“The Desert is now being flooded”:
A Study of the Emergence of Chinese-language Media in New Zealand

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Abstract

Focusing on the Chinese-language media in New Zealand largely run by the new immigrants since the late 1980s, this study aims to fill the significant gap between the long-time presence of the media in question and the lack of academic study of them.

The thesis starts with a review of relevant literature, and a retrospect of the Chinese-language media and the ethnic Chinese community in New Zealand. A content analysis compares the Chinese-language print media with their mainstream English-language counterparts, emphasising the ethnicity-related reportage on front pages and in editorials. This comparison is extended in the case studies of news stories and editorials. An enhanced and diversified representation of ethnic Asians and more importantly, the Asian (Chinese) perspective in shaping news, are found to be the most salient alternativeness of Chinese-language media in New Zealand. When media identity is examined, it is argued the Chinese-language media exert their alternative input to the formation of New Zealand identity through this Asian (Chinese) perspective. However, the commercial orientation of the Chinese-language media, including the business associations and alliance with elites, has undermined their role as alternative media in a structural sense. The Chinese-language media do not challenge, but rather follow, the existing power relations and ideological infrastructure in media production.

It is concluded that the ‘alternativeness’ of the Chinese-language media is salient in news content and the media’s input in the formation of the New Zealand identity. However, the corporate way of organisation, coupled with the free-of-charge model, undermines the Chinese-language media’s role in democratic communication and their alternative status.
SECTION 1

An Overview
Chapter 1

Preamble

The boom: "The desert is now being flooded"

In 1991, when Malaysian Chinese David Soh initiated the Mandarin Pages Weekly,¹ the first free Chinese-language paper in New Zealand, he probably did not envisage what a boom in this media territory he had actually triggered. Shortly after the Mandarin Pages Weekly, dozens of newspapers followed its free-of-charge model in the pursuit of an ethnic Chinese market. Around the new millennium, broadcasting and online operations have begun. Geographically, this boom is spreading beyond the borders of the Auckland region and expanding to other major urban areas such as Wellington and, more recently, Christchurch.

"The desert is now being flooded", said David Soh (July 28 2004: interview, translation mine), figuratively, and not exaggerating the situation for the Chinese-language media in New Zealand. Currently in Auckland, there are no less than ten newspapers, in addition to several broadcasting and online outlets. In cities with smaller ethnic Chinese populations such as Wellington and Christchurch, there are two or three newspapers and one radio station based in each city. In addition, a few Auckland papers are circulated nationwide, just as non-Auckland papers are. Broadcasting and online outlets also offer greater accessibility to audiences beyond Auckland.

Having reached a numerical pinnacle around 2002, the media in Auckland are experiencing a reshuffle. On the one hand, the year 2004 saw the commencement of an Auckland-based radio station broadcasting on three frequencies, and more conspicuously, the Mandarin Pages become the first free Chinese-language daily

¹ The newspaper was titled the Mandarin Times from 1996 to 2004, and adopted the name Mandarin Pages later.
in New Zealand. On the other hand, several media outlets, mostly newspapers, were casualties of fierce market competition. The media outside Auckland, however, are just gaining momentum, presenting a different picture. A few newspapers have just emerged, coupled with more print media outlets either increasing their publication frequency or changing from tabloids into broadsheets.²

This proliferation of the Chinese-language media since the milestone year 1991 certainly finds its roots in the soil of the Chinese-speaking community in New Zealand. Ever since the introduction of a new immigration scheme structured to attract immigrants of all races in 1986, the Chinese population in New Zealand has almost doubled in every five years. Up from 19,506 in 1986, it leaped to 44,793 in 1991, 81,309 in 1996 and 104,580 in the year 2001. This momentum is mostly pushed up by the incoming of the so-called ‘new immigrants’³, who are middle-class people qualifying for permanent residence status because of either their investments or skills. The explosion of the Chinese population in New Zealand from the watershed year 1986 onwards presents a sharp contrast with its slow increase from the end of Second World War, and an even sharper contrast with the stagnancy from the mid-nineteenth century till the 1930s. Moreover, this community will be even more populous if Chinese visitors and students in New Zealand are included, which numbered 74,329 and 44,700 respectively in 2004. Merely seen from the population base, they are indispensable in the discussion of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand.

At a broader level, New Zealand’s ethnic Asian group, inclusive of Chinese, has undergone a rapid expansion since 1986 as well. The year 2001 saw the population of ethnic Asians overtake that of Pacific Peoples, with numbers of 272,000 and 231,801 respectively. Now the third-largest ethnic group after

² For details, see the ‘Snapshot’ section in Chapter 3 of mapping the Chinese-language media in New Zealand.
³ For the conceptualisation of ‘new immigrants’, see Appendix 1: thesis terminologies.
Europeans and Maori, the Asian population is expected to reach 604,000 by 2021, that is, 13 percent of the New Zealand population, up from 7 percent in 2001. The Chinese, in particular, have been the main element in this ethnic Asian influx. Chinese are the largest Asian ethnic group, comprising 44 percent of the Asian population and 3 percent of the total New Zealand population in 2001. Of all the ethnic Asian groups, the Chinese community experienced the sharpest increase in population between 1991 and 2001, up 59,787 or 133 percent. In the metropolis of Auckland, the Chinese population is now equivalent to that of Maori at 8 percent of the total population (www.aucklandcity.govt.nz, 2004).

The objective: filling the significant gap

This rising profile of the Chinese-language media as well as its community has drawn some mainstream media attention. As early as in 1994, for instance, the programme Asia Dynamic (1994) on TV1, now named Asia Down Under, aired a documentary focusing on eight “regular Chinese commercial publications” in Auckland. When analyzing the advertising market for ethnic media in New Zealand, The AdMedia (August 2004) identified the New Zealand Mirror, a Christchurch-based Chinese-language paper, as a successful example in attracting mainstream advertising dollars. 168.co.nz, an Auckland-based website mainly in Chinese, was among the top 10 New Zealand Business Information Websites listed by the Marketing Magazine (2004). In a more significant way, the Chinese-language media are beginning to exert their own inputs to the entrenched news processing of mainstream media. Just to name one, the New Zealand Mirror’s reports on South of Equator LTD, an immigration agency allegedly charging Chinese students extortionate amounts of money for fake documents, were repeatedly cited by The Press (Aug 7, 2004; Aug 9, 2004) stories.

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4 Except other specified, for figures in this paragraph and the previous one, see: Statistics New Zealand (2001), Census 2001, [online] www.stats.govt.nz
Academic preoccupations on the Chinese-language media in New Zealand, however, have been comparatively scarce. Manying Ip (2003a) touches on the Chinese-language media produced by Taiwanese immigrants dominating the Chinese-language media territory at the early stage of the new immigrants era in the 1990s. She notes that the major print and broadcasting media outlets are run by Taiwanese, whose immigration to New Zealand during the new immigration wave predates that of Mainland Chinese. Even more retrospectively, James Ng (1997) and Nigel Murphy (1997) trace the origins and early history of Chinese-language newspapers from 19th century onwards. Chinese publications are reviewed in light of print cultures of various ethnic groups in New Zealand.

As far as the research on the ethnic Chinese community in New Zealand is concerned, priority has been given to historical aspects. James Ng (2001a), for instance, has studied the settlement of New Zealand Chinese through family stories. Similarly, a review of Chinese political groups in early twentieth century by Kirsten Wong (2003) is intertwined with the Chun Family story. Together with others, Nigel Murphy's probe on the poll tax issue linked to early Chinese immigrants suffering the then discriminatory policies, contributed to the government’s formal apology to the Chinese community in 2002 (Murphy 1995;1997;2003a, also see www.stevenyoung.co.nz(a)).

Soon after the advent of the new immigration era, there has been a “mini-boom in research and publications” on the ethnic Chinese in New Zealand, especially on the new immigrants (Murphy, 2003b: 287). Ip (2003b: xv) famously examines the transnationalism in the new immigration era, which involves high mobility of “cross-border flows of capital, commodities, people and ideas”. Chinese new immigrants are given the appellation “untapped talents” by Henderson (2003) due to their high unemployment rate in New Zealand, despite their techniques and skills. Such traits of Chinese new immigrants as ‘transnationalists’ and ‘untapped talents’, are amongst the most important socioeconomic catalysts for
the revival of the Chinese-language media in the 1990s, which is to be discussed in detail in Chapter 3 which maps the Chinese-language media in New Zealand.

Overall, the literature on the ethnic Chinese community in New Zealand echoes what King and Wood (2001: 2-3) find when generalizing media and migration studies:

The migration studies literature – which has been growing extremely rapidly in recent years – is curiously silent on the role of the media. A perusal of the key texts which have been published in the last few years reveals that practically no attention has been paid to media issues…Migration tends to be objectified as a time-span event or process which is largely to be explained in economic, demographic or sociological terms and linked to issues of employment, development, population redistribution, class formation and the creation of ethnic communities.

What stands in the way of more academic preoccupations on the media issues is literacy-related. Scholars may not be literate enough in the Chinese-language to fathom this ‘inscrutable’ subject area, while Chinese is most commonly used by Chinese new immigrants. Presumably, another obstacle is the newness of the Chinese-language media and ultimately, of the Chinese-speaking community. This simply means tardiness in social recognition and academic attention (for instance, see Tsagarousianou 2001: 159), and perhaps the media/community itself being too under-resourced to be researcher-friendly. Plenty of room is now left open for more studies of Chinese-language media in New Zealand.

In the first place, this research aims to enhance the study of the Chinese-speaking

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5 As an overseas Chinese student in New Zealand as well as a member of the Chinese-speaking community, I myself have been accumulating certain empirical experiences for an academic scrutiny of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand. Inevitable difficulties exist, however. I am comparatively new here in New Zealand. At the time of writing, I have stayed for just a bit more than one year and a half in New Zealand. Meanwhile most of my time is spent studying in Christchurch, not Auckland, where most Chinese-language media outlets are found. However, these disadvantages are mitigated as much as possible, by virtue of wide contacts with associated people, such as media practitioners, organization leaders, government officials and scholars. Findings via formal interviews in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch are incorporated in the thesis.
community in New Zealand. After all, as communication holds together communities (Berger, 1995: 10, cited by Hong Qiu, 2003: 149), mass media stand out as helpful way of understanding the community in which they reside and serve. In the media's own right, it is also important to study the recent emergence of the Chinese-language media, because of all the newness, vibrancy and uncertainty it has to offer as a research subject. The need to step into this territory becomes even more pressing when one notices that little academic attention has been given systematically to the Chinese-language media per se.

By focusing on the current Chinese-language media in New Zealand largely run by the new immigrants since the late 1980s, the study aims to capture more contemporary and representative pictures of the Chinese-speaking community, and tries to fill the significant gap between the ascending presence of the Chinese-language media and the absence of research on them. Furthermore, a study on the Chinese-language media in a multi-cultural New Zealand would enrich the study of New Zealand media as a whole.

Chapter Arrangement
The thesis is composed of four sections. Section 1, namely the next two chapters, aims to give an overview for the whole study by reviewing literature and facts relevant to Chinese-language media in New Zealand. Section 2 compares the Chinese-language print media with their mainstream counterparts in journalistic aspects such as media content and individual news stories. Section 3 details the idiosyncrasies of the Chinese-language media such as their dynamics in identity consciousness. The commercial orientation of the Chinese-language media is discussed as well, before the final conclusions are drawn and predictions made in section 4.

To start with, the literature review in Chapter 2 covers four aspects concerned with the study on the Chinese-language media in New Zealand. Firstly, the
literature on overseas Chinese throughout the world is reviewed, against which the New Zealand story can be pinpointed in a global setting. Secondly, the focus ‘zooms-in’ to look closely at the study of overseas Chinese in New Zealand. Thirdly, literature on overseas Chinese-language media, as well as the representation of overseas Chinese by the mainstream media in the host countries, is examined. Finally, the limited literature, particularly on the Chinese-language media in New Zealand, is discussed. Theoretical ideas about alternative media and imagined community are introduced as well.

Chapter 3 expands the brief introduction of the Chinese-language media with which this thesis opened. A timeline from the early 1920s to the present day is drawn for the Chinese-language media in New Zealand, in relation to the history of the ethnic Chinese community. Reasons why there has been a revival of the media since the 1990s are discussed. What follows is a highlight of important contemporary media outlets, in order to make concrete what exactly the term ‘Chinese-language media in New Zealand’ entails.

A series of content analyses in Chapter 4 aims to discover the journalistic traits of the Chinese-language media through a comparison with their mainstream counterparts. On the one hand, content analyses of front page stories are made, on the other, analyses of the editorials. The benefits of doing this is that people familiar with either type of media, be it ethnic Chinese or mainstream, can be expected to better understand the other through the bridge of comparison. Moreover, statistics reveal in a straightforward way the journalistic similarities and differences of media in the comparison.

This comparison is continued in Chapter 5 with case studies of news stories. An emphasis is put on the alternative perspectives of the Chinese-language media in explaining local New Zealand issues. This qualitative part of the case studies complements the previous quantitative chapter of content analyses. Both chapters
aim to explore the similarity and uniqueness the Chinese-language media have, when compared with the mainstream English-language media. The focal point, though, is how the media in question represent the Asian (Chinese) community and shape the reportage of general issues with an alternative perspective.

Across the next two chapters the idiosyncrasies of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand are discussed. Chapter 6 examines Chinese-language media in New Zealand according to their identity dynamics. The media in question are classified into three categories, namely: China’s media in New Zealand; New Zealand media in the Chinese-language; and the Chinese-language media of New Zealand, which stand in the middle ground of the first two opposites. Meanwhile, under examination are the media’s conflicting political orientations. There are Mainland-China-focused and Taiwan-focused outlets, anti-communism and pro-communism outlets, in addition to more eclectics. Conclusions are reached that the Chinese-language media’s variations in the sense of identity and ideologies mirror a diverse and dynamic Chinese-speaking community in New Zealand.

Chapter 7 deals with the commercial orientation of the Chinese-language media. It is argued that the commercial background, notwithstanding sustaining the Chinese-language media financially, has in effect compromised their journalistic quality and role in democratic communication. This ethos is embedded in the ideals of alternative media, to which the Chinese-language media arguably belong.

In the concluding chapter, an attempt is made to explore the factors which determine the way the Chinese-language media may evolve in the near future. Before that, the empirical part of this study is revisited, focusing on the extent to which the Chinese-language media qualify as alternative media.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

A study of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand stands at the intersection of several inter-related angles, which are explored in the following literature review. First of all, literature on 'overseas Chinese' is looked at. The New Zealand story of overseas Chinese and media is an integral part of a global process. In this light, the study of Chinese diaspora and media worldwide is introduced in order to contextualize the story in New Zealand. Each section begins by outlining facts, be they historical or contemporary, to pave the way for the discussion that follows. The only exception is the second part, under the subheading of “Overseas Chinese in New Zealand”. The history of Chinese people in New Zealand is skipped there deliberately to be fitted into the following chapter’s retrospect of Chinese-language media in New Zealand. Finally, the notions of alternative media and imagined community are introduced.

**Overseas Chinese**

Although Chinese emigration in a general sense dates back more than 1000 years, the large wave of emigration did not take place until mid-19th century after China’s defeat of the First Opium War. The following 100 years saw 10 million Chinese emigrate, many of which were indentured labourers. The second significant wave occurred after the Second World War, and is still underway. According to Qiu Liben (2002: 41), four million people have emigrated from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau and Southeast Asia in this period. Compared with their predecessors, they are better-off, with entrepreneurial, technical and cultural capital. Among them, mainland Chinese migrants are less numerous and more recent (Qiu Liben, 2002: 41).
The current population of overseas Chinese is estimated to be some 35 million (Qiu Liben, 2002: 52; Dan Cun, 2002: 192).\(^1\) Dispersed in more than 150 countries worldwide, the vast majority of overseas Chinese (80 per cent) are found to be in Asia, South East Asia in particular. Second to Asia is America, with 15 per cent, then Europe with 2.8 per cent. Oceania is not a significant destination for overseas Chinese, with only 1.7 per cent of the overseas Chinese population. The smallest percentage (0.4 per cent) is found in Africa.

*Hua Ren*, *Hua Qiao*, or *Chinese Diaspora*?

In mainland China, the terms *Hua Qiao* and *Hua Ren* have been used to denote overseas Chinese, either in official or academic discourse. *Hua Qiao* means overseas Chinese citizens, or rather, Chinese sojourners overseas. *Hua Ren*, which literally means Chinese persons, actually connotes foreign citizens of Chinese origin or ancestry. A term initially applied by Qing government officials at the turn of the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century to promote “an intense identification with China among the Chinese overseas”, *Hua Qiao* is a “political and ideological construction” of rising Chinese nationalism (Wing Chung Ng, 1998: 203). However, since the 1950s, more and more overseas Chinese have forsaken their Chinese nationality and have become naturalized as citizens of their resident countries. With *Hua Ren* outnumbering *Hua Qiao* and becoming commonplace for overseas Chinese,\(^2\) it is increasingly argued that this dichotomy of *Hua Qiao* and *Hua Ren*, especially the term *Hua Qiao*, is outmoded. For instance, in discussing the acculturation of overseas Chinese in South East Asia countries, Chen Zhiming (2002) argues that the title *Hua Qiao* is now inaccurate, although it used to be correct historically. The fact is that overseas Chinese in South East Asia are largely citizens of the country of residency. Especially for the younger generation born overseas, China is no longer the mother country. Under such

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\(^1\) At times, non-Chinese scholars count Chinese in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan as overseas Chinese as well. That is why the population is said to be 55 million, rather than 35 million. See Karim H. Karim (2003: 5) for example.

\(^2\) It is estimated by Zhou Yu’e and Dai Fan (2002: 337) that *Hua Ren* make up 80 to 90 per cent of all overseas Chinese.
circumstances, the terms *Hua Ren* and *Hua Yi* (the overseas-born descendants of *Hua Ren*) seem more effective in signifying "the Chinese background of the person without signifying any cultural and political orientation of this individual" (Wing Chung Ng, 1998: 203).

Whether *Hua Qiao* is out of date is less important; what the dichotomy of *Hua Qiao* and *Hua Ren* implies is an egotism to always place China (*Hua*) as the core, while overseas Chinese are categorized according to their distance from that imagined core. *Hua Qiao* is closer while *Hua Ren* is further away, but metaphorically both are conceived as planets orbiting around the fixed star of China. This China-centred mentality inevitably plays down the nuanced idiosyncrasies of overseas Chinese and thus tends to be simplistic. It also rules out the possibility that overseas Chinese can have multiple cores to identify with and orbit around, and that overseas Chinese could be the fixed star themselves.³ Chen Zhiming (2002: 232), a Malaysian-Chinese scholar, suggests discarding the term ‘overseas’ when Chinese of a certain locality outside China are mentioned. For example, “overseas Chinese in Hawaii” should be replaced by “Hawaiian Chinese” (ibid., translation mine). Chen Zhiming’s proposal exemplifies a significant shift from the China-centred orientation, which constitutes an alternative perspective to the binary of *Hua Qiao* and *Hua Ren*.

Outside mainland China, however, the dichotomy of *Hua Qiao* and *Hua Ren* is resolved by the term Chinese diaspora. In its classic sense, the term diaspora (literally meaning a scattering of seeds) refers to the Jews forced into exile from their homeland. The historical connotation, such as the loss of homeland, rootlessness, expulsion and oppression, has given way to the more modern usage

³ For instance, Wang Gungwu (2002) argues there have been three tiers of cultural centres overseas Chinese can identify with. Mainland China comes as the primary and most legitimate centre. Hong Kong and Taiwan are the sub-centres. Localized and contextualized, the third cultural centre is a combination of Chinese-ness and local cultures. Singapore and California are such prime examples. Wang Gungwu argues that the three-tiered cultural centres are in process. The sub- and third tiers are probably becoming more salient, in that Wang Gungwu notes that two generations of overseas Chinese have been raised without identifying with China as their cultural centre in the past 50 years.
of the same term (Laurence J.C. Ma, 2003). Diaspora in later modernity have become more noticeable in their supermobility, flows of capital, multiculturalism, ethnicity and religion (Laurence J.C. Ma, 2003; Tsagarousianou, 2001).

At first glance, the term diaspora appears unbecoming for Chinese overseas. The rationale partly rests on the fact that overseas Chinese are a tiny minority of the ethnic Chinese as a whole (Skeldon, 2003). According to Qiu Liben (2002: 53), the current overseas Chinese only count as the equivalent of 2.7 per cent of China’s population, while the equivalents for traditional emigration countries are much higher. Overseas Italians, for example, number the equivalent of 87 per cent of Italy’s population. For France, it is 37 per cent. However, the term diaspora has been used more broadly and boldly to cover unconventional migration groups such as Chinese. For instance, Hong Qiu (2003: 148) terms the recent Chinese overseas students as “knowledge diasporas”. Scholars in China, though, are reluctant to use ‘diaspora’ when talking about overseas Chinese (for instance, see Li Yiyuan, 2002; Hong Yuhua and Wu Wenhuang, 2002). Hua Qiao and Hua Ren (Hua Yi) are still the most commonly used terms.

The notion of Chinese diaspora has the advantage of incorporating Chinese migrants into the world context. Qiu Liben (2002) contends that the Chinese diaspora since the 19th century is part of capitalist processes (flows of free labourers) and thus should be re-evaluated in a world context. This is an important counter-balance to the China-centric dichotomy mentioned earlier. More important from this thesis’s point of view is that the incorporation of the notion of diaspora facilitates discussion on issues such as transnationalism, ethnicity and cultural identity, while the dichotomy of Hua Qiao and Hua Ren is stronger when dealing with the relationship between the overseas Chinese groups with China.
The “Three Treasures”

Studies of overseas Chinese in various countries reveal something in common in terms of the maintenance of Chinese identity. The societal infrastructure for maintaining Chinese-ness among overseas Chinese is constructed by what is called “three treasures” (San Bao), namely, Chinese organisations, Chinese-language schools and Chinese-language media (Yasui Sankichi, 1998; Zhu Huiling, 1998). In addition, Ip (2003c: 355) adds that religious institutions, such as the Chinese Christian churches, Buddhist temples and Taoist temples, also serve in the embodiment and maintenance of what it means to be Chinese. Through all these institutions, Chinese-language is taught, Chinese culture is celebrated and Chinese people are socialised as a cohesive group. Missions carried out by each ‘treasure’ may overlap. Organizations can socialise people, distribute Chinese-language newspapers, and run language sessions. Language schools have similar functions. When it comes to media, they are becoming a most powerful way of social liaison, and more than that, they educate people in language literacy and culture virtuosity. All in all, it is these social agencies which embed the Chinese heritage in people’s daily practices.

There has been a lack of attention to media, however. Generally, the existing scholarship on overseas Chinese mainly falls upon the following aspects: history (C. Cindy Fan, 2003; David Chuenyan Lai, 2003), archaeology (Cartier, 1998), individuals (Zhou Nanjing, 1998; 2002), culture, identity and ethnicity (Wang Gungwu, 2002; Liu Hong, 2002; Chen Zhi Ming, 2002; Li Minghuan, 1998; Zhu Huiling, 1998), demography (Li Minghuan, 2002), economics (You-tien Hsing, 2003; Palanca, 2002), politics (Lary, 1998; Liang Yingming, 2002), religion (Garland Liu, 1998), and transnationalism (Ip, 2003c; Pe-Pua et al, 1998). Although the list goes on, there is an overall lack of the media’s perspective in tackling overseas Chinese-related issues. This is despite the comparative wealth of literature on issues of culture, identity and ethnicity, upon which Chinese-language media can impact significantly.
Overseas Chinese in New Zealand

Generally, the study of overseas Chinese in New Zealand is not as substantial as that in America, Europe and South East Asia. In contrast to the popularity of Asian American studies as previously mentioned by C. Cindy Fan (2003), Asian study programmes are solely focused on Asia, and fail to connect Asians already living in New Zealand. This is despite the substantial percentage of Chinese in New Zealand’s population (3 per cent), far higher than that of America (1 per cent), Holland (0.82 per cent) and Britain (0.42 per cent).

So far, a most important anthology on overseas Chinese in New Zealand is *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*. Largely from an insider’s view, Ip et al (2003) cover a variety of issues about New Zealand Chinese. The book covers the history from the very inception of Chinese immigration in the gold rush of the 1860s, to the more recent trend of skilled and affluent immigrants since the late 1980s. Aspects discussed include:

A) The vicissitudes of the early Chinese community which bore the brunt of discriminatory legislation and policies;

B) The struggle of early and recent Chinese migrants to subsist; and

C) The diverse nature of the Chinese community due to different places of origin, such as Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

The website “Chinese in New Zealand” (www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/) is an important researchers’ community online. It is also the most cited one on the topic of Chinese in New Zealand (www.stevenyoung.co.nz (b), 2003). Various disciplines are applied, and historical as well as contemporary issues are pondered upon in the contributions to this website. Overall, the discussions privilege historical perspectives. Altogether, culture, identity, politics, literature and arts, gender study and history are given both academic and non-academic
scrutiny in this website, with content “biased towards the Chinese who have been in New Zealand for several generations” (www.stevenyoung.co.nz (b), 2003).

**Overseas Chinese and media**

*Overseas extension of China’s media?*

The Chinese-language media’s history of nearly 200 years is documented in Cheng Manli’s (2001) work. Cheng contends the *Chinese Monthly Magazine* (*Cha shi shu mei yue tong ji zhuang*) was the first Chinese-language periodical overseas. It was founded by a British missionary, Robert Morrison, in 1815 at Malacca in Malaysia. Targeted at Chinese readers for evangelistic purposes, it heralded a series of religious Chinese-language publications worldwide. Among them, there was *Jin San Ri Zhi Lu*, the first overseas Chinese-language newspaper in the strict sense. Founded in San Francisco in 1854, this weekly catered for the local Chinese, who were mainly indentured gold mining workers. According to Fang Hanqi (2001), there are approximately 4,245 newspapers, more than 30 online publications, 60 radio stations and 35 television stations in 54 countries around the world today.

