DIGITAL ETHNIC MEDIA: INTEGRATING MINORITIES & CONNECTING DIVERSITIES

DIGITAL DIASPORA, VIRTUAL DIASPORA COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores the implications of digital ethnic media for International diaspora through an empirical analysis of virtual Chinese diaspora spaces. The analysis shows that the Chinese cultural sphere is a heterogeneous and pluralistic space which is diverse, segmented but connected. The multicultural sphere fosters the complexity of interactions within digital ethnic community, by means of the appropriation of ethnic media which bring globalized context to the local cultural community. In this sense, digital ethnic media are taken advantage of enhancing multicultural sphere and thus enable digital diaspora reconcile with the context of host culture and society, with dualistic identities as well as cultural integration.

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INTRODUCTION

New figures from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN.com, 2013) show that 232 million people, equaling to 3.2 percent of the world's population, live abroad all over the world, compared with 175 million in 2000. More people than ever are living abroad: the immigration has doubled over the past few decades, with Asia seeing the largest rise of migrants over the past decade, while the United States of America hosting the largest number of International immigrants (2013).

According to 2010 United States Census Briefs, the Asian population grew faster than any other race group in the United States between 2000 and 2010, with an increase of 43 percent of Asian alone population (Elizabeth et al., 2012). Over 2.7 million Americans are of Chinese ancestry and 1.3 million non-citizen Chinese in the United States from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and etc., making the United States the country with the highest Chinese diasporic population outside Asia (Shi, 2005, p. 55). Until now, the Chinese American community is immigrant-dominant communities: more than two-thirds of the Chinese American (first generation) population is foreign-born (Sun, 2006).

The surge of Chinese immigration create a numerous demand of Chinese diaspora for Chinese ethnic media which help them obtain local information, rebuild social network and navigate social life in the new homelands. In addition, ethnic media are in need to offer institutional support to new migrants stuck in language and cultural barriers. Thus in many circumstances, immigration become a question of identity and a diasporic adaptation process.

New information and communication technologies play a "deterritorializing" role in connecting individuals in different territory and allowing people with different sociocultural backgrounds to discuss and participate in events that occur in distant locations worldwide. In the context of cultural globalization, a homogeneous and narrow mediascape excluding individuals and minority clusters are created as an imagined community within virtual sphere (Brantner & Herczeg, 2013, p. 215). However, it does not suggest that the emergent technology guarantees homogeneous globalization. With regard to the 'locality' force of ICTs, multicultural online communities made of local communities exhibit local characteristics (Cheng, 2014, p. 342). It results from a trend of an increasing compartment of mediascape based on pluralistic social life and heterogeneous virtual spaces.

Within the context of a multimedia environment, ethnic media emerge from the homogeneous mediascape, and contribute to a multicultural sphere. It is arguable that ethnic media enable diaspora to de-ghettorize themselves in using digital ethnic media as a way of interacting with people outside their neighborhood. While it could be claimed immigrant's excessive use of minority media lead to media ghetto which are isolating ethnic enclaves from the mainstream society and fostering segmentation.

In this paper, we optimistically view that transcultural ethnic media enable diaspora communities to find entrance into the public sphere and to interact with different social and cultural contexts, serving as bridging media; though they indeed fragment publics by providing alternative perspectives and communication on issues not covered by mainstream media. In the effect of two pairs of tensions - of globalization and locality, dynamics of division and connection, ethnic media play a dual role in influencing immigrants in minority communities, by the constituting the diasporic social sphere, reconstructing their identities of transnational migrants as well as reconfiguring the imagination of ethnic community and their relation with the majority. The fundamental argument of our study points to the duality of digital ethnic media in accentuating hybrid identity, ambiguous lived experience, and thus pluralistic integration by appropriating media messages embedded in multiple contexts.

The purpose of our research is to investigate how digital diaspora deploy the digital ethnic media in the construction and maintenance of their cultural identities and in forming virtual diaspora community by means of examining our case – WeChat appropriated as minority community media for Chinese diaspora to mobilize social actions in the host country. We attempt to answer the primary question: How do ethnic media influence the integration of international immigrants in their host countries?

The case study of WeChat as digital ethnic media help us to understand more about the power of media in shaping individual's identity, views on culture and society and their important role in creating cultural and social community. An important concept of appropriation and theoretical framework of cultural perspective studies will be employed in the descriptive analysis to the functionality of the WeChat in order to analyze how digital ethnic media are appropriated to solidify digital diaspora into community. Finally the discourse analysis along with the theoretical models of cultural studies perspective and dimensions of ethnic media, will be conducted on a variety of written texts found in the chatting groups – rules, conversations, and other shared content mostly in Chinese, in an attempt to find out how the

virtual community of Chinese diaspora use Chinese language media in a way that could be ideologically significant in identity negotiation and cultural integration.

The main research questions of the research are as followed:

1.   What are characteristics of virtual Chinese cultural sphere where Chinese immigrants involve?
2.   What implications do Chinese ethnic media have on the integration of Chinese immigrants into the host society and culture?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Overview

Although communications researchers have recognized media's significant impact on the social integration of ethnic minority long before, in-depth investigations on ethnic media use for social integration have just been conducted for last two decades. In particular with the rapid emergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs), mediascape has been trans-nationalized and cultural space has been created (Pöttker, 2005, p. 46). Though a substantial research related to this issue has emerged, still research findings of this subfield are fragmentary within multimedia sphere (Caroe Christiansen, 2004; Pöttker, 2005, p. 46). There is a research gap on the implications of digital ethnic media embedded in the telecommunication system, for immigrant's integration into the mainstream society. Some studies (Gitlin, 1998; Sreberny, 2005) state that ethnic media use is negatively related to immigrant acculturation; while others (Brantner & Herczeg, 2013; Bailey & Harindranath, 2006 in Brantner & Herczeg, 2013;) demonstrate ethnic media bridge immigrants with the majority society. Moreover, another stream (Tomlinson, 1999; Melkote & Liu, 2000; Zhou et. Al, 2005 in Sun, 2006; Yin, 2013; Shi, 2005) of research argues ethnic media recreate an "in-between" space by reconstructing hyphenated or hybrid identity of immigrants.

Ethnic media

Ethnic media is conceptualized as media "by and for" ethnics in a host country with content in ethnic language (Georgiou, 2001; Jeffres, 1999; Johnson, 2000; Shi, 2009 in Yin, 2015, p. 558). It is assumed to be created by the ethnic minorities who living on cultural borderlands or interstitial zones around imagined 'homeland', practice 'authentic home cultures' and form ethnic communities so as to re-root their floating lives and make sense of their subjectivities (Shi, 2005, p. 57). Sun (2006) claims, in certain social contexts, ethnic media play primary

three roles: firstly, negotiating the tensions among different opinions and interest within the ethnic communities; secondly, representing and communicating the sentiment and opinion of the ethnic groups to the mainstream society; last but not least, feedback the views and attitudes of host society to the ethnic communities (p. 9).

According to Pöttker, communications research concerning the issue of media use in ethnic integration, primarily with reference to three theoretical perspectives: use and gratifications model; approach based on media effects; and cultural studies paradigm (Bonfadelli & Bucher, Piga, 2007; Bonfadelli & Bucher, 2007 in Pöttker, 2005, p. 47). First, "uses and gratification paradigm" focus on not only on patterns of media consumption but also various types of attitudes towards immigrant acculturation. "Media-effect paradigm" does not emphasize media use itself, but concerns social integration on a macro level. In a complementary way, "cultural studies perspective" focuses on cultural identity on a micro level, against "media-centric" effects paradigm (Hall, 1980; Hepp, 1999 in Pöttker, 2005). It assumes participating in dualistic cultures and using media in both countries and languages simultaneously enable members of ethnic minority groups to "bridge the norms and values and to actively develop new forms of reflective hybrid identity" (Pöttker, 2005, p. 51).

Digital diaspora and cyber culture

In retrospect, immigrants managed to employ a variety of communication media to overcome the temporal and spatial barriers between countries of residence and land of origins, from newspaper and telegraph, radio and television, to the internet. In the past days, mass media established an imagined community without individuals or communities of minority and thus "creating a homogeneous and narrowly defined "we-ness" (Haavisto, 2009 in Brantner & Herczeg, 2013, p. 215). However, internet and new media ignite a new hope for uniting disperse and marginalized immigrants efficiently because it offers opportunities to recreate ethnic minority as "globally imagined communities", similar with the Jenkins' notion of "relocating" diasporas globally (Alonso and Oiarzabal, 2010, p.9; Jenkins, 2010, p. 278). In a word, once a common space is created and shared among transnational diaspora through information and communication technology, cyberspace as a "deterritorializing" force is liberalized from the geographic location of nation, state and diaspora group to a common "virtual space" (Alonso and Oiarzabal, 2010, p.11).

Alonso and Oiarzabal define "digital diaspora" as *immigrant group or descendant of an immigrant population that uses its connectivity to participate in virtual networks of contacts*

for a variety of purposes that, for the most part, may concern either homeland, the host land, or both" (Alonso and Oiarzabal, 2010, p.50). And it is also as distinct online networks where diaspora re-construct identities, exchange information and culture, and create public debate about common-interest issues (Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010, p.11).

In fact, digital diaspora are processes of "deterritorialization" which implies territory loses its significance in cultural experiences and identity construction (Morley & Robins, 1995, p. 87 in Yin, 2013, p. 557). Lemos (2002) points out, when people leave their homeland and disperse globally, they are deterritorialized in terms of physical location; and become territorialized again thus re-building their own network. On one hand, ethnic communities are able to localize themselves online to find new ways to reinforce their ties to the world, thereby increasing intensity of their meetings off-line (Lemos, 2002 in Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010, p. 180). On the other hand, the consumption of digital ethnic media blurs distinction between 'West' and 'East' or 'here' and 'there', in reconstructing the boundaries of physical locations as well as cultural identities of ethnic communities. The model of "dislocation" and "relocation" is mediated by transnational ethnic media to demonstrate the gap between the lived experience in the host country and the imaginations of those seeking a nostalgic return to their homelands (Jenkins, 2013). In conclusion, society's deterritorializing dynamics are not only a result of physical diaspora, but also a process facilitated by digital diaspora (Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010).

Thus as a trend to investigate the relationship between digital diaspora and ethnic media embedded in information and communication technology, it draws much attention of communications scholars to scrutinize how International diaspora use digital ethnic media in relation to different social perspectives, such as the formation of diaspora community, interrelation with identity reconstruction and social and cultural integration of diaspora.

Hyphenated or hybrid identity

In the last two decades, a number of literature on ethnicity hypothesizes identity within a postmodern framework, is "hybrid, dynamic, fluid, and multilayered", against essentialists' view of identity as "fixed and bounded" (Anzaldúa, 1995; Hall, 1996a; Rosaldo, 1989; Nagel, 1994 in Shi, 2005). However, researchers claim the work of postmodernists runs the risk of homogenizing the notion of hybridity and neglects to take into account the diverse experiences within the diaspora groups, such as the second generation who are seeking to articulate a new identity as a "hyphen between two cultures" (Maira, 1999; Vertovec, 2001).

Nowadays, the globalization phenomenon has raised questions about the relationship between territory and cultural identities, in particular with reference to the cyberspace as a "deterritorializing" force. Digitalization is hypothesized as a process of identity re-building while a growing number of diaspora communities are tapping into the potential to utilize new media for linking the old world and the new homeland, as well as heterogeneous communities within the ethnic public sphere. Though an empirical study by Yin (2015) indicates cyberspace does not dissolve location-related identity but reinforce it.

