internet Development Survey 2012 中国互联网络发展状况统计报告-2012.jan' <<http://www.cnnic.cn/dtygg/dtgg/201201/W020120116337628870651.pdf>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

¹⁰⁷ '29th Chinese Internet Development Survey 2012 中国互联网络发展状况统计报告-2012.jan'.

world’s mobile users) mobile phone users.¹⁰⁸ China broke a new global record in Smartphone penetration after reaching 330 million smartphones by end of 2012, a 150% increase over the year before. It is estimated that China will have 500million Smartphones by end of 2013. This dramatic growth is estimated to be maintained and Chinese mobile users will soon exceed all mobile users in the US and Europe combined.¹⁰⁹

Fig 4.2) Chinese the biggest 10 websites in January 2013

Rank	Website	Site nationality	Rank	Website	Site nationality
1	Baidu.com (Search engine)	PRC	6	Weibo.com (SNS)	PRC
2	qq.com (portal)	PRC	7	163.net (Portal)	PRC
3	Tabao.com (e-commerce)	PRC	8	Tmall.com (E-commerce)	PRC
4	Sina.com.cn (portal)	PRC	9	Sohu.com (Portal)	PRC
5	Google.com.hk (search engine)	USA	10	Soso.com (Search engine)	PRC

Source: <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/CN> Accessed 25thJan.2013

Fig. 4.2) shows the most popular websites in China, it also reveals several features about Chinese Internet. There are two e-commerce sites in the top 10, Taobao.com and Tmall.com. Taobao.com in particular was ranked in the top three. The strong performance of E-commerce sites in China is due to the Chinese government’s attempts to increase the role of domestic consumption as a driver for GDP.¹¹⁰ This is the same pattern that the US followed. On Nov. 11th, 2012 alone, these two E-commerce sites registered total sales of US \$ 3.07 billion – it is more than 50% the revenue of total online sales in the USA on Cyber Monday (26th Nov, the day after Thanksgiving weekend).¹¹¹ Such patterns illustrate the potential of e-commerce markets and the scale of China’s domestic online consumption.

What should be highlighted in fig 4.2) is the sites’ nationality. 9 out of 10 sites are from the Chinese mainland. This indicates the degree to which the Chinese Internet is nationally concentrated and bound. Compared with other authoritarian countries such as Russia with 5

¹⁰⁸ ‘China’s Internet Population Expected to Surge to 800 Million Users by 2015’, *Marketwire* <<http://www.marketwire.com/press-release/chinas-internet-population-expected-to-surge-to-800-million-users-by-2015-nasdaq-bidu-1744770.htm>> [accessed 24 January 2013].

¹⁰⁹ ‘Smartphones: China’s Next Great Economic Indicator - Fortune Tech’ <<http://tech.fortune.cnn.com/2013/01/14/smartphones-chinas-next-great-economic-indicator/>> [accessed 24 January 2013].

¹¹⁰ ‘Smartphones’.

¹¹¹ ‘Online Advertising Expected to Exceed 100b yuan[Industries|chinadaily.com.cn’ <http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2013-01/10/content_16101983.htm> [accessed 24 January 2013].

global sites (American sites)¹¹² or Saudi Arabia with 9 sites from the US base out of 10,¹¹³ the Chinese Internet sphere shows a highly domestic condition. This illustrates the Chinese authority's strict control over the inflow of international content. The case of Google and the Chinese government's conflict regarding the level of openness and censorship is a good example to explain the specific pattern of Internet control in China. The Chinese Internet is relatively exclusive with localized and national information platforms. A.B. Kipnis explains that China's exclusive Internet environment is propelled by the growing rates of literacy in simplified Chinese characters, which allows those with access to the Internet to communicate easily with other Chinese-literate Internet users. The association of simplified Chinese characters with the PRC makes it much easier to construct a national commonality.¹¹⁴ Thus, the authority can utilize the Internet medium to build a solid national unification by creating a self-sufficient information sphere. In short, Chinese authority implements strict surveillance and censorship on ISPs in order to maintain the contents offered to the public.

The Chinese government is legally protected to control not only ISPs, but also end-users (public). According to the Internet security and management law,¹¹⁵ it is illegal to abuse the Internet to disturb national security; this is for the national, social collective's benefit. It is also mentioned by the law that it is illegal to incite subversion of state power and resistance.¹¹⁶ But, there is no mention of the exact definition and scope of state power or who exactly the law benefits. By setting vague conditions of the law, the government can enforce the law with greater adaptability. The Chinese authority often utilizes an Online-Propaganda strategy. The evidence was found that the Chinese central government sent instructions to Internet-propaganda administrators (网宣办值班人员¹¹⁷) on the provincial level that detailed

¹¹² 'Alexa - Top Sites in Russia' <<http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/RU>> [accessed 31 January 2013].

¹¹³ 'Alexa - Top Sites in Saudi Arabia' <<http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/SA>> [accessed 31 January 2013].

¹¹⁴ A. B. Kipnis, 'Constructing Commonality: Standardization and Modernization in Chinese Nation-Building', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 71 (2012), 731-755.

¹¹⁵ Full name is «The Administration Law of Computer Information Internet Security Protection». Translated to English by the author, original name in Chinese is “计算机信息网络国际联网安全保护管理办法”

¹¹⁶ 计算机信息网络国际联网安全保护管理办法 (公安部令第33号)

<<http://www.mps.gov.cn/n16/n1282/n3493/n3823/n442104/452202.html>> [accessed 10 April 2013].

¹¹⁷ '黑龙江信息港：“把矛头指向少数西方媒体” - 中国数字时代'

<<http://chinadigitaltimes.net/chinese/2008/04/%E9%BB%91%E9%BE%99%E6%B1%9F%E4%BF%A1%E6%81%AF%E6%B8%AF%EF%BC%9A%E6%8A%8A%E7%9F%9B%E5%A4%B4%E6%8C%87%E5%90%91%E5%B0%91%E6%95%B0%E8%A5%BF%E6%96%B9%E5%AA%92%E4%BD%93/>> [accessed 31 January 2013].

how to direct and lead online discussions to unify ideology during the Tibet-Free movement in North America and Europe before the Beijing Olympics.¹¹⁸

In sum, this chapter presented about the history and the feature of the Internet. Internet is relevantly popularized both in worldwide and China. As Internet high-technology industry influenced the US economy in great level in the 90s, the Chinese government raises GDP by promote E-commerce domestic consumption. This indicates the Internet's economic influence in the world. With the popularization of the smart phone as the Internet device and Web 2.0's dominance, the individuals can interact with each other to sharing information more quickly and ubiquitously. But unlike other authoritarian countries, Chinese government controls the inflow information strictly, highly domestic condition and nationally concentrated pattern of Chinese Internet sphere illustrated about it well, such environment make the authoritarian regime to raise national commonality without the interruptions. Not only censoring external information to the public, Chinese government also uses "leading" method to mobilize the discussion or public opinion the way the government wants. So to speak, Chinese Internet sphere also follows global trend such as Web 2.0 services, and E-commerce. However, the government operates diversified censorship method in order to maintain their political ideology.

¹¹⁸ 'Censorship Vault: Guiding Protests Then and Now - China Digital Times (CDT)' <<http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2012/09/censorship-vault-guiding-protests-then-and-now/>> [accessed 2 January 2013].

5 HFS and Mass Public Investigation

This chapter examines and analyzes how individuals develop influential power through mass investigation by the Internet. The case of politician Zhou Jiugeng explains how individual Internet users can come together to take action against corrupted bureaucrats. In this case, individuals came together online to investigate the background and activities of Zhou. In the end, the online project led to the dismissal of Zhou from his position, and later he was convicted of bribery.

By observing the chronological processes of organization, mobilization and collaboration in events, I will analyze how the Internet platform offers individuals the opportunity to realize their own justice and punishment against corruption. I will try to account as to whether the Internet can change the relationship between public and the authority in China.

5.1 What Is Human Flesh Search (HFS)?

The Chinese word “人肉搜索,” literally means “human flesh search (HFS).” HFS is when Internet users target certain persons and investigate the information related to the target. During the process of investigation, users utilize search engines, media applications, social networks and other information technology to hunt down individual suspects.¹¹⁹ The first HFS case appeared more than a decade now. One of the most significant HFS cases attracted the public’s eye in 2001; an Internet user posted a beautiful woman’s photo and stated that she was his girlfriend. Users were suspicious and investigated him and the girl in the picture. Soon, they found out that the girl was a model and that the Internet user was lying.¹²⁰ Within the last decade, HFS has become quite popular in China. According to research, approximately 84% Internet users know what HFS is.¹²¹ Moreover, it is increasingly possible to find Chinese websites which specialize in HFS, such as Maopu (猫扑)¹²² or Zhaoren (找人网): in English means “Finding person net”).¹²³

¹¹⁹ Johan Lagerkvist, *After the Internet, Before Democracy: Competing Norms in Chinese Media and Society* (Peter Lang, 2010).

¹²⁰ Dongxiao Liu, ‘Human Flesh Search Engine’ <<http://www.cprsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/drupal/Dongxiao%20Liu.pdf>> [accessed 26 February 2013].

¹²¹ Liu.

¹²² dzh.mop.com/renrou

¹²³ www.zhaoren.net

HFS sites are basically operated using a *consultative mechanism* such as Yahoo! Answers or Ask.com. Whereas users asking “can you teach me how to make ribbons?” in Yahoo! Answers, most of the requests or questions in HFS sites are human search requests such as “can you find this person and this information?” In addition to HFS specialized websites, HFS can be mobilized in any type of site which allows users to share information and interact with each other such as BBS, Blogs or Microblogs (Weibo).

In general, the formation of HFS targets is set via user’s discussion activity; more than 50% of HFS targets are selected in online forum.¹²⁴ In the targeting process, individuals hold discussions and build a common opinion that “this person should or shouldn’t be a target.” After a target is selected, recruitment and investigation quickly follow. In most cases, targets are corrupt government bureaucrats and individuals engaged in illegal or unethical activities.¹²⁵ During the process of investigation, participants collaborate together and search details related to the target. The investigation can happen both online and offline, but the Internet (online) is the platform used to gather all of the investigated information; gaining in impact by the discussion between information senders and receivers.

So, what is the purpose of HFS? Sometimes HFS’s ultimate goal is to expose the target’s private information as a punishment mechanism. However, sometimes HFS attempts to deliver opinions, change problems and realize a justice confirmed and standardized by collective individuals. Because of this, the outbreak of HFS is often motivated by political or moral events.

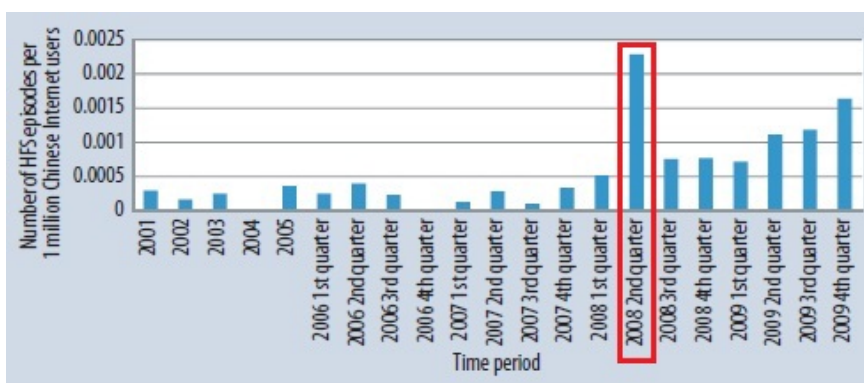


Fig. 5.1) Quarterly ratio for the number of HFS episodes over the number of Internet users in China¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Fei-Yue Wang and others, ‘A Study of the Human Flesh Search Engine: Crowd-powered Expansion of Online Knowledge’, *Computer*, 2010, 45–53.

¹²⁵ Wang and others.

¹²⁶ Wang and others.

Above fig.5.1) illustrates that the frequency of HFS's. Whereas the number of Internet users in China is rising in a stable pattern, the frequency of HFS episodes dramatically increased in the second quarter of 2008. The peak period of HFS in China was during the months surrounding the Beijing Olympics, an event that raised conflict and issues. It can be assumed that the increasing popularity of the Internet possible to affects the scale and the speed of HFS development, but the greatest promoter of HFS's is external events.

Because HFS is the investigation of personal information, it is often argued that it is illegal to invade personal privacy because it could ultimately produce a network that generates violence.¹²⁷ The example of the HFS conducted towards Grace Wang is an example of this. Grace Wang, a Chinese student at Duke University, tried to gather together pro-Tibet and pro-China groups in order to let them communicate about the upcoming Beijing Olympics in April 2008. According to Wang, she was on neither side of the argument; she was simply trying to mediate these two groups of protesters.¹²⁸ However, because of a picture that surfaced of Wang standing with pro-Tibetans and a Tibetan flag (fig.5.2: left), she became a target with the charge of betraying her motherland. Tibet is the one of the most sensitive issues in China; a single picture of Wang standing with a Tibetan flag generated a great level of aggressive attention from the public. Through HFS's, her private information (mobile, parents' house address...etc.) were posted online. As a result, people wrote abusive words on the wall of her parents' house (Fig.5.3: right) and called her and parents' mobiles to threaten them.



Fig. 5.2: left) Grace Wang with pro-Tibetans

Fig. 5.3: right) Grace Wang's parents' apartment with painting "Kill everyone in the home" and "Kill traitors"

¹²⁷ Liu; Guang Yang and Zechao Zhang, 'Analysis of the Privacy Issues of Human Flesh Search Engine', in *Computer and Communication Technologies in Agriculture Engineering (CCTAE), 2010 International Conference On*, 2010, I, 51–54 <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpls/abs_all.jsp?arnumber=5543708> [accessed 27 February 2013]; Yicheng Luo and Ting Wen, 'Human Flesh Search and Intrusion to Privacy', *Journal of China University of Geosciences-Social Sciences Edition*, 4 (2009) <http://en.cnki.com.cn/Article_en/CJFDTOTAL-DDXS200904015.htm> [accessed 27 February 2013].

¹²⁸ 'Caught in the Middle, Called a Traitor', *Washington Post* <http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2008-04-20/opinions/36775389_1_tibetan-language-chinese-flags-china-and-tibet> [accessed 26 February 2013].

Such events gave HFS's several nicknames with negative nuance; "digital witch hunt", "Internet mob" and "Chinese style Internet man hunt."¹²⁹ These names were defined from the perspective of the punishment. The example of Grace Wang illustrates how HFS can seriously violate privacy and rights based on searchers' different motivations and purposes. However, HFS also attempts to change social problems and realize justice based on the public's standard. This kind of motivation is often observed in the HFS's of corrupted government bureaucrats or mistakes made by government institutes. In October 2007, the Forestry Bureau of Shanxi Province, China announced that a previously presumed to be extinct tiger had been found by a farmer, and published a picture of the tiger, taken by the farmer. Internet users were suspicious about the picture. These users, especially the users with professional backgrounds in photography, collaborated together to analyze and investigated the picture for 8 month. As a result, these users, with the help of other individuals, proved that the picture was a fake.

The Public who participated in the above HFS placed value in "revealing the truth" and correcting the inefficient bureau. As a result, the public brought justice by revealing the truth and the original news story was corrected. In the context of this project, HFS can also be referred to a "people-powered search" and a "human power search engine."¹³⁰

Although many scholars affiliated with the field of Chinese Internet and politics have researched HFS, few studies have analyzed in-depth the process of HFS from the perspective of collective intelligence. I picked the HFS case of Zhou Jiugeng in particular because the majority of development stage occurred online. For instance, the suspicion of corruption, investigation of the corruption, the mobilization of public opinion, and the promotion and development of public opinion...all happened online and was initiated by the public. All of those processes proceeded via collective intelligence mechanism. I will attempt to discover the role of the Internet in collective intelligence and power mobilization process by in-depth analysis of the event. Based on the result of the analysis, I will also try to account if Internet has influenced the relationship between the public and the bureaucratic elites.

5.2 Zhou Jiugeng and His Corruption Scandal

¹²⁹ Wang and others; Liu.

¹³⁰ Wang and others; Liu.

Zhou Jiugeng (周久耕) is a former director of the Real Estate Management Bureau in Jiangning (江宁) District, the provincial capital of Nanjing (南京). In 1992, when he was 32, he became an Associate-Director of the Administration Committee of the Jiangning Economy and Technology Development Zone (江宁经济技术开发区管委会) and was later promoted to director. From director of development zone, he stepped into higher position as the director of the Jiangning District Civil Affairs Bureau in 2002. Until his new policy of property market was published in December 2008, he was not in the public eye. After the new policy was published, the online public disagreed with the new policy. Furthermore, they started to suspect Zhou as a corrupt official, as the policy attempted to protect the profit of developers and sellers. Internet users collaborated and found evidence of his exclusive life style (expensive cigarette, watches, and cars) through online investigation. On December 29th, 2008, two weeks from the time that the first evidence was exposed online, Zhou was dismissed from his position for “speaking to the media without authorization about the city's property market.”¹³¹

After he was dismissed, official prosecutors investigated his case. According to the report from the Lishui County (溧水县) Prosecutor’s office, Zhou received 25 bribes between 2003 to 2008, the total of which over 186, 000 USD.¹³² As a result, he was convicted of taking bribes and sentenced to 11 years in prison on October 10th, 2009. In the further part, I will divide the event into several stages by milestone. I will attempt to outline the strategy of collective intelligence in different stages.

5.2.1 First publication of the policy and online public reaction

On December 10th, 2008, Zhou published a new city’s property market policy. He stated that the bureau would investigate property trades made under prime cost, and make it illegal. The next day, several media institutions published news about the new policy. Nanjing Weekend (南京周末) published the interview with Zhou, and titled the article as “very optimistic (很乐

¹³¹ By Malcolm Moore in Shanghai, ‘Chinese Internet Vigilantes Bring down Another Official’, *Telegraph.co.uk*, 30 December 2008, section worldnews
<<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/4026624/Chinese-internet-vigilantes-bring-down-another-official.html>> [accessed 27 April 2012].

¹³² ‘Online anti-corruption: Zhou Jiugeng case before and after.’ English title is translated by the author, original as: ‘网络反腐：盘点周久耕案前前后后(组图)-搜狐新闻’
<<http://news.sohu.com/20091202/n268622760.shtml>> [accessed 15 March 2013].

