



The right to freedom of expression versus media censorship in China: Chinese citizens and the Internet

SOA-3902

By

Yiyao Zhang

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree:

Master in Human Rights Practice

Department of Social Anthropology, University of Tromsø

School of Global Studies, Göteborgs University

School of Business and Social Sciences, Roehampton University

26 May 2010

DECLARATION FORM

The work I have submitted is my own effort. I certify that all the material in the Dissertation which is not my own work, has been identified and acknowledged. No materials are included for which a degree has been previously conferred upon me.

Signed: Zhang Yiyao Date: 26 May 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my supervisor, Jorun Bræck Ramstad, for her constant support during the writing of this dissertation. Without her valuable comments and warm encouragement I wouldn't be able to finish it. I would also like to thank Tormod Sund for inspiring me to write on this topic. I am grateful for the knowledge and guidance I have gained from Tromsø University, Göteborgs University, and Roehampton University during the past two years. I thank all teachers who have taught me.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines citizens' practice of freedom of expression on the Internet in China. It focuses its discussion on issues such as what channels are available for Chinese citizens to voice their opinions on social and political issues, how Chinese citizens raise issues on the Internet, what impact of the Internet is on traditional media, and what the attitude of the government is in responding to online opinions.

By reviewing Internet policies adopted by the Chinese government since 1994, this dissertation looks into existing online censorship applied by the government and self-censorship practised by individual Internet users. It sheds light on the reasons of the seemingly contradictory attitude of the Chinese government towards Internet and the widely practised self-censorship among Chinese citizens.

Through analyzing two recent cases, it examines the situation of citizens' participation in online expression in China. It addresses existing issues faced by Chinese citizens in relation to free practice of their right to freedom of expression.

Observing the ongoing phenomenon of a joint force, consists of traditional media and Internet companies in facilitating disputable online discussions. This dissertation also analyses the role of parties other than the government, such as traditional media and Internet companies, in favoring the practice of freedom of expression of the citizens. Taking note on the impact of Internet on traditional media, this dissertation examines the new trend of agenda setting and the change in information flow in China.

In the end, it provides suggestions for further research in related fields.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCTV	China Central Television
CNNIC	China Internet Network Information Center
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICP	Internet Content Provider
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ISP	Internet Service Provider
NPC	National People's Congress
RMB	Renminbi, the currency of the People's Republic of China
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration Form	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iii
List of Abbreviations.....	iv
Table of Contents	v
1. Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 Research Background.....	1
1.1.1 Legal Background	1
1.1.2 Technological Background.....	3
1.1.3 Social Background	4
1.2 Research Questions	6
1.2.1 Main Research Question	6
1.2.2 Sub-Research Questions	6
1.3 Research Scope	6
1.4 Definitions of Terms.....	6
1.4.1 ‘Political Opinions’	6
1.4.2 ‘Traditional Media’	7
1.4.3 ‘Free Practice of the Right to Freedom of Expression on the Internet’	7
1.5 Significance of the Research.....	7
2. Chapter 2 Literature Review	8
2.1 Conventional Wisdom of the Internet	9
2.2 Internet Censorship	10
2.3 Internet Policy of the Chinese Government	10
2.4 Self-censorship.....	11

2.5 Public Sphere	12
2.6 Alternative Channel and Political Participation on the Internet	14
2.7 Commercialization and the Joint Force	17
2.8 Summary of Analytical Framework.....	18
3. Chapter 3 Research Methodology	20
3.1 Selection of the Cases	20
3.2 Analytical Tools	21
3.2.1 Participants.....	22
3.2.2 Content of discussions	22
3.2.3 Links with traditional media	22
3.2.4 Links with offline reality.....	22
3.3 Data sources	23
3.4 The Researcher's Role	23
3.4.1 Neutral Role	23
3.4.2 Interpretive Role	24
3.5 Methodological weakness and strength	24
3.6 Validity of the Research	25
3.6.1 Researcher's Bias	25
3.6.2 Reliability of the Sources.....	26
3.6.3 Limitations of the Research	26
3.7 Ethical issues.....	27
3.7.1 Public spaces or private spaces	27
4. Chapter 4 Case Analysis.....	27
4.1 Description and Analysis of Case One: South China Tiger Event.....	28
4.1.1 Case Description and Analysis.....	28
4.1.1.1 First Round: Questioning.....	28
4.1.1.2 Second Round: Discussion	30

4.1.1.3 Third Round: Challenge	32
4.1.1.4 Fourth Round: Backup.....	34
4.1.1.5 Fifth Round: Censor	37
4.1.1.6 Sixth Round: Victory?	38
4.2 Description and Analysis of Case Two	39
4.2.1 Case Description	39
4.2.2 Analysis.....	40
4.2.2.1 Quantity:	41
4.2.2.2 Content:	42
4.2.2.3 Status:	43
4.2.2.4 Summary.....	43
5. Chapter 5 Findings and Discussions	45
6. Chapter 6 Conclusions and Suggestions	49
6.1 Conclusions.....	50
6.2 Suggestions	51
7. Bibliography.....	53
Appendix 1	58
Appendix 2.....	61
Appendix 3.....	68
Appendix 4.....	72

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Free practice of citizens' rights to freedom of expression on the Internet has long been a problematic issue in the single party state of China since the world-wide Internet connection was established in 1994. On the one hand, Chinese government has great enthusiasm in promoting the Internet as a commercial gold mine; on the other hand, it fears the unregulated Internet will undermine and challenge its power of the regime. Thus strategic control of the Internet has been conducted by the Chinese government at multiple levels since its birth (Tai 2006). In this chapter, this dissertation discusses the legal, technological and social backgrounds of the research.

1.1.1 Legal Background

Freedom of opinion and expression is one of the fundamental civil and political rights enshrined in international Human Rights law. It is clearly stated in its article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that

‘Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.’

Also, the right to freedom of expression is guaranteed in article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),

‘1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.

2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.

3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

(a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;

(b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.’

Even though China has not yet become a party of the ICCPR. It has signed the Covenant in 1998. As early as 1948, being a permanent member state of the United Nations Security Council, China participated in drafting the UDHR. As a member of the UN Human Rights Council, China has the obligation to abide by international human rights standards. In fact, the right to freedom of expression is legitimated in the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, which was adopted on 4 December 1982. In its article 35 of the Constitution, it says that ‘Citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy the rights to freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession, and of demonstration’. Article 41 states that ‘Citizens of the People’s Republic of China have the right to criticize and make suggestions regarding any state organ or functionary.’

In practice, media at all levels are run by the state and under severe censorship from the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party in China (Zhang 2007). Compared to the tightly censored traditional media such as newspapers, TV, radio and other forms of print media, Internet is believed to be born with a greater degree of freedom and openness (Papacharissi 2002).

However, as a matter of fact, Internet is far from censorship-free in China; quite the contrary, since the Internet connection was officially established in mainland China in 1994, Chinese government has issued a number of policy papers and regulations to regulate and control the content on the Internet (Yang 2009). (See Appendix 1) It is worth mentioning that among these regulations listed in Appendix 1 only the *National*

People's Congress's Decision on Maintaining Internet Safety was passed by the National Congress on 28 December 2000 which acts as law. The rest are mere administrative rules and regulations. In principle, these regulations restrict the content on the Internet and authorize the government the sole discretion in deciding what is harmful and deleterious content on the Internet.

1.1.2 Technological Background

Tai (2006) argues that one of the two premises of the Chinese government's enthusiastic embrace of the Internet is that the government believes that with proper technologies at hands, it can create a cyber environment with filtered information which are chosen to as fit to see. Besides the laws and regulations, using advanced technology from many international companies, China has launched several Internet surveillance projects to build up its 'Great Firewall' on the Internet in order to filter and control content on cyberspace.

In fact, tight control of international connectivity has been a key principle in China's Internet security strategy. All online traffic into and out China is directed through a limited number of proxy servers at official international 'gateways' (Tai 2006, Dai 2003 and Walton 2001). In 1998, China launched its ambitious Golden Shield Project as its first line of defence against anti-government network intrusion (CPJ Report). The ultimate aim of the Golden Shield project is believed to integrate a gigantic online database with an all-around surveillance network – incorporating speech and face recognition, closed-circuit television, smart cards, credit records, and Internet surveillance technologies, covering the whole nation. As a result, all online traffic especially international traffic is under surveillance by the Chinese authorities in the name of protecting state security and state secrets. Walton (2001) argues that this project threatens the protection of human rights, in particular the right to freedom of speech.

In May 2009, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of China issued a

notice requiring all PC producers in China, from July 2009, install Green Dam, a filtering software, on each every of the machine before they are launched into market. Green Dam, proposed by the Chinese government with a public stated intention of helping the parents to protect harmless children, is believed as part of China’s Great Firewall to control content on the Internet and block ‘unfit’ information.

1.1.3 Social Background

Surveys conducted by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) demonstrate a rapid growth in the number of Internet users and the Penetration Rate of the Internet in China. By 30 December 2010, the number of Chinese Internet users had reportedly increased to 384 million. The Penetration rate of the Internet had risen to 28.9%. (For data before 2009, please refer to Chart 1.1, the 24th Statistical Report on Internet Development in China)

Chart 1.1



(CNNIC 24th Statistical Report on Internet Development in China)

As it is shown in the chart, the absolute quantity of the Internet users in China is high. However the penetration rate is still relatively low as only less than one third of the total population is online. It is far behind the penetration rate of Korea, Japan and the United State, 77.3%, 75.5%, 74.1% respectively. Shown in the surveys, there are huge gaps of

penetration rates between economically developed provinces and less developed ones and between urban and rural areas.

Parallel to the ongoing shift of power from institutions to individuals with the steady increasing rate in the number of Internet users in China, Shapiro (1999) reminds us the attempts by powerful entities to set limits to individual Internet users through legislation and technological control. As it is mentioned above, technological control such as surveillance technology and filtering software justified by regulations and administrative rules censor the content on the Internet at the macro level.

At the middle level, Internet companies, such as Internet service providers and content providers, are involuntarily conducting self-censorship in order to get their license and keep running their businesses in China (Tai 2006). On 16 March 2002, a group of Internet companies under the China Internet Industry signed Self Disciplinary Pact to promise to run their business in consistent with the Internet censorship policies set by the government.

At micro level, for fear of believed unbearable consequences, individual Internet users are practicing self-censorship and being careful with their online opinions. (Becker 2004 and Lagerkvist 2005, Yang 2004, and Zhang 2007) All Internet users are registered with the Public Security Bureau and are constantly reminded that they are under close surveillance with serious punishment of the violators. Political dissidents and 'radical' online writers who criticize current political system in China are trialed and imprisoned occasionally to cause a chilling effect among the citizens. On 25 December 2009, Liu Xiaobo, a prominent writer and political dissident, who advocate democracy and human rights in China, was sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment merely because of his practice of freedom of expression on the Internet. His six essays published on foreign based websites during 2005 and 2007 were cited as main evidence in the court verdict. It was reported by the Committee to Protect Journalists that China imprisoned more than 19 cyber dissidents in 2007, let alone the imprisoned journalists.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.2.1 Main Research Question

To what extent can citizens practise their freedom of expression on the Internet in China?

1.2.2 Sub-Research Questions

1. Through which channel and in which way can Chinese citizens bring up issues, suggestions and criticisms against the government on the Internet?
2. What is the influence of the Internet on traditional media? What changes and trends have Internet users brought to the information flow?
3. What is the attitude and reaction of the government to online opinions?
4. Can online discussions bring any offline consequences accordingly?

1.3 RESEARCH SCOPE

This dissertation discusses how Chinese citizens practise their rights to freedom of expression on the Internet, which is guaranteed in article 35 and 41 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. This dissertation argues that the right to freedom of expression as a basic civil and political right recognized by international norms eventually guarantee citizens' rights to take part in the government of his country. Thus the aim of this dissertation is to examine how freely Chinese citizens can express their political opinions on cyberspace.

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1.4.1 'Political Opinions'

Considering the fact that China is a single party state, political opinions in this research

refer to opinions in relation to suggestions and dissents regarding government policies; criticisms against government officials and party officials' wrongdoings; and other general discussions on both the government and the Communist party.

1.4.2 'Traditional Media'

By traditional media, it refers to TV, radio and newspapers, which are the main forms of media and under direct control of the state in China.

1.4.3 'Free Practice of the Right to Freedom of Expression on the Internet'

Given the context of contemporary China, this dissertation argues that the enjoyment of the freedom of expression on the Internet means that citizens can freely express their ideas, suggestions and criticisms concerning political issues without receiving any negative consequence to either the article or the author. More specifically speaking, enjoyment of free speech should not incur deletion of the article, blocking of the website, punishment or arrest of the author.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

In its examination of the practice of freedom of expression of Chinese citizens on the Internet, this dissertation aims at offering insights into the role and impact of the Internet on contemporary Chinese society. Considering the fact that the Internet is becoming increasingly influential on traditional media in the context of China, the impact of the Internet and the relationship between the traditional media and the Internet deserve further academic discussion.