A number of scholars agree that online ethnic media are powerful in the reconstruction of identity for migrants. One of them, Yin (2015, p. 564) states online ethnic media manifest new functions in the formation of migrant's identity in negotiating different layers of identity simultaneously, such as Chinese, American, citizen. Multiple and complex identities establish multifaceted and complicated networks, meanwhile multiple opportunities for identity and identification are greatly strengthened by new information and communication technologies, which benefit diaspora communications largely (Husband & Moring, 2009 in Brantner & Herczeg, 2013). Thanks to development of information and communication technology, digital ethnic media are able to provide the diaspora with a more authentic connection between them and homeland – reinforcing "a sense of in-group belonging to a collective Chinese imagination. It emphasizes the deterritorized interactions with members of diaspora communities as well as peers in the homeland. This online ethnic media play a role as "identity reminder" for diaspora to enjoy togetherness with homeland compatriots and ethnic neighborhood, as well as to recognize "other-ness" within mainstream society. Within the diaspora's lives of paradoxes, ethnic media particularly appear to be significant to their identity construction through creating "a sense of cultural coherence", providing "socializing context" and facilitating imagination of transnational diaspora communities, which could "anchor the identification of the floating lives" of the migrants (Shi, 2005, p. 69).

Moreover, in a diasporic context, ethnic media also give rise to collective diasporic imagination which focuses on the common aspect of individual identity in terms of shared cultures, language, territory, and history, bonding dispersed sectors into an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983 in Shi, 2005). The political nature as well as the role of media presented in the diaspora community forming is recognized by researchers. As Bhabha (1994 in Shi, 2005), the process of minority community formation involves a complicated negotiation on authorizing hybrid identities and multiple cultures, and hence acquires an equal speaking position for minorities. Although many scholars expect to find out the

potential and implication of collectively ethnic media consumption in generating alternative identities and mobilize social activism. However, Shi (2005) claims shared cultural identity and mediated communications alone cannot fulfill the task of generating a social action - imagining belonging to an ethnic community is indispensable.

In contrast to 'medium-centric" effect paradigm of migration research, "cultural studies perspective" assumes participating in dualistic cultures and using various media in dualistic countries and languages simultaneously enable members of ethnic minority groups to "bridge the norms and values and to actively develop new forms of reflective hybrid identity" (Pöttker, 2005, p. 51). The dualistic societies are not supposed as detriment for the development and construction of cultural identity, otherwise new forms of cultural identities can be hypothesized based on the dialectical dynamic of "locality-translocality" and "similarity-difference" (Pöttker, 2005, p. 52). Bonfadelli (2005 in Pöttker, 2005, p. 51-52) points out five types of cultural identity: 1. "locally bounded and based on difference"; 2. the separate cultures and traditions are maintained in the same person as long as hybrid identities are presented depending on certain situations; 3. "assimilation into a new culture and absorption of new value and norms"; 4. based on diversity because of new global media culture; 5. new forms of identity based on mutual concerns.

Bridging or fragment communities

Hall (1994, p. 394 in Shi, 2005, p. 57) points out the history of diaspora: media impose "an imaginary coherence on the experience of fragmentation of diaspora, through "marking symbolic boundaries, re-linking cultures to places and fulfilling the desire for memory". In a diaspora context, ethnic media bring forth to "collective diaspora imaginations" which emphasizes shared perspectives of identities and cultures, and bridges many discrete subjects into an imagined community (Anderson, 1983 in Shi, 2005, p. 57). In a multi-ethnic society, ethnic homogeneity has been significant in structuring interpersonal networks, because of the shared cultural background, language, and life experience. Furthermore, members of ethnic group have to be pushed to co-ethnic interaction because of shared problems and frustration they come across in the majority society (Chen, 2015).

Compared with the previous approaches that ethnic communications focus on the mutual bonds of languages, lifestyles and cultures which bind members of ethnic communities together as a subcultural groups within the given territory (Sreberny, 2000 in Brantner &

Herczeg, 2013); new information and communication technologies deterritorilize transnational communications and thus bring members of communities dispersed in every corner in the world together (Brantner & Herczeg, 2013). In a word, transnational ethnic media serve a role as bridging medium to bring different groupings embracing common grounds and diversities together (Brantner & Herczeg, 2013).

However, Alonso and Oiarzabal claim, in the context of digital globalization, the interplay between diaspora and digital technology do not generate homogeneity of results, but heterogeneous outcomes. They explain their assumption by elaborating five models that access the process of transformations of diaspora communities. In regard with "digital diasporic marginality model", "digital divide" has been raised to investigate the fluctuating size of the gap digital technology brings about the society. There are a variety of digital divides existing and it results in social exclusions throughout the process of digitalization, such as the "exclusion-embedded design, exclusion-embedded appropriation, exclusion-embedded access, and etc. of communications facilities (Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010, p.53). Profit-driven digital infrastructure designed for the majority of common users with no reference to specific ethnicity is conceptualized as "exclusion-embedded design". "Appropriation exclusion" divides those with availability and unavailability of tool and money for Internet. "Access exclusion" relates to divide with the different levels of computer and internet access (Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010, p.54). For instance, if an individual migrant uprooted from homeland and departed from minority communities, she/he definitely has limited access to ethnic media content. Thus they have to adapt their media consumption patterns to the availability of resources, and find out new ways for getting information (Shi, 2005, p. 65). In addition, certain languages of online media content are also "digital divide" excluding immigrants especially for the first generation immigrants from the e-communication.

The notion of 'media ghetto' in "digital diasporic marginality model" is articulated for an ideal isolation of ethnic community within the majority society - ethnic spaces which are focused to and manufactured solely by the members of ethnic group tend to facilitate segmentation (Brantner & Herczeg, 2013, p. 216). Brantner & Herczeg (2013) argue if ethnic groupings negotiate their interest and struggle for the ethnic equality within a 'media ghetto', their opportunity of participating in the discussions within the public sphere of majority society is scarce (Bailey & Harindranath, 2006, p. 313). For Gitlin's (1998) view, digital ethnic media not only isolate ethnic minorities, but also shatter the public sphere.

Although "digital marginalization" is assumed to reinforce social exclusion and fragment social population, it also brings benefit to the marginalized groups – the other side of "digital diasporic marginality model" is "empowerment model". Digitalization de-marginalizes and empowers the diaspora communities who are in a disadvantageous position and are isolated from the dominant discourse of majority society. Furthermore, "empowerment" could influence other aspects of social life; like enabling diaspora groupings engage civic discussion and political activities. The practice of empowerment also de-marginalizes the marginalized and then "relocates" them into a local space for inner-community interaction. It reinforces the community interaction as practice of community empowerment, which is assumed to facilitate people to use digital technology to organize and gather individuals for staging a protest for community's right. Some scholars (Husband, 2000 in Brantner & Herczeg, 2013, p. 215) claim, ethnic media are essential in democratic system as artifacts of free expression of ethnic community, and as contributors to multi-ethnic sphere for inter-ethnic communications and multi-interest exchanges. The alternative ethnic media which can be productive as multi-ethnic space of cultural expression establishing dialogues across and inner cultures (Bailey & Harindranath, 2006 in Brantner & Herczeg, 2013).

In conclusion, the discussions about the impacts on social cohesion is two-fold; on one hand, digital ethnic media establish dialogues across different cultures involving in multi-ethnic public sphere as well as empower the unvoiced and disadvantageous groupings to voice to the host society; on the other hand, digitalization divide us off from individuals and communities and thus foster fragmentation (Sreberny, 2005).

Ambiguity of immigrant integration

Integration as a key concept in the influence of media on social cohesion and connection, emphasizes an ideal process that interconnects both similarities and the unity of the diverse segments of society, and differences (Pöttker, 2005). Hafez (2005) points out three primary perspectives of integration: civic integration, such as participation in political process; social integration i.e., media or institutional integration; and cultural integration which is fundamental for multiple identity formation and is related to striving for equality for different cultures (Hafez, 2005, p. 176 in Pöttker, 2005, p. 85).

There are two analysis approaches toward the problem of immigrant acculturation. The assimilationist assumes that the ethnic community is conflicting and excluding the host society and their culture. While a spontaneous process towards homogeneity where various

ethnic communities drop their "cultural baggage" and share a common identity and culture (Zhou et. al, 2005, p. 67 in Sun, 2006). Conversely, the multiculturalist claims, ethnic community being an "integral part" of the host society of which each ethnic culture with its unique "internal dynamics", contribute to the host society as a whole (Zhou et. al, 2005, p. 67 in Sun, 2006).

In support with the multiculturalist perspective, Zhou (Zhou et. al, 2005, p. 67 in Sun, 2006) points out ethnic media as a "social institution complementary to rather than to inharmonious with the host society". Considering the question that are the International diaspora involved in the ethnic institution being better integrated into life in their new homelands, Zhou assumes the answer is dualistic and paradoxical. Immigrant communities and ethnic institutions may decrease the socialized incentives of immigrants to approach those in host society's mainstream group and institution, which will eventually trap them in social isolation. However, empirical research shows no strong evidence for permanent isolation and presents a variety of cultural crossover in the host society, like first and second generation, ethnic and mainstream businesses (Zhou et. al, 2005, p. 72-73). In this sense, ethnic media being as social institution cannot simply be viewed as an ethnic group marginalized from mainstream society, but they contribute to multicultural sphere which facilitates ethnic integration into the whole society.

Another proponent for multiculturalist paradigm, Pöttker (2005, p. 41) further puts forward a notion of "multicultural media integration" which focuses not on homogeneity, but on communal acknowledgement and communication about differences and diversities within mediascape. He claims different sectors mutually participate in social institutions; and the acceptance of diverse cultural values serves as an indicator of successful integration (Pöttker, 2005). Researchers agree that migrant's integration tend to be adaptation allowing for cooperation with the mainstream society and cultural diversity; instead of the complete assimilation (2005). In contrast, any media practice excluding multiculturalism impedes the process of cultural integration. For example, mainstream media ignore ethnic minorities and ethnic diversity; Ethnic media only perceive hostile and negative content toward host society for "protecting" diaspora from the majority society (2005, p. 24).

In addition to the "multiculturalist" paradigm, Yin argues "two-fold" impact model of ethnic media for minority community. With the dual forces of globalization-locality, ethnic media is assumed to "interweave the local with the transnational", accentuating the deterritorialization

of migrant identity and lived experience (Yin, 2013, p. 558). On one side, the increasing consciousness of homeland culture facilitated by the transnational ethnic media co-existing with their reinforced sense of cultural belongings and differences among diaspora members, contributes to forming unified minority communities (Shi, 2005). Ethnic media also play an important role in deterritorializing ethnic communities in preserving ethnic culture and identity lifted out of locality, promoting 'ethnic pride', as well as presenting 'symbolic ethnicity' and solidifying ethnic minority groups (Jeffres, 1999; Johnson, 2000; Zhang & Hao, 1999 in Yin, 2015, p. 558).

On the other side, ethnic media help migrants re-root in the host country by facilitating the identities of ethnic minority with the locally lived experience related to the geographic location (Yin, 2015, p. 558). It also functions as a detailed "roadmap" for migrants to navigate foreign territories through connecting them to the mainstream society and informing them the local events (Zhou & Cai, 2002; Viswanath & Arora, 2000 in Yin, 2015, p.558).

It is a conclusion that ethnic media highlight the ambiguous lived experience of migrants in the globalized environment, since it creates a "pluralistic integration" for immigrants into the host society (Tomlinson, 1999; Melkote & Liu, 2000; Yin, 2015, p. 559). It is the duality of online ethnic media that fosters migrants' assimilation into the mainstream society while preserving their cultural roots and ethnic identity at the same time (Yin, 2015). The duality essence enables digital ethnic media provide diaspora in ethnic communities with communal reference points to communicate either with people back home or other compatriots in the host country - keeping both old ties that unite the dispersed population into "imagined transnational communities" and new ties for social relations and social integration (Shi, 2005, p. 66; Tufte, 2001). Within the model of "dislocation" and "relocation", neither can the diaspora satisfy a complete regress to the past lives back home, nor are they able to melt into the host society and culture entirely (Shi, 2005). In this sense, they are struggling in the paradox of their lived experiences, perceptions on their identities, cultures and even belonging community.

Theoretical Framework

It is substantially significant to emphasize technology in itself is not sufficient for constructing social cohesion, but also the culture contributes. Thus with regard to investigating the integration of Chinese immigrants into the dominant discourse of American

society, we will simultaneously take the factors of both technology and culture into account. The methodological literature displayed previously not only represents the discussion on the subject of identity construction, community formation and cultural integration, but also generally builds up the discourse and the significant arguments embedded in our research. The theoretical frameworks above related to various subjects are mainly categorized into two methodological perspectives: "media-effect paradigm" and "cultural studies perspective".

