

Many journalists in Hong Kong seem somewhat idealistic, attracted to the "heroic" tradition of the profession. While most of them profess to hold a strong commitment to Western norms of professionalism, many seem also attached to partisan orientations. They represent a mixed lot: idealistic yet practical, strong yet weak, self-assured yet reserved, confident yet anxious, relatively well-educated yet quite poorly paid, full of opportunities to make a difference yet seemingly doubtful about their ability to do so. They also experience a substantial gap between hopes and reality, in ways similar to their counterparts in the US and Britain.

The media have been in huge flux, anxiously anticipating the colony's handover to China in 1997. Journalists, who stand sentry over the transitional process, are likely to bear the brunt of any significant change. In this monograph journalists express their views about the role of the media in the political transition. As it is evident that very few journalists hold high confidence in the future of press freedom after 1997, what will they do to weather the storm?

This project is part of a larger and continuing attempt to make sense of the significance of media politics in Hong Kong from the perspective of political communication in theoretical and comparative contexts.

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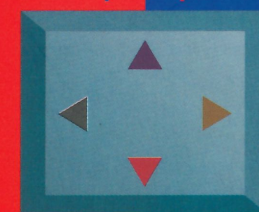
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Sitting at the tip of the Chinese mainland, the small but vibrant Hong Kong press has historically been viewed as a vital element of modern Chinese politics.

Hong Kong is no democracy. But the British colony boasts of considerable press freedom, the level of which is next in Asia to Japan. Spanning the entire ideological spectrum, there has been an uneasy coexistence of the professional press that caters to the market logic and the partisan press that sides with rival Chinese regimes. The rise of media professionalism has forced partisanship to operate in a weakened, albeit still symbolically powerful, position.

Journalists set public agendas, stimulate policy discourses, contribute to the shaping of cultural identity and help to sort out political uncertainty. They deserve to be understood. This monograph is a collective story of the Hong Kong journalists — based on the only comprehensive and representative academic survey of them — about their demographics, career paths, values, work settings, aspirations and frustrations. They also candidly assess the performance of their profession.

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Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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Preface

Journalists see, feel, report and interpret. They set public agendas, stimulate policy discourses, contribute to the shaping of cultural identity and help to sort out political uncertainty. They stand sentry over Hong Kong's momentous political transition to Chinese sovereignty. The crucial role they played in the Tiananmen movement was genuinely shocking to the Beijing leadership. This incident may have inadvertently dramatized the importance, in the eyes of China, of Article 23 in the Basic Law which seeks to outlaw what may be seen as subversive activities against the future sovereign. Will the press bear the brunt of any significant change?

Hong Kong journalists profess to hold a strong commitment to Western norms of professionalism, but they also seem to be attached to ideological partisanship. They are a mixed lot: idealistic yet practical, strong yet weak, self-assured yet reserved, confident yet anxious, relatively well-educated yet poorly paid, full of opportunities to make a difference yet seemingly doubtful about their ability to do so.

They deserve to be understood. This monograph is a collective story of the Hong Kong journalists, without whose support it could never have been written. The analysis is based on a survey of Hong Kong journalists — the only comprehensive and representative academic survey available to date — which aims to present their profiles, values, work settings, aspirations and frustration. This project is part of our larger and continuing attempt to make sense of the significance of media politics in Hong Kong

from the perspective of political communication in theoretical and comparative contexts. Among the authors, Joseph Man Chan drafted Chapters 1-3, Paul Siu-nam Lee drafted Chapters 4-5, and Chin-Chuan Lee drafted Chapters 6-7, but the entire manuscript reflects our broad consensus.

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1

Evolution of the Hong Kong Journalist

Many Chinese are taught that their ancestors had made four technological inventions that had tremendous impact on the world: the compass, paper, printing and gunpowder. All but gunpowder happened to be communication technologies of their times. The compass was instrumental in bringing people together who would otherwise have been separated by long distance. The paper and printing were the technological foundation of the print media. If technology were the sufficient cause of the first form of mass media — the press — China would have witnessed the birth of the world's first newspaper. But the newspaper was invented in the West where it flourished for more than a century before it spread to China. Obviously, technology alone could not account for the birth of the newspaper. China appeared to have lacked the social conditions of the West, such as increase in literacy, the development of capitalism and the expansion of the middle class, which were conducive to press growth (Schudson, 1978; DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1982).

While the press developed into a common cultural form in the West, China was still under feudal rule where printing and paper were used to publish "official gazettes" which registered imperial decrees, officials' movements and other matters related to the bureaucracy. From its inception in the Han dynasty (around 150 BC) to its heyday in the late Qing dynasty, such gazettes had evolved from manual copies that had been distributed strictly among government officials to printed copies that had also circulated among a limited public (Ge, 1964; Lai, 1978:8-21). However, they never made the breakthrough to become a modern newspaper by carrying news and commentaries, targeting the public. Their primary function was to facilitate communication within the feudal bureaucracy. It was not until the Western powers forced open China's doors around the mid-nineteenth century that the Chinese learned of the modern press. Hence, began the history of Chinese journalism which interwove with that of Hong Kong.

Humble Beginning

Out of cultural pride and ignorance, the Qing dynasty was unwilling to learn from foreign countries when it first encountered the West in the nineteenth century. It took several military defeats before the Qing dynasty awoke to Western superiority in technology and later in political arrangement and culture. The first shock happened when Britain subdued China during the Opium War that ended in 1842 with the cessation of Hong Kong and the opening up of five ports — Shanghai, Hankou, Tianjin, Ningpo and Nanjing — for foreign trade. It was mainly through Hong Kong and these ports that the modern press diffused into China. Even a cultural form like the newspaper, that is taken for granted nowadays, took several decades to take root in Hong Kong and China.

The prototypes of Chinese newspapers were the religious periodicals started by Western missionaries. The *Chinese Monthly Magazine*, first of its kind, was published in 1815 in Malacca. Many

more cropped up when Hong Kong, Shanghai and other ports became accessible to Western missionaries, registering some 76 in the period 1842-1891 (Lai, 1978:28).¹ The influence of these publications went beyond the sphere of religious conversion. They often extended their coverage to include current events, science, geography, history, commentary and other topics (Lai, 1978:38). They also introduced some Western concepts of journalism, such as judging news by its accuracy and significance, and the strategic importance of editorial writers. The functions of the press, according to them, were to expand people's knowledge, bridge the gap between the ruler and the ruled, and distinguish the good from the bad. The press was supposed to be used for the promotion of public rather than private interest.

But the religious publications did not lead directly to the first Chinese dailies which were born out of partnership arrangement with English newspapers or Western business interests (Ge, 1964). For instance, two of the earliest Chinese newspapers were published in Hong Kong, one as the Chinese version of the English *China Mail* in 1858 and the other as that of the *Daily Press* in 1860.² Other better known dailies that were launched as business joint ventures by Westerners and Chinese included Shanghai's *Shen Pao* of 1872 and *Shanghai Journal* of 1883, Tianjin's *Times* of 1886, and Hong Kong's *News Daily* of 1893.

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1. The more famous included *Chinese Serial*, *Chinese and Foreign Gazette*, *Shanghai Serial*, *Shanghai Miscellany*, *Chinese and Foreign Weekly News*, as well as *Chinese Globe Magazine* (Ge, 1964:67-72).
 2. According to Ge (1964), the *China Mail* and *Daily Express* were not totally owned or operated by Chinese. The short-lived *Xiaowen Daily* published in Hankou in 1873 was the very first all-Chinese newspaper. However, Lai (1978) argued that Hong Kong's *Daily Press* was in reality owned by a Chinese although it was published under the name of an English daily. He treated Wang Tao's *Xunhuan Daily* published in 1874 as the first newspaper that was independently and fully owned by a Chinese.

These foreign or semi-foreign Chinese newspapers prevailed in the second half of the nineteenth century (Ge, 1964). Original news and commentaries were of marginal importance in these newspapers because the Qing imperial court which made the national decisions was virtually closed to the press (Lai, 1978:46; Ge, 1964:100-101). The common content categories found in these newspapers included reproduced information from the official gazettes, entertaining stories, poetry, commodity prices, shipping schedules, opera themes and advertisements. All these added up to perpetuate the image of the newspaper as one form of Western business, a commercial extension of the official gazettes, or a carrier of trivial information and untrue stories. The newspapers were so lowly regarded that elders often forbade or dissuaded their juniors from reading them (Lai, 1978). Both circulation and advertising were limited largely to foreign companies and locals who had to do business with foreigners.

Limited resources restricted the employment of each newspaper to just a few who often worked in rather poor conditions. For instance, the *Yue Pao* started in 1885 had only two editors and one translator; all three had to do reporting as well (Lin, 1977). The newspaper workers did not command much respect from both government officials and the population at large. Many thought the educated turned to newspaper work only when they failed in other more respectable endeavors, such as getting into the Chinese bureaucracy through public examinations. As if to inspire the humble newspaper workers in China, the foreign Chinese publications often stressed the prestige and influence that an editorial writer in the West enjoyed. The position of an editorial writer was proclaimed to be so important that it should not be traded for any government position (Lai, 1978:38-39). To be qualified for the post, one had to be far-sighted, insightful, expressive, well-versed in current affairs and unbending in face of suppressive power.

The Awakening of Intellectuals

The importance of newspapers did not dawn on Chinese elites on a large scale until China lost the war to Japan in 1894 which was traditionally regarded only as one of China's inferior neighbors. Newspapers which were instrumental in enlightening the public came to be recognized as part of a reform package that had successfully transformed Japan (Lai, 1978). This belief was reinforced when Japan won the war over Russia, a Western power, in 1904. By then, even the Qing government had begun to realize the importance of newspapers in reforming itself.

The intellectuals who advocated reform were among the most prominent pioneering journalists. Wang Tao, an intellectual who had sought refuge in Hong Kong for alleged affiliation with the Taiping rebels, was one of the very first Chinese to launch an independent newspaper, the *Tsun Wan Yat Po* (*Xunhuan Daily*), which was credited for starting the tradition of making press commentaries (Lai, 1978:61-63, 1979:93-153).³ The function of the press, according to Wang, was to expedite communication between the rulers and the ruled, and between the foreigners and Chinese nationals (Lai, 1979:130-134). He attributed the high social status and influence of editorial writers in Western societies to their sense of fairness and sincerity. His notable success as a press commentator was found to have influenced Chinese intellectuals, like Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei, who founded newspapers by the end of the nineteenth century. That well-respected intellectuals, such as Liang and Kang, engaged in newspaper work helped reduce the initial social contempt for newspaper men (Ge, 1964).

Chinese intellectuals have long-cherished traditions such as self-imposed concern for the welfare of the nation and the people (*yiuguo yiumin*), and speaking out against social wrongs even at

3. See Note 2.

the risk of irritating the rulers (*yanze* and *yanjian*). In the past, the major channel for realizing such traditions had been to become part of the imperial bureaucracy. Journalism opened up a new channel independent of the state (Lai, 1978:83-84). This explains why the press at the time was often valued for its roles in eradicating public ignorance, raising public social consciousness and advising the government.

The intellectual journalists were the first to emphasize the importance of professional discipline or ethics (Lai, 1978:85-86). While accusing journalists at the time of rumor-mongering, basing their commentaries on personal considerations and appeasing the powerful, they argued that intellectuals should maintain their integrity, live up to their honor, and keep up their social responsibility and credibility.

Liang Qichao, a leader of the reformist movement and an ardent journalist, was the most articulate in summing up the ideals of journalism. According to him, there were two major functions of the press: One was to supervise the government and the other was to enlighten the general public.⁴ The press, on behalf of the public, should criticize and advise the government with all its heart. If the press were doing its job, politics would be cleansed. To enlighten the public was to show them the way ahead by looking at the historical trail. Influenced by Western liberal philosophers, Liang came to embrace the freedom of thought, expression and publication as "the mother of all civilizations" and the necessary conditions for the popularization of knowledge among the people.⁵

At the media level, Liang quite systematically laid out rules for making press comments and news, respectively.⁶ These could

4. As cited in Lai (1978:85).

5. As cited in Lai (1979:227).

6. Based on an account of Liang's thoughts on these issues as reproduced in Lai (1979:232-233).

be viewed as an important early attempt to articulate the ethical and professional codes for journalism. There were four principles to commentaries: (1) Editorial stance should be based on public interest rather than personal biases; (2) Only socially significant issues deserve commentary; (3) No issues of importance should be spared commentary; and (4) Views should be appropriate to the context of China. As for news coverage, Liang maintained that it should be extensive, fast, accurate, straight-forward and impersonal.

Liang appeared to practise what he preached. When Liang was about to publish an article to denounce Yuan Shikai, the first President of the Republic of China, for his planning to reinstate the monarchy, Yuan tried to threaten and then bribe him with lucrative offers. Liang did not yield and went on to publish the articles. In explaining his behavior, he said: "I think China is now ruled by evil forces. Subordination to any of these forces is to cooperate with the evil. I am already embarrassed for failing to cleanse the society, how can I spread the seeds of evil through a medium?"⁷ While not everyone agreed with Liang's political thoughts, his words and deeds had made him one of the exemplars that Chinese and Hong Kong journalists had looked up to in the early twentieth century.

Tango between Politics and Journalists

Since the beginning of this century, the press has been developing in tandem with Chinese party politics. Many newspapers have been owned and run by the governments and political parties. In the decade preceding the republican revolution in 1911, more than 200 partisan newspapers cropped up in Hong Kong, China and overseas-Chinese societies (Lai, 1978:87). Hong Kong again was the birthplace of the first Chinese party newspaper, *China Daily*,

7. As cited in Lai (1979:239).

which was established by the Tong Meng Hui, the KMT's (Kuomintang) predecessor, in 1900 to advocate the overthrow of the Qing dynasty. It was followed by other revolutionary dailies such as *Gongyi Pao*, *Guangdong Pao* and *Yousuowei Pao*. The constitutional monarchists, led by Kang Youwei, responded by setting newspapers in Hong Kong to spread reformism (Li, 1989:25). This turned Hong Kong into a battleground where Chinese parties fought out their propaganda wars.

Another type of partisan newspapers at the turn of the twentieth century was the official gazettes of the Qing dynasty. In face of mounting threats from the revolutionaries and foreign powers, the Qing reversed its once negative attitudes towards newspapers and started to publish official newspapers for the consumption of the public (Ge, 1964:46-48; Lai, 1979:450-488). These newspapers not only carried decrees and government news but also information about science and technology. But they were not allowed to carry commentaries and news deemed socially disruptive or critical of the Qing rulers. The newspaper men working in these official publications behaved more like government officials than journalists. Their positions were analogous to those journalists or cadres who worked for the ruling parties in China and Taiwan, respectively, in later years.

To the partisan journalists, the newspaper was primarily a tool for spreading ideas and converting the readers to their cause. Consequently, the emphasis of these newspapers was on commentaries and not on news and advertising. News was often selected or written to toe party lines. Although they might not be competitive in a media market such as Hong Kong, they survived and sometimes developed as a result of subsidy from their host parties.

But Hong Kong journalists working in the revolutionary press in the late 1890s and 1910s were very poor financially. This was a result of the parties' poverty and the lack of advertising in party newspapers. *China Daily*, for instance, was on the brink of bankruptcy only months after its operation started; the situation was so severe that its cook was known to have paid out of his own pocket

to feed its staff (Lai, 1979:401-402). *China Daily* and many other revolutionary newspapers had to survive on contributions from the rich who were sympathetic to their causes.

Press freedom bloomed briefly in China in the years immediately after the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. At the same time, numerous political parties were formed, giving rise to a new crop of party newspapers that served as nothing but their mouthpieces. The majority of these newspapers were very small in scale, often manned by a couple of staff, working in a one-room office, and having no printing machine of their own (Lai, 1978:128-129). The start-up cost for such a newspaper could be as little as several hundred *yuans*.

But the press freedom was short-lived, and setbacks followed as a result of power struggles among the warlords from the 1910s to the 1920s, the Japanese invasion from 1937 to 1945, the overlapping inter-party strife between the KMT and the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) from the late 1920s to 1949. Among all the conflicts, Hong Kong served as battleground for propaganda warfare among the contending parties and as a safe haven for journalists who had to escape mainland China for political reasons.

Hong Kong owed its role as a favorite propaganda battleground to the higher press freedom it had and its unique position as strategic outpost to both mainland China and overseas-Chinese. That explains why party newspapers have abounded in Hong Kong which until 1990s had not had any parties of its own. The long and bitter inter-party struggle between the KMT and the CCP has left the strongest imprint on Hong Kong's press development (Chan and C.C. Lee, 1991). It is in Hong Kong where the KMT and the CCP newspapers can rival one another on the market and in polemics without trying to subdue one another by force.

Political repression and turmoil forced many Chinese journalists, both partisan and independent, to settle or work temporarily in Hong Kong during the ups and downs of political turmoil in China. Some of them brought with them practices, skills and standards which were developed in other relatively more ad-

vanced cities such as Shanghai and Beijing. They enriched the journalistic repertoire of Hong Kong. For instance, as Japan intensified its invasion of China in the 1930s, important journalists moved to start publications in Hong Kong. Among the more famous were *Li Pao's* Cheng Shewo, *Ta Kung Pao's* Zhang Jiluan, *Life Daily's* Zou Taofen, etc. Although they did not achieve the same success as they had in Shanghai and other parts of China, they were important in introducing news formats and quality standards into the Hong Kong's newspaper industry (Lin, 1977). *Sing Tao Jih Pao*, launched in 1939, was a newspaper that made conscious use of the combined talents of northern China and of Hong Kong.

The Rise of Independent Journalists

The independent newspapers differ from the party press in two major aspects: One is that they are not organizationally linked to political parties. While some may be ideologically sympathetic towards a particular party, others may opt for "centrism," keeping a safe distance from any party. The second is that independent newspapers do not survive on political subsidy and derive their income from commercial channels, such as advertising and circulation. Profit-making can be their major driving force. Such commercial newspapers were born in the 1860s in response to increasing trade between the Western world and China (Lai, 1978:40-41). Naturally, the more successful early examples were found in the major metropolitan centers, such as the *Daily Press* in Hong Kong, *New Daily*, *Shen Pao*, *Xinwen Pao* and the *Times* in Shanghai (Lai, 1978:136-141).

The commercial newspapers stressed the importance of news and entertainment. A content analysis of five commercial newspapers in five Chinese cities in the 1920s showed that news constituted about one-third of the informational content (Ge, 1964: 201-202). They competed intensely to expand the news net and to put out magazine sections that entertained and informed with

serialized novels, essays and features. To compete with partisan newspapers that stressed commentary and political news, the commercial newspapers also included these in their coverage.

It was the more successful commercial newspapers that invested heavily to upgrade the craft of newspaper making, including printing technology and the use of pictures. While some commercial newspapers advanced the practice of journalism, many were criticized for their professional and ethical deficiencies in various historical periods. For instance, during the reign of the warlords in the 1910s and 1920s, many journalists accepted bribes to become their mouthpieces (Fang, 1981:728). Lowly educated, many were uncommitted to journalism. For fear of punishment or interference from the warlords, journalists tended to stay reactive and ambivalent in their editorial stance. At the same time, many emphasized sensational and socially insignificant news in their effort to appease the audience. All these resulted in the journalists' loss of credibility and respect among the public.

Before the 1910s, newspapers generally did not have reporters of their own. News was rather homogeneous because they depended on a pool of reporters who loosely organized themselves to provide news to newspapers (Zhang, 1928; Lai, 1978:144-145). It was a rudimentary form of news agency. Newspapers were criticized for the relative lack of news made by one's own journalists and over-reliance on outside sources. But as competition among the commercial newspapers intensified, newspapers after the 1910s had to employ more reporters and set up some specialized beats. Entering the 1920s, the major newspapers in Shanghai and Hong Kong began to employ more reporters. News generated by one's own reporters and correspondents have since then played a more important role.⁸

8. Other traditional news sources included wire agencies, foreign newspapers and other Chinese newspapers.

The first reporter who came to be known nationally was Huang Yuansheng who served as a Beijing political correspondent for Shanghai's *Shen Pao* in the early 1910s (Fang, 1981:741-742; Song, 1985). Huang owed his exemplary status to being educated, expressive, well-connected and capable. He emphasized the requirements that were essential for making a successful reporter, namely, analytical ability, health, listening comprehension and written expressiveness. At the same time, he stressed the importance of being fair and objective.

Commercial newspapers in Hong Kong firmly established themselves as the mainstream newspapers when *Wah Kiu Yat Pao* and *Kung Sheung Daily News* were launched in 1925. While both newspapers were commercial enterprises, they were ideologically inclined towards the KMT. This political orientation was particularly strong with *Kung Sheung Daily News* which professed in its inaugural issue that one of its goals was to contain the spread of communism in China (Lin, 1977). Nevertheless, both *Kung Sheung Daily News* and *Wah Kiu Yat Pao* were run as commercial enterprises. Later, these two newspapers were joined by *Sing Tao Jih/Wen Pao*, *Sing Pao Daily News*, *Oriental Daily News*, *Ming Pao Daily News* and so on as the major commercial newspapers of Hong Kong.

These commercial newspapers placed much greater emphasis on news, especially local news. In the past, local news, if any, was provided by a loose form of shared agency mentioned earlier. It was *Wah Kiu Yat Pao* that led the way to have more reporters covering local affairs (Lin, 1977). In their competition to attract readers, many commercial newspapers in Hong Kong devoted much attention to societal and entertainment news and slighted serious news. As late as the 1970s, Hong Kong government officials blamed the Chinese newspapers for devoting less than 5% of the newshole to current local issues. This "news for profit" mentality, according to S. Mosher (1988:29), resulted not just in the minimization of salaries for journalists but also the emphasis on "lurid, even unethical reporting in order to increase sales by ap-

pealing to readers' basic instincts," and compromising accuracy and fairness in reportage related to big advertisers.

