



Regulating Chinese and North American Digital Media in Australia: Facebook and WeChat as Case Studies

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INTRODUCTION

Digital media has become a significant part of people's lives. Algorithms are shaping the way of information distribution, where 'filter bubbles' might occur (Flaxman et al. 2016); personal data are being traded discreetly as a 'corporate asset' for commercial gains (Srnicke 2016); and content moderation practices are still insufficient, as evidenced by the livestreaming of the Christchurch mosque massacre (Besley and Peters 2019). For the Australian government, the problems caused by western platforms are not the only things they need to worry about these days. With the growing significance and attention around the Chinese tech-giants-BAT (i.e. Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent, Chinese equivalent of Google, Facebook and Amazon) (Su 2019), risks and threats are largely

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T. Flew and F. R. Martin (eds.), *Digital Platform Regulation*,

Palgrave Global Media Policy and Business,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95220-4_9

overlooked in the Australian market. For instance, content regulation on WeChat is under-developed (Walsh and Xiao 2019), and platform transparency and neutrality are inadequate as well.

These innate issues may intensify in offshore markets, such as Australia, or Canada, who holds the highest percentages of immigrants. According to the 2019 report released by International Organization for Migration (IOM), Canada received 690,000 Chinese immigrants, ranked 4th globally, and Australia received 640,000 Chinese immigrants, ranked 5th globally, while the first three are United States, Hong Kong, and Japan. In addition to the high volume of Chinese migrants, Australia is reported to have 30% of immigrant population (2nd in the world), where Canada have 21% (3rd in the world) (McAuliffe et al. 2019). Such data suggested that Australia and Canada are considered as the world's leading multicultural society, with a large base of Chinese immigrants, which also indicates a wide-spread adoption of Chinese digital services. Localised services, varied provisions, challenges from local or other international players, these are general problems facing most of digital platforms across the world, especially when they are trying to enter or already operating in an international market (Plantin and Punathambekar 2019). This is even more so in the case of China, where domestic companies are shielded from the Western competitors—a phenomenon that has been termed the 'splinternet' facilitated by the Great Firewall (Miconi 2019), which poses new challenges to global frameworks for online regulations.

In light of the current progress made by News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code, this chapter selects Australia, to examine and cross compare how WeChat and Facebook are regulated in the third country. There are different factors at play regarding this issue:

1. Chinese digital services are permeating Australian businesses. Australia is a major international market for Chinese digital platforms Both Alibaba and Tencent are operating and expanding their services in Australia via Tian Mall (online-shopping store) and WeChat (instant messaging software). For instance, Australia is the third largest international market for Alibaba, following Russia and South East Asia (Brook 2018), and WeChat (the primary service of Tencent) is attracting more and more non-Chinese speaking users, even Australian politicians (Hollingsworth 2019). As a result, more and more Australian businesses are beginning to adopt Alibaba and WeChat to reach their Chinese customers (such as David Jones,

Chemist Warehouse and Destination NSW), and this supports a growing popularity of the use of these Chinese digital services in Australia.

2. Strategic ties between Australia and China. Australia and China have a close economic relationship that extends over to the digital market. Indeed, Chinese internet companies have targeted Australia as a major western market for international expansion (Jing 2016).
3. The Australian digital market is heavily influenced by online services based in both the US and China. Australian market is unique in that it is politically tied to the US, but economically bound to China. In this sense, the world's biggest digital platforms (US and also China based services) are simultaneously playing on this battlefield. The Chinese government holds supreme power over the domestic market (Su 2019), whereas Australia aims to encourage the development of the free market. In comparison, America pursues the ideal of freedom of speech, vacillating between platform regulation and democratic rights of freedom of expression. With the mixture of Chinese and American online services operating within the Australian market, examining platform regulation in Australia will reveal unforeseen challenges and expose risks and opportunities associated with competing regulatory frameworks (Nooren et al. 2018). Therefore, the overarching research question is how to regulate the Chinese and North American digital media in Australia, or alternatively, is there a necessity to regulate Chinese digital services in the Australian market?