Among a variety of methodological perspectives, two middle-range theoretical models – "cultural studies perspective" and "dimensions of ethnic media" will be utilized to articulate the phenomenon of ethnic media and ethnic media's implications for social and cultural integration. Against the "grand theory" of the "functionalist" and the "assimilationist" for articulating immigrants' integration, The study prefers middle-range paradigm, such as "multiculturalist", "two-fold" to establish a model of immigrant's integration. We agree on Tufte's (2001) argument that the use of ethnic media presents cultural ambivalence as well as ongoing identity negotiation generally taking place within ethnic minority groups.

Cultural studies perspective

In the case study, the cultural studies paradigm is complementary to media effects paradigm, with regard to media use as selective preference of media and the reception process as an "active construction of meaning" (Pöttker, 2005, p. 51). Taking advantage of the discourse analysis to the media content of the case, the study attempts to embed the diaspora context into the cultural studies paradigm, so as to investigate the way ethnic media reconstruct hybrid identities and the bicultural integration of the Chinese migrants.

For cultural studies perspective, it is just the media content, but by its forms, constructs our very identities; our sense of belonging or marginality; our sense of ethnicity, of nationality; and of "we-ness" and "other-ness". In order to identify the integrative implications of digital ethnic media for Chinese diaspora, it is important to understand the process of meaning construction of the inter-cultural communications. Therefore, we will interpret the cultural meanings of the media content, including the text, message, and other forms of verbal communications on the WeChat platform. Our observations on the reception process of which members communicate within the virtual ethnic communities help us analyze how ethnic media shape users' view of the world, their deepest values, and the shared culture (Kellner, 2014).

The theoretical framework is adopted to analyze the results of the study is multiculturalism paradigm. Considering the globalization discourse, this study hypothesizes a multicultural perspective - requiring an understanding of cultural meanings which are negotiated in the interaction between dualistic lifestyles, norms and values facilitated by the alternative media. It is because the paradigm suggests using media involve dualistic cultures, countries, and languages enables members of ethnic community to bridge the values and norms of different cultures. And the emergent digital ethnic media fulfill the dualistic position that enable minorities participate in both cultures and develop new forms of hybrid identities. And it is further argued this meaning-negotiation process empowers ethnic groups to promote common respect, social engagement and cultural integration.

Appropriation process

A key concept concerning the study of the integrative implications of digital media for immigrant community is the appropriation, as a notion of "social shaping of technology" approach (Wikipedia, 2016). In scrutinizing the appropriation process of online communication, the paper means to understand how Chinese diaspora appropriate the digital ethnic media to build up their imagined collective community and to reshape their multicultural identities. It argues that the functionality of virtual space facilitated by ICTs contributes to shaping the user's ways of appropriating media messages, and then helping them reconcile in alternative contexts. Therefore, the thesis will examine the functionality of digital apparatus - WeChat in our case, to explore the emergent meanings of information and communication technology making sense within the Chinese diaspora community.

On the perspective of individuals, we assume Chinese migrants do practice WeChat platform as globalized ethnic media, to their own lives and life context of Chinese diaspora in the U.S. in appropriating messages, images and news. In this sense, the practice of appropriation means involving individuals who are situated in specific context, adopts the resources available to make sense of media messages and then incorporate the context into their lives. In addition, in the process of appropriation, messages will be transformed while individuals adapt them to the practical context of day-to-day life. Consequently, we plan to analyze the multiple discourses of the virtual ethnic spaces, as an arena of minority community interactions, so as to observe how ethnic media are appropriated for inter-contextual interactions within virtual diaspora community.

It is also hypothesized the process of appropriation of ethnic media involves tensions and contexts of globalization and locality, further influencing digital diasporas, for "appropriation of media products are a localized phenomenon; and the localized appropriation of globalized media products is a source of potential conflict" (Thompson, 1995, p. 175). When appropriating media messages, digital diaspora are able to concern the alternative life ways which facilitates them to think critically about their own lives; and are able to experience a clash of values as a personal conflict (Thompson, 1995). However, digital diaspora will gradually reconcile and hold in an uneasy balance of diverse values and beliefs embedded in alternative contexts. In this sense, an appropriation of globalized media enables diverse contexts co-exist and makes sense within the community. So through observing and analyzing the conflict discourse on the cyberspace, we are able to verify our hypothesis that the appropriation of ethnic media enables digital diaspora reconcile themselves with dual or multiple contexts of both globalization and localization, and facilitate minority integration into the localized discourse.

Dimensions of ethnic media

This paper mainly hypothesis digital ethnic media help enhance social and cultural integration of Chinese immigrants into host society of the United States. Another theoretical model that I am inspired by in particular is "dimensions of ethnic media" approach.

Fleras (Fleras in Pöttker, 2009, p. 159) points out the dialectical dynamics in play at the "reactive-proactive" with the "inward-outward dimensions" of ethnic media. The "insular and integrated" process that are generated by the interplay of "reactive-proactive" with "inward-outward" dimensions, while pushes as it pulls - "bonding and buffering as well as crossing borders and bridging" (Fleras in Pöttker, 2009, p. 159). Ethnic media play an inward-looking role as a "marker of identity" strengthens identities, heritage and culture by offering audiences information of relevance to the ethnic community or the homeland in their ethnic languages, tones and perspectives. Outwardly, by of providing relevant and immediate information concerning the livings and experiences of ethnic minorities in the new lands of residence, ethnic media bridges the inclusive minorities and the outside world as well as empowers those to voice their concerns with the wider public. It is supposed that if ethnic media provides information outside world and connected to the mainstream society, they are typecasted as integrative tools. However, others critique that ethnic media deepen the diversity and fragmentation, especially with the emergence of the internet and ICTs -

deterritorializing virtual diaspora community to easily retain their cultural roots in preoccupying with homeland and ethnic news. As far as Husband is concerned, once members of diaspora community become technology aware consumers of communication service, and then absorbed in their own media world, critics contend, they will be constrained to communicate with the outside world, which leading to the inclusive enclaves in a fragmented society (Husband, 2005; Weber-Menges, 2005). In response to the concern, other scholar claims neither do ethnic media enable migrants live in media ghettos nor depend on the exclusive diet of ethnic media, but presenting a rich media menu (Lam, 1996; Mahtani, 2007; Weber-Menges, 2007). Fleras argues a preoccupation with homeland and ethnic may weaken the societal incorporation, but the focus will not hold back the trend of integration (2009, p. 159).

With regard to the model of ethnic media dimensions, the overall outcome of integrative or divisive depends on the interplay of other dimensions of ethnic media. Ethnic media play a role of constructing buffers for migrants to re-adjust the new homeland when they provide minority information in a reactive perspective. Serving bonds within the ethnic community, ethnic media highlight celebrating ethnic community's achievement to enhance community cohesion. In contrast, when media focus on outside community news in a defensive position, it is able to cross the community border by advocating positive changes against social injustice. The most idealized model is, two dialectical factors of media – being proactive and outward, interacting for "building bridges" between the minority community and mainstream society.

However, the assimilationist approach assumes the ethnic community and the host society are inherently contradictory and mutually exclusive, but withdraw from the ethnic communities as they are assimilated. In contrast, the multicultural perspective hypothesizes that ethnic communities are parts of the host society and contribute to the host society as a whole; and predicts migrants would become identifiable in the mainstream society via their ethnic institutions. Sun points out Chinese language media can be regarded as an ethnic institution complementary to rather than conflicting with the society (2006, Sun, p. 67).

The literature review has underscored the importance of ethnic media research and theoretical framework offered insights in the ways that ethnic media frame multicultural sphere, shape migrant's identity and form virtual ethnic community. Using this theoretical framework, I will now proceed to analyze the networking functionality of digital ethnic media in order to

understand how information and communication technology constructs cultural meaning for virtual ethnic communities. By employing utterance discourse analysis, facilitated by the theoretical framework, I plan to analyze the role played by the ethnic media in shaping multicultural sphere, constructing hybrid identity and forming cyber Chinese diaspora community.

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Introduction

The study applies a qualitative case study approach, synthesizing descriptive analysis to networking media's functionality as well as an in-depth analysis to the discourse of inner-group conversations. The research explores the causes and consequences of the Chinese ethnic media and their implications on Chinese diaspora in the U.S. The thesis attempts to answer a fundamental question: How do Chinese ethnic media impact the integration and acculturation of Chinese immigrants into their host country?

The following research questions were included in this study:

1.   What are characteristics of virtual Chinese cultural sphere where Chinese immigrants involve?

2.   What implications do Chinese ethnic media have on the integration of Chinese immigrants into the host society and culture?

This qualitative case study describes the cultural view on an appropriation of digital ethnic media contribute to either division or integration of Chinese diaspora community. The quasi-ethnographic research is used to collect data in the areas of diaspora media, with a primary goal of revealing a relationship between positive and negative integration of immigrants and online diaspora media usage. The textual data are transcribed, coded, and categorized into two subjects – "identity" and "integration" related to the research questions.

Setting

Participants/Sample

The study focuses on investigating an integrative role of digital ethnic media in cyber-communities in the host society. The study takes into a consideration of a truth that integration into the new homelands in not an automatic process for the new migrants. During

our research period of February to April, an outbreak of the social mobilizations by Chinese Americans across the U.S. coincided with the conviction in Zhang's case. Two virtual Chinese immigrants' communities arose shortly for mobility purposes. In both cases, virtual immigrant communities played an essential role in mobilizing Chinese diaspora to fight for social and political justice when migrants come across discrimination and unjust treatment in the host society. It is noticed while ethnic minorities are faced with injustice and discrimination in their new homelands; the dispersed and marginalized individuals tend to gather together into ethnic communities for mobility purpose. That is why the two seemly negative events, "help Liang campaign" and "collective investigation for Zhang's case" where individuals with Chinese background have been discriminated in America, are selected simultaneously as cases for the study; which is crucial for the understanding of the role of ethnic media in the marginalized virtual communities, who directly impact on the social integration in collective level.

The sampling procedure of the research is convenience sampling. The participants are restricted to those who regularly apply WeChat as their social networking tool to stay in touch with their contacts who are either living in the homeland or are staying in the same ethnic neighbors across America, and as minority community media to acquire localized information. The participants are the members of four discussion groups in support of the social campaigns for Liang (2016) and Zhang (2016) respectively, who responding proactively to protect their civic citizenship and discuss important local and national issues within their virtual communities. The participants are also selected because they are from diverse cultural backgrounds and part of the same virtual space where they have a plenty of opportunities to interact and communicate, and the intersect of different discourses could be observed within the cultural spaces.

The sample group of the research is the users of WeChat platform, including both the new immigrants from the People's Republic of China (P.R.C), Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and other states since 1979, and the immigrants who settled in the U.S. over generations. The native-places of new migrants are diverse and could be traced to many different provinces and cities all over China (H. Liu, 2005, p. 299). However, the second generation immigrants, in a Chinese term "Hua yi" meaning "children of Chinese descent", who were growing up in the host country are excluded in this study. The group of participants is conceptualized as immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for at least 12 months and have access to the Internet. They are from a variety of demographic backgrounds, but similar ethnic identities - Chinese

immigrants in America. The total number of members approximately reaches 470 people, but most demographic data of the participants are anonymous in the Internet.

Materials

Two main kinds of medium materials are used for an observation of the virtual Chinese cultural sphere as well as for an analysis to the multicultural discourses within the digital communities. The data of content, origins, distribution and popularity of the posts on the open spaces reveals how the networking platform is connected inward virtual community and outward society, and an overview to mechanism of social networking on establishing cyber community.

Moreover, the conversation records as well as public statements published by the representatives of the groups for the purposes of mobilization, declaration, and affirmation, abstracted from the four chatting groups on WeChat. The quantity of the conversation records reaches around 25,000 Chinese characters (including the simplified, traditional character and English words) during the research period of February 20 to April 20, which approximately equals to the waiting period before the sentencing to Liang's case.