Out of the independent journalists in modern China, Zhang Jiluan, the editor-in-chief of *Ta Kung Pao* that was revitalized in 1926, stood out as an exemplar. Under his leadership, *Ta Kung Pao* received an award from the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri in 1931 for its excellent performance. His views of journalism represented an escalation of the intellectual tradition within the independent press. While sharing with Liang Qichao the need to contribute by making commentaries to improve national welfare, Zhang stressed the importance of editorial independence, the role of the press as a forum and news coverage.⁹

One of the highest principle that he adhered to was non-partisanship (Zhang, 1931). He argued that the press should speak for the public at large. Only views that promoted national welfare would be endeared. The press should never accept bribes or political investment that might compromise its editorial judgment. Neither should it omit nor distort views in order to appease the powerful and the general audience.

Committed to journalism, Zhang said the press should not be a tool for pursuing ulterior motives. Instead, it should serve as an open forum where public debates could take place. Through such debates, he envisioned that mature public opinion could be formed and would have a beneficial impact on the society. He promised that his newspaper would accommodate views of all bents as far as they fell within the legal limits.

Zhang himself was one of the best editorial writers in Chinese journalism history, but he emphasized that news coverage was the "life of journalism" (Lai, 1979:631). With news, the press could reflect all the major national issues and help build China. He urged the press to devote more attention to economic news, which was slighted at the time.

9. Based on original citations in Lai (1979:597-598, 630-639).

Influenced by Western liberalism, Zhang was relentless in exposing the merits of the freedom of expression. A free press, according to him, was beneficial to the government because it would expose social problems before they developed into social crises. On the contrary, a suppressive press would result in the prevalence of the official opinion, thereby undermining the credibility of both the press and the government. In the end, people would just turn to rumors that might arise to fill the void of credible information. Although Zhang did allow restraints on the press on issues of extreme sensitivity, he argued that freedom of expression and the freedom of the press were people's rights and should not be denied.

Social Image of Journalists

Starting from the 1920s, journalists in both Hong Kong and China sometimes congratulated themselves as being "kings without the crown," a reference that spoke to their potential influence and their access to the rich and the powerful (Zhang, 1928:13). There was no denying that some journalists had earned wide social respect for the excellent work they had done. However, this reference usually served no more than as a contrast to the generally low social image of journalists which was related to their meagre salary, difficult working conditions and unethical practices.

From the mid-nineteenth century to the 1900s, newspaper journalists in both Hong Kong and China were mainly regarded as outcast intellectuals or gossip carriers. As late as the 1930s, many parents just did not want their children to be journalists (Li, 1989:182). This rather humble image lingered on into the modern era. In the 1960s, it was not uncommon for fire-fighters in Hong Kong to host reporters and photographers and for policemen to threaten and push journalists around at sites of news happenings (Spackman, 1993). An occupational categorization adopted for decades by the Hong Kong government betrayed its refusal to view journalism as a respectable profession: The Journalism

Training Board, a government-funded body that helped meet the training needs of working journalists, had been grouped with other boards that dealt with craftsmen and junior white-collar workers (Wong, 1988:21).

The social status of the journalists had suffered as a result of the low salary they had received in the past. There was no significant improvement as late as 1988 when S. Mosher (1988:29) made this vivid illustration: "In Hong Kong, Filipino maids are guaranteed by law a minimum wage of \$2,300 per month, plus room and board. An unskilled electronics factory worker earns at least \$3,000 per month. The average starting salary for a reporter at a Chinese newspaper is also \$3,000 per month, under working conditions that compare unfavorably to those of factory workers or amahs in length of hours, exposure to the elements or benefits enjoyed. But the same reporter is required to have a tertiary education. Requiring the same credentials, but offering much better working conditions, mainline banks offer their trainee managers \$6,000 per month, and a graduate teacher starts at \$6,800."

Another reason that contributed to the low image of journalists was the wide practice of unethical practice before the mid-1970s. Many received monetary rewards, sometimes through mah-jong games, for printing information favorable to individuals, products or corporations.¹⁰ Some made use of their social connections to solicit advertising. Some chose to mingle with the rich and the powerful and to write and publish public relations articles on their behalf, resulting in the proliferation of "news" about the activities of individual celebrities and their family members (Lin, 1977:165). Worst of all, some journalists accepted bribes from the police who themselves were bribed for not reporting on gambling and other illegal activities.¹¹ All these did not happen

10. Interviews with veteran journalists.

11. Interviews with veteran journalists.

only in the small newspapers but also in the established ones like *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, *Kung Sheung Daily News* and *Sing Tao Jih/Wen Pao*.

An important sign of journalists' sprouting awareness of their social situation was the founding of the Hong Kong Journalists Association in 1968. It was no coincidence that its first chairman described its founding as "a matter of dignity" (Spackman, 1993: 20). Over the decades, individual journalists and the Journalists Association have been making persistent complains over low pay and raising the issue of professionalization. It took the establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption in 1972 to reduce the practice of accepting bribes. Improvement in working conditions, salary and social status of journalists were not noticeable until the early 1990s.

According to Daisy Li (1993), head of the Hong Kong Journalists Association, there was a compelling move towards professionalism consequential to intensified competition among the media because of the public thirst for information about the uncertain future of Hong Kong. She argued that whether the journalists could fulfil their social functions and obligations in collating and disseminating information in a "fair, objective and accurate manner" for the public was a more important indicator of professionalization than raising financial rewards and educational qualifications (p. 13). Meanwhile, the task of the Journalists Association has been to promote press freedom and professional ethics, and to improve standards within the journalism industry.

Modern Media Structure in Hong Kong

To fend off communist influence in the 1950s, the Hong Kong government passed very stringent laws, which, if enforced to the letter, would result in the curtailment of press freedom (Shen, 1972). A British attempt in 1952 to put these laws into practice was aborted because of pressure from mainland China. Since then, the press was left to operate primarily within a market structure,

resulting in a high degree of press freedom in Hong Kong which has been second only to Japan's in Asia (Chan and C.C. Lee, 1991). While only a handful of electronic media are licensed to operate, anyone can apply for a business licence and start a publication. The government does set some limits on the publication of pornographic and politically sensitive materials. However, it rarely practises editorial censorship. Without an explicit and elaborate cultural policy, Hong Kong is a free port for information that allows the free flow of the media in and out of Hong Kong.

Consequently, the media market is left in full operation. Thanks to the rapid growth of advertising revenues and social consumption power, the media industry flourishes.¹² Presently Hong Kong has four television broadcast channels, two of which are saturated with local productions. Radio broadcasting has three operators, one publicly owned, two commercial, running a total of thirteen channels. Hong Kong is a hotbed of publication. For a city with a population of 6 million, there are more than 20 daily newspapers, not counting the "mosquito" papers that cater to horse-racing. Hong Kong is also teeming with magazines, many of which have mushroomed in recent years. It is also a regional center for news transmission, publication, television broadcasting, popular music, movie production and telecommunication.

Prior to the 1990s, politics in this colonial administrative state was sharply divided on the line of the struggle between the CCP and the KMT, that is, mainland China and Taiwan. The press in effect had become an extension of the KMT-CCP strife when both parties had set up propaganda outposts in Hong Kong (Chan and C.C. Lee, 1991). Not until the early 1970s did "centrist" newspapers, critical of both Beijing and Taipei, began to prosper. These profit-motivated commercial papers were beneficiaries of Hong

12. A detailed analysis of the development of communications in Hong Kong is given in Chan and P. Lee (1991).

Kong's rapidly expanding economy and advertising. Although devoting significant coverage to Chinese politics, they focused even more on immediate local concerns.

Hong Kong did not have its own political parties until 1990 when the United Democrats of Hong Kong formed in anticipation of the maiden Legislative Council election the following year. From then on, other Hong Kong parties began to crop up, resulting in some rudimentary forms of local party politics. So far, the mass media have not made any explicit editorial endorsement of the parties, not to mention financial and organizational linkages.

The electronic media are much less partisan than the press. Neither the CCP nor the KMT is allowed to own and run television or radio stations even though individual owners may have economic or ideological ties with either party. With the exception of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) which is publicly owned, all other electronic media are commercial operations, which tend to take a "centrist" position ideologically.

Organization of the Book

The conception of the journalist is still being defined and redefined as Hong Kong's journalism industry changes in tandem with its working environment. To more accurately gauge the characteristics of Hong Kong journalists in the 1990s, we did a representative survey of the news community in 1990. The topics of interest included the journalists' socio-economic background, working conditions, professional attitudes, ethical standards, political perception and ideological inclination. We shall organize the results in this book as follows:

Chapter 1 provides a historical view of the Hong Kong journalists in the broader context of China. It discusses the various journalistic traditions and the social image of journalists. A methodological note is also given.

Chapter 2 typifies and profiles the Hong Kong journalists in statistical terms. The topics covered include the distribution of

journalists among the media, their socio-economic background, professional affiliation, social and ideological outlook, nationality and immigration inclination, as well as the uses and the evaluation of various news media.

Chapter 3 traces the development of journalism education and training in China in general and Hong Kong in particular. The journalists' educational background and its influence are examined in details. Finally, the chapter gives an analysis of the emergent challenges to journalism education in Hong Kong.

Chapter 4 discusses the working conditions of Hong Kong journalists with respect to their income, job satisfaction, turnover and ideological linkage with the employing media.

Chapter 5 examines the journalists' degree of professionalization as reflected in their attitudes towards media roles, newsworthiness, journalistic canons, ethical norms and political ideology.

Chapter 6 explores the media roles during the political transition as perceived by Hong Kong journalists. It will also probe how they evaluate the political situation and how they self-censor towards the power centers as represented by China and Hong Kong.

Chapter 7 sums up the findings and provides a comparative view of the Hong Kong journalists by drawing together studies of journalists in other parts of the world. It also extrapolates on the future of the journalist profession.

Methodological Note

This was the first comprehensive survey of Hong Kong journalists. Journalists surveyed included reporters, editors and news translators working in television, radio, newspapers and news magazines. Excluded from this study were correspondents of the international media as well as journalists specializing in sports, entertainment, photography and non-editorial columns. A total of 25 news organizations were involved, covering all the local elec-

tronic media and dailies that publish regular news.¹³ In other words, virtually every news organization was represented in the sample.

Since quite a few Hong Kong media kept their staff roster under strict confidence because of political sensitivities, we had to create the sampling frame with the aid of informants. They enlisted the journalists working in each news organization by rank and by job nature between mid-June and mid-July 1990, resulting in a total of 1,381 names. Among them, 95 were expatriates from two English-language newspapers or English news departments of the electronic media. A systematic sample with an interval of 2 was drawn from this population, yielding a sample of 692.

The questionnaire had a Chinese and an English version. Questionnaire distribution and collection were done with the aid of one or more than one acquainted journalists working in each of the sampled institutions. We finished data collection between mid-July and late August 1990. Named questionnaires were delivered to the distributors in bulk who, in turn, handed them to his or her colleagues in the office. Respondents returned the questionnaires directly to our informants or mailed them back to us. A response rate of 75% (N=522) was obtained after follow-up phone calls and reminders. This rate is consistent across media (print vs. broadcast), types of journalists (reporters vs. editors) and journalists of differing partisan persuasion.

13. Specifically, the sample includes these news organizations: (1) Television: Asia Television Limited, Television Broadcasts Limited, Radio Television Hong Kong; (2) Radio: Hong Kong Commercial Radio, Radio Television Hong Kong; (3) Newspapers: *Ching Pao Daily*, *Express Daily News*, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily*, *Hong Kong Daily News*, *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, *Hong Kong Economic Times*, *Hong Kong Standard*, *Hong Kong Times*, *Ming Pao Daily News*, *New Evening Post*, *Oriental Daily News*, *Sing Pao Daily News*, *Sing Tao Jih/Wen Pao*, *South China Morning Post*, *Ta Kung Pao*, *Tin Tin Daily News*, *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, *Wen Wei Po*; (4) News Magazines: *Contemporary*, *Pai Shing Semi-Monthly*, *Yazhou Zhoukan*.

2

Statistical Profile of the Hong Kong Journalist

The purpose of this chapter is to typify the Hong Kong journalists and present their basic characteristics. Typification is a useful device for characterizing journalists or members of other professional communities in a society although it runs the risk of slighting the diversity among individuals. As evidenced by the statistics to follow, a "typical" Hong Kong journalist is young, mobile, well-educated, relatively underpaid, pro-capitalism, pro-democratization, neutral towards the KMT-CCP strife and gloomy about the future of press freedom in Hong Kong. But, this portrait should be viewed against other journalists of diverse backgrounds and orientations. A sizable portion of the Hong Kong journalists is middle-aged, well-paid, sedentary in employment, not-so-well educated, having strong views over the KMT-CCP rift and neutral towards socialism and democratization. We need to look more carefully at the statistical data to have a more comprehensive and detailed view.

The Journalistic Workforce

Table 2.1 shows that an overwhelming majority of Hong Kong journalists work for newspapers (72%), with the rest thinning out into television (13%), radio (8%) and news magazines (2%). That the newspapers out-compete other media in employment is a direct result of the large number of dailies — about 20 — that Hong Kong has. Only an insignificant number of journalists worked for news magazines in 1990 when the survey was done. With the launching of a few more titles since then, the number of journalists working for news magazines should have slightly increased.¹ When Wharf Cable started a 24-hour news channel in 1993, television journalists were expected to grow by about 15%.

Table 2.1 Medium type (%)

Newspaper	72.4
News magazine	2.3
Television	12.8
Radio	8.0
Unidentified	4.5
Total	100.0
(N)	(522)

As expected, journalists in Hong Kong are ranked in a pyramidal fashion with the reporters at the base and the managing and chief editors at the top. Table 2.2 indicates that regular reporters (49%) and senior reporters (12%) together constitute the majority of journalists (61%). In some newspapers, the senior reporters also

1. These include *Next Magazine*, *Pai Shing Semi-Monthly* and *China Times Weekly*.

perform a management role that includes job assignment and team coordination for special coverage. Most media depend on the news assignment editors who make up 6% of the journalistic workforce for the daily management of reporters. About 14% are editors who edit the news stories filed by the reporters. At the top of the news organization are the managing editors, the deputy and chief editors (4%) who supervise and direct the whole news operations. It is rare for Hong Kong media organizations to station correspondents in foreign territories on a regular basis. Instead, they rely on news translators who in many cases help select and edit news out of the wire supply.

Table 2.2 Ranks in local news media (%)

Reporter	49
Senior/Principal Reporter, Beat Leader	12
News Assignment Editor	6
Copy Editor, Sub-editor	14
Section Head/Chief	3
Executive/Managing Editor	1
Deputy/Chief Editor	4
News Translator, Wire Reporter	4
Others	8
Total	101
(N)	(522)

Note: Percentage does not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Job differentiation was very low before the 1980s. This was a result of understaffing at Chinese newspapers which forced many reporters to be "jacks of all trades and masters of none" (Mosher, 1988:29). But, when the political economy of Hong Kong underwent tremendous changes during the transition, political reporters and economic reporters came to be well differentiated. Beat

structures became more refined. Now, reporters may specialize in the coverage of education, transportation, constitutional affairs, etc.

The total workforce of the whole media industry should be much larger than what the size of our sampling frame, 1381, may suggest because it would also include international media, wire agencies and non-news publications. The periodic manpower reports of the Hong Kong Journalism Training Board provide an estimation of the total editorial workforce in the mass media of Hong Kong. To put the journalistic workforce into perspective, Table 2.3 which shows the distribution of editorial manpower in the whole media industry is produced here.²

Table 2.3 Editorial workforce in all Hong Kong media and news agencies, 1991 (%)

Job level	Newspaper	Radio and television	Magazine	News agency	Total
Managerial Editor	4	8	34	15	16
Supervisory Editor	31	37	43	49	37
Reporter	58	52	22	33	43
News Translator	7	2	1	3	4
Total	100	99	100	100	100
(N)	(1,871)	(403)	(1,375)	(136)	(3,785)
Row %	[49]	[11]	[36]	[4]	[100]

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Recalculated from Journalism Training Board (1991).

2. Based on the results of a survey (Journalism Training Board, 1991) that covered 66 newspapers, 349 magazines, 20 radio and television stations and bureaus, as well as 20 news agencies.

Comparing Table 2.1 and Table 2.3, newspaper journalists still make up the largest subgroup although it has dropped from 72% to 49%. This reduction is largely due to the increase of magazine workers (36%) who, in this case, include those who work for non-news magazines such as entertainment weeklies and other interest periodicals. Radio and television journalists make up 11% while their counterparts in the news agencies comprise merely 4%.

As magazines and news agency bureaus are usually of smaller sizes than newspapers and the news departments of the electronic media, the proportion of managerial editors to reporters in the latter tend to be larger. In the case of magazines, managerial editors are even more numerous than reporters (34 : 22). This speaks to the small staff size of magazines on the one hand and to the tendency of magazines to title its editorial workers as "editors" rather than "reporters," on the other. With newspapers and the electronic media, the ratio of managerial editors to reporters is more consistent with the pattern represented in Table 2.2.

Gender, Age and Marriage

It is common for television news to show tens of Hong Kong reporters pressing both Chinese and British officials for information. These frontline reporters on the political beat are predominantly female, which is in line with the sex ratios in local journalism schools. For instance, in the Department of Journalism and Communication at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, the sex ratio has been about 1 : 6 in favor of the female since the late 1980s. An equally lopsided distribution is observed in the Journalism Department of the Baptist University.

However, the survey finds that the male outnumber (65%) the female (35%) by a ratio of about 2 : 1. There are two plausible reasons that account for this apparent discrepancy: One is that a sizable portion of journalists are spot reporters who, as a tradition, have been dominated by the male, presumably because of their

higher capability in dealing with crisis situations such as accidents, disasters and tragedies. These spot reporters seldom appear on the television screen as a collectivity. The other reason is that many female reporters find themselves less mobile when they start marriage and child-rearing, thereby becoming housewives or deserting journalism for jobs that pay better and have more regular working hours. Consequently, the male journalists have a higher tendency to stay on and take up more senior positions.

As mentioned earlier, Hong Kong has a long history of journalism which could be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century. However, its practitioners at present are extremely young, with a median age of only 30. As indicated in Table 2.4, about half (51%) are below the age of 30 and about 85% are below 41. Only 7% of the journalists are older than 51. This has to do with the rapid turnover of personnel in the news industry. While the youthfulness of Hong Kong journalists speaks to their energy and enthusiasm, it also underlies their inability to accumulate and pass on experience which is essential for the maturity of a profession.

Table 2.4 Age (%)

Below 21	1
21-25	18
26-30	32
31-35	21
36-40	12
41-45	5
46-50	3
51-55	2
56-60	3
Above 60	2
No answer	2
Total	101
(N)	(522)

Note: Percentage does not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Consistent with the low age of Hong Kong journalists, more than half are single (54%). Married journalists account for only 41%. In contrast, the more mature and stable news industry of the United States registers 60% of its journalists as married (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1993).

Experience

Given the youthfulness of Hong Kong journalists, it is inevitable that the majority are relatively inexperienced too. The median of experience in journalism is only 5 years and 9 months, a far cry from the American journalist who has a median experience of 12 years (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1993). As indicated in Table 2.5, about 53% have been in the profession for less than 6 years. Only 7% are veterans of over 20 years. Consequently, it is quite common for journalists who have been in the field for about 5 years to assume leadership and management positions. They often become targets of raiding and enjoy quantum jumps in salary should such raiding happen.

Table 2.5 also shows the number of years journalists have been working for their present employer. Hong Kong journalists appear to have weak organizational loyalty, as evidenced by the fact that more than half of the journalists (55%) have been with their employing organization for only 2 years or less. Those who have been working for the same organization for 11 years or more account for merely 16%. It appears that not only is the turnover of journalists in the profession high in Hong Kong but also within individual news organizations.

Table 2.5 Years working in journalism and in present organization (%)

Duration in years	Journalism	Present organization
Less than 1	9	23
1-2	17	32
3-4	18	14
5-6	9	6
7-8	8	4
9-10	9	5
11-12	9	6
13-14	6	4
15-20	8	3
Over 20	7	3
Total	100	100
(N)	(522)	(522)

There is both a pull and push factor in accounting for the high mobility of journalists in Hong Kong. The pull factor is related to the continuous economic growth of Hong Kong since the early 1980s which has rendered unemployment virtually nonexistent. The expansion in the relevant industries such as public relations and advertising has created opportunities for journalists to leave for more attractive jobs. The push factor is that most news media, particularly before the 1990s, do not match their intense demands for performance with corresponding monetary rewards and working conditions. Worst of all, many news organizations do not even have well-defined reward structures that offer the journalists long-term prospects. Many young people, therefore, shift to occupations that offer greater stability and higher rewards after serving in the field for several years.

Education and Income

Before the 1970s, most of the journalists were quite lowly educated. Some reporters covering societal news were just retired or sacked policemen who were hired for their good police connections.³ Being unable to express themselves in good Chinese, many had to rely on their colleagues for writing up the stories. Entering the 1970s, more college-educated students entered journalism. Their improved proficiency in English and Chinese, coupled with their concern for the society, rendered them more effective reporters than their predecessors.

In general, Hong Kong journalists are quite well educated. About 78% of them have received some level of college education and the majority of the rest are matriculators (Table 2.6). Of all the respondents, about half (48%) majored in journalism or communication in their undergraduate studies. Among degree holders, the communication majors make up 62%.

Table 2.6 Education (%)

Junior high school	1
Senior high school	7
Matriculation	11
Tertiary education	72
Graduate school	6
No answer	3
Total	100
(N)	(522)

3. Interview with a veteran journalist.

The relative high proportion of journalists who have received college education needs a qualification. University education in Hong Kong has been very elitist. Only the very competitive students can enrol in tertiary institutions that offer officially recognized degrees. Many less competitive students have to enrol in local colleges that grant unrecognized degrees or go to overseas universities whose degrees may or may not be officially recognized. But, it is safe to say that an overwhelming majority of Hong Kong journalists have received some level of tertiary education that is at least close to a bachelor degree.