THE RISE OF GLOBAL DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Digital platforms like Google, Facebook, Amazon and Alibaba are becoming increasingly central to the global digital economy. These companies are disrupting social, cultural and economic routines on a global scale, via interconnected services known as 'network effects' and economies of scale (Feld 2019). They operate in different political systems and territories, challenging policymakers and regulators alike, where officials are 'almost learning while doing' (Rossotto et al. 2018). As such, traditional regulatory approaches need to be improved to adapt to these challenges.

Numerous countries are trying to work out how to regulate digital platforms. On 3 August 2018, the Australian Competition and Consumer

Commission (ACCC) issued a media release in which it emphasised that the ACCC would ‘increase its enforcement action’ and hold a world-first inquiry into the market power and general corporate behaviour of digital platforms (ACCC 2019). Around the same time, the European Union issued their General Data Protection Regulation in 2016, with legislation commencing in May 2018,¹ while Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg appeared before the US Congress in 2018.² Subsequently, the EU Digital Services Act was released in 2020, and later, US Congress Antitrust report was made available as well, not to mention the strong attitude on Antitrust for Big Tech from the Biden Administration (U.S. House of Representatives 2020).

These digital platforms are being regulated in different parts of the world. As a result, researchers have focused on political systems and pertinent policies as all digital services should operate under the provisions of local laws (Rossotto et al. 2018). For US-based platforms, this means adopting an evasive tactic to circumvent local government regulations, launching push backs under US jurisdictions while evading others in different political contexts. For example, companies like Facebook and Google have been trying to get away with AU regulations through various campaigns and aggressive measures. However, Chinese-based platforms are only starting to deal with the transnational use of their products. China is one of the few countries in the world to have an industry based eco-system similar to the US. This is partly because services like Google, Facebook and Amazon are well-accepted in most countries and are banned from the Chinese market through the Great Firewall (Keane and Su 2018). This particular situation has enabled Chinese market to incubate substitutes of US-generated services and foster local monopolies (Su 2019). But what challenges do Chinese digital services face when they enter the international market, and what does this mean for platform regulation globally?

¹ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).

² BBC, ‘Mark Zuckerberg to appear before Congress’, BBC Tech, 10 April 2018 (Dave Lee) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/technology-43706820/mark-zuckerberg-to-appear-before-congress>; Jennifer Rankin, ‘Mark Zuckerberg to appear before European parliament’, *The Guardian* (online), 17 May 2018 <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/may/16/mark-zuckerberg-facebook-to-give-evidence-at-european-parliament>.

This chapter examines how digital platforms of China and North America are being regulated in Australia, using Facebook and WeChat as case studies. While Facebook and Google have been a regular feature in the Australian market for some time, China is only now becoming a major player in the Australian market. This is due to: strong economic ties between the two countries (Baxter 2019); the size and scale of Chinese immigration in the Australian society (it is the second largest immigration community) (Walsh et al. 2018); and the rapid expansion of Chinese digital platforms in the Australian market (Brook 2018). The comparative framework between Facebook and WeChat will be focused on societal issues created by disinformation, transparency in regard to content moderation, and potential or existing crisis for media diversity. By examining these three aspects of US and China based social networking apps, this research presents a comparative analysis featuring infrastructuralisation, techno-nationalism and civil society, contributing to future discourses of platform regulation in diverse settings.

COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK

WeChat, as a Counterpart or a Different Service

WeChat is the most popular social networking digital service in China, created by Tencent—the world’s 9th internet company by market capitalization, next to Facebook (which ranked 8th as of 2021). Similar to Facebook, WeChat entails features such as messaging, video calling, friends circle (equivalent to ‘Facebook Wall’), and short video sharing. It can be described as ‘a better WhatsApp crossed with social features of Facebook and Instagram, mixed with Skype and a walkie-talkie’ (Plantin and De Seta 2019), or in other words, a ‘super-sticky platform’ or a ‘super app’ (Chen et al. 2018). WeChat however, is in many ways distinct from its Western counterparts, in its capacity of platformization, as well as the establishment of infrastructuralisation. The structure of WeChat follows the logic of platform capitalism, focusing on ‘network effects’ and enclosed business loop, where the ultimate intention is to create a ‘super sticky’ platform, that every user is obsessed with. In addition to WeChat Pay (the third payment application), one of the most successful features would be ‘mini programs’, or in other terms, the idea of ‘apps within an app’ (Chan 2015). This invention empowers WeChat to become a virtual and also physical internet infrastructure in China (speaking to enabling of

government related services, utilities fees, health codes and so on), that goes beyond linked services, and social networking purposes, but rather, as a beholder of various digital apps, with multi-purpose functioning.