Measurement Instruments

The research on these virtual communities was carried out during the period of February to April, with the outbreak of the minority mobilization - "march 4 Liang". It provides the research with an opportunity through cyber-lens to observe how ethnic communities were aggregated by digital media to respond on an individual tragedy, but symbolizing as an ethnic crisis. The thesis analyzed the messages posted on the "Moment" platform, based on the selected topic of discussion to Liang's case. The narratives and discourses of the online media outlets including ethnic media as well as the user-generated content and discussion text in the social media platforms together with the subjective reflections of interviewees were analyzed to find out the interaction between them.

Data Collection

The data are collected mainly through observations. The observations were collected under natural, non-manipulative settings. The observations of the participants were conducted within the social networking platform WeChat which is the natural setting free of political

and economic stresses outside China territory. The researcher is a non-participant observer and resides on the media platform and chatting groups to avoid any interference to the setting.

Because of the divided territory between the research respondents and researcher, data collection has to be constrained within the cyberspace. However, the private nature of the chatting groups isolated and distanced the researcher, who is an outsider to the Chinese diaspora community in the U.S. from the Chinese immigrants on the virtual space. In order to reach out the sample respondents, the following endeavors were conducted: Firstly, follow the open information released online to contact the core members of the social campaign "Help Liang". Through interviews with them, it confirmed that WeChat as a dominant protest tool succeeded in assembling and mobilizing collective social actions among Chinese diaspora communities unprecedentedly. Online mobilized leads to off-line mobilized; in our case, digital ethnic media play a role in promoting the mobility goals of the immigrant community. Second, get involved in the chatting groups so as to observe the interactions within the Chinese cultural spaces. Though a frustration occurs to us whom we being strangers were always shut out of the door to their private groups, leading we have to postpone the process of data collection for almost one month. From February a couple of opportunities of getting the researcher invited into the chatting groups have emerged, since the researcher kept trying to establish social networking with some core members of the communities via WeChat. Third, being a non-participant lurks in the chatting group to observe and record a process of interaction among the member of digital communities. In addition, Researcher is able to obtain other data about the user's medium usage, and their frequency, preference and distribution to medium content without specific permission, since their entire shared content are free to reach since someone are authorized their contacts on the platform.

Data Analysis

WeChat platform is a Chinese dominant social networking platform and deployed by a group of Chinese immigrants in our case; Chinese appears leading communication language of the raw material we had collected. Thus, before starting the stage of data analysis, the phrases substantially significant around the research questions are extracted and then interpreted from Chinese into English.

The next, the extracted data were transcribed and categorized in terms of the subcategories of the main themes of "identity" and "integration". A coding method was used to organize those textual data into a limited number of themes and issues around the research questions about the interplay between digital ethnic media and integration of diaspora community. And quotations were then selected from the conversation records that illuminated our themes and concepts. The data analysis involves a coding process to organize and label the data into meaningful chunks. This is also necessary to interpret the data and draw out the major themes. According to the design of the study, both descriptive analysis and discourse analysis are employed as coding method to decode the massive volume of the material.

It is assumed human mind is able to recognize and build the patterns in terms of which people think, act, talk value and interact, which are guided and normed by the sociocultural practice and setting in the sense of culture and society. Thus human mind is cultural as well as social. Every individual human belongs to diverse sociocultural groups and multiple social communities, thus each cultural model, discourse model and pattern related to each group can impact on everyone in a unique way (Gee, 2010, p. 68). If human mind recognize the patterns goes far and lost from those used by others in a given discourse, the sociocultural practice and given discourse model will seek to re-discipline and "re-norm" that mind. In reality, the situated identity, meaning, and cultural model result from the social practices of discourse rather than inside human's head; implying human mind in root is mind of social. On this perspective, discourse analysis contributes to examine the way of which situated identity and social practice of the virtual diaspora group are disciplined and normed as specific sociocultural group rooted in the discourse model by social networking medium.

Moreover, an analysis to the discourse models which mediate between the "micro" level of interaction and the "macro" level of institutions is important to find out those "taken-for-granted" theories about how the world works. We know the "theories" from our life-world experiences which are shaped and normed by the social and cultural groups to which we belong and shared with others who are members of the same groups. Thus, through an examination to the discourse model of the virtual Chinese diaspora community, the thesis seeks to scrutinize the mediation effect between the inner-group interaction and institutional communication. Thus, taking advantage of the discourse analysis to the online texts, the study intends to look at who they are, what are doing, and how they communicate. Discourse is ways with words, deeds, interactions and feelings, enabling me to recognize different socially situated identities in the case (Gee, 2010). While reflecting the discourse of the utterances of

the digital communities, I intended to investigate the integrative implication of digital ethnic media on digital immigrant community.

ANALYSIS

Some media researchers argued "the medium is the message" (McLuhan 1964; 2001), demonstrating that the medium in which information is presented is the crucial element that shapes meaning. Though disagreeing with the extreme technology-determinism, we cannot deny the significance of medium in constructing meanings. Consequently, before analyzing the material, we have to identify the different categories in which our source appeared.

Chinese is the dominant language of communication in most of virtual Chinese diaspora spaces, though English is utilized in some. Compared with a significant volume of research on the cyber communities in model of Web 1.0, like portal sites, newsgroups and online magazines, and bulletin boards (Yang, 2003, p. 469-490), I will discuss the spaces based on the new media which enhanced by ICTs (Information and communication technologies). China dominant social media – WeChat is selected as a typical new media infrastructure for investigating the dynamics of virtual diaspora communities.

Case Overview

WeChat

WeChat (a.k.a Weixin in Chinese) is social media platform with text and voice messaging communication service on smartphone developed by China Internet giant Tencent (Wikipedia, 2016). WeChat is honored as one of the biggest standalone messaging apps by monthly active users, along with whatsapp (Lim, 2014). It is also a fast-growing mobile-focused social platform that attracts a broad range of users. Forbes stresses it as "one of the World's most powerful app" with over a billion created accounts, 700 million monthly active users; with 70 million outside of China (Wikipedia, 2016).

The original version app Weixin was first released in 2011, and was re-branded as WeChat for expanding an International market (Wikipedia, 2016). Even though Weixin and WeChat are definitely not two apps, Weixin and WeChat are kind of two different modes of the same app - Weixin is the mode for people who register with a Chinese phone number while WeChat refers to the international mode of the app (CHINA CHANNEL, 2015). Two different user groups refer to two modes are separated in the information exposed and the

some features by default (CHINA CHANNEL, 2015). Being regarded as transnational ethnic media in our case, WeChat will be selected as an ideal subject that we intend to investigate.

Similar to other networking platform, WeChat has built an entire ecosystem through its specific platform approach. WeChat services include free text messaging, voice/video messaging, group chat, broadcast messaging (one to multiple receivers), video games, sharing of photographs and videos, and location sharing. For WeChat users, WeChat is much more than just a calling and messaging tool. Instead, WeChat contains functionality of mass media with features of "moment" and "official account". The networking platform to some extent presents media convergence – combining portal sites, bulletin board system, chat room, and networking platform. In this sense, WeChat enhances multiple-platform, one-to-many interaction, and most importantly, connected media sphere.

WeChat as ethnic media

According to a recent report from a third party concerning marketing "Walk the Chat" (WALKTHECHAT, 2016), WeChat outside China is mostly restricted to the Asian regions such as Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, in spite of a huge population of 70 million users outside of China. Even though the app supports some widely used languages such as Indonesian, Spanish, Hindi and Russian and oversea office in San Francisco set up to "spearhead its American push from within", the growth of user is restrained to regions with a significant Chinese-speaking population (Lim, 2014). Obviously, language is still the main obstacles to transnational communication within media sphere. We could assume that a majority of users outside of mainland China consist of Chinese diaspora, including the first, the second generation diaspora and the newcomers.

Ethnic media provide alternation for ethnic minorities without political power or demographic impact, within the mediascape which are increasingly homogenous facilitated by mainstream media. It is conceptualized that ethnic media as a subdivision of alternative media which embrace news values that differ from mainstream media in empowering the disempowered. Concerning our case, WeChat functions as community media in the mainstream society, because WeChat in the United States mostly serves Chinese diaspora, the ethnic minority in American society, even though it is not produced by and for ethnics in the host country. However, functions as ethnic media keeping migrants informed about the local events, involved in the public discussion and unified as an ethnic community.

Through a scrutiny of the case, we intend to examine how the Chinese diaspora community appropriates WeChat as online ethnic media to engage social issues. During our research period, two issues arrested the most attention from the Chinese ethnic community within the cyberspace - one is the campaign "Help Liang", and the other issue is a collective investigation for Zhang's case. First I will give a brief description about both cases; second media content in the chat groups, moment, and official accounts will be scrutinized to dig out the way they re-negotiate their identities, articulate the social issues and associate with the communities.

Case one: "Help Liang" campaign

Peter Liang was found guilty of manslaughter in November 2014 and was convicted for second degree manslaughter on February, 2016. The cause-celebre was Peter Liang, a rookie New York City police officer of Chinese descent, accidentally shot an unarmed African-American, Akai Gurley, in the stairwell of a Brooklyn housing project (Wu, 2016). In regard of the accident, the jury concerned it is Liang's official misconduct as well as manslaughter leading to the death of an innocent directly.

However, the conviction was criticized by Chinese American communities who contended it was an unfair sentence for minorities while a slew of previous case in which juries declined to indict white officers involved in mis-killings of black men (Wu, 2016). They argued that "nobody should be given a pass" for causing the death of an innocent Black man, regardless of his race (Wu, 2016). The case drew the heated national debate over how police officers use force, particularly against African American.

On February 20, 2016, almost 15,000 Chinese American participated in the rallies in New York, and demonstrations were also held in dozens of cities, such as Boston, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles on the same day (Wikipedia, 2016). They contended Liang has been scapegoated for the tension between the American cop and other races, especially African American, calling for justice for all races in the U.S. with the slogans as "Justice for Peter Liang", "No scapegoat", "All Lives Matter", "Accident Not Crime!", "One Tragedy, Two Victims!" and etc. (Mather, 2016). The mass protests by American Chinese communities immediately appealed an attention from numerous mainstream media in the U.S., including CNN, NY Times, Huffington post, etc. Not only did they have a detailed coverage about Liang's case, but also they highlighted an outstanding effectiveness and efficiency of WeChat as a protest tool in spreading the information, organizing mobilization and raising awareness.

Thanks to the numerous efforts by Chinese American communities, on April 19, 2016, Brooklyn Supreme Court downgraded Peter Liang's manslaughter conviction to criminally negligent homicide with five years of probation and 800 hours community service (Wikipedia, 2016).

Case two: "Collective investigation" for Zhang

Zhang was accused for sexually abusing a 6-year-old girl of a Chinese family who migrated to the U.S. one year ago, and was sentenced for 25 years prison recently. However the conviction did not convince Zhang's family, friends and the Chinese American community, because the verdict was mostly based on the testimony from the "victim" as well as the only "witness", a 6-year-old girl; and several doubtful points remained in the case. Therefore, the Chinese American communities were activated on cyberspace calling for "digging out the truth and righteousness" together.

Descriptive Analysis

The functions of WeChat – "moment", "official account" and "group chat" are distinguishing in facilitating interpersonal communication and social interaction in the connected media sphere. Therefore, in the thesis, I will discuss the three major features to investigate how Wechat as digital ethnic media are appropriated to influence to enhance the virtual diaspora sphere and thus influence the message reception of virtual diaspora. It is hard to map online spaces a moving target; as Appadurai (1994, p. 3) says, online spaces "offer new resources and new disciplines for the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds." The presentation in the analysis below is taken account of materials for the work of imagination, which is in order to have an explicit understand to the cyber spaces.

Function 1: Moments

"Moments" is equivalent to twitter, a mini-broadcast supporting users to post image, text, share music and article, as well as comment and "like". Only authenticated friends of the users are able to view their contents and comments. It can be linked to Facebook and Twitter accounts, which access the features and content of the platform.

Three participants, Carfield, Momo and Lake belong to the virtual Chinese community, who are active users of Moments platform. They are Chinese American, and all first generation migrants living in different parts of the U.S., including Houston, San Francisco and Boston,

but sharing common concerns to civil rights of Chinese or Asian community in the U.S. The Moments are selected to examine the functionality of the platform, which are related to the topic of Peter Liang, from a certain period of January 1 to April 6.