Cheng Manli (2001: 146) notes that a fundamental change in the nature of overseas Chinese-language media has taken place since the 1950s. More and more overseas Chinese chose to be naturalized and became citizens of their country of residency. In mainland China’s terminology, *Hua Qiao* were gradually replaced by *Hua Ren*. Accordingly, Chinese-language media outlets run by the same people of different political identities were no longer technically the ‘China persons’ media overseas’ (*Hua Qiao* media), but foreigners’ media in Chinese-language (*Hua Ren* Media). Hence, there was a change of media focus from China’s issues to local ones. The value of the dichotomy of *Hua Qiao* and *Hua Ren* media lies in discerning various overseas Chinese-language media according to their Chinese identities. *Hua Qiao* retain a stronger bond with China than *Hua Ren*, therefore this approach is nicely positioned to infer that media by
the former would be more China-focused. This dichotomy is largely applicable in a South East Asia context, where the state often exercises tighter controls over media and has stringent regulations leading towards the naturalization of *Hua Qiao*. However, this may not be the case in more multiculture-tolerant and liberal countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia (Cheng Manli, 2001: 148). In these countries, *Hua Qiao* media are not necessarily closer to China in their stances, while media owned by *Hua Ren* may still retain a strong China focus. Therefore, under the dichotomy of *Hua Qiao* and *Hua Ren*, exceptions also tend to be neglected and a vast diversity of overseas Chinese-language media in terms of political and cultural orientations is overlooked. Besides, it is technically impractical to tell if the media owners are *Hua Qiao* or *Hua Ren*.

This egotism implied in the dichotomy of *Hua Qiao* and *Hua Ren* in denoting overseas Chinese, as argued previously, is once again mirrored in media territory in Cheng Manli's (2001: 322) conclusion that overseas Chinese-language media are an extension of China's media, and there is always a centripetal force binding them firmly to their motherland. This simplification of the overseas Chinese-language media as an extension is somehow arrogant. Yet Cheng’s points are representative of the traditional views held by China’s scholars that overseas Chinese-language media are China’s cultural extension, represented and reinforced by the Chinese language. At best, overseas Chinese-language media may even serve ideological and economic purposes by elevating China’s international prestige and attracting overseas investment to China respectively. Overseas Chinese-language media can therefore be likened to a two-way conduit, allowing the flow of China’s information globally on the one hand, and drawing overseas investment interest to China on the other.

Once again, this over-concentration on China in studying overseas Chinese language-media was echoed in the recent Forum of Global Chinese Language Media. Representatives from 150 Chinese-language media outlets in more than
30 countries, their counterparts in mainland China and scholars attended the symposia in the city of Changsha, 2003. The forum had generated literature pertaining to contemporary issues of overseas Chinese-language media. According to the forum’s official website, five topics were highlighted:

A) New tendencies in the development of overseas Chinese-language media;
B) How the partnership between overseas Chinese-language media and their China counterparts can be fostered;
C) How overseas Chinese-language media can speed up their development by making the best of China’s economic growth;
D) How overseas Chinese-language media can report China in an objective, comprehensive and complete manner; and
E) The relationship between overseas Chinese-language media and the mainstream media in the host countries.  

At least three of these five aspects are directly related to China. Little attention though, was given to overseas Chinese-language media in their own right, let alone what China’s media can learn from their overseas equivalents.

*The Trichotomy: right, left and middle*

In addition to the dichotomy of *Hua Qiao* and *Hua Ren*, another common way employed by China’s scholars to classify overseas Chinese-language media is the ideological trichotomy of the so-called left-wing, right-wing and the middle-ground. For instance, Cheng Manli (2001: 153-4) reveals that long after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, the overseas Chinese-language media territory had been dominated by right-wing media, namely the pro-Taiwan media. This dominance, however, has been undermined since the late 1970s when China took up the reformation and opened its gateway.

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to the world. With more and more emigrants from mainland China, pro-mainland China media, that is, left-wing media, as well as media of a mild standpoint, have abounded. This leads Cheng to conclude that overseas Chinese-language media are now nearly equally controlled by the triad of the left-wing, right-wing and the neutral.

While it is undeniable that this classification, if not a stereotype, is politicised and simplistic, it is useful for evaluating the editorial/political standpoints of overseas Chinese-language media. At least in New Zealand, the trichotomy is still highly effective when it comes to identifying the media’s political stances on China’s issues.\(^5\)

In a nutshell, a literature review of the study of overseas Chinese-language media in China reveals a China centricity exemplified by the forementioned dichotomy and trichotomy in labeling overseas Chinese-language media. Despite being viable to some extent, this China-centred mindset inevitably plays down the nuanced idiosyncrasies of overseas Chinese-language media and thus tends to be simplistic.

"The Periphery as the centre"\(^6\)

In contrast to China’s study of overseas Chinese-language media, the overseas approach tends to be more localised and multi-faceted. The periphery of the “cultural China” is now studied in its own light as if it is the centre. Following this approach, the study of overseas Chinese-language media is not necessarily intertwined with China’s issues, rather more weight is put on the features of individual locales.

Hong Qiu (2003) examines online magazines of overseas Chinese students in

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\(^5\) This is to be expanded in detail in Chapter 6 of the dynamics of media identity.

\(^6\) The phrase comes originally from Tu Wei-ming (1991).
North America. These digital magazines endeavour to build a virtual community by mobilizing Chinese culture, national identity and community awareness. Overseas students, in addition to other sojourners, are indispensable in the discussion of overseas Chinese-language media. They are numerous, not just in New Zealand, but on a global level. More than 700,000 Chinese have studied overseas since the year 1978. In 2003 alone, there were more than 110,000 overseas Chinese students (MOEPRC, 2004). Moreover, an important component of the “knowledge diasporas”, these students are in sound possession of the cultural and technical capitals required to run media of their own, notwithstanding their lack of other resources such as working staff and operating budgets (Hong Qiu, 2003). Cheng Manli (2001) also regards overseas Chinese student media as part of the ‘new immigrant media’, because realistically, overseas students and new immigrants are hardly discernable.

However, the academic literature on overseas Chinese-language media is found to be limited. More often than not, media of the following diaporic groups, other than Chinese, seem to be of greater interest for scholars: Indians (Ray, 2003; Gillespie, 2000), Middle Easterners (Naficy, 2003; Hassanpour, 2003; Sreberny, 2000), Spanish (De Santis, 2003), Turkish (Aksoy and Robins, 2003) and Vietnamese (Cunningham and Nguyen, 2003). Despite its net population of over 30 million, the Chinese diaspora is yet to attract much academic attention.

There are times when Chinese new immigrants are not examined as media practitioners but as consumers. Lee (2001), for instance, observes the satellite television watching behaviors of Hong Kong migrants (political exiles who are concerned with the 1997 handover) in Britain. Various audience responses to the televised handover of Hong Kong to mainland China in 1997 on satellite television are observed and compared, only to display the complexity of their sense of identity. It should be noted though that Lee’s study is not concentrated on transnational media per se, but rather on migrants themselves. However, it
indicates an important fact about overseas Chinese-language media. They are not geographically delimited but rather accessible in a global setting today. Globally penetrating are satellite television, online publications, and even newspapers. Therefore, this study’s focus on the Chinese-language media which are based and operated locally in New Zealand, does not mean to suggest that they are without their international counterparts which are also accessible in New Zealand.

Finally, the representation of overseas Chinese in mainstream media discourse, appeals to researchers. This signifies a shift of angle, turning from diaspora media and transnational media to the ethnic aspect (Sreberny, 2000; Naficy, 2003). Van Dijk (1991) has spearheaded this field of study. A comparison between the British and Dutch mainstream print media on the reportage of ethnic minority groups, Chinese included, reveals various levels of reproduction of what is termed “elite racism”. Van Dijk famously examines the subtle elite racism of the press through content analyses. By exploring the distribution of news topics on ethnic minority issues, Van Dijk discloses that:

Minorities continue to be associated with a restricted number of stereotypical topics, such as immigration problems, crime, violence (especially ‘riots’), and ethnic relations (especially discrimination), whereas other topics, such as those in the realm of politics, social affairs, and culture are under-reported (Van Dijk, 1991:245).

This ‘reproduction of racism’ does not stop at the print media. Gandy (1998) contends that the whole mass media are at work. Gandy reviews critiques on the representation of ethnic minorities by various media, namely, news media, film and television fiction, and advertising. Likewise, Suk-Tak Tam (1998) reviews the representations of ‘the Chinese’ and ‘ethnicity’ in British racial discourse, including official reports and media coverage. The discourse’s stress on the

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7 In New Zealand, there are a few satellite television providers offering programmes made in places such as mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. A few newspapers not only have online editions but also provide overseas subscription services and offer give-aways at government agencies in China.

8 See clause “Chinese-language media in New Zealand” in Appendix 1: thesis terminologies. In Chapter 6 of the dynamics of media identity, the “international counterparts” are referred to as “China’s media in New Zealand”.
‘voluntaristic’ separateness of the Chinese community in Britain based on the assumed ‘naturalness’ of cultural differences, masks “the complexity of Chinese social and cultural organization and the importance of the structural inequalities that shape Chinese people’s lives” (Suk-Tak Tam, 1998: 88).

Thus far, three levels of literature have been reviewed around Chinese and media study overseas. The study on the representation of ethnic minorities by mainstream media tends to be critical whereas the study of diasporic/ethnic and transnational media tends to be analytical. A three-tiered structure on overseas Chinese and media takes shape as follows:

![Figure 2.1: Diaspora and Media](image)

The depiction of the diaspora (as ethnic minorities) by mainstream media constitutes the bottom level. The consumption of transnational media by diaspora or exiles lies in the middle. At the topmost level, there is the media run by the diaspora themselves. As the level goes up, the number of media outlets and the vulnerability of the diaspora decrease while their initiative and input to media increase. The diaspora are most vulnerable to mainstream media which, according to Van Dijk (1991), are central in the reproduction of elite racism. When diaspora consume media introduced from their original countries, however,
their relationship with the media seems more equal yet remote, because what they consume is something that appeals to them but is neither specifically produced for them nor directly concerned with them. More importantly, they as consumers of media content have no control whatsoever on the media they consume. This dilemma only dissolves at the highest level, that is, the diaspora media, which are not only concerned with them, but owned by them. The status of the diaspora, then, rises from being vulnerable (being misrepresented) to being passive (being catered for), and finally to being active (being the owners) in the three-tiered structure of media power relations.

**Chinese-language media in New Zealand**

In profiling the Taiwanese community in New Zealand, Ip (2003a) touches upon the Taiwanese’s “total dominance” of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand. Ip noted that the major players of each sector of the Chinese-language media were invariably Taiwanese. The only paid-for daily newspaper, the only full-time radio station, as well as the only full-time television station were all Taiwanese-owned. Ip attributes this phenomenon to the economic wealth, political awareness and social mindset of the Taiwanese community in New Zealand. Such characteristics of the Taiwanese are in sharp contrast to the apolitical Hong Kongers and mainland Chinese. This also reminds people of the diversified nature of the Chinese-speaking community in New Zealand. Although this Taiwanese-dominating-the-media-scape scenario remains by and large the same at the time of writing, what Ip does not mention is the growing number of media outlets owned by mainland Chinese.\(^9\) Ip (2003c: 355) then juxtaposes the Chinese-language media with the Chinese Christian churches, Buddhist temples, Taoist temples, and place-of-origin Chinese associations in New Zealand. All are socially constructed efforts to enhance “Chinese identity and a sense of pride in Chinese culture”. This juxtaposition is important in realizing the role played by

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\(^9\) The continuous influx of new immigrants from mainland China is changing the mediascape in New Zealand. It is to be discussed in detail in the following chapter’s profile of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand.
the Chinese-language media, among others, in the social construction and maintenance of Chinese identity and culture.

From a historical perspective, Murphy (1997) traces the origins of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand back to the 1920s. Surprisingly though, there were handwritings, correspondence, handwritten newspaper, overseas Chinese newspapers and magazines in New Zealand as early as the 19th century. Yet Chinese-language newspapers in the strict sense did not come into being until the 1920s. Details of Murphy’s work on Chinese-language media will be dealt with in the next chapter whereby a chronicle of Chinese-language media is compiled. To wrap up, Murphy’s work is linear so that one can see current Chinese-language media as a continuation rather than something completely deprived of origin and tradition.

Alternative media and Imagined community

‘Alternative media’ and ‘imagined community’ are intriguing realms attracting a considerable amount of scholarly attention. Much literature around these two notions can be a reference point for the study of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand that follows. To what extent are Chinese-language media alternative? When Chinese are the ethnic minority, do the alternative media construct an imagined Chinese community? To answer these questions, a review and application of these two conceptions are essential.

Alternative media

In a broad sense, ‘alternative media’, or ‘radical media’ (Downing et al, 2001), or ‘citizens’ media’ (Rodriguez, 2001), are the antitheses of the so-called ‘mainstream media’.10 ‘Alternative media’ encompass:

Non-hierarchical methods of organization, media ‘organizations’ that exist outside

10 For the conceptualisation of ‘mainstream media’, refer to thesis terminologies in the Appendix 1.
the corporate division of labour and capital, activist-journalists who experiment with non-routinised, unprofessionalised methods of doing newswork, audiences that can become contributors, the superseding of expert knowledge (Atton and Couldry, 2003: 583).

Chinese-language media in New Zealand are arguably one form of ‘alternative media’, among other varieties categorized by Downing (2003), such as the women’s movement media, lesbian and gay media, labour media and hobby media. Regardless of these forms, what is all-important for the ‘alternative media’ is the notion of citizenship (Rodriguez, 2001, cited by Atton and Couldry, 2003: 580), which always finds itself at the mercy of the corporate media. As a counterbalance, alternative media are thus regarded as the way to a participatory democracy, “offering the means for democratic communication to people who are normally excluded from media production” (Atton, 2002: 4).

The definition above concerns two important dimensions of alternative media: the social processes and relations. The ways of organising media and involving audiences are linked to social relations, while the “methods of doing newswork” are the processes of alternative media production. Atton (2002) adds that ‘content’ is also an important factor of alternative media. Altogether, the combination of content, processes, and relations will be the criteria against which the alternativeness of the Chinese-language media is to be assessed in the chapters to come.

In a vivid way, the notion of alternative media is best represented by the slogans developed by Indymedia, the prototype of alternative media, during the Reclaim Your Media march in Rome, 2002. The Indymedia Italia produced the catchwords of “Don’t hate the media, become the media!” (Downing 2003: 629). The transit from “hate” to “become” by initiating media of their own indicates a significant upgrading of the unprivileged in terms of status in the power relations.
However, Bishop (2003) cautions people against a simplistic approach to ‘alternative media’. By suggesting that inequality in power relations is still present even in alternative media, Bishop contends that a critical approach to alternative media study, rather than a taken-for-granted one, is necessary. Bishop’s argument casts light on the study of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand. In contrast to mainstream media, they contribute to the diversity of the New Zealand media-scape by their representation of ethnic groups and unique perspectives. Yet the extent to which they are the idealised ‘alternative media’ leading to a better citizenship and democracy is compromised in that they are deeply commercialized and thus again fall into the corporate power relations. This theme will be given closer attention in Chapter 7 on the commercial orientation of the Chinese-language media.

*Imagined community*

Imagined community, phrase created by Anderson (1983) in his reflections on the origins of nationalism, refers to a congeniality of language, ethos and culture shared by a group of people, no matter how geographically disconnected they can be. Anderson’s explanation of the so-called ‘imagined community’ is exemplified as follows:

> Why is this man doing what I am doing, uttering the same words that I am uttering, even though we can not talk to one another? (Anderson 1983: 55)

Of course, the notion of imagined community is contextualized by Anderson in the discussion of the way the “divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm” was undermined by the Reformation. Anderson argues that the hierarchy of Latin which constructs the imagined community of Christendom, was gradually de-constructed by the rise of vernaculars. Print-capitalism played a decisive role in this process by promoting vernaculars and ultimately, national consciousness.
Equally important in the formation of modern nationhood is language. Essentially, it is the spread of vernaculars—languages—that really matter, whilst print-capitalism is a catalyst in the popularization of vernaculars. Language is therefore believed by Anderson (1983) to be able to generate imagined communities, and to build in effect particular solidarities. Anderson puts it poetically:

Through that language (he or she is born with), encountered at mother’s knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed (Anderson 1983: 140).

Two factors highlighted by Anderson, media and language, converge in the discussion on the sense of identity of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand.
Chapter 3
Mapping the Chinese-language Media in New Zealand

This chapter focuses on facts of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand, be it historical or current. Firstly, a chronicle of Chinese-language media is compiled, in combination with the history of the ethnic Chinese community in New Zealand from the 1860s onwards. Secondly, factors responsible for a media boom since the 1990s are explored. Thirdly, a more contemporary perspective is taken to highlight media outlets.

Media and community: a timeline
The evolution of Chinese-language media in New Zealand can be split into several stages: the genesis; the upsurge; the dormancy that followed; the revival and finally, the restructuring today. This evolution will be interwoven with a history of the Chinese community in New Zealand.

Overview: the change of the Chinese population in New Zealand
The variation of Chinese population in New Zealand throughout the five stages mentioned above is first illustrated as follows:¹

¹ For detailed numbers, refer to Appendix 2: Chinese population in New Zealand 1871-2001.
The genesis: 1865-1920s
The Chinese in New Zealand have a history of more than 130 years. In 1865, the
Otago Provincial Council and the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce invited Chinese goldminers in Australia to come to New Zealand and to rework Otago’s goldfields left by European miners. Thus the Chinese became the first non-Maori and non-European people to migrate in numbers to New Zealand (Ng, 2001b). By 1869, the majority of the incomers were directly from the Cantonese rural regions in China. Soon the Chinese population reached 5,000 between 1874 and 1881 (see Figure 3.1). They were predominantly rural male sojourners, or rather, diaspora in the classical sense, who intended no permanent stay in New Zealand but to return home one day with the earnings to support their families awaiting them. Largely illiterate (in both Chinese and English) yet industrious, frugal and withdrawn, they adhered to their own Chinese conventions and had minimal contact with the outside society.

It is estimated by Ng (2001b) that for many years in Otago, Chinese workers made up about 40 per cent of the goldminers and produced some 30 per cent of the gold. When the Otago gold fields reached full capacity, the Chinese spilled over to the West Coast goldfields. Meanwhile, when the opportunities at the gold fields ran out, the Chinese sought employment in occupations other than gold mining, such as gardens, fruitshops and laundries. Their success in the gold fields had aroused “jealous antagonism” among European miners despite their low key position (Ng, 2001b). This antagonism only intensified and spread to other European workers when the Chinese expanded to other localities and occupations. Finally, this sentiment resulted in a series of discriminatory acts against the Chinese, who were deemed inscrutable, inassimilable and “essential outsiders” (Ip, 2003b) by the advocates of a white New Zealand. In 1881, a poll-tax of 10 pounds was charged to new Chinese arrivals to New Zealand. Accompanying that was a tonnage ratio of 10 tons of ship cargo per Chinese newcomer. The tonnage ratio was soon elevated to 100 tons of ship cargo per person in 1888. In the following year the Old Age Pensions Act excluded Chinese and other Asians. Then the poll-tax of 10 pounds was multiplied 10 times, with 100 pounds being the new threshold for Chinese entry. In 1907, an English reading test on arrival was imposed, only adding to the formidable obstacles any potential Chinese
migrant would face. For those already settled in New Zealand, the situation was no better. From 1908, the likelihood of any Chinese residents being granted New Zealand citizenship had been ruled out. As a result, the population of Chinese in New Zealand gradually decreased, from the peak of 5000 in 1881 to around 3000 in 1920 (see Figure 3.1). The only significant exception was during 1918-20, when 1,374 males and 115 females arrived from China with the aid of their fathers and kin already in New Zealand.

It is not surprising that the Chinese-language print media (or any publications in a broad sense) in this period were few, given the limitations of the Chinese and the hardship they experienced (Murphy, 1997: 271). During the whole 19th century, no books were written, and no newspapers were founded by the Chinese people in New Zealand. Rather, correspondence, legal or quasi-legal documents in a mixture of English and Chinese, official and business notices, lottery tickets, calling cards, wooden plaques, cloth banners and gravestones constituted the media where the Chinese characters could be used and read at all (Ng, 1997).

Nevertheless, 1883 saw the first known Chinese-language newspaper in New Zealand, that is, the weekly Kam lei Tong I Po. Initiated by Alexander Don, a non-Chinese missionary, Kam lei Tong I Po echoed the way early overseas Chinese-language newspapers, such as Chinese Monthly Magazine (Cha shi shu mei yue tong ji zhuang) in Malaysia and Jin San Ri Zhi Lu in the US, were started by non-Chinese missionaries. In the meantime, as noted by Ng (1997), overseas Chinese-language newspapers and periodicals circulated in New Zealand during the last decades of the 19th century. They included the dailies China Mail, Kwang Pao and the Wa Tz Yat Pao, the weekly Chinese Australian Herald, and the monthlies Review of the Times, Missionary Review, the Chinese Illustrated News and the Chinese Globe Magazine.

The upsurge: 1920s-1940s
The 1920 Immigration Restriction Amendment Act gave immigration officials sole
discretion in judging the eligibility of residency applicants. It remained unchallenged until the introduction of a new immigration scheme structured to attract immigrants of all races in 1986. With new Chinese arrivals prevented and the possibility of acculturation ruled out, the Chinese had to retain their sojourners’ status (Ng, 2001b) and the Chinese community remained “transient, unstable, insecure and alienated” (Ip, 1995: 175). However, there was a new wave of Chinese migrants who did manage to come to New Zealand under a small quota system between 1921-26. The newcomers were better educated than their predecessors, yet they were also loyal and patriotic to China, especially when faced with the anti-Chinese sentiment in New Zealand. Two chief societies, the Kuomintang Party (Chinese Nationalists) and the New Zealand Chinese Association (NZCA), were founded in 1913 and 1937 respectively. It was the Kuomintang Party which contributed to the historical emergence of the first Chinese-language newspaper by the Chinese in New Zealand, the *Man Sing Times*.

![The Man Sing Times](image)

*Figure 3.3 The Man Sing Times, photo courtesy of Nigel Murphy of Alexander Turnbull Library*

Handwritten, the *Man Sing Times* was published in Wellington every ten days, and circulated throughout America, the Pacific Islands, and China. It advocated support for the Kuomintang Party in vying with the new government in Beijing for control of
China, at a time when China was in a civil disorder after the Qing Dynasty had been overthrown by the republican revolution in 1911 (Murphy, 1997). The paper was composed of China news (termed as “domestic news” by the paper), New Zealand news (local or onshore news), the party news, commentary on current affairs, and short fictions. In the foreword to the first issue, the *Man Sing Times* avowed its support for the new-born Republic of China, created by the Kuomintang Party, which it feared would be usurped by warlords. The ways to that objective involve advocating the Chinese people’s nation, people’s morality, people’s enlightenment, people’s rights, and people’s well-being. Throughout the foreword, the phrase “our country” was repeatedly used to refer to China rather than New Zealand. New Zealand was briefly mentioned once amid the overwhelming air of Chinese patriotism, with China the immutable focus:

[Given all the hazards that the new-born Republic of China faces] We are floating away in New Zealand, and sojourning in Wellington. Yet when looking at several thousand of our compatriots here, we see enthusiast patriots who are ambitious of saving China (*Man Sing Times*, July 11 1921a, translation mine).

In another review article by the editor-in-chief, it was stated that,

The *Man Sing Time*’s mission lies in awakening our compatriots both in China and overseas, and promoting the true ethos of republicanism (*Man Sing Times*, July 11 1921b, translation mine).

Although the paper ceased only one year later due to funding problems, the *Man Sing Times*’ manifesto had in effect set up a China-centered keynote for the Chinese-language newspapers in New Zealand in the next decades to come. At the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, the sentiment of Chinese nationalistic patriotism skyrocketed. The NZCA acted quickly and started the Wellington-based *New Zealand Chinese Weekly News* in the same year. One year later, its Auckland branch initiated *Q Sing Times*. Both NZCA papers lasted until 1946. What is extraordinary about the *New Zealand Chinese Weekly News* is that all its revenue, except the part used to offset the costs, went to the Chinese Relief Fund to support the
common cause of defeating the Japanese invaders. In fact, Chinese-language newspapers, not just New Zealand ones, but those in America, Europe and Asia, were unprecedentedly united in mobilizing all Chinese to support their mother country (Cheng Manli, 2001). In New Zealand, the NZCA imposed a mandatory weekly donation (income levy) on all able-bodied Chinese male workers. According to Ip (1995), the funds donated by the New Zealand Chinese from 1937 to 1944 amounted to 174,149 pounds, and it ranked second per capita among overseas Chinese communities worldwide.

During the Second World War, the ordeal the Chinese in New Zealand had faced eased, since both New Zealand and China were members of the Allied Forces. This relief was exemplified by a “landmark decision” made by New Zealand to accept 249 Chinese wives and 244 young children of Chinese residents as war refugees (Ng, 2001b). More importantly, in 1947, these refugees were allowed to stay as permanent residents. This incident, according to Ip (1995: 182), triggered a significant shift of the Chinese from “an itinerant male labour force” to “a group of families”, and ultimately from Chinese in New Zealand to Chinese New Zealanders (see Figure 3.2).