观)” which was the term used by Zhou during the interview.¹³³ The article from Nanjing Weekend (南京周末) only contained the interview with Zhou, therefore the content was optimistic about the new policy and lacked criticism. In the central official news, for example Xinhua net (新华网)¹³⁴ also published the news about this new policy. The content of the article contained four actors who were related to the policy, as listed below (fig.3).¹³⁵

PART	Standpoint	Number of Chinese characters
Zhou Jiugeng	Positive	1627
Real estate developer and specialists in real estate world	Positive and negative	577
Real estate buyer (public)	Negative	120
Lawyer	Neural but state the policy is legal	415

Fig.5.4) the proportion of each part

Zhou’s opinion on the new policy was the major focus of the news content. He explained how and why the policy was beneficial to the real estate market and public by implementing rules such as “trading under cost price is unfair competition according to price law.”¹³⁶ No negativity or hesitations about the new policy are mentioned by him. Some real estate developers and specialists supported the policy, for example “under cost price trading disturbs the real estate market, it is necessary to implement the policy”¹³⁷ while opponents said “low price trading helps businesses by circulating capital.”¹³⁸ Buyer (public) opinion, held the smallest proportion in the news, it is mentioned that “Why do developers always make huge profits? It doesn’t make sense.”¹³⁹ Lawyers stated that the policy was legal. In other words, initial media cover of the policy was positive and supported that the policy was legal. Although public opinion is mentioned, it only occurred in 5% of news related to the policy. The above news was published under the section of “real estate.”

¹³³ ‘Director of Jiangning District Real estate bureau, Zhou Jiugeng: Next year’s property market of Juangning is very optimistic.’ English title is translated by the author, original as: ‘江宁区房管局局长周久耕：明年江宁楼市很乐观_新浪房产_新浪网’ <<http://nj.house.sina.com.cn/3/2008-12-11/2449.html>> [accessed 1 March 2013].

¹³⁴ Xinhua net (www.xinhuanet.com) is online version of Xinhua news. It is the People's Republic of China's official news agency which belongs direct to central government.

¹³⁵ ‘南京将查处低于成本价卖房的开发商引发争议_房产频道_新华网’ <http://news.xinhuanet.com/house/2008-12/11/content_10487004.htm> [accessed 1 March 2013].

¹³⁶ Translated by the author, original as: 按照价格法规定，低于成本价销售，就属于不正当竞争

¹³⁷ Translated by the author, original as: 有些楼盘亏本卖房子就是扰乱市场秩序的行为，很有必要进行查处

¹³⁸ Translated by the author, original as: 如果通过低价销售，开发商的资金盘活了

¹³⁹ Translated by the author, original as: 凭什么开发商就能永远保持暴利呢？这是非常不合情理的行为

The online public reacted to the new policy differently. Xinhua net published the news at 8:45AM, December 11th. Internet users posted news and exchanged their opinions on BBS forum sites almost right after the news was published. In this process, a variety of types of posts appeared; some directly forwarded the official news with the purpose to spread the news, some posted their own opinion regarding the policy to express their own thoughts. For example, at 9:00AM, one of the users on Tianya BBS (天涯) copied the official news content from Xinhua net, but titled with their own emotion: “Strange, strange, strange!!!.....The bureaucrat says it is to be responsible for the public.”¹⁴⁰ At the end of the post, the user wrote “Is this director of real estate bureau corrupted or not? Please answer.”¹⁴¹ The public started to not only question why Zhou made such a policy, but also started to focus on Zhou himself. As curiosity grew, people turned their focus onto Zhou rather than the policy. Online posts stimulated to raise another angle of curiosity from the public. The target of criticism became the “bureaucrat (官员)” and Zhou’s corruption.

The online comments were mostly pessimistic towards Zhou and the new policy, with angry emotions because of the real estate bubbles in China.¹⁴² The comments toward Zhou had several different focuses. For example, **A) focused on director Zhou**; such as “What kind of mental disease does he have?”¹⁴³ “Zhou, fuck you,”¹⁴⁴ or “The crappy officer,”¹⁴⁵ **B) focused on the bureaucrats and party system**; such as “cureless corrupted power,”¹⁴⁶ “the government and the developer are in the same group,”¹⁴⁷ “We don’t die without buy house for 3 years, let’s see how the government (ZF) will cheat the public,”¹⁴⁸ “have no choice, they will not help the public, because they are not elected (voted) by us. The public are garbage to

¹⁴⁰ ‘怪怪怪！！南京江宁查处低价房 官员称是对老百姓负责(转载)_房产观澜_天涯论坛’

<<http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-house-128901-1.shtml>> [accessed 2 March 2013].

¹⁴¹ Translated by the author, original as: 这个房产局局长是不是贪官？请回答

¹⁴² ‘Greatest Real Estate Bubble In Modern History Not Done Bursting - Forbes’, *Forbes*

<<http://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2012/10/03/greatest-real-estate-bubble-in-modern-history-has-yet-to-really-burst/>> [accessed 22 March 2013].

‘Greatest Real Estate Bubble In Modern History Not Done Bursting - Forbes’, *Forbes*

<<http://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2012/10/03/greatest-real-estate-bubble-in-modern-history-has-yet-to-really-burst/>> [accessed 22 March 2013].

¹⁴³ Translated by the author, original as: 什么样的精神病

¹⁴⁴ Translated by the author, original as: 性周的，我操你妈

¹⁴⁵ Translated by the author, original as: 狗官

¹⁴⁶ Translated by the author, original as: 不可制约的腐败权

¹⁴⁷ Translated by the author, original as: 开发商和政府是同一个利益集团

¹⁴⁸ Translated by the author, original as: 三年不买房又不会死人，看看 ZF 能怎样欺骗老百姓

most bureaucrats,”¹⁴⁹ and “The public doesn’t recognize their country if country doesn’t. The public turns over their country if the country kills the public.”¹⁵⁰ **C) focused on the analysis of the policy itself**; such as “Developers will be bankrupt if nobody buys houses...people still buy houses which proves that keep the higher cost is accurate, it is market economy,”¹⁵¹ “According to the law...it is legal to trade with a lower cost price...actually, sellers have a right to trade houses with lower costs by the law.”¹⁵²

As above, we can observe different attitudes (or angles) of comments from a single post. The coexistence of different perspective offers an advanced sphere to promote qualitative growth. In a single post, the individuals’ reactions and focuses were different. The Internet delivers a medium for these different perspectives to be presented to individuals at the same time in an equal forum. As stated by Dahlgren, the Internet offers actors the accessibility of diversified inclination on the same information.¹⁵³ Those different viewpoints on the information interact and stimulate individuals to develop further curiosity.

Another post in the economy section of BBS shows a similar pattern. The user forwarded mass media news content, but renamed the titles of the articles. The title that the user gave to an article about Zhou was “I finally understand why Chinese houses are so expensive after hearing what Zhou said.”¹⁵⁴ At the end of the post, the user added his personal opinion.

From the beginning of the online discussion in the BBS sphere, there was an apparent A (Public) vs. B (The bureaucrats, authority) composition with clear collective solidarity pattern. This collective solidarity promoted the event to further action (HFS) than simple discussion. The collective solidarity became more solid when the evidence of Zhou’s luxurious lifestyle was discovered via HFS. In this case, we can clearly observe internal solidarity (recognition

¹⁴⁹ Translated by the author, original as: 没办法,因为不是老百姓选举的,当然不会帮老百姓,对大部分政府官员来说,老百姓就是垃圾

¹⁵⁰ Translated by the author, original as: 国不知有其民,民就不知有其国,国要杀其民,民就要反其国

¹⁵¹ Translated by the author, original as: 不降价如果没有人买,开发商还不得同样倒闭...市场经济吗

¹⁵² Translated by the author, original as: 在依法降价处理...经营者的合法权利...其实法律规定开发商是有降价处理房子的权利

¹⁵³ Dahlgren and Olsson.

¹⁵⁴ ‘恍然大悟: 看了江宁区房产局局长周久耕的话, 我终于知道中国高房价是怎么来_经济论坛_天涯论坛’ <<http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-develop-211215-1.shtml>> [accessed 2 March 2013].

of actors as members within the group=A) and external solidarity (recognition that actors as not belonging in the group=B).¹⁵⁵ Such as,

- “*The Communist Party* (共产党) really can train the genius, *the public* (老百姓) only can afford cheaper houses.”¹⁵⁶
- “Now, how many good people among those *who are bureaucrats* (当官的)?”¹⁵⁷
- “*All bureaucrats* (官都) like to wear good watches.”¹⁵⁸
- “*Being a bureaucrat* (做官) is so good. Nice cigarettes and watches.”¹⁵⁹
- “I dare that there is *no good bureaucrat* (没有一个好人当官的).”¹⁶⁰
- “Do not piss *the common people* (老百姓) off.”¹⁶¹
- “*All of the Communist xxx* (共xx) *officers* are disgusting.”¹⁶²
- “Why do salaries never raise, but *the factory managers* (厂长) get 250,000 RMB raise? ... *Workers* (工人) are always following *the leaders* (领导)...”¹⁶³

¹⁵⁵ David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi, *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (Wiley, 2004).

¹⁵⁶ Translated to English by the author, original comment in Chinese is “共产党真能出人才,房价低了老百姓能买得起房。”‘[原创]房产局长周久耕的表戴得真好 【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区’
<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?boardid=1&id=2596310&page=3&uid=&usernames=&userids=&action>>
[accessed 21 March 2013].

¹⁵⁷ Translated to English by the author, original comment in Chinese is “现在当官有几个是好人。”‘[灌水]周久耕局长抽名烟、戴名表 (图) 【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区’
<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?page=1&boardid=1&id=2595930>> [accessed 4 March 2013].

¹⁵⁸ Translated to English by the author, original comment in Chinese is “官都喜欢戴好表的。”‘[灌水]周久耕局长抽名烟、戴名表 (图) 【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区’
<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?boardid=1&id=2595930&page=2&uid=&usernames=&userids=&action>>
[accessed 21 March 2013].

¹⁵⁹ Translated to English by the author, original comment in Chinese is “做官真好,名烟名表。”‘[灌水]周久耕局长抽名烟、戴名表 (图) 【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区’
<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?boardid=1&id=2595930&page=6&uid=&usernames=&userids=&action>>
[accessed 21 March 2013].

¹⁶⁰ Translated to English by the author, original comment in Chinese is “我敢说没有一个好人 当官的。”
<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?boardid=1&id=2595930&page=6&uid=&usernames=&userids=&action>>
[accessed 21 March 2013].

¹⁶¹ Translated to English by the author, original comment in Chinese is “你不要惹怒老百姓。”‘[灌水]周久耕局长抽名烟、戴名表 (图) 【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区’
<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?boardid=1&id=2595930&page=11&uid=&usernames=&userids=&action>>
[accessed 21 March 2013].

¹⁶² ‘[灌水]周久耕局长抽名烟、戴名表 (图) 【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区’
<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?boardid=1&id=2595930&page=15&uid=&usernames=&userids=&action>>
[accessed 21 March 2013].

- “When *the officials* (官家) have meeting, they are covered by luxury things. One cigarette costs the same as 2 months income of the *farmer* (农工).”¹⁶⁴

All of the above comments illustrate the identification of solidarity. Internal solidarity is a common identification among individuals such as “public, common people, workers, and farmer workers.” In contrast, external solidarity is described as “The Communist Party, bureaucrats, factory managers, leaders...etc.” Based on their collective solidarity, they recognized external members among the online users; those who commented about their support for the government and Zhou were external members, thus termed the “50 Cent Party.”¹⁶⁵ For instance, “Did *50 Cent Party* (五毛) come?”¹⁶⁶ “What a quick reaction, is it private *50 Cent party* (5毛)? Or is the attention from the government?”¹⁶⁷

From the perspective of social movements, the above process of discussion was the movement’s (HFS) start point. Mass media offered a source for the public to either accept or reject. There is a consistent tendency in authoritarian countries of using public communication media as tacit support in the task of maintaining order. In the case of Zhou, the mass media upheld a typical authoritarian pattern by covering the policy positively. However, in this case, such a pattern was not observed in the Internet discussion sphere, it was more pluralistic. The Internet sphere offered a platform for the public to form a mass public opinion and further a movement. Although the government framed perspective was delivered to the public via mass media, the public rejected this perspective and mobilized a collective viewpoint through autonomous discussion. Furthermore, Internet could reflect the public opinion to the rest of people simultaneously.

¹⁶³ ‘[灌水]周久耕局长强调：切实加强党风廉政建设（图）【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区’
<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?id=2596911&boardid=1>> [accessed 4 March 2013].

¹⁶⁴ Translated to English by the author, original comment in Chinese is “官家开会时，满身名牌装。岂知一条烟，农工两月饷”
<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?boardid=1&id=2595930&page=49&uid=&usernames=&userids=&action=>>> [accessed 21 March 2013].

¹⁶⁵ The commentators who hired by the Chinese government, 50 Cent Party comments positive about the Chinese government and party to shape positive image and public opinion on the government. Because it is said that the government pays them 50 Cent RMB per comments, they are called as “50 Cent Party.”

¹⁶⁶ ‘[灌水]周久耕局长抽名烟、戴名表（图）【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区’
<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?boardid=1&id=2595930&page=6&uid=&usernames=&userids=&action=>>> [accessed 22 March 2013].

¹⁶⁷ ‘[灌水]周久耕局长强调：切实加强党风廉政建设（图）【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区’.

The posts regarding Zhou and policy were largely originally discussed under the BBS sections of economy and real estate. However, from late in the afternoon of the 11th, topical posts started to spread into several different BBS sections. Unlike official media or other portal news sites, the Zhou issue started to draw attention from “Focused people (猫眼看人)” in other BBS sites such as Kaidi (凯迪, kdnet.net).¹⁶⁸ This illustrates the advanced expandability of the Internet sphere. The actors noticed that if the policy was only posted on the real estate section, discussion would remain focused on real estate policy and not Zhou. Thus the actors posted about Zhou and the policy under the category of “focused people” where the public discuss hot issue people. Consequently, public opinion and curiosity became focused on Zhou in far greater levels. In the Habermasian public sphere, after public opinion and focus is settled, it attempts to gathers and systemize the ongoing discussion.¹⁶⁹ Such a pattern was observed in the case of Zhou. After public opinion was turned to focus on Zhou, users continued to post about the issue under suitable categories of BBS and attempted to promote curiosity. In the BBS forum, related news and discussion took place under several categories. Discussion began under the category of the real estate, but as the discussion started focused on Zhou, the contents appeared under the category of “Focused people.” This kind of “Post(脱)” or “multi” category tendency on the Internet offers an easier environment to build quantitative development and qualitative growth via Interaction between individuals with different focuses.

On the same day that the HFS movement was officially set up by the post from Kaidi BBS; the user posted the article “Dear post heroes, let’s investigate the director of Jiangning district real estate bureau, Zhou Jiugeng.”¹⁷⁰ The target of HFS was set up on the same day that information was released to the public.

¹⁶⁸ ‘[转贴]房价直降 3000 元“有罪”？ 南京某楼盘将被查 【猫眼看人】 -凯迪社区’

<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?page=1&boardid=1&id=2591794>> [accessed 2 March 2013]; ‘[转贴]南京房产局长呼吁百姓理解 【猫眼看人】 -凯迪社区’

<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?page=1&boardid=1&id=2591244>> [accessed 2 March 2013].

¹⁶⁹ Jürgen Habermas.

¹⁷⁰ Original post is deleted, the source is from: ‘房管局长的工资有多少？能抽名烟戴名手表_全国政策_大成网_腾讯网’ <<http://cd.qq.com/a/20081217/000272.htm>> [accessed 2 March 2013]; ‘周久耕事件戏剧性发展的偶然与必然 - 半岛网新闻’

<http://news.bandao.cn/news_html/200812/20081225/news_20081225_765693.shtml> [accessed 2 March 2013].

5.2.2 HFS investigation

After three days of official HFS was announced, user name “Huage (华阁)” in Tianya BBS posted the below (Fig.5.5: left) pictures at 2:00AM under category of economy. The post title was “Click to support if you want to punish that “prime cost” director. Look what he smoking.”¹⁷¹



Fig.5.5: left) Zhou Jiugeng with exclusive cigarette Fig.5.6: right) the detailed picture of the cigarette

The user posted the picture of Zhou with exclusive cigarettes and commented on the picture “What is this cigarette? It is an exclusive cigarette.....It costs 1500RMB (241\$) per carton! (fig.5.5: left: blue texts)” The post got huge attention from the public, because it was conspicuous consumption, the public rushed to check and criticized about this morally unacceptable consumption habit. This post reached almost 50,000 clicks and 400 replies. The post sender and the commenters interacted with each other by exchanging opinions and searching for further related information. For instance, some commenters searched for more information about the cigarettes and corrected the price as 2000RMB (324 \$) per carton. Some users uploaded pictures of billboards advertising the cigarettes onto the post comment, these pictures proving that such cigarettes do exist and that the cigarette is of a high standard (fig.5.7). The billboard ad wrote “Respect Nanjing, enjoy top class luxury,” this ultimately increased the persuasive power of the original information.

¹⁷¹ ‘赞一下那个要处罚低价房局长了，看人家抽的烟，_经济论坛_天涯论坛’ <<http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-develop-212539-1.shtml>> [accessed 2 March 2013].



Fig.5.7) billboard advertisement of the cigarette

This finding quickly spread internally and externally. Internally on the Tianya BBS site, this post was found in the category of Shenzhen (深圳),¹⁷² social event (社会万象),¹⁷³ media place(传媒江湖),¹⁷⁴ hot news (热点资讯),¹⁷⁵ real estate law and policy (房产观澜政策法规)¹⁷⁶...etc. Externally, this finding of the cigarettes was spread to several different BBS sites such as the HSW BBS site.¹⁷⁷ As above, the Post (脱)-category pattern was observed in several BBS sites. For instance, in the HSW BBS site, the post appeared under “Chat topics (杂谈),” “Real estate.” In Kaidi BBS, this scandal was found under the categories of “focused people(猫眼看人),” “consumers’ observation (消费观察)”¹⁷⁸...etc.

The Post (脱)-category tendency appeared quicker and spread more broadly this time. This can be explained as the investigation and curiosity gained influential power that was stronger than the stage of simple discussion. Such quick development of the Post (脱)-category tendency was based on the high speed of communication on the Internet. The Internet enables

¹⁷² ‘看局长抽的烟，真是公仆本色呀，1500一条（组图）！（转载）(转载)_深圳_天涯论坛’
<<http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-47-875383-1.shtml>> [accessed 3 March 2013].

¹⁷³ ‘看南京江宁房产局长抽的烟，真是公仆本色，1500一条_贴图专区_天涯论坛’
<<http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-no04-753586-1.shtml>> [accessed 3 March 2013].

¹⁷⁴ ‘看局长抽的烟，真是公仆本色呀，1500一条（组图）！（转载）_传媒江湖_天涯论坛’
<<http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-no06-98574-1.shtml>> [accessed 3 March 2013].

¹⁷⁵ ‘请大家为南京江宁房产局局长抽1500元/条烟被曝光事件命名_经济论坛_天涯论坛’
<<http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-develop-212862-1.shtml>> [accessed 3 March 2013].

¹⁷⁶ ‘看看，扬言要严惩低价售房的房产局局长抽的却是1500元一条的香烟！_房产观澜_天涯论坛’
<<http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-house-129433-1.shtml>> [accessed 3 March 2013].

¹⁷⁷ Bbs.hsw.cn (Hua Shang forum 华商论坛)

¹⁷⁸ ‘[转贴]看照片南京房产局长抽1500元的烟【消费观察】-凯迪社区’
<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?id=2595813&boardid=63>> [accessed 4 March 2013].

the simultaneous reception, alteration and redistribution of cultural objects.¹⁷⁹ By quickly redistributing to diversified categories of BBS, the collective intelligence raised quantitative development much faster and obtained stronger influential power (public opinion).