Out of all the journalists, 23% are graduates from local degree-granting institutions which include The Chinese University of Hong Kong (10%), Baptist College (7%), University of Hong Kong (4%) and the two Polytechnics (1%). As many as 31% are from the local unrecognized colleges, almost evenly divided between Chu Hai College (16%) and Shue Yan College (15%). The rest are trained in Taiwan, China and overseas colleges. It is remarkable to note that 20% of the journalists had their education at the National Chengchi University of Taiwan. In contrast, Jinan University of China accounts for only 4%.

That more than 50% of the journalists are trained in unrecognized colleges in Hong Kong and Taiwan needs an explanation. On the one hand, it speaks to the difficulty young people had experienced in entering local universities before the Hong Kong government expanded the university enrolment in the 1990s. Those who failed to get into degree universities usually turned to local unrecognized colleges in Hong Kong and Taiwan which were less stringent about their entry requirements. On the other hand, the media in Hong Kong, particularly the newspapers, like to employ the holders of unrecognized degrees that are less competitive in the job market.

Historically, low pay has been a major problem that has plagued the journalism occupation. In the early 1960s, a high school graduate earned about HK\$280 per month as a reporter. In comparison, a clerk with the same educational qualification was paid HK\$380 whereas a bank teller, HK\$400. In the late 1960s, a

college-educated radio reporter got about HK\$600 whereas a teacher could get as much as HK\$1,450 per month. It was particularly attractive for high school graduates to get into clerical works at the time because of higher pay, regular hours and higher social status. To make their ends meet, many journalists had to have a second job before the 1980s. The favorite second jobs was teaching or working at another publication.

The situation was not much improved as late as the 1980s when the average starting salary for a reporter at a Chinese newspaper compared unfavorably with the salary of an unskilled electronics factory worker, a bank trainee manager, and a graduate teacher (Mosher, 1988:29). As indicated in Table 2.7, more than half (61%) of the journalists received a monthly salary of HK\$10,000 (US\$1,300) or below in 1990. In a booming city like Hong Kong and given the journalists' relatively high educational qualification, the financial reward for journalists was generally considered to be low. In 1990, a university graduate who started out as a reporter earned about HK\$5,000 per month whereas he could make about HK\$11,000 if he chose to work as an executive officer for the government. The relatively deprived state of Hong Kong journalists is attested by the fact that one quarter of the Hong Kong journalists (25%) have a part-time job in extra. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority (87%) consider a big salary increase an urgent need.

Table 2.7 Monthly salary

Monthly salary (HK\$)	%
Below 5,001	9
5,001-10,000	52
10,001-15,000	16
15,001-20,000	11
20,001-25,000	7
25,001-30,000	1
Above 30,000	4
Total	100
(N)	(522)

Professional Affiliation

There are three major journalism organizations in Hong Kong: The Newspapers Society of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong News Executives Association and the Hong Kong Journalists Association. The Newspapers Society of Hong Kong, comprised of the publishers of virtually all the newspapers, is functional in fixing a unified price for its member newspapers and deciding on when a price increase should be implemented. As a gesture to improve journalism, it organizes journalism competition and gives off prizes to the best performers in various domains. The other two associations are for journalists, with the News Executives Association admitting only journalists at management level and the Journalists Association welcoming all practitioners at lower levels. The Hong Kong Journalists Association was founded in 1968 with most of its leaders being expatriates. It was only until mid-1980s that local Chinese came to account for 75% of its membership (Li, 1993). Judging from the membership figures, the journalists are quite loosely organized. Only about 13% of the respondents are members of the Hong Kong Journalists Associa-

tion and 5% are members of the Hong Kong News Executives Association. The latter has not been as outspoken as the former on issues related to press freedom and the journalism profession since the onset of the transition of sovereignty to China. While it has stopped short of being a well-organized union that fights for the economic benefits of its members, the Hong Kong Journalists Association is emerging as an outspoken pressure group, a professional organization that provides ethical guidelines and occasional training. For instance, it has been campaigning for law reform in an effort to safeguard press freedom (Bale, 1993a) and responding to ethical issues that the journalism industry faces. While it endorses a code of ethics, it also releases guidelines on reporting teen suicides, elections and other controversial subjects (Bale, 1993b).

Social and Ideological Outlook

Most journalists hold an uncertain view about Hong Kong’s political future. The survey shows that 22% of the journalists believe the scheme of “one country, two systems” to be feasible, 27% rule it out as unfeasible, and 40% express uncertainty and 11% have no opinion. As evidenced in Table 2.8, Hong Kong journalists have a bleak view of the future of press freedom in Hong Kong. More than half (56%) expect press freedom to be restricted even during the run-up to 1997. When asked about press freedom beyond 1997, 69% of the respondents think that it will be “restricted” while 28% find it “hard to say” or have no opinion. Only 3% estimate that press freedom will remain “unchanged.”

Unlike journalists in the United States where partisan ideology plays a less important role in news media, the political ideology of journalists, for instance, has been observed to have effected self-selection in newspaper recruitment, resulting in high ideological congruence between journalists and newspapers (Chan and Lee, 1987; Chan, Lee and Lee, 1992). As we shall observe later, the political ideology of the journalists is also found to relate system-

atically to their social and professional outlooks, self-censorship and aspired media roles. It is, therefore, essential for us to examine the ideological outlooks of Hong Kong journalists as the society restructures on many fronts.

Table 2.8 Views of future press freedom (%)

Press freedom	In the run-up to 1997	Beyond 1997
Restricted	56	69
Hard to say	22	24
Unchanged	15	3
Greater	4	0
No opinion	3	4
Total	100	100
(N)	(522)	(522)

We measure journalists' political ideology by asking them to identify their locations on a 11-point (0 to 10) Likert scale with regard to (a) their affinity towards Taiwan or Beijing, (b) their preference for socialism or capitalism as a way of life, (c) their preference for slowing down or speeding up Hong Kong's democratization at present, as well as (d) their priority over the interests of the upper social strata and those of the lower strata.

Table 2.9 indicates that Hong Kong journalists, as a whole, are bent quite strongly towards capitalism (median=8.0, mean=7.3) and speedier democratization (median=8.0, mean=7.7). Their tendency over identification with class interest is less marked in comparison, tilting slightly in favor of the lower class (median=5.0, mean=4.3). While the partisan rift between Taiwan and mainland China has shaped Hong Kong's press structure, the journalists appear to be distancing themselves from this inter-party conflict. As many as 65% claim to opt for the neutral point along the measurement scale (median=5.0, mean=4.9).

Table 2.9 Ideological orientation

Ideological orientation	Median	Mean	Standard deviation	(N)
Pro-socialism (0) to Pro-capitalism (10)	8.0	7.3	2.3	(494)
Pro-Taiwan (0) to Pro-China (10)	5.0	4.9	1.5	(484)
Slower democratization (0) to speedier democratization (10)	8.0	7.7	2.1	(495)
Pro-lower class (0) to Pro-upper class (10)	5.0	4.3	2.1	(496)

In light of the impending change of sovereignty in 1997, one should not be surprised to find that the choice of social systems and the attitudes on democratization have emerged as the significant ideological axes because both are related to the potential threat of China as a disrupter of Hong Kong's *status quo*. Hong Kong, noted for its capitalist success, dreads the idea of becoming part of China in spite of China's promise of "one country, two systems." At the same time, many people tend to think that democratization, independently of its own intrinsic merits, will help fend off undue interference from mainland China.

It is interesting to note that the ideological strife between KMT-CCP that was functional in shaping the press structure in the past is losing its relevance at the level of journalists who opt in the main for a neutral stance. This agrees with the fading influence of Taiwan and the looming importance of China over Hong Kong.

In spite of the journalists' slight inclination in favor of the lower class, they are not showing a strong attitude on class interests. How this relatively neutral stance towards class interests has come about in a society that witnesses large gaps between the rich and the poor is an intriguing question. While the existing data cannot give a certain answer, one can postulate that there are two

plausible explanations. One has to do with the prevalence of the refugee mentality of Hong Kong that stresses social stability and feeds on the fear of China retaking Hong Kong should any disruption occur. The second is the “trickle-down effect” that Hong Kong’s continuous economic growth may have in relieving class tensions which should otherwise run high.

Nationality and Emigration Tendency

Social and political discourses in the Hong Kong media are filled with references to and identification with both China and Hong Kong. But, when asked whether China or Hong Kong counts more to national identity, the journalists tend to choose Hong Kong. As Table 2.10 shows, 45% identify themselves first as Hong Kong citizens whereas only 23% as Chinese. About 17% are too uncertain to make a clear choice. It appears that the development of Hong Kong as a separate political entity has instilled a sense of belonging that even overshadows the traditionally influential Chinese identity among some half of the journalists. It would be interesting to observe how this identification with Hong Kong is going to change after Hong Kong reunifies with China.

Table 2.10 National identity (%)

First as Hong Kong citizen	45
First as Chinese	23
In between Hong Kong and China	17
Others	11
No answer	5
Total	101
(N)	(522)

Note: Percentage does not add up to 100 due to rounding.

The impending change of sovereignty in 1997 has induced the public’s anxiety over two interrelated issues — nationality and emigration. In the last decade, emigrating to obtain a foreign passport has become a safety measure among the well educated who have left Hong Kong in droves. Those who are possessing foreign passports are in general less inclined to move out. As indicated in Table 2.11, a breakdown of the journalists’ nationalities shows that about 86% of the journalists are holders of passports issued by the Hong Kong government. Only about 10% hold foreign passports.

Like in other professional sectors, emigration is hitting the journalism profession as well. When asked if they have applied for emigration, 11% of those who respond (N=469) answer “yes.” Out of those who have not yet applied (N=349), 25% say they plan to. It is estimated that a total of about 30% of the journalists have tried or will try to emigrate.

Table 2.11 Nationality

Type of passports	%
BDTC(HK)/BN(O)	67
CI holder	19
Foreigner	10
No answer	4
Total	100
(N)	(522)

Media Use and Media Evaluation

Interviews with journalists indicate that they expose themselves to news media in order to get informed, to find news clues and to compare performance. Table 2.12 shows that the four newspapers, *Ming Pao Daily News* (59%), *Oriental Daily News* (54%), *South China*

Morning Post (53%) and the *Hong Kong Economic Journal* (48%), are the most read newspapers among journalists. With the exception of the *Oriental Daily News* which is the best selling Chinese newspaper in Hong Kong, the other three are generally considered to be quality newspapers read by the more educated and the elite.⁴ The *Oriental Daily News* is noted for its wide coverage of news. Apparently, the journalists prefer reading these newspapers because of their substantive coverage and quality rather than their circulation.

The two leftist newspapers, *Wen Wei Po* and *Ta Kung Pao*, registering less than 1% of the general readership (Chan and P. Lee, 1991), were read by 23% and 19% of the journalists, respectively. This discrepancy has to do with the fact that journalists working in leftist media account for about 15% of the journalism workforce. Some non-leftist journalists need to read them to keep abreast of Chinese policies too. The less prominent leftist newspapers, such as the *New Evening Post* (12%), *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* (4%) and *Ching Pao Daily* (3%), are read by a very low proportion of the journalists. The *Hong Kong Times*, the only rightist newspaper surviving at the time of the survey, fares no better and is read by only 7%. This speaks to the reduction of perceived newsworthiness of Taiwan in the eyes of Hong Kong journalists.

Regional and international publications, such as the *Asian Wall Street Journal* (3%), *New York Times* (2%) and the *London Times* (2%), are not well read either. This reflects Hong Kong media's heavy emphasis on local news and their reliance on wires as sources of international news.

4. For a comparison of the circulations among various newspapers, see Chan and C.C. Lee (1991).

Table 2.12 Preference of newspapers (%)

Ming Pao Daily News	59
Oriental Daily News	54
South China Morning Post	53
Hong Kong Economic Journal	48
Sing Pao Daily News	27
Hong Kong Economic Times	26
Sing Tao Jih Pao	24
Wen Wei Po	23
Hong Kong Standard	22
Ta Kung Pao	19
Tin Tin Daily News	15
New Evening Post	12
Express Daily News	12
Sing Tao Wen Pao	12
Hong Kong Daily News	9
Hong Kong Times	7
Wah Kiu Yat Pao	4
Hong Kong Commercial Daily	4
Ching Pao Daily	3
Asian Wall Street Journal	3
New York Times	2
Times (London)	2
(N=434)	

The journalists are also asked to grade the credibility of the Hong Kong mass media as well as those of Government Information Services and Xinhua News Agency which are important providers of news information. The measurement scale ranges from 0 to 10, with 10 registering the highest credibility. Table 2.13 shows that the electronic media, with the exception of the Hong Kong

Commercial Radio which traditionally does not stress the production of news, are perceived to have high credibility, with RTHK (mean=7.6) leading, followed by TVB (mean=7.3) and ATV (mean=7.2).

Table 2.13 Perceived credibility of various news media and agencies

Media	Perceived credibility (Scale: 1 to 10)	Standard deviation	(N)
Electronic media			
Radio Television Hong Kong	7.6	1.6	(451)
Television Broadcasts Limited	7.3	1.6	(451)
Asia Television Limited	7.2	1.5	(446)
Hong Kong Commercial Radio	6.7	1.7	(444)
Newspapers			
South China Morning Post	7.7	1.4	(445)
Hong Kong Economic Journal	7.4	1.4	(399)
Ming Pao Daily News	7.0	1.5	(409)
Sing Tao Jih Pao	6.9	1.5	(375)
Oriental Daily News	6.9	1.6	(404)
Hong Kong Economic Times	6.7	1.6	(361)
Hong Kong Standard	6.6	1.6	(402)
Sing Pao Daily News	6.5	1.6	(378)
Sing Tao Wen Pao	6.1	1.7	(360)
Wah Kiu Yat Pao	5.8	1.7	(338)
Hong Kong Daily News	5.6	1.7	(348)
New Evening Post	5.6	1.8	(354)
Tin Tin Daily News	5.5	1.9	(365)
Express Daily News	5.4	1.9	(362)
Hong Kong Times	5.1	1.8	(328)
Wen Wei Po	5.1	2.1	(373)
Ta Kung Pao	5.1	2.1	(369)

Table 2.13 (Continued)

Hong Kong Commercial Daily	5.0	1.9	(306)
Ching Pao Daily	4.7	1.9	(307)
News magazines			
Yazhou Zhoukan	7.0	1.7	(306)
The Nineties	6.4	1.8	(304)
Contemporary	6.3	1.8	(285)
Pai Shing Semi-Monthly	6.3	1.8	(317)
Wide Angle	5.9	1.8	(256)
The Mirror	5.9	1.8	(244)
Cheng Ming	5.4	1.9	(281)
News services			
Government Information Services	7.0	2.4	(403)
Xinhua News Agency	4.9	2.8	(378)

The most outstanding newspaper in the eyes of journalists is the *South China Morning Post* (mean=7.7), an English newspaper that has published many exclusive stories about the Hong Kong government. Many journalists are known to have read the *SCMP* for news clues and to monitor the development of news. The Chinese newspaper that is closest to it in credibility is the *Hong Kong Economic Journal* (mean=7.4), which publishes not only economic news but many indepth analyzes of various issues in the political, economic and social spheres. Trailing the *Journal* are the more popular newspapers, such as *Ming Pao Daily News* (mean=7.0), *Sing Tao Jih Pao* (mean=6.9) and *Oriental Daily News* (mean=6.9). Circulations do not guarantee perceived credibility among journalists, as illustrated by the cases of *Tin Tin Daily News* (mean=5.5) and *Hong Kong Daily News* (mean=5.6), both being very popular among the general public. Clustering at the end of the credibility score are the partisan newspapers. The rightist *Hong Kong Times* (mean=5.1) is as discreditable as the leftist *Wen Wei*

Po (mean=5.1) and *Ta Kung Pao* (mean=5.1). The two newspapers that receive the lowest ranking are the *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* (mean=5.0) and *Ching Pao Daily* (mean=4.7) which are also controlled by the CCP. *Ching Pao Daily* finally folded in 1992.

Yazhou Zhoukan (mean=7.0), a news weekly magazine owned by *Times* at the time of survey, has a relatively higher credibility score than the other local news monthlies which focus mainly on China. In general, these local magazines are not highly rated by the journalists, with *The Nineties* (mean=6.4) leading the group, followed closely by the *Contemporary* (mean=6.3) and *Pai Shing Semi-Monthly* (mean=6.3). Again, nearing the bottom of the scale are the leftist publications, *Wide Angle* (mean=5.9) and *The Mirror* (mean=5.9). *Cheng Ming*, the best-selling of these magazines, receives the lowest rating (mean=5.4). It appears that many journalists tend not to believe in the many exclusive stories it carries about political happenings in China, regardless of its popularity.

The Hong Kong Government Information Services (GIS) is the public relations department of the government that dispatches official accounts of news to the media via teleprinters, briefs sessions and news conferences (Lee and Chan, 1990). The Xinhua News Agency have two sections: The political section that serves as the *de facto* embassy of China in Hong Kong and the news section that disseminates news about China among its other functions (Chan and C.C. Lee, 1991). Both GIS and Xinhua are important sources of news in Hong Kong. However, as indicated in Table 2.13, the credibility of GIS (mean=7.0) is much higher than that of Xinhua (mean=4.9). The low credibility of Xinhua provides a contrast to the high frequency at which Xinhua officials make headlines. It appears that Xinhua, as an institution, has not won the trust of Hong Kong journalists although it is perceived to be very newsworthy.

Summary and Conclusion

In a survey of journalists in the United States in 1992, Weaver and Wilhoit (1993:3) found that a "typical" American journalist is one who is working for the press (55%), is 36 years (median) old, married (60%), male (66%), college graduate (82%), non-journalism major (61%), and has 12 years (median) of experience in journalism. It is interesting to compare this portrait against that of a "typical" Hong Kong journalist who can be typified as one who also is working for the press (72%), is 30 years (median) old, single (54%), male (65%), college graduate (78%), journalism major (62%), and with 5 years and 9 months (median) of journalism experience.

While the journalists from the United States and Hong Kong share similarities in sex, education and the type of media they are working in, they differ in age, marital status, college major and experience in the field. The Hong Kong journalists are younger, less experienced and journalism majors. Their low age and lack of experience are related to the relatively unsatisfactory working conditions that fail to retain the young blood flowing into the journalism profession.

Many people are known to have joined journalism to earn some experience before deserting for more lucrative and stable jobs in other fields, particularly in public relations. A common complaint among journalists is that journalism does not pay well and the prospects are uncertain. If journalism in Hong Kong is to attract and retain talents, it has to overhaul its salary, promotion and reward structures. While Hong Kong may have a very modern communication infrastructure, its newspapers in general are still under the influence of family management which tends to depend on the personal likes and dislikes of the newspaper founder or his offspring successor rather than on the formal rules of organization. It is not uncommon for the publishers to give off monetary rewards to individual journalists on the basis of perceived merits or affinity at the lunar new year. While some are benefiting from such personal and somewhat arbitrary evalua-

tions, many younger journalists would rather have a less arbitrary and better-defined reward system which they can follow and in which they can situate themselves. The need to establish an attractive reward structure is particularly acute at this juncture when Hong Kong journalists, haunted by the gloomy view of the future, are expressing a desire to emigrate before 1997. A good reward system will help keep the practitioners within a news organization as well as within the field of journalism.

Close to 80% of the Hong Kong journalists have received post-secondary or university education. With the rapid expansion of university enrolment since the 1990s, it is expected that the number of graduates entering the journalism market will increase. Meanwhile, competition among mass media in Hong Kong is intensifying in light of new entrants and rising demands on the part of the audience. The media owners will have to think twice before they employ graduates from unrecognized colleges at reduced cost as they do now. To gain a competitive edge, they need to employ more university graduates who are supposed to be better-trained. But, in light of the fact that more than 50% of Hong Kong journalists are graduates from Taiwan universities or from local unrecognized colleges, the composition of journalists by education will not change overnight.

As noted earlier, the proportion of journalism majors among journalists with college education in Hong Kong is 62%, compared with only 39% for the American journalists. This should not be interpreted as Hong Kong having a more extensive journalism education than the United States. It should be viewed against the specific situation in Hong Kong. While the University of Hong Kong, following the British tradition, does not offer a journalism major, The Chinese University of Hong Kong has had a small journalism program for more than two decades. It was not until the late 1980s that Baptist College's communication degree was recognized by the government. The general neglect of the journalism education in the major universities has created a niche for the two local unrecognized colleges, Chu Hai and Shue Yan, and the National Chengchi University of Taiwan to exploit. The publish-

ers have preferred hiring graduates of these unrecognized colleges because they, for lack of a recognized degree, are less competitive in the job market and yet possessing the necessary training.

It should be noted that a total of 36% of the journalists received their undergraduate education at Chu Hai College in Hong Kong and the National Chengchi University in Taiwan, both of which are ideologically bent towards the KMT. While their graduates may believe in the importance of objective and balanced reporting which forms part of their curricular, they tend to hold anti-communist views. It will be interesting to see if this ideological tendency among such a sizable proportion of journalists will serve to slow down the process by which the Hong Kong journalists submit to China's cooptation.

Only about 5% join the News Executives Association and 13% enrol in the Hong Kong Journalists Association. In contrast, 36% of the American journalists join a professional organization of some sort (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1993). One of the major characteristics of a profession is its ability to enforce norms through peer reviews. Without a strong journalism organization, it is difficult for the journalists to carry out such peer reviews at the industrial level. In recent years, the Journalists Association has been promoting a code of ethics (see Appendix). Most important of all, it has reacted to the challenge of the times by speaking against threats to press freedom in Hong Kong. To make a louder voice and to be more effective with its pressure tactics, the Journalists Association requires more extensive membership enrolment and participation from its members.