Table 1 demonstrates the volume of Moments (posts) relevant with the topic of Liang, and their distribution of three Chinese diaspora.

TABLE 1

Volume of Moments and resources distribution of three Chinese diaspora, 7 April 2016

Name	Sharing from other resources				User-generated content		Total
	ethnic media	mainstream media (U.S.)	homeland media	official account	Others	Self	
Carfield	14	13	3	4	4	18	56
Momo	3	1	2	4	/	11	21
Lake	13	28	3	27	16	19	106

Source: WeChat Moments, retrieved 7 April 2016.

According to Table 1, it is acknowledged the resources of Moments can be categorized as ethnic media, mainstream media, homeland media, official account, and user-generated content; while distribution tendency and volume may depend on user's media consumption patterns. However, common points of the media consumption can be distinguished. First, three of them shared multiple consumption patterns – resources come from a variety of sources (e.g. ethnic media, homeland media, host media) and are generated by different ways (UGC and sharing). Second, compared to a consumption of homeland media, consumption of mainstream media as well as ethnic media generally appears more preferable to the respondents. It implies that the digital ethnic media, not only enable digital diaspora obtain information from a variety of sources and exchange individual opinions, but serves as a medium bridging the mediascape and cultures between the host country and their homeland.

Table 2 shows the applied languages of Moments of the respondents, which implies the dominant and more preferable language for the diaspora on cyber space.

TABLE 2

Languages application in the posts, 7 April 2016

	English	Chinese	Bilingual	Total
Carfield	5	33	12	50
Momo	/	19	2	21
Lake	17	55	23	95

Source: WeChat Moments, retrieved 7 April 2016.

As table 2 shows, Chinese dominates the Moments of the respondents on the WeChat platform while Chinese-English is occasionally adopted and English was scarcely applied. It accounts for, on one hand, Moment has been a Chinese-dominated platform; on the other hand, bilingualism becomes increasing frequent among digital Chinese diaspora community, for Chinese cannot prevail over the cyberspace. A tendency of bilingualism on the platform indicates cross-posting of messages on Moments connects varied virtual spaces in different languages. In this sense, Moment manages to transcend territorial and cultural boundaries, serving as a deterritorializing information agent for the group of Chinese diaspora.

Table 1 and table 2 indicate the characteristics of "deterritorialization" and "bridging" of Moments that are able to broaden the views and perceptions from "east" to "west", from "localized" to "globalized", of the digital Chinese diaspora groups. In the following, another feature Official account will be examined.

Function 2: Official account

Compared with Moment as private networking circle, Official account is such an open space that allows any organization, company, or even individual to create their "official account" appealing their audiences to "subscribe" their media contents. By the end of 2014, the number of Official accounts had reached 8 million. The feature encourages a flourishing of user-generated content and public discussions about civic issues, because taking advantage of the feature, every individual could become a journalist, a broadcaster, a public intellectual who could release their articles to the public, which can impact the opinions of the mass in a more explicit mean. It seems almost like a portal site, with each individual official account acting like a web page. Not only can the users subscribe, consume and comment their interested content, but also they are able to forward the subscription content to the Moment platform for sharing and discussing them with a broader circle of audiences. Official accounts

are usually organized by interest or purpose, and most of them provide issues of interest to their subscribers, serving as regular mini-broadcast tailored to the given audiences.

Table 3 displays fifteen popular official accounts from which the most Moments related to Liang, resource among the three respondents. From the table, we recognize there is a wide range of properties of official accounts, from individual to company, from mainstream media to ethnic media, and from institute to professional community.

TABLE THREE

Selected Popular Official Accounts of Chinese Diaspora, April 8

Ownership	Account Name	Location
Individual	*Civil Right*	Boston
Individual	*In Philadelphia*	Philadelphia
Individual	*USA TODAY*	USA
Individual	*HN-VIEW*	New Jersey
Individual	*Little World of Chinese American*	Los Angeles
Individual	*USA ONLINE*	USA
Individual-celebrity	*Mr. Cui in North America*	USA
Ethnic media-Television	*Sino-vision*	USA
Enterprise-Real estate	*CRYSTAL CHOICE*	New York
Enterprise-Lawyer	*Niu's American Commerce Law*	USA
Enterprise	*New Yorker*	New York
Enterprise	*Houston Online*	Houston
Ethnic media-Press	*US CHINA PRESS*	USA
Ethnic media-Press	*SING TAO DAILY-EAST USA*	New York
Homeland media-Press	*Global Times*	CHINA

Except the homeland media "Global Times", a majority of popular accounts are information-provided platform that manufactured by the ethnic community or organization to serve ethnic' political, cultural, economic and everyday needs in the land of residence. We also find out audiences tend to pay attention to those location-specific content (e.g. *In Philadelphia, New*

Yorker) that have their roots in the local community and are embedded in the local experience specific to the migrants' location. For example, "In Philadelphia" appeals audiences from Philadelphia; while most subscribers of "Little World of Chinese American" are residing in Los Angeles. It supports the location-specific perspective that the location-specific accounts connect migrants to the host society functioning as ethnic media.

Therefore, those accounts are assumed to have a "localized" function – providing culturally relevant and locally vital information to immigrants in the host country. Because of the functionality as broadcast to foster the homogeneity within diverse ethnic groups, we assume, Official account contributes to unifying subgroups with shared interest and locality. In addition, given the accounts' heterogeneous nature of ownership status, it also enhances diversity in content and culture on the cyberspace – interweaving local and transnational contexts of political and social issues to digital diaspora.

Function 3: Group chat

Another distinguishing "open space" within WeChat platform is Group chat (mounting to 500 participants per group). Any user is able to start a chat group of particular theme; and once you become the member, you could also invite other participants who share the common interest and aim. Furthermore, a QR code related to the group can be disseminated on the Internet, allowing people scan it via mobile and then join in actively. In this sense, Group chat within WeChat is like a mix-up production of chat room and bulletin board system – an open space based on autonomous principle and concentrating on particular topics and themes. Members are able to freely speak out their voice and opinion, but violating the communally authentic regulation of the group. It liberalizes individuals from their own networking circle, and then opens up a new space for public discussion. In addition, all contents disseminated within WeChat, and from other outside media platforms are able to be shared to the chat groups.

In the following sections, we are going to investigate the contexts of the four chatting groups of Chinese diaspora in the U.S., in terms of the topic of Liang and Zhang's case respectively, by analyzing the online texts including group naming as well as regulation description.

Group Naming

The following four chatting groups are selected as samples of research:

- *April 14 **national** mobilization group **in support of Liang in NY***

- *Communication Group for Responsible Person of February 20 Rallies **across the U.S.***

- *February 20 Rally **in support of Liang from San Francisco Bay***

- ***National Chinese** Investigation group three for **Zhang**'s case*

First of all, according to the naming of the chatting groups, we can identify the aim, standpoint of the groups and the identity of participants. Each group name relates to a specific issue, location, purpose – naming words like "February 20 Rallies", "in support of", "Zhang's case", "San Francisco" demonstrates that the discussion of each group is supposed to focus on the particular subject by given community of members.

Moreover, the participants are possibly subject to their belonging locality from the group naming – "NY", "San Francisco Bay". In the sense, the cyberspace of chatting group turns "narrower" as well as more "closed", compared to those of previous virtual spaces, such as bbs, news room – in "narrowing" the range of debating topics and participants; and "isolating" the community of interest from the outsiders. Simultaneously, the "narrowed" and "closed" environment facilitates intensive and efficient discussions of certain group of digital diaspora for community issues.

In the second place, we notice different words are adopted to identify the participants. The word "national", are frequently adopted in naming the groups, which implies that most of the members, at least the co-founder perceive their citizenship as American, not Chinese; and their nationality of the United States. The American citizen context indeed fosters them devote in the interest of their civil right of individuals and communities in their host country as new motherland. In contrast, another group utilizes the phrase "group… across the U.S." which reveals their identity perception as "community in the U.S." instead of "community of the U.S.". It is not able to see the entire picture of the social media platform in investigating every member's perception of their identity, but it could be hypothesized migrant's perception of identity is negotiated ubiquitously as long as they started to involve themselves within the virtual community.

Regulation Description

Among the four chatting groups, two of them present concrete description for their group regulations on the introduction page in Chinese, which were initially drafted by the group

administrator, and then negotiated and modified by other members. Two pieces of regulation description have been translated into English and underlined as followed:

*"Not only the members within the group, but also other proponents outside the group, are the co-founder of our group. No leader, chief and no priority here, but an **unity** for digging out the truth. The aim of our group is to build up a **solidarity** among different communities, striving to find out the reality of Zhang's case together, through the **rational debate** among each other. In addition, **dictatorial** behavior as well as any speech with **discrimination, assault, or no-proof defame** are strongly resisted. We will **drive** those who violate the regulation repeatedly **away**. All discussions here should be based on the practice of **American law**. Everybody has a right to report other's speech that goes far beyond the **U.S. law**, along with the presentation of the given law and the conversation record. We bear no responsibility for any speeches of members."*
Source: National Investigation group three for Zhang's case on WeChat

*"Article or content relevant to Liang's case are highly encouraged to share; content in terms of local activity or civil right defense of Chinese American could be posted properly. However, frequent poster of advertisement or "chicken soup" will be asked to **leave**. We encourage **rational discussion**, instead of **personal offense**."*
Source: February 20 Rally in support of Liang from San Francisco Bay on WeChat

With reference to the regulation presentation of the two groups, it could be observed that they share some similarities in the basic norms, speech guidelines, and etc. Both of them emphasize the code of conduct – being rational in the speech within the group. Positive phrasing, such as "rational debate", "rational discussion", along with phrasing with negative attitude, "dictatorial", "discrimination", "assault", "defame", and "personal offense" are highlighted repeatedly in order to raise the rational sense of speakers in their communication. The group norms are not first settled at the starting point of group-establishment, instead of being discussed, processed and revised collectively during the inner-group debates. The notion of "group administrator" is largely lightened by weakening their privilege except for the power to kick someone out of the group they had created, but some managing power of group chatting platform, like the right of "group dismissal" or "speech block" have not been privileged.

It indicates the administration of the space is based on the autonomous and democratic norms; as well as built upon a potentially rational and respectful context. In addition, members of

"National Investigation group" conferring American law as the fundamental principle reveals that to some extent they agree with or in favor of the U.S. law system, as identity of citizen in the host society, but not merely as immigrants.

In the following section, the means of which digital media are appropriated to create virtual diaspora community as well as the interrelation between digital media and identity construction of migrants will be elaborated through scrutinizing interaction among the digital diaspora community. The study intend to find out the influence of digital ethnic media on the migrant's integration and identity construction, by observing their conversations of the four chatting groups, in terms of articulating ethnic issue, associating the public and mobilizing the communities concerning the cases of Liang and Zhang. It is looking at how digital diaspora communicate who they are and what are doing through the discourse analysis to the online texts.

The texts were obtained by the field research toward three chatting groups manufactured by Chinese diaspora communities, "April 14 national mobilization group in support of Liang in NY" (abbr. "414 mobilization group"), "National Chinese Investigation group three for Zhang's case" (abbr. "national investigation group") and "Group for April 19 volunteer Assemble in support of Liang" (abbr. "419 assemble group"). The records of conversation started from February to April 20, during the conviction period of Liang's case and Zhang's case. The conversation record as research material responses to the event of "April 14 and April 19 national mobilization for Liang" and "Appeal for Zhang", and tied into broader debates about protecting civil right for Chinese American. The chatting groups were established by the Chinese American from all over the U.S. They are virtually named "Sun", "Ping", and "John" who claim as the representative and leader of Chinese American communities.

In addition to the discourse analysis of the conversation records, other forms of texts in the chatting group will be observed and scrutinized as well; for example, public statement published by the representatives of the groups for the purposes of mobilization, declaration, and affirmation, after Liang was sentenced will not serve any time in prison. Extracts from four articles, "Reflections on 'Support 4 Liang'", "Anniversary in memory of 426", and "Notice to the 'United-group'" and "Letter to Chinese American Compatriots in NY State", as well as the relevant feedbacks, which focus on celebrating both individual and collective

accomplishments and successes will be presented as research material, to find out how they further construct the discourse embedded within virtual Chinese diaspora space.