At 00:34 AM, December 15th, user name “chenyou007” posted an article under the category of “focused people” on Kaidi BBS. The title was “Director Zhou smoking luxury cigarette, wearing exclusive watch.”¹⁸⁰ The post didn’t contain any information pertaining to his policies; it only contained information about Zhou’s cigarettes. The post contained two pictures of Zhou with different watches (fig.5.8: left). The user explained that the Vacheron-Constantin watch in the picture was worth more than \$16,000 USD. There was no explanation pertaining to the second watch.



Fig.5.8: Left) Zhou with identified Vacheron-Constantin watch Fig 5.9: right) Zhou with unidentified-brand watch

At 7:27AM, the user name “fang1973” commented by posting another picture of Zhou wearing a Rolex watch. Many users asked what brand the watch in the second picture was, since it was not explained by the original post creator (fig.5.9: right). At 8:17AM, a user discovered the brand of the watch in the second picture. He commented on the post “It is a Bulova” with a clear picture of the watch. After the users discovered that Zhou owned three different luxury watches, they started to satirize “Three Represents and Three watches (三个代表,三个戴表).”¹⁸¹ The watch scandal involved three watches. The first two watches were

¹⁷⁹ Denis McQuail, *McQuail’s Mass Communication Theory*, Sixth Edition, p148. Originally published in Allocated. Baarn: Bosch and Keuning, 1982.

¹⁸⁰ [灌水]周久耕局长抽名烟、戴名表(图)【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区’.

¹⁸¹ Three Represents (三个代表: San ge dai biao) and (三个戴表: San ge dai biao) are homophone in Chinese. Three Represents is the official statement for the Chinese Communist Party, originated from Jiang Zemin. It focuses to develop A) social force, B) advanced culture, C) Interests of the majority.

updated by one user. Then, the readers participated to make the presented information more solid and convincing. Individuals shared their curiosity about the unidentified watch. Others acted on this curiosity and took direct action to identify the unknown watches. Further, other users searched additional pictures of Zhou to discover that he owned a third luxury (Rolex) watch. This is a typical exhibit of a collective intelligence qualitative growth pattern, a “nobody knows everything, but somebody know something”¹⁸² mechanism. In this case, the Internet allowed individuals to communicate with each other to raise and stimulate curiosity. The Internet offered search tools that gave individuals the capacity to investigate on their own. The Internet offered individuals the ability to autonomously share their findings and knowledge with the public.

Chenyou007’s post reached almost 100,000 views and more than 750 replies. The cigarettes and watches brought greater attention to the public. By searching, viewing, and commenting on topics related to Zhou, this event eventually ranked as the third hottest issue on a Top 10 Hot Issued List in the “Public opinion channel” of the People’s Daily Online.¹⁸³ On December 16th, at 7:46AM, mass media news organizations started to publish the Zhou scandal.¹⁸⁴ The news content contained both the luxury cigarettes and watch scandals related to Zhou. The news reviewed the exposure of the scandal by HFS and confirmed the price of the cigarettes from the factory. This is the first case of collective intelligence in HFS reaching a strong enough impact to influence the mass media.

The next day, December 17th, a user from a BBS forum found out that director Zhou’s brother, Zhou Jiuzhong was one of the real estate developers in Jiangning. Furthermore, it was also discovered that Zhou’s policy was applied unequally between his brother’s company and other developers.¹⁸⁵ The user professionally investigated this information from the perspective of real estate information; the post contains a variety of external links (evidence) to prove his point. The same day, readers continuously commented their own findings on the post; one user finding evidence which shows that Zhou’s brother’s company manipulated the

¹⁸² Lévy.

¹⁸³ ‘[灌水]周久耕局长强调：切实加强党风廉政建设（图）【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区’ <<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?id=2596911&boardid=1>> [accessed 4 March 2013], original resource is deleted. Original resource Public Opinion Channel of People’s Daily Online is <http://yuqing.people.com.cn/>.

¹⁸⁴ ‘网友曝南京一房产局局长抽天价烟 1500/条(组图)_华商新闻’ <<http://news.hsw.cn/system/2008/12/16/006473332.shtml>> [accessed 4 March 2013].

¹⁸⁵ ‘[转贴]更新资料：周久耕局长周久忠经理人肉搜索新进展【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区’ <<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?page=1&boardid=1&id=2600627>> [accessed 4 March 2013].

trade process. This post received almost 92,000 views and more than 800 comments. The post reached an extraordinary number of comments in comparison with previous findings. This indicates that the attention from the public had significantly grown.

Whereas many people worked to reveal Zhou's corruption and criticize him, there were also users who supported Zhou. For instance, one of the blogger wrote "Zhou clearly explained that the new policy is to prevent dropped off and suspended building projects...it's a personal choice to choose his own cigarette, why can he not wear a luxury Swiss watch? ...He is a normal officer...In old speak 'Don't judge the book by a cover.'"¹⁸⁶ Another blogger in the real estate business also supported Zhou on his blog, he wrote "I don't want talk about his personal life, I just want to talk about his policy and the policy does make sense...What is the purpose of enterprises? It is profit!"¹⁸⁷ This illustrates the coexistence of different opinions in the Internet sphere; two opposite opinions coexisting and stimulating actors (individuals). This could be understood as independency of the public sphere. By the stimulation and recognition of different opinions in the independent sphere, the quality of information and intelligence could obtain and retain objectivity.

On December 18th, 3:27AM, the Sichuan provincial news site (四川新闻网) published a report on the scandal of Zhou and his brother. This occurred less than 24hours after the HFS findings.¹⁸⁸ This shortened circulation from the Internet to mass media is further evidence of the increasing power of public opinion. The cigarette scandal was published two days after HFS findings. After the number of HFS's was escalated, a negative public opinion of Zhou gained power and the information circulated to the mass media as a result.

On December 19th, 1:11AM, the journalist from the Sichuan provincial news site published updated information with the title "the real estate director of cigarette scandal rides in

¹⁸⁶ '周久耕并不山寨, 也不雷人 -楚芸 -搜房博客'

<<http://blog.soufun.com/35448602/13950424/articledetail.htm>> [accessed 4 March 2013].

¹⁸⁷ '支持周久耕的观点!! -顾军 -搜房博客' <<http://blog.soufun.com/11604449/2698638/articledetail.htm>> [accessed 4 March 2013].企业存在的原因是什么?那就是利润, translated to English by the author.

¹⁸⁸Original news source from Sichuan provincial news cannot be found, but forwarded news from the site were found as: '房产局长抽天价烟续: 网友曝其弟为房产老总_新闻中心_新浪网' <<http://news.sina.com.cn/s/2008-12-18/032716868855.shtml>> [accessed 5 March 2013].

Cadillac car.”¹⁸⁹ The journalist was an HFS actor. “I (the journalist) went to the Nanjing real estate office...According to the information, Zhou drives a Cadillac, I (the journalist) went to the parking but couldn’t see the car, but the staff at parking place advised that the director who drives the Cadillac hasn’t come to office for few days.”¹⁹⁰ In addition, the news reconfirmed the HFS findings through their own investigation. For example, the news corrected the relationship between Zhou and the real estate developer who was thought to be his brother, the journalist investigated and corrected the developer as being a cousin (系周久耕堂弟).

The finding of Zhou’s expensive car was not from public to the mass media, it was mass media to public. It can be understood that the influential power of collective intelligence reached to encompass mass media and subsequently promoted the mass media to actively participate.

The Cadillac scandal spread quickly to BBS, Blog and other portal site news sections. When the QQ portal site published the news, it reached almost 5000 comments on the news post.¹⁹¹ Compared with the BBS cigarette scandal post (400 comments), the watch post (750 comments), and the brother post (800 comments), 5000 comments in the portal site indicates the impact of the mass media’s active involvement.

One of the major online features in promoting the investigation of Zhou was an anonym system on the Internet. It can be explained by the reaction of the mass media. The mass media didn’t publish actively about the online public’s reaction in the beginning. The major findings were the cigarettes, the watches, the social status of Zhou’s brother and the Cadillac car. Among four major findings, three elements were discovered by Internet users. Internet users published those findings online anonymously and without permission. Mass media journalists have a higher self-censorship than online individuals and are instructed by the government

¹⁸⁹ ‘房产局长抽天价烟被调查 座驾为凯迪拉克_即时报道_财经_腾讯网’

<<http://finance.qq.com/a/20081219/001365.htm>> [accessed 5 March 2013]; ‘人肉搜索，令官员谨言慎行 - 周蓬安 - 价值中国网’ <<http://www.chinavalue.net/General/Article/2008-12-19/150404.html>> [accessed 5 March 2013].

¹⁹⁰ Translated by the author, original as: 记者赴 江宁区房产局...据知情人士透露, 周久耕座驾为一辆凯迪拉克...记者在停车场并未看到凯迪拉克...门前一位工作人员告诉记者 “开凯迪拉克的局长已经好几天没见了.

¹⁹¹ ‘房产局长抽天价烟被调查 座驾为凯迪拉克_即时报道_财经_腾讯网’.

and the media organization. Their investigations and publications can affect not only themselves, but also the entire organization. Therefore, the publication of the mass media organization is more passive than the online public. This is illustrated by the mass media's reaction to the evidence found by online users. After the first findings were revealed online on December 14th, the mass media didn't publish the findings for two days. Although the mass media later covered the Zhou scandal, the news media's contents only reconfirmed the finding made by the online investigation. The mass media's own investigation finding (Cadillac) was published after significant public opinion was mobilized. Compared to the passive reaction of the mass media, online users were more active in publishing their findings to the public. The anonymity of identity and non-belonging position offered online actors a lower self-censorship.

After the last evidence the Cadillac was found, Internet users reacted differently and through different methods, some asking about Zhou's Cadillac on the Baidu (百度) post bar.¹⁹² In the BBS sites, the picture of Zhou's Cadillac was added with original news content.¹⁹³ This post reached almost 30,000 views and over 350 comments. It is also observed that some users created their own posts based on several mass media news reports. One user cited several official news contents with negative opinions about HFS and criticized the mass media contents, this post reached over 35,000 views and, 510 comments. As above, it was observed diversified reaction and focuses from the actors in almost every stage of the event.

5.2.3 The Central Media's Involvement and the Result

On December 21st, the Chinese Central TV (CCTV) news channel broadcasted the scandal of Zhou by showing the newspaper reports. The Internet users not only discussed the meaning of the official TV broadcast, but also captured stills from the TV report and posted to the public as below.

¹⁹² Baidu post bar(百度贴吧): similar to BBS mechanism. Whereas BBS find suitable section (板块) or category, Baidu post bar doesn't sort out the category of the contents.

¹⁹³ '[转贴]周久耕局长抽天价烟被调查 座驾为凯迪拉克 【猫眼看人】-凯迪社区'
<<http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?page=1&boardid=1&id=2602865>> [accessed 5 March 2013].



Fig.5.10) the first CCTV broadcast of Zhou scandal¹⁹⁴

CCTV broadcasted the newspaper report which strongly assumes Zhou is corrupted (fig 5.10). It shows “Director Zhou! be more silence can provoke public issues.” Top of right sub-title as “Director, come out and speak.” Bottom of right sub-title as “Is it common to smoke such cigarette?” The coverage by CCTV demonstrates the influential power of the public’s findings. In the beginning, the pressure on Zhou was only from the public. Then, the provincial newspaper (mass media) started pressing Zhou by publishing his scandal. The CCTV’s broadcasting meant that the attention on Zhou had reached a central level. After CCTV’s broadcast, relevant government institutions took action. On December 29th, 15 days after the first cigarette scandal was exposed by HFS, Zhou was dismissed from office and his policy was unimplemented from January 1st, 2009.¹⁹⁵ On October 10th, 2009, Zhou was sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment for taking bribes amounting to over 160,000 USD.

5.3 Findings

The case of Zhou was not a simple investigation. It was a *Mass public investigation*. This case illustrates how the Internet offers individuals an advantageous platform to mobilize power by offering the platform to solve their curiosity.

The Internet offered actors an equal right to participate in the investigation which raised objectivity of the information. The Internet’s “less limited accessibility” guarantees the

¹⁹⁴ Screenshot resource from: ‘在赵晓之后，周久耕也成为央视的“嘉宾”！-楼市话题(业内论坛)业主论坛-北京搜房网’ <http://bbs.soufun.com/salon~-1~7671/80572560_80572560.htm> [accessed 5 March 2013].

¹⁹⁵ ‘南京开闸商品房定价权 周久耕事件引政策摇摆-搜狐财经’ <<http://business.sohu.com/20090108/n261635889.shtml>> [accessed 5 March 2013].

equality of the actors which affects the quality of collective intelligence in significant level. Search engines also play an important role in collective intelligence; the Internet is an advanced environment to develop the quality of information through huge databases, accessed via search engines. Media richness was easily accessed with search engines, which stimulates individuals and develops curiosity and cognition.

Public awareness is achieved by accessing information that is relevant to the cause. However, it is often difficult to get the public involved in political movements. Since traditional information channels may well be controlled by those whose interests are counter to that of the activists, the Internet may serve as alternative news and information source.¹⁹⁶ Although it is said that the Internet sphere exists censorship through the blocking of access to data and information,¹⁹⁷ but it is also found that the Internet sphere offers individuals a greater opportunity to investigate and research topics that stimulate their curiosity and raise their awareness.

The simultaneous flow of information on the Internet promotes quantitative development. The speed of reflection of public opinion, and the speed of mobilizing investigations on topics spark the public's curiosity. The Internet also offers diversified communication tools for participation in collective intelligence. Actors can choose to post on BBS, comment on a BBS post, comment on news contents, post on blogs, SNS...etc. All of these interactive communication tools can increase the exposure of information and the speed in which the information circulates. Whereas the mass media only distributes information, online communicational tools create a network. Resultingly, online forums not only utilize the broadcast of information from the mass media, but also mobilize the public by expanding their knowledge base and extending social networks.¹⁹⁸ Online communicational tools are the foundation of co-existing, diversified perspectives and opinions on the Internet. These tools play an important role in guaranteeing the quality of the collective intelligence. The Internet allows actors to publish diversified perspective and opinion. This can stimulate the actors in different ways, maintaining objectivity of the collective intelligence. The Internet's anonymity promotes both quantitative development and qualitative growth of collective intelligence. The anonymity of the Internet offers individuals a relevantly low self-censorship,

¹⁹⁶ Martha McCaughey and Michael D. Ayers, *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2003).

¹⁹⁷ Ronald J. Deibert, *Access Controlled: The Shaping of Power, Rights, and Rule in Cyberspace* (MIT Press, 2010); Morozov.

¹⁹⁸ McCaughey and Ayers.

in comparison to mass media journalists. Subsequently, actors can autonomously post findings and communicate each other – this ultimately initiated the HFS movement.

6 Bypass Censorship with Microblogs

In this chapter, I selected the case of artist and political activist Ai Weiwei in order to analyze how an individual with high social status can mobilize the power to resist the Chinese authority's oppression by utilizing the Internet. Ai was accused of tax evasion by the government and charged a penalty fine by the government. Ai raised the amount for the fine by publishing a money raising campaign online. During this event, Microblogs were primarily used to promote the campaign. I will analyze the function of Microblogs and how they promote bypass the authority's censorship; the first segment of this chapter will be an introduction to Microblogs. The second segment will be overview of Ai Weiwei. In the last segment, I will discuss the case and how collective intelligence was practiced. Through this case analysis, I will examine if and how the Internet democratizes information and thus offers the advanced public sphere an avenue for mobilizing power.

6.1 Microblogs: Twitter and Chinese Weibo (微博)

Microblogs are an online communication platform, combined with IM (Instant Messaging), blog and social network figures. Users post short messages called "Micro posts"¹⁹⁹ of 140 words or less. Therefore, Micro posts can be spread to the public in a short and simple fashion. Because of this feature, Microblogs perform more in a broadcasting manner as opposed to simple one on one communication. Moreover, individuals in Microblogs are strongly linked to each other, this helps to build and expand the network easily because networks and content are publicly visible by default. Twitter is best representative of a Microblog site. After launching in 2006, Twitter quickly grew in the global market, ranking as the 11th biggest website in the world by 2012.²⁰⁰ In the field of Social network services, Twitter is ranked as the 3rd biggest website in the world with over 200 million active users.²⁰¹

Microblogging services came to China in 2007. The first Chinese Microblog sites such as fanfou.com, Tao Tao site²⁰² and Twitter were not very popular. But these Microblogs played

¹⁹⁹ Steffen Lohmann and others, 'Visual Analysis of Microblog Content Using Time-varying Co-occurrence Highlighting in Tag Clouds', in *Proceedings of the International Working Conference on Advanced Visual Interfaces*, 2012, pp. 753–756 <<http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2254701>> [accessed 18 March 2013].

²⁰⁰ 'Alexa Top 500 Global Sites' <<http://www.alexa.com/topsites>> [accessed 19 March 2013].

²⁰¹ 'New Instagram Stats: 90 Million Monthly Active Users', *Social Fresh* <<http://socialfresh.com/1000instagram/>> [accessed 2 May 2013].

²⁰² Tao Tao is launched by one of the major portal site company 'Tencent group.' The site is shutdown Jan, 2010.

their role in broadcasting information, especially information not covered by mass media in China. In February, 2009, when traditional news outlets responded with usual caution to a sensitive story (a suspicious fire near the new headquarters of state broadcaster CCTV), they were outflanked by witnesses on the streets of Beijing breaking the story on Twitter.²⁰³ Microblogging was becoming a prompt reporting medium. However, the Chinese authority observed several phenomena of “Twitter revolution” in Arab nations which alarmed them. In July, 2009, the authority spotted that information about ethnic riots in Urumqi (capital of Xinjiang) where the region with ethnic unrest was actively being distributed on Twitter. As a result, Twitter was permanently shut down in China.²⁰⁴ After Twitter was blocked, Chinese portal site enterprises – agreeing to keep information flows under control - started to evolve into the Chinese Microblog market.²⁰⁵ Chinese Microblogs began to receive their own names, such as “Weibo” (微博: Translated version of “Microblog”). The Chinese private enterprise Sina Corporation controls the second largest web portal site in China (www.sina.com.cn).²⁰⁶ In 2009, the Sina Corporation was the first company to present the Microblog censorship and the control proposal to the government. With approval from the government, the Sina Corporation entered the domestic Microblog market under the name “Sina Weibo (新浪微博).”²⁰⁷ Sina Weibo thus became the first, and subsequently, most successful Microblog platform to be authorized after the clampdown in 2009.²⁰⁸ And the Renaissance of Chinese Microblogs arose. Sina Weibo was launched in August, 2009. Approximately two months later, the site had reached 1 million users. By end of April, 2010, the number of registered users raised 1000% with users numbering 10 million. By 2011, Sina Weibo controlled over 87% of the domestic Microblog market share.²⁰⁹ Thus in China, Sina Weibo is almost synonymous with Chinese Microblogging.