Ideologically, Hong Kong journalists are in general in favor of capitalism and democratization which are instrumental in defending the existing way of life in Hong Kong against possible interference from mainland China after reunification. On the contrary, the inter-party struggle between the KMT and the CCP is of secondary importance in defining the journalists' political outlook as the majority opt for a neutral position. This indicates that the tensions and conflicts between China and Hong Kong will emerge

as the most important ideological axis around which political discourses in Hong Kong will be organized. The KMT-CCP strife is becoming more a vestige of history, particularly in light of the fact that Taiwan, as a political entity, can no longer be equated with the rule of the KMT as it could in the past. The KMT has to share power with the Democratic Progressive Party and other parties in Taiwan. But, the ruling status of the KMT in Taiwan and the balancing force that Taiwan may exert on China will slow down the withering of the importance of the KMT-CCP strife. Moreover, one should not forget that about 40% of the journalists have received pro-KMT education in their undergraduate years and that about 15% of the journalists are working in CCP-controlled media. This will help extend the lingering importance of the inter-party conflict as an ideological axis.

Like their American counterparts who prefer reading the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post* (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1986:33), the Hong Kong journalists choose to expose themselves most frequently to local elite newspapers such as the *Ming Pao Daily News*, the *South China Morning Post* and the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. However, the journalists also like to read the *Oriental Daily News*, a best-selling newspaper noted for its brief but comprehensive coverage of city news. This differs from the United States where the best-selling newspapers are usually too parochial in coverage to command a national audience.

In spite of the heavy investment that the Xinhua News Agency and the leftist media have made in enhancing their image and in modernizing their operation, they still receive a very low credibility rating from their journalism community in Hong Kong. But it appears that many Hong Kong journalists find it difficult to ignore all that is published in these seemingly "untrustworthy" media. They have to be monitored to keep abreast of the movements of China, the future political master.

3

Education and Training

Education in general and journalism education in particular have important influence over the quality of journalists and their professional outlook. Like journalism itself, formal journalism education is also imported from the West. But in this case, it was first introduced in mainland China and spread to Hong Kong and Taiwan several decades later. Journalism education in Taiwan is related to Hong Kong news media in providing training for a sizable portion of their workforce. The first purpose of this chapter is to examine the development of journalism education in the general context of Chinese societies with a focus on Hong Kong. The second purpose is to evaluate the state of journalism education in Hong Kong in relation to the emerging needs of the journalism industry and to those as expressed by the journalists.

Journalism Education in the Larger Chinese Contexts

American journalism education, as exemplified by the journalism schools at the University of Missouri and Columbia University, has exerted important influence over that in Chinese societies (Chu, 1988). According to Weaver and Wilhoit (1986), journalism education in the United States can be divided into four periods: The first, extending from the 1700s to the 1860s, was essentially an apprentice system. The second, from the 1860s to the 1920s, was characterized by the introduction of more formal journalism education at the college level, as witnessed by the founding of the first journalism school in 1908 at the University of Missouri and the professional graduate program at Columbia University in 1912. The third period, roughly from the 1920s to the 1940s, saw the diffusion of the Missouri and Columbia model in other universities. While more journalism departments and schools were set up, social science was becoming an integral part of journalism education. This was attested to by the growing recruitment of social science doctorates as journalism faculty members. The last period, extending from the 1940s to the present, has been noted for the phenomenal growth of journalism faculties in large research universities, the expansion of student enrolment and the proliferation of doctoral programs in journalism.

These stages during which journalism education developed had important implications for that in China. The modern newspaper was spread to Hong Kong and China from the West around the middle of the nineteenth century, a time when the United States was already introducing journalism education at its colleges. Formal journalism education in China was out of the question prior to the 1910s because the press as well as universities were at their infancy stage in China. Moreover, the Qing emperors found no reason to support journalism education at a time when the press was regarded to be subversive of their power.

Apprenticeship was, therefore, the major channel through which one could learn the trade during this period. Those who

were interested in journalism usually had to start out as proof-readers, then probational reporters and assistant editors, literally learning their way through a rather time-consuming process. This remained true for Hong Kong and Guangzhou even up to the 1930s (Li, 1989).

It was not until the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911 that the first period of journalism education in China ended. The second period last from the 1910s to the late 1940s, during which formal journalism education began to draw the attention of the journalism industry and universities. Right after the revolution in 1911, the National Press Promotion Association moved to set up a press training institute to meet the burning needs of the news industry. A similar idea to set up a journalism program at a university was raised again by the National Press Association eight years later. But these two attempts came to no fruition as both Associations folded some time after making public their decisions.

Formal journalism education in China finally started in 1918 with the offer of a course on journalism, taught by a newspaper practitioner, in the Political Science Department at Peking University (Cheng, 1964). In the same year, Cai Yuanpei, the President of Peking University, founded the Journalism Research Society which held regular journalism classes for its members (Fang, 1981:222-228). This was followed by the establishment of a journalism department in 1920 within the humanities faculty of St. John's, a Shanghai university run by a religious group based in the United States. It was patterned so much after American journalism education that English was emphasized more than Chinese in its curriculum (Yuan, 1957).

While other universities followed the lead of Peking University and St. John University by offering individual journalism courses, Yenching University set up a journalism department in 1924 that came to be regarded as an exemplar of journalism education in China. Vernon Nash, its second department head and originally a journalism professor from the University of Missouri, played an instrumental role in shaping its orientation after the

fashion of the Missouri School. While a staff exchange program was set up to allow the interchange of teachers between Yenching University and the Missouri School (Yuan, 1957), the curriculum placed heavy emphasis on liberal education by requiring the students to take as many as about 75% of their credit loads in non-journalism courses in social sciences and humanities (Cheng, 1964). To enhance the students' grasp of know-how in message production, field practitioners were also invited to teach and the students had to publish a small newspaper as part of their practicum.

Another journalism department that achieved the status of exemplar in Chinese journalism education was the one set up at Fudan University in Shanghai in 1929. It evolved through successive stages from a seminar series to an emphasis on journalism and finally to a department (Yuan, 1957). Unlike Yenching University and St. John University which emphasized English, Fudan's journalism department intended to train personnel for Chinese journalism. The students were allowed to choose only half of their courses under a more structured program whose purposes were fourfold: (1) To impart knowledge about journalism; (2) To let the students have the right views of and capabilities in literature; (3) To let the students have knowledge of the social sciences; and (4) To train the students to be leaders of public opinion (Cheng, 1964).

The third exemplar was the journalism department founded in 1934 at the Central Chengchi University, the precedent of the National Chengchi University. Its first department head was Ma Xingye, a graduate in journalism from the University of Missouri. Serving as a personnel training school of the KMT and the government, the department endeared the Three People's Principles promulgated by Sun Yat-Sen, the founding father of the KMT and the Republic of China. The students were required to engage in publishing a practicum magazine as well as taking up brief internship. After graduation, many students were dispatched, with their consent, to man various news media and government departments (Cheng, 1964).

Journalism education did not stop at these three famous departments. It also emerged as individual courses or departments in other universities and specialized institutions that were often run by practising or veteran journalists. Some of the more famous specialized schools included the Beiping Journalism Specialty School, the Shanghai Minzhi Journalism School, the Guangzhou Journalism Specialty School, Hong Kong Journalism Learning Society and China Journalism School in Hong Kong (Yuan, 1957: 129).

The history of China from 1937 to 1945 was marked by the Japanese invasion and the Second World War, during which journalism education was disrupted as much as its university education. To stay free from Japanese rule, universities had to relocate in the interior and southern part of China where the Japanese had not yet reached. In this relocation process, journalism departments were suspended, reduced in size or tried to persist as the case might be. It took one to two years after the war for the journalism departments to gather their resources together and re-establish themselves in their original sites (Yuan, 1957). As we shall see in the next section, Hong Kong had received an influx of famous journalists and journalism educators who had fled the mainland in the wake of the Japanese invasion.

No sooner had the journalism departments regained their foothold than the CCP took over mainland China in 1949. Many journalism teachers and journalists fled to Hong Kong or with the KMT to Taiwan. This marked the third period in the development of journalism education that extends from 1949 to the present. During this period, journalism education took on separate paths of development in mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Essentially, two distinct types of journalism education emerged: communist journalism education in mainland China and America-influenced journalism education in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

After the CCP came to power, the existing journalism departments were consolidated and reorganized to meet the political and ideological needs of the CCP. American influence, perceived to be alien, was purged. Many journalism departments were can-

celled or transformed into concentrations within the departments of Chinese language. For instance, the Yenching University was dissolved and incorporated into Peking University which maintained a journalism specialty within its Chinese Language Department. Only Fudan University was allowed to keep its journalism department. In 1954, the CCP opened a journalism department in the newly-founded People's University in Beijing which was to become a center of journalism education of equal importance to that at Fudan University. In 1954, the Institute of Broadcasting was set up in Beijing to train journalism personnel for the electronic media.

The purpose of journalism education under communism is to train cadres for the media under the control of the CCP. They are expected to be well-versed in communist political ideology, to have high language proficiency and to be knowledgeable about the theory and practice of journalism.¹ Of central importance is ideological conformity. During the heats of the Cultural Revolution, journalism education was virtually suspended along with the teaching of other social sciences and humanities. Those journalism practitioners and educators who had made their name prior to the 1960s were purged and had to step aside to make way for the ideologues. More traditional journalism education was revived only after China launched its reform and open door policy in the late 1970s. American and other foreign professors and experts have been invited to teach on a temporary basis. Foreign media culture is emulated. Ideological control has been relaxed to the extent that western journalism concepts such as "press freedom" and "the right to communicate" have made their inroad into China through informal channels. The concept of journalism education has been expanded to include communication studies. Some political contents in the curriculums have now been re-

1. Interviews with Chinese journalism educators.

placed by courses on the technical know-how of message production.

The early years of the KMT's resettlement in Taiwan was a difficult time for journalism education. The first to set up a journalism department in 1950 was the Political Department of the KMT whose purpose was to train cadres for propaganda work against communism (Yuan, 1957). Urged by the Association of Editors to open a journalism department in 1953, the prestigious National Taiwan University refused on the grounds that journalism did not qualify to be an academic discipline. In 1954, the Journalism Research Institute of the National Chengchi University was re-established in Taiwan. One year later, its Journalism Department came into place. National Chengchi University has since then become the center of journalism education in Taiwan and for some students from Hong Kong too.

By 1990, there were altogether eight Taiwanese tertiary institutions that offered formal programs in journalism and communication education, with a total full-time teaching staff of 109 and student enrolment of about 5,000 (Yin, 1992). National Chengchi University also runs a doctoral program in communication. Journalism education in Taiwan is more of a continuation of its predecessors in China before 1949. An overwhelming majority of journalism educators have received their graduate training from American universities, and most curriculums are heavily influenced by American models, requiring students to take both journalism and non-journalism courses. But, there are specialized journalism institutes that merely stress the teaching of journalism subjects. In addition to formal journalism education as outlined above, Taiwan is also teeming with short-term training programs for practising journalists run by the major media or universities.

As journalism education in Hong Kong is our focus, it deserves a separate and more detailed treatment.

Journalism Education in Hong Kong

While Hong Kong was among the first Chinese cities to introduce the modern Chinese newspaper, it lagged behind the mainland in journalism education before the CCP came to reign over the mainland. When mainland universities were setting up journalism departments in the 1920s, Hong Kong was still struggling with the establishment of journalism specialty schools that offered courses in the evening. The first of these training institutes was the Hong Kong Journalism Learning Society that was started in 1927 by a novelist (Li, 1989). Closed after just two years of operation, it was succeeded by the Life Journalism School that was jointly established by a number of publishers and journalists in 1936. The school had an initial enrolment of some 30 students which, after a few months, dwindled to just seven. Finally, the school had to close for financial reasons.

As mentioned earlier, the Japanese military invasion of China on a large scale in 1937 had driven many journalists and cultural workers from Tianjin, Beijing, Shanghai and other areas to seek refuge in Hong Kong. The more famous included Cheng Shewo, Hu Zhengzhi, Luo Yinpu, Zou Taofan and others (Li, 1989:183). In 1939, local journalists and these newcomers from the north formed the Young Chinese Reporters Learning Society which, in turn, set up the China Journalism School. Given that many famous journalism practitioners and educators from the mainland and Hong Kong served as its teachers, the school was able to attract about 60 students. It ran until the Japanese occupied Hong Kong in 1941; it resumed operation in 1946 and finally folded in 1949.

The Hong Kong population surged in the late 1940s and early 1950s when about a million refugees fled to Hong Kong in the wake of the Communist takeover on the mainland. To meet the educational needs arising from this population influx, the Hong Kong government established the Senior Chinese Evening School which was later renamed the Public Humanity and Commerce Specialty School. It offered a three-year diploma program in journalism consisting of courses on news production, press laws,

press management and various social science subjects. Equivalent to a tertiary education institute, its students were all high-school graduates. Many of its teaching staff were once famous professors in mainland universities, including Yuan Changchao, Tan Weihai, Xie Fuya, etc. (Li, 1989:185). This first attempt by the Hong Kong government to engage in journalism education came to a halt when the school was closed in 1956.

Meanwhile, some former mainland university educators joined hands to set up the New Asia College and the United College, both of which had a journalism department. When these two colleges and the Chung Chi College merged to form The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1963, the journalism major was cancelled but was reinstituted two years later under New Asia College within the university. This started a new stage in journalism education in Hong Kong as it was the first time that a public-funded university was offering journalism degrees that were recognized by the government. What began as a two-year program was expanded to four years in 1974. Since 1988, it has offered four emphases within the department, including print journalism, advertising and public relations, broadcast journalism, and communication studies. Graduate education in communication was started with the introduction of a master's program in 1977 and a doctoral program in 1993.

The addition of the Chinese University to the already existing University of Hong Kong failed to ease the intense demand for higher education in Hong Kong whose population had grown to about 4 million in the 1960s. Many young people who could not get through the narrow entrances of the two universities for academic or financial reasons chose to further their education at Taiwan universities. The KMT government, in an attempt to rally the overseas-Chinese under its flag, was eager to offer relatively cheap places to students from Hong Kong and other overseas-Chinese communities. Consequently, the Journalism Department at National Chengchi University became a popular choice for students who wanted to go into news work. That explains why

National Chengchi University has been an important rearing ground for Hong Kong journalists.

The demand for journalism education in Hong Kong was also perceived and acted upon by other private colleges in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Most notable among them were the establishment of a four-year diploma course in journalism at Baptist College in 1968, the offer of evening courses at Chu Hai College in the same year, and the founding of the journalism department at Shue Yan College in 1971. While Chu Hai and Shue Yan remained private colleges up to the 1990s, Baptist College became a public-funded institution in 1979 and its communication degree came to be recognized by the government in 1987. Since 1988, interested Hong Kong students can also enrol in the journalism department of the Open Institute of Macao's East Asian University.

Formal journalism education as such has been supplemented since the 1970s by courses offered by the extramural departments of the established universities. In addition, training courses and seminars have been made available to news practitioners through the Journalism Training Board, a public body under the Vocational Training Council, and the Hong Kong Journalists Association. Language skills in Mandarin and English that are useful for interviewing are among the most popular courses.

Journalism education in Hong Kong has, therefore, three tiers: (1) education at the university level whose degrees are recognized by the government; (2) education at the private colleges whose degrees are not recognized by the government; and (3) short-term training offered by the universities' extramural departments and other news-related organizations.

The curricular orientation varies with each tier and with each institution. As indicated in Table 3.1, the curricular base of the journalism programs in the four most important tertiary institutions in Hong Kong is the broadest at the Chinese University, where the students are required to take about half (47%) of their credits in non-journalism courses. This is low when compared with the recommendation of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) for de-

voting 75% to non-journalism courses in liberal arts and sciences. The corresponding proportions for the other three colleges are even smaller, with the Baptist College registering only about 25%, Shue Yan College and Chu Hai College about 35% each.

Table 3.1 Credit distribution among major and non-major courses in various schools (%)

Credit requirements	Chinese University	Baptist College	Shue Yan College	Chu Hai College
Major	53	74-77	65-66	65
Non-major	47	23-26	34-35	35
Total	100	100	100	100
(N)	(120)	(101)	(160-163)	(141)

Source: Leung (1992:486).

As the Chinese University allows a higher proportion of non-journalism courses, it is possible for students to choose complementary courses according to their interest or minoring in a specific area. But, given the reversed emphasis in the curriculums of the other three colleges, such possibility is remote. This is not just a result of the low proportion of non-journalism courses allowed but also of rigid distributional requirements among these courses.

The curricular orientation of various schools can also be examined by comparing the proportions of theoretical to technical subjects in the credit requirements (Leung, 1992). Table 3.2 shows that the Chinese University and Baptist College stress theoretical training in communication (74-76%) whereas Shue Yan College and Chu Hai College tend to emphasize technical subjects at the expense of theoretical courses (22-46%).

At the level of specialty requirements, the Chinese University again places greater emphasis on theoretical courses than any

other colleges. In journalism, the Chinese University has 47% of its specialty offerings in theoretical subjects while Shue Yan College and Baptist College have 0% and 22%, respectively. To give the students some hands-on training, all the journalism programs in Hong Kong require that the students engage in summer internship and press practicum.

Table 3.2 Proportions of theoretical and technical courses in journalism education in various schools (%)

	Chinese University	Baptist College	Shue Yan College	Chu Hai College
Major core				
Theoretical	74	76	22	46
Technical	26	24	78	54
Specialty				
Journalism				
Theoretical	47	22	0	—
Technical	53	78	100	—
Broadcasting				
Theoretical	40	35	—	—
Technical	60	65	—	—
Advertising and public relations				
Theoretical	40	29	68	—
Technical	60	71	32	—

Source: Leung (1992:489).

The teaching staff varies in size and background across the schools too (Leung, 1992). Table 3.3 shows that the Baptist College has the largest full-time teaching staff (14), followed by Chu Hai College (13), the Chinese University (7) and Shue Yan College (7). It should be pointed out that the full-time faculty at each of the four colleges is supplemented by part-time lecturers who are still

practising in the field of communication. Very often, they are responsible for teaching the technical courses.

At the Chinese University, the majority of its teaching staff have doctoral degrees in communication from major universities in the United States. While most of the teachers at Baptist College had master's or bachelor degrees before the 1990s, it has been trying to recruit more communication doctorates. At Shue Yan College and Chu Hai College, virtually all the teachers are veteran communication workers who have either bachelor or master's degrees. In general, the teachers are influenced by the American models of journalism and journalism education regardless of their level of education.

Table 3.3 Faculty strength, enrolment and student output of various schools

School	Full-time teachers	Enrolment 1990-91	Graduates 1980-90
Chinese University	7	161	323
Baptist College	14	328	704
Shue Yan College	7	281	647
Chu Hai College	13	255	716
Total	41	1,025	2,390

Source: Adapted from Leung (1992:492-493).

That the Chinese University, the most prestigious school among the four, has the smallest teaching staff is related to the small size of the enrolment. Its faculty strength in Journalism and Communication has subsequently expanded to 13 in 1993. In 1990-91, it registered an enrolment of only 161 students whereas the corresponding numbers for Baptist College, Shue Yan College and Chu Hai College were 328, 281 and 255, respectively. The number of graduate output from each college in the last decade has followed the same pattern, with the latter three colleges each

doubling that of the Chinese University. From 1980 to 1990, the number of graduates from the Journalism and Communication Department at the Chinese University was only 323 whereas each of the other three had produced more than 600.

Challenges and Conclusion

Journalism education in Hong Kong has to be understood in the broader context of China which began to have some formal journalism education in the late 1910s. From the beginning, journalism education was influenced by the American models as represented by the journalism schools at the University of Missouri and Columbia University. Students were often required to learn journalism know-how, language skills as well as social sciences.

The Communist rise to power in 1949 marked the development of two divergent forms of journalism education in the context of Chinese societies: socialist journalism education on the mainland and American-influenced journalism education in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In the wake of the Communist takeover, while many journalists and journalism educators fled to Hong Kong and Taiwan, traditional journalism departments on the mainland were consolidated and reorganized. Purged of its American influence, journalism education began to follow more closely the Soviet model that stressed ideological conformity and political obedience rather than objectivity and independence. In contrast, journalism education in Taiwan was very much a continuation of its preceding one in mainland China before 1949. Revived in the mid-1950s, it has since then proliferated and become very popular among students.

Thanks to the influx of journalists and journalism educators from mainland China consequential to the Japanese invasion and the Communist takeover, Hong Kong was able to set up journalism programs in specialty schools or colleges. However, it was not until the mid-1960s that journalism education first gained its foothold in a university that was officially recognized. Since then,

journalism programs have been growing steadily. In both Hong Kong and Taiwan, the influence of the American models of journalism education is quite strong, as evidenced by the American educational background of its many teachers, the composition of the curriculum and the adoption of American teaching materials.

Although the Chinese socialist model and the American-influenced model in Hong Kong and Taiwan are incompatible in theory and practice, China's reform and open door policy has fostered exchanges among journalism educators and journalists in these three places. So far, the impact of such interactions on journalism education in Hong Kong is not visible. However, the growing economic and cultural integration among the three Chinese societies as a result of China's policy has important implication for journalism education, particularly in Hong Kong that is going to reunify with China in 1997.

The first challenge that Hong Kong journalism educators face is whether they can enjoy the same academic autonomy that they have after the change of sovereignty. The answer lies not only in the composition and orientation of the academic community, but it is linked to other important factors such as democratization, the rule of law, social pluralization, which are beyond the control of journalism educators. However, the ready willingness and efforts of journalism educators to defend their autonomy will definitely contribute to the preservation of the educational principles they are so endeared to now.

Another challenge is the looming of China as the major subject of media coverage. To be effective in their coverage and analysis, the journalists need to be more knowledgeable about the politics, economics, language, and culture of China which, in the past, were not stressed. Journalism curriculums should be able to cope with these needs and to expand the students' scope of vision to China.