*The dormancy: 1950s-1980s*

This was a period of consolidation. Not only the war-time agitation experienced by the Chinese, but also the earlier social prejudice laid upon the Chinese in New Zealand had largely subsided. As a continuation of the 1947 policy, family unification with kin back in China was made easier, hence the chain migration which remained the only overseas influx of the Chinese population in New Zealand. New Zealand Chinese retrieved the right of naturalisation in 1951, after they had been deprived of it since 1908. These moves taken by the government reflected an improved attitude towards the Chinese in New Zealand generally. Accordingly, New Zealand Chinese, especially those born in New Zealand, became more and more settled, accepted, acculturated and assimilated. They embraced the education system, including that at tertiary level; they made non-Chinese friends during the course of education thus
gradually promoting social recognition towards ethnic Chinese; and they became respectable professionals when they graduated (Ng, 2001b). James Ng (ibid.), who was among the war-time refugees, recalled from an insider’s view that:

They [the refugee and postwar Chinese children] knew of the European expectation of their assimilation and the inevitable loss of Chineseness (as their parents warned), but they were not afraid of that. Indeed, many were eager for change and were especially attracted - in those early years of their lives - by the penchant for individuality and transformation inherent in New Zealand’s European culture. They saw the road of assimilation open to them, with its challenge and the more promising future it offered in comparison with rural based Cantonese or communist or Kuomintang alternative ways of life. Many travelled that road, intent upon achieving assimilation.

Likewise, Ip (1995) notes that in this period, the locally born New Zealand Chinese had reached over 75 per cent, and that Chinese festivals were largely unobserved. Rather, the New Zealand Chinese were becoming “New Zealanders of Chinese ancestry” (Ng, 2001b), or a “model minority”, “unobtrusive, law-abiding, and undemanding”—a “middle-class, well-educated, and low-profile group” (Ip, 1995: 186), and undistracted by the influx of new Chinese immigrants (Ng, 2001b).

When Chinese-ness was experiencing such a dormancy after its war-time upsurge, it is unsurprising that the *New Zealand Chinese Growers’ Monthly Journal* (1949-1972) stood out as the only major Chinese-language media outlet in this period and served as “the de facto voice of the community” (Murphy, 1997: 273). First handwritten, then offset printed, the *Journal* was the official publication of the Dominion Federation of New Zealand Chinese Commercial Growers. It was also authorized by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission of Republic of China, therefore it remained pro-Taiwan in its editorial. Most distinctively compared with its forerunners, the *Journal* for the first time concentrated on local issues, rather than China’s issues (Murphy, 1997). Apart from the *Journal*, there had been a number of other pro-Taiwan papers such as the *New Zealand Chinese Monthly Special* of 1950, the *Chinese News Weekly (Kiu Pao)* of 1951 and *Voice of China* (*Zu Guo Zhi Sheng*) of 1971.
The revival: 1990s-2002

This dramatic period began with the watershed enactment of the Immigration Act 1987, drawn up by Hon. Kerry Burke, Minister of Immigration and passed by the reforming Labour Government. For the first time in more than 60 years, immigrants were chosen solely on merit rather than on place of origin. The door of New Zealand was wide open to non-traditional immigration sources, such as the Chinese. Contextualized by a) the deregulation and liberalization and b) New Zealand's growing geo-economic connections with Asia since the 1980s, this policy had changed the landscape of New Zealand's population "more than any time since Captain Cook" (Burke, cited by Ng 2001b). In just ten years, the Chinese population in New Zealand rose from 19,000 to 82,000; to a great extent pushed up by the new immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore and later, mainland China. Now the ratio of overseas born Chinese among all ethnic Chinese in New Zealand (75 per cent) is equivalent to that of local-born Chinese from 1950s to 1980s. The ethnic Chinese new immigrants were high achievers in their original countries, coming to New Zealand with their knowledge, skills, business acumen and investment, urbanized backgrounds and accordingly, heterogeneous cultures.

Boosted by this new situation, the Chinese-language media in New Zealand awoke from the dormancy. Print media heralded this revival. At the beginning there was Sing Tao Weekly of 1989, which became Sing Tao Daily in 1991, a subsidiary of the Hong Kong media giant Sing Tao Holdings. It was edited and printed in Hong Kong and air-ferried to New Zealand. Commonly regarded as a quality newspaper, Sing Tao had had problems in distribution, for instance. Its subscribers were too dispersed to be approached cost-effectively (Soh, July 28 2004: interview). Thereafter, the free-of-charge model has thrived among the following New Zealand-based newspapers. The Mandarin Pages of 1991 announced the advent of the free-of-charge newspaper era. Followed is an illustration of an early edition of that paper.
The *Chinese Express* followed one year later. It is asserted by the paper that it registered New Zealand’s first Chinese-language online magazine [www.chinese-media.co.nz](http://www.chinese-media.co.nz) in 1996. *New Times Weekly* and *Chinese Herald* joined the competition in 1996 and 1997 respectively. These four newspapers, together with the only paid-for newspaper, *The Independence Daily* of 1997, constitute the major players of the Chinese-language print media. Meanwhile, AM990, the first around-the-clock radio station, and World TV (WTV) the first full-time TV station, came on air from 1998 and 2000 respectively. Conspicuous is that all these major outlets, except *New Times Weekly*, are run by ethnic Chinese new immigrants from outside mainland China, such as Malaysia, Hong Kong, and more significantly, Taiwan. This pattern continued through the mid-1990s until 2002 (Chen Weijian, July 29 2004: interview), when the Chinese-language media emerged at an unprecedented scale. Figure 3.5 shows the distribution of the establishment dates of the media outlets, which are to be highlighted in the following part.
These newcomers have a high likelihood of being founded by new immigrants from mainland China, which is especially true for cities only becoming more popular recently for ethnic Chinese new immigrants, such as Wellington and Christchurch. The advertising rate plummeted due to a media war, joined by both the old major players and the ambitious new ones. With advertisements as the underlying source of revenue for free-of-charge Chinese-language media, the drop in advertising rate had a significant impact on media outlets’ marketing strategy and above all, editorials. Put another way, more and more media outlets, print media in particular, tend to cooperate, start new subsidiaries, and change the frequency, format and even editorials of their publications in order to better meet the needs of advertisers.²

The restructuring: 2002 onwards

The increase of Chinese population slowed in 2003. The incoming of Chinese international students to New Zealand has been greatly discouraged by the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), the rising New Zealand dollar,

² This is to be critiqued in detail in Chapter 7 on the commercial orientation of the media.
and negative media reportage of overseas Chinese students in New Zealand in both New Zealand and China (168.co.nz, 2005). The introduction of a more stringent Skilled Migrant Policy has turned many away who aspired to migrate to New Zealand. According to the New Zealand Immigration Service (2005), the population of new immigrants into New Zealand under the business/skilled category was 11,993 in the financial year 2002/03. The figure was 8175 in 2003/04 and 4,914 in 2004/05. Specifically, 7,990 mainland Chinese had residence applications approved in 2002/03, 4,809 in 2003/04, and 2,287 in 2004/05.³

This demographic trend certainly impacted on the media. Having reached a numerical peak around 2002, the Chinese-language media are now experiencing a restructuring. Big players try hard to consolidate their dominance. WTV, the only commercial Chinese-language television station in New Zealand, commenced the Chinese Voice Broadcasting in 2004. The Mandarin Pages become the first free Chinese-language daily in New Zealand in the same year. The media outside Auckland are gaining more momentum. A few more outlets have emerged, coupled with a few print media outlets either increasing publication frequencies or changing from tabloids into broadsheets. However, there has been a gradual decline of outlet numbers in Auckland, where the battle for advertising renders a heavy burden on the shoulder of every competitor. TCTV, a free-to-air television station, ceased broadcasting in 2004. Free-of-charge newspapers such as the Auckland Forum, Asian Times, New Zealand Weekly and Chinese Business Times have stopped publication recently. Three months into 2005, The Independence Daily, the only paid-for Chinese-language newspaper in New Zealand, suspended the daily publication and its future remains vague (Oriental Times, March 8 2005). By and large, a reshuffle of the media industry is taking place and a clear shape of the future remains yet to be seen. A more detailed analysis on the future of the media will be provided in the last chapter.

³ Figures for the year 2004/05 will rise from the current level, since the financial year starts from 01 July to 30 June and these figures were updated till March 2005 at the time of writing.
Why the revival?

The reasons why the Chinese-language media have revived and boomed since the 1980s are many. First and foremost, the growing Chinese population in New Zealand provides a promising niche market for the media. As previously noted, the influx of overseas-born Chinese has become the main force for the growth of the Chinese community in New Zealand. This influx also means an expanding base of potential media consumers. What is more important, the “cross-border flows of capital, commodities, people and ideas” brought by transnationalism in the new immigrant era (Ip 2003b: xv) has provided the economic and cultural soil for the mushrooming of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand.

Secondly, three features of the Chinese-speaking community have contributed to the growth of media. Feature one: the Chinese of overseas origin are in sound possession of economic, cultural and media capital. Among those coming to New Zealand as new immigrants under the Business Immigration Policy (BIP), or rather, as self-employed business migrants with economic capital, a few of them have invested their money in the media. After all, the option of starting a Chinese-language media outlet avoids direct competition with entrenched New Zealand media while bringing into play cultural empathy. Cultural and media capital can be best exemplified by a series of statistics. By the year 2001, nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of the ethnic Asians in New Zealand had obtained a bachelor degree or higher qualification, almost double the equivalent (12 per cent) for the total New Zealand population. Moreover, 62 per cent of the Asians were living in households with access to the internet, again higher than the average percentage for the total New Zealand population at 43 per cent. Particularly, ethnic Chinese rank the third highest among Asian ethnic groups in terms of this criterion (Statistics New Zealand, 2001).

Notwithstanding the first feature, the Chinese of overseas origin have had a lower percentage of employment in New Zealand. The labour force participation rate for the Asians (56.5 per cent) trails those of ethnic Europeans (68.0 per cent) and Maori
(67.7 per cent) (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). Language and culture are obvious barriers, among others. Understandably then, Chinese of overseas origin are predisposed to self-employment. Starting a media outlet, especially a print media one with lower entry barriers, becomes one of the options. Meanwhile, there has been Chinese self-employment in other businesses such as restaurants, trade and immigration consultancy, financial services, property agencies and language schools. The Chinese involvement in these areas has not only offered important advertising sources for the Chinese-language media, but also given birth to a few business-initiated media outlets directly (see Figure 7.1). Ostensibly, the decision to run a media business of one’s own seems voluntary, yet it is not completely so when the overall employment status is considered.

Feature three: the urban lifestyle appreciated by the Chinese in New Zealand. The Chinese prefer to congregate in big cities. Sixty-nine per cent of overseas-born Chinese in New Zealand are concentrated in Auckland, which at the same time has 63.7 per cent of the total Asian population (New Zealand Statistics, 2001). Because of this notable concentration, the Chinese-language media, most of which are mainly operated on a city basis, can be expected to be cost-effective in reaching a larger population with less distribution costs.

Thirdly, New Zealand offers a milieu favourable for initiating media causes, especially for the ethnic Chinese migrants from places where journalism is under tighter government control.⁴ The idea of running a media outlet of one’s own certainly becomes alluring when one sees no bureaucratic media registration processes, no government censorship, and minimal industry regulation which often focuses on advertising content only.⁵ Hence the words “spontaneity” and “freshness”

⁵ The Chinese Media Bureau (CMB), a member of the Advertising Standards Authority of New Zealand, is now the only watchdog for the Chinese-language media. Yet the embarrassing fact is that not a single Chinese-language

Apart from New Zealand being so accommodating, the disproportionately low Asian input in the mainstream media has caused people to start media of their own. Lincoln Tan, a Singaporean Chinese, an ethnic interest advocate and an owner of the bilingual (English and Chinese) paper *Iball*, tells why he initiated the newspaper of his own:

> Having been in newspaper journalism and publishing for almost 10 years then, and with professional experience in cartoon illustration, newspaper layout, photography and news reporting in Singapore, I was confident that I was well qualified for an advertised position for a “cub reporter” with The North Shore Times, a suburban newspaper in Auckland. Yet, after sending my CV and copies of my work, I could not even get an interview (*Iball*, March 2004).

This excerpt mirrors what has been discussed before in Chapter 2 of the literature review (see Figure 2.1). The *Iball* model stands at the topmost level of that three-tiered triangle symbolic of the relationship between the ethnic group and the media. At the topmost level, the input and initiative a certain ethnic group (in this case, ethnic Asians/Chinese in New Zealand) can exert on media are the highest, since they are the owners themselves.

**A snapshot**

A selection of 23 Chinese-language media outlets in New Zealand is highlighted to briefly outline Chinese-language media. Priority is given to more news-driven media, with exceptions available to demonstrate the diversity of the media in question. In the snapshots, the most current possible information is provided. Some outlets listed below have recently discontinued, however they are included in the snapshot regardless, due to the significant impacts they used to exert. The narratives are
organised principally in the order of media genre, starting from print media and moving on to broadcasting and online outlets. Journalistic traits are the focus of this snapshot, while the commercial background of the media outlets is detailed later in Chapter 7 (see Figure 7.1).

• Auckland Newspapers

The Mandarin Pages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Broadsheet</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first free Chinese-language newspaper, *The Mandarin Pages* again heralded the industry by becoming the first free Chinese-language daily in June, 2004. “Newspapers are like one’s girlfriends. You meet some of them once or twice a week. Yet the one you see six times a week will of course turn out to be more intimate”, so David Soh (July 28, 2004: interview, translation mine), the owner, explained his motivation for going daily. Indeed, despite a controversy over the paper’s over-concentration on advertising, its classifieds contain a wealth of information important for the daily lives of Auckland Chinese. Website: www.mpages.co.nz

Chinese Express

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Broadsheet</td>
<td>A,B,C,D sections</td>
<td>Weekly on Tuesdays</td>
<td>16000 - 20000⁶</td>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This newspaper is regarded as the paradigm of entertainment, exemplified by florid layout and trivialized news stories. The front page has no news but advertisements. However, it does have exclusive in-depth news specials inside focusing on New Zealand issues. This paper registered New Zealand’s first Chinese-language online magazine (www.chinese-media.co.nz) in 1996, which applies a similar layout with its physical version and is quite user friendly.

**New Times Weekly**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Broadsheet</td>
<td>28 pages</td>
<td>Semiweekly, Thurs. &amp; Sat.</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Anti-Communist</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This newspaper is distinguished by its sharp-cut standpoint of anti-communism, featured by its negative reportage of mainland China’s issues and propagation of liberalism. It claims to be “the only overseas Chinese-language media outlet impervious to the control of the Chinese Communist Party” (Chen Weijian, July 29 2004: interview). The *New Times Weekly* takes pride in its supplement known as Langsuyuan, reserved exclusively for classical Chinese literature. Another supplement of current affairs commentary contributes to the political-ness of this paper. This paper is also known for the illustrated adult advertisements inside its pages. Website: [www.newtimesweekly.com](http://www.newtimesweekly.com)

**New Zealand Chinese Herald**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Broadsheet</td>
<td>40 pages approx.</td>
<td>3 times a week on even-numbered days</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>Neutral, pro-PRC</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once named *Chinese Weekly*, this paper used to be a subsidiary of the *New Zealand Herald* until 1997, when Stephen Wong, an ethnic Chinese from Hong Kong, purchased the paper and became the new proprietor. There had been a partnership between the *Chinese Weekly* and the *New Zealand Herald* for a short period of time since then, which authorised the former to share the *Herald* news resources. However, the partnership stopped in 1998, and the *Chinese Weekly* has been run completely in Chinese hands in the new name of the *Chinese Herald*.

The paper has exclusive front page stories. The commentary and literature supplements have added a strong artistic and political orientation to this paper. The
frequency was elevated to three times a week in June 2004.

*The Independent Daily*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Broadsheet</td>
<td>16 pages</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>15,000⁷</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Neutral, pro-Taiwan</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the only paid-for Chinese-language newspaper in New Zealand. It has balanced reportage on issues from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, whereas a pro-Taiwan perspective is apparent. In its issue on March 4 2005, the newspaper claims to “suspend” the daily publication and to “publish specials on an irregular basis” (cite by the *Oriental Times*, March 8 2005, translation mine). “Being unable to balance the current distribution system with the anticipation from the subscribers”, as well as “a restructuring of the computer network” (ibid.) are the reasons for the suspension.

*New Zealand Chinese Bizlink*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Broadsheet</td>
<td>A,B,C,D stacks</td>
<td>Semiweekly, Wed. &amp; Fri.</td>
<td>No more than 20,000</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *Bizlink* is characterized by its exclusive front page stories and the accompanying commentary. Equally noticeable is its preference for stories of the overseas Chinese worldwide, such as those in the US, Canada, and Europe.

*Asian Voice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Broadsheet</td>
<td>20 pages</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>Auckland &amp; Wellington</td>
<td>Pro-PRC</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The front page stories of *Asian Voice* are in Chinese and English, and its English supplements aim to introduce Chinese culture to New Zealanders. It is estimated by the newspaper that 7.5 per cent of its content is in English (Li Yongjie, Aug. 10 2004: interview). Newsletters from various New Zealand political parties are heavily

⁷ ibid
adopted.

*Oriental Times*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Broadsheet</td>
<td>A,B,C,D stacks</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>20,000³</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Neutral, Pro-PRC</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This paper used to be known for its readability and “politicised editorial stance” (IWP, 2003). The front page stories are exclusive.

*The Epoch Times* (the New Zealand edition)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Broadsheet</td>
<td>12 pages</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Anti-Communist</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The New Zealand edition is only part of its global network which produces locally tailored versions. Allegedly *The Epoch Times* is the most widely distributed free Chinese-language paper, with a weekly distribution of 660,000 copies, and 27 branches worldwide (www.epochtimes.com, 2004). Website: [www.epochtimes.com](http://www.epochtimes.com)

*Chinese Business Times*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Tabloid</td>
<td>36 pages</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The newspaper claims to be the first free Chinese-language paper to be circulated nationwide. Website: [www.mingshan.co.nz](http://www.mingshan.co.nz)

- Wellington Newspapers

*Capital Chinese News*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Broadsheet</td>
<td>12 pages</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the front page stories exclusive, this paper takes a stronger local stance in reporting Wellington and New Zealand news. It tends to present international news in a sensational format, with large headings and illustrations. The *New Times Weekly*
supplements of current affairs commentary and the Langsuyuan are incorporated inside the *Capital Chinese News*, and vice versa for the *Capital*'s front page. The *Capital* adopted a broadsheet format in March, 2004.

**Home Voice Chinese Weekly News**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Tabloid</td>
<td>36 pages</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td>Pro-PRC</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At times, the *Home Voice* has front page stories. Webstie: http://www.homevoice.co.nz

**New Zealand Chinese Times**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Tabloid</td>
<td>24 pages</td>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Neural, Pro-Taiwan</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This paper is noted for exclusive front page stories in Chinese and one front page news item in English. It tends to focus on non-New Zealand issues.

- Christchurch Newspapers

**New Zealand Mirror**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Broadsheet</td>
<td>28 pages</td>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
<td>18,000–22,000</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Pro-PRC</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This publication is characterized by its exclusive feature stories, mainly concerning social elites. A page of English-language news is provided to showcase China’s issues. In April 2004, the newspaper opted for a broadsheet format to replace its former tabloid style, based on the newspaper’s finding that “most readers and advertisers regard the newspaper format as one of the decisive factors for the influence of a newspaper” (*New Zealand Mirror*, April 2 2004).
**New Zealand Messenger**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Tabloid</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>8,000-12,000</td>
<td>Christchurch</td>
<td>Pro-PRC</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *Messenger* has a stronger concentration in artistic and cultural aspects, embodied by its various supplements. A upgrading from a fortnightly to a weekly was completed in September 2004.

**Chinese Life**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Tabloid</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>Christchurch</td>
<td>Pro-PRC</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This paper had been titled *Chinese Times* from September 2002, its starting time, to February 2004. It was re-launched half a year later, under the new name *Chinese Life*.

**Iball**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Tabloid</td>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Christchurch</td>
<td>Multicultural</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Bridging the cultures" is the motto of *Iball*. Inaugurated as an English-language newspaper, it added a Chinese-language version to most of its stories later in 2004. A fervid advocate for the Asian interest and multiculturalism, this paper attaches great importance to stories of the Asian communities in Christchurch. Advertorials are another noticeable feature.

- Miscellaneous

Apart from newspapers, there have been a number of periodicals, such as *The Chinese Times*, *WTV Magazine* of Auckland, and *New Zealand One Magazine*, *Asian Media*, *Most Mobile Secrets* and *The Steering Wheel* of Christchurch. Chinese-language yellow pages have prevailed as well, providing assorted advertisements. For instance, *The Chinese Directory* is semi-yearly while *Chinese Business Pages* and *New Zealand Chinese Travel Guide* are yearly.
• Broadcasting outlets

World TV (WTV)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Subscribers</th>
<th>Time Slot</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>11,000⁹</td>
<td>24 hrs. daily</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>SKY digital</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With “user-pay” as the philosophy, the WTV provides 7 channels (5 Chinese, 1 Korean and 1 Japanese) throughout New Zealand on the SKY digital network. The Chinese-language programmes are mostly supplied by the mainstream media in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. WTV broadcasts its exclusive news programmes mainly in Mandarin, as well as TV3 news with Chinese subtitles (Acom Media Kits, 2004). Website: www.wtv.co.nz

TCTV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Viewership</th>
<th>Time Slot</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>741,200¹⁰</td>
<td>1pm-3pm daily</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>TV4</td>
<td>Pro-PRC</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is the only nationwide free-to-air Chinese-language television channel. It broadcasts programmes imported from mainland China, and has not produced any of its own. Soap operas, documentaries and entertainment programmes are frequently aired, while at times playlets in English are on offer as well. However, November 2004 saw the broadcasting suspended, due to unknown reasons. Website: www.tctv.co.nz

Golden Raindrop TV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Viewership</th>
<th>Time Slot</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Uncertain¹¹</td>
<td>2hrs. daily</td>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>Triangle TV</td>
<td>Pro-PRC</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁹ WTV claims the total number of viewers to be 50,000 (Acom Media Kits 2004).
¹⁰ Source: http://www.tctv.co.nz/cn/alaad.htm (accessed on 11/3/04)
¹¹ Golden Raindrop claims that it is accessible to the majority of the Auckland Chinese. Source: Independent World Productions: Your Bridge To New Zealand's Asian Communities, 2003, Unpublished work courtesy of Lily Wong, CEO of the Golden Raindrop Chinese TV.
It was the first free-to-air Chinese-language channel ever in New Zealand, despite its narrow projection area. The programmes shown are introduced from mainland China, including but not limited to news, TV series and entertainments. Website: www.goldenraindrop.com

**AM990**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Listenership</th>
<th>Time Slot</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>60,000&lt;sup&gt;12&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24hrs. daily</td>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>AM990 FM90.6</td>
<td>Pro-Taiwan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first round-the-clock Chinese-language radio station in New Zealand, AM990 is exclusively entitled to rebroadcast the BBC World Service in Mandarin and Cantonese. Also broadcast are programmes from Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China, as well as exclusive programmes. Website: www.am990.co.nz/

**Chinese Voice Broadcasting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Listenership</th>
<th>Time Slot</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>92,000&lt;sup&gt;13&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24hrs. daily</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>AM936 FM958</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The AM is broadcast in Mandarin whereas the FM is in Cantonese, and both are subsidiaries of the Asian Communications Media House Ltd., which owns the WTV at the same time. Titled “Real Good Life”, FM958 broadcasts Hong Kong-produced programmes, as well as exclusive ones such as the breakfast show “Hello New Zealand” and local DJ music shows. “New Supremo”, AM936 broadcasts a variety of programmes from America, Taiwan and mainland China. The breakfast show “I Love New Zealand” and local news bulletins are among the locally produced items. Website: www.chinesevoice.co.nz

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<sup>12</sup> According to Everlyn Liu (Aug. 11 2004: interview), AM990's listeners constitute 60 per cent of the Auckland Chinese residents, which numbered 100,000 plus.

<sup>13</sup> Source: Chinese Radio Audience Survey (Auckland Region), conducted June 2004 (Acom Media Kits, 2004).
Christchurch Chinese Broadcasting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Listenership</th>
<th>Time Slot</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>24hrs. daily</td>
<td>Christchurch</td>
<td>Christchurch</td>
<td>FM96.1</td>
<td>Pro-mainland China</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FM88.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Its programmes consist of news, music, phone-in, finance and so on.

- Online outlets

www.168.co.nz

An Auckland-based website in Chinese, Korean and English, 168 was among the top 10 New Zealand Business Information Websites listed by the *Marketing Magazine* (2004). The current visiting IP addresses amount to 6,000 per day. Local news, online columns and forum are the features. Registered users number 4,137.

www.180.co.nz

This 2002 website is the online subsidiary of the Chinese Times Group, which runs the magazine *The Chinese Times* and the yellow pages *The Chinese Directory* mentioned early. Its main features comprise daily local news, online yellow pages and self-help classifieds. Registered users number 3,000.

www.chinese.net.nz

This website is informational in that it has well-assorted messages concerning most aspects of daily lives in New Zealand. Columns and forum are also well presented. Registered users number 15,440.

www.verychinese.co.nz

Founded in 2001, Verychinese asserts that it offered the first ever online yellow pages for the Chinese in New Zealand. Seen from the content, this website concentrates more on mainland China’s news, rather than local news in New Zealand. Registered users number is uncertain.
It is a well-designed website with a pleasing layout. More important than that, its long-time popularity rests on three components: the Study in New Zealand Community BBS, the Online Trade and Exchange, and the LoveStage. The first one in particular has become a most popular online community for the Chinese international students in New Zealand. Registered users number 71,561.
SECTION 2

Comparisons
Chapter 4

Content Analyses

This chapter compares the Chinese-language print media in New Zealand with their mainstream counterparts, through a series of content analyses of front page stories and editorials. The objective is to understand the Chinese-language media comparatively, journalistically, and statistically.