²⁰³ Jonathan Sullivan, ‘Teaching Chinese Politics: Microblogging and Student Engagement’, *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 2012, 1–14.

²⁰⁴ Sullivan, ‘Teaching Chinese Politics’.

²⁰⁵ Sullivan, ‘Teaching Chinese Politics’.

²⁰⁶ Sina portal is ranked No.4 in Chinese top site list. China’s most biggest web portal is qq.com. Resource is from ‘Alexa - Top Sites in China’ <<http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/CN>> [accessed 19 March 2013].

²⁰⁷ Sullivan, ‘Teaching Chinese Politics’.

²⁰⁸ Sullivan, ‘Teaching Chinese Politics’.

²⁰⁹ ‘未来资产报告称新浪微博使用率市场份额达 87%_互联网_科技时代_新浪网’ <<http://tech.sina.com.cn/i/2011-01-28/18045144960.shtml>> [accessed 19 March 2013]; ‘新浪微博近期酝酿架构大调：无线事业部将并入’ <http://www.hn.xinhuanet.com/2012-12/18/c_114068476.htm> [accessed 19 March 2013].

According to the report from the China Internet Network Information Center (CINIC), the number of Chinese Microblog users reached 309 million in December, 2012.²¹⁰ This means that more than half of all Chinese Internet users have a Microblog account.²¹¹ Smart phones are a key factor in this rapid growth, the number of mobile Internet users reached 420 million in 2012 with an 18.1% yearly growth rate.²¹² Among Microblog users, more than 65% of users-202 million Microbloggers access Microblogs with Mobile devices. This indicates the strong correlation between smartphones and Microblogs in China.²¹³

Although the censorship proposal was initiated by major Chinese enterprises, Chinese Microblog Weibo still plays a large role in broadcasting “unpleasant” information, similar to Twitter before it was banned. It is often observed that Weibo rapidly broadcasts an accident or sensitive information until it is censored. For example, in 2012, the high-profile leadership contender Bo Xilai was suspended from his key political posts and his wife Gu Kailai was detained for the suspected murder of a British businessman, it was one of the biggest political scandals of the year. Weibo users received advanced warning of almost every development in the unfolding scandal. A post predicting Bo’s dismissal as Party secretary of Chongqing circulated widely before the official announcement. And claims that his wife had poisoned a British businessman emerged weeks before official statement.²¹⁴ This indicates that even though Weibo sphere is under the systemized control of ISPs and that the highly domestic environment of the site challenges international information-flow, it still functions in a role of democratizing information with its’ special features.

6.2 Who is Ai Weiwei?

In this case analysis, it is important to briefly give some information about Ai Weiwei. Because after all, the social position of Ai had a certain level of impact in the case. Ai is a Chinese contemporary artist with a global reputation. In addition, he is also a political and human-rights activist.

²¹⁰ 第31次中国互联网络发展状况统计报告(中国互联网络信息中心(China Internet Network Information Center)) <http://cnnic.cn/hlwfzyj/hlwxzbg/hlwtjbg/201301/t20130115_38508.htm> [accessed 18 March 2013].

²¹¹ 第31次中国互联网络发展状况统计报告, p. 3.

²¹² 第31次中国互联网络发展状况统计报告.

²¹³ 2012年中国网民社交网站应用研究报告(中国互联网络信息中心(China Internet Network Information Center)) <http://cnnic.cn/hlwfzyj/hlwxzbg/mtbg/201302/t20130219_38712.htm> [accessed 18 March 2013].

²¹⁴ ‘China’s Censors Tested by Microbloggers Who Keep One Step Ahead of State Media’.

Ai studied art in New York from 1983 to 1993 and was one of the first generations to study abroad after Chinese reforms in the late 1970s. He gained a reputation for having adding a liberalistic air to Chinese contemporary art culture in the early 90s, a dark-period of creative-works after the Tiananmen pre-democracy movement. Soon, he successfully held art exhibitions around world, with particular popularity in Europe. In China, Ai is also recognized for being the son of Ai Qing. One of China's finest modern poets, Ai Qing was purged for being a liberalist in the 1950s after being denounced as "an enemy of the state and a rightist" by the Anti-Right movement.²¹⁵ Because of his father, Ai has always been linked to political struggle. By that, he has its source in classical liberalism which supposed to be influenced by his father and obtained natural reaction to what the social and political situation is about.²¹⁶

From 2006, Ai started actively using the Internet platform to express his criticism and dissident opinions against the Party system. Resultantly, Ai received the nickname "Online Activist."²¹⁷ For instance, he posted a criticism about the government on his own blog and communicated with the public about human rights almost every day until the blog was shut down by the authority in 2009. Many of his blog posts contained very direct criticism against the government and the Party system. In example, on July 15th, 2006, he criticized the Chinese media's propaganda by writing "The media should cover a story of social movement which conflict with the police as a 'nonstandard assault on police in an abnormal society,' or 'the people bite back' rather than "mob assault" in China."²¹⁸ He also directly spoke about freedom of speech by saying "As long as we follow the firm leadership of the Communist Party of China, any unlawful attempts to fragment the motherland, and even criminal activities that don't attempt to fragment the motherland, will ultimately come to a bad end."²¹⁹

In 2007, Ai publicly criticized the Beijing Olympics and said "I would feel ashamed if I just designed something for glamour or to show some kind of fake image."²²⁰ This interview was

²¹⁵ 'Chinese Architect Slams Olympic "Pretend Smile" - CNN.com' <<http://edition.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/asiapcf/08/13/china.olympics.reut/?iref=mpstoryview>> [accessed 19 March 2013].

²¹⁶ David A. Andelman, 'The Art of Dissent: A Chat with Ai Weiwei', *World Policy Journal*, 29 (2012), 15-21.

²¹⁷ 'How Chinese Activist Ai Weiwei Became an Internet Master', *CNN* <<http://www.cnn.com/2011/11/08/tech/innovation/ai-weiwei-documentary-poptech/index.html>> [accessed 6 April 2013].

²¹⁸ Weiwei Ai, *Ai Weiwei's Blog: Writings, Interviews, and Digital Rants, 2006-2009* (MIT Press, 2011), p76-77.

²¹⁹ Ai, p 159-160.

²²⁰ 'Chinese Architect Slams Olympic "Pretend Smile" - CNN.com'.

not published in China.²²¹ However, because Ai was the designer of the symbolic Olympic “Bird Nest Stadium,” and the first high-profiled Chinese person who challenged the spirit of the Olympic,²²² he received mass attention from the international media. Ai status as a public figure in the world was thus elevated. Because of this interview, Ai became internationally identified as a political activist in addition to being an artist. In China, Ai was publicly recognized as an activist in 2009. The 2009 earthquake in Si Chuan province, killed many young students because of poorly constructed schools which should have managed by the government. In the aftermath of the earthquake, authorities attempted to manipulate the total number of dead students to hide the government’s poor construction management. The authorities clearly noticed Ai’s potential to provoke mass protest, so they shut down Ai’s blog for the first seven days after the earthquake.²²³ Once the blog was opened again, Ai launched his own project to investigate the real number of student deaths. He reported on the project status online every day. It gave the Chinese public a strong recognition of Ai as a political dissident, but it was also Ai’s strongest and most direct conflict with the authority.²²⁴ As a result, his blog was officially shut down in May, 2009. Ai created Microblogging accounts on sites such as Twitter and Weibo and continued to communicate with the public after his blog was shut down. With diversified communication tools on the Internet, Ai continued to interact with the public and spread his dissident opinions about the Chinese government. At the same time, the authority continued its efforts to stifle Ai’s voice. For instance, a studio in Shanghai that had been designed by Ai was demolished by the authority. Ai’s reaction was sending an invitation to the public via Microblogs to gather at the studio one day before the demolition and eat river crabs.²²⁵ The event was published on Ai’s Weibo and many individuals came to the studio on short notice.²²⁶ This indicates that Ai had continued to maintain both a direct and indirect conflictive position against the authority.

Ai started as a famous Chinese artist and became a public figure. Thus, Ai always received national and international attention regarding his dissident activities. Ai exercises a high level of influential power as a public figure; Ai’s supporters call themselves “Ai mi” (艾迷: means

²²¹ Alison Klayman, *Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry*, 2012.

²²² Klayman.

²²³ Klayman.

²²⁴ Klayman.

²²⁵ River Crab in Chinese is He Xie (河蟹) which is the homophone of Peace, harmony (He Xie 和谐). By arranging eating crab party, he attempted to deliver the symbolic meaning of harmonious society.

²²⁶ Klayman.

Ai's fan). And with his cultural approach, he has become a trademark for Chinese liberalism.²²⁷

6.3 The Case: Ai and Microblog

Ai's strenuous activities as an online activist are saved via documentary, book, and interview journals by Ai himself and others.²²⁸ After successfully raising money via Microblog to pay a large fine for tax evasion, Ai became a classic example of individuals utilizing the Internet as a promotion tool for democratization in China.²²⁹

However, most of these only highlight about the result of the campaign, what majorly focused were the fact that Ai raised big amount money with online. In other words, the empirical evidence or analysis to support the relationship between the Internet and democratization is missing. I will apply collective intelligence theory to examine before, during and after the campaign. From this empirical approach, I will attempt to discover how the Internet offers an environment allows individuals to mobilize influential power in a state where governmental authority dominates public rights.

6.3.1 What Happened?

On April 3rd, 2011, Ai tried to departure from Beijing International airport to Hong Kong. Chinese police arrested Ai at the airport, and detained him for 81 days. During this time, police raided Ai's studio and home in Beijing and investigated the studio's staff. His detention drew huge attention around the world. In an effort to keep a low profile, Ai's detention was not initially published by the authority. However, the arrest elicited tremendous overseas response from US, EU, and British governments and drew shock and public

²²⁷ Klayman.

²²⁸ Klayman; Andelman; Ai.

²²⁹ 'BBC News - Ai Weiwei China Tax Bill Paid by Supporters', 20111107 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-15616576>> [accessed 25 November 2011]; 'China's Censors Tested by Microbloggers Who Keep One Step Ahead of State Media'; Sullivan, 'Teaching Chinese Politics'; Jonathan Sullivan, 'A Tale of Two Microblogs in China', *Media, Culture & Society*, 34 (2012), 773–783; Nicholas Aase and others, 'Whiskey, Weed, and Wukan on the World Wide Web: On Measuring Censors' Resources and Motivations', in *USENIX Workshop on Free and Open Communications on the Internet (FOCI)*, 2012 <<https://www.usenix.org/system/files/conference/foci12/foci12-final17.pdf>> [accessed 17 April 2013].

demonstrations around the world.²³⁰ Hillary Clinton expressed concerns about Ai's detention on the annual global human rights report.²³¹

The attention from such high leveled institutions and individuals in such a short time can be explained by Ai's reputation. Because his social status was not only that of a political activist, but also a well-known artist, his detention had a greater impact and triggered a larger bearing with the world interpreting his detention as the 'suppression of an artist.' Four days after the arrestment, the official newspaper broadcasted the event for the first time.²³² The Foreign Ministry of China did not issue its official statement until five days after the arrest.²³³ It can be assumed that Ai's arrest most likely would not have been officially published in China if the West had not reacted so quickly and dramatically.

81 days after the initial arrestment, Ai was released under the condition that he would not give any interviews, would remove himself from social media, and would not travel outside of Beijing. But within months, Ai was back on Twitter and speaking to the press.²³⁴ After he was released, the police accused him of tax evasion. On November 1st, 2011, Ai received a court order to pay approximately 2.4 million USD (15 million RMB) within 15 days.²³⁵ With relevantly short deadline with big amount of fine looks as if allegations might have been substantial by the Chinese law afford the authorities a great legitimation to implement selective punishment. Ai realized that he had no way to collect the fine on his own and therefore no means to avoid being arrested again.

A few days after the court order, Ai and his studio staff posted on several Microblogs to borrow money in order to pay the fine, the money raising campaign had started. His supporters and people who followed Ai's Microblog began collecting money. Quickly, the speed of broadcasting and active participation in Microblogs began to show results. Money was collected with incredible speed. However, at the same time, the government sensed that the movement was growing in size. As a result, the authority shut down Ai's Weibo account

²³⁰ Meiling Cheng, 'Ai Weiwei: Acting Is Believing', *TDR/The Drama Review*, 55 (2011), 7–13.

²³¹ 'US Criticises China Rights Record', *BBC*, 8 April 2011, section US and Canada <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/13017141>> [accessed 20 March 2013].

²³² '社评：法律不会为特立独行者弯曲_评论_环球网' <<http://opinion.huanqiu.com/roll/2011-04/1609672.html>> [accessed 18 April 2013].

²³³ 'China Omits Ai Weiwei References', *BBC*, 8 April 2011, section Asia-Pacific <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13016289>> [accessed 18 April 2013].

²³⁴ Klayman.

²³⁵ 'BBC News - Ai Weiwei China Tax Bill Paid by Supporters'.

on November 7th, 2011.²³⁶ Ai's Weibo account has remained blocked since then. Ai's Chinese name “艾未未” also became censored in Weibo, searches for his name show the result “According to the political law and policy, the search result of ‘艾未未’ cannot be shown (Fig 6.1).”²³⁷



Fig 6.1) the search result of “艾未未” on Sina Weibo site

Because the money raising campaign and Ai's studio address were spread so quickly, the campaign still continued after Ai's Weibo account was shut down. As a result, within the two week deadline, Ai raised almost 1.4 million USD (8.59 million RMB). Ai was able to fully pay the government fine by combining his own money with the money collected by the public.²³⁸

After his successful campaign, the authority has paid extra attention to Ai's public activities. For example, in late 2012, Ai published a music video on the Chinese version of YouTube, tuduo.com. The music video criticized the authority's censorship by parodying the Korean pop-song “Gangnam Style.” It was completely censored on Chinese Internet within a few hours.²³⁹ With limited communication mediums and highly concentrated surveillance, Ai's publications on dissident ideology have been quickly flagged and censored by the authority. Officially, China based communication platforms such as blogs and Weibo blocked Ai's accounts. Theoretically, Twitter and Google+ are blocked on the Chinese mainland by the

²³⁶ ‘Sina Blocks Weibo Accounts in Wake of Ai Weiwei’s Fundraising Campaign’
<<http://www.techinasia.com/sina-blocks-weibo-accounts-in-wake-of-ai-weiweis-fundraising-campaign/>>
[accessed 26 March 2013].

²³⁷ The result comment is translated to English by the author. ‘艾未未的相关微博 - 新浪微博’
<http://s.weibo.com/weibo/%25E8%2589%25BE%25E6%259C%25AA%25E6%259C%25AA&Refer=event_wibo> [accessed 31 March 2013].

²³⁸ ‘BBC News - Ai Weiwei China Tax Bill Paid by Supporters’.

²³⁹ ‘China’s Ai Weiwei Bemoans Block on His Gangnam Parody’, *Reuters* (Beijing, 25 October 2012)
<<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/25/us-china-aiweiwei-gangnam-idUSBRE89O0H120121025>>

[accessed 2 April 2013]; Original Music Video can be found at: 草泥马 style, 2012
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LAeFTzSwWY&feature=youtube_gdata_player> [accessed 2 April 2013].

Chinese Firewall system. However, it was observed that Ai uses these platforms to continue to communicate with the public. Ai’s supporters still talk about Ai’s money raising campaign as a symbol of liberalism that encourages further discussion about sensitive political issues.

As above, the money raising campaign and Ai’s continuous communication with the public can be classified extreme direct confliction between Ai and the authority. It was clear that Ai attempted to resist the authority and the authority, resultantly, attempted to stifle his voice. The Internet played a major role in empowering Ai and giving him a medium to further mobilize and develop that power. In the next section, I will apply collective intelligence theory to discuss how the Internet offers an advantageous sphere for mobilizing power.

6.3.2 Discovery of Quantitative Expansion

Following Ai’s detention, Microblogs played a major role in mobilizing power against the authority. In this section, I will analyze how power was mobilized by a quantitative expansion method in collective intelligence and promoted the event to the public agenda.

When Ai was arrested at the airport on April 3rd, Microblogs were the first medium to spread information about the arrest to the public. The authority didn’t want to publish this event in the beginning. Microblogs were the most efficient tool to sidestep traditional forms of media and broadcast information about Ai’s arrest. The arrest was first published on Ai’s Twitter account by the one of his staff about 30minutes after Ai’s arrest in the airport (Fig 6.2).²⁴⁰



Fig 6.2) information about Ai’s disappearance, posted by Ai’s staff (left: 30 minutes after the arrest, right: 50 minutes after the arrest)

²⁴⁰ Twitter is officially blocked in China. However, on Baidu search engine, it is possible to find the method to access Twitter. For example, I searched “怎么上推特 (In english means how to access Twitter),” Baidu shows more than seven million results. And it was easy to find out the program, apps, web to access Twitter in China. This part will be discoursed more at qualitative growth part.

Fig 6.2 shows Twitter contents which describe the situation of Ai's arrest. The left Tweet says "April 3rd 2011, Ai was arrested at Beijing International Airport. Ai was separated from his staff and the officers took him away, Ai's phone is off. He has lost contact for 30 minutes...Please pay attention." These posts were updated almost every 10 minutes with one the time changing; "lost contact for 30 minutes," "for 40 minutes," "50 minutes," etc. The status of Ai's arrestment was being broadcasted live. The speed of the internet made it possible for to be reported live to the public. Here, "speed of the Internet" refers to the timing of delivery of information between the information-producer and the receiver. And this was advantageous to form the public attention and opinion (collectivity) in short time which promoted quantitative development on the event. In addition, another quick speed can be underlined which is the speed between the event and the broadcasting. With mobile phones now operating as Internet devices, the Internet sphere has become ubiquitous and de-located.²⁴¹ Resultingly, it made the occurrence of events and the events publication to be nearly simultaneous. Whereas the mass media censored before the publication mechanism, the above features of the Internet operates on a publication first mechanism which challenges the authority's ability to cover stories quietly.

Secondly, it was observed that Internet's diversified platform promoted quantitative development. When Ai received the court order to pay the fine for tax evasion, he used several Microblog accounts to release information. Three of the major Microblogs were used; Sina Weibo,²⁴² Twitter, and Google + (fig.6.3: left). Ai and his staff used several Microblog accounts to actively inform followers and the public about this event. Such diversified platforms were advantageous in raising quantitative development. Although some Chinese access Twitter through websites that skirt the Chinese firewall, officially it is blocked in China. Ai and his staff primarily used Twitter to reach Western followers and Weibo to reach Chinese followers. Through diversified Microblog accounts, Ai maximized exposure about his situation to the national and international public.

²⁴¹ McQuail.

²⁴² Ai's Weibo account was locked in 7th November, 2011 after Ai's fund raising campaign. 'Sina Blocks Weibo Accounts in Wake of Ai Weiwei's Fundraising Campaign'.