Given the fact that traditional media is under severe censorship in China, it is argued that Internet acts as an alternative media in China which to certain degree provides a public space for citizens to discuss sensitive issues and express their political opinions

(Tai 2006). It is meaningful to look into issues such as the impact of the Internet on Chinese civil society, its role as a public space and its potential capacity to mobilize citizens and facilitate their participation in the government of the country.

Moreover, freedom of expression, as an important part of citizens' civil and political rights, is also believed to be a precondition of democracy. Before the 1989 Tiananmen pro-democracy movement, a great number of journalists working for traditional media joined the debate on media censorship. They went out to the street protesting against media censorship and demanding media reform and the freedom of press. However, after the crackdown of the 1989 Tiananmen pro-democracy movement, many of the pro-reform journalists were dismissed from their jobs; some of them were arrested and imprisoned (CPJ Report). It is argued that since then the free press movement and the democracy movement in China at large has been stagnated. Thus, research of the practice of freedom of expression forms part of the larger discussion of democratic reforms in China.

Considering the fact that China is one of the few single party states in East Asia, examination of the current democratic situation in China helps to verify the relationship between development and democracy in the context of East Asia.

In addition, current studies on media censorship and freedom of expression seem to limit their focus to the practice of the government. Long-running discussions have examined why government employs such censorship on the Internet, what are the details and effects of the policies. This dissertation slightly moves the focus onto the citizens, examining how citizens practise their rights under different levels of censorship that exist in China. This focus can be seen as an innovation in this research area.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter builds up the analytical framework of the research by reviewing recent literatures relating to the research questions. It focuses on recent research findings and

debates among writers concerning the following topics, the discussion of the conventional wisdom of the Internet which believes that it is immune to government control; a further discussion of the relationship between the Internet and democracy; Internet censorship; the principle of Internet policies of the Chinese government; whether there is public sphere or public space in China; and online behavior, especially the motivation of political participation of Chinese citizens.

2.1 CONVENTIONAL WISDOM OF THE INTERNET

Deibert (2003) argues that landmarked by Lessig's book, *Codes and Other Laws of Cyberspace*, scholars have started calling into question of the conventional wisdom of the Internet which claims that by the nature of the technology, it is not subject to any control by governments.¹ It is widely agreed among writers in recent literatures that although difficult, assisted with sophisticated technology, many authoritarian governments in the world have managed to control not only the access but also the content on the Internet effectively. (Kalathil and Boas 2001, Deibert 2003)

Besides the conventional wisdom which indicates its lawless characteristic, the Internet is also seen by many as encouraging democracy, freedom and liberty around the world (Deibert 2003). Tai (2006) asserts that the Internet has started democratizing communication of information in Chinese society. This dissertation finds that the relationship between the Internet and democracy is debatable, however. As a new technology, the Internet is believed to have unconventional characteristics and the potential to facilitate democracy. Nevertheless, Zhou (2006) reminds us that technology can be employed to enhance democracy, while it can also be used to maintain undemocratic regimes. This dissertation maintains that the revolutionary nature of the Internet can be hindered by political forces. As Zhou (2006) further argues, "it is politics

¹ For supportive arguments and researches of the conventional wisdom please refer to Wriston 1992, Kedzie 1997, Barney 2000, and Selian 2002

that determines how a technology is used, not the other way around". Similar to his assertion, Norris (2001) finds a significant correlation between democratization and Internet users per capita in her research. She suggests that political change is a determinant of Internet diffusion, not vice versa.

Regarding the context of China, Zhou (2006) asserts that it is naïve to conclude that the Internet will democratize China. This dissertation considers that the mere access to the Internet without the liberty of expression might not be enough to lead to democracy. In Gomez's (2004) word, there are other crucial preconditions for establishing democracy, such as politically active citizens, vibrant civil society and a government which pays regard to human and civil rights. Papacharissi (2002) also points out that we cannot recreate the public sphere online when it dose not ever exist offline.

2.2 INTERNET CENSORSHIP

It is widely argued that seeing the cyberspace as a political challenge which is encouraging democracy and might threat against the authority, authoritarian regimes apply severe censorship online to minimize and eliminate negative political effects from the Internet (Kalathil and Boas 2001, Hachigian 2002, Deibert 2002, Gomez 2004).

Hachigian (2002) further explains that the worry of the authoritarian regime comes from the invisible challenges to it. She points out that introducing the Internet to the general public in a single-party state does not change the physical power of the regime but will heavily affect its persuasive power by which the state shapes public opinion. Thus authoritarian regimes like China adopt strategies which restrict access, content or both.

2.3 INTERNET POLICY OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT

As a matter of fact, the Chinese government applies systematic censorship on the Internet as introduced in chapter 1 (Deibert 2002, Tai 2006). Ironically, it is also the Chinese government that has been actively promoting the Information and

Communication Technologies (ICTs for short), especially the Internet. The reason for this seemingly contradictory practice of the Chinese government is widely observed and well summarized by Tai (2006), among others, that the Internet is seen as a prominent engine of economic growth in the national wide strategic plan and more importantly, with proper technology at hand, the Chinese government believes that it can succeed in creating a cyberspace which contains mere information which is fit to see.

As presented above there is a widely observed dilemma faced by the Chinese government, which on one hand it is motivated to promote the Internet in order to achieve economic growth, on the other hand it fears for the believed potential political threats from the cyberspace. Writers do not share a consensus regarding this dilemma. Dai (2003) asserts that “political considerations tend to outweigh economic benefits when it comes to policy-making for new economy”. Disagreeing with Dai’s (2003) assertion, Zhou 2006 argues that the Chinese officials should be described more as “development crazy” than “control crazy” and concludes that Internet policies of the Chinese government favor economic factors other than any others. Other point out that the Chinese government has always been trying to balance between economic modernization and political control (Kalathil and Boas 2001, Lagerkvist 2005, Hachigian 2001, Tai 2006). Just as the fundamental guideline of the Internet policy conducted by the Chinese Communist Party in 1997 says, “developing it actively, strengthening the management, seeking advantages and avoiding harmfulness, making it serve our purpose.’

2.4 SELF-CENSORSHIP

The effect of systematic government censorship and surveillance technology used on the Internet is argued to engender apprehension and self-censorship (Deibert). Lyon (1993) illuminated the situation as people living in an “electronic panopticon”. Panopticon is a wheel shaped prison with an observing warden in the hub which

convinces the prisons that theoretically the warden might have any of them under observation at any time. It was first mentioned in Foucault's *The Birth of the Prison* as a paradigm for the idea of surveillance. Foucault introduced the panopticon and concluded the major effect of it as 'to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power' (Foucault 1977). This dissertation argues that the systematic online censorship in China has a similar effect on the Internet users.

Observed by many writers, such as Lagerkvist (2005) that online individuals and journalists practice self-censorship. Hachigian (2002) states that behind the self-censorship of the individuals and the ICPs is the fear of being arrested or of websites being shut-down by the security forces. This dissertation argues that being aware of the surveillance technologies applied by the government and for fearing of the negative consequences, self-censorship practised by Chinese citizens on the Internet shares the same logic with the prisoners in panopticon prison.

Furthermore, self-censorship online among individuals and online journalists is generally considered as the most effective way in achieving information control on the Internet in China (Hachigian 2002). Wu (2002) believes that, besides other forms of censorship, the Party state effectively achieved control over information by turning every media worker into a conscientious self censor. Censored however, Lagerkvist (2005) argues that as an alternative means of agenda setting to the more strictly controlled traditional media in China, the Internet plays a crucial role in the process of building up public sphere in China.

2.5 PUBLIC SPHERE

Habermas's famous phrase *Bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit* is commonly translated as bourgeois public sphere. He sees the public sphere as a domain in which public opinion could be formed out of rational and logical public discussion and debate (Habermas

1962). O' Donnell (2001) summarizes the key elements of Habermas's public sphere as: universal access, reliable sources of information, voluntary participation, rational argument, the freedom to express opinions, and the freedom to discuss matters of the state and participate outside institutional roles.

Critics like Fraser (1992) and Husband (2005), among others (Calhoun 1995, Kluge 1993, Dahlgren 1991, Negt 1972) suggested that there are multiple independent public spheres. Further critics of Habermas's public sphere point out that the situation Habermas describes is too ideal. Lyotard (1984) asserts that in fact anarchy, disagreement and individuality rather than rational accord, lead to true democracy. Papacharissi (2002) states that the ideal public sphere, which Habermas refers to as a domain where public opinion could be formed after rational debate, never existed.

In relation to the research of Internet, Dahlberg (2001a 2001b), Fedback (1999), Jones (1999) and Poster (1997), among others have proposed that the Internet should be approached and studied as a public sphere. Tai (2006) argues that the Internet, as a popular tool of public communication in China has become a Habermasian public sphere in the twenty-first century. Imperfect as it is, it provides an opportunity for Chinese citizens to engage in public discussions. However, he asserts that it is more appropriate to use the idea of multiple public spheres, instead of the single general public in Habermas's public sphere model, to describe the Internet.

It is worth mentioning that Papacarissi (2002) scrutinizes the core of Habermas's public sphere by distinguishing the term public space and public sphere. He argues that virtual sphere enhance democracy while virtual space does not guarantee rational discourse but merely enhances discussion. Thus according to Papacarissi (2002), Internet in China should be considered as a public space which merely provides an alternative forum for political deliberation.

2.6 ALTERNATIVE CHANNEL AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ON THE INTERNET

Although the scholars do not share a consensus regarding whether there is public sphere on the Internet in China, most of them agree that the Internet serves as an alternative channel for Chinese citizens to express themselves and participate in political discussions (O' Donnell 2001, Papacharissi 2002, Lagerkvist 2005, Tai 2006, Yang 2006 and Zhou 2006). Lagerkvist (2005) argues that the Internet in China serves as an alternative means of agenda setting. He observes that more critical, sensitive, controversial or political news are first set in internet news forums. Tai (2006) goes as far as,

“Because public opinion on sensitive issues or topics in China may not be readily available or may not even be possible to assess from alternative sources elsewhere. The Internet has created the opportunity to allow Chinese netizens to express their opinion on important issues of interest and has thus become a barometer for politicians, governmental functionaries, and lawmakers, among others, to gauge public opinion and to consider actions thereafter.”

(Tai 2006: 205)

As Tai (2006) argues, the reason for Internet serving as an alternative channel for political discussions attributes to the lack of institutionalized channels for public opinion and the relatively tighter control of traditional media (Lagerkvist 2005, Tai 2006, and Yang 2006).

This dissertation will introduce two surveys conducted by the Research Center for Social Development of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS Survey in short) in 2003 and 2005. Even though CASS is the highest institution in social science research in China, it is not independent from the government from many aspects. Therefore it is a possibility that its close tie to the Chinese government might force its

researching result to be politically correct. Regardless of this possibility, this dissertation argues that the survey result of CASS is basically reliable.

In *The Survey of the usage and Impact of the internet in Twelve Chinese Cities* conducted by CASS in 2003 and its follow-up survey conducted in 2005 there are four questions on the impact of the Internet on government and politics as

1. By using the Internet, people can better express their political views.
2. By using the Internet, people have more say in what the government does.
3. By using the Internet, people can better understand politics.
4. By using the Internet, government officials can better learn people’s views.

Here I would like to bring you attention to the first two questions. In the responses to the survey, 71.8 percent of the Internet users surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they can better express their political views; 60.8 percent of the surveyed Internet users agreed or strongly agreed that they have more say in what the government does. Since the CASS Survey is part of the UCLA World Internet Project, in which Internet users from ten countries are asked the same two questions regarding the impact of Internet on politics and government, Tai (2006) compared the responses from Chinese Internet users and those from other countries.

Table 2.1

Cross-national comparison of self-perceived competence on the Internet (all respondents 18 and above)

Country	Percentage Agreeing		Year of Survey
	with “More Say” ^a	with “Better Understand” ^b	
China	60.8	75.2	2003
Chile	18.1	20.4	2003
Hungary	8.6	23.1	2001

Italy	37.1	33.4	2002
Japan	24.2	30.5	2002
Korea	25.7	18.9	2001
Singapore	19.2	20.0	2001
Spain	25.2	20.2	2003
Sweden	10.1	11.0	2002
USA	20.0	42.5	2002

^a “Do you think by using the Internet, people like you can have more say about what the government does?”

^b “Do you think by using the Internet, people like you can better understand politics?”

Source: Chinese Academy of Social Science Research Center for Social Development (2003)

UCLA Center for Communication Policy (2004)

Tai (2006: 202)

Table 2.1 shows responses to two questions by Internet users from ten countries. Tai (2006) observes that Chinese Internet users offered the most positive assessment to both of the statements. He notices that the difference in perceptions of the Internet’s power in the political process between Chinese Internet users and their counterparts are astounding. Tai (2006) attributes it to the lack of expression channels for the Chinese citizens in offline society due to the historical practice of media censorship by the government. He further argues that Table 2.1 shows that Chinese Internet users display the highest internal political efficacy which refers to the individual’s belief that means of influence are available to him or her. Again he explains that it is because the offline channels of political participation are much more limited. Tai (2006) asserts that with a higher level of internal political efficacy, it is logical to expect that Chinese Internet users behave more actively in political discussions on the Internet than their counterparts.

