

***Australian Chinese Daily, not for Australian Chinese?***

Jack Kang Jie Liu

Australian Chinese newspapers are a significant but under-researched topic in the global media arena. With the use of the *Australian Chinese Daily (ACD)* this paper investigates what role Australian Chinese newspapers play in Australian Chinese communities focusing on their roles of (providing) information, integration, bridging and local surveillance. The content analysis examined 2138 pieces of news in *ACD*'s main news pages (2006-2008) and the results show that the daily published plentiful and diverse news; especially Australian news items which occupy 88% of total news reports. This suggests solid information and integration roles. The news reporting on China also indicates a bridging role. However, the reports on Australian Chinese people only occupy 5.5%, and there are a large number of negative articles. Thus, to further investigate the role of the *ACD*, this paper explores three negative reports on Chinese in Australia (Wei Liao killing, 2008; exploitation of two workers, 2007; and De Yuan fishing boats case, 2006). The results show that *ACD* covered these negative events, but provided no in-depth, analytical or exclusive reports. Through content analysis and case study results, this article argues that a salient disadvantage of *ACD* is the weak "local surveillance role". This would affect the daily's readership and development in a competitive electronic media environment.

**Keywords**

Australian Chinese newspapers, diasporic media, media role, surveillance, migration, Australian Chinese newspapers

[1] Because of their long history and contemporary prosperity, Australian Chinese newspapers are a significant topic in the global diasporic media arena. The earliest newspaper, *Chinese Advertiser*, appeared in 1856 in Ballarat, Victoria and was also the first bilingual (English and Chinese) newspaper worldwide (Wang and Ryder). By the early 1920s, there were five Chinese papers published in Sydney (Fitzgerald).

[2] Currently, Australian Chinese newspapers occupy a predominant position in both the Australian and the global diasporic media arena. There are 27 Chinese newspapers published in Australia, ranking first position in the diasporic newspapers market (Liu) that boasts approximately 100 diasporic newspapers in 40 languages in New South Wales alone. In total, the Chinese newspapers occupy more than 20% of this market. On a global level, Australia has the second highest number of diasporic Chinese newspapers, outranked only by the United States (US) Chinese newspaper market.<sup>1</sup> The *Australian Chinese Daily (ACD)* was chosen as this paper's research sample because it is the second oldest contemporary Chinese newspaper in Australia and one of the largest two dailies in the circulation and advertisement market of Australian Chinese press.

[3] *ACD* was a branch of *Hong Kong Daily News* (香港新報), but in recent years, it has been financially separated from its Hong Kong headquarters. The *ACD* office is located in downtown Sydney and boasts more than 70 staff members, including editing/reporting staff. Journalists rarely publish in-depth or investigative coverage. Their major duties are composed of translation and participation in press conferences. These staff members are generally from Hong Kong or mainland China.

[4] *ACD* maintains good relationships with Hong Kong and mainland China governments and companies. For example, the daily can arrange invitations so mainland Chinese high-profile figures can visit Australia and some large mainland Chinese companies advertise in this paper. Since 2006, the daily has published 36 pages in a weekday edition, separated into three sections – news, entertainment and advertisements. The news sections generally occupy 14 pages (2008), including four categories: “main news” (first page), China news, Australian news, and World news. This paper focuses on the main news page.

### **Research Question and Methods**

[5] Although Australian Chinese newspapers are a significant research topic, there is a paucity of reference on these newspapers. A reference search in 32 databases delivers merely five papers. Four of these five address historical accounts from before 1957. The fifth, more recent paper, discusses  
Copyright 2012. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives

the relations between Chinese newspapers and communities of past and present Australia, but only provides some general information on contemporary Australian Chinese newspapers (Sun et al).

[6] This limited availability of research fuels the following fundamental question: what role do these newspapers fulfil for Australian Chinese communities? By focusing on the *ACD*, this paper will attempt to answer this question.

[7] This paper will first provide some theoretical background of diasporic media. It will then explore the above question through a content analysis of the *ACD*'s main news pages (from 2006 to 2009) and an in-depth look at three events that each had significant impacts on the Australian Chinese community.

## **Roles of diasporic newspapers**

### *Media role*

[8] Australian Chinese newspapers can be categorized into community, diasporic and ethnic media, and a number of scholars have discussed the role of such media from various angles. Stamm regards the key roles for community (diasporic) media as providing information, as well as providing "bridging" help. This "bridging" proves vital in tackling what he describes as key gaps between (diasporic) community members and mainstream society: "information"; "spatial"; "social". In addition, a number of scholars believe that the role of surveillance is also a key role of this media (Lauterer; Lasswell).

### *Information role*

[9] Providing information to audiences and communities is one of the most fundamental roles community/diasporic newspapers. Stamm examined US community newspapers and claims, "If you are considering a move to a different locale, your initial tie to the place might be through reading issues in the local newspapers" (21). Husbands holds the same attitude, "minority media are both 'for' and 'by' minorities, perform a crucial function for ethno-cultural minorities, who experience a great need for information about their native country and their country of settlement" (29). As Kim (1985) observes of the Korean migrant community in Sydney, Australian Korean newspapers provide a crucial information service by printing news reports that are not covered in the mainstream media. In this case, local Korean newspapers filled the information gap and offered specific information needed by

Copyright 2012. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives

migrants. Adoni, Caspi and Cohen (2006) through their research on Russian and Arabic diasporic community press in Israel found that this role is particularly important in the early transition period of settling (21).

