Both Here and There: The multi-dimensionality of Chinese language Television in Canada

Shuyu Kong
Department of Humanities and Asia-Canada Program, SFU

- (Chinese language television and radio programs in Canada have become arguably)“the richest and most sophisticated outside China, Hong Kong and Taiwan” (Zhou, et al, 2007, 66)
- 92% of Vancouver’s Chinese Canadians over 18 years old watch TV, and of these, 78% watch Chinese programs, and 13% watch English programs (Ipsos Reid 2007). In Metro Vancouver, Fairchild TV and Talentvision together cover 88% of the Chinese population (Murray et al, 2007).
- “a well functioning communication infrastructure consists of ‘think’ media and a social production system of outlets that create and disseminate everyday conversations and formal news, opinion and commentary to any given community within a specific geographical region. Access to a supportive communication infrastructure in their own language of origin is crucial for individual immigrants to build their sense of orientation and belonging in the receiving society” (C. Murray, 2009, 589).

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Introduction

- This empirical research examines the multi-dimensionality of ethnic media via a case study of Talentvision (城市电视), a national broadcasting network established in 1998 and privately owned by Fairchild Media Group.
- Main method is content and discourse analysis of representative locally-produced news events and programs in order to understand the geo-ethnic storytelling function of Talentvision;

Research Questions

- What kind of communicative space does Chinese-language television provide?
- What strategies are used to encourage civic engagement and community belonging
- Any efforts in maintaining a dualistic "transnational" perspective in terms of content production?

Why multicultural communication infrastructure is important

- Demography and linguistic structures of Canadian society have changed dramatically.
- Fast growth of ethnic media in urban populated centers
- The debate on impact of the multiculturalism policy and the social capacity of ethnic media in building national unity

Changed demographic and linguistic structures of Canadian society

- in Metro Vancouver the immigrant proportion has now reached 40% as compared with 35% in 1996 and 29% in 1986 (Canada's Ethnocultural Mosaic, 2006 Census).
- More than 1.1 million immigrants arrived in Canada in the five years preceding the 2006 Census, and 81% of them had a mother tongue other than English or French. ("The Evolving Linguistic Portrait, 2006 Census").
- non-English/French speakers have reached 20.1% of the total population in Canada (2006 Census).
- The total population with one of the Chinese dialects as its mother tongue experienced the largest increase, more than 160,000 since 2001.

Growth of ethnic media

- the main finding of a recent report on ethnic media in BC (Murray et al. 2007) is that the ethnic media market is not only larger than previously supposed but is also growing quickly.
- The report located 144 ethnic media outlets in B.C, with over two thirds of these outlets established since the 1990s (Murray et al. 2007).
- Among them, the 24 Chinese media outlets, comprise the biggest ethnic media market in terms of readership and audience

The debate on the impact of the multiculturalism policy and the social capacity of ethnic media in building national unity

- CRTC's ethnic media policy (1985, revised 1999) requires that one third of the content of Canadian television and radio broadcasts features Canadian stories.
- Creating "parallel societies" and fragmented citizenship (debates recounted in Karim, 2002b and Hafez, 2007).
- ethnic media mainly acted as feeds for information from home countries, "represent a hollow in national and provincial civic life" (Yu & Murray, 2007).

What is Geo-ethnic Storytelling?

- Geo-ethnic media "are both ethnically and geographically specific in their focus and content."
- These media engage in geo-ethnic storytelling "when they produce culturally relevant, locally focused content for their audience that encourages audiences to connect with community resources and organizations." (Matsaganis, et al. 2010).

Ethnic Chinese Mediascape: case of Metro Vancouver

- The 24 Chinese media outlets, comprising the biggest ethnic media market in terms of readership and audience, also exhibit the most diversity in media forms (print, internet, television and radio) and have strongly increased their local content in recent years.
- Ethnic Chinese media is highly diverse, heterogeneous and in constant change in terms of sources, content format, political orientations, and targeted audience

Fairchild Media Group

- TV broadcasting: Fairchild (1993, Cantonese) and Talentvision (1998, Mandarin)
- Radio broadcasting: Am 1470, FM96.1, FM94.7, AM 1430, FM88.9
- Publication: Popular lifestyle and Entertainment
- Internet developments
- Film making http://www.fairchildgroup.com/ttv.php