2.7 COMMERCIALIZATION AND THE JOINT FORCE

In recent literatures, writers such as Pan (2000), Papacharissi (2002), Wacker (2003) and Yang (2006) well notice the impact of media reform, namely, media commercialization on the operation of traditional media and Internet industry in China. Since the late 1990s when China gradually started its media reform, media received little or no funding from the government. Two of the most significant impacts are that audiences and advertisers weigh heavily on programming (Papacharissi 2002). In Tai (2006)'s words, "media can no longer afford to ignore public information demand and interest when eyeballs and circulation define the success and failure of media enterprise." This dissertation argues that the pressure from self-financing becomes the driving force for media to meet the demand of the audience in order to attract enough attention to persuade potential advertisers. Thus, some media are even motivated enough to cover or play edge balls in dealing with sensitive stories.

Yang (2006) sees a connection between online political discussions, especially contentions, with media business. He indicates that in the age of attention economy, sensitive topics and contentions draw online traffic, in another word, attention. Thus this dissertation argues that in order to keep the attention of their audience, traditional media and ICPs and ISPs are actively involving themselves in sensitive discussions initiated by Internet users. As an American representative of the Chinese-language portal Sina.com says, "We are playing that role, to let people talk about sensitive issues but also to help the government manage the flow of ideas." (Tai 2006) Quoted by Yang (2006), an editor from Sina.com describes their strategies regarding radical verbal exchanges in their BBS forums as,

"We let it follow its natural course in the initial period, to wait and see how the relevant agencies respond. If those agencies require us to exercise limits, we will follow directions. If the relevant agencies hold a supportive attitude or remain

noncommittal, then we will make a big deal of it.”

(Yang 2006: 115)

The willingness of the ICPs and ISPs to support online discussions of sensitive issues is well illustrated above. The pressure and the resulting practice of the traditional media will be indicated in the case analysis in this dissertation.

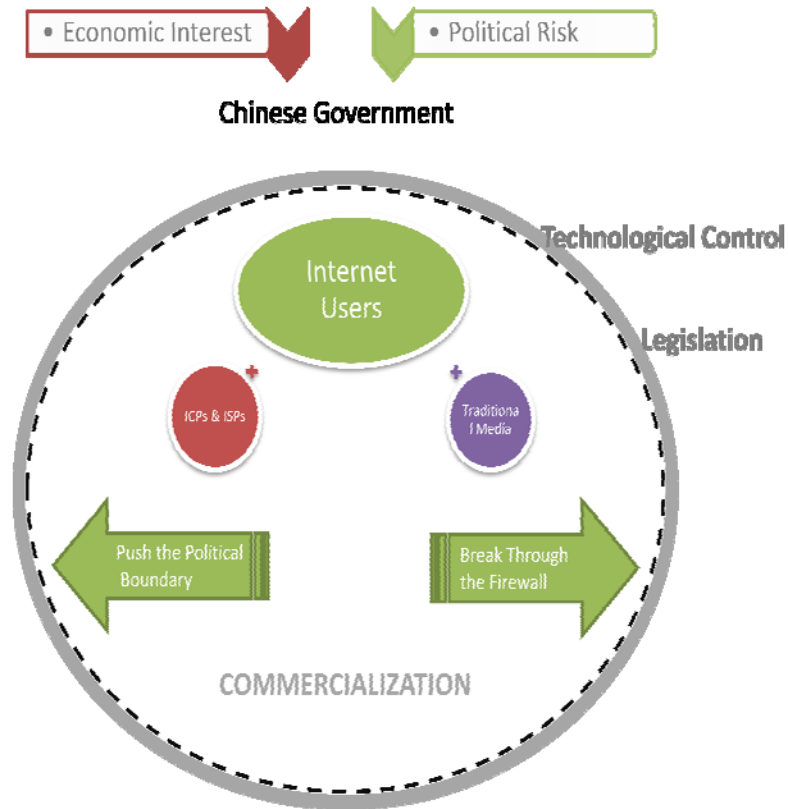
It is important to highlight that Wacker (2003), among others, notices that the boundaries of political tolerance is negotiable. As demonstrated above, this dissertation asserts that driven by economic interests, media players are intentionally and unintentionally covering the stories which are on the agenda of the Internet users even when they are to some extent politically sensitive. Thus the boundaries of political tolerance are constantly tested by the Internet users and their joint forces such as media workers from other forms of media and ICPs, ISPs.

2.8 SUMMARY OF ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Thus the analytical framework of this research is illustrated in Diagram 2.1 as below. This dissertation argues that driven by economic interest, the Chinese government has been trying its best to promote the development of ICTs especially the Internet to achieve economic growth since the 1990s. Meanwhile, for fear of political risk it has been controlling the content on the Internet firmly both by legislation and technological means. By controlling the reluctant self-censoring ICPs and ISPs, the government aims to restrict the practice of the Internet users and limit the content on the Internet to what it considers to be fit for the public to see. However, because the censorship over traditional media is believed to be even tighter compared to the Internet, there is a lack of alternative channels but a huge demand among the citizens to express their political views and participate in political discussions. So in a sense the Internet is believed and in fact becomes a public space, censored by the government though, still for the citizens to raise their voice in China. And in fact, due to the result of media commercialization,

traditional media and the ICPs /ISPs are actively involving themselves in expanding the public space existing on the Internet by bringing the issues discussed online to offline reality and pushing the boundary of political tolerance of the government together with the netizens.

Diagram 2.1



Chapter 3 Research Methodology

In order to examine the research questions listed in chapter 1, one needs to look into the situation of current Chinese society and cyberspace. It is unavoidable to refer to actual cases to facilitate analysis and support argument in relation to the practice of freedom of speech on the Internet in China. Due to the nature of the research topic and the limit of the resources, this dissertation applies case studies method emphasizing on qualitative analysis. In Yin (1984)'s word, case study method is suitable for studying complex social phenomena by giving an in-depth examination of a typical case or cases. Mabry (2008) also argues that case studies research can provide deep understanding of specific case or cases. In this research, it introduces two cases to explore the research question, namely, to what extent Chinese citizens can practice their freedom of speech on the Internet.

This chapter discusses the following issues such as the selection of the cases, analytical frames, validity of the methodology, weakness and strength of the methodology, the role of the researcher and ethical issues.

3.1 SELECTION OF THE CASES

Instead of choosing typical cases, this research chooses two informative cases which are actually not the most representative ones. Flyvbjerg (2006) gives a perfect explanation of the strategy of choosing extreme and unusual cases instead of representative ones. He argues that 'when the objective is to achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given problem or phenomenon, a representative case or a random sample may not be the most appropriate strategy. Instead, typical or extreme cases often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied.' Thus this dissertation chooses two cases which are rich in information and best serve the purpose of this research.

The first case, South China Tiger Event (Tiger Event for short), is one of the most significant Internet events happened in the year 2007-2008. It is considered as a big victory of the Internet users to raise their voices and challenge provincial government through the channel of the Internet. The widely joined online discussion proved the passions of the Chinese citizens in seeking for truth and justice via the Internet. The second case is the 5 July Xinjiang Urumqi Ethnic Clashes (Xinjiang Event for short) which drew significant national and international attention as a political and ethical incident. Compared to the first case, the complicated ethnical and social backgrounds of the Xinjiang Event contribute to its sensitivity.

The reason for choosing these two cases is that both cases reflect on current Internet censorship in China from different perspectives. The Tiger Event seems to display the freedom enjoyed by the Chinese citizens online while the culture of silence showed in the Xinjiang Event proves the extremely strict restrictions conducted by the Chinese government and self-censorship practised by individual Internet users. This dissertation argues that from these two cases we can draw a rough picture of the situation in terms of the freedom of speech on the Internet in China.

3.2 ANALYTICAL TOOLS

O' Donnell (2001) develops an analytical framework which contains seven elements for analyzing alternative media on the Internet.² I will apply four elements from his framework in this study to analyze the cases, namely the participants of the Internet discussions, content of the discussions, links with traditional media and links with offline reality.

² The seven elements in his framework are the participants, the production process, the content, links with the public sphere, links with political participation, links with social capital and linking local and global.

3.2.1 *Participants*

Here participants refer to Chinese Internet users (netizens). Since there is no way for the researcher to distinguish the offline identities of the netizens, participants in this research refer to merely the online IDs of the Internet users.

Internet is open to access to all Chinese citizens in China in principle, but, due to technological, economical and social inequality in contemporary China, it is important to bear in mind that there exist system exclusion among citizens on the Internet. As Tai (2006) states that there exist two types of digital divide in China, the gap between rural and urban and the gap between economically developed regions and undeveloped ones, current netizens in China do not represent the whole population. Thus online opinions do not represent Chinese citizens' public opinion at large.

3.2.2 *Content of discussions*

The examination of the content of online discussions will focus on the following aspects. What are the sources of online discussions? Do Internet users pay attention to the sources of content? Are there many original inputs from Internet users? Do Internet users conduct well-founded argument or unfounded assertions online?

3.2.3 *Links with traditional media*

Links between online discussion and discourses of traditional media on the same topic will be examined to answer the question that to what extent do discussions on the Internet abide by or challenge and influence the opinion formed by traditional media.

3.2.4 *Links with offline reality*

Although the focus of this research is to examine the practice of freedom of speech on the Internet in China, activities on the cyberspace is not isolated from the offline reality. (Castells 2001) This dissertation argues that it is crucial to observe the interplay of the

reality and cyberspace in China. Thus in case analysis this dissertation will try to touch upon questions such as can online discussions result in any form of offline consequences, to what extent can online discussions change offline realities and so on.

3.3 DATA SOURCES

The analysis of this research is mainly based on secondary data including online posts, personal online blogs, news report, TV program clips, diaries of frontline journalists, academic papers and other archive records. Regarding the reliability and validity of different forms of data, this dissertation refers to multiple sources before drawing any form of conclusion. Personal online blogs and posts are used as sources for diverse opinions and personal experiences rather than sources for basic facts. When it comes to basic facts, such as dates of key events, official news reports take more credibility in this dissertation. However, when contravention occurs, opinion and voices from both sides are paid the same amount of value.

In addition to vivid online discourses from Internet users, general statistic data released by the government is used in order to provide a general picture of related issues. This dissertation also refers to reliable interviews and surveys on Internet users done by other researchers such as the *Survey on Internet Usage and Impact Beijing* completed by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 2001; the Survey of the usage and Impact of the internet in Twelve Chinese Cities conducted by the Research Center for Social Development of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. October 2003; The CNNIC Statistical Survey Reports on the Internet Development in China and so on.

3.4 THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE

3.4.1 Neutral Role

Considering the fact that the cases chosen in this research have happened already, and

the researcher was not involved in either of these two cases nor did she directly join any of the discussions. Thus the researcher has no influence on the start, development and result of any of the cases referred to in this research. Therefore the researcher in this dissertation plays a neutral role. This neutral role benefits the researcher to conduct subjective observation and impersonal interpretation towards the chosen cases.

Nevertheless, the neutrality of the researcher also leads her into a comparatively negative position in relation to the research objects, namely, Chinese Internet users. For example, due to the lack of interactivity between the researcher and the research objects, the researcher is not in a position to examine the social identities of the internet users who were involved in the cases. Thus her analysis is restricted to interpretations of mere online activities of online identities.

3.4.2 Interpretive Role

Besides the neutral role the researcher plays, she also plays an interpretive role in this research. Referring to Stake (1995)'s argument that qualitative research demands researcher to be responsible for their interpretations in the field, this dissertation indicates that it is through observations, exercising subjective judgment, analyzing and synthesizing that the researchers can realize their own consciousness thus to build up a critical personal view upon the research topic. It means that subjective interpretations in qualitative research are encouraged as methods to reach analytical conclusion and generalization. Since the researcher of this research has lived in the context for many years her own observations and reflections into the analysis of this research topic makes her in a good position to play an interpretive role in this research.

3.5 METHODOLOGICAL WEAKNESS AND STRENGTH

Being aware of the criticisms against case study method regarding the weakness of it in scientific generalization of the group at large (Yin 1984 and Kathleen 1989), taken this

research as an example, this dissertation argues that on the other hand that case study can be rather rich in providing accurate details which can lead to profound findings. Compared to large scale quantitative research which is good at giving an overall description of the related issue in breadth, this two cases based research can provide some deep understanding of the sophisticated research topic.

Meanwhile, this dissertation maintains that case studies research plays a powerful role in social science in general. Flyvbjerg (2006) well defends the significance of case studies research. He asserts that social science cannot be examined in a context-free environment and the 'force of example' is underestimated. He argues that when it comes to social science, context-dependent knowledge is more valuable than any predictive theories or universal generalizations.