#### *Bridging role*

[10] Since appearing in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, diasporic community media have become crucial in bridging the gap between diasporic people and communities and their homelands. This media fills the temporal gap by becoming “a bridge between the past [hometown] and the future [host country]” (Martin 240), as well as overcoming the geographical gap by providing homeland news that would otherwise not be available (Zhou and Cai 437). Diasporic community media can also strengthen “emotional ties” people may have with their homelands. As Yin observes, Chinese migrants in the United States are eager to obtain homeland news because their families, relatives, friends and other relations still reside in China. Further, they want to be kept abreast with homeland politics, economic changes and any other events that may affect their loved ones (Zhou and Cai).

#### *Integration role*

[11] Integrating into one’s new society is can prove difficult due to lack of contacts, language and cultural differences. This situation is why the integration role of this media has been one of its most noticeable roles. By examining the front pages of the United States *The China Press* (West coast edition), Xu discovers that “there were more assimilation-fostering content [integration] than culture-preserving content on the first page of the regional section” (5) which shows the importance of the integration role. This media helps with the (1) adjustment to institution and facilities; (2) democratizes prestige; (3) defines rights and privileges of community members; and (4) extends personal and social contacts (Janowitz 73). By contributing to these steps community diasporic newspaper can, as Cormack writes, “meld people into a sense of a larger community” (55).

#### *Local surveillance role*

[12] In media studies “surveillance” refers to – as Lasswell states – the “surveillance of the environment, disclosing threats and opportunities affecting the value position of the community and the component parts within it” (118). Diasporic newspapers disclose in-depth social issues threatening communities and, as Liu observes whilst studying Philadelphia’s Chinese newspapers, warn the community, empower its people and function as a forum for opinions (256).

[13] However, some researchers believe the surveillance role of diasporic newspapers should extend to publishing investigative stories on the hardships faced by diasporic individuals. Lauterer argues that community media should report stories that assist community members to solve their difficulties. The Maori community media in New Zealand is a particularly successful example of how this can work. When rural-to-urban migrating Maoris – the indigenous peoples of New Zealand – found themselves misrepresented in mainstream urban media they established their own community media. Their community newspapers revealed their hardships, reported on their political viewpoints, and promoted their campaigns. This media came to be “a ‘sustaining voice’ in times of troubles, such as conflict with agents of the majority government” (Alia 115).

### **Research Results One: Content Analysis**

#### *Results overview and the information role*

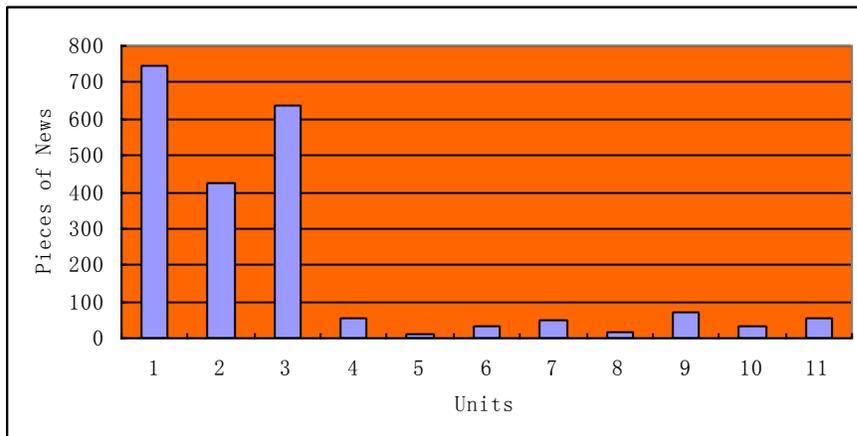
[14] The content analysis the underpins this paper reviewed 2,138 (N=2,138) news items in a total of 253 weekday issues<sup>2</sup> in *ACD*'s main news pages in January, April, July and October (2006–2008). The results are shown in three charts. Table 1 shows the overall situation of these categories and units. Column 1 is the graphic demonstration of Table 1. Additionally, Table 2 demonstrates the results of four categories and 11 units in these three years in appendix.

[15] An overview on these charts reveals three characteristics: plentiful news content, abundant Australian news and some news on China, and minimal news on Australian Chinese people. This suggests that the daily played the information, integration and bridging roles, but achieved a limited local surveillance role.

**Table 1 News in the main news pages, ACD (2006–2008)**

Categories	Australian news				Chinese news			ACP			OT	
Time/Units	Ap	Ae	As	Ao	Cp	Cn	C o	Pp	Pn	Po	OT	Total
Total, units	743	42 6	63 9	54	12	33	4 8	15	7 0	34	54	2138
%,units	35%	20 %	30 %	2.5%	1%	1.5%	2 %	1%	3 %	1.5%	2.5%	100%
Total, categories	1862				103			119			54	2138
%,categories	87.5%				4.5%			5.5%			2.5%	100%
Codes for Column 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	