Fig 6.3: left) Ai Weiwei's Google+ page with a picture of the government notice



Fig 6.4: right) Ai's staff Twitter posted the government notice with an external blog link for the full text²⁴³

The fig 6.4: right) is a Tweet from one of Ai's staff on her account, which wrote "Ai Weiwei is Not Free Yet; Look Fake Company's tax bureau final order notification full text."²⁴⁴ She led readers to read the full text of the notice from the government. Since Twitter limits the number of characters in a tweet, she simply added an external blog link to the full published contents of the government order. When readers clicked the external blog link, they could directly enter the blog and read the full text without any additional process. The sender (the staff) utilized different types of platforms with different advantages. In this case, diversified types of Internet media, not just diversified Microblog accounts, were utilized. She used the Microblog as a platform to raise the efficiency of broadcasting. The blog service was used to offer readers fuller content, with a picture of the government order presented to raise persuasive power over the reader. It is more convincing and raises more sentiment to show the full text of the court order and the picture than only broadcasting text via Micro posts, such as "Ai is accused for tax evasion and got the court order to pay a fine." By utilizing diversified tools with easy interchangeability, the Internet boosts quantitative development (high efficiency of broadcasting by Twitter) as facts become more convincing. From the readers' perspective, diversified tools raise the qualitative development, because they can receive more information than the simple Micro-post. It is advantageous for the readers in that they can be further stimulated by diversified information.

Before I account further findings in quantitative development, it is important to understand the "@" function of Microblogs, one of the key features to Microblog broadcasting. For

²⁴³ 'Twitter 艳萍 (duyanpili)' <<https://twitter.com/duyanpili>> [accessed 21 March 2013].

²⁴⁴ The official name of Ai's company (studio)

instance, in fig 6.4: right) Ai's staff member wrote "@aiww" and "@puzhiqiang." By using the "@," her content was shown on Ai's main Twitter page and subsequently was shown to Ai's followers. In Twitter, "@" is essentially a tagging function that expands the exposure of the content. When Ai's staff member posted content on her main Twitter page, it was not only exposed on her page, but also exposed on the main page of two other accounts; "aiww" and "puzhiqiang." Using the "@" function, her Tweet was exposed to over 250 thousand people.²⁴⁵ Additionally, 10 people Retweeted (sharing function) the post, so this information was displayed on 13 individual's main pages. If "@" was not added, the content would have only been exposed to two types of users; 1) those who are already following this person, 2) those who visit this person's main Twitter page. But she added "@aiww" and "@puzhiqiang," so the content is shown to; 1) users who are following this person, 2) users who visit this person's main Twitter page, 3) users who visit "aiww" main Twitter page, 4) users who visit "puzhiqiang's" main page. I call this function of Twitter and other Microblogs as "*Networked Broadcasting Method*." The simple "@" function raises the capacity to broadcast information at a higher level, which significantly promotes quantitative expansion. Exposer to a larger public means stimulating a larger public's curiosity and thus recruiting more participants.

A third example of quantitative development was observed by this "@" function. Networked broadcasting method promoted significant quantitative development, especially during the money raising campaign. The money raising campaign was started on November 3rd, 2011, via Micro-posts by Ai and his staff.

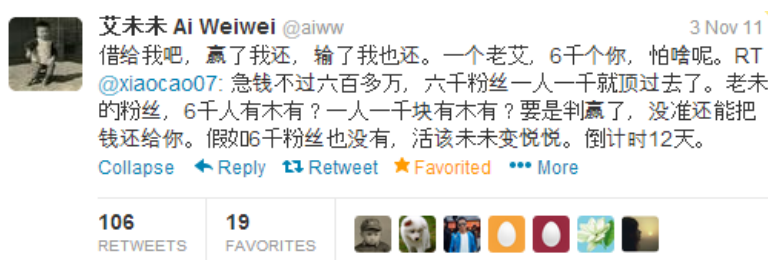


Fig 6.5) Ai's money raising campaign on his Twitter²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ In 23rd March 2013, the staff in fig.7: left) who published content has 18244 followers. Ai has 209.030 followers, and Pu Zhiqiang who was appeared on fig.7: left) as "@" has 42524 followers. The number of 250 thousand followers was based on the calculation of above numbers.

²⁴⁶ 'Twitter 艾未未 Ai Weiwei (aiww)' <<https://twitter.com/aiww>> [accessed 21 March 2013].

Fig 6.5) Ai's Tweet; "Please lend me money, I will pay it back no matter if I win or lose.....D-day is in 12 days."²⁴⁷ Ai's staff also uploaded Micro-posts on how to lend money to him (Fig 6.6-6.7).

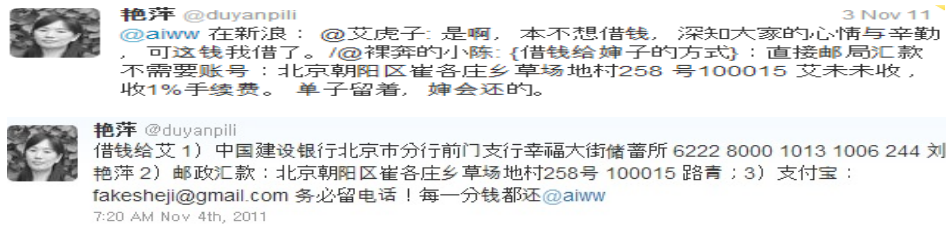


Fig 6.6: top) Ai's staff posting a money raising ad on Twitter which also mentions Weibo activities²⁴⁸

Fig 6.7: bottom) Ai's staff member's money raising ad on her Twitter²⁴⁹

Fig 6.6: top) says "@aiww at Sina Weibo... Yes, I don't want to borrow money...but I will borrow the money... You can directly send money by post: Beijing, Chaoyang district ..." ²⁵⁰ By this Tweet, we can understand that the money raising campaign was also broadcasted via Sina Weibo. Fig 6.7: bottom) contains several specific methods to lend Ai money. This information was spread quickly by using the "@" function. Many individuals who followed Ai's plight not only sent money, but also spread his studio address through their own network in order to encourage others to send money to his house.

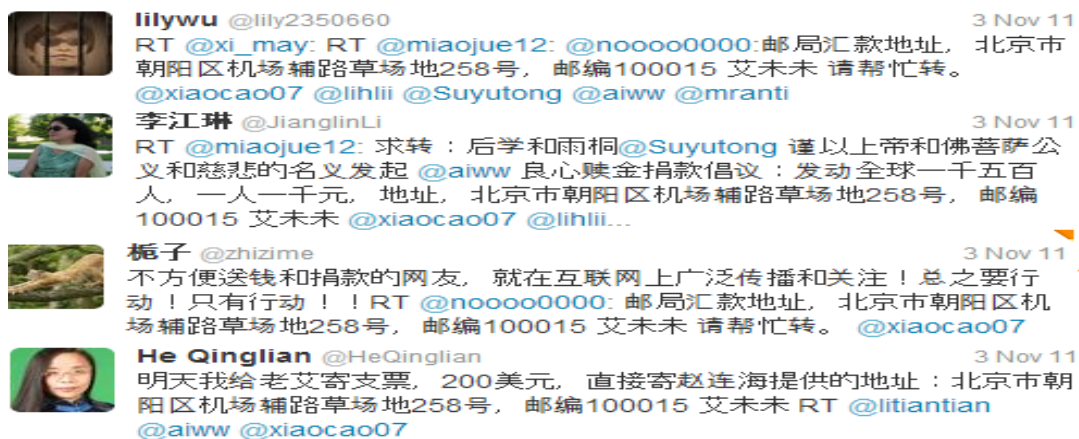


Fig 6.8) four different Twitter users spreading Ai's home address on November 3rd²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ Translated to English by the author

²⁴⁸ 'Twitter 艳萍 (duyanpili)'.

²⁴⁹ 'Twitter 艳萍 (duyanpili)'.

²⁵⁰ Translated to English by the author

²⁵¹ 'Lilywu (lily2350660) on Twitter' <<https://twitter.com/lily2350660>> [accessed 31 March 2013]; '李江琳 (JianglinLi) on Twitter' <<https://twitter.com/JianglinLi>> [accessed 31 March 2013]; '梔子 (zhizime) on Twitter' <<https://twitter.com/zhizime>> [accessed 31 March 2013]; 'He Qinglian (HeQinglian) on Twitter' <<https://twitter.com/HeQinglian>> [accessed 31 March 2013].

Fig 6.8) shows a high dissemination of information. With networked broadcasting method, four individuals raised the efficiency of broadcasting to a great level. The first user lists eight @, which means that this information was shown on a total of nine user's main pages (including the user himself). The @ function on Twitter maximized a way for users to participate in the movement; it transformed the individuals' role as not only an information receiver, but also as a broadcaster. This maximized the efficiency of recruiting participants and promoting quantitative development in a short time. In the money raising process, individuals could participate in two different ways; A) by sending money to Ai, which increased the quantitative development of the campaign, B) by @ and Retweeting, individuals promoted the advertisement of the campaign and became directly involved with recruitment process (expansion of public attention). With the combination of A) and B), the event spread rapidly with explosive broadcasting capacity.

The amount raised by the campaign illustrates the significant power of Microblog broadcasting. 12 hours after the money raising campaign was published, more than 5232 supporters raised money for Ai.²⁵² The status of the campaign was broadcasted daily by Ai and Ai's staff via Microblogs. According to the Twitter from Ai's staff, at 22:00 on November 4th, the total amount raised was almost 160,000 USD less than a million RMB (fig 6.9 top). By November 5th, the amount raised had nearly tripled, reaching over 400,000USD - more than 2.5million RMB (fig 6.9 bottom).

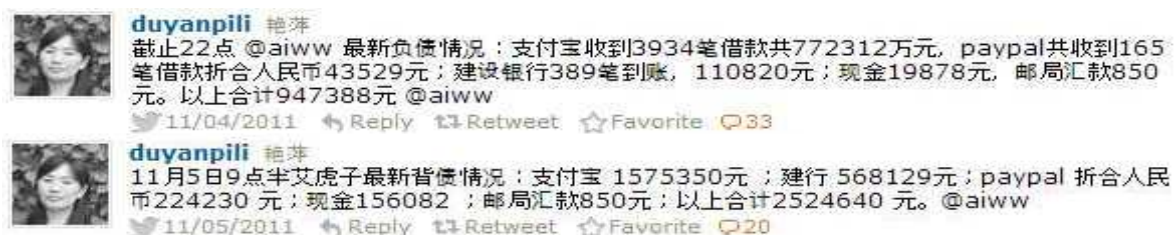


Fig 6.9) Ai's staff's money raising status report on Twitter, November 4th and 5th²⁵³

According to research, Weibo users in China are relatively well educated (more than one-third have a university degree, and 10% a higher degree), professional (28% work in the Information Technology Industry) and coastal-metropolitan (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Fujian residents account for two-thirds of respondents).²⁵⁴ Ai's money raising campaign which started from Microblogs, had a noticeable' impact on the mass

²⁵² 'BBC News - Ai Weiwei China Tax Bill Paid by Supporters'.

²⁵³ 'Twitter 艳萍 (duyanpili)'.

²⁵⁴ Sullivan, 'A Tale of Two Microblogs in China'.

public's agenda in a relatively short period. Not only wealthy and influential individuals, but also the general public came to Ai's studio address to throw money over the wall. By the November 5th, 2011, the money raised by studio visitor reached over 25,000USD (fig 6.9).²⁵⁵

The below example illustrates how Ai bypassed the authority's shutdown of his Weibo account and continued to encourage collective intelligence from the quantitative development perspective.

After Ai's Chinese Weibo and blog were censored during the money raising campaign, a new Weibo page appeared under the user name "Ma Lei Ge Bi" (in Chinese: 马勒戈壁. fig 6.10). It was Ai's new Weibo.²⁵⁶



Fig. 6.10) Ai's Weibo with the new user name "马勒戈壁"

Compared with his previous Weibo and blog, Ai writes less about his direct criticism of the authority and democratic ideology. However, in this platform, he still continues to communication with the public.

According to Guobin Yang, the methods of resisting power through digital forms are called "digital hidden transcripts."²⁵⁷ One of these digital hidden transcripts is called "online guerilla war." Online guerilla war is when one person controls multiple accounts. Ai continues to resist the government's censorship by using this type of hidden transcript. If a website is shut down, technology now makes it easy for an individual to open another.²⁵⁸ Ai continuously creates new broadcasting platforms to communicate with the public and build networks with less censorship. It is not difficult to create new Weibo accounts, which means that he can

²⁵⁵ Klayman.

²⁵⁶ '马勒戈壁--的微博 新浪微博-随时随地分享身边的新鲜事儿'

<http://www.weibo.com/u/3080105675?topnav=1&wvr=5&topsug=1&profile_ftype=1> [accessed 4 April 2013].

²⁵⁷ Guobin Yang, *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online* (Columbia University Press, 2009).

²⁵⁸ Yang, p 60-61.

easily remobilize his collective following whenever of his accounts is deleted. It can be said that the Internet offers information and knowledge in a way that increases its exposure and helps it to survive censorship. This is directly connected with the idea of collective intelligence. In mass media, information is less likely to survive once it has been censored. On the Internet, individuals can recruit more participants to interact and mobilize public opinion by creating multiple social media accounts. In sum, “online guerilla war” strategy in digital hidden transcripts promotes information to raise quantitative development and become an influential power by offering increased exposure to the public.

Ai’s new Weibo account name illustrates another type of the digital hidden transcript, linguistic strategy. His user name “Ma Lei Ge Bi” originally means Mahler Gobi, but it is homophone of “your mother's fucking cunt.” In the Internet sphere, the second meaning of “Ma Lei Ge Bi” is the one generally recognized. For Ai, this is a curse towards the authority and the censorship. In his short film and performances, this word often appears to curse the Chinese authority and criticize censorship.²⁵⁹ With a linguistic hidden transcript strategy, Ai could indirectly express dissident opinions that would otherwise be filtered right away. A linguistic strategy typically promotes qualitative growth. With a linguistic hidden transcript, diversified information and knowledge can be combined, offering the public an independent public sphere. However, in the case of Ai’s new account, it could be said that a linguistic hidden transcript offered Ai the possibility to expose to the public his political standpoint. This made his new account easily recognizable and easily regained the public’s attention.

6.3.3 Discovery of Qualitative growth

During this case analysis, several distinguishable qualitative growth patterns that promoted influential power were observed.

The first instance of qualitative growth was observed during Ai’s arrest in the airport. On the same day, the police raided Ai’s studio in Beijing and took several computers. Ai’s staffs and wife were investigated. This situation was broadcasted by his staffs to individuals outside of the studio via Twitter. Below fig 6.11) shows three different individuals posting on different Twitter accounts about the studio being raided. On the top of fig 6.11), Ai’s staff Tweeted

²⁵⁹ 草泥马祖国 *Fuck Your Motherland*, 2012

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXtHw42aXg0&feature=youtube_gdata_player> [accessed 4 April 2013];

Ai Weiwei Sing Grass Mud Horse Fuck Song for His Lenders 艾未未唱草泥馬之歌英文字幕版, 2011

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nsk-KgD0aOM&feature=youtube_gdata_player> [accessed 4 April 2013].

with Ai’s Twitter account “The studio staff and volunteers were taken away by the police officer for investigation. Ai’s wife is at home with a police officer. *Now*, the front and back door of the studio are surrounded by police officers. Not possible to go in.”²⁶⁰ In the second post, another staff posted on the situation from her Twitter account that “*Now* the police still at @aiww studio. Studio has police tape rolled around it. Cars are not allowed to drive past. Today the police searched the place where Ai’s two year old son is living.”²⁶¹ On the third Twitter of below fig 6.11), a user paying attention to the case spread a post written by staff who was inside the studio when it was raided. He wrote “Ai Weiwei’s studio staffs are locked in the studio.....FeiFei’s Sina Weibo is @feifei0621: *Now* front and back door are surrounded by the police. We cannot go out.”²⁶²



Fig 6.11) Reports from several Twitter users who were on the spot when the police raided Ai’s studio

The Internet’s ubiquity on mobile phones raises quantitative development enabling information to stream live. It also presents events and information from different angles as it’ published by different positions as three different users posted about the police raid (fig 6.11). However, each post contained different information. All three posters were in different locations when the raid happened; the first post was from a person outside of the studio (The user used the word “cannot go in (无法进去)”), the second post was from a person who was inside the studio, the third post was a forwarded post from an individual inside of the studio (The user used the word “cannot go out (不让出去)”). These three posts also contain different content; one says “volunteers were taken away” another says “the police searched the place where Ai’s two year old son lives.” The actors utilized the ubiquity of the Internet to update information about what they seeing from their own positions. By that, the event could be

²⁶⁰ The post is translated by the author, original post from ‘Twitter 艾未未 Ai Weiwei (aiww)’.

²⁶¹ The post is translated by the author, original post from ‘Twitter 艳萍 (duyanpili)’.

²⁶² ‘Twitter 莫之许 (mozhixu)’ <<https://twitter.com/mozhixu>> [accessed 21 March 2013].

informed to the public with rich contents which offers the event to be more persuasive. It literately demonstrated “No one knows everything, but everybody know something”²⁶³ method. In the process of collective intelligence, these diversified angles on the information of the event sparked the curiosity of readers. An abundance of fully detailed information raises persuasive power. From the collective intelligence context, information about an event not being covered by the mass media maximized qualitative growth by stimulating individuals’ curiosity.

The second example of qualitative growth in this case was observed after Ai’s tax evasion and the government fine. Before the money raising campaign started, Ai and his staff broadcasted information about the tax bomb. The public reacted immediately, but in different ways, on Twitter.



Fig 6.12: left) BBC news and Foreign Policy Initiative (FPI)’s Twitter accounts broadcasted Ai’s tax fine issue on November 1st²⁶⁴

Fig 6.13: right) One of Ai’s followers uploaded a Singaporean newspaper report about Ai’s tax fine²⁶⁵

The public’s reactions on Twitter (fig 6.12 and 13) illustrate one of the major features of the Internet sphere; the Internet sphere is a highly de-territorialized sphere. Fig 6.12: left shows a UK based International news media BBC and US based human right organization FPI’s broadcasting about Ai’s taxi fine issue. At the same time, one of the Ai’s followers, Zhou Shuguang (周曙光), who is also investigation journalist with his Twitter account @zuola updated the picture of Singaporean newspaper article regarding Ai’s tax fine issue with his comment “At breakfast, I saw the newspaper with the title of ‘Ai is fined 7million.’ 7million

²⁶³ Lévy.
²⁶⁴ ‘BBC Newshour (BBCNewshour) on Twitter’ <<https://twitter.com/BBCNewshour>> [accessed 31 March 2013]; ‘FPI (ForeignPolicyI) on Twitter’ <<https://twitter.com/ForeignPolicyI>> [accessed 31 March 2013].
²⁶⁵ ‘佐拉 (zuola) on Twitter’ <<https://twitter.com/zuola>> [accessed 31 March 2013].

is Singapore dollar (fig 6.13: right).”²⁶⁶ All of these contents from BBC, FPI and Zhou were from different locations and nationalities. In addition, all of their posts added “@aiww” so that it also posted on Ai’s main Twitter page. This allowed users who were already following Ai further access to alternative media coverage. International media and organizations broadcasted this tax evasion case very differently from the Chinese mass media. For instance, whereas the western media focused on Ai as a political dissident, the central government media institution huanqiu.com (环球网)²⁶⁷ more underlined Ai as a tax criminal by saying “What never changes is that Ai’s tax evasion is a fact...”²⁶⁸

The readers are not only just experiencing simple fact that how the other locations broadcasting about the event, but also acknowledging cultural, political differences by contacting these contrasting and different contents from different territories. So in here, de-territorialized sphere is referred to “communicative de-territorialization”²⁶⁹ rather than simple geographical de-territorialization. Communicative de-territorialization realizes trans-local connections between different ‘present contexts’ across various territories.²⁷⁰ The Internet offers the public both censored and uncensored information. And with modern, globalizing tendencies, the distinctiveness of any particular national variant of media content and institution is being reduced.²⁷¹ From the geographical de-territorialization perspective, the Internet public sphere is a global sphere - advantageous in raising quantitative development. What should be highlighted here is the successful synergy of qualitative growth and communicative de-territorialization. Communicative de-territorialization promotes qualitative growth by shaping collective intelligence with international, multifaceted perspectives on the same issue. Communicative de-territorialization enables the Internet to be more independent and neural than traditional media, especially media produced under a centralized political-power structure.