A comparative study between Facebook and WeChat will unveil common issues faced by both platforms, and identify similar challenges posed by these digital giants. Through the lenses of infrastructuralisation, techno-nationalism, and civil society, this study will address disinformation, censorship, and platform neutrality to argue for the imperativeness of platform regulation, with particular reference to Chinese digital services operating in international markets.

Disinformation and Infrastructuralisation

One of the consequences of platform power is mistrust in digital services. There is a growing sentiment of mistrust in news, authority, and most of all platforms (Flew et al. 2020). Algorithms for instance, facilitated a personalized feed that constraints one's own worldview via filter bubbles and echo chambers (Napoli 2018). Numerous scholars have explicitly articulated trust issues in news, with one study showing that mistrust in news has increased three percentage points from 24% in 2016 to 27% in 2019 (Park et al. 2020); another stated that news sharing on social media platforms 'has increasingly come to be perceived as a predatory one' (Flew 2020, p. 4). Critics often draw Facebook as an example, pointing to lack of content regulation that lead to livestreaming of the Christchurch, New Zealand mosque massacres (Douek 2020); misconduct of user information as in how they collect, use and trade personal data, such as Cambridge Analytica (Cadwalladr and Graham-Harrison 2018); over-reliance on algorithms that eventually incurred filter bubbles and echo chambers and problematic form of profiting models, where it is distributing established media content with likes of fake news, generating a 'news gap' in between (Flew et al. 2020).

Such a 'news gap' existed on both Facebook and WeChat and there have been calls for joint forces to tackle the issue. Facebook has notoriously been known for its fake news problem, it is catchy, fast spreading and most of all profitable. The fact is, 'disinformation is endemic to digital networks', global platforms such as Facebook and WeChat have become 'the possessor of social deviance online' (Iosifidis and Nicoli 2020). The term 'information warfare' is adopted to describe meddling of elections via disinformation, which normally happens between one country and

their opposing regimes (Iosifidis and Nicoli 2020). Accusations such as the Chinese government seeking to disrupt Australian elections via WeChat, or the Russian government aiming to sabotage UK elections via Facebook, or in other cases, the famous incident of Cambridge Analytica, demonstrated how and why digital platforms are seen as a threat to democracy (Iosifidis and Nicoli 2020). Under this context, disinformation is a common theme (or problem) across digital platforms, one that serves similar aims and needs, despite various means.

To obtain a better understanding of how disinformation functions on WeChat and Facebook, it is essential to look into the infrastructure or business model of these platforms. It is crucial to acknowledge that platforms like Facebook and WeChat are experiencing a dual process of platformization as well as infrastructuralization. Platformization lies in their attempt to centralise business models, while at the same time, amplifying and extending the ‘network effects’, focusing on the ecosystem of platform itself. In comparison, infrastructuralization points to the social impact of platforms, and how this socio-techno availability turned into a traditional mandate of infrastructures (Plantin and De Seta 2019). As users gathered on social media platforms to get and share the news, connect with friends, and update their lives, these internet giants are increasingly becoming an infrastructure that penetrates every aspect of users lives.

Infrastructuralization enlarges issues of disinformation, where reliance upon social media platforms aggravates the phenomenon known as fake news. Facebook has turned into an ‘advertising-driven business model delivered mainly on smartphones’ (Iosifidis and Nicoli 2020), personal information is then being collected and analysed for better advertising results through technologies known as online targeting—the same method that was later used in Cambridge Analytica scandal. This suggests that Facebook could be and almost is a platform that lives on and designed for disinformation. Conversely, WeChat incorporates state and self-regulation, and are more responsive to similar issues. Unlike Facebook where the revenue stream is largely dependent on advertising income, WeChat has found various ways to monetize its service, especially ‘WeChat Pay’—an online payment system with financial services, a one-stop hub for utility fees, government related services, travel expenditures and so on. WeChat is a relatively more private space comparing to Facebook; rather than directly pushing notifications on your personal feed, WeChat has created a separate tab to aggregate information from

official accounts. Additionally, advertising on WeChat Moments, a similar space to Facebook News Feed, was only starting to appear until recently. Therefore, the disparity of their business models, lies in WeChat's ability to support third-party applications, in other words, its affordance as the 'super app', whereas Facebook is overly reliant on data trade and online targeting.