**Column 1 News in the selected months in the main news pages, ACD**



**Table 2 News in the selected months in the main news pages, ACD (2006, 2007 and 2008)**

Categories	Australian news				Chinese news			ACP <sup>3</sup>			OT	
Units	Ap	Ae	As	Ao	Cp	Cn	Co	Pp	Pn	Po	OT	Total
2006,Total,units	234	141	211	16	1	10	20	7	31	16	18	705
Total,categories	602				31			54			18	705
%,units	33%	20%	31%	2%	0% <sup>4</sup>	1%	3%	1%	4%	2%	3%	100%
%,categories	86%				4%			7%			3%	100%
2007,Total,units	286	147	224	23	3	7	17	8	26	10	22	773
Total,categories	680				27			44			22	773
%,units	37%	19%	29%	3%	0%	1%	2%	1%	3.5%	1.5%	3%	100%
%,categories	88%				3%			6%			3%	100%
2008,Total,units	223	138	204	15	8	16	21	0	13	8	14	660
Total,categories	580				45			21			14	660
%,units	34%	21%	31%	2%	1%	2.5%	3%	0%	2%	1%	2.5%	100%
%,categories	88%				6.5%			3%			2.5%	100%

Note: 1, 2, and 3 represents the units Ap, Ae, and As shown in Table 1 (code)

[16] Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate that the main news pages offered ample and diverse content, and thus the ACD played an informative role. There were respectively 705, 773, and 660 pieces of news published in the twelve selected months (2006–2008). All 11 units appeared in the main news pages, including Australian news (politics, economy, society news), Chinese news, and the news reporting about Australian Chinese people.

*The content and bridging role*

[17] Over the span of the three years in question the Chinese news takes up on average 4.5% of the main news (Table 1). There was a proliferation of this news category. This demonstrates that ACD played a bridging role.

[18] The Chinese news category only represented 4% in 2006 and 3% in 2007, but increased to 6.5% in 2008. According to Tables 1 and 2, the positive, negative and neutral news occupied similar proportions in these three years. However, scrutiny of each year indicates two characteristics. Although neutral news occupies most of the coverage, negative news outnumbers positive news. To illustrate, all Chinese news published in October 2007 and October 2008 are presented as follows.

#### October 2007

October 4, "Friendship and open" policy received recognition (positive)

October 16, Liberal and Labor Parties comment China's environmental policy (neutral)

October 30, John Howard claims 60% of global waste air from China (negative).

#### October 2008

October 2, Chinese chocolate was found poisonous (negative)

October 3, Chinese White Rabbit candy was suspended poisonous (negative)

October 6, Chinese milk tea was recalled (negative)

October 7, (1) The stability of Chinese economy is important to the world (positive);

(2) China is looking for business talents (neutral)

October 9, Chinese vegetables were suspected poisonous (negative); the development of China's economy becomes slow (neutral)

October 13, The development of Chinese economy is important to Australia (positive)

October 14, Da Lian court assessed the Zhang Hong Jia case (negative)

October 24, A parliamentarian inquired into Chinese food (negative)

October 31, Chinese furniture may contain poisonous ingredients (negative)

[19] The negative news is focused on problems China is facing, including environmental and food safety. On the other hand, the positive and neutral news clearly outlines the development and importance of China to Australia and the world, as two examples show: October 4 2007, "Friendship and open" policy received recognition; October 7 2008, the stability of Chinese economy is important to the world. These figures and examples suggest that the daily played a bridging role. The daily connected the diasporic Chinese people with their homeland via an array of stories with various perspectives.

[20] The rise of China as an economic and political power is providing a diversity of opinions in regards to issues. For instance, China's influence is expanding in the Asia-Pacific region. The economic boom, the extension of Chinese politics and military into new area, the transformation of  
Copyright 2012. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives

Chinese traditional society and culture have become popular yet controversial themes for the overseas Chinese dailies and the audience. The diasporic community media reflects this.

*The content and integration role*

[21] Column 1 and Table 1 show that Australian news is the most dominant category in *ACD*. In 2006, Australian news occupied 86% of total news, which increased to 88% in 2007 and 2008. This coverage underscores the integration role of diasporic community media. In an interview with the *ACD*'s editor, he considered the most important goal of the daily was "to inform/educate readers about Australia" (Pe-Pua, Morrissey and Mitchell 238).

[22] Fulfilling the integration role has its own benefits for the *ACD*. By publishing a large amount of host-country stories the *ACD* and other diasporic community newspapers show the strong intention for its audience to be integrated into that host country's mainstream society. In turn, the newspapers gain the support of local governments, as well as said mainstream society (Sun et al). This facilitates the diasporic media business' own survival and development. It can therefore be said that the *ACD* played the integration role for both the reader and its own commercial interests.

*The content and local surveillance role*

[23] Reporting on Australian Chinese people occupied a significantly smaller proportion of total coverage: Australian Chinese news occupied 7%, 6%, and 3% respectively in 2006, 2007, and 2008. Furthermore, there was a large proportion of negative coverage, without further investigation or explanation. The daily played a limited local surveillance role during this period.