²⁶⁶ Translated to English by the author

²⁶⁷ huanqiu.com (环球网) is the website version of *Huanqiu Shibao* (环球时报). Huanqiu.com is invested by central government online newspaper people.com.cn (人民网) which is online version of *People’s Daily* (人民日报). It is the one of sub-organization of people.com.cn.

²⁶⁸ Translated to English by the author, original content in Chinese is “第一个变不了的, 是艾未有偷逃税的事实...” Original content from huanqiu.com cannot be found, but founded new can be found at ‘单仁平: 艾未未“借钱还税”搞得太极剧性 - 时评 - 21CN.COM’

<<http://news.21cn.com/today/topic/2011/11/07/9698184.shtml>> [accessed 1 April 2013].

²⁶⁹ Andreas Hepp, ‘New Media Connectivity: a New World of Mobility? The Internet, Identity and Deterritorialization in Europe’, *Brooksbank Jones, Anny/Cross, Máire: Internet Identities in Europe. Sheffield: University of Sheffield. <http://www.shef.ac.uk/content/1/c6/04/88/28/Hepp.pdf> [31.12. 2005], 2005.*

²⁷⁰ Hepp.

²⁷¹ McQuail, p.41.

Thirdly, it was observed that the search engine offered the individuals the control of the information and promoted qualitative growth in significant level. Accessing forbidden sites from mainland China is not so difficult for individuals with certain technologies. It is estimated that over 100,000 Chinese were on Google+ and 20,000 on Twitter in 2011.²⁷² Access to Twitter is blocked in China But, in the case of Ai’s money raising campaign, Twitter was one of the major broadcasting platforms used. Curious, I attempted to discover how the mainland Chinese public could access Twitter. The result was that it is not so difficult to learn how to access Twitter, instructions can be easily found using the Chinese Baidu search engine. In addition, since the trend if using mobile devices to access the Internet, Apps joined with additional technology to also allow easy access to Twitter. As below (fig 6.14), the search result of “怎么上推特 (in English: How to access Twitter) produced over 6.5million results on Baidu.



Fig 6.14) Search result of 怎么上推特 on Baidu²⁷³

²⁷² ‘Chinese Take Creative Approach to Internet Censorship | Stanford Knowledgebase’

<<http://www.stanford.edu/group/knowledgebase/cgi-bin/2011/11/29/chinese-take-creative-approach-to-internet-censorship/>> [accessed 2 April 2013].

²⁷³ ‘怎么上推特_百度搜索’

<http://www.baidu.com/s?wd=%E6%80%8E%E4%B9%88%E4%B8%8A%E6%8E%A8%E7%89%B9&rsv_bp

Some results shows how to log into Twitter with a PC, some results shows how to log in Twitter with a mobile phone by downloading certain kinds of technologies (Apps). It is not difficult to understand that the number of Chinese Twitter users has increased since 2011. Yang classifies technologies used to bypass the authority’s censorship as technical hidden transcripts.²⁷⁴ The digital hidden transcripts are reflecting both political conditions and human creativity under the condition of censorship.²⁷⁵ The government is well aware of the public’s strategy for bypassing control; officials have been ordering Chinese media outlets to “strengthen information management” and “Crack down on false rumors”²⁷⁶ since 2011. It is also said that a high capacity to customize Internet technology can result in even higher censorship than traditional media.²⁷⁷ So how should we interpret 6.5 million search results with instructions on how to connect to Twitter? Few individuals have the prior knowledge required to modify software code and create programs that bypass government censorship to log into Twitter. Some of those individuals who do have this knowledge have posted strategies online for access forbidden sites. Search engines help to distribute this information by making it easier to find. For society with high information-censorship, such as China, this could significantly raise collective intelligence and qualitative growth. After all, the authority simply cannot control all of the information available on the Internet. Search engines offers actors control over the information flow. For instance, if an actor is curious about certain events, a search engine can offer the initiative to control and manage further investigation and research by offer relevant information and knowledge.



Fig 6.15: left) Ai’s Twitter profile²⁷⁸ Fig 6.16: right) content regarding the authority censorship in Ai’s Twitter²⁷⁹

[=0&ch=&tn=baidu&bar=&rsv_spt=3&ie=utf-8&rsv_sug3=13&rsv_sug=0&rsv_sug4=29236&rsv_sug1=3&inputT=14183](#)> [accessed 3 April 2013].

²⁷⁴ Yang.

²⁷⁵ Yang.

²⁷⁶ ‘Chinese Take Creative Approach to Internet Censorship | Stanford Knowledgebase’.

²⁷⁷ Morozov.

²⁷⁸ ‘Twitter 艾未未 Ai Weiwei (aiww)’.

Fig 6.15: left) is Ai's Twitter profile. Ai is still actively communicating with his followers. For example, he posted and forwarded over 20 Tweets on April 1st, 2013. His political ideology for freedom of speech and public rights is still continuously broadcasted. For example, in fig 6.16: right), he wrote ".....was arrested.....At the last interrogation, they suddenly asked about Jasmine.²⁸⁰ Answer was: It is a kind of flower that smells very good. Then I got released. I have no clue why he asked such question till now",²⁸¹

Comparing activity on Ai's Weibo and Twitter accounts, it is clear that Twitter is the public sphere with less censorship. And if the public wants access to a blocked public sphere with less censorship, search engines provide the opportunity to easily compare information with what is presented in mass media. Search engines function as a bridge. Resultingly, by offering the opportunity to access diversified information, individuals can contact with different perspective and opinions on independent spheres which promote qualitative growth.

Fourthly, it was observed that the public's digital linguistic hidden transcript was utilized for qualitative growth. Previously, Ai's Weibo account, with its linguistic hidden transcripts, was classified as quantitative development. However, when the public uses linguistic hidden transcripts, it can be classified as qualitative growth, because they ultimately raise neutrality and the independence of information on the Internet.

After the money raising campaign, all of Ai's Weibo accounts and public communication platforms became censored and content containing his name were filtered. However, Ai and other individuals found strategies to continue to interact with each other, sharing information on the Internet.

After the public recognized that searching or writing Ai's Chinese name "艾未未" would be useless since it was censored immediately, they decided to refer him as "艾神 (Ai Shen: means Ai God)." By referring Ai as 艾神, the public could avoid the authority's censorship, continue their communication, and maintain and develop the collective's intelligence. By referring to Air as "神 (god)," users expressed their worship and support of Ai. This expression can be found everywhere, search engine results, BBS, Blogs, etc. For instance, on

²⁷⁹ 'Twitter 艾未未 Ai Weiwei (aiww)'.

²⁸⁰ The meaning of Jasmine could be interpreted as "Jasmine revolution."

²⁸¹ Translated to English by the author, original text in Chinese from fig 6.16: right) are ".....被擒.....最后一次□□□,突然□及茉莉花,答曰:一□味道很想的花,之后被□放.至今不解其故"

April 4th, 2013, I inputted the keyword “艾未未”. The first result page only showed content that introduced Ai as an artist and the authority’s official news content regarding Ai’s tax evasion. Using the keyword “艾未未,” none of the public’s discussion or comments from Microblogs, BBS, or SNS appeared on the first page of results.²⁸² Next, I inputted the keyword “艾神”. The results on the first page were one BBS site, “Baidu Tieba (百度贴吧),” and a blog post.²⁸³

However, censorship of content relating to Ai was implemented far more strictly on Weibo. Ai’s last movement which was published to public agenda was by Microblog. The authority has noticed the speed in which Weibo can mobilize the public’s opinion. After Ai’s Chinese name “艾未未” was censored, the alternative keyword “Ai god (艾神)” also became censored on Weibo. When searching Weibo for “艾神,” the result says “According to the political law and policy, the search result of ‘艾神’ cannot be shown (fig 6.17)” - the same result as when searching for “艾未未.” Following the censorship of ‘艾神,’ Ai’s followers started to refer to him online as “艾嬋 (Ai Shen).” In this name, “嬋 (Shen)” originally means a wife of an uncle. But here, “嬋” is only used because it is a homophone of “神.” So by changing “神” to “嬋,” the public could avoid the authority’s censorship. Since the new name was a homophone, users quickly adjusted their searches and continued to develop the collective intelligence. In Weibo, searching for “艾嬋” results in 18,308 hits -most of the results are related to Ai (fig 6.18).



²⁸² ‘艾未未_百度搜索’

<<http://www.baidu.com/s?wd=%E8%89%BE%E6%9C%AA%E6%9C%AA&pn=0&ie=utf-8&usm=2>> [accessed 4 April 2013].

²⁸³ ‘艾神_百度搜索’ <http://www.baidu.com/s?ie=utf-8&bs=%E8%89%BE%E6%9C%AA%E6%9C%AA&f=8&rsv_bp=1&rsv_spt=3&wd=%E8%89%BE%E7%A5%9E&rsv_sug3=6&rsv_sug=0&rsv_sug4=2712&rsv_sug1=2&inputT=5078>

[accessed 4 April 2013].

Fig 6.17) search results for “艾神 (Ai Shen)” on Weibo²⁸⁴



Fig 6.18) search results for “艾神 (Ai Shen)” on Weibo²⁸⁵

Individuals referencing the name “艾神” are well aware of Ai’s political background.

Therefore, many of the search results generated by searching for this name contain political meaning. For example, one result shows a strong frustration from a user directed at the governmental authority by writing “...Students who were taught to call 110 (police) in brutal situations found out that the police officers who should help people are staring at the us, full of hate, isn’t it frustrating?...Ai Shen (艾神) said that it is entering the criminal domain if you try to know your own real nation (Fig 6.19: top).”²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ ‘艾神的相关微博 - 新浪微博’

<http://s.weibo.com/weibo/%25E8%2589%25BE%25E7%25A5%259E&Refer=STopic_box> [accessed 3 April 2013].

²⁸⁵ ‘艾神的相关微博 - 新浪微博’

<http://s.weibo.com/weibo/%25E8%2589%25BE%25E5%25A9%25B6&Refer=STopic_box> [accessed 3 April 2013].

²⁸⁶ Translated to English by the author, original contents in Chinese is “面对他们这般野蛮,自小接受教育的学生拿起电话打 110, 却发现我所求助的警察叔叔坐在对面恶恶恨恨的看着父老乡亲.这能不让人绝望...艾神讲, 当你试图了解自己国家的时候,就走上了犯罪的道路...” ‘艾神的相关微博 - 新浪微博’ <<http://s.weibo.com/weibo/%25E8%2589%25BE%25E5%25A9%25B6&page=2>> [accessed 5 April 2013].

宝宝的晴天娃娃：情何以堪呢？//@未成话：面对他们这股野蛮，自小接受教育的学生想拿起电话打110，却发现所要求助的警察叔叔坐在对面恶狠狠的看着父老乡亲。这怎能不让人绝望，所学到的一切东西都被颠覆，艾婶讲，当你试图了解自己国家的时候，就走上了犯罪的道路。//@何光伟：河南省立即停止强征血拆！中原父老



Fig 6.19: top) search result of 艾婶 on Weibo example #1 Fig 6.20: bottom) search result of 艾婶 on Weibo example #2

Direct complaints about the authority’s censorship were also observed (fig 6.20: bottom) in another search result, the post says “Ai Shen (艾婶) paid back my money, is this sensitive too?” This user also uploaded a captured picture of the Internet administration’s message about censorship, it says “The notice from the system administration: Sorry... Your Weibo contents ‘I just received 1001RMB.....@ Ai Weiwei (艾未未)’ has been censored by the administrator. This Weibo message is not suitable for publication to the public...”²⁸⁷ Contents which are not suitable for publication are continually being published on Ai’s new Weibo account “Ma Lei Ge Bi (马勒戈壁),” which refers to Ai as “艾婶” instead of “艾未未.”

²⁸⁷ Translated to English by the author, original contents in Chinese is “艾婶换钱了,这事也敏感?.” The picture of the phone page capture says: “系统管理员…抱歉，您在…发表的微博 #我刚收到艾嫂的 1001 元#...已经被管理员加密.此微博不适宜对外公开...” ‘艾婶的相关微博 - 新浪微博’.

Linguistic hidden transcripts with euphemistic meanings are referred to in China as “Grass mud horse (草: Grass泥: Mud马: Horse: In Chinese this reads as “Cao Ni Ma”) lexicon.” 草泥马 is a homophone for 你妈 which means “Fuck your mother” in Chinese. As Ma Lei Ge Bi contains “mother,” in the grass mud horse lexicon “mother” also refers to the Communist party. Grass mud horse is often used to express “Fuck the Party.”²⁸⁸ So on the Internet, “Grass mud horse,” “Mahler Gobi,” and “River Crab”²⁸⁹ are euphemistic words which are used to express the frustrating, negative and sarcastic opinions against the authority. This type of strategy obscures the use of coercion.²⁹⁰

Calling Ai as “Ai God” can also be understood in the context of the Grass Mud Horse lexicon, in that it can also be considered a criticism of the government. From statements made by the government, Ai is a criminal who committed tax evasion. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that he insulted the Chinese public and the Chinese nation by making the short film “Fuck you motherland (草泥马祖国)” and disseminating pornography.²⁹¹ By referring to Ai as a God, the public is expressing their dissident support of Ai and mocking the government’s statement.

Ai’s new Weibo name and the public’s strategy of renaming Ai in order to bypass censorship are important steps in maintaining an independent internet sphere in China. Unlike the mass media, linguistic hidden transcripts allow actors the platforms to create their own content on the Internet. Mass media content is guided by government institutions, often meaning that content is pro-government oriented. Content on the Internet is created by the public. This means that the public has more control over the development of events by expanding knowledge with their opinions and perspectives. This type of communication, the manner in

²⁸⁸ ‘Grass-mud Horse - China Digital Space’ <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/space/Grass-mud_horse> [accessed 5 April 2013].

²⁸⁹ “River Crab (河蟹)” in Chinese is homophone of “Harmony (和谐)” which is the Party’s propaganda catchword. Thus it is used to express the government’s censorship. ‘Grass-mud Horse - China Digital Space’.

²⁹⁰ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Yale University Press, 2008), p.53.

²⁹¹ ‘艾未未开始交代问题 涉偷漏税重婚证据确凿’ <<http://cache.baiducontent.com/c?m=9f65cb4a8c8507ed4fece763105392230e54f7376395904468d4e41dce204c413037bfa676750d55849e3a7a50f51541a0b560342a452ab49fc8834ecabbe57269d733712d5cd04e05a31bb8b83732c050872b9eb869e1adf14284dfa5c4af5244cb23120bf6e7fc5a1764bc78806426e2d68e38154860ce&p=ce6fc716d9c240ff57ed957949488e32&newp=c462cd15d9c340a805b7c7710c179f335c5bc4387ebad51e7489c9&user=baidu>> [accessed 5 April 2013].

which people engage and conduct communication, is conducive to the construction of individuals as conscious subjects.²⁹²

The Internet sphere, with its elevated autonomy, contains the independence and objectivity to raise the quality of collective intelligence. More importantly, collective intelligence has a higher chance of surviving and growing when strategies to escape censorship are mobilized. The Internet's high capacity to develop linguistic hidden transcripts is an excellent example of a strategy to promote the existence of collective intelligence in the face of severe censorship. In the case of Ai, the actors could obtain different perspectives on information regarding Ai by using the strategy of changing keywords to search, which could be considered that the linguistic hidden strategy made Weibo sphere to be closed to Twitter sphere. Resultantly, it has enabled a decentralized, yet effective, communication channel that challenges the hegemonic order in China.²⁹³

This last example of qualitative growth is Microblog networking. Because Microblog networks are publicly visible by default, the network sharing mechanism on Microblogs promotes significant qualitative development.

Ai's Weibo account lists 107 people in whom Ai is interested and 4,049 people who are interested in Ai.²⁹⁴ Because Ai is an artist and political/social activist, Ai is mostly followed by other artists and political/social activists.



²⁹² Bingchun Meng, 'From Steamed Bun to Grass Mud Horse: E Gao as Alternative Political Discourse on the Chinese Internet', *Global Media and Communication*, 7 (2011), 33–51.

²⁹³ Meng.

²⁹⁴ '马勒戈壁--的微博 新浪微博-随时随地分享身边的新鲜事儿'.



Fig 6.21) people who Ai is interested in, from his Weibo follower list

Fig 6.21) shows three people who Ai is interested in. All three of these individuals are political dissenters who are interested in human rights and freedom of speech. On their Weibo platforms, human rights issues and social movements which were not covered by the mass media were actively updated. Ai’s Weibo account bridges his followers to more information and knowledge by sharing these other activist’s accounts. By viewing Ai’s network, individuals can find more information on diversified social movements, information regarding human rights, freedom of speech and political discussions. For example, I visited the account of one of the users that Ai is interested in, “左小祖咒 (Zuo Xiao Zu Zhou)” is a heavy metal rock singer in China, as well as a social activist.²⁹⁵ Through Zuo Xiao Zu Zhou’s network, I can enter further human right’s networks. From Zuo’s network list, I found one user called “人由自 1199 (Ren You Zi 1199)” who introduce himself as “No against the Party, No new China” on his Weibo account’s main page.”²⁹⁶ This user actively uploads content related to criticism of the Party system, freedom of speech, human rights, and the abuses of government authority (Fig. 27). He also posts about highly censored topics, such as Liu Xiao Bo (fig 6.22).

²⁹⁵ ‘左小祖咒的微博 新浪微博-随时随地分享身边的新鲜事儿’

<<http://www.weibo.com/zxzuzhou?from=otherprofile&wvr=5&loc=bothfollow>> [accessed 7 April 2013].

²⁹⁶ The introduction is translated to English by the author, original content in Chinese is

“没有反对党就没有新中国”‘人由自 1199 的微博 新浪微博-随时随地分享身边的新鲜事儿’

<<http://www.weibo.com/u/2826865080?from=otherprofile&wvr=5&loc=myfollowhisfan>> [accessed 7 April 2013].



