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A VIRTUAL CHINATOWN:

THE DIASPORIC MEDIASPHERE OF

CHINESE MIGRANTS IN NEW ZEALAND

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Chinese

The University of Auckland

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Abstract

This is a study of the social dynamics of the current Chinese migrant community in New Zealand through a critical analysis of the Auckland-based Chinese-language media. It combines two research fields, international migration studies and media studies, to conceptualise Chinese-language media as a specific type of alternative media in contemporary New Zealand.

The Chinese population in New Zealand has rapidly increased through immigration since the passage of the 1987 Immigration Act; Chinese now comprise 3.4% of the New Zealand population, and a wide variety of Chinese-language media have accordingly thrived in New Zealand. In contrast to New Zealand mainstream media, these Chinese media serve the specific needs and interests of newly arrived and only minimally acculturated Chinese migrants.

The research was conducted in three phases: quantitative and qualitative data were acquired from the content of Chinese-language media during the period of the 2005 New Zealand general election; qualitative data were obtained from focus groups and interviews with members of the Chinese audience subsequent to the election; qualitative data were generated from Chinese media personnel.

The findings suggest that these Chinese-language media closely reflect and depict recent PRC Chinese migrants’ perceptions of New Zealand and aspirations towards their new life in the host country. Within the global context of the Chinese diaspora in historical and contemporary times, this research also introduces a new angle for exploring the socio-economic impacts of China as a rising superpower on New Zealand and the Pacific Rim.
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