[24] The percentages of the positive, negative and neutral news coverage are as follows: 1%, 4%, 2% (2006); 1%, 3.5%, 1.5% (2007); 0, 2%, 1% (2008). So what sort of news was published? And more specifically, what sort of negative news was published? News on Australian Chinese people in October 2007, used as an example, is listed below:

October 3, A Chinese man in western Sydney killed his former wife (crime)

October 5, The injured actor asked for compensation in NSW court, a Hong Kong director involved (court)

October 9, A "master" of prostitutions was killed in Melbourne (crime)

October 11, A Chinese female student Jiao Dan was killed at night while off-duty in Perth (accident)

Copyright 2012. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives

October 12, Chinese students compassionated Jiao Dan's death (accident)

October 17, (1) Jiao Dan's parents arrived in Perth, and the murderer in court (court);

(2) The body of a "master" of prostitutions found (crime)

October 18, Jiao Dan's mother extremely grieved at her daughter's death (accident)

October 31, A Sydney Chinese chef killed his former employer, because whom had a relation with his girlfriend (crime)

[25] It can be seen that all above news is composed of crime, court reports or news about accidents. Such coverage is counter-productive to the local surveillance role. In order to successfully fulfil the local surveillance role, media should not simply report events but should also investigate and explain the "dangers" and "threats" that communities face. However, in the case of *ACD*'s October 2007 issue, the daily was purely descriptive, and did not investigate or explain the broader socio-political conditions of these events, nor alert the Chinese communities to possible risks. Taking the Jiao Dan killing case (October 17) as an example, why did this occur? How should the other female students prevent a similar tragedy? What could the Chinese communities learn from this event?

[26] The daily did not publish news with regard to the life and work of ordinary (nor notable) Chinese people in Australia. The focus on crime, court cases and accidents does not represent the broader community, nor did the daily inform them. The daily did not play the local surveillance role.

[27] Overall, the content analysis shows that *ACD* played the information, bridging and integration roles. However, the daily achieved is weak in regards to the local surveillance role. A question that can be thus further explored is: how exactly does negative news on Australian Chinese issues get reported? In the next section this paper looks at three representative events from the content analysis, and analyses about how *ACD* reported this type of news.

## **Research Result two: Three Case Studies**

### *Case study 1 (2008): The Wei Liao killing*

[28] A review of the daily found 13 pieces of news reporting this case between October 2008 and December 2009, as Table 3 shows. An analysis on these reports suggests that *ACD* published detailed information and thus achieved the information role in this case. However, the daily did not publish in-depth investigative reports, which suggests a lack of local surveillance role.

**Table 3 Reports on the Wei Liao killing case**

Time	Articles	Words <sup>5</sup>	Locations	Other
Oct 28	A naked Chinese female student fell down from the balcony and died	1,030	Headline page 1	2 photos: the balcony
Oct 29 (1)	The victim came from Si Chuan	1,000	Middle page 1	2 photos: Wei and her boyfriend
Oct 29 (2)	Wei's classmates mourn her on the spot	420	Middle page 1	2 photos: a student mourns Wei, a flower on the spot
Oct 30	Police publish the CCTV video to catch the murderer	910	Headline page 1	3 photos: police, the murderer, and the Chinese consulate officers
Oct 31	The murderer is detained, and the court requests the murderer's DNA	650	Headline page 1	2 photos: the parents, and the murderer
Oct 31	The parents mourn Wei on the spot	750	Middle page 1	No photo
Nov 1/2	The grieving mother preparing for daughter's funeral	1,300	Headline page 1	No photo
Nov 3	The mother intends to ask for compensation	1,100	Headline page 1	1 photo: the parents
Nov 3	The Department of Foreign Affairs (China) discusses the event with the Australian ambassador	820	Up right page 1	No photo
Nov 7	Wei was enthusiastic about living	810	Headline page 1	2 photos: media interview
Nov 8	The victims called police in the accident	630	Middle page 1	No photo
Nov 10	Wei's funeral will be held	650	Middle page 1	No photo
Nov 12	The smiling angel flew away	750	Middle right page 1	1 photo: funeral ceremony

[29] ACD published a lot about the Wei Liao killing case. The four people encountering the attacks were covered in detail. Then, the following news (October 29) reported that one of the victims was from Si Chuan Province. The news on October 30 revealed that the murderer was photographed by CCTV. Two pieces of news appeared on October 31: when the murderer will appear in court and Wei's mother mourning for her.

[30] Subsequently, two pieces of news on 1, 2 and 3 November covered her parents preparing for the funeral, and that the Chinese Department of Foreign Affairs had taken notice of this event. After introducing Wei's personal life (November 7), the news disclosed that Wei and her classmates called 000 (November 8), but the police could not identify the exact location. Following a statement on the time and location of Wei's funeral (November 10), the final news (November 12) was a feature depicting the funeral.

[31] The Wei Liao reports show a limited local surveillance role. First, ACD failed to disclose or explore "threats" to the local community members. Before this event, a few similar tragedies had taken place, including another Chinese female student, Jiao Dan, and a six-year old Chinese girl being raped and killed in Perth in 2007. Broadly speaking, between 2006 and 2009 there were frequent reports regarding assaults on Australian Chinese people. A high frequency of fatal cases happening in a diasporic community (accidental or not) should have prompted its diasporic community media to be more aware of this issue. In relation to the media surveillance role, both Wilson and Guitierrez and Lasswell point out that mass media should bring news of unfavourable issues to their community members. ACD could have highlighted the security issues facing the community, summarized similar events, and explored the reasons why these events occurred. Nevertheless, these kinds of reports were not found. This kind of reporting can be used to help prevent similar events in the future. In other words, ACD did not perform the local surveillance role.