We will turn now to this section by stating a hypothesis we have drawn from the conversation record we collected from the group chat, and then looking at some of the text that we believe support this hypothesis. The discourse analysis is about to formulate and gain enough confidence in our hypothesis which must be investigated. The data is presented as followed with underline words that will be examined with particular emphasis.

Discourse Analysis

Identity

Firstly, I want to start with a consideration of identities, examining the way of which socially significant identities are mutually constructed in language and what this has to do with situated meanings and discourses. Gee (2010) points out identities are involved as a component of any situation we want to study via discourse analysis; and socially situated identities are mutually co-constructed in everyday conversations. Consider the following extracts relevant to the "identities" descriptions from the records of inclusive conversations in the groups. "Conversations" are debates in society or within specific social groups over focused issues.

"Immigrant underclass"

1 (Chinese American) are yet <u>second-class</u> citizens.   *(From Suki Lei)*

2 If we lose the case, how can we Chinese American live in the U.S.? Chinese American, you are "<u>the weak</u>"! Whose destiny is to be "<u>eaten</u>". "A staff is quickly found to beat a dog with".   *(From Jessie)*

3 Wake up! Those Chinese American who are yet sleepy. And use your voting right to <u>roar</u> loudly. We are not supposed to be <u>sheep</u> bound <u>slaughtered</u>, but a <u>male lion raging</u> for Peter Liang, the child of our Chinese American, for overall benefit of <u>our Chinese American community</u>.   *(From 'New Jersey')*

4 The Asian American, especially for those of old generation, are equals as a group of "<u>mute American</u>" who never <u>cries for milk</u>, never engage political activities, but stick to earn money <u>quietly</u>. Compared to our Chinese, a majority of the blacks could speak

English. No matter grassroots or people embracing political ambition, they are capable to join in the group of "crying for milk".   *(From Connie)*

5 Chinese communities in the U.S. are alike feudatories fragment in ducal states. Old Chinese diaspora are looked down upon by the new migrants … the "white-collar" think little of the "blue collar"; diaspora from the North China despise those from Southern China, etc. *(From Johnny)*

6 Solidify as much strength as we can! The leaders of Chinese diaspora, the councilmen, the Chinese American and Asian American.   *(From Jessie)*

7 (Who) wants to be the emperor, when the stronghold has not been settled. There is still time to be while the occupied stronghold are being split. (Who) in the U.S. now, while is the methods of struggling for the benefit of China working well? Why cares who is the emperor today even when not standing firm? The capable need not to boast themselves, but along with the followers! No matter how many Chinese obtained the U.S. citizenship, (who) remember one point forever: that second-class citizen is second-class citizen! Your skin colour and ancestral home are not altered, along with all generations. Is no American wondering whether you are American or not? Only do they ask what country did you come from! (Who) do not want to be Chinese, but no one admit you are American.
    (From Susie)

Members tend to deploy vocabulary that have a common contextual background from war-languages (e.g. "slaughtered", "feudatories", "ducal states", "solidify", "emperor", "stronghold", "follower") and often adopt passive phrases and voice while describing their identity as Chinese diaspora in the U.S. (e.g. "the weak", "eaten", "sleepy", "mute American", "cries for milk" and "looked down upon", "second-class") as well as the furious tone. It indicates their identity perception as passive and submissive ethnic minorities which were suppressed in the host society and the resentment to their antagonists.

However, their antagonists were not identified explicitly through the context, instead of being presented with the third person pronouns. We argue the frequent omission of the responsible party in their narratives are in order to obscure relationship and shirk responsibility to the present situation - Chinese American community being mute and powerless in the host country. Moreover, allegories, metaphors are employed to construct the their imagined and actual identities - "slaughtered sheep" vs. "raging lion", "mute American" vs. "crying for

milk", revealing their inferiority, disappointment and dis-identification to their actual identities, presentation and situation, though they claimed as much stridently and furiously as they could.

> 8 We are growing from being as grassroots and insisting being it. The grassroots connect as a whole, bringing green all over the ground. We are eager our kids to become the towering trees and forests covering the earth. Today's endeavor of grassroots is for the flourishing forests tomorrow, even though someday they turn to withered vines, which could be utilized as handhold for climbing upward by our kids. *(From "Notice to the 'United-group'"; Jackie Wu, Leader of group)*

Through close examination to the context with, a closely related discourse model is salient, which tied to the notion of "grassroots", representing the Chinese migrants, as the central role in changing the present and navigating to the future. The "grassroots model" assembles the features that constitute the pattern or situated meanings that words have in the context. While triggered by the given context, we understand the situated meanings and patterns to this context – a rhetorical figure of simile or even metaphor are deployed in the utterance that equates diaspora with grassroots, withered vines, the migrants of second generation with towering trees, forests, and the U.S. with the earth. By means of the simile, the author does not only simplify the construe for abstract identities, he also indicates interrelationship among the components involved, Chinese migrants, kids of future generation and the host country.

Although Chinese migrants present a frustration being inferior community as grassroots in the society, they imagine their prosperous future when they are fully integrated to the host society like towering trees taking deep roots in the ground as well as flourishing to become forests. It is in the service of the overall argument that the persistent struggle of Chinese migrant nowadays is for a better integration to their new homeland in the future. In a way, this is a version of The American Dream, yet collective.

The fragmented or the unitary?

Phrase 9 is the message of one "collective investigation group" member, presenting her/his concern to the investigative result of Zhang's case.

> 9 A number of new migrants from mainland China behave "incredibly", along with shameful histories. However, our intuition is based on the mutual norms and rules that formed as long as we have been living in the North America for a long time. I think if their

case wins when anyone could be convicted solely according to a child's words; then the fortune which were strived by the <u>old migrants</u> will be <u>written off</u>… Afterwards the lives would be tougher. *(From 'The Ocean')*

It is recognized the phrase 9 shows less emotional narratives, but indicating an opposition between protagonists and antagonists: newcomers and old migrants. Instead of identifying them as "Chinese American" or "Chinese diaspora", they distinctively identify themselves "old migrants" regardless of their ethnicity and place of origin but referring to those inhabited in the U.S. before 1979; in contrast with those who emigrated after 1979 when the economic reform began in mainland China. The statement from an "old migrant" reveals a pride in their well-integration to the host society by using positive narratives (e.g. "mutual norms and rules", "fortune") and the hostility in seeing the "new migrant" as their antagonist in the host country with a negative tone (e.g. "incredibly", "fraud", "shameful").

Phrase 10 and 11 are extracted from the conversations among the members of "414 Voluntary group" who attempt to raise other awareness to voice for their ethnic community.

10 Hope <u>we</u> all actively vote for those candidates who voice for <u>our</u> Chinese American; making the <u>mainstream society</u> to attach attention to <u>us</u>. (in Traditional Chinese; *From Lei Ming*)

11 Make the <u>mainstream society</u> aware Chinese American will no more grin and bear it. (in Traditional Chinese; *From Andy Cai*)

Phrase 10 and 11 are two conversation records written in traditional Chinese characters, which are being deployed by people in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao and other overseas Chinese communities outside the Southeast countries in Asia, in contrast of the simplified Chinese characters presently used in mainland China, Singapore and Malaysia (Wikipedia, 2016). Although characters could not matter the meanings of utterance, their particular language forms take on specific meanings in specific context.

The multi-character context reveals the components of the discussing groups are migrants range from mainland China to other states which consist of communities of Chinese ancestry. The traditional character user adopts "we", "our" and "us" to take themselves to be in such context of "unitary Chinese community" to reach a consistent aim: voicing to the "mainstream society". Regardless of their given differences in terms of culture, communication and mindset between the social groups, they reconcile their differences and

create the cultural community through the context. The socially situated identity as scattered or solidified, pride or humble ethnic minority outside the mainstream society have been constructed and dominating the discourse in inner-group interaction.

Integration

The following section attempts to investigate how the debate and interaction within the public sphere contribute to generating interactivity between the minority community and the host society; and among the discussants themselves.

Social exclusion

12 I am so disappointed that the "justice" of this country was fake.   *(From Tom Wei)*

13 (William Colton) is such an amazing official! Where did the officials of our Chinese go?
        (From Fanny Chen)

14 We believe that any freedom this country renders is equal to all.

15 As a politician, Assemblyman Charles Barron has been given disproportionately larger and voice in our society. He is elected to make our city a better and safer place to live... We demand that Assemblyman Charles Barron rescind his remarks and make an apology to our community. (in English)   *(From Lucy Gui, one of the group leaders)*

16 American judicial systems are of colors. Unfair! Hope our kids of next generation to learn law in favor of our Chinese community.   *(From Jack)*

17 Wake up! Those Chinese American who are yet sleepy. And apply your voting right to roar loudly. We are not supposed to be sheep bound slaughtered, but a male lion raging for Peter Liang, the child of our Chinese American, for the overall benefit of our Chinese American community.   *(From 'New Jersey')*

18 Fight with those with foreign races if you are capable, rather than always fighting to death with your own race. *(From Johnny)*

19 We are segmented seriously by diverse opinions, perceptions and competitions. There is no way to fight with other ethnicities or systems, if the one is not capable to solidify their own group of ethnicity.   *(From Johnny)*

It is observed when Chinese diaspora were confronted with unfairness in the host society, the inner-group solidification and an inter-ethnicity antagonism rise spontaneously within the online Chinese community. Frequent use of the pronouns "our", "this" as well as the adjectives "own", "foreign", "other" enables audiences to firstly recognize who are protagonists and antagonists by the context and distance two parties within the discourse. They repeatedly address their identity as "our Chinese", "our Chinese American", "our kids", "own race", and "own group of ethnicity" involving in "our (Chinese) community", "our city", and "our society", which reinforcing a sense of belonging and cohesion to the ethnic groups; in contrast, phrases like "this country", "foreign races", and "other ethnicity and system" were utilized to emphasize the contradiction and conflict between the Chinese diaspora community and American mainstream society.

Furthermore, the members always adopt a collective forms "community", "group" to identify themselves opposite to the single form or individuals of their antagonist, like "this country", "he", "his". We hypothesize through the inner-group interaction via Chinese ethnic media; immigrant's sense of "we-ness" to the exclusion of "other-ness" would be reinforced.

20 On February 20, from the East Coast to the West, across 40 cities in America, Chinese American were facilitated to speak out with the most powerful voice of the ages. *(From 'Letter to Chinese American Compatriots in NY State', Jackie Wu, Leader of group)*

21 On the 4·26 of last year, we walked a vital step of "United as one to fight". We left a significant chapter in "striving rights" history of Chinese American. *(From Anniversary in memory of 426, Jackie Wu, Leader of group)*

22 Even after the February 20 rallies, we 100 people did not scatter; but united minds and strength as one. We contributed ourselves and our strength to donating, to voicing our thought. We are like a big family! *(From "Reflections on 'Help Liang'", Amy Liu)*

23 Thanks for the comrades who fought side by side with us; because it is not an individual battle. You are the glare of Chinese American; the glory of Chinese American. When I think about you, my heart is fulfilled fully with warmth and appreciation. *(From "Reflections on 'Help Liang'", Amy Liu)*

These public statements were for the purpose of celebrating the diaspora community's success, of which their voice was heard by the mainstream society and they finally protect their rights, from their perspective. Thus, tone of the four statement letters tend to be excited,

elevated and proud. First of all, the authors utilize extreme positive phrases (eg. "most powerful", "ages", "history", "glory", "glare", etc.) to present the prevailing triumph of the community and their uncovered excitement in an affirmative and super-proud tone ("40 cities", "100 people"); shaping their identity as unprecedented champion of minority rights. The author compares the mobilization to a "battle", group members to "comrades", which places the members in the discourse of "battlefield". This discourse fosters the members "unite as one" to "fight" for the "glory" of the community.