Nevertheless, diversified revenue income fails to prevent disinformation on WeChat, it is still the trickiest and most persistent and prominent problem on the platform, domestically or otherwise. Verifying online news has been a direct way of combating disinformation, where traditional media channels such as CCTV (China Central Television) was constantly releasing news stories to tackle or clarify fake news. However, this process can be problematic in overseas market, where disinformation is raging without proper regulation, and dual attention is yet to be given. The content disseminated on WeChat is not properly monitored, and it is difficult to verify the sources, especially for users who rely solely on the platform for news consumption. Fact-checking, a common set-up in various countries, therefore, has become an important feature for Chinese Australians, which is currently missing or at least inadequate (Chen and Wei 2021). It is challenging and time-consuming 'for Chinese readers in Australia to verify the authenticity of the information', according to the WeChat group creator, who revealed in a news piece, 'every day, members post news to the group', in an attempt to verify the information presented there (Chen and Wei 2021).

Infrastructuralization as well as platformization is reinforcing the imperativeness of platform regulation, especially for companies like Facebook and WeChat. Content regulation and influence on election campaigns associated with Facebook have become a regular topic, and most recently, Australian government compels Facebook and Google to pay for news content, through 'Mandatory News Media Bargaining Code' (Flew et al. 2020). Although tech giants were prepared for a hard fight (threatening to pull back from AU market) (SBS 2021), Australian government were determined as well. It is evident that Australian government is one of the pioneers in regulating these US-based platforms, one move that is closely watched and monitored by governments around the world (Hitch 2020). One notable challenge in the midst of platform regulation by the third country, is political nuance and balance, where a pushback from platform-based country is possible and foreseeable. Even

though in this case, the US government attempted pressure on AU regulation appears to be in vain, it reveals political implications and tensions in regulating global platforms. On that note, any attempts to regulate WeChat would be seen as a direct threat to Chinese central government, one that disrupts censorship and challenges Chinese values.

Censorship and Techno-Nationalism

As of 2019, WeChat has more than 30% registered non-English speaking users, and it has more than 1.5 million monthly Australian users (Kosłowski 2019). The recent election campaigns had put WeChat on the government's radar. Experts realized that compared to western platforms such as Facebook, WeChat has not been properly monitored by the Australian government and it may have unforeseeable impact on the election results (Kosłowski 2019).

One of the de-platforming events happened on WeChat in December 2020, where Australian Prime Minister—Scott Morrison's post, has been deleted due to Chinese allegations of spreading misleading information, the post said: the post of a false image of an Australian soldier does not diminish our respect for and appreciation of our Chinese Australian community or indeed our friendship with the people of China (Johnson 2020). Similarly, Donald Trump is also banned by Twitter and Facebook for disseminating inflammatory material (BBC News 2021). De-platforming has become increasingly mundane in the digital age, it is an effective result of platform as well as government censorship, but the guidelines were considered to be less transparent, and rather mysterious. WeChat users who experienced shut down of account or content removal unveiled that, further explanations are unavailable, except for official responses such as 'according to platform policy' (Li and Shelton 2019).

Transparency is in short supply, especially with regards to the techno-nationalist platform like WeChat, where platform development is heavily dependent on 'compliance-based privilege' (Votmer 2013), meaning infrastructural ambitions should coincide with policy alignment (Plantin and De Seta 2019). In order to comply with national policy, WeChat has adopted mainly two ways to filter online content, that is algorithm, and content moderators, where other studies have termed it as 'auto and human censor' (Yu and Sun 2020). The platform uses algorithms

to conduct key words searching and filtering and use content moderators to eliminate potential sensitive or harmful materials online where necessary. This combination of technology and human moderation is a well-adopted method for platforms like WeChat and Facebook, but WeChat has another layer of content monitoring – the state government.