In addition to pending political change, media development also puts pressure on educational institutions to face up to new needs in the teaching of journalism. While Hong Kong has witnessed the launching of new media such as cable television, news

weekly, newspapers and satellite television in recent years, China has been forming media joint-ventures with Hong Kong and foreign interests. Coupled with the high turnover of existing journalists, media development as such requires a large supply of both fresh and experienced manpower. The shortage of manpower is severely felt as news management editors often complain of the difficulty in recruiting the appropriate personnel. If China's media becomes more open, the shortage of communication workers will be more strongly felt.

The National Chengchi University used to serve as a supplementary supplier of fresh blood for the journalism industry in Hong Kong. But given the intention of the Taiwanese government to reduce its educational service for Chinese outside Taiwan, we can expect National Chengchi and other Taiwan universities to be playing a less important role. The responsibility of turning out more journalism graduates naturally falls on the shoulder of educational institutions in Hong Kong. They should take steps to meet the anticipated increase in need of journalism manpower in the years to come. Among the existing journalism departments in Hong Kong, the one at the Chinese University has the largest room to expand.

At present, Hong Kong is also suffering from the lack of qualified teachers who are knowledgeable about the situation of Chinese societies in general and that of Hong Kong in particular. This is important as such teachers can bring social relevancy to journalism education whose purpose, after all, is to serve local needs. As few local students pursue doctorate studies in communication, a growing number of journalism posts at the Chinese University and the Baptist University have been filled by expatriates who are, in general, less involved in local development. If the trend continues, the social relevancy of journalism education in Hong Kong will be jeopardized.

Linked to the shortage of local well-trained journalism educators is the shortage of teaching materials based on Chinese settings. Many text books are now imported from the United States and other parts of the world. While some level of international

exposure is important to journalists in a cosmopolitan city like Hong Kong, overuse of foreign teaching materials in journalism will again hamper their social relevancy. The researches and works produced by the local scholars since the 1980s have eased the situation to some extent but much remains to be done.²

The journalism curriculums vary across schools in emphasis. The Chinese University, by virtue of its early history as an officially recognized university that receive relatively sufficient funding, it treats journalism more like an academic study, placing equal emphasis on journalism and non-journalism courses and also on theoretical and technical courses. This provides the students with a broad academic background which is useful to modern journalists who have to adapt to a fast changing world.

On the contrary, the curricular structure is reversed in the journalism departments of the Baptist University, Shue Yan College and Chu Hai College, with lopsided emphasis on journalism courses. In addition, all three schools have rather rigid distributional requirements on non-journalism courses, thereby reducing their chance of broadening their knowledge base or gaining some depth in a given subject. In light of the adaptability that is often required of university graduates, not to say journalists, greater emphasis on non-journalism courses and flexibility in making up the course load appear to be overdue.

Many practising journalists think that more training courses are needed. However, the managers in most media are not as supportive as they should be. For instance, many journalists have complained that they are not exempted from work even on the few days that they take special training seminars offered by the Journalism Training Board. Very often, they have to report to work after spending the entire day in tiring seminars. Only the few enthusiasts will therefore register for these training sessions.

2. For a review of the research on Hong Kong and China by Hong Kong's journalism educators, see Chan (1992).

The slighting of training is further illustrated by the general lack of in-house training which, in the case of Taiwan, is much more common. A notable example is Taiwan's *United Daily News* which has established a training center to provide intensive courses for its potential recruits and existing staff on a regular basis. In the training period, the trainees are often freed from work, with the potential recruits being paid too. Another illustration is the Journalism Development and Research Foundation established by the National Chengchi University's Journalism Department. It also provides training retreats for practising journalists on various specialized subjects. It is with the general support of media managers that journalists can take leave and engage in an intensive program. In this respect, Hong Kong's media owners have much to learn from their Taiwanese counterparts.

4

Working Conditions and Job Satisfaction

Many newspapers Hong Kong people read today were launched with a small amount of capital. The capital usually came from friends' loans and proprietors' own savings. The first thing these commercial newspapers needed to do was to survive and grow. In the early years, many newspapers employed sensationalism to attract mass audience. Some succeeded, still more failed. Journalists would be paid better if the newspapers prospered. Should the newspapers fail, journalists might not even get their salaries. This shaky financial situation of the press has improved with the growing economy since the mid-1970s. In terms of working conditions, however, much is to be desired.

A Volatile Profession

As indicated in Chapter 2, journalists in Hong Kong are young and highly mobile. Eight out of ten (85%) are below age 41 (Table

2.4) and two-thirds (68%) have worked with their present organization for less than five years (Table 2.5). In respect of the duration they have worked in the profession, four in ten (42%) have worked for less than five years. And about a quarter (23%) have joined the profession for less than three years. These findings suggest that many journalists have joined the profession only recently, and the turnover rate is high.

When the journalists are asked how long they will work with their present organization, 79% answer "don't know." Among the 21% (N=108) who have thought of leaving, 63% answer they will leave within one year, and 18% will leave in two. In terms of absolute numbers, 68 journalists, i.e., 13% of the total sample, plan to leave their present organization in a year (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Expected time to leave present news organization (%)

Within 1 year	63
In 2 years	18
In 3 years	6
In 5 years	8
After 5 years or later	5
Total	100
(N)	(108)

This expected turnover rate is not small, it can cause much disruption to the newswork in the media. It is difficult, if not impossible, for the profession to accumulate experience and knowledge. This hinders the development of journalism into a quality profession. The turnover problem must be resolved before the profession can perfect itself.

Areas of Work

The high rate of turnover is probably related to working conditions and job satisfaction. Many news organizations in Hong Kong are under-staffed. Journalists need to work for more than one news beat, and the division of labor is unclear. Reporters are expected to do all kinds of assignments. Table 4.2 shows the areas worked by Hong Kong journalists. Most of the journalists work in the area of local soft news (42%), local hard news (35%) and local political news (34%).

Table 4.2 Areas of work

	%	(N)
Local soft news (transport/housing)	42	(219)
Local hard news (crime/law and order)	35	(181)
Local political news	34	(177)
China news	25	(131)
Financial/Business news	25	(128)
Cultural/Educational news	22	(115)
World news	20	(103)
Court news	15	(77)
Readers' column/opinion	5	(26)

Nearly half of them (46%) have to work in more than one area and one in five (21%) has to work in four or more areas (Table 4.3). Further analysis shows that 18% of them work in both local hard news and transport/housing news, and 16% work in local hard news and local political news. It should be noted that 11% have to work in local hard news as well as the China beat, which are not related areas (Table 4.4). The unclear division of labor definitely increases the pressure on Hong Kong journalists. Their heavy

workload and unclear division of labor probably contribute to the high turnover rate.

Table 4.3 Number of areas worked by journalists

Number of areas	%
1	54
2	18
3	7
4	5
5	5
6	3
7	4
8	2
9	2
Total	100
(N)	(497)

Table 4.4 Journalists working in local hard news and another area

	%	(N)
Local hard news and transport/housing news	18	(96)
Local hard news and local political news	16	(85)
Local hard news and cultural/educational news	13	(69)
Local hard news and court news	13	(66)
Local hard news and China news	11	(55)
Local hard news and world news	8	(43)
Local hard news and financial/business news	6	(31)
Local hard news and readers' column/opinion	4	(21)

Note: Local hard news = crime/law and order.

In order to understand the high turnover rate better, we examine the journalists' job satisfaction and reasons for leaving.

Level of Satisfaction

Amongst the 509 respondents who have indicated their level of job satisfaction, few (9%) are dissatisfied. Four out of ten (40%) indicate that they are satisfied while a little more than half (52%) feel "so-so." Amongst those dissatisfied (N=45), 42% plan to leave, while among those who are satisfied (N=202), 18% have thought of leaving. Table 4.5 further shows that, amongst those who are dissatisfied and have thought of leaving, almost all of them (95%) will leave within a year. To leave an unsatisfying organization in a short period of time is natural and logical. But, it is intriguing to find that, amongst the satisfied journalists who have thought of leaving, still 40% will leave within a year and 26% in two. For the "so-so" group, the percentage of journalists leaving within one year is also high (67%). The journalists must be discontented with some specifics of the profession, otherwise, the turnover should not be so fast.

Table 4.5 Time expected to leave present organization by satisfaction with present job (%)

	Level of satisfaction		
	Satisfied	So-so	Dissatisfied
Leave within 1 year	40	67	95
Leave within 2 years	26	18	0
Leave within 3 years	5	8	5
Leave after 3 or more years	29	6	0
Total	100	99	100
(N)	(38)	(49)	(19)

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

A detailed analysis of job satisfaction has been conducted, and the result is shown in Table 4.6. With three exceptions, all specific items are rated by more journalists as satisfactory than unsatisfactory. The journalists generally feel satisfied with the opportunity for creativity and initiative, social contribution of their job, opportunity to learn new knowledge, opportunity to influence the public, flexibility in time, autonomy and access to important people. Only a small proportion is dissatisfied with its job's social contribution (4%) and influence on the public (11%). Twelve percent are dissatisfied with the creative environment, 12% with access to important people and 19% with job autonomy.

The three items which have more people rating them as unsatisfactory than satisfactory are the pay for a modest living, promotion prospect and influence on editorial policy. Only 19% of journalists are satisfied with their pay and promotion prospects, and about one-fifth (24%) are contented with their influence on editorial policy. Nearly half (44%) feel dissatisfied with their pay, and more than one-third (38%) are dissatisfied with promotion prospects. These findings suggest that the material rewards of the Hong Kong media are inadequate to satisfy the journalists.

The disparity of salaries between journalists and people having similar qualifications in other professions is not new. For university graduates who join news media, the salary is usually one-third less than their fellow graduates in other professions. Although some jobs for university graduates in business may offer a similar salary as the journalists', e.g., salesmen or executive trainees, promotion prospects are much better in the commercial sector than those in the journalist profession.

Table 4.6 Level of job satisfaction (%)

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	So-so	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	(N)
Present job	4	36	52	7	2	(509)
Chance for creativity and initiative	8	46	34	9	3	(502)
Chance to learn	7	41	37	10	6	(499)
Social contribution	10	47	39	3	1	(477)
Influencing the public	5	32	52	10	1	(447)
Flexible time	4	28	37	22	9	(484)
Autonomy	6	36	39	14	5	(499)
Access to important people	8	38	42	8	4	(439)
Pay	3	16	37	28	16	(493)
Promotion prospect	3	16	43	27	11	(437)
Influence on editorial policy	4	20	38	26	12	(435)

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Before the 1970s, news media seldom employed graduates from local universities. The salary was too low to attract them. The news media at that time did not seem to have the need to hire college graduates, because they relied mainly on the Government Information Services (GIS) for local news and international wires for world news. The news media did not require many staff reporters. They needed mostly translators and people who could re-write the GIS stories, a job people with secondary education could handle. People in the field used to say that newspaper employers were not afraid of reporters' strike because the employ-

ers could find easy substitutes. The media did hire quite a few college graduates from Taiwan universities whose degrees were not recognized by the government. They had little bargaining power and had to live with a low salary.

It was not uncommon then for reporters to have two or three jobs for different news organizations, because the salary from one news organization was inadequate for maintaining a living. It was only in the early 1980s, when news media started to recruit more college graduates, probably because of the growth of the economy and the politicization of Hong Kong. With the growing complexity of society, secondary school graduates could no longer handle the job. With the growth of the economy, news media could afford to pay the college graduates. In addition, due to changes in society, existing newspapers had to compete with new ones to survive. Once competition set in, news media were forced to hire more and more college graduates. The journalists' material rewards became better only when competition among news media intensified.

Reasons for Leaving the Profession

The study asked a specific question about the reasons for journalists to leave the profession if they chose to. The results show that low pay is the most frequently mentioned reason (26%), followed by work pressure (15%), lack of autonomy (14%) and unpalatable editorial policy (10%). Only 7% consider political interference, and 3% mention the lack of press freedom in the future as the reason for them to leave (Table 4.7). In fact, 92% of journalists consider a big salary increase and 96% consider better working conditions the most urgently needed improvement in the profession. The journalist profession in Hong Kong seems to be a "spiritually-rewarding" but "materially-depriving" profession. This explains the great turnover in the profession.

Table 4.7 Reasons for leaving journalistic profession

	%	(N)
Low pay	26	(121)
Work pressure	15	(71)
Lack of autonomy	14	(67)
Unpalatable editorial policy	10	(46)
Boredom	8	(35)
Political interference	7	(32)
Press freedom being curtailed	3	(12)

When asked which profession they will join if they leave the news profession, 22% answer they will join the non-news media, other 23% will go to the business sector, 8% will join the public relations and advertising sector while 7% will go to education (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8 Job chosen if one leaves journalistic profession

	%	(N)
Public relations/Advertisement	8	(37)
Education	7	(32)
Business	23	(101)
Non-news media	22	(99)
Others	28	(123)

Many Hong Kong journalists treat their job as a stepping stone to other more remunerative careers. It is quite common for them to work in the field for a couple of years, then switch to the Government Information Services, the public relations department of business firms, a public relations company or the financial

sector. For many college graduates, journalism is chosen as the first job because it can expose them to many aspects of life, coming into contact with different walks of people. After a couple of years, they leave when they feel they have seen enough. Only a handful few choose journalism as life-long career.

Job Satisfaction, Political Stance of News Organization and Marital Status

We are interested in knowing if there is a difference in job satisfaction among journalists in news organizations with different political stances. The media are grouped into four political orientations. The *Hong Kong Times* is put under the rightist category, *Ta Kung Pao*, *Wen Wei Po*, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* and *Ching Pao* are grouped under the leftist, *Sing Tao Jih/Wen Pao*, *Wah Kiu Yat Pao*, *Express Daily News* and *Contemporary*¹ are grouped as center-to-right, and the remaining media are classified as centrist. Table 4.9 shows that the difference in job satisfaction among journalists of these different news media is small. As a whole, more journalists feel satisfied than dissatisfied across the board, though the leftist journalists tend to be more satisfied (37%) than all the others. The journalists working with the centrist media are also found to be more dissatisfied than those working with other media; 10% of centrist journalists feel dissatisfied as compared

1. The *Contemporary* was a political news magazine launched by a group of dissenting journalists, including the chief editor, of the leftist *Wen Wei Po* after the Tiananmen Massacre. When the survey for this study was done, this magazine exhibited an anti-communist tone, but its political platform was still not on the far right as the *Hong Kong Times*. Therefore, it was grouped as a center-to-right medium. There were only two respondents from this magazine, its effects on the general results of our analysis is small even if this magazine was classified differently.

with 5% of leftist, 7% of center-to-right and 5% of rightist. Due to insufficient cases in some cells, we cannot use chi square test to examine the statistical significance of the relationship between job satisfaction and political stance of the news media.

Table 4.9 Satisfaction with existing organization by political stance (%)

	Leftist	Centrist	Center-to-right	Rightist
Dissatisfied	5	10	7	5
So-so	58	49	55	60
Satisfied	37	41	38	35
Total	100	100	100	100
(N)	(73)	(339)	(76)	(20)

As the working hours of the journalist profession are different from other professions, we expect that those who have married would feel more dissatisfied than those who are single because the job may affect the former's family life. But Table 4.10 does not support this idea. Single journalists tend to be more dissatisfied than married ones and the proportion of satisfied journalists among the married group exceeds the single group by 12%. A chi square test shows that the variables of job satisfaction and marital status are not independent; the relationship is significant at 0.01 level. An explanation for this result is that people with family may feel less free to switch jobs, consequently, they are more ready to compromise with the present situation and feel contented. Single journalists, however, may find their job disrupting their social life, which may be more important to single than married people.

Table 4.10 Satisfaction with existing organization by marital status (%)

	Single	Married
Dissatisfied	11	5
So-so	54	48
Satisfied	35	47
Total	100	100
(N)	(291)	(210)

$\chi^2=9.95$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$; Cramer's $V=0.14$.

Predictors of Job Satisfaction

There are many studies on journalists' job satisfaction, but little attempts have been made to examine the question "to what extent do job attributes or non-job attributes contribute to job satisfaction." In studying job satisfaction, researchers are often interested in finding out only the relationship between certain variables and job satisfaction, or identifying some dimensions of job satisfaction from a battery of attitudinal items. When researchers report the impact of certain variables or factors on job satisfaction, they seldom go further to examine how much does each of these variables contribute to overall job satisfaction. In the following, we attempt to construct a predictive model of job satisfaction amongst Hong Kong journalists. In this model, the most important predictors and how much each contributes to the overall job satisfaction will be specified.

In constructing a predictive model of job satisfaction, we first run a correlation between job satisfaction and relevant variables identified from the literature, including job attributes, non-job attributes and four political variables. We include the political variables because we would like to know whether there is a polit-

ical dimension in Hong Kong journalists' job satisfaction. The four political variables are the news organization's political stance, its attitude towards democratization in Hong Kong as perceived by the journalists, the individual journalist's political stance and his/her attitude towards democratization.

As the new power holder, China, is an authoritarian state, Hong Kong journalists who favor faster democratic reforms may feel anxious about and insecure in their career, thus they may feel discontented with their job. On the other hand, journalists who advocate faster democratic reforms may feel more satisfied because they have a mission to go for. This study hopes to throw light on these two possible situations.

In the same vein, as China will become the sovereign state of Hong Kong after 1997, pro-Beijing news organizations will probably provide better job security in the future, journalists who perceive a pro-Beijing stance in their organization may feel more secure and satisfied.

After running a correlation among relevant variables, we use only those with significant correlation with Job Satisfaction for regression analysis. In total, 17 independent variables are selected. They include the demographic variables of Age, Marital Status and Sex; the job attributes of Rank, Salary, Time Worked with Present Organization, Access to Important People, Chance for Advancement, Autonomy, Chance for Creativity and Initiative, Importance of Job to Society, Influence on Editorial Decision, Chance to Influence the Public, Chance to Learn, Satisfaction with the Pay, Time Flexibility. The political variable of Organization's Attitude towards Democratization is also included in the analysis. The job-related variables of Access to Important People down to Time Flexibility are measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Very Dissatisfied to Very Satisfied. A stepwise regression is then run to get the best predictive model.

Predictive Model of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is regressed on the above-mentioned 17 independent variables selected from a correlation matrix of 22 relevant variables. The correlations of the 17 independent variables with job satisfaction are all statistically significant at .05 level. The variables of Individual Political Stance, Individual Attitude towards Democratization, Organization's Political Stance, Education and Journalism Degree are excluded from the regression analysis as they have insignificant correlation with Job Satisfaction.

A stepwise regression gives the best predictive model as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 2.00 + .19_{\text{Create}} + .17_{\text{Pay Satisfied}} + .16_{\text{Sex}} + .14_{\text{Learn}}$$

This model consists of four predictor variables, which has an adjusted $R^2=.24$, with $F=22.01$, significant at the .001 level. The variables of Chance for Creativity and Initiative, Satisfaction with the Pay, Sex and Chance for Learning, in total explain 24% of the variance in Job Satisfaction. Table 4.11 shows that the strongest predictor of Hong Kong journalists' job satisfaction is their satisfaction with the pay ($\text{Beta}=.26$, $p<.001$). The actual salary, on the other hand, is insignificant. The next strongest predictor is the chance for creativity and initiative in the news organization ($\text{Beta}=.24$, $p<.001$), followed by the chance of acquiring new knowledge ($\text{Beta}=.20$, $p<.001$). The outcome of this variable is not surprising, given that 85% of Hong Kong journalists are below age 41. Young professionals may have a greater need to learn and improve themselves. Sex is also shown to be a significant predictor of job satisfaction ($\text{Beta}=.12$, $p<.05$). Male tend to be more satisfied than female journalists in Hong Kong.

Table 4.11 Predicting job satisfaction with stepwise regression

Independent variables	Standardized Beta
Chance for creativity and initiative	.24***
Satisfaction with the pay	.26***
Chance to learn	.20***
Sex	.12*
$\bar{R}^2=.24$ $F=22.01$, $p<.001$	
Variables not in the equation	
Age	.01
Marital status	.09
Salary	.05
Rank	-.01
Time worked with present organization	.02
Access to important people	.08
Chance for advancement	.06
Autonomy	.08
Importance of job to society	.05
Influence on editorial decision	.07
Chance to influence the public	.07
Time flexibility	.05
Organization's attitude towards democratization	.06

* $p<.05$, *** $p<.001$.

Table 4.11 shows that age, marital status, salary, rank, time worked with present organization, access to important people, autonomy, importance of job to society, influence on editorial decision, chance to influence the public, time flexibility and

organization's attitude towards democratization are all insignificant in predicting job satisfaction among Hong Kong journalists.

Media's Political Stance and Job Satisfaction

As regards the role played by the media's and individual's political position and the attitude towards democratization in job satisfaction, we found that only News Organization's Attitude towards Democratization in Hong Kong makes a significant difference in job satisfaction among Hong Kong journalists. Three other political variables, namely, Organization's Political Stance, Individual's Political Stance and Individual's Attitude towards Democratization, do not make a difference in journalists' job satisfaction.

It should be noted that 77% of the sampled journalists (N=522) favor a faster development of democracy in Hong Kong, while 17% are neutral and only 6% indicate that they prefer a slower pace of democratic reforms. In other words, a majority of Hong Kong journalists are supportive of democratic reforms.

The individual attitude, however, does not make a difference in journalists' job satisfaction. A t-test shows that the difference in job satisfaction between journalists who favor a faster pace in democratic reforms and those who favor a slower pace is not significant. Neither political stance of individual's nor that of news organization's makes a significant difference. These findings show that, although the authoritarian state of China will replace the United Kingdom as the sovereign power in 1997, the journalists' job satisfaction is not affected by their news organization's political stance, or their own political stance or attitude towards democratization in Hong Kong. In other words, whether one or one's organization is pro-Beijing or pro-Taiwan, one will not become more satisfied or more dissatisfied. The finding also shows that whether one favors a faster pace of democratic reforms does not make a difference in job satisfaction.