Analyses Design

The Hypothesis

Based on my empirical observations of both media and a pilot analysis conducted earlier, it was hypothesized that the Chinese-language media in New Zealand, as a significant form of alternative media, were different from the mainstream English-language media, in the way they brought issues into their news agenda of either front pages or editorials. It was also expected that Chinese-language media not only remedy the lack of presence of Asians in mainstream media reportage in quantitative terms, but offer diverse approaches leading to a nuanced understanding of this ethnic group in New Zealand. Therefore, ethnicity would be a crucial criterion against which most of the following comparisons are conducted.

The Media

The media under scrutiny were limited to print media, whose content is readily retrievable while that of broadcasting media is elusive. When it came down to individual outlets, priority was given to news-driven outlets with more sinew in front page stories and editorials.

The comparison was conducted, first of all, between two media outlets (one Chinese-language, the other English-language) in the same locality. A more general comparison was also made between all Chinese-language and English-language media outlets in question. The New Zealand Herald of Auckland, Dominion Post of Wellington and The Press of Christchurch were selected from the mainstream print media in their respective cities, due to their obvious predominance in circulation. The
Chinese-language equivalents were the *New Times Weekly*, *Capital Chinese News* *Chinese News* and *New Zealand Mirror*, again of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch respectively. As the only Chinese-language newspaper in New Zealand with regular editorials on New Zealand issues, the *New Times Weekly* was suitable for a comparison with the editorials of the *New Zealand Herald*. For the analyses of front page stories, the *Capital Chinese News* and *New Zealand Mirror* were chosen because they were the only broadsheets among the existing Chinese-language newspapers in their respective cities.

The Sampling

To get twelve *Dominion Post* front pages for a continuous 12-month span starting from October 2003 to September 2004, the first date was designated to October 6, 2003, the first Monday of the starting month. The next date was the second Tuesday of the second month, and so on. After the fourth Thursday of January 2004 was selected, the first Friday of February was picked. By covering all week days (Sundays precluded for dailies) and all months in a year, this selection method was representative of a daily as far as possible for that period.

Similarly, *The Press* samples were collected starting from Monday to Saturday, with the only difference being the weeks rotating in a descending order, namely from week four to week one. For instance, the starting *The Press* edition was October 27, 2003, the fourth Monday of that month.

The dates for the Chinese-language issues were determined accordingly, either immediately after, or concurrent with, their counterparts in the English-language media. The first sample issue selected for the *Capital Chinese News*, for example, was October 10, 2003, which followed immediately after October 6, 2003, the first *Dominion Post* sample date. Since the Chinese-language papers were not dailies, picking the dates closest to their English-language counterparts made the comparison as valid as possible, by maximizing similarities of possible front page items.

There were unavoidable exceptions in sampling Chinese-language papers. To be the equivalent of *The Press* sample of February 27, 2004, the *New Zealand Mirror* sample had to predate February 20, 2004. As a bi-weekly, the *New Zealand Mirror* had no
issue published after February 27 to represent the month of February. Therefore the closest predating issue, February 20, was selected. Another exception was the *Mirror* issue on March 19, 2004, for *The Press* counterpart on March 20.

The sampling for the editorial comparisons was more straightforward. A whole year of editorials from the *New Zealand Herald* and *New Times Weekly*, starting from September 2003 to September 2004, were selected as cases for content analyses. Specifically, 313 *New Zealand Herald* editorials and 47 *New Times Weekly* ones were collected. Due to the concern of numerical insufficiency, every single item of editorials available in the successive 12 months, instead of one sample for each month as in front page analyses, was selected into the data pool. Unfortunately, the numerical inequality could not be counterbalanced by incorporating more previous *New Times Weekly* editorials as it started its editorials on New Zealand issues only in September 2003.

**The Processing**

Each item, be it a front page story or an editorial, was analysed according to a pre-designed coding manual. There were nine variables, namely: case number, main story actor, the ethnicity of main story actors, main story topic, whether local Asians in New Zealand were mentioned, whether Asians outside New Zealand are mentioned, story geography, and finally, the attitude taken by the media towards Asians. Various values were ascribed to a variable. For instance, for the variable ‘attitude’, value ‘1’ stood for ‘positive’, ‘2’ ‘negative’, ‘3’ ‘neutral’ and ‘4’ was labeled as ‘unclear/not mentioned’. As a result, a row of value numbers were produced, each of which defined a variable for that individual case. Data were thus grouped, processed, compared and presented.

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1 A time range of 13 months, instead of 12, is resulted. This is because the *New Times Weekly* editorials on New Zealand issues were not available until late September 2003.
2 There are normally more than one items (cases) for a single front page while there is always only one item (case) available for each editorial page.
3 See Appendix 3: coding manual for content analysis.
Findings

Main Story Actors

Analysing figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 suggests all papers in question show great interest in portraying ordinary people, government officials and politicians on their front pages. The major distinction is that the English-language papers have a wider actor range than their Chinese counterparts. The Dominion Post, The Press and New Zealand Herald cover 10, 12 and 13 actor types respectively, while the counterparts for the Capital Chinese News, New Zealand Mirror, and New Times Weekly are 8, 8, and 9. ‘Legislators/lawyers/judges’ are absent in all three Chinese-language papers and only present in English-language ones. ‘Academics/scientists’ cannot be found in both Chinese-language front pages either. It is presumably due to the fact that English-language newspapers have far more cases for the analyses than do the Chinese-language ones. Throughout the 12 issues in a year, there are 45 news items for The Press front pages, 44 for the Dominion Post, while the Capital Chinese News and New Zealand Mirror contain only 28 and 22. The margin by which the New Zealand Herald outnumbers the New Times Weekly samples is even larger. If the Chinese-language papers had more items on front and editorial pages, their actor range could be wider. Another plausible explanation is that, mostly as new immigrant media, they still lack the social and cultural capital to be able to deal with the idiosyncrasies of professionals such as legislators/lawyers/judges in the New Zealand setting different from their countries of origin.

Business people were given more attention in both Chinese-language newspapers than in English-language ones, as far as the comparison on front pages was concerned. This is largely because of the popularity of advertorials and in-house news in Chinese-language papers, which finds no counterparts in the English-language papers. All business people as main story actors appear in advertorials in the Capital Chinese News, and half of them showed up in the in-house news of New Zealand Mirror, while only half of them were contextualised in economy/finance topics. This points to a more explicit commercial orientation of Chinese-language papers than the English-language ones.\(^4\)

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\(^4\) The commercial orientation is to be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.
Figure 4.1: The *Dominion Post* vs. *Capital Chinese News*: Main Actors

Figure 4.2 *The Press* vs. *New Zealand Mirror*: Main Actors
The Ethnicity of Main Actors

The most conspicuous finding in terms of actors’ ethnicity as shown in Figure 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 is that all three Chinese-language papers attach overwhelmingly greater importance to ethnic Asian actors, rendering a sharp contrast to the English-language papers. Yet again the Dominion Post and The Press turn out to be more comprehensive in representing various ethnic groups, albeit unevenly. That is to say, more ethnic groups are covered in the front pages of these two newspapers. Particularly, Maori and ‘other’ ethnic groups receive greater exposure in the English-language front pages than in Chinese-language ones (see Figures 4.4 and 4.5). This is hardly surprising when the targeted reader groups of media are taken into account: the mainstream English-language media have a general appeal to the whole society, whereas the Chinese-language media cater more specifically for the Chinese, a niche of the ethnic spectrum in New Zealand. The exposure Maori receives in the New Times Weekly, however, is greater than the New Zealand Herald (see Figure 4.6). This is because Maori take up a significant percentage (16.67 percent) of the discussion on
culture and ethnicity, the most important topic for the *New Times Weekly* editorials (see Figure 4.15).

Four out of six newspapers, namely all English-language papers and the *New Zealand Mirror*, tend not to identify the ethnicity of main actors in their front page stories. This might be explained by the journalistic ethic of avoiding stereotyping in reporting, which results in the suppressing of actors’ identities and ethnicities. Also at work are technical factors. At times, with only story actors’ names revealed and no photos of them provided in stories, it is inappropriate to assume people’s ethnicities, especially ordinary people. Neither is it usual to appoint an ethnicity to institutions/agencies/organisations appearing as story actors. Altogether, institutions/agencies/organisations and ordinary people make up a substantial percentage of the ethnically unidentified main actors.\(^5\)

Another intriguing contrast between two Chinese-language front pages rests in the tendency of reporting white New Zealanders as the main story actors (see Figures 4.4 and 4.5). In the *Capital Chinese News*, 32 per cent of its main actors are white New Zealanders, a percentage even slightly higher than that of *Dominion Post* (27 per cent), and far higher than that of *New Zealand Mirror* (9 per cent). The *Capital Chinese News* identifies more with New Zealand and thus concentrates more on the mainstream society. It is the reverse for the *New Zealand Mirror*, which focuses more on its connection with China (Eric Yuan, Sep. 3 2004: interview).\(^6\) The *New Times Weekly* also has a higher percentage of having white New Zealanders as main actors in editorials, even compared with the *New Zealand Herald* (see Figure 4.6). This is due to a need for critiques on New Zealand issues and defending for Asians. As can be seen in Figure 4.33 that when white New Zealanders make editorials in the *New Times Weekly*, 73.68 per cent of them are involved with discussion on Asians. A positive stance towards Asians is taken in 42.11 per cent of the cases where white New Zealanders are main actors.

\(^5\) On average, 21.37 per cent of the ethnically unidentified actors are institutions/agencies/organisations, and 12.98 per cent are ordinary people in all six newspapers in question.

\(^6\) The *Capital Chinese News* is classified as ‘New Zealand media in the Chinese-language’, while the *Mirror* falls into the category of ‘Chinese-language media of New Zealand’. See Chapter 6 of dynamics of media identity for more details.
Figure 4.4 The *Dominion Post* vs. *Capital Chinese News*: The Ethnicity of Main Actors

Figure 4.5 *The Press* vs. *New Zealand Mirror*: The Ethnicity of Main Actors
Interactive: Ethnicity—Actors

Amidst the five values for the variable ‘the ethnicity of main actors’, the ‘others’ and ‘unclear’ ethnicities are excluded in the final graphic presentation of interactive findings for the sake of clarity. Only definite ethnicities, namely ‘white New Zealanders’, ‘ethnic Asians’ and ‘Māori’, are compared in their interactivity with the variable ‘main story actors’. This rule applies to the other two interactive comparisons (ethnicity—topics, ethnicity—reference to Asians) as well.

In the *Dominion Post*, Asians make the front page stories only as ordinary people. The only Asians to appear on the front pages of the *New Zealand Herald* were sports personalities. Similarly, ethnic Asian actors show up only as ordinary people and government officials in *The Press* stories. The actor make-up becomes much more diverse in the Chinese-language newspapers. Asians are depicted in at least four, and as more as six, various actor types. This diversity is even more impressive, given the fact the Chinese-language papers produced fewer data for the analyses than do the English-language papers. It follows that a more profound understanding of Asian-
related issues and therefore a more heterogeneous representation of them are the strength of Chinese-language papers.

This is not necessarily at the expense of the presentation of white New Zealanders as main story actors. As can be seen in Figure 4.7&8 and 4.11&12, the Capital Chinese News and New Times Weekly portray white New Zealanders as various actors (with 5 actor types in either papers), nearly as diverse as in the Dominion Post and New Zealand Herald (with 5 and 9 types respectively). The New Zealand Mirror presents a counter example, with white New Zealanders identified only as government officials. This is largely due to the newspaper’s predisposition of reporting Asian-immigration-concerned issues, in which the government is a key player.

Maori are predominantly portrayed as politicians in the front pages of the Dominion Post, Capital Chinese News, The Press and New Zealand Herald. Given the controversial issue of foreshore and seabed in New Zealand politics, this politicalisation of Maori is reasonable. In the front pages, the New Zealand Mirror does not include Maori as story actors, and The Press has one story with Maori as main story actor. The respective numbers for the North Island newspapers, the Dominion Post, New Zealand Herald, Capital Chinese News and New Times Weekly, are 3, 9, 1 and 5. Locality seems to matter in deciding the prominence of Maori-related issues on news agenda: they are given more primacy in the newspapers of the North Island, where nearly 90 per cent of Maori dwell (Statistics NZ, 2002). As for the New Times Weekly editorial, it has the most diverse representation of Maori (with 3 actor types), among the three Chinese-language newspapers in question, revealing a more sophisticated understanding of New Zealand issues in its exploration of indigenous issues.
Figure 4.7&8 The Dominion Post (upper) vs. Capital Chinese News (lower): Ethnicity—Actors
Figure 4.9&10 *The Press* (upper) vs. *New Zealand Mirror* (lower): Ethnicity—Actors
Figure 4.11&12 The *New Zealand Herald* (upper) vs. *New Times Weekly* (lower): Ethnicity—Actors
Story Topics

The English-language newspapers cover a greater variety of topics than the Chinese-language ones. The Dominion Post, The Press and New Zealand Herald covered 13, 15 and 16 topics respectively, while the Capital Chinese News and New Zealand Mirror had only 10, and the New Times Weekly had even less. In particular, stories on legislation, which made up a most significant proportion of the front pages of these two English-language papers, attracted no attention from the Chinese-language counterparts. Equally absent in all three Chinese-language papers are ‘health’ issues.

Yet, Chinese-language newspapers show greater interest in reporting politics, diplomacy, and immigration. Along with the higher frequency of government officials appearing as main story actors in Chinese-language newspapers, it suggests that all three Chinese-language papers are fairly politics-conscious. Their concentration on diplomacy and immigration topics fits well with their nature of diaspora/immigrant media, and this is especially true for the New Zealand Mirror and New Times Weekly. Diplomacy and immigration issues are given a high profile in the Chinese-language front pages, since they are closely tied up with people’s (media practitioners as well as consumers) need of remaining connected to their homeland and establishing themselves in New Zealand at the same time.

Another unique feature of the Chinese-language front pages is their ‘in-house news’, which keeps the readers updated with the news of the media they are consuming (see Figures 4.13 and 4.14). Throughout the front pages of these two Chinese-language papers, there are stories on the newspapers’ new year greetings, conferences, co-operations and partnerships. The popularity of in-house news in Chinese-language papers implies the media’s strong incentive for self-promotion. After all, in-house news helps enhance the social awareness of the media concerned, which is of special importance for the Chinese-language media at their nascent stage.
Figure 4.13 The *Dominion Post* vs. *Capital Chinese News*: The Story Topics (Note: The topic 'culture/ethnicity/international student' is displayed as 'culture/ethnicity/in'.)

Figure 4.14 *The Press* vs. *New Zealand Mirror*: The Story Topics (Note: The topic 'culture/ethnicity/international student' is displayed as 'culture/ethnicity/in'.)
Figure 4.15 The *New Zealand Herald* vs. *New Times Weekly*: The Story Topics (Note: The topic 'culture/ethnicity/international student' is displayed as 'culture/ethnicity/in')

**Interactive: Ethnicity—Topics**

This group of comparisons on the interactivity between ethnicity and story topics produces similar findings to the interactive group of ethnicity—actors. Yet noteworthy is the way the media associate topics with a certain ethnicity. For both English-language newspaper front pages, 'white New Zealanders' are most likely to be involved in legislation issues, much more than other issues (see Figures 4.16 and 4.18). When it comes to the Chinese-language counterparts, neither report white New Zealanders on legislation in their front pages. Even though the *New Times Weekly* does cover legislation, its percentage is insignificant (5.26 per cent) compared with the *New Zealand Herald*'s (19.35 per cent). This again is reminiscent of the high profile of legislation issues in the topic distribution of English-language papers and their low profile in Chinese-language papers.

For the Chinese-language papers, the topics most likely to involve white New Zealanders are politics and immigration. These common, if not stereotypical, topics
can be seen as aspects the Chinese-language papers are most inclined to consider when presenting New Zealanders. The simplicity of dealing with a certain ethnicity occurs also in all three English-language papers, whereby Asians are connected to only four kinds of story topics, namely immigration, conflicts/war, politics and health. However, the English-language newspapers over-concentrate on presenting white New Zealanders in various story topics while reporting Asians and Maori in a more limited manner. The story topics assigned to ethnicities are not so imbalanced in the Chinese-language papers. Specifically, the topics where white New Zealanders are main actors are almost as diverse as topics with Asians as main actors in the Chinese-language papers. For example, the New Times Weekly has white New Zealanders as main actors in 6 topics, and Asians as main actors in only 3 topics. The equivalent numbers for the Capital Chinese News are 6 and 7. The only exception is the New Zealand Mirror. Yet throughout all three English-language newspapers, the topics with Asians as main actors are disproportionately few, forming a sharp contrast to topics with white New Zealanders as main actors (see Figures 4.16, 4.18 and 4.20).

Unlike most of the newspapers in question, the New Times Weekly editorial links Asians and Maori to the topic of ‘culture/ethnicity/international student’, rather than to politics. Indeed, the New Times Weekly editorial has been quite culture-sensitive, with topic on culture/ethnicity/international student being the most important topic of all (see Figure 4.15).
Figure 4.16&17 The Dominion Post (upper) vs. Capital Chinese News (lower): Ethnicity—Topics
Figure 4.18 & 19 The Press (upper) vs. New Zealand Mirror (lower): Ethnicity—Topics
Figure 4.20 & 21: The New Zealand Herald (upper) vs. New Times Weekly (lower): Ethnicity—Topics
**Reference to Asians**

Most dramatically, local Asians in New Zealand barely make any stories in any given English-language newspaper, while the situation for Chinese-language papers varies greatly (see Figures 4.22, 4.24 and 4.26). As far as the reference to Asians in international news is concerned, the contrast still exists, yet less sharply (see Figures 4.23, 4.25 and 4.27). It suggests that when Asians are mentioned in English-language papers, they are much more likely to be contextualised overseas rather than in New Zealand. Local Asians turn out to be less newsworthy than their overseas counterparts in making front page stories and editorials.

More subtleties are on the Chinese-language media side. It can be seen that the *Capital Chinese News* attaches greater importance to reporting local Asians in New Zealand, whereas the *New Zealand Mirror* prefers an international angle for Asian stories (see Figures 4.23 and 4.24). This again indicates these two media outlets’ divergent senses of belonging, demonstrated early in the examination of the ethnicity of main actors. As for the *New Times Weekly*, it presents a well-balanced coverage of both local and international Asians (see Figures 4.26 and 4.27).

![Graph](image)

Reference to Local Asians in NZ?

Figure 4.22 The *Dominion Post* vs. *Capital Chinese News*: Reference to Asians in Local New Zealand News
Figure 4.23 The Dominion Post vs. Capital Chinese News: Reference to Asians in International News

Figure 4.24 The Press vs. New Zealand Mirror: Reference to Asians in Local New Zealand News
Figure 4.25 *The Press vs. New Zealand Mirror*: Reference to Asians in International News

Figure 4.26 *The New Zealand Herald vs. New Times Weekly*: Reference to Asians in Local New Zealand News
Interactive: Ethnicity—Reference to Asians

The ‘reference to Asians’ applied in this set of comparison entails ones made to Asians in both local and international news. Comparison on the interactivity between the ethnicity of actors and reference to Asians looks at the extent to which various ethnicities other than Asians as main story actors are linked with Asians as minor story actors.  

All three English-language newspapers show little connectedness between white New Zealanders as main story actors and Asians as minor actors. This trend is reversed when it comes to Chinese-language newspapers. Quite frequently, white New Zealanders are associated with Asians in front page stories and editorials, to the point that the former become main story actors primarily because they concern Asians in one way or another. This is especially the case in the New Zealand Mirror, whereby main story actors of whatever ethnicity are wholly concerned with Asians (see Figure 4.31). What stands out then is an observable Asian-centredness in deciding what is important for the front pages and editorials.

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7 Under the variables ‘Mention Local Asians in NZ?’ and ‘Mention Asians outside NZ?’, any reference to Asian characters is recorded as ‘yes’, no matter they are portrayed as main or minor story actors. Yet in cases where the ethnicities of main story actors are non-Asians and where Asians are meanwhile mentioned at all, Asians appear as minor actors.
All newspapers in the comparison seldom connect Maori to ethnic Asians, with the exceptions being the *New Zealand Herald* and the *New Times Weekly* (see Figure 4.32&4.33). The *New Times Weekly* editorial’s substantial concentration on Maori-related issues including the Maori language, Maori-language television, and Maori mindset. The newspaper editorial argues in a way Asians’ vested interest and ultimately, status, are inextricably influenced by Maori in the distribution of limited social resources in the multi-cultural New Zealand.
Figure 4.28&29 The *Dominion Post* (upper) vs. *Capital Chinese News* (lower): Ethnicity—Reference to Asians
Figure 4.30 & 31 *The Press* (upper) vs. *New Zealand Mirror* (lower): Ethnicity—Reference to Asians
Figure 4.32&33 The *New Zealand Herald* (upper) vs. *New Times Weekly* (lower): Ethnicity—Reference to Asians

*Story Geography*

In group 1 of the *Dominion Post* and *Capital Chinese News*, it is the *Dominion Post*, the English-language one, whose front pages have a far more even distribution of story occurrence locations all over the world. Eighty-six per cent of stories in the *Capital Chinese News*’s front pages are found to be occurring in New Zealand, with little space left for stories happening elsewhere (see Figure 4.34). This once again
attests to the localized orientation of the *Capital Chinese News* mentioned early. The comparison of group 3 between the *New Zealand Herald* and the *New Times Weekly* presents a similar picture (see Figure 4.38).

Nevertheless, in group 2 of *The Press* and *New Zealand Mirror*, the *New Zealand Mirror* takes a more global stance to report more offshore news. At first glance, both newspapers have been quite balanced in bringing in stories of various parts overseas, despite the overwhelming concentration of New Zealand stories in their front pages in the first place (see Figure 4.36). Yet when places other than New Zealand are observed specifically, it becomes apparent that *New Zealand Mirror* has a larger percentage of stories in Asia, the US, the Middle East and other places (see Figure 4.37).

Overseas stories in four out of the six newspapers (except the *Dominion Post* and the *New Zealand Herald*) are more likely to be happening in Asia. This supports the previous finding that Asia turns out to be of greater importance for international issues. This trend would be more obvious were the Middle East portion added in for geographical reasons. Given the geo-economic ties New Zealand has established with Asia for decades, the high exposure rate Asia receives in international news is well deserved.
Figure 4.34 The *Dominion Post* vs. *Capital Chinese News*: Story Geography (Overall)

Figure 4.35 The *Dominion Post* vs. *Capital Chinese News*: Story Geography (NZ excluded)
Figure 4.36 The Press vs. New Zealand Mirror: Story Geography (Overall)

Figure 4.37 The Press vs. New Zealand Mirror: Story Geography (NZ excluded)
Figure 4.38 The *New Zealand Herald* vs. *New Times Weekly*: Story Geography (Overall)

Figure 4.39 The *New Zealand Herald* vs. *New Times Weekly*: Story Geography (NZ excluded)
Attitudes Towards Asians

Comparison in attitudes towards Asians reveals a vast journalistic difference between the Chinese-language media and the English-language media. The great reluctance of the English-language papers to impose their own judgements on news subjects is indicative of their long entrenched newsroom norms, with objectivity being the pith. All three Chinese-language newspapers put more definite judgements on ethnic Asians, mainly positive, and rarely negative. This means the assertiveness of the Chinese-language media in upholding the vested interest of Asians.

Figure 4.40 The *Dominion Post* vs. *Capital Chinese News*: Attitudes Towards Asians
Figure 4.41 The *Press* vs. *New Zealand Mirror*: Attitudes Towards Asians

Figure 4.42 The *New Zealand Herald* vs. *New Times Weekly*: Attitudes Towards Asians
Conclusions

The comparison between the Chinese-language and the English-language newspapers has so far been carried out on a statistical basis. Generic journalistic aspects, such as main story actors, topics, story geography, have been criteria in the content analyses. Other criteria, including the ethnicity of main actors, reference to Asians, attitudes towards Asians and the cross-examinations, are ethnicity-related.

The early hypothesis about differences between two types of media is proved valid, especially when it comes to the ethnicity-specific criteria. Firstly, the lack of Asian presence in English-language newspapers is substantially remedied in the Chinese-language newspapers. Specifically, the ethnicity of main actors and reference to Asians render aspects whereby the absence of Asians in the English-language papers and the presence of Asians in the Chinese-language papers are dramatically contrasted. Put another way, Asians are much more likely to be the main story actors and to be mentioned in New Zealand and international news in the Chinese-language newspapers.

Secondly, the Chinese-language newspapers endeavour to understand Asian-related issues in a more heterogeneous and therefore, more profound way. This is more significant than the first point because it concerns how Asians are presented, rather than whether they are presented at all. Asians are portrayed as more types of story actors, and associated with more story topics, not necessarily thwarting the diverse presentation of other ethnicities. Compared with the English-language newspapers which over-concentrate on portraying white New Zealanders as various actors in various topics while simplifying other ethnicities, the Chinese-language newspapers are offering a more balanced picture of the ethnic spectrum in New Zealand.