*Case Study 2 (2007): The exploitation of two Chinese skilled workers*

[32] This case study examines the content and role of the reports in a conflict between two Chinese workers and their employer. A review of the daily between September 2007 and December 2008 found four pieces of news, as table 4 shows. Similar to the case of the Wei Liao killing, ACD provided the information of this event, but did not publish any investigative reports. Consequently, the daily again played an information role but did not achieve the local surveillance role.

**Table 4 Reports on the exploitation of two Chinese skilled workers**

Time	Articles	Words	Locations	Other
Sep 14	Two Chinese skilled workers penniless and homeless	830	Headline, page 2	1 photo
Sep 15	Two workers facing deport	850	Headline, page 2	1 photo
Sep 18	Two workers' visa cancelled	530	Headline, page 1	1 photo
Sep 27	Two workers obtained the Bridge visa	530	Headline, page 2	No photo

[33] The first article reported that two Chinese skilled workers were deceived by their employer. The claim is that they should have received AU\$45,000 in annual salaries, but ultimately only received several hundred dollars. These two workers were penniless and homeless, and faced deportation. The second news story (September 15/16) explained that their visas would be cancelled by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, and the news on September 18 confirmed the decision from the Department. The headline on September 27 reported that these workers obtained assistance from the Workers' Union and were waiting for the investigation and final decision from the authorities.

[34] According to DIAC figures (2006), Chinese skilled workers generally have a lower education and English level, compared with skilled migrants (and overseas students). Consequently, these workers may encounter more cultural shock, and they may lack the knowledge as how to better protect themselves under Australian law.

[35] In order to be more helpful and fulfil the integration role, *ACD* could have explored the stories from the perspective of these workers, revealing what they really needed help with in Australia. For instance, these workers would have benefited from knowing employment regulations relevant to them. *ACD* could subsequently provide legal explanations of the situation and thus aid in reducing the possibility of a similar scenario arising in the future.

[36] To some degree, the Chinese skilled workers in Australia may be similar to the Chinese rural migrant workers who also encounter a number of difficulties when first arriving in the cities, Some mainland Chinese newspapers have established a column for "migrant workers" and published stories about their hardships and unfair treatment.<sup>6</sup>

[37] Liu recommends that the overseas Chinese media should “empower” the local Chinese people. However, *ACD* neither gave sufficient information nor provided resources for other to draw upon and so avoid a similar dispute in the future. Furthermore, the daily failed to do a follow-up report: did these workers eventually get their salaries? Because of a lack of such reports, *ACD* again did not perform the local surveillance role.

*Case Study 3 (2006): “De Yuan” fishing boats case*

[38] This case study will review how *ACD* reported a conflict between two Chinese boats and the Australian Government. An examination on the daily between April 2006 and December 2007 found four pieces of news, as Table 5 shows. Similar to the former cases, *ACD* provided some information about this event, but played a minimal local surveillance role.

**Table 5 Reports on the “De Yuan fishing boats case”**

Time	Articles	Words	Locations	Other
Apr 8/9	Two Chinese fishing boats detained.	520	Headline (page2)	1 photo(an Indonesian illegal ship was burnt)
Apr 25	The investigation finished.	440	Up left (page 1)	no photo
May 2	Two Chinese captains accused illegal fishing.	550	Down left (page 1)	1 photo (Australian officers in two boats)
Aug 30	The first Chinese citizen prosecuted for illegal fishing in Australia	350	Down left (page 1)	no photo

[39] A review of these four reports found that they offered basic information about the event. The Australian Government Minister of Fishing claimed that illegal fishing was increasing in Australia and involved organized criminals. The subsequent paragraphs were composed of illegal fishing details (e.g. the oyster “black market” and the illegal weapons trade). The two boats at the centre of the controversy were not illegal, even though the reporting could mislead the reader to think that.

[40] The next report covered the investigation of the two boats, and that the 23 crew<sup>7</sup> members were placed in a “detention camp”. The news on May 2 confirmed that the two Chinese captains were

accused of illegal fishing, and the 25 crew members would be deported. The final news (August 30) was titled: "The first<sup>8</sup> Chinese citizen to be prosecuted for illegal fishing". The news only mentioned the reason why these two boats entered Australia and come into contact with the Australian Navy in two sentences: for ship supplies and their misidentification of the Australian Navy as the Indonesian Navy. The news allocated two paragraphs for the Minister of Fishing, who supported the trial and emphasized that Australia should punish illegal fishing.

[41] The *ACD* did not fulfil the local surveillance role in this case for two reasons: publishing the misleading reports and not providing important details. The fisherman had a very different story. On September 7 2006, *Sing Tao Daily* reported that the fish in these boats were not caught in Australian Waters, but in Indonesia. There was no direct evidence to prove that these two boats had fished in Australia water.

[42] Furthermore, *ACD* failed to disclose an important detail: the two boats were burnt before the trial (see the reports on September 7 2006 *Sing Tao Daily*) which resulted in a significant loss for the boats' owner, and the loss of possible evidence. However, *ACD* did not publish this crucial news. Additionally, no further report was found regarding the result of the trial. Did the two captains really go to jail and pay their fine? *ACD* did not reveal the hardships and the stories of the Chinese captains and their crews.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

[43] The main research question of this paper was to find out if the *ACD* managed to play all the key roles of diasporic community media. Through the content analysis and case studies we can safely say that the *ACD* played the information, integration and bridging roles, but did not fulfil the local surveillance role. From the content analysis we saw that *ACD* provided abundant information, especially on Australian news, which proves the information and integration roles. It also published Chinese news, connecting diasporic Chinese people with their homeland – the bridging role. However, the reports on Australian Chinese people are minimal, and most of them are negative, lack analysis and there are no follow-up reports. This indicates a limited local surveillance role. During the research period, *ACD* neglected the vital role of "local surveillance", which suggests that the daily has paid insufficient attention to Australian Chinese people needs and concerns.