But, there is a possibility that only when the journalists' own political stance is congruent with their organization's, they are satisfied. If there is a discrepancy between the individual's and the organization's political position, journalists may feel dissatisfied. To examine this possibility, we re-group the journalists into a "Congruent" and an "Incongruent" group. The former has the individual political stance matched with the organizational, i.e., rightist-rightist, neutral-neutral and leftist-leftist. The latter has an individual stance incongruent with the organizational, i.e., rightist-neutral, neutral-leftist, leftist-rightist, etc. We run a t-test to see if there is a difference between these two groups in job satisfaction. The result shows that the mean for "Congruent" group is 2.6 (N=258) and "Incongruent" group is 2.7 (N=209). The t-value is .90 with df=465, which is not significant at .05 level. This finding further confirms that the political stance of individuals or organizations does not make much difference in job satisfaction.

The organization's attitude towards democratization, nevertheless, contributes to a significant difference in journalists' job satisfaction. A t-test shows that journalists who perceive a liberal stance in their news organization in Hong Kong's democratic reforms (faster pace of democratization) are significantly more satisfied than those who have a conservative perception of their organizations (slower pace of democratization). The mean value for the Conservative perception group (N=62) is 3.10 while that of the Liberal perception group (N=298) is 3.40, with a t-value of 2.18, df=358, which is significant at 0.01 level. One explanation for this result may be that a news organization perceived to be liberal towards democratization tends to be one with a democratic character, e.g., decentralized decision-making and democratic leadership. The organization's attitude towards democratization may refer more to the organization's management attributes than the political dimension.

But, a caution has to be added about the absence of a political dimension in the predictive model of job satisfaction amongst Hong Kong journalists. Since the data were collected at a time when the Chinese communists had not yet controlled Hong Kong,

the model may apply only before the change of sovereignty. Predictors for Hong Kong journalists' satisfaction may be different after 1997. When Hong Kong is ruled under an authoritarian regime, or when Hong Kong becomes politically unstable, the political dimension may have a role to play in journalists' job satisfaction. The findings here may hold only for a politically stable society with a liberal media system.

Conclusion

The Hong Kong journalism profession is found to have a high turnover rate. Quite a number of journalists is planning to leave the present news organization in a year or two, including those who feel satisfied with their job. With a high turnover, the performance of the profession cannot improve as experience cannot accumulate. The journalists are generally dissatisfied with the material rewards and job promotion but satisfied with the non-monetary rewards, like having the opportunity to influence the public and exercise creativity.

The findings on job satisfaction and working conditions indicate that, if the profession is to reduce its turnover rate, news organization must pay their employees better, create more positions for promotion and hire enough people to do the job. The survey shows that about two-thirds of journalists (61%) received a monthly salary of less than HK\$10,000 in 1990. Compared with teaching and the civil service, the pay was about one-third to one-half lower. Switching from one organization to another could possibly be used as a means to have a salary increase.

The majority of Hong Kong journalists have received tertiary education; if their starting salary is lower than people with similar qualifications in other fields, there must be promotion incentives to keep them in the profession. The democratization of editorial decision will also help to keep the staff, as many journalists name unpalatable editorial policy and lack of autonomy as reasons for leaving the profession.

Four important predictor variables for job satisfaction are identified. They are opportunity to exercise creativity, satisfaction with the pay, opportunity to acquire new knowledge and whether or not one is male or female. Male journalists tend to be more satisfied than female journalists. Political factors do not seem to play a role in journalists' satisfaction. But after 1997 when the Chinese People's Republic takes over Hong Kong, the predictors of job satisfaction may have a political dimension. The predictive model of job satisfaction identified in this study may be applicable only to a politically stable society with a liberal media system.

Professionalism: Roles, Values and Ethics

In its 150 years of history, Hong Kong witnessed the growth of professionalism in journalism only after the Second World War. The press of Hong Kong before then was barely recognized as a profession by the public or the journalists themselves. The Chinese press in Hong Kong had been dominated by partisan strife for a long period of time. Since the publication of *Tsun Wan Yat Po* in 1874, party press had been the dominant press model. Non-partisan press emerged as the “mainstream” only after the Second World War.

The first newspapers association, the Newspapers Society of Hong Kong, was established in 1955, but up to the present, it has not formulated any code of practice for newspapers or journalists. The most obvious function of this organization, which comprises more than 90% of Hong Kong newspapers, is to fix a uniform price for all member newspapers from time to time. The Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA), which is the only journalist organization having a Code of Ethics for its members, was formed

in 1968. The Association was plagued by conflicts between Chinese and expatriate journalists in the early 1970s. It was not until the 1980s that more Chinese journalists joined the Association. With growing membership, the HKJA has become more influential in the profession. It has become the prime force behind professional excellence and freedom of speech since the late 1980s. The journalists themselves, however, are not so sure of their "professional" status although they stress the need for the free exercise of conscience. A former president of the Association notes:

... journalists cannot be blended into something like the Bar, which is connected to a licensing system, which in turn is not to be tolerated as a way of accrediting journalists under the concept of press freedom. The key word is conscience.... Some... had thought of changing their journalist unions into professional societies, but had to give up finally. The crux... is, coming to refuting outside pressures and self-monitoring, only trade unions representing the interest of employees can serve a duty. (Wong, 1992:53)

Mixed Orientation

Johnstone and colleagues (1976) classify American journalists according to two orientations, i.e., "neutral" and "participant," while Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) distinguish three types, i.e., "adversarial," "interpretive" and "disseminator." The Hong Kong journalists do not seem to fall neatly into either of these two schemes. The survey shows that Hong Kong journalists share some ambivalence towards their professional orientation. The ambivalence is reflected in their attitudes to two professional dimensions. One is the "neutral-informative" versus the "participant-interpretive" role. The other is "watchdog of government" versus "mouthpiece of government."

"Neutral-informative" versus "Participant-interpretive"

The study finds that, on the one hand, most Hong Kong journalists value a neutral position in reporting, but on the other, they also favor the interpretive and participant role. An overwhelming majority (95%) regard "objective reporting" important (Table 5.1). And, only 19% of Hong Kong journalists consider that slanting can be justified on the grounds of realizing political ideals (Table 5.2). Nearly all of them (95%) think that "rapid dissemination of information" is important to news organizations. All these findings suggest that Hong Kong journalists choose a "neutral-disseminator" position for themselves.

However, an overwhelming majority (92%) also regard "analyzing and interpreting complex issues" as important. And, eight out of ten journalists (80%) consider it important for the news media to "speak for the people." In other words, the journalists also accept a "participant-interpretive" role for themselves.

Given the strong consensus in objective reporting, it is interesting to note that only 23% of the journalists agree that news organizations should prohibit their employees from joining any political groups, and 55% disagree. The high percentage of approval of political participation might be due to the journalists' conviction that their neutrality would not be affected by their political activities. Or, it might be a result of their abhorrence of any restriction on their personal activities by the media they work with. Nevertheless, in view of the fact that only one-third (34%) claim that their own political stance had no influence on their judgment of "newsworthiness" (Table 5.8), the contradiction between objective reporting and participation into political groups might well reflect a mixed professional orientation by Hong Kong journalists.

Table 5.1 Importance of various professional values (%)

	Very important	Somewhat important	So-so	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant	(N)
To report objectively	71	24	5	0	0	(503)
To inform public promptly	65	30	6	0	0	(513)
To analyze and interpret complex issue	55	37	7	1	0	(508)
To be watchdog of government	58	30	10	1	1	(506)
To speak for public	41	39	17	2	1	(502)
To report in a balanced way	48	30	14	3	5	(459)
To assist in promoting government policy	7	26	46	15	7	(493)
To educate public	28	43	23	5	1	(504)
To raise cultural level of masses	16	45	30	7	2	(497)
To provide entertainment	8	31	50	10	2	(501)
To meet popular taste	8	28	41	15	8	(493)

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table 5.2 Attitudes towards different values (%)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Hard to say	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	(N)
Media can slant reports for political ideals	3	16	23	36	23	(502)
News media should forbid staff from joining political parties	6	17	22	38	17	(474)
To stabilize Hong Kong in the transitional period is the most important task of media	26	30	19	20	5	(488)
News media should mould public opinion	14	46	20	14	5	(489)
Sensational reporting should not be blamed	1	9	22	44	24	(495)
One should have own views on social issues	21	62	10	6	1	(496)
News media should publish PR stories	1	12	37	26	22	(444)

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

"Watchdog of Government" versus "Mouthpiece of Government"

The second dimension which may reflect Hong Kong journalists' professional ambivalence is their attitude towards the news media's relationship with the government. The study shows that 88% of journalists consider it important for the media to serve as a watchdog of government (Table 5.1).

A further analysis shows that the perceived importance of the "watchdog" function holds across all news media regardless of their political orientations. It also holds for the function of "speaking for the people." Tables 5.3 and 5.4 indicate that no matter whether it be a leftist, rightist or centrist media organization, the journalists regard it as important for the media to serve as "a watchdog of government" and "to speak for the people." The meaning of "people" can be interpreted variably, but the meaning of government is straightforward. This finding may hint at a possible confrontation between the Hong Kong press and the Chinese communist government after 1997, as the Chinese government regards the media as their mouthpiece, rather than as a watchdog.

Table 5.3 Media as watchdog of government by political stance of news media (%)

	Leftist	Centrist	Center-to-right	Rightist
Agree	81	89	90	94
So-so	15	9	9	6
Disagree	4	2	1	0
Total	100	100	100	100
(N)	(75)	(337)	(77)	(16)

Table 5.4 Media should speak for public by political stance of news media (%)

	Leftist	Centrist	Center-to-right	Rightist
Agree	78	80	86	74
So-so	19	17	13	26
Disagree	3	4	1	0
Total	100	101	100	100
(N)	(73)	(332)	(77)	(19)

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Nevertheless, the survey shows that about one-third (33%) of journalists regard it as important to assist in promoting government policies and less than a quarter (22%) regard it as unimportant; the majority (46%) held an ambivalent attitude (Table 5.1). This finding indicates that the media might transform themselves easily into a mouthpiece of the government as the "ambivalent" majority can switch to the publicity function without denying their original position with regard to government publicity. It is interesting to note that while an overwhelming majority thinks that the news media should serve as a watchdog of government, many still consider it important to assist in government publicity. Probably, the journalists who hold both attitudes do not consider themselves to be self-contradicting, because, they could criticize the "bad" policies, while at the same time publicize the "good" and/or "important" policies.

But, the problem is that there is no clear guideline as to what is a "good" or "bad" policy. When the journalists serve as a mouthpiece of government, they could comfort themselves by rationalizing it as helping the government to publicize "good" and "important" policies. The above results show that Hong Kong journalists do not choose an outright "adversary" role for themselves in dealing with government.

Elitist and Anti-commercial Tone

Hong Kong journalists are found to possess an "elitist" and "anti-commercial" orientation. Seven in ten journalists (71%) consider it important to "educate the public," six in ten think that it is important to "raise the cultural level of the masses" (61%) (Table 5.1), and agree that news media should "mould the public opinion" (60%) (Table 5.2). Only a little more than one-third (36%) of journalists consider it important for news organizations "to meet the popular taste" and "to provide entertainment" (39%) (Table 5.1). The journalists tend to be less agreeable to the business and entertaining side of the media. This is probably due to the high educational level of Hong Kong journalists. Since more than three quarters of them (78%) have tertiary education or above, they may consider the general mass somewhat "uneducated" and of "low-taste."

Further analysis shows that the educational level does make a difference in the perceived importance of meeting popular taste. Significantly, more journalists with tertiary education regard the role of meeting popular taste less important than journalists with secondary or matriculation level (Table 5.5). The duration of working in the journalist profession also makes a difference in the perceived importance of meeting popular taste. More people who have worked in the profession for a longer time, i.e., four years or more, would say that it is important to meet popular taste (Table 5.6). This finding suggests that when one works longer in the field, one gets to appreciate more the importance of meeting popular taste.

Table 5.5 Importance for media to meet popular taste by educational attainment (%)

	F.5 or below	Matriculated	Tertiary or above
Important	51	47	33
So-so	39	38	42
Unimportant	10	15	26
Total	100	100	101
(N)	(41)	(53)	(393)

$\chi^2=11.77$, $df=4$, $p<0.01$; Cramer's $V=0.11$.

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table 5.6 Importance for media to meet popular taste by duration in journalism profession (%)

	Below 4 years	4-10 years	10-15 years	15 years or above
Important	29	41	32	51
So-so	41	38	51	37
Unimportant	30	21	17	13
Total	100	100	100	101
(N)	(208)	(140)	(82)	(63)

$\chi^2=20.36$, $df=4$, $p<0.002$; Cramer's $V=0.14$.

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

The stress on the educational role of the media by the journalists might well be a result of the party press' influence inherited from the past. The reporters and editors might have acquired the values and norms left over by the party press from their predecessors or organizations. The organizational values fermented during the party press stage may survive longer than the party press itself. Further analysis shows that there is no significant difference

in the perceived importance of the media in educating the public across all educational groups (Table 5.7). In other words, although journalists with secondary or matriculation levels of education are more likely to value the function of meeting popular taste, they still consider educating the public an important media function, just like their college-educated colleagues.

Table 5.7 Importance for media to educate the public by educational attainment (%)

	F.5 or below	Matriculated	Tertiary or above
Important	77	60	71
So-so	21	32	23
Unimportant	3	8	7
Total	101	100	101
(N)	(39)	(53)	(400)

$\chi^2=3.94$, $df=4$, $p>0.05$; Cramer's $V=0.06$.

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Factors for News Judgment

To understand the news-making process, one must examine the factors affecting journalists' news judgment. This study looks into these factors. It is found that an overwhelming majority (92%) names "social significance of event" as influential, while 73% name "source of information," 66% "past journalism training" and 59% "supervisors" as having influence on their judgment of what news is (Table 5.8). It is interesting to note that only about one-third (35%) of journalists regard the political stance of news organization has an influence on their news judgement. This percentage is lower than one would have expected, especially at a time when Hong Kong has been politicized by the "1997 Question."

Table 5.8 Factors affecting news judgment (%)

	Great influence	Some influence	So-so	No influence	Not at all	(N)
Social significance of event	47	45	6	2	0	(504)
Source of information	20	53	16	8	2	(502)
Colleagues	3	29	34	27	7	(500)
Acquaintances in other media	3	27	37	26	8	(495)
Supervisors	14	45	24	13	4	(497)
Journalism training	22	44	23	9	3	(436)
Audiences/Readers	9	34	30	21	7	(481)
Major media competitors	4	35	37	21	4	(485)
Television news treatment	2	24	43	24	8	(487)
Radio news treatment	0	24	43	26	8	(487)
Leading newspapers' news treatment	2	30	40	23	5	(489)
One's own political stance	5	33	29	26	8	(473)
Political stance of one's news organization	8	27	27	27	11	(471)

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

The lack of influence of the news media's political stance is probably due to the dominance of non-partisan media in Hong Kong. Non-partisan media do not stick to a particular political stance, thus making the media's political orientation less important in the journalists' news judgment. Further analysis supports this explanation. Table 5.9 shows that the number of journalists working with centrist media almost doubles that of the leftist and rightist media in pointing out no influence of media's political stance on their news judgment. In contrast, more than half of the journalists in both the leftist and rightist media consider the media's political stance influential on their news judgment.

Table 5.9 Influence of media's political stance on news judgment by political stance of media (%)

	Leftist	Centrist	Center-to-right	Rightist
Have influence	53	27	46	71
So-so	23	28	30	18
No influence	24	45	24	12
Total	100	100	100	101
(N)	(75)	(311)	(67)	(17)

$\chi^2=37.42$, $df=6$, $p<0.001$; Cramer's $V=0.20$.

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

The colleagues and external media tend to be less influential on the journalists' news judgment. About one-third of journalists (32%) consider their colleagues as having influence. Even fewer journalists (30%) so consider their acquaintances in other media, although 39% admit that major media competitors have influence. Among external media, about one-third (32%) consider that leading newspapers' news treatment has influence on their news judgment while a quarter point out the impact of television (26%) and radio (24%) (Table 5.8).

As reported in Chapter 2, among the newspapers which Hong Kong journalists read every day, 59% read *Ming Pao Daily News*, while 53% read *South China Morning Post* and 48% *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. These three newspapers can be regarded as the "elite" newspapers in the journalist circle; they can probably set the news agenda for other media.

Credible Media Sources for Journalists

Hong Kong journalists' professional orientation is reflected by their evaluation of the credibility of various media. The study shows that more than one-third of journalists (37%) regard the Chinese official news agency, Xinhua News Agency, as having low credibility, followed by the *Hong Kong Commercial Daily*, *Ta Kung Pao* and *Wen Wei Po*. All these three leftist newspapers are rated by more than 30% of journalists as having low credibility. The rightist *Hong Kong Times* is also rated low in credibility by 28% of journalists. Besides partisan media, some sensational media receive low rating as well. Twenty-seven percent rate *Cheng Ming*, a sensational political magazine, as having low credibility, followed by the *Express Daily News* (25%) and *Tin Tin Daily News* (23%).

The *Hong Kong Economic Journal* and *South China Morning Post* fare best on the credibility scale. Only 2% of journalists rate them as having low credibility. The government's Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) also fares well; only 3% of journalists rate it as having low credibility. The Hong Kong Government Information Services (GIS) is perceived as more credible than the Chinese official Xinhua News Agency; only 12% of journalists rate it as having low credibility compared with 37% for Xinhua (Table 5.10). These ratings show that the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, *South China Morning Post* and RTHK are credible sources among journalists. They may play an important role in setting the media agenda of Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the results also indicate some

success of the government agency, GIS, in “managing” news in Hong Kong.

Table 5.10 Media which have low credibility among journalists

	%	(N)
Xinhua News Agency	37	(141)
Hong Kong Commercial Daily	35	(107)
Ta Kung Pao	32	(119)
Wen Wei Po	31	(117)
Hong Kong Times	28	(91)
Cheng Ming	27	(76)
Express Daily News	25	(90)
Tin Tin Daily News	23	(85)
Hong Kong Daily News	20	(68)
Wide Angle	17	(44)
Wah Kiu Yat Pao	17	(56)
The Mirror	14	(33)
The Nineties	12	(35)
Contemporary	12	(33)
Government Information Services	12	(48)
Sing Pao Daily News	7	(27)
Hong Kong Economic Times	7	(25)
Hong Kong Commercial Radio	6	(28)
Yazhou Zhoukan	6	(18)
Oriental Daily News	5	(20)
Ming Pao Daily News	5	(20)
Sing Tao Jih Pao	4	(16)
Television Broadcasts Limited	4	(18)
Asia Television Limited	4	(18)
Radio Television Hong Kong	3	(12)
South China Morning Post	2	(10)
Hong Kong Economic Journal	2	(7)

Professional Values and Ethics

Divulging Confidential Sources

Hong Kong journalists have a relatively high consensus on some professional values and ethical issues. Nearly all of them (95%) condemn the act of “breaking promise of confidentiality.” This high concern for the protection of information sources indicates the importance of news sources to the profession. No reporters want to alienate their sources by breaking the confidentiality promise (Table 5.11).

Using Personal Documents versus Government Secrets

Three quarters of the journalists (74%) consider it improper to use others’ personal documents without authorization, 21% consider it “hard to say,” and only 5% consider it a proper practice. In contrast, nearly half (45%) of journalists consider it proper to use confidential documents of government, only 21% regard it improper, and the remaining one-third (35%) consider it “hard to say.” The percentage of approval for revealing government secrets is also greater than that for revealing commercial secrets. A little more than one-third of journalists (36%) consider it proper to use confidential documents of business, and slightly more than one-third of the journalists (38%) consider it “hard to say” (Table 5.11).

These findings indicate that Hong Kong journalists make a distinction between the use of personal documents and government as well as commercial secrets. An overwhelming majority would respect personal privacy, but many are likely to disclose government and commercial “secrets.” It explains to some extent why Hong Kong journalists were so upset when Xi Yang, the reporter of *Ming Pao*, was sentenced to prison for 12 years for “theft of state secret” by the Chinese government in 1994. Few Hong Kong journalists regard it as improper to disclose the so-called “state secrets.” They did not expect such a heavy sentence for the *Ming Pao* reporter. Should Hong Kong journalists continue

Table 5.11 Attitudes towards ethical issues (%)

	Absolutely improper	Improper	Hard to say	Proper	Absolutely proper	(N)
Break promise of confidentiality	63	32	5	0	1	(502)
Unauthorized use of personal documents	32	42	21	4	1	(497)
Use confidential government documents	6	15	35	35	10	(482)
Use confidential business documents	6	20	38	30	6	(482)
Get employed in a firm for information	22	34	26	16	3	(484)
Claim to be somebody else	27	35	26	11	1	(493)
Badger unwilling informants	3	12	22	47	15	(487)
Pay others for confidential information	24	24	32	16	3	(491)
Exchange information with other journalists	5	12	27	45	12	(483)
Plagiarism	17	40	25	15	3	(473)

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

to hold this view, their conflicts with the Chinese authorities will ensue after 1997.

Faking Identity

Nineteen percent of journalists regard it as proper to be employed in a firm to get inside information, but more than half (56%) regard it as improper to do so. When asked about their attitude towards "claiming to be somebody else for information," even more journalists (62%) consider it as improper, only 12% consider it not a problem. This is probably due to the disliking of faking. Most Hong Kong journalists do not like to conceal their identity when they gather news, but a quarter of journalists (26%) are not certain about it (Table 5.11).