On one side, the languages enact a voice of brave warrior struggling for their own glory without enmity. However, the authors never identify their antagonists against them and claim they won against others (they solely use the term "success"). It could be explanatory that Chinese diaspora community conveys frustration when they feel excluded and marginalized within the host society, but explicitly condemning anyone whom they intend to overwhelm. The context is established for a "no-smoke battle" without "antagonist" and "winner". On the other side, things are referred to be pacific and friendly ("as one", "big family", "side by side", "warmth and appreciation") and a less tough and hard tone to construe the unity of the diaspora community.

This linguistics enacts a different social language of "a lovely family united for the outside crisis with the voice of thankful and encouraging". We see interwove double-voice, and diverse social languages which serve for different purposes and effect, as "intertextuality" of context. The first voice adopts positive images of Chinese American, being "powerful", "united" champion in the "battle", intending to bolster more ethnic minorities to participate in the civil activities in mainstream society. The second voice focuses on the community solidarity and its accomplishment to provoke diaspora's adherent emotion and sense of belongings to their community, which will facilitate community cohesion and culture pride. In a word, the effect of "intertextuality" here contributes to "creating bonds" inward the community and "building bridge" outward that at the same time (Gee, 2010, p. 159).

Social inclusion

24 Only when the more Chinese American have positions in the <u>Congress, House of Senates and House of Representatives,</u> <u>we</u> would not be discriminated! *(From Mei He)*

25 Only when the more Chinese American have positions in the <u>House of Senates and House of Representatives,</u> and the people like Colton in favor of justice and fairness, voice

for Chinese American, Chinese American would not appear as the <u>victim</u> and <u>sacrifice</u> for <u>political correctness</u> as the <u>powerless</u> and <u>weak</u> ethnic minority.   *(From Cecilia)*

26 Tell you a piece of general knowledge of politics: generally, the <u>presidential primaries</u> decide the candidate of the party. The most competitive thing is the <u>intra-party elections</u>. If somebody fails in the <u>presidential primaries</u>, he is out of the <u>general elections</u>. *(From Susan Liang)*

While members reacted defensively to counteract social injustice toward the ethnic groups through the in-group debates, they strived to advocate positive changes for leveling an unlevel political field to them in the U.S. From the above extract associated with the discussion about the political system, presidential campaign and political ideology in the host country, discussants that are with political acquaintance, appear to use more "politician-like" language to other members. In the context of politicians popularizing the political knowledge, a plenty of political jargons and utterances contribute to "educating" their audiences, who are supposed a group of "outsiders" to the foreign playing field in regard to the society, culture, and politics.

It appears to function as "crossing borders" for the ethnic minority. It is recognizable the social language aspect of "politics-cognitive Chinese diaspora debating social justice within an ethnic group" constructs the discourse here. Apart from the "educative" language, the utterance also addresses advocative and affective involvement, solidarity, and participatory in meaning making (e.g. "we", "Tell you", "only when…"). The discourse encourages members to step in the unknown and unlevel playing field and bring about positive changes.

27 His case proceeded through the <u>grand jury</u> (in English), who conferred the act was crime and brought a bill of <u>indictment</u> (in English); then the following trial was proceeded toward. At least 15 <u>grand juries</u> (in English) is required in the courts of <u>GA</u> (abbr. Georgia). *(From Lesley Chen)*

28 I was called to be a <u>juror</u> and <u>grand juror</u> for once. The <u>juror</u> stays in the resident <u>county court</u> (English) while <u>grand juror</u> goes to the <u>State Supreme Court</u> (English). Zhang's case (English) is was preceded in Gwinnett <u>county court</u> (English), so they are <u>regular jures</u> (English)... <u>Grand jury</u> is applied to the <u>Supreme Court</u> case (English), but Zhang's civil case was decided by the <u>regular juror</u> (English).   *(From Evelyn Lu)*

29 <u>Grand jury</u>(English) is certainly not only applied to the <u>Supreme Court</u> (English). You being as <u>grand juror</u> (English) in the <u>Supreme Court</u> (English) does not mean that <u>grand jury</u> (English) are solely applied to the <u>Supreme Court</u>.   *(From Lesley Chen)*

30 (Who) minimize the possibility of fault raised by the <u>judiciary</u>. Only when (who) exercise the <u>supervision</u>, the arbitrariness of the <u>judiciary</u> to the Chinese American would be lessened.   *(From Ann Cui)*

The above debate about judiciary in the host country is recognized by a number of judicial terminologies, such as "grand jury", "regular jury", "Supreme Court", "county court" and "appeal". The discussants use the utterance to project themselves as "grassroots lecturer" who engaging in the activity of "judicial workshop" to the public circumstance. However, their utterance is obviously situated for the particular group with shared sociocultural background and interest, since a common sense to the host society at least is supposed to have known. It is worthwhile to pay attention to the utterance of discussants in construing the mechanism of judicial system of their new homeland.

Firstly, bilingualism of English-Chinese in the utterance, specifically for those judiciary jargons, frequently rises when they explain the process of operating a judicial case in the state, involving the discussion about the responsibilities of operatives ("jury"), the function and mechanism of authority ("Supreme Court"). This is because the judiciary in the U.S. differs hugely from that of China; judicial jargons here uniquely appear embedded in the context of American judicial system. Secondly, the linguistic and "collocational pattern" within the context in which the discussants communicate and discuss as "everyday" people but not as "lay people", for example, the omitting subject in the sentence 30 reveals an informal and casual verbal utterance here; considering the audience are constituted by grassroots, "everyday" people (Gee, 2010, p. 63).

Last but not least, except for the terminologies adopted in English, most utterance remains in ethnic language and social language of grassroots, so as to "construct buffers" for the ethnic group by means of supplying information to the intended demographic with a minority perspective and tone. In addition, bilingualism in the text fosters bicultural context, in which influences the audiences in two ways, insularly as well as interactively (Pöttker, p. 158-159).

DISCUSSION

Evidence presented in the thesis that virtual diaspora community makes them matter to the dominant discourse of mainstream society via the new media technology. So far, I have mapped the characteristics and implications of virtual cultural space on the integration of Chinese diaspora community.

Features of Virtual Spaces

From the analysis of the functionality of the platform, we figure out some characteristics of Chinese language cyberspace where Chinese diaspora involve, which are consistent with Yang's argument: they are diverse, fragmented, and yet connected (Yang, 2002). Firstly, the virtual spaces are segmented in terms of issues, topics, locations, professions, and etc. The virtual space supported by "Moment" is divided into a number of heterogeneous and independent circles of social networking. So as space of "Official account" and "chatting group" are split up according to areas of interest, professions, concerning issues and even locations. With reference to our observation to online communities on the platform, location-specific content in fact play an essential role in their preference to diaspora media, which is not in favor of the deterritorialization role of ethnic media in some degree. Yang explains the fragmentation is because of the general trend of life-world differentiation in modern society – social life becomes increasingly compartmentalized based on occupations and personal needs (Yang, 2002). And information and communication technology speed up the "compartmentation" of social life as well as virtual publics substantially. The result of the "compartmentation" of online spaces is the creation of multiple and partial spaces.

Secondly, fragmentation results from increasing differentiation, and leads to further diversity in cyberspace. At the beginning, diversity reflects on the occupations and personal needs, areas of interest, related issues and topic, and even locations. As long as developing the interaction with each other in the mutual spaces, their perception of identity, reflection on the issues, host society, and politics may differ from each other community; even though their values and minds to the host country would be negotiated and assimilated mutually within the group. Furthermore, the diversity of these cyber communities indicates some degree of pluralism, which fosters the democratic value of respecting and celebrating differences (Yang, 2002). Brantner & Herczeg (2013, p. 231) point out diversity require "tolerance of difference and an ability to live together in ways that do not exclude other people and other views". The principle could be observed from the process of a collective negotiation for drafting group regulations of the chatting group – dictatorship is discouraged, but respecting any

individual's perspective and right of speech. In this respective, WeChat, as an open space where offers equal access to Internet technology and culture, equal voice in demonstrating anyone's point of view and being heard, and reflective dialogue in exploring social concerns (Kurland and Egan, 1996). We assume a multicultural sphere was set up by means of the inner-group interaction gained by a repeating appropriation to ethnic media by the migrant community. Multiculturalism model is embedded within the Chinese cultural sphere, which tolerates cultural differences among those immigrants from different origins – sharing single unified Chinese written language in different versions, and those with opposite political perspectives.

Finally but not least, meanwhile the open spaces are being split up into pieces by millions of diversity, the fragmented and heterogeneous spaces, to some degree, are yet connected, which basically benefits from the development of ICTs. The ethnic media enable users transcend territorial, technological and social boundaries, connect each other among online and offline spaces. Especially the emergence of ICTs gives rise to an increasing convergence of informational space on the networking platform. That is to say, information is no longer dispersed in different parallel spaces isolated from each other, such as bbs, website and online magazines. For instance, contents on the "official account" not only can be shared to other contacts, to the "Moment" platform, to the "chatting group", but also to the outside platform, like micro-blog. Meanwhile, transnational content from the mainstream media of both mainland and host country, could be forwarded to WeChat platform. However, technology in itself is not sufficient for constructing social cohesion.

The common practice in the use of the Internet contributes to the connection among cyberspace, for example, the cross-posting of message. Concerning the most popular "Official account", "Civil Rights" among the Chinese diaspora community, some brilliantly-written or revealing content from the account gains popularity and huge volume of forwarding to other media platforms and individuals. Moreover, the content of widespread popularity will steer consumers to be linked to other potential media platforms. The common practices of the consumption of Internet, potentially bond heterogeneous cyberspaces to a virtual community.

Through the examination about the functionality of WeChat, being an ethnic media in the U.S. as well as the consumption pattern of Chinese diaspora, we argue an essential role of digital media in creating virtual community, negotiating identity and facilitating assimilation for

diaspora community. The new generation of Chinese diaspora is capable of employing various communication media to maintain different degrees of transnational connections in overcoming the spatial and temporal barriers. In this sense, by means of digital media, "digital diaspora" take advantage of the communication technology to participate in virtual networks for political, social or other purposes (Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010).

Implications for integration

Ethnic social institution

Through the ethnic media, new migrants are able to cluster in ethnic enclaves and rely on co-ethnic network to find their ways around their new homeland. Especially with the emergence of ICTs, digital media whose functionality as connection-embedded, effortlessly connect digital diaspora into ethnic enclaves and network. We argue ethnic media can be understood as ethnic social institution complementary to instead of dissonant to the mainstream society. As social institution, it serves as an information agent to keep migrants, in particular with those non-English-speaking well informed with the information around the host society. In addition, ethnic media contribute to renegotiating certain habits, behaviors, mindsets and values that are not typically Chinese. For example, ethnic media encourage migrant to practice democracy and civil participation by offering them spaces and empower them to voice their opinions - especially rare to those from mainland China. Further, ethnic media provide diaspora cultural spaces related to different interests, for enriching their new lives in the host country.

As ethnic social institution, ethnic media connect immigrants to the host society and facilitate the cultural integration of the digital diaspora community. The very practice of discussions and reasoning, rather than violence or riots, can also improve integration. We argue as a social institution, ethnic media reinforce immigrants' sense of "we-ness" to the exclusion of "other-ness" and thus improve their inter-group communications. However, in an individual level, it may lower immigrant's motives to expand their social network to the mainstream society or other ethnic community, which negatively influences their personal integration.

Identity establishing network

Scholars argue ethnic media "proliferated and multiplied, reinforcing, destabilizing and challenging" prior understanding of what it means to be Chinese (Shi, 2005, p. 66). Ethnic

media construct a strong migrant identity for making the transition from "there" to "here" by fostering a multi-local sense of belonging (Cheng, 2005). Sun argues new technology amplifies the dispersal of Chinese migrants and their fragmented identities, since its features of memorylessness and deterritorialization (Sun, p. 132-133). Even though the use of online ethnic media is somehow inclusive and insular to the certain group or community, the networking platform developed by ICTs succeeds to embrace people with Chinese descent in the U.S., across generations, professions, societal class, homeland states, and cultures on a certain platform. Therefore, a variety of discourses meet and intersect to reconstruct multiple and hybrid identities together.