Thirdly, in terms of the Chinese-language media, the Asian perspective becomes predominantly influential in shaping the presentation of other ethnicities. This is especially evident in the interaction between the ethnicity of actors and reference to Asians (see subhead Interactive: Ethnicity—Reference to Asians). Priority is given to issues that concern Asians when Chinese-language newspapers select what will make their front pages and editorials. Then this Asian perspective, as a deeply rooted framework for news production, has even greater implications for the Chinese-
language newspapers since it determines their alternative orientation. This discussion on the alternative nature of Chinese-language media will continue in the case studies of the next chapter.

In spite of the significant differences listed above, the Chinese-language media have apparent shortcomings. The range of story actors, topics, and location of occurrences is comparatively narrow, indicating the media's lack of resources to stretch further. However, ameliorations can be expected as the media mature in the foreseeable future.
Chapter 5
Case Studies

The comparison between the Chinese-language media and the English-language media on journalistic aspects continues in this chapter through case studies that address three aspects of news stories and editorials, namely Chinese-specific information; alternative perspectives; and conflicting views to the dominant culture. Under scrutiny are pieces of news from media of both languages, in 2003 and 2004.

Chinese-specific Information

Case 1: The Shocking Inside Story

When the Chinese-language media present New Zealand issues, details otherwise ignored by the mainstream media may be brought to the fore. For example, in an exclusive interview with Lianne Dalziel, the former Minister of Immigration, the New Zealand Mirror revealed a “shocking inside story” (New Zealand Mirror, June 11 2004). Dalziel’s husband was found to be a communist and a fan of China. He told the Mirror that “I have always been supporting the Communist Party, and I myself nearly joined the party. Many friends of mine are the party members.” (Translation mine)

Case 2: The Glass of Christchurch Art Gallery

The feature story of Tony Preston, the director of the Christchurch Art Gallery, gave details of the gallery glass imported from the second largest glass manufacturer in China (New Zealand Mirror, May 16 2003). The glass, according to Mr. Preston, required special techniques to keep the gallery warm in winter and cool in summer. In The Press, this was only briefly mentioned, with a emphasis on New Zealand: “Imported materials from Europe and China were used because of the specialist nature of the building. New Zealand materials were used wherever possible in the
gallery."

There was generic information in these two stories, in addition to the Chinese-specific information cited above. The Chinese-specific information revealed in cases 1 and 2 would almost certainly prove less newsworthy for the mainstream media and therefore readily ignored. Communism has been tolerated in the free society of New Zealand, especially on a personal level. It is therefore not so shocking to find individuals of any communist belief. Neither would the mainstream readers be keen to know about the special Chinese glass, given the prevalence of China-made goods in New Zealand. Yet these added details became highlights of the two feature stories, because they concerned China and therefore, the Chinese target readers. These details not only notify but also involve the readers. In providing China-specific information to New Zealand issues, these details serve as the nexus connecting people’s Chinese-ness with a growing understanding of New Zealand, and therefore contextualise and enrich each other.

Case 3: Dual-citizenship and Chinese Characters

At times, the whole news agenda, not just parts of information, are provided for the Chinese target readers. The abandonment/retaining of traditional and simplified characters in the Chinese language, and local Chinese’s request for dual-citizenship of New Zealand and China are such examples of unique news agenda (see, for example, the New Zealand Messenger, Nov. 3 and 10, 2004; New Zealand Mirror, May 14 and Dec. 10, 2004). The discussion on dual-citizenship is timed to coordinate with the same discussion in mainland China and is expected to provide an overseas Chinese’s perspective. The discussion on Chinese characters, however, turns out to be a topic most suitable for the Chinese-language media outside China, which are in a perfect position to have readers from backgrounds of both simplified and traditional Chinese characters. Compared with cases 1 and 2 which contain Chinese-specific as well as generic information, these unique topics concentrate on homeland connections only and are thus too culture-specific to compare with English-language counterparts, if
Alternative Perspectives

Under this category, news in the Chinese-language media is structured through an alternative perspective. Compared with the Chinese-specific information, the following cases take on a fundamental change in their starting points of story-telling.

Case 4: NCEA vs Chinese Tradition

In a front page story, the *Oriental Times* (Nov. 30, 2004) talks about the implication of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) to the Chinese families in New Zealand. The story, whose title is “NCEA challenges Chinese educational tradition”, opens with a comparative introduction of the NCEA:

The oriental way of pedagogy emphasizes knowledge cramming and memorising, fixed syllabus and student self-reliance. However, the NCEA, a new testing system in New Zealand, regards as important the ability to act, orate, perform, create and work as a team player. (Translation mine)

Therefore, there is a clash between the NCEA and the Chinese family traditions:

Family plays a significant role in the formation of the children’s characters and views. The Chinese convention discourages children from debating with older generations and also discourages the adults from discussing issues with children over meals. The generational relationship is one-way, subordinate and about giving orders and carrying out orders. If this is what a child is told in his/her family, then it is hard for him/her to readapt into the school environment.

Usually, conventional Chinese migrants do not encourage their children to be interested in politics and New Zealand society, due to either language barriers or their ethnic minority status. This mindset will inevitably affect the next generation. (Translation mine)

Here the NCEA is symbolic of anything that is incongruent with the Chinese tradition of the immigrants in New Zealand. The *Oriental Times* did not just translate literally what the NCEA involves; more importantly the paper translates culturally what the NCEA means for the Chinese. Unlike previous cases, this one perceives, organises,
and presents the whole news story from a Chinese point of view not to be found in the English-language newspapers. In other words, this case offers a brand-new, or rather, an alternative reading of a heavily-reported issue.

Case 5: Kenneth Wang the New Member of Parliament
Kenneth Wang replaced Donna Awatere Huata to be a new ACT Member of the Parliament (MP) in November 2004. He is the second MP of Chinese descent as well as the first male Chinese MP.

Most stories in English-language newspapers seemed more interested in Kenneth Wang’s background of “red army stock” (New Zealand Herald, Dec. 8 2004) and his experience in the Cultural Revolution. Titles such as “From cultural revolution to an ACT MP” (Dominion Post, Nov. 19 2004) and “ACT’s new man learned from Red China’s mistakes (New Zealand Herald, Nov. 19 2004) are such examples. Also, Wang’s appointment to Parliament was intertwined with the synchronised expulsion of Donna Awatere Huata from Parliament. That is to say, the media’s mentioning of Wang could be derivative of and secondary to the Awatere Huata angle.

The perspective was distinct in Chinese-language newspapers. Wang became the indisputable major story actor, given the importance of having a second MP for the Chinese community in New Zealand. Chinese-language newspapers tended to understand this issue in the context of the politics of New Zealand Chinese. The New Zealand Messenger (Nov. 24, 2004) comments in its editorial:

For more than a hundred years, generations of Chinese immigrants had been the “Mr. Good”, and they did not participate in New Zealand politics and were almost consigned to oblivion. ...

In a New Zealand democracy, ... every ethnic group has its right to a voice. The Chinese, who make up 7 per cent of the New Zealand population, lack their representatives, which is apparently abnormal. ... Fortunately, Mr. Wang now stands up on the stage.

As a newspaper valuing objectivity and detachment, the New Zealand Messenger refrains
from commenting on the governing Labour and other Opposition parties, including the ACT party Mr. Wang works with. Nonetheless, from the Chinese point of view, we applaud for him!

...

Mr. Wang's experience proves that only through participation can the Chinese people's voices be heard, and only through participation can the Chinese enter the mainstream New Zealand society. God save those who save themselves. (Translation mine)

To the Chinese-language media, Wang's victory belongs to himself, the ACT party and above all, the Chinese in New Zealand. After all, it is the degree of political participation that determines the vested interest of the ethnic Chinese in the democracy of New Zealand. Wang could be a catalyst to such a participation. The Messenger editorial has chosen an angle crucial for the well-being of the Chinese community in New Zealand.

Similarly, Kenneth Wang was mentioned in combination with the issue of ethnic Chinese's political participation in a mainstream story titled "Labour Party sets sights on capturing Asian votes" (The New Zealand Herald, Dec. 8, 2004). It was noted by Labour Party president Mike Williams that the Asian community was becoming more active in New Zealand politics. Yet this was said in the sense of Labour Party attracting Asian votes for the general election, as the headline shows. The mentioning of the Asian community ultimately points to the interest of the Labour Party vying for a re-election, rather than to the interest of the Asian community per se. The attention put on the growing political profile of the community is reactive rather than proactive as is the Messenger case.

Case 6: Local Body Elections

During the buildup to the local body elections throughout New Zealand in 2004, the Chinese-language media made great efforts to introduce and publicise the elections, as well as to mobilise the local Chinese voters.

The New Zealand Chinese Herald (Sep. 18, 2004), a newspaper based in Auckland,
viewed the local elections against a unique background:

Unlike the Taiwanese Election several months ago which involved the independence of Taiwan, and unlike the just-finished Hong Kong local elections which involved a struggle over democracy, the elections in a scenic New Zealand involved no lofty political causes but the interests of the common people. Sectors such as traffic, public reserves, water quality, tax rate, environment, libraries and health facilities are the major concerns. They may seem too ordinary but it is these sectors that are closely linked to the quality of our daily lives. How lucky it is to live in New Zealand! (Translation mine)

Through a timely comparison, what was suggested to the potential Chinese voters was a sense of superiority by living in New Zealand. The message could well be convincing because it works on people's egos. The reference to elections in Taiwan and Hong Kong enables people to base the understanding of a new political system on something they have been familiar with. After an introduction of the ethnic Chinese candidates in the Auckland election, a clear message was sent expressly to the Chinese:

We sincerely expect we Chinese to enthusiastically participate in the election, to show the New Zealand society our care for the nation and for our future, through the precious democratic rights we possess. (Translation mine)

It can be seen that the information tailored to the Chinese is engaging because it is relevant to them. The impact based on this relevance is obvious compared with the normal ways of reporting local elections, such as explaining the know-how of the election procedure and introducing the candidates' backgrounds/proposals.

In Christchurch, communication with mayoral candidates was made by the New Zealand Mirror (Nov. 1, 2004), this time at a national level. Seven candidates from Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin were approached and asked the same questions. The objective, according to the paper, was explained as follows:

Plenty of Chinese voters remain uneducated about the candidates and inactive towards the local elections. Therefore, we interviewed candidates of major cities in New Zealand and they will be faced with identical questions. The Chinese in New Zealand care about these questions. Their answers can not only help you make informed decisions for the
election, but also help you know the political ecosystem in New Zealand as their political views are representative of most New Zealanders. (Translation mine)

The five questions raised for the mayoral candidates were:
A) Do you believe you will win the election? What are the reasons?
B) The Chinese, including the immigrants and international students, have become the second largest ethnic group in New Zealand following Maori. What is your policy to the Chinese community?
C) What do you think of the free trade agreement, which is likely to be signed between New Zealand and China next year? What kind of advantages/disadvantages will be brought about by this agreement to your city/New Zealand?
D) The education targeted at overseas students has diminished for one year and a half. A few educational providers have been bankrupted. Do you have any strategy or plan to revive this sector?
E) How do you look at the issue of mainland China and Taiwan? What kind of outcome is most desirable to you?

Four out of five questions are China/Chinese-related. The questions were largely replied to positively, even when it came to rigorous questions such as the last two. These preset questions served two purposes. From the candidate’s points of view, they came to know about some of the major concerns of the Chinese community in New Zealand. Also, the Chinese voters were enabled to base their appraisals of the candidates on criteria they are familiar with. The Chinese-language media, presenting news from an alternative point of view, acted as a mediating agency between the community and the candidates.

The New Zealand Messenger (Oct. 6, 2004) focused more on Christchurch on this issue and even co-organised a seminar. Four out of ten mayoral candidates “came face-to-face with Chinese community” and joined in a presentation and open debate co-organised by the Messenger and the New Zealand-China Knowledge Exchange, a local Chinese organisation. In this forum attended by local politicians and Chinese,
topics under discussion were very much China/Chinese-related. Throughout the presentations made by Blair Anderson, Aaron Keown, Garry Moore and Bob Nimmo, references were made to Chinese history, ethnic Chinese police staffing, multiculturalism and trade with China. Bob Nimmo even spoke about details of his personal involvements with Asians and life experience in multicultural Singapore. In the question-and-answer session following the presentation, quite a few questions raised were about the local Chinese. Topics such as ethnic Chinese/Asian councilors, Chinese overseas students, as well as Asian crime were among them.

The influence of such a function is two-fold. On the one hand, more local Chinese involvement in the election and higher turnout from them can be expected, on the other hand, the candidates present were given a rare opportunity to formulate and articulate their policies around the ethnic Asian groups, the Chinese in particular. This *New Zealand Messenger* story was unique less because the mainstream media failed to cover the same initiative, but more because it demonstrated the more active role the Chinese-language media began to take to exert their input in New Zealand politics.

**Conflicting views to the dominant culture**

The following cases show rare occasions where the Chinese-language media are in conflict with the mainstream (authorities and media) views.

**Case 7: The rejection of a Chinese delegation in Masterton**

Forty-three invited Chinese delegates were refused by the Masterton District Council and Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ) board to attend the SCNZ convention in Masterton April 2003, due to the locals’ alleged concern of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus being spread by the delegates.

This turning-away provoked wide criticism from both Chinese and New Zealand government officials as well as the media. The English-language media adopted a mild, reasoning-based approach in their criticism. After playing down the severity of
SARS by comparing its low toll with notoriously lethal pandemics such as the Black Death, the Spanish flu, the Asian flu and Hong Kong flu, the *New Zealand Herald* editorial of April 4, 2003 ends with a temperate tone:

Probably, as the Director of Public Health suggests, there will be one or two cases of SARS in New Zealand. At that point, those most at risk will be health workers and those living with the infected person. Others have no reason to be unduly alarmed. They should take sensible precautions and be aware of the symptoms. Anything more strident accords SARS a fear factor it has not earned.

The public’s over-reaction, if not hysteria, to SARS is again criticised by a New Zealand Press Association (NZPA) article through a citation in its April 4 story:

It is likely New Zealand will get a small number of cases … But there are other realities, especially for the director of public health, Colin Tukuitonga, who has effectively warned the main thing New Zealanders have to fear is fear itself.

In comparison, the Chinese version of the story appears less science-oriented, more confrontational and more overt in venting anger. In its story titled “Dealing with the Chinese delegation stupidly: even the cattle in Taranaki welcome the Chinese guests”, the *Capital Chinese News* (Apr. 17, 2003) confronted the Masterton mayor Bob Francis’s claim that the local residents were nervous about the expected arrival of the Chinese delegates. The newspaper went out of its way to interview the Masterton locals, most of whom were European New Zealanders, including those working at motels, hotels, gas stations, supermarkets and restaurants. It followed that people interviewed largely disagreed with the rejection of Chinese delegates. Particularly, Roger Maxwell, the former Minister of Immigration, said: “Somebody in the Masterton City Council has banned the Chinese delegation from the convention, whereas even the cattle in Taranaki welcome our guests.” (Translation mine) Based on these testimonies, the *Capital Chinese News* reporter contradicted the mayor’s rationale during a later interview with him. The *Capital Chinese News* story then ended in sarcasm:

What remains doubtful to us is how such an inconceivable decision can be made to
prohibit the so-called 'sister delegates' from attending the sister city conference? ... So what is the point of this conference? Is it a political drama, or does it indeed have any actual meanings? The mayor said Masterton’s greatest interest concerning its relationship with Changchun [Masterton’s sister city in China] lay in education, but there are only some 20 students from Changchun currently studying in Masterton. (Translation mine)

This Chinese-language piece relies on first-hand interviews. Unfortunately, the news credibility may well suffer following this approach. The ethnically European respondents would find it at least embarrassing to voice their support, if any, for the rejection of the Chinese delegation, to the Chinese-language newspaper. Put another way, the visual reminder of the 'ethnicity of the media' may make the interviewees resort to safe and easy rhetoric.

The sarcastic tone of the Capital Chinese News suggests the newspaper was a collateral victim of the event, with the Chinese delegation bearing the brunt. This was obviously not the case for the English-language media, hence the impartial and moderate stance they took. In fact, this case presents an abnormality where the Chinese-language media turn out to be polemical in dealing with New Zealand authorities. The norm, though, is a symbiosis between the officials and the media—the officials rely on the media for publicity among the ethnic groups and the media are after official endorsement.¹

Case 8: The Drinking Culture

In 2003, the New Zealand Herald launched a series of articles featuring the disadvantages as well as advantages of drinking. By and large, drinking was criticised, yet it received upbeat appraisal from the New Times Weekly, thus presenting a clash of two drinking cultures: the oriental and the occidental.

The Herald editorial on December 15, 2003 countered the notion held by people that

¹ The exemplar of such a symbiosis is the publication of complimentary letters from government officials and political leaders for special events such as the Chinese New Year and newspaper anniversaries. These letters normally occupy a priority in the placement of news items.
“unlimited drinking is somehow stylish” by saying:

Most people who drink too much are surprised when somebody tells them so. Under the influence they imagine they are urbane, witty, splendid company and, of course, that they can hold their liquor.

The truth, they should be told later, is that they were none of these things; the truth is they turned themselves into shambling, slack-jawed oafs. Drunkenness, they need to realise, deserves the worst term of approbation in the language of youth: drunkenness is boring.

Yet the “culture of moderation” promoted by the Herald article was challenged in the Chinese-language New Times Weekly (Dec. 18, 2004). In response to the Herald’s point that drinking was violence-provoking, unhealthy and unproductive in economic terms, the Weekly titled “I drink, therefore I am” argued from a humane point of view:

...Why do people 'torture' themselves with alcohol into someone with confused speaking and shambling walk? It seems hard to understand. But, if we ask contrarily, why we stick to the daily routines, such as working, eating and sleeping? Then it becomes obvious: this is what life is, we have to be like this. Then, this is the problem. Working, eating and sleeping are necessary, while drinking is optional. What is necessary is something forced upon us and therefore not of our choice; what is optional is, of course, freedom to choose. It is because of these choices that we possess more freedom and gain an unfettered human spirit. (Translation mine)

Then the argument continued from a cultural perspective:

Unfortunately, the western drinking culture is presented more as hedonism, an organic indulgence, and this probably contributes to the approbation, doesn’t it? There has been countless prohibitions out of religious purposes. Throughout the western literature, hardly any novelists or poets have come up with masterpieces out of drinking. For the western literature, alcohol is merely a transient and elusive metaphor.

... As far as the Chinese culture is concerned, there have been no large-scale prohibitions throughout history. Drinking has never had any seriously negative effects; more importantly, it has been enabling the Chinese literati to create a peerless drinking

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2 For instance, figures were revealed to prove the unproductive nature of drinking. In 2002, drinking cost the public health system $655 million. The liquor-caused death brought an annual loss of $5.5 billion to New Zealand in production and taxes, yet the alcohol trade only contributed $600 million a year (The New Zealand Herald, Dec. 15, 2003).
There are no classical Chinese poems inspired by drinking.

Therefore, after quoting several classical Chinese poems inspired by drinking, the article concluded:

The Orient and Occident perceive drinking differently. Through reasoning or emotion, the government and the media try to talk people out of drinking; yet regardless we drink. (Translation mine)

It has to be noted that the notion of 'culture' applied in these two articles has various connotations. The 'culture' the Herald talked about entails the social beliefs/habits people hold as true and take for granted in their daily lives; the 'culture' discussed by the Weekly refers to artistic traditions throughout history. Again, the Herald argumentation was more facts-based and focused in the present, while the Weekly tended to be emotional and history-sensitive.

Case 9: One News Insight—Immigration

A television discussion on immigration named "One News Insight: Immigration" was broadcast on TV One on the night of July 14, 2004. People of all walks, standpoints, and localities were gathered to have their say on the topic: "Do we need more immigrants?" This programme was later translated and published in the New Zealand Messenger front page, in order to "help our readers better understand the views held toward immigrants by New Zealanders" (New Zealand Messenger, July 21 2004). According to a poll synchronized with the television programme through phone calls and mobile texts, only 28.5 per cent of respondents agreed New Zealand needed more immigrants, while 71.5 per cent replied 'no' to the topic question. The follow-up story made the front page of the following issue of Messenger, featuring an interview with Christchurch mayor Garry Moore. Reportedly, the interview was provoked by a great response from the Chinese community after they read the previous Messenger story on that programme (New Zealand Messenger, Aug. 4 2004).

In the interview titled "Immigrants, both Christchurch and New Zealand need you",
Garry Moore discredited the figures of the One News Insight poll,

Please bear in mind that TV surveys are not representative. For example, the Christchurch council has recently surveyed people on a waste water disposal project. According to the initial outcome from the poll, we will have to spend $7 million more on the project. However, when 600 respondents were randomly approached and explained in detail about that project for about 1 hour, totally opposite conclusions were reached. Therefore, a balanced and correct analysis is crucial.

To me, this kind of TV programme is not only meaningless but also harmful to the harmony among various ethnic groups. Immigration should not be simplified as a yes-or-no, or black-or-white issue. Due to the nuances involved in this issue, the solution is far from a mere 'yes or no'; rather the answers are many and all-inclusive. That's why I say the programme is rubbish. ....

What I am saying is, who will join in such a poll in that TV programme? Some disaffected and bigoted individuals. Therefore I really doubt to what extent this programme represents the truth. (Translation mine)

Case 10: The Asian Image

The supposedly negative image of Asians in New Zealand created by the mainstream media was rejected by Ethnicity Affairs Minister Chris Carter in a feature story of the New Zealand Mirror on November 14, 2003. The reporter said:

Recently, there has been a lot of New Zealand Herald stories on international students, most of which were negative, such as stories on kidnapping and murder. We know that the media systems are different in New Zealand and China; sometimes the Chinese people are under the impression that the continued reportage on crimes committed by international students, Asian students in particular, is actually a government attitude. This [negative reportage] has resulted in a rise of racism. (Translation mine)

Chris Carter replied:

Concerning this, I think quite a lot of mainstream media outlets should be responsible for this misrepresentation. A strong impression has been left by the media to the public that the New Zealand government and society do not welcome overseas students and immigrants, and overseas students are trouble makers for New Zealand. But it is absolutely not the case. In scenic peaceful New Zealand, overseas student crimes are minimal considering the related population size. Asians make up 6.4 per cent of the New Zealand population, yet Asian crimes only occupy 2 per cent of overall crimes nationwide. .... In fact our surveys tell us Asians are the most peaceful ethnic group in
New Zealand, but you do not have this feeling when reading the New Zealand Herald. Personally, I think the western media have gone too far in commercialisation and attracting readers. (Translation mine)

In the two cases above, the Chinese-language media’s latent dissents were voiced indirectly through authoritative tones. The indirectness is probably due to the concern of credibility of the news over immigration, a controversial issue. Comments from interviewees produce an objective style for the Chinese-language media. Also, comments from authorities enhance news credibility.

Cases of conflicting views to the dominant culture suggest that the Chinese-language media are tactical in applying appropriate ways of confronting the authorities or mainstream media. For the less controversial Masterton case, the Capital Chinese News was aggressive and outspoken, especially when backed up by testimonies from its own interviewees. The issue of drinking culture is controversial, yet not so sensitive, especially when the Weekly commented from an artistic point of view. When it comes to a controversial and delicate immigration issue, the Messenger and Mirror were careful to remain at least ostensibly objective while dropping a hint as to their views.

Conclusion
Cases of Chinese-specific information, alternative perspectives and conflicting views to the dominant culture have so far been studied. Chinese-specific information, including parts of information and brand-new agenda, involves the readers and satisfies their need of homeland connection. This information serves exclusively the readers of Chinese-language media, or rather, non-mainstream readers. The information flow between the Chinese and English-language media is hardly existent.

In contrast, the confrontational cases point to media that are more responsive to the mainstream. By contradicting the existing mainstream views where necessary, the media exhibit their self-righteousness, boldness in expressing conflicting views,
resources in establishing and defending their opposing views. Through either face-to-face confrontation as in Case 7 or citations from official sources as in Case 9 and 10, the Chinese-language media manage to voice dissents of the community to the wider society.

However, the extent to which the Chinese-language media are opposing can be compromised by language barriers. The key problem is: can the opposing views raised by the Chinese-language media always be heard by the mainstream? After all, an opposing view is expressed in the expectation that the other side can be at least informed, if not persuaded. Only when the answer is ‘yes’ can dialogues be possible and conflicting views to the dominant culture be effective. Otherwise, the opposing views are degraded into self-soothing monologues. Jonathan Zhang (July 29 2004: interview), author of the New Times Weekly editorials on New Zealand current affairs (including the article on drinking culture), admitted there was a fissure in the communication with the mainstream:

Writing the Weekly editorials is only an abreaction. It is monologue. I do not think what I write can change anything, it is only a demonstration of my freedom of expression.

It [my commentary] may seem to be an attempt to communicate with the mainstream, but the communication is actually impossible due to the language barriers and the culturally marginalised status of the Chinese. Even if the mainstream have the access to our views, they disdain to understand.3 (Translation mine)

Newsroom routines are also in the way to such dialogues. Heavy workloads and pressures of coping with deadlines have restricted any translation of Zhang’s works, or the likes, for the mainstream’s information. A viable way is yet to be found to enable the two-way information flow of opposing views, which is crucial to the social impact and, ultimately, legitimacy of the opposition.