Badgering Unwilling Informants

In the early 1980s when China started to open its door to the outside world after decades of turmoil, Hong Kong journalists impressed the Chinese authorities by their earnestness in gathering news. They demonstrated to the government officials and their fellow-journalists on the mainland a different way of gathering news. The Hong Kong journalists have been noted for their persistence in getting information from informants. Their earnestness is so great that sometimes complaints are heard from news figures. This study shows that only 15% of journalists regard it as improper "to badger unwilling informants to get a story," 62% regard it as proper, and 22% think it "hard to say" (Table 5.11). That means six in ten Hong Kong journalists will badger a source for information, and two more may join the badgering depending on the situation. It explains why Hong Kong journalists are sometimes called "mobs."

Paying for News

Two in ten journalists (19%) approve of the idea to pay for confidential information, but nearly half (48%) do not approve of such

practice, the remaining one-third (32%) consider it “hard to say” (Table 5.11). This one-third of “undecided” will probably make their decision depending on the situation. Paying for news is a controversial issue. Those who disagree with the practice argue that paying for news will encourage informants to withhold information, thus reducing the supply of it. It may also encourage criminal activities of getting confidential information by improper means. If paying for news becomes a common practice, news organizations will increase their cost of production. Not many news organizations are willing to pay extra cost for news. On the other hand, those who agree to the idea of paying for news argue that if the news vital to public interest is available only with payment, there is no reason why the media should not pay for it. Furthermore, if the source uses his or her expert knowledge in providing information, it is fair for him or her to be paid. The diverse opinions of Hong Kong journalists reflect the complexity of this issue.

Exchanging Information and Plagiarism

It is quite unexpected that only 17% of Hong Kong journalists disapprove of the practice of “exchanging information with fellow reporters,” and 57% do not consider it to be a problem (Table 5.11). This finding helps to explain why the news media in Hong Kong seldom break exclusive stories. Further analysis shows that journalism training and membership in the Hong Kong Journalists Association do not make a difference in journalists’ attitude in exchanging information. Table 5.12 shows that, in both journalism and non-journalism education groups, more people approve than disapprove of information exchange. Table 5.13 also shows that, amongst both HKJA members and non-members, more people approve than disapprove of information exchange. In other words, the exchange of information is a widely accepted practice among Hong Kong journalists.

Table 5.12 Exchange of information with other journalists by undergraduate major (%)

	Journalism/Communication	Others
Improper	16	19
Hard to say	31	27
Proper	53	55
Total	100	101
(N)	(239)	(145)

$\chi^2=1.06$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$; Cramer’s $V=0.05$.

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table 5.13 Exchange of information with other journalists by membership of Hong Kong Journalists Association (%)

	Member	Non-member
Improper	21	16
Hard to say	36	25
Proper	43	59
Total	100	100
(N)	(62)	(418)

$\chi^2=5.36$, $df=2$, $p>0.05$; Cramer’s $V=0.11$.

The journalists probably need to exchange information with others because most news organizations in Hong Kong are understaffed. If they did not exchange information with others, they might run the risk of losing some important news. To solve this problem of exchanging information, more manpower must be provided in the news organizations. It is also quite surprising to

see that 18% of journalists still approve of plagiarism (Table 5.11). The profession has much to be desired.

Receiving Advantages

As regards receiving advantages from people being reported on, Hong Kong journalists are resolute in refusing money from those being reported on. Less than 1% of journalists consider it acceptable to take money from people, and only 3% reply "hard to say." This finding suggests that Hong Kong journalists are conscious of the ethical issues involved in taking money from people being reported on. With respect to other advantages, however, there are great variations. For free gifts, 11% consider it acceptable, and one-third (33%) reply "hard to say." For free trips or junkets, even more journalists (16%) consider it acceptable although half (52%) consider it unacceptable. The acceptance level increases to 48% for free meals and 49% for souvenirs. Only 17% and 15% consider free meals and souvenirs unacceptable, respectively (Table 5.14).

Table 5.14 Level of acceptance of receiving advantages (%)

	Absolutely unacceptable	Should not	Hard to say	Should accept	Absolutely acceptable	(N)
Money	69	28	3	0	0	(497)
Gifts	22	34	33	9	2	(472)
Trips/Junkets	18	34	32	14	2	(463)
Lunch or dinner	6	11	35	44	4	(462)
Souvenirs	6	9	36	45	4	(472)

In general, the more valuable the advantage is, the less likely will it be accepted. Hong Kong journalists will generally accept free meals and souvenirs, but not money. They seem to think that

free meals or souvenirs would not affect their reports. Whether this belief has grounds merits further investigation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Hong Kong journalists share a mixed professional orientation. On the one hand, they tend to be detached, but on the other, they accept a participant role for themselves. They consider it important for news media to act as a watchdog of government, but also important to assist government to publicize its policies. Most Hong Kong journalists have an elitist orientation with an anti-commercial tone. They think the media should educate the masses, raise their cultural standards and pay less attention to meeting popular taste.

With respect to professional ethics, an overwhelming majority will honor their promise of confidentiality. Most of them will refrain from using unauthorized personal documents and from claiming to be somebody else for information. They are not likely to pay for information. But, many of them will badger unwilling informants for news and use government as well as commercial secrets. Many of them exchange information among themselves, and a small minority does not think plagiarism to be a problematic practice.

They are conscious of ethical issues involved in taking money from people, but they are less concerned about free gifts and free trips. Even less is their concern about free meals and souvenirs.

On the whole, the subjective ethical standards of Hong Kong journalists is quite high. The areas which need improvement would be the practice of exchanging information, plagiarism and taking "freebies" from people being reported on. But, all these three problems cannot be solved simply by demanding a higher standard of the journalists, because these problems are related to news organizations' policies and resources. If news organizations do not recruit enough people, exchanging information and plagiarism will continue in the profession even if the journalists them-

selves hate such practices. If news organizations do not commit enough fund for news gathering, free trips and free meals are obvious means to subsidize their operation costs. Maybe the owners of Hong Kong news media should be demanded a higher professional standard as well as the journalists.

6

Journalists and Political Transition

In Hong Kong, there has historically been an uneasy juxtaposition of the partisan press and the professional press, constituting what Seymour-Ure (1974) characterizes as the "party-press parallelism." But the professional press has gained a central place since 1970 with the partisan press either gradually fading out or undergoing significant change. The press market has further been restructured by the Sino-British Joint Declaration concluded in 1984, resulting in the demise of the traditionally pro-KMT papers and the blurring of boundaries between the right-of-the-center press and the centrist press. Nevertheless, the ideological or partisan orientation of media organizations remains as the most pivotal determinant of journalists' worldviews — including their perception of the norms of media professionalism, the political transition and the role of the media in this transitional process. We categorize journalists into "rightist," "centrist" and "leftist" on the basis of (a) the media's source of financial support and party affiliation; (b) place of registration; (c) choice of national day cele-

bration and calendar systems; and (d) ways of addressing the Beijing and Taipei regimes (Lee, 1985).

Following Weaver and Wilhoit's study (1986), we asked the journalists in our sample to rate the importance of a battery of 12 items generally regarded as major constituent norms of professional values. They include:

1. To get information to the public quickly;
2. To provide analysis for complex problems;
3. To provide entertainment;
4. To publicize government policy;
5. To educate the public;
6. To speak for the public;
7. To be a watchdog of the government;
8. To report news objectively;
9. To report news in a balanced way;
10. To provide a clear political stance;
11. To raise public cultural appreciation;
12. To meet popular taste.

Each item is a five-point Likert scale ranging from "very important," "quite important" and "neutral," to "not quite important" and "not very important."

Their responses are summarized in Table 6.1. Several statistics are worthy of note. The stronger the endorsement of a norm, the higher the percentage of journalists in each partisan media category who believes the norm as "very important" or "quite important." Likewise, the lower the mean score, the stronger the endorsement. Furthermore, a higher correlation indicates a stronger relationship between media partisanship and the endorsement of a norm. The statistical significance of this relationship is determined by a F test.

At first glance, Hong Kong journalists as a whole hold "neutral" positions on such norms as "meeting popular taste," "publicizing government policy" and "providing a clear political stance." They are somewhat lukewarm about the media's functions to "provide entertainment" and "raise public cultural appre-

Table 6.1 Importance journalists assign to various professional values

Professional values	Media partisanship						r	F	df	p
	Leftist		Centrist		Rightist					
	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean				
Get information to public quickly	90	1.57	95	1.37	95	1.42	-.13	2.66	510	.07
Provide analysis for complex problems	86	1.73	94	1.51	90	1.49	-.02	3.92	505	.02
Provide entertainment	45	2.65	38	2.74	38	2.62	-.03	0.87	498	.42
Publicize government policy	37	2.90	26	3.00	45	2.58	-.16	12.15	490	.00
Educate public	62	2.24	70	2.14	76	1.96	-.09	2.69	501	.07
Speak for public	78	1.96	80	1.82	83	1.79	-.03	0.84	499	.43
To be watchdog of government	81	1.71	90	1.56	89	1.54	-.05	1.89	503	.15
Report objectively	92	1.47	95	1.36	95	1.36	-.05	1.22	500	.30
Report in a balanced way	61	2.20	80	1.84	86	1.70	-.16	7.63	456	.00
Provide a clear political stance	40	2.90	28	3.28	45	2.65	-.08	9.82	477	.00
Raise public cultural appreciation	65	2.35	57	2.42	70	2.20	-.13	4.36	494	.01
Meet popular taste	37	3.02	33	2.96	45	2.65	-.14	2.71	490	.07

Notes: All items are measured on 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1="very important," 2="quite important," 3="neutral," 4="not quite important" to 5="not very important."

Percentage indicates journalists saying "very important" and "quite important."

ciation" probably because such functions are not considered essential tasks of the news. But akin to their US colleagues, Hong Kong journalists enthusiastically embrace four norms: to report news objectively, to get information to the public quickly, to provide analysis of complex problems and to be a watchdog of the government.

There is an uneven impact of media partisanship on their endorsement of professional values. In summary,

- a. The centrist-media and rightist-media journalists are more likely than their leftist-media colleagues to attach greater importance to norms aimed to "provide analysis for complex problems" and to "report news in a balanced way." The differences on these norms all obtain statistical significance.
- b. The centrist-media journalists are more likely than their partisan counterparts (both rightists and leftists) to assign greater significance to norms aimed to "publicize (the Hong Kong) government policy" and to "raise public cultural appreciation." As expected, the centrists are less likely to value the norm of "providing a clear political stance."
- c. Journalists respond positively to norms ranging from balanced reporting, media as a government watchdog, getting information to the public quickly, to educating the public — in fact, their response is so overwhelmingly positive as to make journalists' partisan affiliation inconsequential. Likewise, their lack of high enthusiasm for the media's functions to provide entertainment or to meet popular taste does not vary with media partisanship.

Perception of Hong Kong's Political Future

Journalists were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with statements suggesting that (a) the "one country, two systems"

policy will be feasible; (b) political turmoil will occur around 1997; and (c) Sino-Hong Kong conflicts will abound in the future. As Table 6.2a discloses, the relationships between media partisanship and these three items are statistically significant. Specifically, having faith in the viability of the "one country, two systems" policy is supported by six in ten leftist-media journalists (56%), in contrast to only a minority of them in the centrist media (18%) and the rightist media (23%). But, across the partisan spectrum, almost four in ten journalists display uncertainty about that policy.

Further, as Table 6.2b shows, very few journalists dismiss the possibility of political turmoil around 1997, while a sizeable proportion of them acknowledges a sense of uncertainty. More important, six out of ten journalists in the rightist (65%) and centrist (59%) media, compared with about one half of them (46%) in the leftist media, believe that turmoil will break out. Table 6.2c also shows that the Hong Kong journalists are overwhelmingly pessimistic — almost eight in ten from the rightist (78%) and centrist media (77%), and one in two from the leftist media (51%) believe that conflicts between China and Hong Kong will abound in the future.

To further gauge the impact of media partisanship, we ask journalists to evaluate the political prospects of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan "ten years from now," respectively. Table 6.3 shows that a majority of journalists expresses uncertainty, to the extent that media partisanship makes little difference on how they see the political future of either China ($\gamma=.18$; $\chi^2=11.88$, $df=6$, $p>.05$) or Taiwan ($\gamma=-.02$; $\chi^2=11.06$, $df=6$, $p>.05$). Almost one in two journalists across the partisan line indicate uncertainty about the future of Hong Kong, even though the leftists seem slightly more likely to believe that the future will be better ($\gamma=.07$; $\chi^2=24.82$, $df=6$, $p<.001$).

Table 6.2 General political perception of journalists working in news media with different ideologies (%)

Political perception	Media partisanship		
	Leftist	Centrist	Rightist
(a) Feasibility of "one country, two systems" ⁽¹⁾			
Agree	56	18	23
Hard to say	35	48	44
Disagree	9	35	34
(N)	(71)	(292)	(101)
(b) Political turmoil will occur around 1997 ⁽²⁾			
Agree	46	59	65
Hard to say	46	36	34
Disagree	8	5	1
(N)	(76)	(312)	(102)
(c) Sino-Hong Kong conflicts will abound in the future ⁽³⁾			
Agree	51	77	78
Hard to say	37	19	21
Disagree	12	4	1
(N)	(75)	(313)	(108)

(1) $\chi^2=49.72$, $df=4$, $p<.001$; Gamma=.30.(2) $\chi^2=9.56$, $df=4$, $p<.05$; Gamma=-.21.(3) $\chi^2=27.63$, $df=4$, $p<.001$; Gamma=-.32.

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table 6.3 General political expectations perceived by journalists working in news media with different ideologies (%)

Political expectations ten years from now	Media partisanship		
	Leftist	Centrist	Rightist
(a) China ⁽¹⁾			
Getting better	36	26	23
Unchanged	14	12	12
Uncertain	49	54	52
Getting worse	1	8	13
(N)	(78)	(322)	(116)
(b) Hong Kong ⁽²⁾			
Getting better	25	10	17
Unchanged	13	12	17
Uncertain	53	48	44
Getting worse	9	31	23
(N)	(77)	(321)	(115)
(c) Taiwan ⁽³⁾			
Getting better	38	38	34
Unchanged	10	12	23
Uncertain	51	45	39
Getting worse	1	5	4
(N)	(77)	(322)	(115)

(1) $\chi^2=11.88$, $df=6$, $p>.05$; Gamma=.18.(2) $\chi^2=24.82$, $df=6$, $p<.001$; Gamma=.07.(3) $\chi^2=11.06$, $df=6$, $p>.05$; Gamma=-.02.

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Furthermore, journalists were asked to evaluate their own positions on four socio-political issues measured by scales of 0 to 10, with 5 being the middle point. Table 6.4 summarizes the mean scores by media partisanship. It comes as no surprise that the

leftists are more favorable towards Beijing vis-à-vis Taipei than the centrists or the rightists ($F=25.1$, $df=439$, $p<.00$), or that the rightists are more approving than the centrists or the leftists of capitalism vis-à-vis socialism ($F=18.7$, $df=439$, $p<.00$). Likewise, both the centrists and the rightists are more prone than the leftists to support a position aimed to expedite the pace of democratization in Hong Kong as a shield against future abuse by China ($F=13.6$, $df=439$, $p<.00$). Finally, the centrists are more inclined than the rightists and the leftists (in that order) to accentuate the interests of the upper class vs. those of the lower classes ($F=5.3$, $df=439$, $p<.00$).

Table 6.4 Journalists' self-evaluation of personal ideology on four socio-political issues

Issues	Media partisanship						F	df	p
	Leftist		Centrist		Rightist				
	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean			
Beijing-Taipei	39	5.86	15	4.76	8	4.18	25.1	439	.00
Capitalism-Socialism	42	2.31	78	2.70	87	2.87	18.7	439	.00
Pace of democratization	58	2.43	86	2.83	84	2.83	13.6	439	.00
Lower class-upper class	7	1.49	20	1.82	22	1.64	5.3	439	.00

Notes: Percentage indicates preference for Beijing, capitalism, hastened pace of democracy, and the upper-class interests. Means are calculated from scales whose ranges are from 0 to 10 (0 means pro-Beijing, pro-capitalism, pro-slowed pace of democratization and pro-lower class).

Up to this point, we have used 10 items to measure the political perception of the Hong Kong journalists. We subject these items to a principal-component factor analysis using varimax ro-

tation, yielding four ideological clusters that explain 60% of the variances. Factor I, explaining 24% of the variances, comprises three items that tested journalists' political prospects for China, Hong Kong and Taiwan "ten years from now." Factor II, accounting for 13% of the variances, consists of three items measuring their assessment of the feasibility of the "one country, two systems" policy, the likelihood of political conflicts around 1997, and the chances of future conflicts between Hong Kong and China. Factor III, explaining 12% of the variances, is made up of two items measuring journalists' political preference for Beijing versus Taipei and their position on the pace of democracy in Hong Kong. Factor IV, explaining 10% of the variances, consists of two items measuring journalists' preference for the social system (capitalism vs. socialism) and class interests (the upper class vs. the lower class). These four factors constitute the general worldviews of Hong Kong journalists.

In Table 6.5, we used 11 predictor variables in a regression analysis to explain the general worldviews held by the Hong Kong journalists. It is apparent that such variables, such as age, identification with Britain or China, nationality (Chinese or British subject), and plan to apply for the right of abode in Britain after 1997, do not have predictive power on the "ideology as a whole." On the other hand, gender, years of schooling, journalism major, media partisanship, salary, and the plan for emigration are significant predictors of at least one factor. Most important, media partisanship explains Factors II, III and IV.

In sum, female journalists tend to side with Taipei and support a faster pace of democratization in Hong Kong. Those with more schooling are more likely to anticipate political conflicts. Journalism majors tend to endorse capitalism and the upper-class interests, while discounting political conflicts. The higher salaried, as in the rightist and centrist media, tend to lean towards capitalism and the upper class and seem readier to foresee political conflicts. Those with plans to emigrate tend to be pessimistic about the political prospects of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan in the next decade. Most significantly, journalists in the leftist media

are more likely than their centrist and rightist counterparts to discount the possibility of political conflicts. The leftists also tend to support Beijing, to favor a slowed pace of democratization in Hong Kong, and to endorse socialism and the lower-class interests.

Table 6.5 The predictors of total ideology among journalists

	Ten-year political prospects		Possibility of political conflicts		Democratic stances		Social outlooks	
R square=	.03		.14		.07		.11	
	Beta	r	Beta	r	Beta	r	Beta	r
Variables								
Age	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gender	—	—	—	—	.19	.17	—	—
Education								
Years of schooling	—	—	-.19	-.18	—	—	—	—
Journalism major	—	—	-.19	-.19	—	—	-.15	-.20
Organizational stance	—	—	-.17	-.11	.20	.20	.22	.22
Type of media	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Salary	—	—	-.20	-.18	—	—	.20	.20
Nation identified	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nationality	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Plan to emigrate	-.17	-.17	—	—	—	—	—	—
Plan to apply for the right of abode in Britain	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Perception of the Media Role in the Political Transition

Having examined journalists' ideology and its correlates, we proceed to analyze their perception of the media's role in the political

transition. Table 6.6 summarizes the findings. First, an overwhelming majority of journalists agree that Hong Kong media should press Chinese and British governments to protect citizens' rights and their interests during the political transition. The responses are so similar as to make media partisanship unimportant ($\gamma = -.25$; $\chi^2 = 5.95$, $df = 4$, $p > .05$). Secondly, as high as 96% of the rightists, 91% of the centrists and 82% of the leftists concur that the media should fight to maximize Hong Kong's autonomy after 1997; but this difference varies significantly with media partisanship ($\gamma = -.40$; $\chi^2 = 12.00$, $df = 4$, $p < .05$).

Thirdly, it is noteworthy that the centrists are less prone than the leftists or the rightists to favor using the media to stabilize the Hong Kong society ($\gamma = -.12$; $\chi^2 = 40.86$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$). Fourthly, a majority of journalists endorses media neutrality if China should clash with Hong Kong, but within this context their attitude varies significantly with the partisan divide ($\gamma = .28$; $\chi^2 = 10.80$, $df = 4$, $p < .05$). To wit, more rightists (52%) than centrists (38%) or leftists (27%) side with Hong Kong, but only a negligible few side with China. Even the leftist journalists place a higher priority on Hong Kong than on China.

Journalists are then asked to evaluate whether Hong Kong's press freedom in the run-up to 1997 will become greater, more restricted, or remain unchanged (Table 6.7a). Almost seven in ten centrist journalists (68%), one half of the rightists (47%), and one-third of the leftists (34%) predict an erosion of press freedom. Few anticipate an opposite course. Even so, media partisanship significantly influences journalists' assessment of the situation ($\gamma = .07$; $\chi^2 = 39.93$, $df = 6$, $p < .001$).

Journalists paint an extraordinarily dim picture for press freedom after the takeover of Hong Kong by China in 1997 (Table 6.7b). Almost eight in ten centrists, seven in ten rightists, and five in ten leftists foresee a curtailment of press freedom, with media partisanship as a significant predictor ($\gamma = .19$; $\chi^2 = 66.75$, $df = 6$, $p < .001$). Most striking is the finding that none in the sample, irrespective of partisan attachment, expect press freedom to be enhanced at all.

Table 6.6 Importance journalists assign to media roles in transition (%)

Media roles	Media partisanship		
	Leftist	Centrist	Rightist
(a) Press Chinese and British governments for citizens' rights and interests ⁽¹⁾			
Agree	76	81	89
Hard to say	13	11	7
Disagree	11	8	4
(N)	(72)	(311)	(109)
(b) Fight to maximize Hong Kong autonomy after 1997 ⁽²⁾			
Agree	82	91	96
Hard to say	11	4	3
Disagree	7	5	2
(N)	(71)	(312)	(112)
(c) Stabilize Hong Kong society ⁽³⁾			
Agree	74	45	76
Hard to say	10	23	12
Disagree	16	32	12
(N)	(73)	(308)	(107)
(d) Whom should media side with in Sino-Hong Kong interest clashes? ⁽⁴⁾			
China	2	0	1
Stay neutral	71	62	47
Hong Kong	27	38	52
(N)	(79)	(323)	(120)

(1) $\chi^2=5.95$, $df=4$, $p>.05$; Gamma=-.25.(2) $\chi^2=12.00$, $df=4$, $p<.05$; Gamma=-.40.(3) $\chi^2=40.86$, $df=4$, $p<.001$; Gamma=-.12.(4) $\chi^2=10.80$, $df=4$, $p<.05$; Gamma=.28.