3.6 VALIDITY OF THE RESEARCH

Concerning the validity considerations of this research, this section discusses this issue from three perspectives, namely, the researcher's bias, reliabilities of the sources, and the limitations of the research.

3.6.1 *Researcher's Bias*

As it is mentioned above that the researcher plays both an interpretive and a neutral role in this research, it is very crucial to maintain a good balance between these two roles in order to lead to profoud examination of the cases. This dissertation agrees with Flyvbjerg (2006) in the view that context-dependent knowledge and experience are at the very heart of expert research activities. However, Clough and Nutbrown (2002) also remind us that researchers should explore the context with new lenses which go beyond the familiar and personal known. Thus, the challenge lies at the researcher's ability to take advantage of her own experience and to be objective and critical at the same time.

3.6.2 *Reliability of the Sources*

The heavy dependence on second-hand and online materials of this dissertation brings two problematic issues which might impair the reliability of the sources and weaken the argument of this research. It is difficult firstly to prove the authenticity of second hand materials. For example, it is impossible to distinguish the real writers of online threads. As Yang (2006) among others notes that there are a group of ‘Wu Maodang’ who are hired either by the government or Internet companies to monitor online opinion and publish articles as if they are normal Internet users in order to steer public opinion. Thus it might hinder this dissertation from drawing any conclusion on the role of the Internet as public sphere. Even official statistics, such as the survey result from CNNIC, is questionable. As the only national wide survey, CNNIC survey is a crucial channel for researchers to obtain data about the development of the Internet in China. However, the close tie between CNNIC and the Chinese government and its ever changing survey methodology make it reasonable for researchers to believe that the survey results are deliberately revised to be politically right (Giese 2003).

Secondly, due to the dynamic nature of the Internet, it is impossible to exhaust data on the cyberspace or provide a real picture of the Internet in a sense that it is changing continually. Therefore, the researcher is limited to giving analysis and observations of the Internet from a still point.

3.6.3 *Limitations of the Research*

In addition to what has been mentioned above, this research, based on two ‘extreme’ cases happened recently, is not in the position to provide the readers a comprehensive view of the practice of freedom of speech of all Chinese citizens on the Internet. Findings based on these two cases can be restricted to the very context of these two cases.

3.7 ETHICAL ISSUES

3.7.1 Public spaces or private spaces

The biggest ethical challenge in this research is how to distinguish online private spaces from online public spaces. It is ethically questionable to take quotations from any internet users in this research without permission if they were published in private online spaces. Regarding personal online blogs, since bloggers can easily restrict accesses to his or her own blogs, this dissertation argues that online blogs which have free access to all Internet users can be considered as public spaces. Thus contents in this kind of blogs can be quoted in this research.

Chapter 4 Case Analysis

Two cases are chosen from the year 2007 to 2009 in this research to examine the practice of freedom of expression on the Internet in China and reflect the issues addressed in the analytical framework in chapter 2. The first case is South China Tiger Event which is one of the most significant Internet events in the year 2007 to 2009. It is listed on seven ranking lists of top ten most significant Internet events in 2007. It is considered as a big victory of the Internet users to raise their voices to challenge traditional media and question provincial government through the Internet. The second case is the Xinjiang 5 July Event which drew significant national and international attention as an ethnic clash and political riot. Compared to the first case, the sensitive ethnical and social backgrounds in the second case contribute to its significance. Not surprisingly, even though it drew great attention worldwide but didn't trigger relevant discussions among Internet users on the Internet in mainland China. It is obviously naïve to assume that the Internet users were not acknowledged of or not interested in Xinjiang 5 July Event. What made the difference of the behaviors of the Internet users needs to be scrutinized.

Through these two cases, this chapter reflects the analytical framework introduced in chapter 2 and examines the research questions listed in chapter 3. It demonstrates how Chinese citizens raise up issues online under systematic censorship; how they apply self-censorship; how online discussions involve other players, such as traditional media and ICPs, ISPs; how concerned government officials respond to online questionings. Ideally, by analyzing these two cases, this chapter aims to answer the question that what contributed to the difference behaviors of the Internet users regarding these two cases, and indicate how far the Internet users can push the boundary of political tolerance of the government.

4.1 DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CASE ONE: SOUTH CHINA TIGER EVENT

4.1.1 Case Description and Analysis

The case description and basic fact about this case are based on information gathered from academic essays, media reports, online blogs, and transcripts of TV programs available on the Internet. For details of the sources please refer to Appendix 2. The Tiger Event is seen as a big victory of the Internet users challenging authoritative information and the local government. Thus, this dissertation divides the event, starting from 12 October 2007 to 29 June 2008, into 6 rounds of confrontation between Internet users and the local government to show the relationship between power and the resistance. This chapter analyzes the activities of the key players in the tiger events by round. It focuses its analysis on main events during each round.

4.1.1.1 First Round: Questioning

Duration:

From 12 October 2007 to 13 October 2007

Event Description:

On 12 October 2007, Zhou Zhenglong, a villager from Shaanxi province was awarded 20,000 RMB (equal to 2,300 EURO approximately) by Shannxi Forestry Department for his 71 digital and film photos of a believed extinct animal, wild South China tiger, taken in the forest of Shaanxi province. However, the reappearance of rare tiger didn't seem to exhilarate everyone. On the same day after the news was republished online, Internet users left messages on different online forums such as 'Seying Wuji', 'Sina', 'Netease' questioning the authenticity of the photos coincidentally.

One day after the news was broadcasted on China Central Television (CCTV), in the morning of 13 October 2007, a photography fan, 'yixians' posted a thread on a photography forum, 'Seying Wuji', questioning the authenticity of the photos and consulting to his fellow photography fans. Soon some Internet users followed the thread. For example, in a reply, Internet user, 'Diyi Yinxiang', argued that the photos must have been processed with computer software. Another Internet user, 'Hongdu Daoke' suggested that the tiger in the photos could be a paper replica. The thread initiated on the photography forum, was soon spread to other online forums gathered by Internet users from all professions across the country.

Main Events:

On 12 October 2007, Shaanxi Forestry Ministry launched several 'tiger photos' taken by Zhou Zhenglong.

On 13 October 2007, a thread posted by Internet user 'yixians' openly questioned the authenticity of the tiger photos on 'Seying Wuji'.

Analysis:

The beginning of the Tiger Event starts with a quick response from Internet users to suspicious information provided by Shaanxi local government. This dissertation argues that the first round of the confrontation between Internet users and the local government shows the sharpness and courage of Internet users to challenge the authority. Before the

above mentioned thread was posted online by ‘yixians’, scattered Internet users had already shown their suspicions on the photos on different commercial portals based on common sense supported observations.

This dissertation argues that the initial motivation of the discussion of the tiger photos, as it is shown in the first round, stemmed from a professional compassion. Given the fact that ‘Seying Wuji’ is a professional photography online forum, where gathers a lot of professional photographers and photography fans, replies to the thread focused on photography technical issues in the first round. Internet users examined the photos using their professional knowledge. Technical terms such as depth of field, color temperature, difference in the temperature, and shooting angle were widely used among Internet users on Seying Wuji.

Soon, this hot topic among photography fans triggered a national wide discussion as the event itself went more complicatedly.

4.1.1.2 *Second Round: Discussion*

Duration:

From 14 October 2007 to 29 October 2007

Round Description:

On 14 October 2007, internet user, ‘Jingsheng’ whose real name is Fu Dezhi, a botanist, offered his academic insight into the authenticity of the photos on ‘Yishu’, a botanic online forum. Fu indicated that the photos could not be real since that the leaves of plants around the tiger in the photos were biologically out of proportion to a real tiger. Due to his scientist identity in offline society, Fu’s botanic argument soon became well known online. Fu himself was interviewed by several traditional media as a representative of Internet users and also botanical expert. On 20 October 2007, his quotation was used vividly by local media as ‘botanist bets on his head that the tiger photos are forged’.

Within a week, through discussions among Internet users from different perspectives, the dominant online opinion believed that the photos taken by Zhou Zhenglong were forged. The most convincing arguments, among others, were that firstly the tiger remained impossibly still in all digital photos released online which were taken during a span of 25 minutes time from several different angles; secondly the rate of the leaves and the ‘tiger’ in the photos were out of proportion.

On 26 October 2007, Guan Ke, a concerned governmental official from Shaanxi province opened a personal online blog on sina.com.cn to defend the photographer and the authenticity of the tiger photos. He posted 3 articles on 26 and 28 October supporting Zhou Zhenglong and proving the authenticity of the photos from a photography perspective. Within two days, the number of replies to these three articles exceeded 1,000. Under the pressure of the overwhelming majority of the replies condemning the lies of Guan, he alleged closed the comment function of his blog which explains why there was no more comment after 30 October 2007. In the replies of Guan’s blogs, Internet users expressed their anger and disappointment against Shaanxi local government. In one reply to Guan, it says ‘The photos don’t look real to us at all. You should better provide us more evidence to prove real of the photos. It is pointless for you to publish articles like this here!’

On 29 October 2007, during a TV interview, officials from Shaanxi Forestry Ministry revealed the film of Zhou’s photos and indicated that the eyes of the tiger changed in the photos, implying that the tiger was real.

Main Events:

On 14 October 2007, Fu Dezhi, a botanist, suggested that the tiger photos were forged.

On 26 October 2007, Guan Ke, a concerned governmental official from Shaanxi province opened a personal online blog.

Analysis:

Soon tiger photos were republished on many online communities and forums.

Consequently, the photos were examined by national wide Internet users from different perspectives. Among which, Fu's botanic argument was well known and rather influential.

In this round of confrontation we could see firstly that the tiger event drew a wide attention on the Internet in China. This widely joined discussion on the Internet proves the passions of the Internet users in seeking for truth and justice. With the help of photography fans and scientists, the overwhelming majority of the Internet users soon reached the consensus that the tiger photos were forged.

Secondly, it should be highlighted here that in this round of confrontation, the local government and its representatives tried their best to defend themselves on the Internet. Hoping online opinion might be orientated by the voice from authorities, Guan Ke, a local government official from Shaanxi Province, who was directly involved in the launch of the tiger photos, opened a personal blog on sina.com.cn to respond to the questionings by the Internet users. No matter how hard Guan tried to defend the authenticity of the photos from a technical perspective, his weak arguments, empty statement and suspect support to Zhou ruined his reputation. It is shown in the direct language used by Internet users in their replies to Guan's articles that Guan, a government official, lost his privilege when he place himself in an online dialogue between Internet users.

4.1.1.3 *Third Round: Challenge*

Duration:

From 30 October 2007 to 23 November 2007

Round Description:

On 15 November 2007, Internet user 'Panzhihua xydz' announced that the tiger in a calendar poster at his home looked exactly the same as the one in Zhou's photos. But unfortunately he did not know how to upload photo to online forum. With the help of

'Xiaoyu Bobobo', on 16 November, this key evidence, a calendar poster was launched online. The thread launched by 'xiaoyu bobobo' with photos of the calendar poster, 'result of human searching engine: the original tiger photo is found!' soon received almost 300,000 clicks together with more than 2,000 replies. The attention paid to the Tiger Event thus reached its climax online. According to 'Xiaoyu Bobobo', within two hours after the thread was posted, Internet users managed to locate the publisher of the calendar poster. On 18 November, the publisher of the calendar photo, Luo Guanglin confirmed that the calendar poster was published in 2002, 5 years earlier than Zhou's claimed wild tiger photos.

On the same day as the calendar poster was revealed online, a reporter from Huashang Daily, a Shaanxi local newspaper, wrote in his blog that in Zhenping County, where Zhou Zhenglong lived, electricity went out in the evening which hindered communication of reporters with their news agency. According to him, many reporters could not publish their stories due to the cutoff of electricity.

On 23 November 2007, acknowledging the emergence of the calendar photos online, officials from Shaanxi Forestry Ministry launched its first statement insisting the authenticity of Zhou's photos and the existence of wild South China tiger in Shaanxi Zhenping County.

On 24 November 2007, Zhu Julong, deputy head of the provincial forestry ministry supported farmer Zhou Zhenglong and the authenticity of his photos in public. Zhu even questioned the authenticity of the calendar photo which was produced 5 years earlier.

Soon, disappointing voices emerged on the Internet questioning the probity of the provincial authorities. It was seen by the Internet users that the provincial government was fooling the public and planning some kind of plots behind the scenes.

Main Events:

On 16 November 2007, Internet users 'xiaoyu bobobo' uploaded the calendar photo.

On 23 November 2007, Shaanxi Forestry Ministry launched its first public statement

insisting the authenticity of the tiger photos.

Analysis:

This round of confrontation should be seen as the climax of the whole event. Contradictions from the two sides became very clear and sharply against each other. As the tension was aggravated by the launch of calendar photos online, the alleged cutoff of electricity in Zhenping can be explained as part of the systematic censorship aiming at information control.