3 This supposition of the mainstream in the last sentence of citation was rooted in Jonathan Zhang’s personal involvement with the New Zealand Herald. He had written about ten reader’s letters to the New Zealand Herald and received no publication. Since then, he realised that English-language media were not interested in non-mainstream views (Jonathan Zhang, July 29 2004: interview).
The cases on alternative perspectives show Chinese-language media being proactive in communicating with the mainstream. The media took the first move and create opportunities for dialogues. As shown in case 6, the *New Zealand Mirror* enquiries and the *New Zealand Messenger* seminar enabled the voices from both mainstream and the Chinese community to be heard by each other. The concerns of the Chinese gained mainstream awareness and feedback through the platform of information exchange. Meanwhile, the mainstream, mayoral candidates in this case, could be influenced, based on the distinctive perspectives addressed to them.

Various aspects of the media alternativeness are manifested by Cases 4, 5 and 6. The Asian-centredness mentioned early in Chapter 4 of content analyses is substantiated by the distinctive way the media presented NCEA; the appointment of Kenneth Wang; and the local body elections. The media presentation of these mainstream issues is invariably shaped by a Chinese perspective and reflects the vested interest of the ethnic Chinese. However, this presentation through the mediation of an alternative angle is reserved for the ethnic minority. Only the media interventions by the *New Zealand Mirror* and *New Zealand Messenger* are indicative of an alternativeness that is proactive, bilateral and participatory. Communication with mainstream society, therefore, is vital for Chinese-language media to be a genuine form of alternative media. Only when their distinctive perspectives are made known to mainstream society may the alternative media regarded as such, otherwise the recognition remains inside the ethnic community only and lacks its social legitimacy.
SECTION 3

Idiosyncrasies
Chapter 6

Dynamics of Media Identity

In 2004, in order to attract potential overseas students from China, the New Zealand Education Ministry designed a guide to life in New Zealand for distribution among the Chinese students. Included was a glossary of New Zealand slang to help them understand New Zealanders.

The short original story in the *Dominion Post* (Apr. 6, 2004) on that issue was translated into a *New Zealand Mirror* (Apr. 16, 2004) article, nearly verbatim. Yet a tiny modification in the Chinese version exhibits interesting implications. The guide’s introduction to New Zealand culture went as follows in the *Dominion Post* story:

New Zealanders are relaxed types who dress informally and cannot be relied on to turn up on time, the guide says. We love sport, especially rugby, and we hate people spitting or littering in our streets. (Bold font added by me)

In the *New Zealand Mirror*, it was reworded into:

New Zealanders are relaxed types. They dress informally; they cannot be relied on to turn up on time; they love sport, especially American football; and they hate people spitting or littering. (My translation and bold font added by me)

The mistranslation of rugby as American football is trivial. More significant is the paper’s use of “we” or “they” when referring to New Zealanders. By “we”, the *Dominion Post* assumes its readers to be prototype New Zealanders who are English-speaking and culturally ‘kiwi’, vis-à-vis the students in China who are Chinese-speaking and culturally Chinese. Even though the *Mirror* editors, together with the targeted readers, are based in New Zealand, speak English, and are at least in part culturally ‘kiwi’, they keep a distance from being the prototype (mainstream) New Zealanders by using ‘they’. The rewording, then, is a manifestation of filtering the original information through the paper’s sense of identity.

Having compared Chinese-language media with the English-language media in terms of media content and individual cases in part 2, this study now focuses on the idiosyncrasies of the Chinese-language media in their own right. The varying sense of cultural and political identity is a most salient feature of the Chinese-language media
in New Zealand. In a sharp contrast to the mainstream English-language media’s seemingly unanimous identification with whatever is ‘Kiwi’, the sense of identity held by the Chinese-language media is far more diverse and dynamic, reflecting the diverse and dynamic nature of the Chinese community in New Zealand.

The media can be categorised as China’s media in New Zealand; New Zealand media in the Chinese-language; and the Chinese-language media of New Zealand.¹ In the following discussion, the term ‘Chinese-language media based in New Zealand’ is applied where necessary to encompass the latter two categories. It has to be noted though, the boundaries between these three categories are often blurred. They are classified as such, only to facilitate the discussion in this chapter. After probing these categories, an assessment is made as to the way the Chinese-language media’s identification might evolve in the future.

**China’s media in New Zealand**

Back in 1921, the first Chinese-language newspaper by the Chinese in New Zealand, *Man Sing Times*, avowed in the very first issue its whole-hearted allegiance to China in its struggle towards republicanism. Most conspicuous is the signifier “our country”, repeatedly applied by the newspaper to refer to China, rather than New Zealand. Also, China’s news was called “domestic news” by the newspaper. This China-centred keynote set up by the *Man Sing Times* dominated the Chinese-language newspapers that followed, and only intensified during the Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945). The *New Zealand Chinese Weekly News* of 1937, for example, donated as much of its revenue as possible to China in the war. This China-centred keynote did not subside until the end of the Second World War and the inception of the acculturation of the New Zealand Chinese during the 1950s to mid-1980s.

Taking into account the war-time background wherein China was struggling for survival, this keynote is well justified. Yet an impression is inevitably left when one reads the Chinese-language newspapers of that day that the connection made by the newspapers to New Zealand, the host country, was tenuous compared with that to

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¹ ‘China’s media’ encompass media in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau. However, not all Chinese-language media available in New Zealand through transnational technologies are from China. Other Chinese-speaking countries such as Singapore and the Chinese diaspora in countries other than New Zealand may have their media accessible in New Zealand as well.
China, so much so that the newspapers would appear as China’s newspapers which only happened to be published in New Zealand. Except for sporadic local news, there are no more further indications significant enough to mark any of their New Zealand identification. Therefore, despite the fact that these newspapers were based in New Zealand, they were essentially China’s media overseas, just as the party of Chinese Republicans (Kuomintang Party) in New Zealand and Australia, the founder of the *Man Sing Times*, was an overseas branch of the same party in China.

However, the upsurge of China’s media in New Zealand soon lost its momentum with the end of the war and did not revive until the inception of the globalisation age backed up by transnational communication technologies. From the new millennium onwards, China’s media have been accessible on an extensive and simultaneous basis in not only New Zealand but every corner of the globe, thanks to the internet and satellite television. Media of traditional transmission means, such as radio and print, have remained available at the same time. For the first time, media from China have had real time transmission in New Zealand on a large scale, and since the media are based in China, they are China’s media in the full sense, compared with the war-time predecessors like the *Man Sing Times*.

The consumers, most of whom are sojourners and new immigrants in New Zealand, come to obtain a direct and regular supply of news from their country of origin, thus maintaining and strengthening their homeland connections and identifications. Apart from the Chinese-language media based in New Zealand, China’s media constitute an important portion of people’s consumption of Chinese-language media in New Zealand. The online live broadcast of the Chinese Spring Festival Gala produced by Chinese Central Television (CCTV) provides a prime example. Widely regarded as a ‘must-see’ at the Chinese New Year’s Eve, this television show has been attracting hundreds of millions every year, including those outside China. In 2005, three online entries were provided by CCTV for overseas users to watch the gala, in addition to the satellite channels available with the programme running. Hence, the Chinese people’s most important festival is observed both in China and overseas, through the synchronised and televised media experience. This makes good sense to the ethnic Chinese in New Zealand, taking into account Asian households’ higher percentage
(62 per cent) of access to the internet over other ethnicities (Statistics New Zealand, 2001).

Secondly, for the Chinese-language media based in New Zealand, China’s media are important content suppliers. David Soh (July 28, 2004: interview), managing director of the Mandarin Pages, said newspaper clippings from Hong Kong contributed greatly to the editing of his newspaper in its early days at the start of the 1990s. When the internet became available but had yet to gain its full swing, online access to China’s media actually acted as an impetus to the starting of a Chinese-language newspaper in New Zealand. Take the Wellington Home Voice for example. In 1998, the Home Voice was started to ‘reprint’ on paper China’s online news and fill up the gap between the high demand for China’s news and its low availability due to the unpopularity of the internet (Kevin Zeng, July 8, 2004: interview). In respect to broadcasting, the availability of Cantonese radio programmes from Hong Kong had prompted the establishment of the Chinese Voice radio station in 2004 (Samson Yau, August 13, 2004: interview).

Today, five years into the new century, China’s media online remain an indispensable source for editorials of the New Zealand-based Chinese-language media. Specifically, the newspapers’ reliance on the internet for news, especially China’s news, has led Jerry Yang (August 12, 2004: interview), editor-in-chief of the New Zealand Chinese Herald, to ridicule the newspaper as “a paper version of online publications.” Fifteen out of the 19 Chinese-language media outlets I interviewed—newspapers, radio and television stations as well as websites—said they relied on China’s media for news, either through authorisations or cooperation with media in China.

China’s media under discussion fit into the category of transnational media in the triology of mainstream media of the settled country, transnational media and the diasporic/ethnic media (see Figure 2.1). What is more, the media content can be adopted, edited, and transferred into that of the Chinese-language media based in New Zealand. However, from the point of view of the consumers in New Zealand, they are not particularly catered for by China’s media available in New Zealand. After all, overseas Chinese are but a minority niche when compared with the Chinese living in
China. It is the Chinese-language media of New Zealand and New Zealand media in the Chinese-language that meet the demands of this niche.

**Chinese-language media of New Zealand**

*A tale of two countries*²

Most of the Chinese-language media based in New Zealand fall into the category of the Chinese-language media of New Zealand, which presents a mixture of identification with China and New Zealand. On the one hand, China's news remains an important element of the media repertoire and China remains the country the media identify with. On the other hand, the Chinese-language media of New Zealand pay heed to New Zealand issues and endeavour to increase their input in the mainstream society, as shown by Case 6 on local body elections in the previous chapter.

Yet what stands in the way of the media's attempted identification with New Zealand is a lack of sophistication in understanding and presenting New Zealand issues. Generally, the translation of existing reports from the English-language media remains the main approach for the Chinese-language media to cover New Zealand issues. This lack of sophistication is also reflected by the scarcity of Chinese-language editorials on New Zealand issues available for content analyses in Chapter 4. Editorials on New Zealand issues are a touchstone through which the media's localisation level and sense of New Zealand identity can be tested. New Zealand-specific editorials demand language skills, social contacts as well as professional expertise from the media to be able to comment. The *New Times Weekly* provides the only regular editorials on New Zealand issues. Although several others such as the *New Zealand Chinese Herald, New Zealand Chinese Bizlink*, and *New Zealand Messenger* do have similar spaces for such issues from time to time, their commentary tends to be cursory.

Steven Young (July 13, 2004: interview), the president of the New Zealand Chinese Association (NZCA), and an ethnic Chinese who came to New Zealand in his

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² It must be noted that a certain Chinese-language media outlet in New Zealand does not necessarily identify with China as its homeland country. This applies to the Mandarin Pages and Iball, for example, which are run by Malaysian and Singaporean Chinese respectively. However, due to the fact that the vast majority of the media are in the hands of people originally from China, the dichotomy of New Zealand and China is employed for the discussion of identity issues.
childhood and received a western education and way of life, sees the media as incapable of interpreting the political system in New Zealand for new immigrants and students as readers. The treatment of the Opposition and the Government by the media to Young illustrates this incapability. Young (ibid.) argues that the Chinese-language media fail to understand the role of the Opposition in a western democratic system, and the media seem to be more interested in fawning to the incumbent government. Likewise, the Chinese mindset of the media is also viewed as an obstacle to the ethnic Chinese’s acculturation to the mainstream society by Shibo Zhang (August 2, 2004: interview), the ethnic co-ordinator for Hon. Chris Carter.

This lack of sophistication is based on the newness of the Chinese-speaking community, the majority of which is composed of new immigrants and sojourners such as overseas students. The process of understanding and identification with New Zealand is, and has to be, time-consuming. Beyond that, considering the attempts made so far by the Chinese-language media of New Zealand not only to cover but also to be involved in local issues, a growing maturity and identification with New Zealand can be anticipated in the near future.

More significantly, seen from the alternative media’s point of view, sometimes it is precisely the media’s misapprehension of New Zealand issues that creates intriguingly plural approaches to these issues. Take the *New Zealand Mirror*, for example, when it questioned the mayoral candidates in 2004 regarding their views on the issue of the separation/unification of mainland China and Taiwan. Most candidates were embarrassed and their answers seemed circumlocutory on that topic. The fact that local politicians may not be in the position to comment on diplomacy was not appreciated by the newspaper. Yet for the readers, an interesting knot was thus tied between a New Zealand local issue and a Chinese issue that is of longstanding interest. After all, "opinion statuses" are one component of identity (Wei Djiao, 2002). The misapprehension is a Chinese way of speculating on New Zealand issues and ultimately, identifying with New Zealand. By covering and being engaged in New Zealand issues, the media exhibit their own way of identification with New Zealand. Furthermore, their alternative perspectives (Chinese mindset) not only reveal their Chinese identification, but recast the understanding of New Zealand. They present a re-identification of New Zealand. In like manner, a New Zealand perspective of the
media could well impose on a re-identification with China. Yet this re-identification remains a potential rather than a reality, in that the New Zealand perspective of the media is still too immature and discrete to shape the media’s thinking on China’s issues. Also, the Chinese-language media’s easy recourse to China’s media for news from China has retarded the application of the New Zealand perspective. In terms of the Chinese identification, the media in question are more like overseas extensions than “the periphery as the centre” (Tu Wei-ming, 1991). This also attests to the inequality of identifications of the media: the Chinese identity is innate, preponderant and mature, while the New Zealand identity is yet to gain its full strength.

**New Zealand media in the Chinese-language**

In Chapter 4 of content analyses, the *Capital Chinese News* was compared with the *New Zealand Mirror* in terms of the sense of identity. It followed that the former newspaper identifies more with New Zealand, which could be seen through the high percentage of white New Zealanders as its main story actors. What cannot be revealed by the content analyses though, is the signifiers which are used by the media to mark their identities. The phrase “our country” has been repeatedly applied by the *Capital Chinese News* in its news to signify New Zealand. Nick Wang (July, 2004: interview), the *Capital Chinese News* proprietor who immigrated from China in the 1990s, claims to be a New Zealander with a sense of belonging to New Zealand. Of sharp contrast to this is the reluctance of other media to follow suit. To them, the China-centred keynote set by the *Man Sing Times* in the 1920s has weakened, but is still evident. When the phrase “our country” is applied by them, it means China. Alternatively, some may prefer to refer to these two countries directly as ‘New Zealand’ and ‘China’ to avoid ambiguity and controversy.

Apart from the *Capital Chinese News, Iball*, a Christchurch-based newspaper, identifies with New Zealand in a different way, this time through its editorial focus. It concentrates on representing ethnic Asian communities in New Zealand, and aims to “bridge the cultures”. Initially, it was totally in English, but went bi-lingual by adding a Chinese-language version to its stories. The paper’s predominantly localised orientation determines its New Zealand identity, although again this identity is mediated and recast by an ethnic Asian perspective.
The *Capital Chinese News* and *Iball* are the only existing media outlets that fall into the category of New Zealand media in the Chinese-language, because their identification with New Zealand, embedded in the wording and editorials, is their primary and defining feature. Compared with this, their usage of the Chinese-language seems less distinct. The *Chinese Weekly*, a *New Zealand Herald* subsidiary started in 1992, would have qualified for this category as well, had it not ceased in 1998.

However, there exists a dilemma for the media in question: can they be New Zealand media and be in Chinese-language at the same time? Considering the underlying role language plays in the establishment and maintenance of a national identity (Anderson 1983), the prospect of co-existence of these two factors seems bleak. However, the primacy of language in the identification process is contradicted by Kenneth Wang (August 2, 2004: interview), the ACT Chinese MP. For Wang, whether one is assimilated (or acculturated) into New Zealand depends on whether one spends his/her life in the country, regards New Zealand as his/her place, establishes his/her family in New Zealand and makes a contribution to the country. Wang thus argues that an elderly new immigrant can still be regarded as assimilated, if he/she speaks no English but is willing to understand and care about New Zealand through the education of the Chinese-language media. On the contrary, if a new immigrant speaks perfect English, but only comes to the country to take advantage of the social welfare system and emigrates again years later, he/she certainly is not assimilated. It is the ethos, instead of language, that defines assimilation, Wang concludes. Wang’s remarks on new immigrants’ assimilation, or rather, identification, can well be recast for the media in question. A Chinese-language media outlet is ‘Kiwi’ on the grounds that it takes the initiative to understand New Zealand and endeavours to immerse its readers/audiences in what it believes is ‘Kiwi’, even though Chinese remains the language principally used by the media. Thus, the dilemma could be resolved by downplaying the importance of language and arguing for the compatibility of the Chinese-language and the New Zealand identity.

Nonetheless, to resolve the dilemma completely, a rethinking of the notion of ‘the New Zealand identity’ per se is required. The discussion on the media’s identification has in fact opened up a chance to reflect on the ongoing debate about the New
Zealand identity. Specifically, what are the criteria of the New Zealand identity? Or rather, is being ‘Kiwi’ a matter of individual perception or of social recognition? The Chinese’s identification with New Zealand discussed above is unsolicited and self-perceived, but it is hardly realised and recognised by the mainstream society due to factors such as language barriers. However, Kenneth Wang’s argument for self-perception is justified, in the sense that cultural identification is not so straightforward and discernable as political identification (for example, possession of passports). Instead, it almost certainly involves struggle, confusion, adjustment and adaptation, which are individual-specific and are best to be evaluated on a personal basis. Of course, outside circumstances such as the “reception and opportunity given by the host country” and China’s continuous influence (Wing Chung Ng, 1998: 212) are also relevant in the formation of the Chinese identification with New Zealand.

Does the New Zealand identity automatically conjure up prototypical images such as the traditional Westminster political structures, the capitalist economy and the prevalence of western and Polynesian cultures? Rather, during New Zealand’s gradual transition from a bicultural society to a multicultural one (Lincoln Tan, October 11, 2004: email correspondence), new factors such as the Chinese language and the culture it represents can also be blended into the overall image. The examination of the identification of the Chinese-language media has pointed to a New Zealand identity that is dynamic, flexible and open to new conceptions and definitions.

**Divisive Political Identifications**

The way Chinese-language media in New Zealand identify with China is far more complicated than the way they identify with New Zealand. There are distinct and even conflicting political identifications. Pro-mainland China (one China) vis-à-vis pro-Taiwan (Taiwanese independence), and pro-communism vis-à-vis pro-western democracy present the ramifications. In the snapshot of 23 media outlets in Chapter 3 (excluding online outlets), 10, or 43 per cent are pro-mainland China/pro-communism (left-wing); 5, or 21 per cent are pro-Taiwan/pro-western democracy (right-wing) and 7, or 30 per cent are neutral. The trichotomy of the left-wing, right-wing and middle-ground introduced in Chapter 2 fits well in the New Zealand context.
Interestingly, among the 10 media outlets from the opposing sides I interviewed (all of them are included in the snapshot), only 3 of them declared themselves to be on one side of the opposing dichotomy, with the others, 7, invariably claiming to be neutral. In other words, in the discourse chosen by the media, they preferred to be referred to as neutral or objective. This is protective rhetoric, of course, but the actual boundaries between the opposing media are not strictly rigid. On the one hand, the left-wing media keep a deliberate distance from being ‘China’s official media overseas’ in introducing opposing views where necessary. As a result, conflicting ideologies are likely to be presented in the same piece of news, indicating a balanced way of story-telling (see, for example, the New Zealand Mirror Oct. 31 2003; Feb. 9 2005). On the other hand, China’s official media are also being cited by the right-wing media. The pro-Taiwan Independence Daily, for example, has relied on Chinese official news agencies for its China news pages. These variations are a reminder that the conflicting media are not always poles apart. The extent to which the media are at odds hinges on factors such as the size of opposing communities and the dynamics of Chinese/New Zealand identification. For example, both newspapers in Christchurch are pro-mainland China where some 70 per cent of the ethnic Chinese are of a mainland China origin (Helena Wang, September 1, 2004: interview). In contrast, the Chinese-language newspapers in New Zealand had been mainly pro-Taiwan until the influx of new immigrants from mainland China. In terms of the identity dynamics, a stronger identification as New Zealand media in the Chinese-language (Helena Wang, September 1, 2004: interview, Eric Yuan, September 3, 2004: interview) would certainly involve a stronger tint of neutrality when it comes to China’s issues.

More importantly, objectivity is desirable in commercial terms, for the sake of maintaining “the largest possible audience by alienating the fewest consumers” (Neuman at el, 1992). This role has been at work for the Chinese-language media already. Due to its anti-communism stance, the New Times Weekly attracted no advertising from those who do business with mainland China (Chen Weijian, July 29, 2004: interview). Likewise, no Taiwanese advertisers put their advertisements on the pro-mainland China Asian Voice (Steven Wong (b), August 10, 2004: interview).

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3 These ten media outlets are: the Home Voice Chinese Weekly News, New Times Weekly, Asian Voice, The Independence Daily, New Zealand Chinese Herald, New Zealand Messenger, New Zealand Mirror, TCTV, AM990, and CFM. Only the first three outlets clearly express themselves to be on one side of the opposing dichotomy.
The media’s conflicting political identifications typify the plurality of the Chinese-speaking community, especially in terms of places of origin and political orientations. The plural political identifications of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand are largely seen by critics as positive. Xiaoming Huang (July 14, 2004: interview) and Shibo Zhang (August 2, 2004: interview), for example, argue that it is healthy to have different views from the media. Indeed, not only different views, but divergent ideologies are represented by the Chinese-language media in New Zealand, leaving people to make informed decisions with all these perspectives in place.

**Summing up: the identity flow**

![Diagram of the identity flow](image)

Figure 6.1 The Identity Dynamics of the Media and Community

How does the media identification function? As in Figure 6.1, the identity of the ethnic Chinese community in New Zealand (the sphere in Figure 6.1) is composed of an identification with New Zealand and with China. The Chinese identity (the lower hemisphere in Figure 6.1) can be subdivided into a few fractions, based on various political orientations of, or dialects/scripts used by, the ethnic Chinese. Within this Chinese identity, there are flows between these fractions.

This identification with China interacts with the identification with New Zealand (the upper hemisphere in Figure 6.1), which exerts input into the ongoing shaping of the New Zealand identity (signified as ‘wider society’ in Figure 6.1). For the wider
society, the media/community’s Chinese identity may appear inscrutable, due to its linguistic and cultural specialties. That is why the input from the Chinese identity (the lower hemisphere) flows into the mainstream through the mediation of the New Zealand identity (the upper hemisphere), instead of exerting its influence directly on the outside. This indirect flow can be facilitated by the community’s communication with the wider society, which takes place either on a personal (daily conversations and anecdotal experiences) or a institutional level (media interventions, such as the New Zealand Messenger seminar in Case 6 in Chapter 5). In the New Zealand Mirror question cited early, the mainland China/Taiwan issue belongs to the Chinese identity. When incorporated into the question list for the mayoral candidates, it is then transferred into an identification with New Zealand that is mediated by the Chinese identity. By the time the question is answered, this mediated identification has flown out into the wider society. However, not all aspects of the Chinese identity flow into the wider society. It is a matter of fact that much of the Chinese identity remains too specific to be shared by the wider society. Cases detailed in Chapter 5 such as Chinese-specific topics provide such an example. Translatable perspectives not yet translated, such as the New Times Weekly editorials, are practically exclusive to insiders in the Chinese community as well.

Similar to print-capitalism in the promotion of vernaculars in modern nationalism (Anderson, 1983), the Chinese-language media have contributed to an imagined Chinese community with the distinct language they use and the Chinese identity the language arouses. Apart from the media in discussion, equally at work in the construction of the imagined Chinese community are other social bodies such as Chinese organisations, Chinese-language schools and religious institutions (Yasui Sankichi, 1998; Zhu Huiling, 1998; Ip, 2003c). They consolidate and embody values held as common within the imagined community.

**Conclusion and Prospect**

The study of the identity of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand is based on the contrived three-strata identity spectrum: China’s media in New Zealand; Chinese-language media of New Zealand; and New Zealand media in the Chinese-language. They can be regarded as, respectively, transnational media, diasporic media and ethnic media. The picture of the media’s identification is diverse and dynamic. The
media vacillate between identifying with New Zealand and with China, and vary in terms of their political identifications with mainland China/Taiwan, or with communism/western democracy. These identifications are in constant transition. Eventually, this diverse and dynamic picture mirrors the diverse and dynamic nature of the ethnic Chinese community in New Zealand.

In what direction will the dynamics of media identification evolve? Firstly, it is widely believed that the transition from the *Hua Qiao* to *Hua Ren* society is a general trend for the Chinese overseas (Cheng Manli 2001: 147). With the establishment of the Chinese community in New Zealand, it is anticipated that the media’s identification with New Zealand will be on the rise, most notably evidenced by the continuous localisation of media editorials, as well as the media’s improved understanding of New Zealand. This is especially the case for the Chinese-language media of New Zealand and New Zealand media in the Chinese-language.

Secondly, the rise of the New Zealand identity will not jeopardise, but will call for, a re-identification with China (or Asia) among the Chinese. The rationale is that identification with New Zealand includes a realisation of the close relationship between New Zealand and Asia, or rather, New Zealand’s growing identification as a Asian-Pacific nation (see, for example, *New Zealand Herald*, Nov. 28 2003). In a sense, it can be said the Chinese identity is becoming an integral part of the New Zealand identity, especially in an age when Asia (China) and New Zealand are so inextricably being bound together by geo-economics. With the growing contemporary transnationalism, namely the inter-flow of information (including transnational media), commodities, capital and people (new immigrants and overseas students, for example) between these two regions (Ip, 2003b), the re-identification with China will be constantly fostered. The dormancy of Chinese-ness back in the 1950s to 1980s, as addressed in Chapter 3, will not return. The media concerned are in an advantaged position to call upon their Asian (Chinese) resources, therefore reinforcing their identification with Asia (China).