Facebook is dependent on self-regulation and self-managed content moderation, whereas WeChat is implementing both self and state regulation. Additionally, WeChat has a ‘one platform two systems’ policy, for example, blocking of chat groups normally ended up with shielding domestic users ‘from seeing and posting anything’, but ‘leaving overseas users to chat freely’ (Yu and Sun 2020). This suggested that the government is aware of its heavy-handed approach and negative impact, and therefore is encouraging freedom of speech via lessened censorship, as an attempt to recruit overseas users. Facebook and WeChat happen to be on the opposite side of one extreme, where the former is reluctant to delete anything in fear of jeopardizing freedom of speech (Guess and Lyons 2020), which is written in US constitution, and the latter is afraid of missing anything destabilizing, which aligns with national policy. Facebook has been condemned for its inactions in content regulation, with a direct result of NZ live-streamed massacre, whereas WeChat has been accused of state control and influence, leaving allegiance of overseas Chinese diaspora in question (Harwit 2017).

Facebook and WeChat provide a sharp contrast. As Facebook reluctant to pay for news content in Australia, WeChat subscription account (WSAs) has been restricted from reporting original news. According to ‘Provisions for the Administration of Internet News Information Services’ released in 2017, WeChat subscription account ‘can cite or re-post news items from official or authorised sources or platforms’ but are prohibited from generating original news content unless registered and recognized by Chinese authorities (Yu and Sun 2020). For Australia-focused accounts, this means steer clear from political topic, since it is risky, and not business-wise. However, this has created a paradox, as indicated in the study of Yu and Sun (2020), ‘they (WSAs) are Australian content providers, which serve the Australian local markets, yet they are subject to Chinese platform and content regulations as China-registered accounts’. As a consequence, Facebook in some ways, has fostered disinformation due to lack of censorship, and has resulted in mistrust in news in Australia, whereas WeChat triumphed in censorship, but damaged media diversity on the platform.

Platform Integrity and Civil Society

If disinformation is the manifestation of platform issues, and censorship is a mechanism to tackle the problem, then repercussions or collateral damage would include platform integrity and media diversity. The fundamental debate around these platforms resides in the nature of their businesses, and the social impact. Facebook exhibited enormous power in its fight against Australia's News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code, where the homepage of news institutions had been blocked to all Australian users, in comparison, WeChat exemplifies the techno-nationalist nature, 'negotiates relationship between the civil society and the state' (Tu 2016). Both platforms demonstrated the capacity of jeopardising democratic nature of platforms, and the power of shaping public discourses. Platform integrity is therefore under harsh scrutiny, especially as the boundary blurs between publisher and distributor. Some scholars have hinted that Facebook is a publisher of all but name (Andrews 2019; Langlois et al. 2009).

In contrast, WeChat is not regarded as a publisher due to its inability to create original news (unless registered and recognized by Chinese authorities), but it has been frequently criticized for its omni-present censorship scheme, one that threatens platform integrity and freedom of speech (Ruan et al. 2016; Tu 2016). One of the concerns is that WeChat is creating an information vortex, 'which means that no matter where they live in the world, they still live under the same sets of narrative and the systems of mainland China' (Chen and Wei 2021). This claim is evidenced by previous analysis on subscription accounts, where Australian-focused WeChat subscription accounts are subject to repost and translate of local news (Yu and Sun 2020). However, the idea of information vortex is similar to that of filter bubbles and echo chambers (Chen and Wei 2021)—certain narratives are repeated and strengthened, constituting a limited worldview.

Platform integrity is an essential debate due to undetermined nature of digital platforms (whether it is a publisher or a distributor), whereas media diversity is often overlooked in the process. Much attention has been given to dwindled numbers of legacy media—decreasing of media companies and increasing of media ownership, and media diversity seems to be a long-lasting problem, that is less urgent to attend to. Indeed, Australian media 'has been too white for too long' (Rogers 2020), and media diversity is a serious issue that predates digital media. The tech

giants have exacerbated an imbalance in news distribution, but it would be biased to say they are stealing news content from an already concentrated news market. This suggested that Australian media policy has remained dormant or light-handed where the real damage is inflicted upon quality journalism with concentrated media ownership and a lack of media diversity (Dwyer 2014).