In the previous round Internet users still lacked some substantial evidence to prove the tiger photos were forged. With the emergence of the calendar poster, on 16 November 2007, it was quite convincing for the Internet users to believe that Zhou faked his tiger photos using the calendar poster produced 5 years earlier by Luo's workshop. Thus they were expecting a just resolution from the local government.

However, the public statement announced by Shaanxi Forestry Ministry on 23 November 2007 denying of their wrongdoings in verifying Zhou's photos was far from satisfying. It disappointed the Internet users. The announcement itself became a turning point of this event as from this moment on the focus of online discussion switched from the authenticity of the photos to a public trust crisis of the government. The Tiger Event developed from a professional passion to a real challenge to the authorities and a public request for social justice. The honesty of the local government officials were put into question.

4.1.1.4 *Fourth Round: Backup*

Duration:

From 24 November 2007 to 31 December 2007

Round Description:

After the calendar poster, there was little Internet users could do in term of seeking stronger argument to challenge the authenticity of the photos. They had expressed their

demand for justice and invited re-verification of the photos by relevant government department. However, the response from Shaanxi local government on 23 November was far from satisfying.

On 2 December 2007, Netease, one of the biggest commercial portals in China, invited experts from 6 different institutions to verify the tiger photos. Unanimously, after examining the photos, all of the experts considered the photos were forged. Netease published the result of the verification in the evening of 2 December 2007 to meet the using habit of Internet users as most of them surf online after work.

Not surprisingly, the result of the verification was totally ignored by Shaanxi Forestry Ministry. In its second statement launched on 3 December which ignored the verification result from this un-official group of experts, and reiterated the viewpoints in the previous statement.

Following the statement from provincial level, the State Forestry Administration held a press conference on 4 December 2007 indicating that they would not take any intervention in this case and expressed their trust in Shaanxi Forestry Ministry and the local government in handling this case.

At the time when Internet users were sinking into helplessness due to the ignorance of the unofficial verification by Shaanxi Forestry Ministry and the inaction of the State Forestry Administration, On 6 December 2007 and 7 December 2007, CCTV broadcasted two investigative TV programs on South China tiger event, investigating the key players related to tiger photos and questioning the performance of Shaanxi local government officials.

Main Events:

On 2 December 2007, Netease launched the result of an unofficial verification of the tiger photos.

On 3 December 2007, Shaanxi Forestry Ministry launched its second statement.

On 4 December 2007, State Forestry Administration indicated that they would not take

any intervention.

On 6 December 2007 and 7 December 2007, CCTV broadcasted 2 investigative TV programs on South China tiger event.

Analysis:

As mentioned above, the discussion focus of tiger event had switched from the photos to public trust, social justice, and reputation of the government. Internet users expressed constantly their disappointment and anger at the government since the lack of satisfying explanation or convincing argument.

There are two points worth mentioning. Firstly, driven by the demand of Internet users, this dissertation argues that in this round of confrontation, a new party, namely Internet companies and media emerged as backup forces to support Internet users. During this period of time, it showed clearly how Internet companies, represented by Netease, and traditional media, represented by CCTV, took over the relay from Internet users and played an active role in establishing justice and questioning the local government on this case. No matter how much the unofficial verification can be taken into account, the action itself at least showed the Netease's support to Internet users in keeping this issue on the agenda, even if it had no intention to assist in demanding justice and the truth. It is argued that Netease might be motivated by potential commercial interests caused by organizing the photo verification. In fact, launching the result of verification indeed brought a lot online traffic and media exposal to Netease. The active involvement and the alleged motivations of Internet companies and the traditional media in discussing tiger event prove the analytical framework introduced in chapter 2 that they are either intentionally or unintentionally assisting Internet users in pushing the boundary of the government political tolerance.

Secondly, the intentional or unintentional help from the Internet companies did accelerate the response pace of both local and state governments. As it is shown in the description, right after Netease published its verification result, both local and state

government launched their announcements. This should be seen as a positive phenomenon in a sense that government is pushed into the dialogue no matter what message it is sending.

Thirdly, it is shown in this round that state media took part in the discussion supporting the Internet users. Even though the two investigation programs launched on CCTV on 6 and 7 December didn't seem to be timely enough, the open support to Internet users on a state media level legitimated the online challenges and questionings against the local government.

4.1.1.5 ***Fifth Round: Censor***

Duration:

From January 2008 to March 2008

Round Description:

In the beginning of the new year, three Internet users including 'Xiaoyu Bobobo' who played important roles in publishing the calendar photos were chosen as the legal figures of the year 2007; Fu Dezhi's blog on sina.com.cn was also listed as one of the top 10 blogs in the year 2007.

However, according to Fu, TV program producer who interviewed him faced pressure from the censor and had to urge his interviewee to keep silent before his program passed censor. Journalist from newspaper also indicated that the event was not allowed to be covered before the National People's Congress (NPC) and Chinese People's Political Consultative (CPPCC). It was reported that Fu himself was ironically forbidden to attend the awarding ceremony of the top ten blogs organized by sina.com.cn.

Before the start of NPC and CPPCC, Fu was interviewed by a media on some botanic issues. The reappearance of his name on the newspaper was confirmed by the reporter as a means to remind the central government of the pending tiger event before the national congress.

Still, in March 2007, many Internet users once concerned that the tiger event might end with nothing conclusive as this issue was not allowed to be covered by media before the NPC and CPPCC.

Main Events:

‘Xiaoyu Bobobo’ was chosen as the legal figure of the year 2007.

Fu was not allowed to attend the awarding ceremony.

Analysis:

In this round, clear pressure was shown from the government to Internet companies and media players before the start of NPC and CPPCC. Under this situation, there left little space for media and Internet companies to cover the tiger event. Still, some brave media played edge ball to hint the government about the unsolved Tiger Event.

Considering the unclear attitude from the central government, concerns were raised among Internet users that this case might end with nothing conclusive.

4.1.1.6 Sixth Round: Victory?

Duration:

From April 2008 to June 29 2008

Round Description:

Finally, on June 29th 2008, after 8 months since this issue was raised on the Internet, Shaanxi government announced Zhou’s forgery and the punishment to 13 related government officials. Among these 13 government officials who received warning and punishment, Zhu Julong and Guan Ke were deprived of their positions.

Main Events:

On 29 June 2008 Shaanxi admitted that the photos were forged.

Analysis:

The date of the announcement became unimportant as Internet users had waited too long. Nevertheless, as Bai Yansong, a TV host said in his program that ‘it is the

perseverance and unyieldingness of the Internet users which brought the current result of the tiger event.’

4.2 DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CASE TWO

4.2.1 Case Description

A protest march held by around 1000 Uyghurs in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in China, led to a deadly ethnic violence on 5 July 2009. The protesters killed 156 civilians including Han Chinese, Hui, Man and Uyghurs ethnic people during their attack in the streets according to Chinese state news agency, Xinhua News. This violence is believed to be triggered by an earlier brawl among Han Chinese and Uyghurs ethnic people happened in a toy factory in China’s eastern Guangdong province two weeks earlier, on 26 June 2009. The fight among Uyghurs workers and local Han workers caused death of two Uyghur youths (Xinhua News). Anger among Uyghurs ethnic people in Urumqi at the death of the two Uyghur youths allegedly led to the protest and the violence on 5 July 2009.

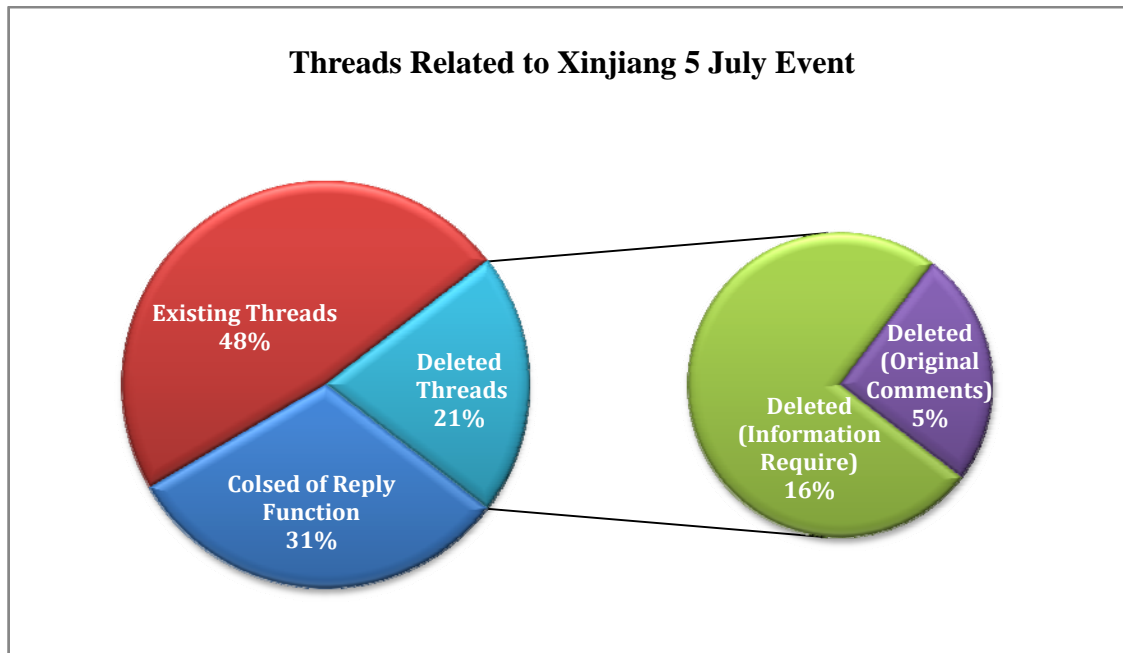
However, many independent writers and observers based outside China argue that the violent attack stems from the long existing ethnic tension and social unrest in Xinjiang due to the illegitimate ethnic policy, religious policy and migration project of the Chinese government (Wang 2009 and Qian 2009). Given the fact of the sensibility of the region and the deadly loss, Xinjiang 5 July Event soon drew considerable international attention. During the regular press conference held by the Chinese foreign ministry on 7 July 2009, ten out of eleven questions asked by foreign journalists were directly about the event. Taking online community, Tianya.cn, as an example, this chapter examines online discussion on Xinjiang 5 July Event in mainland China and the engagement of Chinese Internet users in the discussion of this event.

4.2.2 *Analysis*

It is impossible to collect online articles and threads exclusively, therefore this dissertation chooses Tianya.cn, one of the most influential online communities with almost 30 million registered users based in mainland China, as its research object. Tianya.cn is an all-around online community famous for the diversity of its forums and the openness of its discussion on social and political issues.

This event is called Xinjiang 5 July Event in Chinese media. Thus using ‘Xinjiang’ and ‘5 July’ as key words, this dissertation collects 77 threads regarding Xinjiang 5 July Event on Tianya.cn posted from 5 July 2009 to 20 March 2010. (The time span starts from when the event happened to when the internet connection started to be resumed in Xinjiang.) These 77 threads are categorized by its content into 3 groups, namely, original comments, information require and news report reprint. This dissertation also remarks the status of the threads. It distinguishes the ones which are deleted and those which are closed of the reply function. Please refer to Pie 4.1 as below. (A more detailed table with information of the titles, summaries of the threads, number of replies, and the links, can be found in Appendix 3.)

Pie 4.1



Before analyzing, it is necessary to mention that confirmed by the spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry of China during its regular press conference on 7 July 2009 that after Xinjiang 5 July Event, Internet was cut off in Xinjiang province in order ‘to handle the situation and maintain social stability in order to stabilize the society.’ (Official Website of Chinese Foreign Ministry) Internet in Xinjiang started to be reconnected gradually on 20 March, 2010 (Xinhua News). Thus all online threads collected on Tianya.cn are supposed to be voices from Internet users from provinces other than Xinjiang.

This chapter analyzes the data from three perspectives, namely, the quantity, the content and the status of the online threads.

4.2.2.1 *Quantity:*

As it is shown in Pie 4.1, there are only 77 threads posted on Tianya.cn during 8 months time. Among these 77 threads, 16 are deleted leaving only a cached page on Baidu.com.cn, the biggest Internet search engine in China. 24 out of 77 threads are closed of the reply function which means that around 31% of the threads are sole articles without any interactive functions. Discussion among Internet users was thus

hindered.

This dissertation argues that considering the significance of the event, the amount of online discussion on Tianya.cn is out of proportion compared to other social issues, such as the Tiger Event which is analyzed above.

4.2.2.2 *Content:*

There are 25 original comments on Xinjiang 5 July Event among these 77 threads. 43 out of 77 are information require. 9 threads, in another word, more than 10% of the total threads are literal reprints of news stories published by official news agencies without any original comments. The high percentage of news story reprint and lack of original comments is ironic in a sense that Tianya.cn is generally seen as the frontline challenging the authenticity of traditional media.