Talentvision 城市电视

- Local content: 31.5 % (rising to 33% in prime time)， in Mandarin Chinese
- National coverage, delivered via all the major cable and telecommunication firms (Rogers, Delta, Shaw, Bell, and Telus) 7 days a week and 20 hours each day
- Format : national and community news, current affairs talk shows, lifestyle magazines, entertainment guides, language education, and health programs
- Imported content:
  - various, mainly entertainments and life magazines.
  - Main sources: TVBS (TW), CtiTV (TW), CCTV, Dragon TV (Shanghai), BTV (Beijing), and various provincial and municipal TV

Evening News 晚间新闻

- Format
  - Community events announcements
  - National
  - Canada West (BC)
  - Canada East (Ontario)
  - China, Hong Kong and Taiwan
  - Sports,Weather forecast
- News resources: multiple, currently from the CBC, Global, as well as Fairchild’s own reporters (Canada); Chinese Central Television (China), Dragon TV (SMG)and China television company (TW) .

Analysis

- national and local news from Canada dominates, also substantial international in-group news on China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, reflecting the dualistic cultural identities and community roles of ethnic media.
- There are differences even in coverage of national and local news of Canada from mainstream (English) media, a clear Chinese Canadian community-oriented perspective
- Diverse and heterogeneous character in terms of media sources and political orientation

Straits Today 两岸三地加国情

- Presentation and Format： current affairs talk show, weekly, one-hour
  - host/hostess introducing the topic
  - invited guests (3 or 4) take turns to respond to the host's questions related to this topic
  - Two rounds of audience call-in
  - guests discussing the call-in audience's questions and comments /further responses
  - the host and the guests sum up and conclude.
- Content analysis: 8 week period of program monitoring (March 1 to April 25, 2009), supplemented with a quantitative analysis of the topics of one hundred episodes from 2007 to 2009.

Table 1: Topics of "Straits Today" (Talentvision) during the eight week period March 1 to April 25

	Topic (Chinese)	Topic (English)	Canada	China/ Taiwan
Week 1 (March 6)	圆明园兽首能否完璧归赵	Will the animal head statues from the Old Summer Palace be returned to China?		Y
Week 2 (March 13)	中国经济放缓和对本国的影响	The impact of China's economic stimulus on Canada	Y	Y
Week 3 (March 20)	郭冠英事件看公务员的操守	The Guo Guanying incident and civil servants' personal integrity		Y
Week 4 (March 27)	美元贬值对中国外汇储备的压力	The pressure of the falling U.S. dollar on China's foreign exchange reserves		Y
Week 5 (April 3)	G20 峰会能否成为全球金融危机的转折点	Can G20 Become the Turning Point of Global Financial Crisis	Y	Y
Week 6 (April 10)	从戴国卫访华看加中关系	Defence Minister Day's visit to China and Canada-China relations	Y	
Week 7 (April 17)	09年BC 省选议题对话	Topics and Dialogue on the 2009 BC Election	Y	
Week 8 (April 24)	地球日的反思本国环保政策前景	Earth Day: reflections on Canada's future environmental policies	Y	

Table 2: Geographical Focus “Straits Today ” (100 episodes, 2007 to 2009).

Canada (45%)					China/Taiwan (44%)			International (11%)		
			Canada-China	Canada-US	China (inc.HK)	Taiwan	China-Taiwan	United States	Asia (China/TW excluded)	Other
Federal	Provincial	Territory	7	3	19	19	6	8	2	1
30	4	1								

Table 3: Subject Focus "Straits Today " (100 episodes 2007 to 2009)

Politics (57%)				Economics (15%)	Law/ Order (4%)	Arts & Culture 3%	Education 2%	Health 6%	Environment 3%
Canada	Canada-China	China/ TW	Others	15	4	3	2	6	3
19	7	34	7						

Table 4:Topics on Elections from “Straits Today” (2008–09)

0817從保守黨競選經費風波看隨時一觸即發的聯邦大選

- **Reflecting on the Power to Call Federal Elections at Any Time in Light of the Conservative Party’s Election Funding Controversy**