*Two causes for limited local surveillance role*

[44] Why did the local surveillance role prove to be weak in both the content analysis and the case studies? In other words, why was there so much negative news without further investigative, insightful or exclusive reports? It is this author's opinion that journalistic and institutional reasons led to this situation.

[45] On the journalistic front, both mainstream and diasporic media tend to choose news which have "high news value" – news containing negative aspects (e.g. killing, accidents, conflicts, court, and disasters) – as this has proven to attract a higher number of readers (Harcup; Beer and Merrill). Commercial interests have driven the publishing agenda.

[46] The institutional reason builds on the first and can be divided into two aspects: financial constraints and the enclave ethnic environment. The first aspect refers to the fact that *ACD* did not have sufficient financial resources to investigate events. As Nord states, "investigative journalism is more expensive than routine journalism" (12). In the De Yuan fishing boats incident the court date was held in Darwin, Northern Territory, but the crew members were detained in South Australia. Providing journalists with flights and accommodation would have been expensive. The other institutional aspect – the enclave ethnic environment – refers to the fact that the *ACD* survives in a diasporic enclave in the social economic system. It reports on its diasporic enclave society but also is very much financially dependent on it. As So and Lee state, "The advertising dollars for these overseas Chinese newspaper editions mainly come from local Chinese advertisers" (132). In an economic system where businesses are linked through a large network of "bounded solidarity" and "enforceable trust" (Zhou) the *ACD* is forced to undergo what Mung (1998) calls "automization".

[47] This means that the daily tends to shy away from publishing investigative reports, especially if these reports may affect revenue from or relationships with advertisers/potential advertisers or organizations it has ties with. In the case of student Wei Liao's death, for example, a lack of in-depth investigative reports into the ir/responsibility of her college may have been due to the fact that said college advertised in *ACD*. In this sense, the enclave economic environment becomes an obstacle, which makes it harder for the daily to conduct "investigative journalism" and publish insightful, analytical, and even helpful stories.

*Vitality of local surveillance role*

[48] It is vital that media content link “both the past and the present”, revealing how to reduce the possibilities of future trauma. The media can invite audiences to speculate: “How will I, or my neighbors or my countrymen, react in a crisis?” (193). Obviously, *ACD* did not provide the recommendations for their readers for how to avoid problems (security, employment deceiving, and discrimination) in the future.

[49] Frost criticizes negative news in local community newspapers as “death knocks”. He questions “whether the death is newsworthy because of its circumstance or because of who died?” (231). Frost recommends that local press should respect victims and provide compassion to their families and alerts to the community. Therefore, simply reporting negative news as the *ACD* does, does not equal fulfilling the local surveillance role.

[50] It can be argued that the local surveillance role is the best “weapon” for Australian Chinese newspapers “fighting for” readership. The information and bridging roles can be substituted by the Internet in some situations. Australian Chinese people can now easily obtain homeland news via online sources. The integration role can also be substituted by the English media in some situations. The 2006 figures of ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistic) show that a large proportion of Australian Chinese people have mastered basic English, so they can use the English language media to integrate.

[51] However, the Australian Chinese people do hope that their newspapers can perform the local surveillance role (Liu). Audiences hope that they can be respected and their concerns and needs and issues reported (Abercrombie and Longhurst; Mcquail). Australian Chinese newspapers are asuitable media channel to perform the local surveillance role, even though to date they are weak in this capacity. Then, how can *ACD* fully achieve this role?

[52] As Bakir points out, media surveillance is closely related to “investigative journalism”. Tong and Sparks and de Hugo observe that various newspapers in mainland China that employ investigative journalism enhance their reputation and increase their readership. They conclude: “Investigative journalism has proved a very important tool in the economic development of some newspapers, and has been integrated into their organizational structure as well as providing what might be termed a professional ideology for journalists” (Tong and Sparks 337). In turn, the valuable local surveillance role is fulfilled.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Clifton Evers for giving me the opportunity to publish and advice on this article. I also want to thank my parents, sister and friends for their support during my studies.

## Works Cited

Abercrombie, N., and B. Longhurst. *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Image*. London: Sage, 1998. Print.

Adoni, H., D. Caspi, and A. A. Cohen. *Media, Minorities and Hybrid Identities – The Arab and Russian Communities in Israel*. Cresskill: Hampton, 2006. Print.

Alia, V. "From Colonisation to Cultural Revival: Homeland, Diaspora, and the 'New Media Nation'." *Media and Ethnic Minorities*. Ed. V. Alia and S. Bull. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005. Print.

Bai, S. Y. "Constructing Racial Groups' Identities in the Diasporic Press." *Mass Communication and Society*, 13 2010: 385-411. Print.

Bakir, V. *Sousveillance, Media and Strategic Political Communication*. New York: Continuum, 2010. Print.