Last but not least, from the media’s point of view, it is the interdependence of both identities—New Zealand and China—that legitimises their existence as such. Without the identification with New Zealand, the media cannot take root in the host soil and
develop in the long run; without the identification with China, the media will let slip the chance of taking part in the ongoing process of rethinking the New Zealand identity.
Chapter 7

The Free-of-charge Model and Alliance with Elites

“In practice, it is the advertisers who are the de facto editors-in-chief.”

Jerry Yang (August 12 2004: interview), editor-in-chief of the New Zealand Chinese Herald, mocks when describing the encroachment of advertisements on the editorial of his newspaper. Despite the prescribed ‘half-and-half’ policy concerning the balance between advertisements and editorials, the latter have to give way to the former from time to time.

When compared to the other major Chinese-language papers based in Auckland, however, the New Zealand Chinese Herald has every reason to feel proud. The front pages of the Chinese Express and New Times Weekly do not have any news items but are wholly occupied by advertisements. The New Zealand Chinese Herald used to be so too. However, it later shifted to a more news-driven front page. In fact, the predominance of advertisements and the subsequent shrinkage of editorial content have led the New Times Weekly to admit that it is not a newspaper in the strict sense (Chen Weijian, July 29, 2004: interview).

The front page typifies the problems of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand, especially those following a free-of-charge model. This chapter delves into the commercial orientation of the media, the free-of-charge media in particular, which comprise the majority of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand. What consequences does the free-of-charge model have on the media in terms of news quality? Further, Atton (2002: 4) argues that alternative media are about “offering the means for democratic communication to people who are normally excluded from media production”. In what way, then, is this ethos of empowering the unprivileged affected by the structured alliance of the media with elites?

Coming to terms with the commercial media

In general terms, the term ‘commercial media’ refers to media which are run as a business or industry for profit, and follow a corporate way of organisation and
operation. Commenced in a deregulated setting, all Chinese-language media in New Zealand are commercial media in private hands. Some of them are the sole or prime businesses of the media owners. All paid-for media outlets, such as the Independent Daily, AM990 radio and World TV, plus some free-of-charge media like the Mandarin Pages and New Times Weekly are examples. They are largely self-sufficient and commercially profitable. The others, all of which are free-of-charge, are subsidiaries of non-media mother businesses. They rely on the mother business to remain sustainable. The following chart is an illustration of the typology of selected Chinese-language media outlets in New Zealand.¹

¹ The information provided in the chart is largely derived from my interviews with media owners in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch from July 2004 to December 2004. The credibility, however, is open to question. The situations may have changed over time; more importantly, the interviewees may have chosen not to offer clear answers when asked about their business statuses. This tendency has made it difficult to come up with definite answers to queries such as if the media in question are main or side businesses. For more information on the media outlets above, refer to the 'snapshot' section in Chapter 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media outlets</th>
<th>Paid-for?</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Profitable?</th>
<th>Business Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Mandarin Pages</em></td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Prime business</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>School, property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chinese Express</em></td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>New Times Weekly</em></td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Prime business</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Printery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>New Zealand Chinese Herald</em></td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Immigration Consultancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Independent Daily</em></td>
<td>Paid-for</td>
<td>Prime business</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>New Zealand Chinese Bizlink</em></td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Side business</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Finance Consultancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Asian Voice</em></td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Side business</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Food Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chinese Business Times</em></td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Side business</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Finance Consultancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Chinese Times</em></td>
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<td>Prime business</td>
<td>Leveled</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Capital Chinese News</em></td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Home Voice</em></td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Leveled</td>
<td>Department Store</td>
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<td><em>New Zealand Mirror</em></td>
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<td>Prime business</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Education &amp; Immigration Consultancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>New Zealand Messenger</em></td>
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<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chinese Life</em></td>
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<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Finance &amp; Education Consultancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>International Student Press</em></td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Side business</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Language school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>World TV</em></td>
<td>Paid-for</td>
<td>Prime business</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Golden Raindrop TV</em></td>
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<td><em>AM990</em></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chinese Voice Broadcasting</em></td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Dealership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>180.co.nz Chinese Online</em></td>
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<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.1 Typology of Chinese-language media in New Zealand

The prevalence of the free-of-charge model stands out as an important feature of the Chinese-language media. In the above table, 6 out of 8 media outlets as prime
businesses, and all 5 media outlets as side businesses, are free-of-charge. The free-of-charge media form the majority of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand.

**Free-of-charge: concerns for journalism**

Free-of-charge media encompass free-to-air broadcasting outlets, as well as free-of-charge print media.² The era of free-of-charge Chinese-language media was ushered in by the *Mandarin Pages*. In 1993, the *Mandarin Pages* started as the first free-of-charge newspaper to compete with *Sing Tao Daily*, the then dominating and paid-for Chinese-language newspaper.³ Years later, the *Sing Tao Daily* ceased due to the withdrawal of its Hong Kong investment. The free-of-charge approach survived and thrived, especially in the print media territory.

One significant implication of the free-of-charge model is the “low entry barrier” for the newcomers (David Soh, July 28, 2004: interview). In an unregulated New Zealand setting, new players can start a newspaper without owning any printery or holding any licence (David Soh, July 28, 2004: interview). Today, the average cost for one issue of a newspaper ranges from $5,000 to $11,000, which is not out of reach for a number of companies, especially given the expectation that advertising turnover will offset the costs.

As a result, competitors in the media territory abound, and accordingly the advertising rate has plummeted over time. The tendency for the rate to fall intensifies, as advertising revenue is the only source of income for most media outlets. Accordingly, advertising becomes the battlefield for media’s survival. This is especially the case for newspapers in Auckland where most of the ethnic Chinese dwell. A full-page colour advertisement in the *Chinese Business Pages* used to earn $1000 for the publisher in 2002, when there were few competitors. The rate dropped to $400 just two years later, with rivals such as *The Chinese Directory* and *New Zealand Chinese Travel Guide* vying for market share (Chen Eryou, July 29, 2004: interview). Likewise, the

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² These papers are free to take away. The only exception is that they may charge for subscriptions.
³ However, this is not to say that the *Mandarin Times* is the first ever Chinese-language newspaper that is free-of-charge in New Zealand. The *N.Z. Chinese Growers’ Monthly Journal* (1949-1972), for example, was not for-sale as well. The history of paid-for print media dated back to the 1930s. The *Q Sing Times*, for instance, increased its price to $1 to raise funds for China in the Sino-Japanese War. The *Mandarin Times*, therefore, is said to be the harbinger of the free-of-charge print media only in a contemporary sense.
advertising rate of the Mandarin Times in 1999 was double its standard in 2004 (David Soh, July 28, 2004: interview).

Increasing the quantity of advertisements, or rather, creating more space for advertisements, becomes imperative for the media faced with falling advertising rates. This is especially so for free-of-charge media, whose revenue depends solely on advertisements. Generally, increasing advertisements can be achieved in several ways. Advertisement-only papers can be initiated by newspapers as lucrative operations. Already there have been such papers in Auckland targeting the property and automobile markets, such as the Property Hotline by the Chinese Express and the Newtimes Automobile by the New Times Weekly. Work can be done on existing newspapers as well. Adding pages, accelerating the publishing frequency (such as the Mandarin Times and New Zealand Chinese Herald did in 2004), enlarging tabloids into broadsheets (such as the Capital Chinese News and New Zealand Mirror did in 2004) are alternative options to increase advertising capacity. More frequently and practically, however, squeezing news to make room for advertisements offers the most direct method for cutting budgets.

It is in this scenario that the quality of the media is at stake. Unfortunately, this is happening on a large scale. The New Times Weekly, for example, assigns 30 per cent of its content to news and 70 per cent to advertisements. In practice, the 30 per cent allocation may shrink to 20 per cent only. "Without hesitation, we will prefer advertisements to news if both clash for space. The survival of news hinges on advertisements" (translation mine), states Chen Weijian (July 29, 2004: interview), chief editor of the New Times Weekly. The same encounter by the New Zealand Chinese Herald has resulted in the remarks that opened this chapter. The Mandarin Pages is deemed as an 'advertising newspaper' in the first place. Quite a few interviewees see the Mandarin Pages's move in 2004 to become the first free-of-charge Chinese-language daily as merely a commercial strategy (for example, Kevin Zeng, 2004; Lisa Wang, July 29, 2004: interview; Jerry Yang, August 12 2004: interview), which could have meant a lot in journalistic terms. Indeed, the move to go daily was meant by the Mandarin Times to "reshuffle the Chinese-language newspapers and trigger elimination through competition" (Mandarin Times, Jun. 19, 2004, translation mine).
The encroachment on news space is most dramatically seen in the placement of news items by newspapers. Deviating from news norms, whereby the position of news items is prioritised, a news item is every now and then squeezed to the margin or even the bottom corner of a page, with the prime space taken up by advertisements.

The marginalisation of news does not suggest that the space left for news is purely preserved as such. ‘Soft advertisements’, or rather, advertorials make up a significant portion of the space bound for news. Language schools, finance agencies, and political parties are among these publicity-sensitive and content generating institutions for the newspapers. Columns are created for them to provide informational and analytical pieces, or news releases. For instance, the know-how of insurance, banking and property investment in New Zealand are very likely to be provided by corporate groups dealing with respective businesses. A New Zealand Mirror interview with the principal of a college was found only one page away from the advertisement of the same college in the same newspaper (New Zealand Mirror, Apr. 30 2004). Even AM990, a round-the-clock radio station, incorporates talk shows for advertisers to “talk about their products and services, and exchange their experiences with our audiences” (AM990, 2004), which bespeaks the permeation of advertorials throughout Chinese-language media. This use of the advertorial has been mutually beneficial for the media and advertisers in practice, in that it promotes the social profile of the advertisers in a way advertising cannot, and lessens the journalistic pressure of coming up with original stories at the same time.

Fervid pursuit of advertisements has also distracted the media from concentrating on news. The media’s heavy reliance on the internet and English-language media for overseas and New Zealand news, as mentioned in Chapter 6, is an indication of the media’s weakened news originality. The staffing of the media is revealing on this point as well. Among the 12 media outlets interviewed whose staffing was clear for a survey, 17 per cent had no news staff (be it reporting or editing). The majority of the outlets, 58 per cent, had one to three news staff. Only 25 per cent had more than three news personnel. Among the media outlets with more than three news staff, two of

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4 The media interviewed include both paid-for and free-of-charge media, and the news staff calculated include both full-timers and part-timers. The outlets with no news staff included Golden Raindrop TV and TCTV. 168.co.nz, AM990, the Asian Voice, Chinese Business Times, Mandarin Times, New
them were paid-for media. In sharp contrast, all nine media outlets with no more than three news staff were free-of-charge.

For media desperate for advertisements, strong editorial content, which imply a strong readership base, could be an advantage in attracting advertisers. The Mandarin Pages had intended to become a "genuine newspaper", but realised that this was unattainable: "If I tell the advertising spenders one day that I will increase the rate because my paper content is of high quality, they will not accept it." (David Soh, July 28, 2004: interview, translation mine) "Advertisers are incorrigibly spoiled" (Lisa Wang, July 29, 2004: interview, translation mine). For instance, no significant differences in advertising rates are observed between the free-of-charge New Times Weekly and the paid-for Independence Daily, both of which are Auckland-based.5

There is yet another way in which journalistic quality is affected. News credibility is undermined by the free-of-charge approach of the media in question. The systems of media accountability offer such an example. 'Media accountability' is an apparatus through which "society [might] call on journalists to account for their performance of the responsibilities given them" (Hodges, 1986). Meanwhile, "the media answer directly or indirectly to their society for the quality and or consequences of publication" (McQuail, 2000: 180). The letters section in newspapers can be such a sphere for media accountability, whereby comments on the media from the readers, and responses from the editors are published and exchanged. Such sections in the Chinese-language newspapers, however, are scarce, compared with the mainstream English-language counterparts.6

What is more, the Chinese-language media have not been involved in any voluntarily self-regulatory bodies, such as watchdogs. The Chinese Media Bureau (CMB), the

Zealand Chinese Herald and New Zealand Chinese Bizlink had 1 to 3 staff on news. WTV, the Independence Daily and Home Voice were outlets with 3 plus news staff.

5 In 2004, the quote for a colour full-front-page advertisement was $1,500 in the New Times Weekly. The counterpart for The Independence Daily was $1,980. However, these figures are for reference only. Steven Wong (Aug. 9 2004 (a) : interview) reveals that the actual rates for the Chinese-language newspapers may be lower than the quotes.

6 Given the smaller size of the reader population, this scarcity of letters pages in the Chinese-language media may be justified. Yet, considering that the English-language dailies manage to attract a wealth of readers' letters despite being published daily and most Chinese-language media fail to do so even though they are published weekly or bi-weekly, the extent to which the Chinese-language media take their initiatives to run the letters pages remains questionable.
only ethnic media member of the Advertising Standards Authority of New Zealand (ASA), was established in 2003, with the expectation to promote the credibility of the advertisements in the Chinese-language media and eventually help media attract more advertisements (Steven Wong (a) , Aug. 9 2004: interview). It is now the only watchdog for the media concerned, but this does not imply a promising prospect. No Chinese-language media outlets have yet joined the bureau. The membership fee of $6000 may loom as a major deterrent for the media who are still striving to win the battle for advertising. The voluntary nature of the CMB and ASA also contributes to the media’s indifference. For instance, Helena Wang (September 1, 2004: interview), managing director and editor of the New Zealand Messenger, challenges the credibility of the CMB by questioning who should have the right to regulate. Neither has the CMB received enough support from the media consumers. Even though there have been informal complaints from consumers, none of them have bothered to lodge formal complaints.

Beyond the advertising realm, the editorial content of the Chinese-language media is under the jurisdiction of the New Zealand Press Council and Broadcasting Standards Authority. But, this is only academic; the actual regulation is hardly at work due to the obvious language barriers (Steven Wong (a) , Aug. 9 2004: interview). A search into the rulings made by the Press Council and Broadcasting Standards Authority has resulted in no matches to Chinese-language media at the time of writing. The advertisements and editorial content of the Chinese-language media are unfettered by watchdogs, meaning that there are no structures in place to ensure their credibility and accountability.

As a result, the Chinese-language media have received negative reportage from the English-language mainstream media. For example, all mainstream media’s reportage on the Mandarin Pages and New Times Weekly is invariably concerned with problematic advertisements found in these two Chinese-language newspapers. The Mandarin Pages had reportedly advertised illicit movies, fake job offers, and even sexual entrapment. Advertisements about gambling skills can be found in the New Times Weekly as well. Another feature of the New Times Weekly is the illustrated pornography advertisements, which are not to be found in mainstream English-language newspapers. They are legal, but are at least unbecoming, if not ethically
deplorable, for a politics-sensitive and news-driven newspaper like the *New Times Weekly*. While these cases may seem extreme, the lack of advertisement filtering is commonplace in the Chinese-language media, according to Chen Weijian (July 29, 2004: interview), Chief Editor of the *New Times Weekly*. Chen explains that journalists have no resources to investigate the authenticity of advertisements.

**Business associations and alliance with elites**

As shown in Figure 7.1, most media proprietors have a non-media business background. In other words, the ownership of the media is also linked to the ownership of other businesses. For media as side businesses, their lifeblood is provided by these ‘mother businesses’. Without these businesses, there would not be so many media outlets in the first place. Moreover, a financially prosperous mother business can be the foundation for quality journalism. The *New Zealand Chinese Bizlink* based on an affluent financial consultancy company, for instance, is recognised among its peers for quality journalism, most dramatically manifested by its original front page stories and associated commentaries. The ‘luxury’ of quality journalism is, of course, maintained by the mother business. For other media outlets which are not so well funded, pursuit of advertising dollars remains the primary task. As shown earlier, this is to the detriment of quality journalism.

However, strong business associations have determined the uncritical nature of the Chinese-language media, especially those with business backgrounds. Chen Weijian (July 29, 2004: interview) argues that eulogising on local issues while evading negative issues is one of the similarities shared by all Chinese-language media in New Zealand. Even when it comes to negative issues that concern the Chinese community, the Chinese-language media tend to follow the mainstream media and seldom take the initiative to expose these issues (ibid.).

Another concern, apart from the uncritical nature of the media in question, comes from the media’s structured alliance with social elites. Advertisers, sponsors and

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7 This, of course, has something to do with the Chinese-language media’s reliance on the English-language media for news.
8 The media’s alliance with elites is not apparent, and even contrary to, the findings of the content analyses in Chapter 4 that the Chinese-language media are presenting the ethnic Asian in a diverse
business partners (corporate elites), government and political parties (political elites), as well as leaders of various interest groups (social elites) are given attention by the media. The Chinese-language media in question, along with the mainstream English-language media, are featured by this structured alliance. Knight (1982) argues that the bourgeois nature of the news determines its empathy with the privileged. That is to say, newsmen are institutionally inclined to resort to the sources which have "bureaucratic compatibility" such as "organizational structures, timetables" and "physical proximity" (Davis 2003). Furthermore, ownership, advertising and political pressure have consolidated the media’s position within the ideological infrastructure (Miliband 1969).

However, when it comes to the Chinese-language media, the 'structured alliance' is noticed less in the sense that media rely on elites as news sources. Worse still, the media wittingly create space for elites to generate news (mostly as advertorials), and even make up news to court them. The symbiosis first revealed in Chapter 5 of case studies, whereby the authorities rely on the media for publicity among the ethnic communities and the media chase official endorsement, is a solid proof of this structural alliance. Complimentary letters from government officials and political leaders have become the repertoire to celebrate events such as Chinese New Year and newspaper anniversaries. The *New Zealand Mirror* has carried out a series of high-profile ‘exclusive interviews’ with media celebrities from the Hong Kong-based Phoenix Television, which is one of its business partners. Likewise, immediately after the *Mirror* announced a partnership with one stakeholder as in-house news in its front page, the same stakeholder was interviewed for a feature story within the same issue (*New Zealand Mirror*, Feb. 20 2004). To a great extent, the media’s autonomous discretion to choose news on its own merit is compromised by the temptation to tailor news to suit the elites. This helps establish social relations and helps facilitate other businesses run by the media. This is how the media as ‘business card’ works.

Amidst the symbiosis between the media and the elites, the general public are overlooked. This is critical for the media concerned, which, as the ethnic minority-owned alternative media, are supposed to counterbalance the lack of representation manner. This is because only front pages and editorials of the media were covered by the content analyses while other pages did not count.
and remedy the stereotyping of the community by the mainstream media as evidenced in Chapter 4 of content analyses. The community is overlooked as the Chinese-language media fixate on the elites.

However, the media think otherwise. The elite approach is thought of highly by the *New Zealand Mirror*:

> We try to make the Chinese community known to mainstream society, which is composed of the common people and the elites. If we work on the masses, it can be costly in terms of expenditure, energy and resources and still, it does not work well. However, if we work on the elites, or rather, if we influence the influential, it will be much more cost-effective. Our exclusive interviews with the powerful, such as the Ministers, MPs, the Opposition, will also raise the profile of the newspaper back in China (Eric Yuan, September 3 2004: interview).

While the plan may sound plausible on a tactical level, it ultimately points to enhancing the profile of the newspaper in China. The newspaper’s objective is to represent the mainstream Chinese-language media in New Zealand, cooperate widely with the media and government in China, and facilitate its businesses with China (Eric Yuan, September 3 2004: interview). Influencing mainstream society by approaching the influential is but a means to this objective, not the objective per se.

**Impacts on the notion of alternative media**

It is the uncritical nature and the structured alliance with elites that cause most concerns for the notion of alternative media in democracy. In the New Zealand setting, the ethnic minority-owned alternative media play the role of watchdogs, checking and balancing the privileged and in particular, preventing any abuses to the disadvantaged ethnic minority group. Meanwhile, the ethnic minority-owned alternative media act as a platform where the information inter-flow is enabled: the Chinese community and the wider society get to know each other better. The media in question are thus responsible for representing the majority of the community and endeavouring to make their voice heard by mainstream society.

The media’s structured alliance with social elites has undermined their role as watchdogs. Essentially, both the media and the privileged are of the same social stratum, therefore the media are not in a detached position to act independently as watchdogs. While this is the case for both English and Chinese-language media in
liberal New Zealand society, the uncritical nature is distinctive for the Chinese-language media. Initially founded in order to seek endorsements from and cooperation with the elites, the media are destined to be circumspect when dealing with the elites. Only in some exceptional cases when the matters are uncontroversial and the media are on the moral high ground (see, for example, case 8 on drinking culture and case 7 on the rejection of a Chinese delegation in Chapter 5), do the media function as genuine watchdogs. The media’s function as watchdogs is, therefore, merely conditional.

As far as the role of the information platform is concerned, the information inter-flow between the Chinese community and mainstream society does exist. Furthermore, as alternative media owned by the ethnic minority, the Chinese-language media have presented highly diverse perspectives in terms of cultural and political orientations, as argued in the last chapter on media identities. This has enriched the information flowing through the platform tremendously. More importantly, the information provided by the Chinese-language media is alternative to the mainstream, especially in terms of shaping New Zealand news with a distinct Chinese perspective, as discussed in chapters 4 and 5. This has contributed to the diversity of information flowing through the platform as well.

Nonetheless, the information provided by the media is predominantly concerned with social elites from both the Chinese community and mainstream society. The voice of the common people from either the Chinese community or mainstream society is muted. Especially disadvantaged are ordinary members of the Chinese community. They can hardly have a say in the English-language media, and it is still the same when it comes to their ‘own media’. Bishop (2003) makes the caution that inequality in power relations is still present in alternative media; and this is the case in the Chinese-language media in New Zealand. In a word, the information is ideologically stratified and is not representative of the majority of the community. The democratic ethos embedded in alternative media, to which the Chinese-language media arguably belong, is undermined.
Conclusion

Thus far, the commercial orientation of the Chinese-language media has been critiqued through examinations on two dimensions. Firstly, news is affected by this free-of-charge model. Both the quantity and quality of the news are adversely affected when the media are engrossed in the battle for advertising. Secondly, the media’s uncritical nature and elite ideology, which stem from their business background, have critical impacts on the media’s role as watchdogs and information platform. It follows that the media in question are not genuinely alternative in the sense that they are ideologically in tune with the social elite, and they seldom represent the disadvantaged. These two dimensions are applicable to all Chinese-language media in New Zealand despite some variations. Some aspects, such as the predominance of advertisements and the lack of news sinew, apply to free-of-charge media only. The journalism quality may vary from place to place as well; there is generally more room for quality news in cities outside Auckland. However, other aspects, such as compromised news credibility, the uncritical nature and elite ideology, are common among all media outlets.

A structured dilemma has emerged: on the one hand, most of the media outlets owe their advent and development to their commercial background. On the other, this commercial background is undermining their legitimacy to exist as genuine media with watchdog and platform sinews. This dilemma will have to be resolved if the Chinese-language media are to develop and excel in the long run. Increasing the public share of media ownership, or rather, injecting government funding, may be a solution to this dilemma. Kenneth Wang (August 2, 2004: interview), an advocate for ethnic Chinese in New Zealand and also an ACT MP, proposes a balance of cautious government support with market forces. Wang (2004) argues that criteria equally applicable to all ethnic media should be introduced, against which the government can assess the eligibility of candidates to run media of their own with public funding. This may dilute the commercial influence, meanwhile paving the way for necessary government interventions, such as regulations on media’s social accountability. Meanwhile, injection of public funds can also trigger ‘genuine media’, in the sense that most of the media outlets, newspapers in particular, are based on medium or small enterprises. The notion of ‘genuine media’ is thus tempting, but not affordable (Lisa Wang, July 29, 2004: interview). The current problem though, is that media for
the ethnic Chinese are not incorporated into the policy infrastructure for the ethnic Chinese in New Zealand. While there is government funding for the preservation of historical Chinese migrant sites and for Chinese-language education in school curricula, the media are yet to come onto the agenda.
SECTION 4

Conclusions
Chapter 8

Conclusions

The extent to which the Chinese-language media in New Zealand are 'alternative' is the very focus of this concluding chapter. What follows is an analysis of the factors that determine how Chinese-language media in New Zealand may evolve in the foreseeable future with recommendations for academics, the media, policy-makers as well as the consumers of the Chinese-language media.

Chapter flashback

Chapter 1 of the Preamble outlined the proliferation of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand and offered an analysis of the reasons behind the recent boom. Academic attention on the media, however, was found to be inadequate, and this study of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand was an attempt to fill that gap.

The following two chapters paved the way for subsequent chapters which examined the Chinese-language media in detail. The literature review discussed studies concerned with overseas Chinese worldwide and in New Zealand, and with the media owned by, or related to them. The notions of alternative media and imagined community, as two theoretical tools for this study, were introduced.

A timeline of the Chinese-language media, together with that of the ethnic Chinese in New Zealand, was drawn in Chapter 3. The historical review was further split into five stages: the genesis, upsurge, dormancy, revival and restructuring, with the last two stages being the focus of this study. Explanations as to why there has been a noticeable revival of media since the 1990s were given. At the end, the Chinese-language media outlets were schematically introduced, most of which exist today.

The Chinese-language media and the mainstream English-language media were compared using content analysis of the front pages and editorials of media of both languages. This pointed to a strong 'alternativeness' of the Chinese-language media, especially when the reportage on ethnic Asians is concerned. Case studies in Chapter 5 continued the comparison in a qualitative way. The alternative perspectives shown
in cases further substantiated the finding of the ‘Asian centredness in shaping news’ identified in the content analysis.

