

The new media and Chinese migrant netizens

Socialisation, integration, and parallel lives

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Oct. 2012**

Outline

- Internet facilitate socialisation and integration in the host country?
- Imagined Cyber China
- Leading parallel lives
- Implications

Internet use – migrants socialisation? Integration?

- A safe haven for socialising difficulty
- A barrier preventing socialising

Helen's (51 F NZ) story

- Attempt to socialise -> unsuccessful -> withdraw to the cyberspace

Yin's (M 23 IS) comments

- "In China, I have my family, and I have more friends. Much time was spent on other forms of entertainment and leisure activities such as hanging out with friends at Karaoke or bars. But here (in New Zealand), **there's nothing much to do** after work or school, so I **spend a lot of time on the internet.**"
- Lack of social networks -> nothing much to do in the host country -> use the internet

Susan's (F 29 PR) reflection

- "Using the internet definitely has its negative influence, because I would **spend much time wandering in the Cyberspace**, reading those gossips about celebrities (in China) **rather than going out meeting local people**. This has **prevented me from integrating** into the local society (in New Zealand)."
- Internet use -> less time socialising -> preventing integration

- For these participants, the internet does NOT show great potential in facilitating socialisation and cultural integration in the host society. Rather, internet use may impede the process of integration into the host society.

Internet use – all bad? - NO

- Adaptation – Daily mundane practice – yes!

Various quotidian practice

- “I’d use New Zealand websites to **rent an apartment**, or to **buy a car**.” (Yin M 23 IS)
- “I like Skykiwi’s **'Paradise of Fine Cuisine'** forum. All about food. Just want to know where I can find a **good restaurant**.” (Frances F 26 PR)
- “I’d **write a post for help** when I have problems to handle, such as what I should do with my **leaky house**, where to **fix my car**, where I can **find good stuff to eat**. (The forums are) popular so that there will be people help you to solve the problems...” (Susan F 29 PR)

Work and study

- “Sometimes in my work there are technical terms in English that is difficult for me to understand. I would then search it on Baidu (China’s top search engine), and read about it (in Chinese). In this way, I can **understand it faster**. It helps to **speed up my work**.” (Yang M 30 PR)
- “When I do my assignment, I would search useful information first on Chinese websites. This **saves a lot of time** for me. Reading in Chinese is **easier** and more **efficient**.” (Yin M 23 IS)

Internet use – functional individuals

- The Internet helps migrant netizens become *functional* individuals in the host society.

Imagined Cyber China

- Use of Chinese-language Cyberspace
- Creating Cyber China

The Chinese-language Cyberspace

- Language preference
- Path dependence

China news

- Jing (F 36 WK) claimed, "I pay attention to social news, *things happening around me*, (我身边发生的事) those about people's livelihood... mostly China news..."
- Yin (M 23 IS) expressed, "I would read news of *events that are closely related to my daily life.*"
- Carl (M 25 PR) commented, "I usually read both international news and *national news* (国内新闻). Mostly current affairs, sometimes I'd read entertainment news."

In-group communication

- Using China-based SNS platforms (Qzone, Renren, Weibo etc.)
- IM – with families and friends (almost all of them are Chinese)



- The Internet enables a collective imagination of Cyber China.



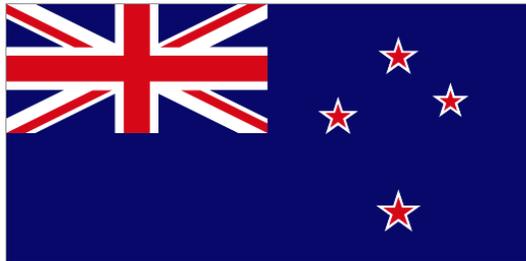
Leading parallel lives

- Physical
- Imagined

“(Here in New Zealand) I live with Chinese; I speak only Chinese; I go to Chinese supermarkets; I eat Chinese food. Plus, I visit Chinese websites every day; I watch Chinese TV dramas on these websites...everything is Chinese. I sometimes ask myself, 'where am I?' *I feel like I'm still living in China, apart from when I'm driving on the road - on the left side.*” (Shen M 35 WK)

Implications

- Belonging
- Identity



Thank you!

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