Beer, A. S. d., and J. C. Merrill. *Global Journalism: Typical Issues and Media Systems*. Boston: Pearson, 2004. Print.

Bell, P., S. Heilpern, M. McKenzie, and J. Vipond. *Different Agenda: Economic and Social Aspects of the Ethnic Press in Australia*. Wollongong: The Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong, 1991. Print.

de Burgh, H. "King Without Crowns? The Re-emergence of Investigative Journalism in China." *Media Culture and Society* 25.6 2003: 801-820. Print.

Fitzgerald, S. *Red Tape, Gold Scissors: The Story of Sydney's Chinese*. Sydney: State Library of New South Wales Press, 1996. Print.

Foucault, M. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Penguin, 1979. Print.

Frost, C. "Ethics for Local Journalism." *Local Journalism and Local Media*. Ed. B. Franklin. New York: Routledge, 2006. 270-279. Print.

Giles, B., and M. Marden. "Watchdog Journalism: An Instrument of Democracy." *Nieman Reports*, 55.4 2001. Print.

Gilson, M., and J. Zubrzycki. *The Foreign Language Press in Australia*. Canberra: Australian National University, 1967. Print.

Harcup, T. *Journalism: Principles and Practice*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2009. Print.

Husbands, C. "Globalization, Media Infrastructure and Identities in a Diasporic Community." *The Public* 5.4 1998: 19-31. Print.

Kim, S. O. *Communication and Acculturation*. Sydney: Macquarie University, 1985. Print.

Kitch, C., and J. Hume. *Journalism in a Culture of Grief*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

Lasswell, H. "The Structure and Function of Mass Communication." *Mass Communications*. Ed. W. Schramm. 2nd Ed. Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1969. 117-131. Print.

Lauterer, J. *Community Journalism: Relentlessly Local*. 3rd Ed. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. Print.

Lee, S.-A. "Performing Community: A Comparison of Korean Language Newspapers in Beijing and Sydney." *Diaspora* 13.2/3 2004: 227-252. Print.

Lin, W. Y. "Communication and Community Building: The Role of Ethnic Media in the Chinese Immigrant Community of Los Angeles." Diss. University of Southern California, 2004. Print.

Liu, D. "Ethnic Community Media and Social Change: A Case in the US." *Understanding Community Media*. Ed. K. Howley. Los Angeles: Sage, 2010. 250-267. Print.

- Liu, K. J. "Two 'Springs' and 'Winters' in the Development of Australian Chinese Media." *Global Media Journal-Chinese Edition* 7.2 2010: 102-127. Print.
- . "Information Role > 'Local Surveillance Role'? – Six Significant Event Reports in *Sing Tao Daily*." International Association for Media and Communication Research Conference. Braga. July 18-22 2010. Conference Paper.
- Marden, M. "Press Failure to Watchdog Can Have Devastating Consequences." *Nieman Reports* 55.2 2001. Print.
- Martin, L. M. "Images, Immigrants, and Their Press." *Small Voices and Great Trumpets: Minorities and the Media*. Ed. B. Robin. New York: Praeger, 1980. 217-247. Print.
- McQuail, D. *Audience Analysis*. London: Sage, 1997. Print.
- Mung, E. M. "Economic Arrangement and Spatial Resources: Elements of a Diaspora Economy." *The Chinese Diaspora*. Eds L.-c. Wang and G. Wang. Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998. Print.
- Nord, L. "Watching the Watchdogs: Different Perspectives on Investigative Journalism in Local Newspapers in Sweden." International Communication Association Annual Conference. Dresden. 19-23 June 2006. Conference Paper.
- Ogan, C. *Communication and Identity in the Diaspora: Turkish Migrants in Amsterdam and Their Use of Media*. New York: Lexington Books, 2001. Print.
- Park, R. *The Immigrant Press and Its Control*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1922. Print.
- Pe-Pua, R., M. Morrissey, and C. Mitchell. *Content Analysis of Australian Non-English Language Newspapers*. Wollongong: University of Wollongong Press, 1994. Print.
- Poon, Y. L. "The Two-Way Mirror: Contemporary Issues as Seen Through the Eyes of the Chinese Language Press: 1901-1911." *Minorities: Cultural Diversity in Sydney*. Eds S. Fitzgerald and G. Wotherspoon. Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, 1995. 60-61. Print.
- Rodriguez, R. "A Vital Responsibility in Need of Support." *Nieman Reports* 62.1 2008: 62-65. Print.
- Copyright 2012. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives

Shoemaker, P., and S. Reese. *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*. White Plains: Longman, 1996. Print.

So, C. Y. K., and A. Y. L. Lee. "Tapping 'Yacht Migrants': Overseas Editions of Hong Kong Newspapers as Econo-cultural Spin-off." *Asian Journal of Communications* 5.2 1995: 122-141. Print.

Stamm, K. R. (1985). *Newspaper use and community ties: toward a dynamic theory*. Norwood (NJ): Ablex.

Sun, W., J. Gao, A. Yue, and J. Sinclair. "The Chinese-Language Press in Australia: A Preliminary Scoping Study." *Media International Australia* 138 2011: 137-148. Print.

Tenezakis, M. D. *The Neglected Press: A Study of Arab and Greek Newspapers and Their Sydney Publics*. Sydney: School of Education, Macquarie University, 1983. Print.