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table 6.7 Journalists' evaluation of press freedom in the run-up to 1997 and after 1997 (%)

Press freedom	Media partisanship		
	Leftist	Centrist	Rightist
(a) The run-up to 1997 ⁽¹⁾			
Increased	7	3	6
Unchanged	30	11	17
Hard to say	30	18	30
Reduced	34	68	47
(N)	(77)	(318)	(110)
(b) After 1997 ⁽²⁾			
Increased	0	0	2
Unchanged	15	1	1
Hard to say	40	20	30
Reduced	46	79	67
(N)	(76)	(317)	(109)

(1) $\chi^2=39.93$, $df=6$, $p<.001$; Gamma=.07.(2) $\chi^2=66.75$, $df=6$, $p<.001$; Gamma=.19.

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Under such circumstances, do journalists feel apprehensive about criticizing the powers that be? As Table 6.8 reveals, they tend to feel much less inhibited about criticizing the lame-duck Hong Kong authorities than about criticizing the Chinese government. While left-media journalists are evenly split between "apprehension" and its lack of it, those in the rightist and centrist media who disavow any apprehension about criticizing China outnumber those who acknowledge apprehension ($F=9.01$, $df=459$, $p<.001$). Centrists also believe that they are less apprehensive than their partisan colleagues about criticizing the Hong Kong government ($F=7.47$, $df=459$, $p<.001$). Since self-censorship

is considered professionally despicable, we suspect these self-reported figures to be somewhat of an understatement. Moreover, they tend to think that other journalists ("journalists at large") exhibit greater apprehension than themselves; in fact, "others" are perceived to be so timid as to render media partisanship irrelevant.

Table 6.8 Journalists' responses to political pressure

Responses	Media partisanship						F	df	p
	Leftist		Centrist		Rightist				
	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean			
(a) Journalists themselves are apprehensive about criticizing China	42	2.97	22	3.59	22	3.42	9.01	459	.00
(b) Journalists themselves are apprehensive about criticizing Hong Kong	20	3.58	8	4.01	13	3.76	7.47	459	.00
(c) Other journalists are apprehensive about criticizing China	42	2.81	56	2.57	54	2.72	1.67	459	.19
(d) Other journalists are apprehensive about criticizing Hong Kong	20	3.43	20	3.58	25	3.43	1.12	459	.32

Notes: All items are measured on 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1="strongly agree," 2="agree," 3="neutral," 4="disagree" to 5="strongly disagree."
Percentage indicates journalists saying "strongly agree" and "agree."

Having examined the ten questions purported to measure journalists' perception of the media role during the political transition, we further subject them to a principal-component factor analysis using varimax rotation. This procedure yields three factors explaining 55% of the variances. Factor I, explaining 23% of the variances, is constituted by the four items measuring journalists' perceived apprehension about criticizing political authorities. Factor II, explaining 17%, consists of the two items measuring journalists' perceived press freedom before and after 1997. Factor III, explaining 15% of the variances, comprises four items (as shown in Table 6.6) measuring journalists' positions on the role of the media in the political transition.

In Table 6.9, we use eleven variables in a regression analysis to explain the perceived role of the media by the Hong Kong journalists. Such variables, age, gender, years of schooling, journalism major, type of media, salary, and plan to emigrate, do not have predictive power. On the other hand, media partisanship, nation with which journalists identify, nationality, and plan to apply for the right of abode in Britain are significant predictors.

In sum, journalists in the rightist and centrist media are more prone than their leftist counterparts to endorse an activist role for the media in the political transition, and thus less likely to show apprehension for themselves and others in terms of criticizing the political authorities. Those who claim to be Chinese citizens or identify themselves with China tend to be more apprehensive — whether for themselves or for "others" — about criticizing the political authorities, while those who identify with China tend to be slightly less pessimistic about the prospect of press freedom, those planning to apply for British residence are most wary of the reduced press freedom.

Table 6.9 The predictors of the perception of media-politics relations among journalists

R square=	Be apprehensive of criticizing political authority		Media freedom in political transition		Media role in political transition	
	Beta	r	Beta	r	Beta	r
Variables						
Age	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gender	—	—	—	—	—	—
Education						
Years of schooling	—	—	—	—	—	—
Journalism major	—	—	—	—	—	—
Organizational stance	.21	.24	—	—	.24	.24
Type of media	—	—	—	—	—	—
Salary	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nation identified	.17	.19	.24	.24	—	—
Nationality	-.35	-.35	—	—	—	—
Plan to emigrate	—	—	—	—	—	—
Plan to apply for the right of abode in Britain	—	—	-.18	-.21	—	—

Journalists' Career Plans

Table 6.10 summarizes how journalists plan their own career. Very few people say that they will quit the profession. More than one half of them in the leftist media (58%) concede having changed news treatment "often" or "sometimes" due to political pressure from China, whereas the rightists and the centrists are much more resistant to such pressure.

Table 6.10 Journalists' personal responses to political pressure (%)

Responses	Media partisanship		
	Leftist	Centrist	Rightist
(a) Professional choice			
Often/Sometimes change news treatment	58	27	17
Leave journalistic profession	5	8	6
(b) Emigration potential			
Plan to apply for the right of abode in Britain	1	14	6
Applied for emigration	3	12	13
Plan to emigrate	21	29	18

Journalists in the leftist media are less likely to apply for British residence. Although one in five say that they plan to emigrate, only a tiny proportion has proceeded with the application process. More centrist and rightist colleagues plan on emigration and have made applications.

Conclusion

Most Hong Kong journalists subscribe to media professionalism as a generalized set of work attitude, but they differ in their endorsement of norms of media professionalism as actual practice. They are largely pessimistic about the outlook of the political transition, but the degree of that pessimism varies with media ideology, or the ideological or partisan orientations of their media organizations. Very few journalists hold high confidence in the future of press freedom in Hong Kong. Again, media ideology emerges as the most important predictor of journalists' perceived media role in the political transition.

Hong Kong Journalists in Comparative Perspective

The history of the Chinese press is at once long and brief. Its long history could be traced far back to the *Di Bao* in the Song dynasty, which was a system of interconnected horse carriage stations for transmitting official documents and proclamations from the capital to the entire state. Yet, the modern Chinese press did not emerge until the late nineteenth century when China came into contact with Western powers and thus sharpened its national consciousness. Published primarily in the British colonies of Shanghai and Hong Kong, the Chinese-language press prior to the 1890s was usually owned by foreign missionaries and businessmen. Throughout the twentieth century, the press was mobilized as an essential instrument of public enlightenment, moral uplifting, reform and revolutions. The Hong Kong press has reflected this instrumentalist press tradition from the outset (Lin, 1937; Tseng, 1966).

Media Professionalism Revisited

Journalism education, as an American invention, reached China quite early. Elite US universities had followed traditional European disdain of journalism as lacking in intellectual backbone. It took the land-grant universities, part of whose central missions was community service, to institute in the 1930s journalism and other practical subjects as legitimate domains of a university curriculum. Journalism education could be seen in part as the public university's response to community pressure for upgrading occupational status in the name of a "profession." Characteristic of media development in the US, its journalism schools have prescribed norms of professionalism and objectivity — defined as segregation of facts from judgment — as central values (Schudson, 1978).

Early in the century, some Chinese students returned from their study in the US with the methods of running Western-style newspapers. Subsequently, many of China's most prominent intellectuals-cum-journalists (including Liang Qichao) became strong advocates of news objectivity, even if they might not have strictly adhered to that proclaimed goal. Most notably, *Da Gong Bao* (*The Impartial Daily*), a paper founded in the northern city of Tianjin in 1926, was the first to consciously model itself after the *New York Times* and to uphold as fundamental principles *wu dang* (non-partisan), *wu si* (unselfish), *bu mai* (no falling under the sway of commercial influence) and *bu man* (no blind following of any ideology). Early on, China's journalism education closely imitated the programs developed at the University of Missouri and Columbia University. Thus, the liberal tenet of US journalism education was taught amidst rigid state control on the one hand; it also defied (and more accurately, mixed with) traditional Chinese moral and intellectual tradition that regarded the press as an instrument of social purposes rather than a "neutral" carrier of information.

Liberal journalism education has been banished in mainland China since 1949, for this *bourgeois* press concept runs deeply

counter to the Communist ideology that subjugates the media to the state's propaganda organ (Li, 1994). Although the concept of objectivity has been twisted to suit political needs in Taiwan, it provides moral justification for Taiwanese journalists in their struggle against state stricture (Lee, 1993). Hong Kong's journalistic practice retains traces of profound Western influence, whereas its journalism education is primarily American in style and content (Leung, 1992).

In Hong Kong, the partisan press has coexisted with the professional press side by side, but media professionalism gradually replaced partisanship in the 1970s as a main current of thought, thanks to improved material conditions made possible by sustained economic growth. Partisanship is now operating in an increasingly weakened, albeit still symbolically powerful, position. Our study reveals that most Hong Kong journalists profess to endorse the ambiguously defined norms of media professionalism, even though their actual performance may fall far short of the ideal. As the professional press owes its primary loyalty to the dominant center in both ideological and market terms, our study shows that most journalists seem to display a commitment to press freedom, a more democratic order and the existing capitalist way of life.

Our study paints a substantially disparate picture about the aspirations and reality of the Hong Kong journalists, in ways rather similar to the gaps experienced by their counterparts in the US (Johnstone et al., 1976; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1986) and Britain (Tunstall, 1971). Many seem somewhat idealistic, attracted to the "heroic tradition" of the profession as dramatized by the images of getting scoops and defending social justice. As Table 7.1 shows, with 66% of them aged less than 35, Hong Kong journalists are younger than their US colleagues. They are as well-educated as US journalists (with eight in ten having a college degree) and much better educated than Australian journalists (39%). Moreover, six in ten Hong Kong journalists with a college degree majored in journalism and communication; this proportion is twice or thrice larger than that in Australia, Canada or the US. On the

other hand, as Table 7.2 shows, only four in ten Hong Kong journalists are "very" or "fairly" satisfied with their work, while eight in ten US and Australian journalists are positive about their jobs. Sources of job satisfaction cited by Hong Kong journalists include opportunities for autonomy, creativity and self-growth, as well as more flexible control over work.

Table 7.1 Age distribution of journalists (%)

	Hong Kong	US			
	1990	1971	1982-83	1992	
Under 24	12	12	12	4	
25-34	54	33	45	37	
35-44	22	22	21	37	
45-54	4	19	11	14	
55-64	5	11	9	7	
65 and older	2	2	2	2	
Total	99	99	100	101	
(N)	(508)	(1,328)	(1,001)	(1,410)	

Note: Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Sources: Hong Kong (1990): our survey.
 US (1971): Johnstone et al. (1976:198).
 US (1982-83): Weaver and Wilhoit (1986:22).
 US (1992): Weaver and Wilhoit (1993).

Table 7.2 Journalists' job satisfaction (%)

	Hong Kong	US			Australia
	1990	1971	1982-83	1992	1991
Very satisfied	4	49	40	27	29
Fairly satisfied	36	39	44	50	51
So-so	52	—	—	—	—
Somewhat dissatisfied	7	12	15	20	16
Very dissatisfied	2	1	2	3	4
Total	101	101	101	100	100
(N)	(508)	(1,328)	(1,001)	(1,410)	(1,068)

Notes: "—" indicates that this category did not exist in the original survey.
 Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Sources: Hong Kong (1990): our survey.
 US (1971): Johnstone et al. (1976).
 US (1982-83): Weaver and Wilhoit (1986:89).
 US (1992): Weaver and Wilhoit (1993).
 Australia (1991): Henningham (1993).

Half of Hong Kong journalists used "so-so" (a category non-existent in comparable foreign surveys) to describe their degree of job satisfaction. This answer is open to various interpretations, but their overall job condition can be described as precarious. Their low pay is not commensurate with high qualifications, while prospects for promotion and career advancement seem slim. They also feel that they wield little impact on the making of the media's editorial policy. Consequently, the media industry is filled with an inexperienced bunch with short professional and organizational ages. They maintain little organizational loyalty, with a high turnover rate. Journalism thus seems to be a "bridge profession" for them to land a more gainful position in advertising or public relations.

The division of labor in Hong Kong's media organizations is relatively underdeveloped, and task assignments are rather undifferentiated, thus requiring the staff reporter to cover several beats. Traditionally, the repertorial task was restricted primarily, if not exclusively, to local events (especially government and crime stories), but the political transition has necessitated creating a specific "China beat." Most papers have established the "China news" page staffed primarily by former mainland journalists. These new immigrants might be disaffected with the Communist system, but many appear to take a China-centric perspective with respect to Hong Kong issues. The impact on their news selection and interpretation calls for further scrutiny.

Our study suggests a broad consensus among journalists regarding the hierarchical structure of press prestige and significance. Television news is perceived to be most credible, followed by the English-language *South China Morning Post* and the elite Chinese-language *Ming Pao Daily News* and *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, although many also feel compelled to compare notes with the *Oriental Daily News*, the best-selling mass paper noted for crime reporting. As a group, these papers claim to steer an ideologically neutral course, aloof to the traditional KMT-CCP strife. Functioning informally as opinion leaders, they collectively set the agenda for the Hong Kong press by providing a point of reference and a standard of reality check for rank-and-file journalists. The partisan press that plays a mouthpiece role is generally held in low esteem.

The goal of objectivity seems to have generally been accepted across cultures. Seven in ten Hong Kong journalists regard objectivity as "very important," compared with eight in ten German, British, or Italian journalists and nine in ten US journalists (Table 7.3). But media professionalism is so ambiguously defined as to give rise to a sharp gap between ideals and practice. Hong Kong journalists find it easier to accept the abstract ideals of professionalism (such as "objective reporting") than to implement its practical norms (such as "balanced reporting").

Table 7.3 Perceived importance of objectivity by journalists (%)

	Hong Kong	US	Germany	UK	Italy
Very important	71	91	81	83	81
Quite important	24	9	19	16	19
Neutral (so-so)	5	—	—	—	—
Unimportant	1	0	0	0	0
Total	101	100	100	99	100
(N)	(501)	(278)	(292)	(216)	(292)

Notes: "—" indicates that this category did not exist in the original survey. Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Sources: Hong Kong: our survey.

US: Weaver and Wilhoit (1986:89).

Germany, UK and Italy: Donsbach and Klett (1993:75).

Compared with the US and Australian journalists, Hong Kong journalists feel more positively about using the media as a watchdog of the government but more negatively about using them to publicize government policy (Table 7.4). This might reflect Hong Kong journalists' perception of the declining legitimacy of the current colonial government and their even greater anxiety about the future government under Chinese rule. As a whole, Hong Kong journalists are quite pessimistic about the outlook of the political transition, but the degree of that pessimism varies with ideological orientations of media organizations. But, in any case, very few of them seem to hold confidence about the future of press freedom in Hong Kong.

Table 7.4 Perceived media roles by journalists
(% "extremely important")

	Hong Kong		US		Australia
	1990	1971	1982-83	1992	1991
Get information quickly	65	56	60	69	74
Provide entertainment	8	17	20	14	28
Analyze complex issues	55	61	49	49	71
Publicize government policy	7	55	38	—	—
Serve as watchdog of government	58	—	20	21	30
Develop cultural interests	16	30	24	—	—

Note: "—" indicates that this category did not exist in the original survey.

Sources: Hong Kong (1990): our survey.
 US (1971): Johnstone et al. (1976:230).
 US (1983): Weaver and Wilhoit (1986:114).
 US (1992): Weaver and Wilhoit (1993).
 Australia (1991): Henningham (1993).

From a comparative perspective (Table 7.5), Hong Kong and British journalists are more likely to consider "badgering news sources" as justifiable than do US or German journalists, while US and British journalists are more likely to regard "using personal documents without permission" as justifiable than do Hong Kong and German journalists. Among the four groups, Hong Kong journalists are the least likely to justify using false identification or employment to get inside information. In all countries being examined, divulging confidential sources is a strict taboo.

Table 7.5 Professionalism (% "may be justified")

	Hong Kong	US		Germany	UK
	1990	1982-83	1992	1992	1992
Divulging confidential source	1	5	—	1	4
Badgering sources	61	47	49	8	72
Using personal document without permission	4	28	47	5	53
Using false identification	12	20	27	22	33
Employment for inside information	19	67	63	36	73
Paying for information	19	27	20	—	—

Note: "—" indicates that this category did not exist in the original survey.

Sources: Hong Kong (1990): our survey.
 US (1992): Weaver and Wilhoit (1993).
 US (1982-83): Weaver and Wilhoit (1986:139).
 Germany, UK (1992): Donsbach and Klett (1993:75).

Challenges to Professionalism in the Political Transition

How will journalists maintain their commitment to professionalism in the face of increased political pressure as Hong Kong draws closer to official changeover of sovereignty in 1997? Media ownership is being acquired at a frenzied pace by international capitalists who eye the huge China market and by pro-China business people eager to ingratiate themselves with the Beijing authorities (Fung and Lee, 1994). The present study discloses that journalists perceive their colleagues to have experienced apprehension when it comes to criticizing the future sovereign, even though they seem less inhibited now than ever in castigating the lame-duck colonial regime. The press has also reported cases of self-censorship among journalists to avoid possible recrimination in the future.

China does not have a good record of respecting press freedom. Since 1989, China has in fact taken a more hardline position towards the Hong Kong press, contrary to the reasonably successful strategy of cooptation taken in the 1980s (Chan and C.C. Lee, 1991). This hardened position reflects Beijing's point of view that Hong Kong is within reach, the question over sovereignty is effectively closed, and China will reclaim the territory on time. China resents and distrusts the Hong Kong press which had actively supported the Tiananmen movement in 1989 and has thus attacked the press as a "rumor mill" conspiring to subvert the socialist system in the motherland. Moreover, China has scorned Governor Christopher Patten's ill-fated political reform and seems to regard the press as his ally that, in Beijing's eyes, deserves punishment.

But, if China is truly serious about the "one country, two systems" policy, press freedom must be maintained. To contain the Hong Kong press within tolerable limits, China cannot resort to naked force but must sooner or later return to the mixed tactics of overt threat and subtle incorporation. Amidst the increased political pressure, the press must attend to its own credibility and legitimation in order to survive the intense market competition. The press will have to strike a working (or workable) balance between political demands and market imperatives. As a result, the future news order will likely be uneven, indeterminate and full of internal contradictions which entail partial compromises, advances and withdrawal.

As said before, most journalists in Hong Kong are vibrant and idealistic. While some have reportedly imposed self-censorship, many others are guarding with vigilance against any signs of infringement on press freedom. The whole process is likely to be a continual contest between control and anti-control, pressure and counter-pressure. While there are many reasons to believe that press freedom will decline, market competition will ensure that Hong Kong's transparency will remain relatively high — even if the process will be twisted and indirect. In conclusion, media professionalism will probably suffer, but it will not be lost.

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Appendix

Code of Ethics

Hong Kong Journalists Association

1. A journalist has a duty to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards.
2. A journalist shall at all times defend the principle of the freedom of the press and other media in relation to the collection of information and the expression of comment and criticism. He/She shall strive to eliminate distortion, news suppression and censorship.
3. A journalist shall strive to ensure that the information he/she disseminates is fair and accurate, avoid the expression of comment and conjecture as established fact and falsification, by distortion, selection or misrepresentation.
4. A journalist shall rectify promptly any harmful inaccuracies, ensure that correction and apologies receive due prominence and afford the right of reply to persons criticised when the issue is of sufficient importance.
5. A journalist shall obtain information, photographs and illustrations only by straight forward means. The use of other means can be justified only by over-riding considerations of the public interest. The journalist is entitled to exercise a personal conscientious objection to the use of such means.
6. Subject to justification by over-riding considerations of the public interest, a journalist shall do nothing which entails intrusion into private grief and distress.
7. A journalist shall protect confidential sources of information.
8. A journalist shall not accept bribes or shall he/she allow other inducements to influence the performance of his/her professional duties.

9. A journalist shall not lend himself/herself to the distortion or suppression of the truth because of advertising or other considerations.
10. A journalist shall not originate material which encourages discrimination on grounds of race, colour, creed, gender or sexual orientation.
11. A journalist shall not take private advantage of information gained in the course of his/her duties, before the information is public knowledge.

香港記者協會專業守則

1. 新聞工作者有責任維持最高的專業及操守標準。
2. 新聞工作者無論何時均應維護媒介自由採集消息、發表評論和批評的原則，並應致力消除扭曲事實、壓制及審查新聞的情況。
3. 新聞工作者應致力確保所傳播的消息做到公平和準確，並應避免把評論和猜測當作事實，以及避免因扭曲、偏選或錯誤引述而使消息虛假。
4. 新聞工作者應盡速糾正任何構成損害的不確報導，並確保更正和道歉得到應有的重視，而在事件有一定的重要性時，應讓受批評者有回應的權利。
5. 新聞工作者應以正直的手段取得消息、照片及插圖。只有在公眾利益凌駕其上的情況下，才可以使用其他手段，而新聞工作者有權基於個人良知反對使用該等手段。
6. 新聞工作者須以凌駕性的公眾利益作為立足點，否則不應侵擾他人的悲哀和不幸。
7. 新聞工作者應保護秘密的消息來源。
8. 新聞工作者不應接受賄賂或利誘，以致影響其履行專業職責。
9. 新聞工作者不應因為廣告或其他因素而扭曲或壓制真相。
10. 新聞工作者不應成為激發種族、膚色、信仰或性別歧視之類材料的源頭。
11. 新聞工作者不應利用從履行職責中獲得的消息而在消息公佈前謀取私利。