0835加美兩國大選氣氛濃

- **Election Fever in Canada and the United States**

0837 大選議題: 自由黨的綠色轉移計畫與綠黨

- **Election Issues: The Liberals’ Green Shift and the Green Party**

0838經濟議題對於聯邦大選的影響

- **The Impact of Economic Issues on the Federal Election**

0839大選民生議題:褸朘 醫療 食品安全

- **Election Issues on Peoples’ Livelihood: Childcare; Healthcare and Food Safety**

0840大選外交議題:阿富汗駐軍 加中關係

- **The Election and Foreign Affairs Issues: The Afghan Campaign and Canada-China Relations**

0843誰可最終獲得民意

- **Who Will Win the Peoples’ Support in the End?**

0844從大選結果看自由黨的前途

- **The Liberal Party’s Future in the Light of the Election Results**

0916 and 0919 卑詩省選議題對話

- **The B.C. Election: Debating the Issues**

0920 卑詩省選直擊

- **Eye-Witness Account of the B.C. Election**

0937 選民如何面對又一次的聯邦大選

- **How Will the Voters Face Yet Another Federal Election?**

Analysis

- a clear effort to encourage discussion and dialogue among Chinese Canadians and among the complex of different subgroups within this ethnic community
- the public affairs and civil issues range widely, geographically also include both Canada and “Greater China”; in some occasions (e.g during election), media is actively involved
- the Chinese media recognizes the specific Chinese Canadian identity within multicultural citizenship, and encourages viewers to maintain their own unique Chinese cultural heritage, group identity, and representation rights (including their linguistic/cultural approach to the media).

Mandarin Profile 新枫采

- Content & Format : a weekly half-hour program that reports success stories of Mainland Chinese immigrants who have set up local businesses in different parts of Canada. Each program features two stories that combines interviews with profiles.
- Media events: In association with this program, Talentvision also organizes an annual awards ceremony for successful Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs, which has become an important event among the Toronto business community.

Analysis

- provide both information and aspirations of entrepreneurship to new immigrants
- the economic incentives of the program
- its connection with local business communities

Shanghai World Expo in Talentvision 上海世博

- Media events and programs
  - the one-year countdown gala staged in Vancouver (May 2009), co-organized with SMG (Shanghai Media Group)
  - shared special serial programs from SMG, plus opening and closing ceremonies
  - substantial coverage in Evening News
  - send reporters to SH, besides reports appered in evening news, also a special serial in July “Shanghai World Expo in Canadian Perspective” （世博枫情）

Analysis

- supply information of relevance to the intended community through a unique perspective and presentation that resonates more meaningfully with their audience.
- Increasing close collaboration with media institutions in China in program supply and other media events
- the constant interplay between Chinese transnationalism and Canadian multiculturalism in the content production of ethnic media in Canada

Conclusion

Based on collected statistics and content analysis on its evening news, a special public affair talk show, a life magazine and its coverage of Shanghai Expo 2010, this paper proposes that

- locally-produced programs speak to local immigrant audiences, and have increasingly built up a communication community outside the mainstream Canadian media.

Conclusion

- Chinese language television Talentvision has played an active and unique role in promoting multicultural citizenship as well as nurturing awareness of a transnational Chinese community. It gives a positive answer to the question whether ethnic media with substantial local content can engage new immigrants into civil life.

- While helping to build transnational group identities, the ethnic Chinese media tries to cultivate a cultural identity or civic culture that balances multicultural Canadian citizenship with a transnational or multilocal Chineseness, or Chinese cosmopolitanism. In other words, being a global Chinese and being a Chinese Canadian are by no means exclusive.

What needs to be done in further studies of ethnic Chinese TV

- Comparative studies with other ethnic TV broadcasting to discern the common trends
- Quantitative comparative studies with English language mainstream broadcasting in news content
- Audience studies on the impact on the communicative experience of Chinese immigrants in Metro Vancouver

What needs to be done in policy making and among media practitioners

- to build “a sustainable multicultural communication infrastructure” ”(Murray, 2009), Canadian policymakers and mainstream media practitioners need to change the “either . . . or” approach and embrace the full potentials of multiculturalism.
- further efforts should be made to foster communication and interaction among the mainstream media and the diverse world of ethnic media in Canada.

Thank You

Contact: Shuyu Kong
shuyu_kong@sfu.ca