Tong, J., and C. Sparks. "Investigative Journalism in China Today." *Journalism Studies* 10.3 2009: 338-351. Print.

Wang, Y. W., and J. Ryder, J. "An 'Eccentric' Paper Edited for the Unwelcome Aliens. (*The Chinese Advertiser*)." *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* 30.4 1999. Print.

Wright, C. *Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective*. New York: Random House, 1986. Print.

Xu, Y. "Assimilation and the Chinese Ethnic Press: A Case Study on the West Coast Edition of the China Press." University of Mississippi, 2002. Print.

Yang, J. "Communications, Knowledge and Attitudes: A Look into Acculturation Patterns of Chinese Students in the US." Diss. University of Texas, 1992. Print.

Yin, X.-H. "Diverse and Transnational: Chinese (PRC) Immigrants in the United States." *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 3.1 2007: 122-147. Print.

Ying, C. N. "International News Coverage in Malaysia: Theorising Complexity in the 21st Century." Macquarie University, 2007. Print.

Copyright 2012. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives

Zhou, M. *Contemporary Chinese in America: Immigration, Ethnicity, and Community Transformation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009. Print.

Zhou, M., W. Chen, and G. Cai, G. "Chinese Language Media and Immigrant Life in the US and Canada." *Media and the Chinese Diaspora: Community, Communications and Commerce*. Ed. W. Sun. New York: Routledge, 2006. 42-74. Print.

Zhou, M., and G. Cai, G. "Chinese Language Media in the United States: Immigration and Assimilation in American Life." *Qualitative Sociology* 25.3 2002: 419-440. Print.

Zhou, M. *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992. Print.

### **Appendix 1 Positive, negative, and neutral news on Australian Chinese people**

This paper adopts the content analysis definitions in a research project on Malaysian Chinese newspapers. In this project, "positive news includes the references such as progress, advancement, strength, continuity, stability and modernity. Negative news includes the references such as decline, weakness, liabilities, conflict, lack of progress, and instability. Neutral news refers to descriptive reporting without any positive or negative references" (Ying 7).

Based on the above research, this paper defines "positive news" as that the news describes the Australian Chinese people in the favorable situations, e.g. an Australian Chinese, Terry Tao, won the Field Award. "Negative news" means that the news describes the Australian Chinese people in unfavorable situations, e.g. some Australian Chinese people were murdered, or were charged in courts. "Neutral news" refers that the news depicts the objective events not in favor of and negative to the Chinese in Australia.

### **Appendix 2 Two examples for content analysis**

ACD, 3 July, 2008 (nine pieces of news in total in the Main News Page)

Australian Chinese ambassador Mr. Zhang Jun Sai unsatisfied: Australian government delays approval OF Chinese investment in Australia (Chinese news)

Copyright 2012. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives

A survey shows Chinese overseas students tend to stay in Australia (news on Australian Chinese people, neutral)

Commonwealth government funds organ donation (Australian news, politics)

A serious car accident in Sydney (Australian news, society)

Western Australian police reveals an unprecedented drug case (Australian news, society)

Police will inquire John Bosca, the Minister for Education – Iguanas Club issue (Australian news, society)

Conflicts between Neil (John Bosca's wife) and journalists (Australian news, society)

Twenty VIC children win the Little Hero Award (Australian news, society)

More adolescence suffer from diabetes (Australian news, society)

ACD, 4 July, 2008 (nine pieces of news in total in the Main News Page)

government's limitation on salary; NSW police, teachers and firemen decide to strike on July 30 (Australian news: politics)

Commonwealth and state governments cooperate and signed contracts: reform irrigation and protect children (Australian news: politics)

A sister and a brother murdered by grandfather in Cowra (Australian news: society)

Labor Party poll higher than Liberal Party 16% in newpoll (Australian news: politics)

Police advise about ski safety (Australian news: society)

Eleven people stuck in Sydney Tower elevator (Australian news: society)

John Bosca was investigated in police station (Australian news: society)

Police raid in Kogarah and detain two men and a woman (Australian news: society)

Free to catch train in International Youth Day (Australian news: society)

---

<sup>1</sup> A summary of participants in the fifth Global Chinese Media Forum, 2009, Shanghai.

<sup>2</sup> The original weekday issues were more than 253. But four issues were not collected by the New South Wales State Library, where the content analysis was mainly conducted. In addition, some issues were not applicable because of advertisements on the main news pages.

<sup>3</sup> ACP: The news reporting Australian Chinese people. OT: the other news. Ap: Australian political news. Ae: Australian economic news. Ac: Australian society news. Ao: Australian news (the others). Cp: Chinese news (positive). Cn: Chinese news (negative). Co: Chinese news (neutral). Pp, Pn, Po: the news reporting Australian Chinese people (positive, negative, neutral).

<sup>4</sup> The calculation process in Excel ignores figures smaller than 0.5% here.

<sup>5</sup> The amount of words is approximate in the case study articles.

<sup>6</sup> The above information is based on my journalistic work experience in China.

<sup>7</sup> The number for the crew could be 25, because the next news mentioned that the number of crew was 25. In addition, the crew figure in the other newspapers was also 25.

<sup>8</sup> The news in the issue May 2 ACD and in the other Chinese dailies all stated two captains (two boats). So, there would be a mistake in the title: two Chinese citizens were prosecuted for illegal fishing.