A close scrutiny of these 25 ‘so called’ original comments shows that almost every sentence in them is in line with the official tune. These original comments existing on Tianya.cn about Xinjiang 5 July event are extremely unitary. The themes of these 25 threads are either on condemning the violent mobs and their supporters, mourning to the died and injured civilians during the event, calling for national stability and ethnic integrity, or supporting actions taken by the government in cracking down the mobs in Xinjiang. Only two threads, numbered as thread 20 and 28, spend a few lines in indicating that the government could have taken actions to prevent this violence event earlier since the ethnic tension had been obviously fastened after Guangdong Event on 26 June 2009. Only one thread, numbered as thread 16, expresses the need for information transparency in maintaining social stability.

It is worth mentioning that the 43 threads of information require in Q & A section on Tianya.cn actually cover all sorts of questions related to Xinjiang 5 July Event, including what is the truth of the event, how to interpret this event, why it took so long for the police to take action to protect civilians, where to find unofficial photos about

this event, and etc. However, most of these threads were either deleted or closed of the reply function.

As a matter of fact that most of the threads in Q & A receive great online traffic, which is indicated as click rate, but they receive very few replies as it is shown in Appendix 4. For example, thread number 31 receives 3,510 visits but only 3 replies. Besides the small number of reply, the majority of the few replies which exist online are irrelevant advertisements or unsubstantial and empty sentences.

It is abnormal considering that the number of replies is far out of proportion to the number of visit to these threads. A reasonable explanation to this phenomenon can be that Internet users practice self-censorship on Xinjiang 5 July Event, thus rather being as observers the majority of them are reluctant to express their ideas in public.

4.2.2.3 *Status:*

30 out of 77 threads were closed of the reply function by Tianya.cn. 16 of the threads were deleted either by individual Internet users or online moderators from Tianya.cn. It explains why the discussion on Xinjiang 5 July Event is rarely seen online. The phenomenon of closing the reply function of threads was discussed on anti.cnn.com, a small online community which has less than 300 registered users. It was said that ‘Tianya.cn intentionally deleted many threads regarding Xinjiang 5 July event; the reply function was closed to any Xinjiang related articles, even the ones introducing the landscape of Xinjiang.’

4.2.2.4 *Summary*

As mentioned above, there is a lack of discussion online regarding Xinjiang 5 July Event in China. Few comments existing online are rather unitary. This dissertation argues that it is obviously naïve to consider that Chinese Internet users had no interest in this event, nor they were totally satisfied and agree with the information provided by mainstream media. To the opposite, considering the fact of the cut-off of the Internet

connection in Xinjiang and the systematic deleting and closing of reply function of Xinjiang 5 July Event related threads in online communities, this dissertation argues that Xinjiang 5 July Event and its related topics are tightly controlled and censored by the government and Internet companies. The very few replies available online and the irrelevance of the replies in this case indicate both systematic censorship from the government and self censorship practised by the majority of Internet users.

However, the lack of different comments regarding Xinjiang 5 July Event on the Internet in mainland China doesn't necessarily indicate that there is a consensus opinion among Internet users on this issue, nor there exists no independent thoughts on this event and related issues other than in line with the official tune. Scholars and independent observers such as Qian Gang and Wang Lixiong managed to publish articles on Hongkong based websites. In his personal blog published in Hong Kong, Qian maintains that the riot happened on 5 July is closely related to the failure of the ethnic and religion policy of the Chinese government which is officially denied. The article refers to the media control policy of the Chinese government on 5 July riot as Control 2.0. It questions the official report of the beginning of the event and the credibility of the alleged organizer by the Chinese government. It argues that the event was not planned but started from a peaceful protest. (Qian 2009)

Other critical analyses about the socioeconomic reason of the event are also available on foreign based websites. For instance, on www.mlcool.com, a political dissident website based outside China, there are four articles written by four different individuals examining the social reasons of the violence published in July 2009. Scrutinizing the socioeconomic background of Xinjiang, the articles argue that social inequality, manifested as high unemployment rate, high mortality rate, difference of income between Uygur ethnic people and Han people in Xinjiang have caused the dissatisfaction among Uygur ethnic people which further forms ethnic tension between Uygur ethnic group and Han people. The articles criticize on the ethnic policy, religion

policy, and information control policy of the Chinese government. The restriction on information flow by the Chinese government is also criticized.

Therefore, the nonexistence of independent views on Xinjiang 5 July Event in China indicates that due to the tight information control applied by Chinese government, genuine thoughts on this event could not become public transcript in China. Such ideas and opinions are hidden from view of the government and could only exist out of the access of the majority of Chinese citizens.

It is interesting to know that 6 out of 42 replies to the articles on Xinjiang 5 July Event on www.mlcool.com indicate that the replier appreciates the articles however it is difficult to access to them as the website is blocked in mainland China. Two replies ask directly for tips on how to access to the website using proxy servers which indicate that Internet users dwelling in mainland China have problems to access to this website. More importantly, it shows that Internet users in mainland China are motivated to make an effort to access to these independent views. The reason why they need to make such effort only for some critical opinions is that the Internet in China is still far from open.

Chapter 5 Findings and Discussions

This chapter discusses the findings of the research. By examining and analyzing the two cases, this dissertation finds that:

1. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, the Internet in China is subject to government control. The systematic control and censorship on the Internet in China conducted by the government hinders Chinese citizens from fully practicing their right to freedom of expression online.

From technical perspective, the government controls the access to the Internet. As it is shown in Xinjiang 5 July Event that firewalls blocked websites with dissident opinions from coming into sights of Chinese citizens. Secondly, online content is subject to surveillance and censorship. Sensitive information and comments, such

as discussions about Xinjiang 5 July event, are deleted systematically under the pressure of the government. In this regard, it violates the right to freedom of expression of Chinese citizens.

2. However, the control on the Internet is not absolute or irresistible. Internet users in China constantly demonstrate their resistance to the control power by sidestepping firewalls.

Through proxy servers, Chinese citizens manage to publish and exchange original criticism of the government on foreign based websites which are blocked in China. Likewise, potential readers in mainland China use proxy servers to access to officially blocked contents.

3. There is a great demand among Chinese citizens in seeking for truth and justice, and requesting for space for expression on the Internet.

It is shown in the Tiger Event that Internet users in China are eager to seek for truth and justice, and join in social and political discussions online. The use of proxy servers to access to dissident ideas published outside China also proves the passion of Chinese citizens for more critical and independent voices.

4. Internet serves as an alternative channel which opens up space for Chinese citizens to express themselves and at the same time offers a means to the government to gauge public opinion and response to public questionings.

This dissertation agrees with Tai (2006) that Internet in China provides an alternative channel for citizens to discuss political and social issues which they have difficulties to approach due to the lack of effective channels. Since compared to traditional media, the Internet is looser controlled and possible for individual inputs. Besides expression channel for citizens, this dissertation finds that the Internet also offers the Chinese government a means to gauge public opinion. As it is shown in the Tiger Event, the Internet even provides the Chinese government a channel to respond to public challenges and questionings.

5. Online networks, which consist of numerous professional and general communities, can mobilize a huge number of citizens to act collectively.

For instance, within two hours after the calendar photo was released online, Internet users managed to locate the publisher of it. This dissertation finds that the Internet brings together different social groups and makes people work collaboratively regardless of social status and profession.

6. Due to the impact of media commercialization, there has emerged a joint force, which is composed of Internet companies and media, supporting the Internet users in discussing disputable topics.

Driven by economic interests, Internet companies and traditional media have shown their willingness in taking part in contradictive online discussions. Because audience and online traffic brought by online disputation in the end benefit them in advertisement income. In a sense, it provides Chinese citizens a strategic opportunity to empower themselves and tone up their voices online with the help of Internet companies and traditional media players.

7. However, for fear of possible punishments, individual Internet users practise self-censorship online.

Majority of the Internet users practice self censorship and act in line with the government's voice online. For example Fu closed his online blog for fear of attracting too much attention from the government when the discussion of tiger photos becoming drastic online. During Xinjiang 5 July Event, there were very few original comments and replies but considerably much greater online traffic paying attention into the event related threads which shows majority of the Internet users is very conservative with their online actions.

8. Considering above findings, this dissertation agrees with Papacarissi (2002) that the Internet in China is not yet a public sphere but public space.

Since online content is still subject to censorship and control by the government in

China. This dissertation finds that the Internet merely offers Chinese citizens an alternative public space to obtain information and raise issues. However, this public space is far from ideal given the fact that both the access and content are under the control and surveillance of the government.

In answering the sub research questions, this dissertation also finds that,

1. Chinese citizens can bring up social and political issues by posting thread in online communities and forums, publishing personal online blogs, commenting on news stories, and using other mutual functions online. For those views and criticisms which are too sensitive to be allowed to exist in mainland China, experienced Internet users manage to publish them on foreign based websites. Even though these websites might be blocked, potential readers still have the possibility to access to these contents through proxy servers in mainland China.
2. Due to the nature of the Internet and the lack of effective expressing channels in China, more original comments and critical issues are firstly set online. Influenced by the process of media commercialization, media players have started paying attention to the demand of audience and advertisers. Because the ever-increasing number of Internet users represent a large group of elite, young and economically active population in China who are also the target group of many advertisers. In order to keep the attention of their audience, traditional media workers use the Internet as a barometer to learn what the hotspot-issues are. In this way, the Internet users set agenda to traditional media.

In addition, the Internet changes the conventional top to bottom route of information flow into a more bottom up pattern. Original views and concern of the citizens on social and political issues are better reflected in traditional media through the Internet.

3. As it is shown in the case analysis, this dissertation argues that the Chinese government pays a considerable degree of attention to online opinions in general.

The Tiger Event shows that government takes the online opinion into consideration and responds to online requests. The political boundaries of the government are believed to be tested by Internet users constantly.

However, the attitude of the government to online discussions is still based on a case-by-case basis. There are still a number of taboo topics which cannot be touched upon. When it comes to crucial issues such as criticism of the central government, the political system of China, ethnic conflict, religious policy, issues related to sovereign integrity and so on, the government applies extreme control on the Internet.

4. Online discussion can mobilize Internet users to act collectively online. Reflected in the Tiger case, in searching for evidence to disprove the authenticity of the tiger photos, Internet users shared information and trains of thoughts. At the same time, online opinions can trigger offline actions too. For instance, when the online discussion sank into deadlock, Netease.com organized an unofficial verification which happened in offline life. The most significant impact of the online discussion is that several local governmental officials were punished.

Chapter 6 Conclusions and Suggestions

This dissertation examines Chinese citizens' practice of their constitutional right to freedom of expression on the Internet. Chapter one briefs the background of the research context in China in relation to the research topic from legal, technological and social perspectives. It reviews related legislation and Internet policies of the government. It also provides a general picture of the information surveillance technology used by the Chinese government on the Internet at macro level, censorship applied by Internet companies at the middle level, and self-censorship practised by individual Internet users at micro level.

Chapter two reviews recent literature and academic debates related to the research topic.

Based on the review of literature, it sets out the analytical framework of this research. It focuses on the following issues, such as the discussion of the conventional wisdom of the Internet; the relationship between the Internet and democracy; the principles of Internet policies of the Chinese government; the discussion on whether there is public sphere or public space in China; and online behavior of the Chinese citizens and their motivations of political participation.

Chapter three introduces the research question and research methodology of this dissertation. Besides the main research question, it enumerates several sub research questions which this dissertation examines. It discusses about methodological issues thus as how to choose cases, how to deal with data and so on. It explains why the researcher chooses case study method in this research. In addition, it assesses the strength and weakness of the chosen research method in exploring these research questions.

Chapter 4 presents two cases happened recently in China in order to explore the situation regarding citizens' practice of their right to freedom of expression. It analyzes the cases while paying attention to the power relationship between Internet users and the government. It also takes note on parties other than the government, such as the traditional media and Internet companies.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of this dissertation based on the analysis of the cases in chapter 4. It sheds light on issues set up in the analytical framework in chapter 2 and answers the research questions mentioned in chapter 3.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, this dissertation concludes that Chinese citizens have gained some degree of freedom on the Internet. The Internet, as an alternative channel in China, provides the citizens a means to access to information and express themselves. As it is shown in the Tiger Event, Internet users in China manage to question the authenticity of

the information provided by official media and challenge the local government. It also serves as a means for the government to gauge public opinion and carry out dialogues. Nonetheless, there are still many of the most crucial political issues which cannot be talked about openly online. Censorship on the Internet has never been loosened since its birth which hinders the Chinese citizens from freely practicing their right to freedom of expression. With the help of high technologies, Chinese government manages to control both the access and the content online especially during sensitive periods such as the National Congress and on sensitive topics such as ethnic conflict, state sovereignty and religious issues. These sensitive periods and topics are the so called boundaries where Internet users have problems to cross in current China.

Attitude of the government towards sensitive issues varies on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes, the Chinese government shows zero tolerance over certain issues. It even applies extreme information block by cutting off Internet connection and systematically deleting online articles as what it did during Xinjiang 5 July Event to control the access and content available online.

Thus it can be concluded that with certain degree of freedom, Chinese citizens' practice of freedom of expression on the Internet is still subject to restrictions, surveillance and occasionally suppression by the government which is in violation of article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 35 and 41 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.