On the other hand, ethnic media constantly pursue the essentialist notion of Chinese identity in cyberspace – assuming a "distinctive Chineseness built on the imaginary of 'we-ness' in a unitary territorial nation of China" being oppressed by 'other-ness'. When Chinese diaspora confronted unfair treatment in the host country, ethnic media become spaces where construct transcultural nationalism and national identity for diaspora groups, through expressing their frustrations and hostility of being treated unjust and marginalized in the host society, and satisfying in a fantasy of ethnic community uniting as a superpower to against the hegemony. The appropriation of ICTs is somehow inclusive, take WeChat for instance, is mainly designed for people of Chinese descent and Americans generally do not participate; therefore, the practice of using the platform can be understood to culturally distinguish distinct and authentic Chinese.

Virtual multicultural sphere

Ethnic media conform to multiculturalism which celebrates cultural diversity and minority community by customizing different users with content in term of content-specific, interest-specific and location-specific as well as the with the ways they consume media. With the emergence of ICTs, cyber diaspora community is being fragmented into diverse, closed and insular spaces with a variety of discourses, and turns increasingly distinct from other individuals, ethnic communities and mainstream society. We argue on the Internet, there are as many heterogeneous publics as spaces generating a variety of public opinion flowing from the rational-debate among members, because of the inclined-mature compartmentalization of online spaces. Within the heterogeneous sphere, online debate and interaction are fragmented into virtual groups of people with "similar ideological positions, grouping together to

reinforce each other's opinion" (Gee, 2010). Cultural differences are encouraged within ethnic media; otherwise it preludes the equal citizenship and full participation.

Given the Internet accelerate the formation of distinct ethnic enclaves that will deepen the differences and tension between Chinese diaspora community and the host society and other ethnic minorities, the voice of Chinese diaspora will be marginalized and isolated from the mainstream society. However, thanks to the connection-embedded functionality of new media, the heterogeneous spaces are yet connected that creates social connection on the basis of technology, culture and society. The digital cultural spaces allow virtual diaspora to gather together, practice democracy, and protest their social and political rights. Indeed, we have seen the signs and evidences from our case that virtual multicultural sphere promote interaction, discussion and understanding between a Chinese diaspora community and host society (Alfonso, p. 237).

Ideological policing

Ethnic media respect cultural diversity and ethnic community, but also conform to the liberal universalism that people should be regarded the same as a matter regardless of their differences since everyone is equal in front of the law. In some circumstance, cultural differences in identity perception and views to host society may have to be incorporated into the existing institutional framework, referring to American law and mainstream values in our case (Pöttker, p. 172). Once the online cultural space emerged, a form of "ideological policing" is practiced, in that members incline to create and disseminate content that are intended toward an akin political standpoint and ideologically coincide with the given norms of their group. Therefore, conversations within certain groups in term of articulating problems and mobilizing the communities are required to present with respect to the laws, values, and rights in America, which in fact facilitates a dialogue where the two discourses intersect. Dialogues between two different discourses could be recognized from the group regulations as well as the debates related to American law and judiciary.

It conforms the principles of the commitment to integration adopted by European Council; integration implies "respect for the basic values for the host country" and "basic knowledge of host country's institutions" (Gee, 2010, p. 154). While two different identities, discourses, perceptions are intersected, the great interactivity of the agents may lead to an integrative process in a community level. Not only are ethnic media used as communication network for public expression, but also contribute to ideologically policing virtual Chinese community in

homology with an American country's credo - serving an integrative role in different discourses for cyber migrant community. The impact of the ethnic media in reinforcing the perception to the mainstream society values and lifestyles is subtle but profound in the diaspora.

CONCLUSION

So far the thesis has given a general picture of the virtual Chinese cultural sphere enhanced by digital ethnic media and its implications for diaspora communication and integration in the USA. It has seen that digital ethnic media have risen in sync with contemporary Chinese immigration and its development not only respond to broader changes in the Chinese diaspora community, but also provide helps for individuals to explore unknown and foreign territories, promote acculturation to the new motherland. The descriptive analysis shows that the connection-embedded functionality of digital ethnic media influences immigrant's media consumption way of inward-community interacting as well as outward-society interacting, which both reinforcing solidarity of ethnic community, and connecting diaspora with the host society. Indeed, it has seen enough evidence from the case of Liang, that ethnic enclaves make them heard by mainstream world by means of digital ethnic media. However, the essence of ICTs dooms to the diversity and increasing segmentation of virtual cultural spaces as well as to the multiple and partial publics, which could deepen the differences and tensions between diaspora community and their host society.

The ultimate question is: Are digital ethnic community being integrated into life of their new homelands? The answer is two-fold. On one hand, the potential consequence of interplay between partial publics within multiculturalism discourse and fragmented identities may be a separation and isolation from the dominant discourse of mainstream society. On the other hand, the maturation-inclined compartmentalization within cyberspace condenses intensively efficient and rational virtual public sphere which encourages immigrants practice democracy, participate in civil discussion and mobilization for their political and social rights. In addition, the multiculturalism connects diaspora to the dominant discourse of host society, and thus more acculturated to their new homelands.

It is argued that ethnic media play a bridging role in connecting the "here" with "there" by way of "in-between". Therefore, rather than stereotyping ethnic media as divisive or integrative, we argue the role of digital ethnic media in immigrants' integration to the host

society is two-fold: enabling virtual community connected and integrated to host society; but being risky in keeping diaspora with an insular and exclusive perspective, and thus being isolated from the mainstream society in an individual level.

Although digital ethnic media to some degree help the Chinese immigrants promote cultural and social interaction and integration to the host society, there were several limitations to the study. Chinese ethnic media in the U.S. are still remained as a first-generation phenomenon excluded from those second-generation Chinese American who are local-born and culturally assimilated to the U.S. It means a dominant discourse and media for the second-generation migrants are based on American-centric perspective. In the case of Liang, Chinese ethnic media play as a cultural divide between foreign-born immigrants and second-generation migrants in respective discourses and media platforms, and thus generating an online and offline conflicts at "homes". But what is the role of ethnic media in the virtual ethnic communities across generations and cultures in this case? The interactions between foreign-born and second generation migrants within the Chinese cultural sphere have to be left out, because second generation migrants are most excluded from the WeChat platform.

Furthermore, online sphere may be uncivil that reflects some participant's disability and unwillingness in fair and rational debates, thus impeding the free flow of rational dialogues. The other limitation is the research on the social integration focuses on the single perspective of Chinese diaspora; though the concept of "integration" is supposed as a dynamic two way process of mutual accommodation by immigrants and host country (Pöttker, 2005, p. 154).

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APPENDIX

Original excerpts in Chinese (before translated into English) were employed in the section of discourse analysis as followed:

1 所以说二等公民还是二等公民。

2 天呀，这次我们 Lose 今后华人在美国生活怎么办呀华人啊，你的名字是弱者！吃定你了！欲加之罪何患无辞！

3 华裔那些还睡着的华裔醒醒吧，用你们的投票权发出最大的怒吼，我们不要做任人宰割的羔羊，我们是雄狮，一只正在发出怒吼的雄狮，为我们华裔的孩子梁彼得，为我们全华裔的利益站出来!

4 亚裔（尤其老中）是哑裔，不会哭闹要奶吃、几乎没有人参加政治活动、只顾埋头做鸵鸟状赚钱。而墨黑能说英语的比我们多得多，所以不论是平民、还是有政治抱负意愿的人，都很容易加入"哭闹要"的行列。

5 现在美国的所谓中国团体就像诸侯分割各地为王。新移民看不起老华侨。打工仔看不起商家。有点钱的看不起没那么幸运的。白领看不起蓝领。北方人看不起南方人等等等等各种对自己人的歧视。

6 团结一切可以团结的力量！首先团结侨领们！议员们！华裔们！亚裔们！把所有镜头给他们！所有荣誉给他们！

7 根据地还没站稳就想当帝王，要当也要占领根据地在分割还来的及。现在是在美国，国内那套权利之争，好使吗？站都站不稳何须在意今天谁为王，有能者无需自称，自有跟随者！不管今天华人多少人入籍美国公民，永远记住一点二等公民乃是二等公民！

改变不了你的肤色与祖籍，这都是世世代代跟随着。没有一个美国人直接问你是美国人吗？只有人问你来自哪个国家！不想做中国人，也没有人认为你是美国人！

8 我们从草根开始，也必须继续草根的坚持：草根连成一片，希望绿满大地；更渴望我们的孩子长成参天大树，成为覆盖大地的片片森林。今天草根为了明天的那片片森林，耗尽心力，纵然哪天成为一枝枝枯萎的根藤，也可以成为孩子们向上攀沿的把手，即使断落崖壁更能和大地溶为一体，化为沃土。

9 很多近期移民的大陆人的历史并不是很光彩的，他们的行为有很多匪夷所思的地方，我们的直觉是基于在北美生活了这么久形成的一些共同的行为规范，我支持上诉，如果这种事开了头，随便一告，没有证据，光凭小孩说就定罪，把老移民辛苦打拼来的一笔购销，这太容易复制了，而且有了这样的先例，以后我们生存就更难了。

10 希望大家踴躍投票，讓主流社會重視我們

11 让主流社會知道華人不再是逆來順受

12 非常失望，这个国家的公正是假的。

13 Colton 真是个好官员！我们自己华人的官员去哪里了？

14 我们坚信这个国家给予每个人的自由是公平的。

15 As a politician, Assemblyman Charles Barron has been given disproportionately larger and voice in our society. He is elected to make our city a better and safer place to live... We demand that Assemblyman Charles Barron rescind his remarks and make an apology to our community. (English)

16 美国司法：是带颜色的。不公平！ 望下一代多些孩子们学法律，援助我们华人社区。

17 华裔那些还睡着的华裔醒醒吧，用你们的投票权发出最大的怒吼，我们不要做任人宰割的羔羊，我们是雄狮，一只正在发出怒吼的雄狮，为我们华裔的孩子梁彼得，为我们全华裔的利益站出来!

18 如果你有能力去和外族人斗争吧，而不是总是在群里斗。

19 各种不同见解不同观点各种逞强严重的分离了我们。连一个自己种族都团结不了的谈什么去和别的种族或者体制斗争啊？

20 2 月 20 日从东岸到西岸，全美 40 多个城市，在美华人被迫着发出了时代的最强音。

21 整整一年过了。去年的四二六，我们走出了团结一心争权益的重要一步。在美国华人争权史上留下浓墨重彩的一笔。

22 2.20 集会后，我们没有散。100 来个人，团结一心，凝聚力量，捐款发声，出力出人，像个大家庭一样！

23 谢谢并肩战斗的战友们，这不是一个人的战斗，你们是华人之光，华人之耀，想起你们，我的心里是温暖柔软和满满感动！

24 只有当更多华人在两院中拥有坐席，我们才不会被歧视。

25 只有参、众两院有越来越多华裔的身影、和像 Colton 一样支持公平正义的人为华裔发声，华裔做为弱势的少数族裔，才不会成为政治正确的受害者和牺牲品！！

26 给大家一点小政治常识，一般在美国初选决定党内候选人。党内选 其实是选最激烈的事情。如果你在初选都不能胜出，大选的时候就轮不到你选了。举例，如果你想帮寇顿，你住在他选区，他在初选有个竞争对手在初选，你就帮不了他了。如果他初选没赢。你大选也选不到他.

27 他这个案子先经过了 grand jury，一致认为他有罪，拿到了 indictment,才开始后面的 trial。GA grand jury 人数至少 15 人。

28 我被叫去做过 juror 和 grand juror。 juror 是在居住的 county court 做的， grand juror 是去 state Supreme Court, 张师傅 case 是在 Gwinnett county 审的， 所以是普通的 juror。Gwinnett county 就有 grand jury, 你去 supreme court 做 grand juror 不能说明只有 supreme court 有 grand jury

29 grand jury 是 Supreme Court case 才用的，张师傅的民事案件用的是一般的 juror。他这个案子是有 indictment 的, 在 GA，刑事案件能拿到 indictment 必须有 grand jury, Grand jury 当然不是只有高院用。

30 只有行使监督权利，对华人司法权的任意性才能降低。