Fig 6.22) Ren You Zi 1199’s Weibo post regarding a police torture case and the wife of Liu Xiao Bo

By network surfing on Weibo, individuals can connect to far more information than what Ai himself broadcasts. Weibo networks offer individuals the opportunity to develop collective intelligence by learning different information with related themes. Sometimes, Internet technology, especially social networking, is criticized because it can be utilized by the authority to capture anti-regime collectivity – such was the case in Iran.²⁹⁷ In a society where freedom of expression is not guaranteed, the Internet easily can be used as monitoring tool to spot anti-regime collectivity. However, the example of researching Ai’ Weibo network illustrates that the Internet can also offer a great opportunity to approach and develop knowledge about sensitive issues. From the perspective of accessing information, individuals could easily find several other people who are interested in a particular issue and actively publishing information. As a result, the individual has a higher opportunity to be stimulated by diversified information and further develop their own interests. The open network system in Microblogs offers individuals a greater chance to develop qualitative development by connecting with diversified information and deepening their understanding.

6.4 Findings

In this chapter, I tried to reveal the role and function of Microblogs in stimulating individual’s collective intelligence in China. I selected the case of Ai Weiwei because Ai and the authority

²⁹⁷ Morozov.

have a direct and visible confrontational relationship, and the pressure against Ai was relatively obvious. By researching an individual who is strongly censored in the Chinese Internet sphere, I attempted to find evidence of whether the Internet offers special advantages creating influential public power.

My findings show that Microblogs are advantageous in raising information to the public agenda. Microblogs have a great capacity for broadcasting, enhanced by the ubiquity and speed of the Internet. They challenge the authority to a certain level, making it difficult to censor information that has already mobilized public opinion through quantitative development.

Although the authority practiced a high level of censorship, the individual (Ai) and the public found several digital hidden transcripts to avoid censorship; by using homophones of censored words, the public continued communication on topics which were supposed to have been silenced. Technological software for bypassing censorship could be easily found using search engines. This gives the public the ability to create more independent Chinese Internet sphere. The Chinese authority's continuous censorship can be interpreted as domination of information, a domination of the public. However, my results show that the Chinese public continuously cracks one of the highest censorship systems in the world and strives to democratize information with continuous strategies to bypass censorship. This indicates that the Chinese public is resisting domination.²⁹⁸ Through the democratization of information on the Internet and mocking the dominant elites, the public can maintain the public sphere (Internet) in an increasingly independent and neutral fashion – developing the influential power to democratize the public's position in China.

²⁹⁸ Scott.

7 Be a Newsmaker, Online Journalism

In this chapter, I will attempt to discover how online journalism offers publics the opportunity to mobilize influential power in China. For my study, I selected the corruption case of the formal deputy mayor of Jining. I selected this case, because it was first published and broadcasted from the individual's website. Using this case, I will examine the detailed process from initial publication to public reaction to find out how influential power was mobilized.

In the first segment, I will briefly introduce the concept of online journalism. Next, I will analyze the cases development using process analysis. In the third segment, I will account as to how the Internet was utilized in this case to mobilize power. Finally, I will discuss online journalism's role in China and its' significance.

7.1 Online Journalism

7.1.1 What is Online Journalism?

When the topic of online journalism is raised, it often comes up with several different names, such as public, civic, citizen, or participatory journalism. So, I will briefly explain the concept of public journalism before I discuss online journalism. Public journalism, in general, is a synonym for civic journalism.²⁹⁹ Public journalism started to become popular in the United States during the 1990s. It was during this period that studies began focusing on the phenomena of public journalism from an academic approach. Edmund B. Lambeth stated five conditions of public journalism from the alternative media and democratic context; 1) Listen systematically to the stories and ideas of citizens even while protecting its freedom to choose what to cover. 2) Examine alternative ways to frame stories on important community issues. 3) Choose frames that stand the best chance to stimulate citizen deliberation and build public understanding of issues. 4) Take the initiative to report on major public problems in a way that advantages public knowledge of possible solutions and the values served by alternative courses of action. 5) Pay continuing and systematic attention to how well and how credibly it is communicating with the public.³⁰⁰ Michael Schudson defined public journalism in a similar

²⁹⁹ Theodore Lewis Glasser, *The Idea of Public Journalism* (Guilford Press, 1999); Edmund B. Lambeth, Philip E. Meyer and Esther Thorson, *Assessing Public Journalism* (University of Missouri Press, 1998).

³⁰⁰ Lambeth, Meyer and Thorson.

context as “In which authority is vested not in the market, not in a party, and not in the journalist but in the public.”³⁰¹ Therefore, the word “public” in public journalism can be considered as referring to both participants (journalists) and themes (subject of the report).

The Internet, especially Web 2.0’s popularization, significantly promoted public journalism. On the Internet, any individual can easily publish their own investigative report with blog or other communication platforms. As communication media is primarily produced by and for the public, weblogs foster public journalism, understood as an explicit alternative to mainstream journalism’s deference to dominant commercial and political interests and to public journalism’s mediation of the public interest by professional journalists.³⁰² The concept of public journalism was continued online. And as public journalism was practiced in the Internet much often, so many people started to equalize online journalism and public journalism. But the meaning of public journalism refers more oppositional meaning of professional journalism, and online journalism mainly has oppositional meaning of mainstream journalists because online journalism limits the platform of the publication as Internet only, so platform of journalism is highlighted in the definition.

Online journalism is often represented by blogs. However, after online journalism became popular, online news portal sites that were run by public began to gain in popularity. For example, one online news portal site from South Korea “OhMyNews (www.ohmynews.com)” is a participatory online news website that receives most of its news content from Internet users. CNN also followed the trend of online journalism by launching its “iReport” service on which the public can upload breaking news stories.

Because of the functionality of the Internet, online journalism has similar key features like high-interactivity, hypertextuality, multimodality, and asynchronicity.³⁰³ There are few constraints for online news content, giving contributors the opportunity to call upon a range of sources.³⁰⁴ Online journalism, with its public oriented approach and the technological advantages of the Internet, promotes political participation and the engagement of the public.

³⁰¹ Tanni Haas, ‘From “Public Journalism” to the “Public’s Journalism”? Rhetoric and Reality in the Discourse on Weblogs’, *Journalism Studies*, 6 (2005), 387–396. Original source from Michael Schudson, ‘What Public Journalism Knows About Journalism but Doesn’t Know About “public”’, *The idea of public journalism*, 121 (1999).

³⁰² Haas.

³⁰³ Denis McQuail, *McQuail’s Mass Communication Theory*, Sixth Edition (Sage Publications Ltd, 2010).

³⁰⁴ McQuail.

As such, some studies state that online journalism promotes civic and transparent environments by developing “Little brother” syndrome.³⁰⁵

On the contrary, few weblog writers engage in independent news reporting. For the most part, online journalism covers the same topics as mainstream news. Resultantly, the influence of mainstream news media on weblog coverage is further strengthened. Some studies state that through their own reporting or that of alternative news providers, weblog writes are strengthening the dominance of mainstream news media rather than challenging it.³⁰⁶ In addition, the professionalism and quality of online journalism is also questioned.

7.1.2 Online Journalism in China

Chinese mainstream journalism is under strict control, with rules that dictate what can and cannot be published. Online journalism promoted a Chinese journalism sphere with a less restrictive environment. In particular, online journalism has led to a rise in investigative journalism by the Chinese public via the Internet, permitting serious discussions and debates concerning citizens’ affairs in China.³⁰⁷ For example, mainstream journalists are not allowed to publish investigative pieces regarding corruption or sensitive issues. However, the Internet sphere doesn’t have regional limitations on what can be uploaded. The Internet has made it incredibly difficult for local officials to enforce media blackouts on sensitive issues.³⁰⁸ It is quite common for Chinese mainstream investigative journalists to research news and information on weblogs or online journalism sites.³⁰⁹

The most popular online journalism case in China was perhaps the “nail house” case in 2007. Nail house refers to a household which has disobeyed the government’s order to relocate. In 2007, a photo was uploaded with the title of “The Coolest Nail House in History (fig 7.1).”

³⁰⁵ Haas; Axel Bruns, ‘3.1. The Active Audience: Transforming Journalism from Gatekeeping to Gatewatching’, 2008 <<http://snurb.info/files/The%20Active%20Audience.pdf>> [accessed 23 April 2013]; John V. Pavlik, ‘DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND JOURNALISM: Implications for Democracy’, *Brazilian Journalism Research*, 7 (2011), 95–116; Dan Gillmor, *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism By the People, For the People* (O’Reilly Media, Inc., 2008).

³⁰⁶ Haas. P 394.

³⁰⁷ Chin-Fu Hung, ‘China’s Propaganda in the Information Age: Internet Commentators and the Weng’an Incident’, *Issues & Studies*, 46 (2010), 149–180.

³⁰⁸ Susan L. Shirk, *Changing Media, Changing China* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

³⁰⁹ Xin Xin, ‘The Impact of “Citizen Journalism” on Chinese Media and Society’, *Journalism Practice*, 4 (2010), 333–344.



Fig. 7.1) the Coolest Nail House in History³¹⁰

The picture was quite extreme and it quickly became a popular issue on the Internet. The Mainstream media was very reserved in discussing the story. The first mainstream institution to report on the story, the Southern Metropolitan Daily, only published the nail house as an online discussion.³¹¹ The mainstream media's passivity in reporting on the nail house stemmed from the story being about a conflict between the authority and the individual. Then, a Chinese blogger with the user name "Zola Zhou" traveled to Chongqing where "the Coolest Nail House" was located. He investigated the circumstance surrounding the nail house case by interviewing the house holders. His investigation was published to the public via his blog, which many users visited and commented on.³¹² Mainstream Chinese media couldn't dare to do something similar. This illustrates the Internet sphere as a less self-censored sphere for publication. During the investigation of nail house, Zhou had no guarantee on the quality of his method of investigation. So during the process of investigation and writing, he sought out help from professional journalists.³¹³ It cannot be denied that the quality of online investigation journalism could be quite challenged by the lack of professionalism.

It seems that the Internet could be a great platform to promote journalism in China. However, although individuals are free to upload anything into the Internet sphere, the Chinese government also has been tightly controlling online journalism since 2001. With the authority's prompt filtering and censorship, many online journals are constrained in the same ways as the mainstream media.

³¹⁰ "'Nail House' in Chongqing Demolished" <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-04/03/content_842221.htm> [accessed 28 April 2013].

³¹¹ Xin.

³¹² Minxin PEI and Minxin Pei, *From Reform to Revolution: The Demise of Communism in China and the Soviet Union* (Harvard University Press, 1994).

³¹³ Xin.

Many studies have researched the impact of online journalism, with social and political contexts, in China.³¹⁴ But still, there is not much research about the detailed process analysis of case development. In other words, most of these studies only use journalism theory and political theories to explain the significance of online journalism in China. This case analysis is my contribution to filling in the gap. I selected a qualitative process analysis of the corruption case of the former mayor of Jining province to achieve this. By in-depth analysis of the event process, I will observe the public's power mobilization development and strategy using the theory of collective intelligence.

7.2 Case Process Analysis

In this segment, I will first explain the circumstances of the event. Secondly, I will analyze how quantitative development and qualitative growth were promoted via online journalism.

7.2.1 Corrupted Mayor

Li Xin was Deputy Major of Jining City in Shandong Province from 1994 to 2004. He was also in charge of Jining City High-Tech Development Zone Management Committee at the same time. Because he was specialized in managing high-tech industry development, Li Xin had many relationships with large, private high-tech enterprises. In the beginning of 2002, Li Xin met Li Yuchun, a business woman in Shanghai, and made her a victim of his corruption.

The deputy mayor proposed to Li Yuchun that they do business together. His plan was to set up the company in Shanghai, with Li Yuchun hired to run the company's administration. Because the deputy mayor was a government employee of the Communist Party, he couldn't register a private company under his name. Instead, he registered the company under his son's name and a fake identity. This fake identity was issued by the official Jining City Police Office. The laundered identity was legalized by the Jining City Police Office because of the deputy mayor's political position.

³¹⁴ Johan Lagerkvist, *After the Internet, Before Democracy: Competing Norms in Chinese Media and Society* (Peter Lang, 2010); Guobin Yang, *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online* (Columbia University Press, 2009); Shirk; S.D. Reese and J. Dai, 'Citizen Journalism in the Global News Arena: China's New Media Critics', *Citizen Journalism: Global Perspectives*, edited by Stuart Allan and Einar Thorsen. New York: Peter Lang, 2009, 221–31.

After the company was set up, the victim realized that the company had been established for the purpose of money laundering for bribes. For example, in December 2002, Li Xin came to the Shanghai office with a check for \$486,000 USD (3million RMB), public funds designated for the Jining City machinery Design Institute (济宁市机械设计院), and asked Li Yuchun to cash the check into the company account. Li Yuchun worked at the office for less than a year. By the beginning of 2003, she had decided to quit the company.

Then, on February 23rd, 2003, the deputy mayor, his brother – the Jining city police office deputy director, and hired gang members kidnapped Lu Yuchun. She was beaten, tortured, and threatened by them to not to spread a word about Li Xin's corrupted dealings.

The seventh day of the kidnapping, Li Yuchun was forced to go to the company's bank in Shanghai, because her ID was needed to withdraw the cash. At the bank, the staff that noticed something was strange and called the police. And at the bank, Li Yuchun was finally saved by the police.

After Li Yuchun was released, she went into hiding in Beijing. From there, she decided to call the police and report everything. She also tried to get the story of the deputy mayor's corruption published. The deputy mayor visited Li Yuchun hometown and tried to find her. Also through private process, Li Xin used his high-political position to meet with the deputy mayor and the police office director of her hometown (De Zhou:德州) and place Li Yuchun's name onto the wanted circular. When the deputy mayor discovered that Li Yuchun was suing him, he asked her to meet with him in person. She agreed. When they met, the deputy mayor kneeled down to ask her not to sue him and begged that no stories about his corruption be published. The negotiation didn't work out. On May 29th, 2003, Li Yuchun was attacked by seven men in the middle of a street in Shanghai. They quickly ran away. The attackers were deputy mayor's gang, the same men that had kidnaped Li Yuchun. On October 18th, 2003, Li Xin hired professional killer and 20 additional men to kill Li Yuchun. The deputy mayor's corruptive behavior continued, even after Li Yuchun had sued him. For instance, he transferred public funds of over \$1.6million USD (10million RMB) to his son's account and bought his son a BMW worth over 100 thousand USD. Li Yuchun tried to publish this event for a year, but no one was willing to investigate the case or publish a piece about it.³¹⁵

³¹⁵ 'Chinese Internet Crusader', *The New York Times*, 24 May 2005, section Opinion <http://www.nytimes.com/packages/khtml/2005/05/24/opinion/20050524_CHINA_AUDIOSS.html> [accessed 22 February 2012].

Furthermore, she called the police to ask them to investigate the case as well as suing him, but the deputy mayor remained in office whereas Li Yuchun had to go into hiding for fear of another physical attack.

On June 10th, 2004, the event hit a major turning point because of online journalist, Li Xinde. Li Xinde is former professional journalist who runs a blog called “Public Opinion Surveillance Net.” He was the first journalist to take up the case,³¹⁶ and the deputy mayor’s corruption was finally exposed to public through Li Xinde’s website. Because his report was properly investigated and written with convincing evidence, especially several pictures of the mayor that show him kneeling and crying, as he tries to convince Li Yuchun to drop the charges against him (fig.7.2), it received huge attention from the public in a very short time.



Fig. 7.2) Jining deputy mayor, Li Xin kneeling³¹⁷

The shocking story and pictures spread quickly under that tag “Kneeled deputy mayor (下跪的副市长).” Li Xinde’s investigative report reached approximately 1.7million clicks.³¹⁸ On July 22nd, 2004, the story of the corrupted deputy mayor was covered by almost every mainstream media group; from Southern Weekly, which produces one of the top investigative journalism,³¹⁹ to the Party’s highest media groups, such as CCTV and People’s Daily.³²⁰

³¹⁶ ‘Chinese Internet Crusader’.

³¹⁷ ‘下跪的副市长 —山东省济宁市副市长李信丑行录 - 中国舆论监督网--中国最著名、最有影响力的反腐维权网站’ <<http://www.yulunjiandu.org/article/64.html>> [accessed 27 April 2012].

³¹⁸ ‘Chinese Internet Crusader’.

³¹⁹ ‘Under Pressure, Chinese Newspaper Pulls Exposé on a Charity - New York Times’, *New York Times* <<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/24/world/under-pressure-chinese-newspaper-pulls-expose-on-a-charity.html>> [accessed 26 April 2013].

³²⁰ ‘南方周末 - 尴尬的“我行贿了”，艰难的民间反腐’ <<http://www.infzm.com/content/60721>> [accessed 27 April 2012]; ‘南方周末：副市长缘何向市民下跪’ <<http://hi.people.com.cn/2004/07/22/130150.html>>

In July 27th, 2004, the deputy mayor was arrested on suspicion of stealing public funds, laundering money, etc. After the investigation, it was discovered that Li Xin had received over \$731,000 USD (4.5 million RMB) in bribes between 1991 and 2004. As a result, In July of 2005, he was convicted of bribery and sentenced to life in prison, confiscation of all private property, and deprivation of political rights.³²¹

7.2.2 Online Journalism and Public Power Mobilization

This case could be considered as news that survived from both self and external censorship. The reason why this story could be exposed to the public, survive censorship, and obtain public power can be explained by several ways.

First, the lower censorship and speed of the Internet created the right conditions for the report to quickly and expansively obtain the public's attention. When the deputy mayor's illegal acts were first revealed, the story quickly reached 1.7million views. The online report was copied and forwarded to other blogs and BBS, which further raised its exposure. The report explosively collected the public's attention and significantly raised quantitative development as a result. This, as a result, shifted the case from being between Li Yuchun vs. the deputy mayor to the public collectively standing up against the deputy mayor. It is the same mechanism that turned a single individual's idea on the Carbonrally site in becoming a proper challenge with other users' support. With the public's attention and support, the report and Li Yuchun obtained the resistant and influential power to not to be filtered and censored. Unlike mainstream media, which is a physical institute, the virtual Internet sphere makes it harder for individuals to exert political influence. In sum, the Internet provides a platform to expose the news with a great deal less pressure and self-censorship on the newsmaker (news uploader). After the news is published online, the Internet's speed and less limited access gives the newly published information a greater opportunity to survive censorship. As a result, online news reports can continue to broadly mobilize quantitative development of collective intelligence.

The second pattern of quantitative development is the collaboration between online journalism and mainstream media. This is observed after an event gains public attention and

[accessed 27 April 2012]; 'CCTV.com-时尚频道'

<<http://www.cctv.com/program/qgzxb/20040727/102569.shtml>> [accessed 27 April 2012].