The scope of the News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code, therefore, goes beyond news media, market, and extends to broader digital media landscape at large. The main focus is about traditional media industry, advertising revenue, and algorithm (ACCC 2019), but it should also be about media diversity. That being said, the current Code fails to tackle with media diversity (how it is supporting independent journalism) (Clark and Ketchell 2021), issues of media ownership (restricting power of media monopolies), inclusiveness of the media market and culture (percentage of non-English/English media outlets), but rather sticks to specific guidelines to payment (Beecher 2021). Potentially, the Code could have had an effect on all digital platforms operating in Australia, forcing platforms like WeChat to start weighing media diversity in third countries, and dealing with such issues. Additionally, the Code could have had the chance to facilitate Australian media to establish an integrated media landscape, one that reflects and resonates with this multicultural society.

CONCLUSION

This chapter offered a comparative perspective between Facebook and WeChat and attempts to engage with platform regulation discourses in Australia. Among other well-known issues, this research has focused on disinformation, where the lack of fact-checking has exposed publics to political manipulation, contributing to a contaminated digital public warfare. Disinformation on Facebook is more straightforward and direct, with online targeting functioning on the front page in most cases, conversely, fake news on WeChat tend to spread through personal networks, such as group chat, or moments (a similar function as Facebook page), susceptible to particularly elderly generation.

Disinformation is disseminated via different channels on the two platforms, and censorship is the mechanism in place to tackle such issues. WeChat is more relentless to battle fake news, and Facebook is often caught in a dilemma of benevolent actions, being reluctant to delete items

for fear of limiting freedom of speech. This is due to different cultural as well as political values, but also different regulatory frameworks. WeChat adopted a combination of state and self-regulation, which has proven to be effective in filtering fake news and preventing disinformation, however, this heavy-handed approach is considered to be demolishing against the ideals of democracy and freedom of speech. But more importantly, foreign governments are worried about the way the Chinese government uses WeChat to penetrate their political influence and agenda, and this similar set of scepticism applies to Facebook as well. Ultimately, self-regulation, state censorship, or current regulatory framework are being scrutinized for its necessity and validity.

Setting aside the effectiveness of censorship, WeChat and Facebook has concurrently damaged media diversity, both on a local and global perspective. Scholars have raised concerns about filter bubbles on Facebook (Flaxman et al. 2016), and particularly its impact during election campaigns; similarly, critics worry about ‘information vortex’ on WeChat, and its influence of political agenda and cultural values on Chinese diaspora (Chen and Wei 2021). This phenomenon leads to a slackness of fact-checking mechanisms, where diversified media organizations and news agencies are able to facilitate. WeChat specifically regulates the operation of official subscription accounts domestically and otherwise, with only a few licensed or authority recognized news accounts to report and post original news, suggesting that the majority of news media accounts on WeChat are simply transporting the information, rather than generating them. Therefore, WeChat subscription accounts are running the pilot mode in overseas market, translate and repost other news sources, while steering clear of political pieces and views.

As for Facebook, the News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code has exposed some of the deep-rooted problems in Australian news media, such as concentrated and commercialized media markets, a lack of public interest or independent journalism, and also, the absence of media diversity. In other words, Facebook has jeopardized the traditional news media industry in Australia, but it also intensifies the issue of media diversity, especially in terms of how it fails to represent the multicultural society. A lack of media diversity in Australia pushed Chinese diaspora to seek information elsewhere, and tightened regulation of WeChat subscription accounts prevented local media outlets to break through the ‘information vortex’ (Chen and Wei 2021). At the end, users are trapped or in a way forced to stay on digital media platforms, repeating

filter bubbles and echo chambers, with no other choices. However, News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code could be a historical development to deal with these issues.

Despite a thorough investigation of disinformation, censorship and media diversity, this study has mainly focused on a few issues at hand. Therefore, the viewpoints presented here are restricted due to limited time and space, and a lack of comprehensive examination of regulatory frameworks worldwide. Nevertheless, the overarching argument has been placed upon the conflict and necessity between localized policies and globalized platforms. For Facebook, it is about how to maintain and contribute to media industry and media diversity in the local market, as for WeChat, it is rather about how to encourage, foster or establish the AU-focused news services, as a direct measure to tackle disinformation in overseas market. The News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code is a promising start to a better integrated and regulated internet, but the question remains—to what end, a splintered internet, the four internets (O’Hara and Hall 2018), or else, a connected world?

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