6.2 SUGGESTIONS

This dissertation suggests the following areas for further research.

1. How can the Internet mobilize civil capitals? Research can focus on how online contents can trigger offline actions.
2. Examine the role of Internet companies. Discuss the possibility of Internet companies of playing a more active role in safeguarding citizens' right to freedom of expression in

China.

3. The impact of globalization on governments' practice in legitimating information control and censorship on the Internet.
4. How public opinion emerges on the Internet in China in the context of both institutional censorship and self-censorship applied by individual Internet users.
5. Comparison study of media and Internet policies and information surveillance technologies conducted by Asian states. Examine the role of Chinese government in this regard in Asia.

Bibliography

- Anti.cnn.com, About the truth of Xinjiang 5 July Event, <http://bbs.anti-cnn.com/thread-178268-4-1.html>, (accessed 11/04/2010)
- Barney, D. (2000) *Prometheus sired: The Hope for Democracy in the Age of Network Technology*, Toronto: UBC
- Becker, J. (2004) 'When the Canary Started Singing...' Silenced International Journalists Expose Media Censorship, edited by David Dadge
- Chinese Foreign Ministry Regular Press Conference, 7 July 2009, <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/gxh/tyb/fyrbt/t571656.htm>, (accessed 11/04/2010)
- Chinese Foreign Ministry Regular Press Conference, 9 July 2009, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t572336.htm>, (accessed 11/04/2010)
- Chinese Foreign Ministry Regular Press Conference, 14 July 2009, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t573182.htm>, (accessed 11/04/2010)
- CNNIC (2010) 25th *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China*, available at <http://www.cnnic.cn/en/index/index.htm>, (accessed 18/01/2010)
- Committee to Protect Journalist (2007) *Falling Short: As the 2008 Olympic Approach, China Falts on Press Freedom*
- Dai. Xudan (2003) 'ICTs in China's development strategy', in Christopher R. Hughes and Gudrun Wacker (Eds) *China and the Internet: Policy of the Digital Leap Forward*, London: RoutledgeCurzon
- Deibert, R. J. (2003) *Black Code: Censorship, Surveillance, and the Militarization of Cyberspace*
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006) 'Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research', *Qualitative*

Inquiry, 12, no. 5, 219-245

Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*

Fraser, N. (1992) “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy”, in Craig Calhoun ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, US: MIT Press

Giese, K. (2003) ‘Internet Growth and the Digital Divide’ in Christopher R. Hughes and Gudrun Wacker (Eds) *China and the Internet: Policy of the Digital Leap Forward*, London: RoutledgeCurzon

Gomez, J. (2004) ‘Dumbing Down Democracy: Trends in Internet Regulation, Surveillance and Control in Asia’, *Asia Rights*, 1, no. 6

Guo, L. (2003) *The Survey of the usage and Impact of the internet in Twelve Chinese Cities* conducted by the Research Center for Social Development of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Habermas, J. (1962) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence in 1989, USA: The MIT Press

Hachigian, N. (2002) ‘The Internet and Power in one-Party East Asian States’, *The Washington Quarterly*, 25, no. 3, 41-58

Husband, C. (2000) “Media and the Public Sphere in Multi – Ethnic Societies” in Simon Cotton ed., *Ethnic Minorities and the Media*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Kalathil, S. and Boas, T. C. (2001), *The Internet and State Control in Authoritarian Regimes: China, Cuba, and the Counterrevolution* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

- Kathleen, M. E. (1989) 'Building Theories From Case Study Research', *The Academy of Management Review*, 14, no. 4, 532
- Kedzie, C. R. (1997) "A Brave New World or A New World Order?" in Sara Kiesler ed. *Culture of the Internet*, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Association
- Lagerkvist, J. (2005) The Rise of Online Public Opinion in the People's Republic of China, *An International Journal*, vol. 3.1, 119-130
- Lyotard, F. (1984) *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi, Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Mabry, L. (2008) 'Case Study in Social Research', *The SAGE Handbook of Social Research Methods*, edited by Alasuutari, P. Bickman, L. and Brannen J. SAGE publication: Los Angeles
- Mckee, M. (2004) "Parsing Habermas's Bourgeois Public Sphere", *Criticism*, 46, no. 2, 273-277
- O' Donnell, S. (2001) 'Analysing the Internet and the Public Sphere: the Case of Womenslink', *The Public*, vol. 8, 1, 39-58
- Pan, Zhongdang (2000) 'Improvising Reform Activities: the Changing Reality of Journalistic Practice in China', in Lee Chinchuan Ed. *Power Money and Media: Communication Patterns and Bureaucratic Control in Cultural China*, Northwestern University Press
- Papacharissi, Z. (2002) "The virtual sphere: The internet as a public sphere", *New media and society*, 4, no. 1, 9-27
- Qian, Gang. (2009), Blind Area and the Doubts in Media Coverage on Urumqi 5 July Event, Journalism and Media Studies Centre, University of Hong Kong http://www.rthk.org.hk/mediadigest/20090817_76_122338.html, (accessed 11/04/2010)

- Selian, A. N. (2002) "ICTs in Support of Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance", prepared for the World Summit on the Information Society
- Stake, R. E. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*, United Kingdom: SAGE Publication
- Tai, Zixue (2006) *The Internet in China: Cyberspace and Civil Society*, New York: Routledge
- Walton, G. China's Golden Shield: Corporations and the Development of Surveillance Technology in the People's Republic of China, www.ichrdd.ca (accessed 10/01/2010)
- Wang, Lixiong. (2009), To Solve Xinjiang Issue Needs New Thoughts and a Big Change, *China in Perspective*,
<http://www.chinainperspective.org/ArtShow.aspx?AID=2048> (accessed 11/04/2010)
- Wu, X. (2002) '*Turning Everyone into a Censor: The Chinese Communist Party's All-Directional Control over the Media*', *Big News*, Internet WWW page at URL: <http://www.bignews.org/2002.html> (accessed 02/04/2009)
- Wriston, W. (1992) *The Twilight of Sovereignty: How the Information Revolution is Transforming Our World*, Toronto: MacMillan Canada
- Xinhua News, (26 June 2009) 'Fight among workers in a toy factory in Guangdong Shaoguan',
http://www.gd.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2009-06/28/content_16935659.htm, (accessed 11/04/2010)
- Xinhua News, (20 March 2010) 'Email and SMS services resumes in Xinjiang',
<http://news.163.com/10/0321/12/62A5GB9B000146BB.html>, (accessed 11/04/ 2010)
- Yang, D.L. (2004), China's Long March to Freedom, *Journal of Democracy*, 18, no.3
- Yang, G. (2009) 'Of Sympathy and Play: Emotional Mobilization in Online Collective

Action', *The Chinese Journal of Communication and Society*, vol. 9

Yin, R. (1984) *Case study research*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Zhang, X.L. (2007), 'Seeking Effective Public Space: Chinese Media at the Local Level', *China: An International Journal*, 5, no. 1, 55-77

Zhou, Y. M. (2006) *Historicizing Online Politics: Telegraphy, the Internet, and Political Participation in China*, California: Stanford University Press

WORD COUNT: 14,641

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

List of Policy Papers and Regulations (from 1994 till 2009)

	Regulation	In Chinese	Issued by	Year of issue
1.	<i>Regulation for the Protection of Computer Information System Safety in the Peoples' Republic of China</i>	《中华人民共和国计算机信息系统安全保护条例》	State Council	1994 Feb 18th
2.	<i>Temporary Decree on the Management of Computer Information Network International</i>	《中华人民共和国计算机信息网络国际联网管理暂行规定》	State Council	1996/02/01 Revised 1997/05/20

	<i>al Connectivity in the Peoples' Republic of China</i>			
3.	<i>Measures on Management of Computer Information Network International Connectivity Security Protection</i>	《计算机信息网络国际联网安全保护管理办法》	National Public Security Bureau	1997/12/ 30
4.	<i>State Secrets Protection Regulation for Computer Information System on the Internet</i>		National Public Security Bureau	2000/01

5.	<i>Measures on the Management of Internet Information Service</i>	《互联网信息服务管理办法》	State Council	2000/09/25
6.	<i>Measures on the Management of Internet Bulletin Board System Service</i>	《互联网电子公告服务管理规定》	Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of the People's Republic of China	2000/11/07
7.	<i>National People's Congress's Decision on Maintaining Internet Safety</i>	《全国人民代表大会常务委员会关于维护互联网安全的决定》	The 9 th National People's Congress Standing Committee the 19 th Meeting	2000/12/28
8.	<i>Decree on the Management</i>	《互联网新闻信息服务管理规定》	State Council Information	2005/09/25

	<i>t of Internet News/Information Service</i>		Office and the Ministry of Information Industry	
9.	<i>Decree on Management of Internet Video and Audio Content Service</i>	《互联网视听节目服务管理规定》	State Administration of Radio Film and Television and State Council Information Office and the Ministry of Information Industry	2008/01/31

All regulations and policy papers are available at <http://www.miit.gov.cn>, accessed on 22 December 2009

APPENDIX 2

Translated by the author from Chinese

Date	Description	Type of Source	Source	Link
12	Post: breaking news, wild South	Online	'Renli	http://forum.xitek.co

October 2007 15:46	China tiger is photographed in Shaanxi!	Forum	Chefu' on Seying Wuji ³	m/showthread.php?t=475777
12 October 2007 16:38	News: Photos confirm the reappearance of wild South China tiger in Shaanxi	Official Media	Xinhua Net ⁴	http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2007-10-12/163814074140.shtml
12 October 2007 17:27	Internet user found the photo suspicious, 'the photo looks a little bit weird. How can the tiger stare at the photographer with such a calm face?'	Online Forum	'lovehunters' on Seying Wuji	http://forum.xitek.com/showthread.php?t=475777 Reply No. 18
12 October 2007 20:59	Internet user suspected the authenticity of the tiger in the photo	Commercial Portal	Anonymous IP 222.75.*.* on Netease	http://news.163.com/07/1012/17/3QKB RIFV0001124J.html
13 October 2007 07:30	First thread online challenging the authenticity of the tiger photos: Are these photos real?	Online Forum	'yixians'	http://forum.xitek.com/showthread.php?t=475878
13 October 2007 15:23	Internet user suggested that the tiger photos might be set-up.	Online Forum	'sdkfz'	http://forum.xitek.com/showthread.php?t=475878 Reply No. 14
13 October 2007 10:56	Internet user suggested that the tiger photos were conversions of a tiger painting.	Commercial Portal	Anonymous IP: 222.244.117 on Sina.com.cn	http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2007-10-12/163814074140.shtml Comment No. 90
14 October 2007	Fu Dezhi suggested that the leaves and the tiger in the photo were biologically unpropotional	Online Forum	'Jingsheng' on Yi Mei ⁵	http://fudezhivip.blog.sohu.com/119959591.html
20 October 2007	News: Botanist bets on his head that the tiger photos are forged	Media	Nanfang Daily	http://www.infzm.com/content/9524

³ Seying Wuji is a professional photography online forum

⁴ Xinhua Net is

⁵ Yi Mei is a botanical forum run by Fu Dezhi

				http://news.163.com/07/1021/02/3R9V5RVT0001124J.html
22 October 2007	On invitation of sina.com.cn, Fu Dezhi opened a personal blog.	Online Blog	Sina.com.cn	http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4ef9035a01000bh2.html
23 October 2007	News: State Forestry Administration debriefs Shaanxi Forestry Ministry on its investigation work on wild South China tiger	Media	China.com	http://www.china.com.cn/news/2007-11/08/content_9195981.htm
26 October 2007	Guan Ke, a local official from Shaanxi province who directly related to the launch of the tiger photos, opened a personal blog on Sina.com.cn to defend the authenticity of tiger photos	Online Blog	Sina.com.cn	<p>http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4f100ac001000d9y.html</p> <p>Represent the shooting situation of Zhou, 26 October 2007</p> <p>http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4f100ac001000daf.html</p> <p>What turned a real tiger into paper replica, 28 October 2007</p> <p>http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4f100ac001000db8.html</p> <p>In a reply to this article, a Internet users wrote, ‘the photos don’t look real to us at all. You should better provide us more evidence to prove</p>

				<p>real of the photos. It is pointless for you to publish articles like this here!’</p> <p>Who is humiliating our hero, 28 October 2007</p> <p>http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4f100ac001000db8.html</p>
29 October 2007	Shaanxi Forestry Ministry: Eyes of the tiger changed in the photos	Local Media	Henan Business Daily	http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2007-10-31/031012815636s.shtml
29 October 2007		Official Media	CCTV Society in News <i>‘The Crazy Tiger’</i>	http://news.cctv.com/society/20071029/109010.shtml
30 October 2007 00:00	Yi Mei Forum was Closed by Fu Dezhi	Online Forum	Yi Mei	
30 October 2007		Official Media	CCTV Society in News <i>‘The Interest Chain of the Tiger Photos’</i>	http://news.cctv.com/society/20071030/108411.shtml
31 October 2007	TV program	Official Media	CCTV Society in News <i>‘Hear South China tiger roaring’</i>	http://vsearch.cctv.com/plgs_play-tvprogctv_20071101_2307597.html