³²¹ '济宁“下跪副市长”被判无期徒刑：南方新闻网中国新闻'

<<http://www.southcn.com/news/china/zgkx/200507050065.htm>> [accessed 26 April 2013].

power is mobilized, as discussed above. This interaction creates a sort of “knock-on effect of power” and pushes quantitative development from the virtual public’s attention on to the offline public agenda. Mainstream journalists, especially investigative journalists, are aware of the role of watch dog functions; one of these conditions is that it is much easier to criticize an official who has already been accused of corruption by the central government than one who is secure in his position. This is often phrased as “it is easier to hit a dead tiger than a live one.”³²² Two weeks after Li Xinde uploaded his story on the corrupt deputy mayor, the government took action. On June 23rd, the deputy mayor was called before the Chinese Communist Party discipline inspection organs and “Shuang Gui (双规)” was implemented.

Shuang Gui is a special rule of the Chinese Central Communist Party that applies to its Party members. If the high Party member is accused of wrongdoings, the Party discipline inspection organs order the suspected bureaucrat to explain himself at a designated location and time.³²³ It is called “Double Designation” in English. The deputy mayor received a Shuang Gui order, but was not arrested. In addition, because the case was being handled by the central Party organ, most of the investigation information was not open to the public. However, because the government admitted to investigating Li Xin and was taking certain actions, the mainstream media became braver. On July 22nd, the investigation newspaper Southern Weekly published the first mainstream media report about the deputy mayor and the allegations being made against him. In other words, after the virtual public’s attention gained influential power, the government took action - although it looked a little bit as if the government was attempting to keep the issue in the dark. The government’s reaction turned the deputy mayor into a “dead tiger” which made mainstream media comfortable enough to publish the corruption case. It was a domino effect.

The mainstream media’s influence on the quantitative development of the case was enormous. The first mainstream publication of the event highly relied on Li Xinde’s online investigative report . Many of the pictures and overall content were copied from Li Xinde’s original report. After the Southern Weekly published the news, it was covered by central and local government newspapers and portal news sites.³²⁴ The joining of online and mainstream

³²² Qinglian He, *The Fog of Censorship: Media Control in China* (Human Rights In China, 2008).

³²³ 中国共产党纪律检查机关案件检查工作条例--纪律规定: Article 28-- 中国共产党新闻网 <<http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/33838/2539632.html>> [accessed 27 April 2013].

³²⁴ ‘南方周末: 副市长缘何向市民下跪’; ‘副市长向举报人下跪折射了什么?’ <http://news.xinhuanet.com/comments/2004-07/22/content_1629007.htm> [accessed 27 April 2013]; ‘下跪

journalism greatly raised the exposure of the news and had a great synergy effect on quantitative development. Five days after the mainstream media's first publication, the deputy mayor was arrested. From the first publication to the deputy mayor's arrest, the power of public's attention is clearly illustrated. The deputy mayor did not receive any sanctions during the year that Li Yuchun spent suing him. After the event was published to the public online, it only took 13 days to get a reaction from the government (Double Designation). And finally, when the mainstream media published the story on/offline, it only took five days for Li Xin to be arrested.

When the Internet's political influence is discussed, doubts often arise about the quality of information and interaction. Online journalism is often criticized for its lack of professionalism and quality.³²⁵ It is criticized that political online debates promote political dialogue but without crystalizing any form of action or change.³²⁶ It is said that the Internet cannot raise concerns about the fundamental preconditions and essential alternatives or transformations of a regime. However, what was observed in the case of the deputy mayor's corruption was a little bit different. Since China has a strong pattern of a centralized regime, the media institute shows high dependence on the authority. In such circumstance, information reported by the mainstream media is put through a great level of self-censorship. As discussed above, online journalism first cracked the information which resultantly made it possible to arrest the deputy mayor. Indeed, it is important to measure the quality of the activity on the Internet in order to evaluate its influence. In some circumstances, information in the mainstream media faces a great level of self or external censorship, decreasing the exposure rate of the information to the public. The value of the Internet should be evaluated on the possibility of less restricted publication of information into the public sphere. In the case of Li Xin, the Internet raised the influential power of the information just by exposing it to the public. Ultimately, the mainstream media, under a strong censorship mechanism, obtained the conviction and confidence to publish to the public. After that, the lack of professionalism in the news content could be supplemented by online and mainstream journalism's collaboration. Collaboration between online journalism and mainstream media

的副市长-山东济宁市副市长李信丑行录(图)-搜狐新闻中心'

<<http://news.sohu.com/20040722/n221144183.shtml>> [accessed 27 April 2013].

³²⁵ Julie Jones and Itai Himelboim, 'Just a Guy in Pajamas? Framing the Blogs in Mainstream US Newspaper Coverage (1999—2005)', *New Media & Society*, 12 (2010), 271–288.

³²⁶ J. Habermas, 'Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy Still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research1', *Communication Theory*, 16 (2006), 411–426.

also had a great synergetic effect on the quantitative development of the case. The influential power of quantitative development was clearly proved by the government's subsequent reaction towards the deputy mayor.

Qualitative growth was also raised at several stages of the case and raised the influential power of the public.

The collaboration and interaction between Li Yuchun and Li Xinde, the online journalist, shows a clear pattern of collective intelligence by qualitative growth. Li Yuchun, as an individual suffering because of a corrupt, high-level bureaucrat, tried herself many times to punish the deputy mayor through the legal system and through having her story published by the mainstream media. The problem with the case of a corrupt high-level bureaucrat is that there is usually a network of corruption. In the case of the deputy mayor, the corruption was not simply receiving bribes, but involved many other officials. For example, the Jining City Police Office which issued the fake ID to the deputy mayor was involved. The Jining City Police Office's deputy director, the deputy mayor's brother, participated in kidnapping Li Yuchun. This is a general pattern in political corruption, organizing and developing with a network mechanism. Many corruption investigation cases begin with minor politicians, only to later find out the major politicians were involved. The rule among mainstream journalists is that "It is easier to swat a fly than to hit a tiger."³²⁷

If Li Yuchun had written and published her news story online, there's a high probability that it would have either been ignored or censored. The collaboration with Li Xinde who was former professional journalist and has his own website raised the quality of the information. Resultantly, the news content obtained convincible power and a sphere to slip away from censorship. It is same mechanism as the Carbonrally site's qualitative growth from collaboration between the scientific advisers and the idea providers.

Because Li Xinde was a former professional journalist, his online report was executed with high-professionalism, based on his own investigation and evidence. He confirmed every details of the story and investigated the occupation and status of all of the individuals in the report. When he wrote about the story of Li Yuchun kidnapping, Li Xinde visited police offices in Shanghai to confirm that the case had happened. He clearly stated in his report where and who had confirmed the event in the police station as "Check Shanghai Ruijin

³²⁷ He.

Police station and the record from 6th unit of criminal investigation (见上海瑞金警署 和刑侦六队的记录).”³²⁸ Another example, when Li Xinde reported on Li Yuchun being suddenly attacked on a street in Shanghai, he wrote the car number of the attackers and the owner as “One of the cars was a black color, the Car number is LU H09999. After the investigation, it is confirmed as Wang Bin³²⁹ (其中一辆是黑色的, 车牌号为鲁 H0999, 后经核实此车为王宾所有的.)”³³⁰

The last part of the reports from Li Xinde also indicates his professionalism, which saved the report from certain levels of censorship. The rule of mainstream journalists when they have to reveal corruption cases is that they must mention and underline the Party and the government’s resolves to combat corruption.³³¹ Li Xinde clearly acknowledged the rule in revealing such a sensitive story. In the last part of his report, he wrote “However, we strongly believe that the justice of law will win this time and Li Xin (the deputy mayor) will not be able to slip away from the judgment of the law and the public.”³³² Resultantly, the report could develop qualitative growth because it was written by a former professional journalist, and the information could obtain a much stronger impact and persuasive power to the public, instead of being censored or ignored.

Li Xinde’s online report triggered the broadcasting and the publication of the deputy mayor’s corruption both on and offline. With the story being openly reported, the Internet sphere could obtain a greater level of transparency and openness. With such an environment, the public could discuss and build public opinions in a liberal and autonomic environment. This ultimately created a co-existence of rich contents and diversified opinions on the event.

For instance, one user posted article to criticize the media institute as “Found out the stupidity and servility of Shandong media from observing Jining deputy mayor’s case.....This case

³²⁸ ‘下跪的副市长 —山东省济宁市副市长李信丑行录 - 中国舆论监督网--中国最著名、最有影响力的反腐维权网站’.

³²⁹ Wang Bin was introduced at the participant of the kidnapping the victim. According to Li Xinde, he is Jining Zhongyi group’s chairman (济宁中亿集团).

³³⁰ ‘下跪的副市长 —山东省济宁市副市长李信丑行录 - 中国舆论监督网--中国最著名、最有影响力的反腐维权网站’.

³³¹ He.

³³² Translated by the author from Chinese to English, original sentence as “但我们坚信,法网恢恢正义必胜,李信终究逃脱不了法律和人民的制裁.”‘下跪的副市长 —山东省济宁市副市长李信丑行录 - 中国舆论监督网--中国最著名、最有影响力的反腐维权网站’.

has been discussed by the public for so long....Where has Shandong media been? Don't you know the responsibility of the media and listening to public opinion?"³³³Discussions in BBS sites have generated several different opinions and perspectives. For instance, some users argued "It is not a problem of journalists, they are just puppets at most (这不是记者的事,记者顶多是个大茶壶或龟公而已)."³³⁴ Or some commented as "Is it happening just in Shandong? It seems that all media institutes are like that (光山东是这样的吗?好象全国各地的媒体都如此)."³³⁵ In addition, different perspectives were also observed in comments that criticized Party bureaucrats, like, "I just think that the quality of the bureaucrats is getting worse and worse by the generation (只是觉得官员的素质一代不如一代了)."³³⁶ "This Party's number is up already!! (这个党已经气数已尽!!)" Other members of public were pay attention to the victim's status, such as "How is Li Yuchun?"

With different opinions and perspectives' co-existence, the online public sphere became less biased and obtained a certain level of independence. It offered the public a place to develop collective intelligence by being stimulated with diversified information. As a result, this created an advantageous platform to develop qualitative growth.

7.3 Findings

In this chapter, I examined online journalism and its social influence in China. Online journalism, as a continuous version of public journalism, shows less self-censorship than mainstream journalism. Instead of having a strong engagement with existing power, social orders, and elite hegemony which mainstream media does,³³⁵ online journalism appears to have a strong public engagement. Such a pattern appeared in China, where the government and the mainstream media have strong engagement. Because of a centralized hegemony system, mainstream journalists have no choice but to help maintain the values of whoever is

³³³ Translated to English by the author, original in Chinese is "从济宁副市长李信下跪一案看山东媒体的奴性与弱智.....这个案子闯入大家视野已经这么久,山东媒体你们到哪里去了?你们难道不知道公众的心声和媒体的责任?"'从济宁副市长李信下跪案看山东媒体的奴性与弱智_山东_天涯论坛'
<<http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-42-550062-1.shtml>> [accessed 28 April 2013].

³³⁴ '从济宁副市长李信下跪案看山东媒体的奴性与弱智_山东_天涯论坛'.

³³⁵ Douglas M. McLeod and James K. Hertog, 'The Manufacture of 'Public Opinion' by Reporters: Informal Cues for Public Perceptions of Protest Groups', *Discourse & Society*, 3 (1992), 259-275.

in power.³³⁶ The victim of the deputy mayor's corruption failed to publish her story through mainstream media, as well illustrated above.

Online journalism, though often criticized for its' lack of professionalism and quality, but it plays a crucial role in countries with strong limits on the publication of information-such as China. Online journalism offers the public the ability to become "newsmakers" via an alternative broadcasting channel, the Internet. The possibility of publishing the news to the public via online journalism encourages the public sphere in China to be an increasingly democratic independent environment. Online journalism allows events, news, and information to have an opportunity to stimulate the public and raise the influential power via collective intelligence. So to speak, individuals, by obtaining the ability to publish the news, raise the opportunity to mobilize influential power using the technological advantages of the Internet. Resultantly, the public can take a watchdog role against corrupt bureaucrats.

³³⁶ Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (Pantheon Books, 1988); Paul S. Voakes, 'A Brief History of Public Journalism', *National Civic Review*, 93 (2004), 25–35.

8 Conclusion

In this thesis, I attempted to discover the role of the Internet in state, society relations in China by analyzing the fundamental functions of the Internet. In order to observe the shift in the relationship between public and state power, I analyzed three online social mobilizations against political elites. The roles of the Internet were discussed by observing how the politically suppressed individuals mobilized and practiced their influential power against the dominant authority.

In order to evaluate the degree of influential power in the online movement, collective intelligence theory was presented - collective intelligence being the method of developing the influential power of information. In addition, based on two different methods to enhance and coordinate the information, I conceptualized quantitative development and qualitative growth in the collective intelligence. By developing the value of the information, collective intelligence raises its impact and influence.

The result of the case analysis indicates that the Internet sphere is advantageous in mobilizing social movements in China for several reasons. First, from the context of the opportunity to mobilize social movements, the Internet sphere allows a much higher capacity to mobilize than traditional mainstream media. For example, Li Yuchun was unable to publish her story and organize public opinion with mainstream media or other public platforms. However, the Internet platform offered her and online journalists the opportunity to expose the story and put down the former deputy mayor of Jining city. The information gained a higher chance of increasing its' power via collective intelligence. This was possible because the Internet has much less self-censorship than the mainstream media. The anonymity and equality of individuals in the Internet sphere also makes it possible for anyone to update and publish information which couldn't be exposed in mainstream media.

Secondly, from the context of advertising social mobilization, the Internet platform shows strong advantages in China. In here, the advertisement of social mobilization could be referred to as quantitative development in collective intelligence. The degree of attention and the number of the participants in the process of social mobilization is very important in practicing influential power. The de-territorialized Internet sphere, with its rapid sharing speed, offered Ai Weiwei the ability to successfully start his money raising campaign and

continue to resist the political elites. Short and advanced, the “@” technology in Microblogging maximizes the broadcasting function of the Internet platform. This enables the information to appear to the public agenda much quicker and in a broader fashion. By that, it challenges the authority to censor the information.

Thirdly, the Internet sphere is an advantageous platform in developing the quality of information. From the social movement perspective, it gives the movement a greater persuasive power. This could be referred to as qualitative growth in the collective intelligence. For instance, in the case of the human flesh search on politician Zhou Jiugeng, individuals started to suspect Zhou’s corruption. The doubts and opinions of individuals didn’t have any power to bring Zhou down from his position. However, individuals investigated evidence of his corruption on and offline and published it to the public. This collaboration, as a result, offered the movement a much stronger persuasive power. The investigation was possible because the Internet has massive amounts of information accessible via search engine. The public could follow their curiosity and investigate the issue, something not possible with mainstream media.

In the phenomena of technical hidden transcripts to bypass censorship, massive amounts of content can be utilized through search engines - offering the public to take initiative in information management. For example, individuals in different professional fields can update their knowledge online and others can discover what they want to know through search engines. For instance, the Chinese authority blocked the access of Twitter in order to maintain an easy construction of national commonality in the Internet sphere. However, the Internet search engine offers the opportunity to easily find technical hidden transcripts and bypass the authority’s censorship and filtering of contents and access. With such an opportunity, individuals online obtain a higher opportunity to acknowledge cultural and political differences by communicative de-territorialization.³³⁷

From the information perspective; by removing limits to the opportunity for information to be exposed to the public, the Internet democratized the publication of information. From the individual’ perspective; by removing limits to the opportunity to access information, the Internet more liberalize the process of interaction. As a result, information’s greater

³³⁷ Andreas Hepp, ‘New Media Connectivity: a New World of Mobility? The Internet, Identity and Deterritorialization in Europe’, *Brooksbank Jones, Anny/Cross, Máire: Internet Identities in Europe. Sheffield: University of Sheffield. <http://www.shef.ac.uk/content/1/c6/04/88/28/Hepp.pdf> [31.12. 2005], 2005.*

opportunity to be exposed to the public, and the public's greater opportunity to participate and interact together raised the opportunity to develop collective intelligence and obtain the power of information.

The state, media institutions, and the public are closely connected and influence each other. Media is a bridge between the state and the public, so by observing the media institutions, we can understand the relationship of the state and the public. In China, the open policy in the 1980s' put the position of the media closer to the public, rather than representing the state power. However, after the Tiananmen pre-democracy movement, the role of the media shifted to being the mouthpiece of the state power. The Internet's popularization and the flourishing of online information raised the Internet's position as a media form. The results of my case analysis illustrates that the Internet is more than an independent sphere to obtain and share information. It is a public oriented platform. Like in the case of online journalism, the corrupted political bureaucrat couldn't influence or exercise his political power against the Internet as he did on the mainstream media, so the publication of his corruption first appeared on the Internet. The detention of Ai Weiwei was also first published online. Further, the mainstream media only covered the positive side of Zhou Jiugeng's new policy, whereas the Internet sphere was filled with complaints from the public. Therefore, although a strong and systemized online censorship is practiced by the authority in China, it should be highlighted that the Internet itself is still maintained as a public oriented and independent sphere – separate from the state power.

Because the Internet sphere is relatively independent from the state power, it is possible for diversified ideas and opinions to coexist. The first diversification is observed in opinions. The public had different opinions on Zhou Jiugeng's new real estate policy and stated a human flesh search. Some agreed on his new policy based on the market economy, and some disagreed. All these different opinions stimulated the public in an objective manner. This neutral space promoted individuals to have independent minds and points of view.

Even though the quality of political discussion on the Internet is criticized,³³⁸ my results illustrate that the Internet sphere is more liberalistic than the mainstream media. What should be highlighted in here is that the Internet promotes the public's political participation and

³³⁸ T. Ogura, 'Electronic Government and Surveillance-oriented Society', *Theorizing surveillance: The panopticon and beyond*, 2006, 270–295; Tanni Haas, 'The Public Sphere as a Sphere of Publics: Rethinking Habermas's Theory of the Public Sphere', *Journal of Communication*, 54 (2004), 178–184.

engagement. In China, the public easily obtained the opportunity to be political engaged through the Internet. And as the Internet sphere is a more public-oriented sphere than mainstream media, it significantly decentralizes communication. As the communication pattern between the authority and the public is shifted, it was observed that institutional loyalties declined in the Internet sphere. It was very easy to observe in the Chinese Internet sphere that the public directly criticizes, curses, and creates satire out of the Party and the authority system. From this sense, we could assume that the Chinese public has a higher capacity to be “Dissatisfied Democrats”³³⁹ in the Internet sphere. This is a method of political engagement, expressing doubts and distrust of the government. Individuals can raise their critical opinion of political elites and generally be more negative toward political parties.³⁴⁰ This sort of pluralistic environment significantly raises the public’s position in a centralized power state.

My results indicate that even though the authority controls and highly censors the Chinese Internet sphere, the Internet shows a high capacity to raise the individuals’ position to a negotiable level against the dominant hierarchy. This is achieved by democratizing information and liberalizing the opportunity to participate in the collective intelligence.

³³⁹ Russell J. Dalton, *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties In Advanced Industrial Democracies*, 5th Edition, 0 edn (CQ Press, 2008).

³⁴⁰ Dalton.

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