The idiosyncrasies of the Chinese-language media were then evaluated. Chapter 6 discussed the dynamics in the media’s sense of identity. The Chinese-language media in New Zealand were classified as China’s media in New Zealand; Chinese-language media of New Zealand; and New Zealand media in the Chinese-language, according to their varying degrees of identification with China/New Zealand. It was argued that as a result of their re-identification with New Zealand through alternative perspectives, the Chinese-language media can have unique input into the ongoing debate on the New Zealand identity. Together with that, the divergent ideological orientations of the media in China-related issues revealed the multi-faced nature of the ethnic Chinese community.

The free-of-charge model and alliance with elites, another salient idiosyncrasy of the media, was critiqued in Chapter 7. The media’s fervid battle on advertising, following the free-of-charge approach, has impacted negatively on the quality of news. Their intricate alliance with corporate interests has undermined their roles as watchdogs and information platforms for the disadvantaged, both of which are significant for the notion of alternative media.

**Evaluation of the Alternativeness of the Chinese-language Media**

Essentially, the alternativeness of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand is the focal point of the empirical part of the study—chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. Chapter 4 reveals from a statistical point of view how alternative the Chinese-language media are. The findings, based on a series of media content analyses, support the hypothesis that the Chinese-language media differ significantly from their English-language counterparts in representing ethnic Asians in their front pages and editorials. This conclusion is further substantiated by Chapter 5 on the study of selected cases, especially by the media’s alternative perspectives in shaping news. The diverse and dynamic identities of the media discussed in Chapter 6 attest to an alternative identification with New Zealand/China, which is mediated by the alternative perspectives held by the media. Last, but not least, Chapter 7 critically examines the extent to which the media are effectively alternative, when the expectation of media
representing the unprivileged is compromised by their free-of-charge approach and elite ideology.

Positives and negatives are found concerning the alternativeness of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand. Based on the analyses of journalistic aspects such as the ethnicity of main story actors and reference to Asians, the lack of an Asian presence in the mainstream English-language media is substantially counterbalanced by the Chinese-language media. Asians (Chinese) are more likely to be mentioned, whether as main actors or not, on the front pages and in editorials of the Chinese-language media. Further, given the correlations of ethnicity-actors and ethnicity-topics, the Chinese-language media are presenting a more heterogeneous picture of the ethnic Asian (Chinese) community in New Zealand. The media relate to Asians with a wider range of story topics and actor types, without necessarily simplifying the representation of other ethnicities in New Zealand. More importantly, as proven by the correlations of ethnicity—reference to Asians, the connectedness to Asian (Chinese) issues becomes the vital criterion against which news on other ethnicities is shaped. This Asian (Chinese) centredness dominates the making of the front pages and editorials of Chinese-language media. The case studies in Chapter 5 exemplify the practical application of this Asian (Chinese) centredness in news stories. The New Zealand Mirror question list and the New Zealand Messenger seminar on the local body elections 2004 are the prime examples whereas the Asian (Chinese) perspective shapes and streamlines the news, and more importantly, influences the mainstream. The projection of the media on the mainstream proves an alternativeness that is proactive, bilateral and participatory. Compared with that, aspects shown in the case studies, such as Chinese-specific information, unique news agenda and direct opinion clashes with the mainstream, indicate an alternativeness of the media which is relatively reactive and unilateral.

Chapter 6 goes on to indicate the alternativeness of the media’s identities. The media’s identification processes are a unique combination of varying degrees of New Zealand identification and divergent ideologies within the Chinese identification. As a reflection of the diverse and dynamic Chinese community in New Zealand, the identification dynamics of the Chinese-language media are in fact taking part in the ongoing debate on the New Zealand identity. Ultimately, the media contribute to the
formation of the New Zealand identity in their own way. They mediate local New Zealand issues through their Chinese mindset, and come up with realisations of New Zealand which are distinctive and meanwhile comparable with what they initially know about China, as evidenced by the *New Zealand Mirror* question to mayoral candidates in 2004. In other words, the media do not identify with New Zealand by merely passively accepting the existing values, but rather take the initiative to intervene and reflect upon the formation of the New Zealand identity. The currently alternative identification may well be one day converted and ‘melted’ into a new New Zealand identity, and it will be difficult to tell where the previously mainstream portion starts and the alternative portion ends. This alternativeness in media identification then, is constructed more in connection with the mainstream, rather than being based on the difference from the mainstream, once again reflecting an alternativeness that is bilateral and participatory.

Seen from above, the alternativeness of the media is two-fold. The enhanced Asian representation, Chinese-specific information, and dissension with the mainstream views constitute an alternativeness that is reactive and unilateral. The media’s initiative in the local elections and participation during the identity processes point to an alternativeness that is proactive, bilateral and participatory. The former alternativeness is inward-looking, based on the objective to cater for the media consumers, most of whom are ethnic Chinese in New Zealand. It is based on “oppositional frameworks” such as “that-which-is-not-mainstream-media” (Rodriguez, 2001, cited by Gutierrez, 2004). Within such as framework, there is a binary of “the powerful (mainstream media) and the powerless (alternative media)” (ibid.). The latter alternativeness shows the media’s outward ambition to not only influence, but also become part of the mainstream in their own way. It points to the “transformative processes”, rather than oppositional processes, brought about by alternative media (ibid.). These two agenda do not contradict, but rather complement each other. The inward-looking alternativeness could become self-centred or even exclusive without the involvement with wider society; the media’s effort to influence and become the mainstream could be rootless without their own specialties.

This positive aspect of media alternativeness cannot be taken for granted in all Chinese-language media, however. It must be noted that the positive findings are
largely based on purposely selected cases. Quality newspapers with front page news and editorials were chosen deliberately for the content analyses. The media’s potential of concentrating on ethnic Asians, presenting a diverse picture of them, and shaping New Zealand issues with Asian perspectives can be compromised in practice, especially by the priority put on attracting advertisements and the elite ideology. Likewise, cases of media reportage in Chapter 5 were selected for their extraordinary quality and comparability. Yet strangely coexistent is news tarnished by advertising overload and ideological impartiality existing in the same media outlets and elsewhere. The positive alternativeness discussed previously is uneven, and affected by the media’s struggle to survive financially and their ambition to excel in journalism. The only universal factor though, is the diverse and dynamic processes of media identification, which points to an alternative contribution to the ongoing formation of the New Zealand identity.

Essentially, the crisis for the media’s alternativeness hinges more on a built-in dilemma. On the one hand, the media are sustained financially by the commercial background. On the other hand, this commercial background, exemplified by the uncritical nature and alliance with elites, has undermined the ethos of privileging the unprivileged, which is key to the notion of alternative media. It follows that the commercial background nourishes media alternativeness but at the same time fundamentally compromises it. This is significant, in the sense that the Chinese will remain an ethnic minority in the foreseeable future in New Zealand, the Chinese-language media’s status as ethnic minority media will remain the same. Being unable to challenge the dominance of the mainstream English-language media, the legitimacy of the Chinese-language media lies in its alternativeness in representing the majority of the ethnic minority group. This alternativeness justifies the presence of the media amidst the mainstream and guarantees its indispensability for a democracy like New Zealand.

A framework proposed by Atton (2002: 3) to evaluate alternative media involves content and media production, the latter of which is subdivided into processes and relations. Content is seen by Stefania Milan and Arne Hintz as a criterion more important than structure for alternative media (paper presented at Porto Alegre, cited by Gutierrez, 2004). In particular, “counter-information” is the main objective (ibid.;
Atton 2002: 19). Enhanced and diversified reportage of the ethnic Asian (Chinese), as shown in the content analysis in Chapter 4, remedied the lack of representation and superficial reporting of this group. This reportage constitutes the counter-information that is crucial for alternative media.

The evaluation on processes of media production presents a bleak view of Chinese-language media as alternative media. The essential qualities of alternative media as identified by Atton and Couldry (2003: 583), Stefania Milan and Arne Hintz (paper presented at Porto Alegre, cited by Gutierrez, 2004), and Atton (2002: 27)—a non-hierarchical structure, a not-for-profit orientation and community involvement in news production—have not been evident in contemporary Chinese-language media from their inception as commercially-driven enterprises. The Chinese-language media do not challenge, but rather, follow the existing power relations and ideological infrastructure in media production.

To sum up, the alternativeness of the Chinese-language media is salient in news content and the media’s input in the formation of the New Zealand identity. However, the corporate way of organisation, coupled with the free-of-charge model, undermines the Chinese-language media’s role in democratic communication.

**The dynamics of the media’s future**

What will direct the way the Chinese-language media in New Zealand progress in the future? Three dimensions of the ethnic Chinese community are directly concerned, which include ethnic Chinese-owned economy, associated government intervention and members of the ethnic Chinese community.

The ethnic Chinese-owned economy in New Zealand is the financial backbone of the media concerned. As discussed in Chapter 7, this economy triggers and sustains the media, by investing in media directly and spending on advertisements. In this sense, beneath the question of how the media evolve, is the real question: how will the ethnic Chinese-owned economy evolve? If it continues to be operated on the current small scale (Lisa Wang, July 29, 2004: interview), there will not be many quality media outlets such as the *New Zealand Chinese Bizlink*. The social resources are still “ill utilised” (Jerry Yang, August 12, 2004: interview), and the battle for advertising
joined by a large number of small-scale competitors is likely to carry on. If, on the contrary, there is concentration and conglomeration within the economy, quality media outlets as subsidiaries of the monopolised economy, could well take on the majority of the media territory. With abundant funds, the media would be less pressured by advertising and could thus concentrate more on improving news quantity, quality and credibility. The media may be run on a paid-for and self-regulating basis. Despite these positive potentials, the structural alliance with elites will intensify at the same time, as the commercial background sets the media more firmly in the power relations and ideological infrastructure.

In this sense, the public (governmental) funding approach proposed at the end of Chapter 7 has merit in promising to ensure the genuine alternativeness, or rather, legitimacy of the media. Most idealistically, the Chinese-language media could be given government support as with Maori Television, a “statutory corporation” under the Maori Television Service Act 2003 (Maori TV, 2004). There are many other ways in which the government can step in. The looming pressure of print media regulation in the late 1960s led the media concerned to start the New Zealand Press Council in 1972, a voluntary watchdog of their own. The same thing could happen for the Chinese-language media, if, say, the problematic advertisements noted by the mainstream media attract enough government concern.

Community members can also contribute to the betterment of the media. A collective call for quality media from consumers will be taken seriously, at least promised by the supply-demand dynamics in the free market system. Ip (August 11, 2004: interview) argues that currently the ethnic Chinese community is not demanding enough for its media. The most immediate concern for them, the majority of whom are new immigrants, is establishment (Ip, August 11, 2004: interview). Whether the media have quality content, reliable advertisements or common people’s say is less important compared with that goal. To this extent, the lack of sophistication of the media is the result of the “newness” of the community (Ip, August 11, 2004: interview). In the future, a resourceful and more established ethnic Chinese community will possess more time, energy as well as social and media capitals to prompt better journalism.
These three abovementioned aspects—the ethnic Chinese-owned economy, government interventions and community members—are realms of the ethnic Chinese community most directly concerned with the Chinese-language media in New Zealand. They constitute respectively, the economic, political and social aspects of that community. Changes in these three realms are determined by the size and composition of the ethnic Chinese community. Specifically, the development of the ethnic Chinese-owned economy depends on the influx of people of Chinese origin into New Zealand. This is especially true when businesses based on international students from China are considered the pillar of the ethnic Chinese-owned economy (168.co.nz, 2005). The strength of the community’s push for quality and alternative journalism depends on the population of the community and the population base of media consumers in particular. The extent to which policy attention is given by the government to the ethnic Chinese community, including the Chinese-language media, is once again influenced by the size of that community.\(^1\)

Government policies on international students, immigration and ethnicity have the final say in the size and composition of the ethnic Chinese community and ultimately on the development of the media. The dormancy of Chineseness and the Chinese-language media during the 1950s to 1970s, and the revival of them from the 1980s onwards are caused respectively by the absence and presence of new immigrants, which are determined by associated policies. What factors then, shape the international student/immigration/ethnic group policies? International relationships, the relationship between New Zealand and China, the image of the international student/migrant/ethnic community and the evolving New Zealand identity are among such factors. As shown in the following diagram, government policies are the decisive factor. It is in this sense that the future of the media remains unpredictable. Intriguingly however, the Chinese-language media, as a representative of the

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\(^1\) For example, the initially retrospective aspect of one Identity (Citizenship and Travel Documents) Bill clause in 2004, which was about “increasing the standard period of residence in New Zealand to qualify for citizenship from three years to five”, was later withdrawn (New Zealand Herald, November 8, 2004). A campaign against the retrospective side of the clause contributed to this outcome. Spearheaded by National MP Pansy Wong, social elites, and the Chinese-language media, this campaign attracted 5,000 Asian submissions to the select committee, which finally resulted in the modification of the retrospective aspect of the clause. The campaign is regarded as “the most successfully organised, most widely participated and most politically significant event in New Zealand Chinese politics for more than 100 years’ time” (New Zealand Chinese Bizlink, October 29 2004, translation mine).
community and an alternative input in the New Zealand identity formation, actually influence the policies that ultimately determine the future of the Chinese-language media. To this extent, the future of the media is still in the hands of the media. The factors discussed above which influence the media’s future are illustrated in the following diagram (see Figure 8.1).
Figure 8.1 The Dynamics of the Future of the Chinese-language Media in New Zealand
Speculations on the media’s future vary, depending on specific media. The broadcasting media are viewed positively by insiders (for example, Samson Yau, August 13, 2004: interview) and print media peers alike (for example, Chen Weijian, July 29, 2004: interview). An enviable fact for print media peers is that the high entry barrier of broadcasting media has guaranteed quality in the first place and rationalises the competition on advertising at the same time.

Online media are viewed optimistically as well, especially by print media outlets (for example, Kevin Zeng, July 8 2004: interview; Chen Weijian, July 29, 2004: interview). Their apparent advantages, such as immediacy, reciprocity, and accessibility, are seen as formidable to the print media. “Lower costs”, “wider projection” (Fred Shu, July 27, 2004: interview) and “retrievability” (Boris Yang, August 13, 2004: interview) are also among the strong points of online media. The optimism also fits into the Asian’s high percentage of access to the Internet in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2001).

The future for print media is problematic from the insiders’ point of view. Few hold that there will be mergers of outlets on a large scale (for counter-examples, see Huang Xiaoming, July 14, 2004: interview; Shibo Zhang, August 2, 2004: interview). Most are of the view that it will be difficult to have paid-for print media in the future (for instance, Kevin Zeng, July 8 2004: interview; Helena Wang, September 1, 2004: interview). This is especially the case with papers in Auckland. “Had the Mandarin Pages opted for a paid-for model from the very beginning, the Chinese-language newspapers nowadays could be paid-for [instead of being free]”, so says the New Times Weekly editor with hindsight (Chen Weijian, July 29, 2004: interview, translation mine). Newspapers based outside Auckland, though, are less dispirited. With far fewer competitors and pressure from the battle for advertising,² the print media have greater room to develop in the long run.

² Eric Yuan (September 3, 2004: interview) reveals that the Korean and Japanese-language newspapers in Auckland, which are far less numerous than the Chinese-language counterparts, have an advertising rate 4 to 6 times higher than the Chinese-language newspapers in the same city. In Christchurch, likewise, the New Zealand Mirror enjoys the same rate as the Korean and Japanese-language papers in Auckland. It is in this sense that Eric Yuan (September 3, 2004: interview) maintains that the Auckland papers are in a vicious circle, and the Christchurch ones have entered a virtuous circle.
Recommendations

For Academics

Due to the scope of this thesis, a few research-worthy aspects have been left unprobed. Proposed fields for future study are:

- Future changes in the media territory and their impacts;
- Content analysis and case study of broadcasting outlets;
- Online Chinese-language media, including websites, forums and weblogs. Unlike the traditional Chinese-language media which are closely linked with social elites, cyberspace ensures maximum participation from the masses, which promises ‘an alternative to the alternative’;
- The consumers’ perceptions of the Chinese-language media; particularly, a comparative study of the perceptions from various sub-communities (New Zealand-born Chinese, Chinese from mainland China and Taiwan) will cast light on a better understanding of the media and the ethnic Chinese community;
- The impact that the Chinese-language media have on the mainstream, media and society alike;
- The impact the Chinese-language media have back in China;
- The role the Chinese-language media play in ethnic Chinese-owned businesses in New Zealand;
- The potential role the Chinese-language media can play in a) Asia—New Zealand interactions, be it economic, cultural or political, b) the ongoing formation of the New Zealand identity;
- Comparative study of the Chinese-language media and other ethnic media in New Zealand; and
- Comparative study of the Chinese-language media in New Zealand with their counterparts in other countries.

For media practitioners

The main problems for the media practitioners lie in the compromised quality of news in the face of fierce competition, and the structural dilemma between commercial background and the alternative ethos. The recommendations for them are to:
• Take the initiative to regulate news and advertisements in the media;
• Streamline and formalise the infrastructure of responding to the media consumers, such as the letters section in newspapers;
• Develop the ‘nexus’ of news which is of interest to both the ethnic Chinese community and the wider society;
• Build up communication platforms with mainstream counterparts and insert more input into the news production of the mainstream media. Provide English-language versions to the ‘scoops’, especially to those with alternative perspectives and on topics that are of interest to the mainstream;
• Recruit personnel of more diverse backgrounds, such as local-born Chinese and non-Chinese with bilingual skills, to improve projection to a wider sector of society;
• Enhance the portion of advertisements from non-ethnic Chinese businesses, especially mainstream advertising spenders;
• Provide Chinese-learning components for either local-born Chinese or non-Chinese.\(^3\) Meanwhile, offer learning sessions on Kiwi English for the ethnic Chinese;
• Work closely with other Chinese-language media outlets in New Zealand. This partnership, be it journalistic or commercial, will have to transcend media of different communication means, localities, cultural and political stances;\(^4\) and
• Set up cooperative systems with other ethnic media in New Zealand and Chinese-language media overseas.\(^5\)

\(^3\) Kirsten Wong (July 15, 2004: interview), policy analyst of Office of Ethnic Affairs, noted that “at some stage, they [the policy-makers] have to support the Chinese-language as a heritage [of New Zealand]”. In providing Chinese-language learning components, the media can pre-empt the role as one of the major vehicles to maintain this heritage. The Ihall, a bi-lingual paper in Chinese and English, has already planned on this role as part of its objectives (Vivienne Ni, October 8, 2004: interview).

\(^4\) This is starting to happen. The New Zealand Messenger (Mar. 9, 2005) in Christchurch, for example, formally adopted news originally reported by the New Zealand Chinese Bizlink in Auckland. “From now on”, stated the Messenger, “we will irregularly exchange important stories with the peer media, so that our readers will benefit from broadened horizons and additional information” (Translation mine).

\(^5\) Chinese Times Group LTD, the owner of the 180.co.nz and The Chinese Times, is aiming for an Asian Media Group which could incorporate media from Korea and Japan (www.180.co.nz, 2004).
For the policy-makers

Currently, the Chinese-language media have been an important information platform for the release of government policies/regulations to the ethnic Chinese community. There are more aspects that the policy-makers should consider:

- Basing policies on consulting the ethnic Chinese community through the mediation of the media. The New Zealand Messenger has already provided such an example in Case 6 of the local body elections in Chapter 5;
- Conducting research on the feasibility of incorporating funding Chinese-language media as one component of ethnic policy; and
- Facilitating, if not intervening in directly, the amelioration of the advertisements in the media; pushing the media towards self-regulation.

For the media consumers

In comparison with academics, media and policy-makers, consumers may appear the most powerless. This situation is exacerbated when the media turn to the advertisers and elites and neglect the common people. However, as the public and consumers, the community can work on:

- Equipping themselves with the way media accountability works in New Zealand,⁶
- Where necessary, urging the Chinese-language media to improve their content quality and advertising credibility by lodging complaints;⁷ and
- Not just consuming the media, but also taking part in media production. Alerting the media to news issues (incidents), freelance contribution and volunteering are among the ways of being involved.

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⁶ Some of these materials may be in the Chinese-language already. The Advertising Codes of Practice, drawn up by the Advertising Standards Authority, was translated into Chinese-language by Steven Wong, CEO of the Chinese Media Bureau (CMB) in 2003.
⁷ Steven Young (July 13, 2004: interview), a New Zealand Chinese advocate and president of the New Zealand Chinese Association, says that he would change the media by lodging a complaint if he had the energy. However the likelihood, his approach offers a possible approach to encouraging better journalism.
Appendixes
Thesis Terminologies*

Media
When this term is applied in this thesis, it is linked to mass media, and news media in particular, unless otherwise specified. Therefore, this notion excludes media of smaller projection ranges such as organisation newsletters. Equally excluded are entertainment media such as book, music and film.

Mainstream Media
It means corporately concentrated or institutionalized media outlets, which are regarded as the representation of the dominant culture. In a New Zealand context, this category is likely to include outlets of several major media players, such as Television New Zealand (TVNZ), Radio New Zealand (RNZ), Fairfax NZ LTD and APN News and Media LTD.

Chinese-language
This is used with a double meaning. When it concerns the written language, it means the Chinese character system. The system may be composed of the simplified and traditional Chinese. The former has been officially applied in mainland China and overseas countries like Singapore, while the latter has been used in Taiwan and amongst most overseas Chinese groups. Yet both make good sense for each other because the difference is insignificant in linguistic terms. However, when the term ‘Chinese language’ is used to refer to spoken language, it may encompass both Mandarin and Cantonese, which are so different that normally their speakers cannot be mutually understood.

Chinese-language Media in New Zealand
This concerns the news media outlets in the Chinese-language which are based in New Zealand, no matter how New Zealand/China-focused they may be. They can be split into three tiers according to the sense of identity, namely, China's media in New Zealand; New Zealand media in the Chinese-language; and Chinese-language media of New Zealand. In terms of media genre, print media, broadcasting and online media are covered by this term. For the sake of brevity, the Chinese-language media in New Zealand can be referred to as “the media” in this study, except where otherwise specified.

Ethnic Chinese
This term is applicable to anyone of any portion of Chinese descent, regardless of his/her nationality, language, or culture.

Chinese New Immigrants
This refers to Chinese middle-class people qualifying for permanent residence status based on either their investments or skills since the year 1986, when a new
immigration scheme was introduced to attract immigrants of all races to New Zealand, instead of giving preference to places of origin (see Ng, 2001b).

**Chinese-speaking Community**
As a subset of the Ethnic Chinese, it denotes any Ethnic Chinese who are able to speak Mandarin, Cantonese or any other Chinese dialects for communication purposes. In a practical sense, it encompasses 1/3 of New Zealand-born Chinese and most of the Chinese new immigrants, Chinese overseas students and visitors.

**Diaspora**
In its classic sense, this term (literally a scattering of seeds) refers to the Jews forced into exile from their homeland. The historical connotations of loss of homeland, rootlessness, expulsion and oppression etc., however, have given way to more modern connotations of the same term (Laurence J.C. Ma, 2003), such as supermobility, multiculturalism and flows of capital.

**Chinese Diaspora**
This term is used in a broad sense and absorbs the recent connotations of the term diaspora. It refers not only to the early indentured Chinese labourers forced into exile in search of a livelihood since the mid-19th century, but also the more recent migrants since the Second World War.

**Hua Qiao**
It means overseas Chinese (Hua) nationals, or rather Chinese sojourners (Qiao) overseas.

**Hua Ren**
This term refers to Chinese persons (Ren) literally, but it is normally used to connote foreign citizens of Chinese origin or ancestry.

**Hua Yi**
It means Chinese descendants (Yi). With an emphasis on Chinese ancestry and origin, this term actually means the overseas-born descendants of Hua Ren.

**Overseas Chinese**
It refers to ethnic Chinese people outside Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau. Both Hua Ren (Hua Yi) and Hua Qiao are encompassed when such a phrase is used in the thesis.

* Note: a term specifically defined somewhere is used in the same way elsewhere. For example, when the term ‘media’ is defined, its denotations are automatically transferred to another phrase containing that term, such as “Mainstream Media”.
### Chinese Population in New Zealand (1867 – 2001)*

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Coding Manual

Case Number
Format: No. plus Date (ddmmyyyy)

Main Story Actors
Value Label
1 Politician/Political parties
2 Govt official/Govt
3 Ordinary people
4 Sports personalities
5 Academics/Scientists
6 Institutions/Agencies/Orgs
7 Entertainment personalities
8 Business people
9 Military forces
10 Legislators/Lawyers/Judge
11 The police
12 Others
13 Not mentioned

The Ethnicity of Main Actors
Value Label
1 White New Zealander
2 Ethnic Asian
3 Maori
4 Others
5 Unclear/No mention/Inapplicable

Main Story Topics
Value Label
1 Politics
2 Conflict/War
3 Accidents/Disasters
4 Economy/Finance
5 Welfare
6 Science/Technology
7 Sports
8 Diplomacy
9 Culture/Ethnicity/International
10 Environment
11 Legislation
12 Immigration
13 Entertainment
14 Education
15 Health
16 In-house news
17 Others

(16 unavailable for editorial analyses)

Mention Local Asians in NZ?
Value Label
1 Yes
2 No

Mention Asians outside NZ?
Value Label
1 Yes
2 No

Story Geography
Value Label
1 New Zealand
2 Asia
3 Australia
4 The USA
5 The UK
6 The Middle East
7 Others

Attitude Towards Asians
Value Label
1 Positive
2 Negative
3 Neutral
4 Not mentioned/Unclear

Media
Value Label
1 The Press
2 New Zealand Mirror

(Labels may change)

Any Reference to Asians at all?
Value Label
1 Yes
2 No

Note: The last two variables are for cross-examinations.
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