8 November 2007	News: State Forestry Administration sends experts to Shaanxi for investigation	Media	China.com	http://www.china.com.cn/news/2007-11/08/content_9195981.htm
8 November 2010	News: State Forestry Administration sends experts to Shaanxi for investigation	CCTV 360°		
9 November 2010	News: Arguments on tiger photos	CCTV	Global News Rank	http://v.ku6.com/show/m7ktYK4miatT5-Mn.html
15 November 2007 21:00	Internet user, 'Pan Zhi Hua xydz', found the tiger in a calendar poster looked exactly the same as the one in Zhou's photos.	Online Forum	Seying Wuji	http://www.cnbeta.com/articles/44483.htm
16 November 2007 10:30	'Result of human searching engine: the original photo of the tiger is found' Internet user, 'Xiaoyu Bobobo' uploaded four calendar photos taken by 'Pan Zhi Hua xydz' online.	Online Forum	Seying Wuji	http://www.cnbeta.com/articles/44483.htm
21 November 2007	Zhou Zhenglong Reported to the local police that the calendar poster was forged	Blog	Shabo Zhong De Yu	http://liubbinm.blog.163.com/blog/static/403545732007102685034319/
22 November 2001		Official Media	CCTV Society in News <i>'the South China tiger in the calendar poster'</i>	http://news.cctv.com/china/20071122/108996.shtml http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMTI5NDQyMDQ=.html
22 November 2007	'loankevy' and 'myvs' complained that their posts were deleted. 'De Sai Tu' was surprised to find that his/her article was not deleted	Blog		Yuanben Shanchuan

23 November 2007	First statement was launched by Shaanxi Forestry Ministry insist on the authenticity of Zhou's photos and the existence of wild South China tiger in Shaanxi.	Media	Huashang Business	http://huasan2001.blog.163.com/blog/static/6168568020082394714664/
24 November 2007	Zhu Julong visited Zhou Zhenglong and supported him	Blog	Shamo Zhong De Yu 163.com	http://liubbinm.blog.163.com/blog/static/403545732007102685034319/
2 December 2007 evening	Netease launched the result of the verification of the tiger photos by nongovernmental organization.	Commercial portal	Netease	http://discover.163.com/07/1202/22/3UO9K825000125L2.html
3 December 2007	Second statement issued by Shaanxi Forestry Ministry	Media	Huashang Business	http://huasan2001.blog.163.com/blog/static/6168568020082394714664/
4 December 2007	News: State Forestry Administration indicates that they would not take any intervention in this case	Media	People.com.cn	http://society.people.com.cn/GB/8217/106495/106496/6610009.html
6 December 2007		Official Media	CCTV Society in News <i>'Real Tiger and Fake Tiger'</i>	http://news.cctv.com/china/20071206/108457.shtml
7 December 2007		Official Media	CCTV Society in News <i>'Story Behind the Tiger Photos'</i>	http://news.cctv.com/society/20071207/109117.shtml
17 December 2007	<i>Information Times</i> lists South China Tiger Event on top of the most significant Internet Event of	Media	Information Times	http://www.techweb.com.cn/news/2007-1

	2007			2-17/280565.shtml
21 December 2007	<i>Southern Daily, China Week, Tenxun, and Sohu.com.cn</i> list South China Tiger Event on top of the most significant Internet Event of 2007	Media		http://tech.sina.com.cn/i/2007-12-21/10541928518.shtml http://www.china-week.com/html/3339.htm http://ox.icxo.com/htmlnews/2008/01/14/1241500_0.htm http://hot.club.sohu.com/s2008/4032/s254548001/index.shtml
December 2007	CCTV lists South China Tiger Event Number 7 of the Event in 2007	Official Media	CCTV	http://news.cctv.com/special/C20275/02/index.shtml
21 January 2008	China Public Science and Technology Net listed South China Tiger Event number nine of the ten most significant events of the year.		Cpst.net.cn	http://news.cpst.net.cn/2008_01/2009848933.html
6 March 2008	Suspension of Zhu Julong was confirmed by the head of Shaanxi Forestry Ministry	Media	www.chinanews.com	http://www.chinanews.com.cn/sh/news/2008/03-06/1184282.shtml
24 April 2008	Guan Ke is dismissed	Media	Chengdu Business	http://society.people.com.cn/GB/1062/7159152.html
29 June 2008	Shaanxi government briefs that the tiger photos taken by Zhou Zhenglong were forged.	Media	People.com.cn	http://society.people.com.cn/GB/1062/8466895.html
29 June 2008	Shaanxi government briefs that 13 officials related to tiger photos	Media	People.com.cn	http://society.people.com.cn/GB/7439486

	receive warning and punishment.			.html http://society.people.com.cn/GB/7439670.html#
27 September, 2008	Shaanxi People's court sentenced Zhou to two and half years of imprisonment for fraud and possessing ammunition, and 2000RMB fine.			
17 November 2008	Shaanxi Intermediate People's Court sentenced Zhou two and half years of imprisonment, 3 years probation, 2000RMB fine			http://society.people.com.cn/GB/1062/8466895.html
28 December 2007	People.com.cn chose the tiger event on top of the hotspot even in the year 2007	Traditional media web version		http://society.people.com.cn/GB/6711896.html
In the end of 2008	CCTV choose 'Xiaoyu Bobobo', 'Xiao Tu' and 'Zubei Shi Nongmin' as legal figures of 2007	Official Media	CCTV	http://society.people.com.cn/GB/1062/8466895.html
2008	Fu Dezhi's blog on sina.com.cn was chosen as one of the ten blogs of the year by Sina. Later, Fu was forbidden to present during the awarding ceremony	Commercial Portal	Sina.com.cn	http://blog.sina.com.cn/lm/z/08pandian/index.html
4 January 2009	Fu Dezhi was awarded as the most significant legal figure of 2007 by People.com, Xinhua.net, CCTV.com and Chinacourt .org	Official Media		http://www.chinacourt.org/html/article/200812/30/337879.shtml

APPENDIX 3

No.	Date	Original Comments	Information Require	News Report Reprint	Deleted	Reply Closed
		25	43	9	16	30 (24)
1	7 July 2009					

2	7 July 2009					
3	7 July 2009					
4	7 July 2009					
5	7 July 2009					
6	7 July 2009					
7	7 July 2009					
8	8 July 2009					
9	8 July 2009					
10	8 July 2009					
11	8 July 2009					
12	8 July 2009					
13	9 July 2009					
14	9 July 2009					
15	9 July 2009					
16	11 July 2009					
17	13 July 2009					
18	14 July 2009					
19	15 July 2009					
20	15 July 2009					
21	15 July 2009					
22	15 July 2009					
23	15 July 2009					
24	15 July 2009					
25	16 July 2009					
26	16 July 2009					
27	19 July 2009					

28	19 July 2009					
29	23 July 2009					
30	23 July 2009					
31	26 July 2009					
32	30 July 2009					
33	15 September 2009					
34	12 October 2009					
35	6 July 2009					
36	7 July 2009					
37	7 July 2009					
38	8 July 2009					
39	8 July 2009					
40	9 July 2009					
41	10 July 2009					
42	10 July 2009					
43	10 July 2009					
44	10 July 2009					
45	11 July 2009					
46	11 July 2009					
47	11 July 2009					
48	14 July 2009					
49	15 July 2009					
50	15 July 2009					
51	17 July 2009					
52	19 July 2009					
53	22 July 2009					

54	25 July 2009					
55	3 August 2009					
56	6 August 2009					
57	7 August 2009					
58	13 August 2009					
59	9 September 2009					
60	17 September 2009					
61	25 September 2009					
62	18 October 2009					
63	19 October 2009					
64	21 October 2009					
65	29 October 2009					
66	21 November					
67	27 November 2009					
68	5 December 2009					
69	6 December 2009					
70	6 December 2009					
71	15 December					
72	28 December 2009					
73	2 January 2010					
74	3 January 2010					
75	9 January 2010					
76	29 January 2010					
77	3 March 2010					

APPENDIX 4

No.	Title	Deleted	Closed of Reply Function	Reply	View times	Number of Reply
1.	What is the newest update of Xinjiang 5 July Event?			Irrelevant reply	N.A.	1
2.	Who knows the truth of Xinjiang 5 July Event?			One reply states that no one knows the truth unless you are the mob.	1164	1
3.	How many people have been arrested by the police during Xinjiang 5 July Event?			Reprint of a report from Xinhua News.	N. A.	1
4.	What is Xinjiang 5 July Event?			One irrelevant reply, the other one condemns the killing of innocent civilians.	N. A.	2
5.	When can we find unofficial photos about Xinjiang 5 July event?				506	0
6.	Where can I find photos of Xinjiang			Irrelevant reply	691	1

	5 July Event					
7.	Was Shihezi attacked by the mobs?			No, only Urumqi.	174	1
8.	Is Ye city safe after 5 July event?			-Safe -could it be said...the first priority is to keep safety.	166	2
9.	Will there be bigger trouble?			Just saw it. Ahhhhh, again....	41	1
10.	Are those died during Xinjiang 5 July al 1 Han ethnics?			No, also Uygury No, also Tibetans	92	2
11.	When will the Internet be reconnected?			The Internet is not working, fixed phone is not available, mobile is not working either.	210	1
12.	When will the Internet be reconnected in Xinjiang?			It is difficult to say.	335	1
13.	Thoughts from students on Xinjiang 5 July event regarding the actions taken by			Irrelevant reply	138	1

	the government					
14.	Why the police arrived that late on 5 July?			- I would like to know too. Is it very severe? - The police are busy examining the prostitutions? Isn't it the same everywhere in China?	324	2
15.	Who is right in Xinjiang 5 July Evnet			Only when the society is in harmony, can GCD (Communist Party) maintain its power.	N.A.	1
16.	How do common people see Xinjiang 5 July Event?				N.A.	0
17.	Why there was no action taken by the police within a few hours after the mobs started violence?				74	0
18.	The police shot 12 mobs during Xinjiang 5 July event. What do you			Considering how many people they killed, I think they deserve to be shot. No matter	673	6

	think of it?			what, they shouldn't have killed innocent civilians.		
19.	Was there any woman raped during Xinjiang 5 July event?				N.A.	1
20.	Was Li Wenwen attacked during Xinjiang 5 July event?			There is no name list yet.	95	1
21.	Have the criminals been executed?				N.A.	0
22.	What is the attitude of Xinjiang police officers towards Xinjiang 5 July event?				N.A.	0
23.	Report on ethnic situations in the community				81	1
24.	What happened on 5 July in Xinjiang?				N.A.	0
25.	What is the truth behind Xinjiang 5 July event?			The truth is that the masses are waiting for the fact to be revealed.	179	1
26.	How to deal with				48	0

	the criminals?					
27.	were there any teachers from Xinjiang Universities who were attacked?			Irrelevant reply	67	1
28.	How many photos are there of the victims?			One reply states how a insurance company paid for the victims.	233	1
29.	Is Wang Xianhong safe? Please contact me if you know				127	0
30.	Is there any event to memorize Xinjiang 5 July Event			Both are irrelevant to the question	381	2
31.	How to see the Xinjiang 5 July event?			One reply is an advertisement about poxy websites. The other two are reprints of high official's speech on Xinjiang 5 July Event.	3510	3
32.	How to write report regarding Xinjiang 5 July event?			Template	2385	1

33.	How many people died during Xinjiang 5 July event?				80	1
34.	How do you see the distortion of China by foreign news agencies on Xinjiang 5 July Event?			One irrelevant reply while the other one says that they don't want to see a strong China.	465	2
35.	What measures has the government taken regarding Xinjiang 5 July Event?			Two irrelevant answers.	54	2
36.	Talk about your ideas and opinions on Xinjiang 5 July event.			Not bad.	2170	1
37.	How to settle the veterans from Qinghai who attended the mission in Xinjiang during 5 July event?			General answer about retired soldier.	213	1
38.	In reference to			One empty reply, one	396	3

	Xinjiang 5 July Event, how to promote ethnic solidarity?			quotes a paragraph from a speech of a local official, the other quotes a paragraph from the government website about ethnic groups in China.		
39.	Is the way how the government deals with Xinjiang 5 July Event consistent to existing laws and rules?			One reply quotes the provisions of 'Emergency Response Law of the People's Republic of China'	233	1
40.	Thought on Xinjiang 5 July event			Due to the control after 5 July I couldn't access to the Internet. Recently, the connection starts to be resumed partly. I hope it will soon be connected again. But I heard it won't happen until October.	170	1
41.	Case study – analyzing Xinjiang 5 July event and its			En.	344	1

	impact on State stability					
42.	Analyzing the impact of Xinjiang 5 July event on integrity of the state using high school knowledge				254	0
43.	Thought from minority groups on Xinjiang 5 July event				133	0