



Immigration Coverage in Chinese-Language Newspapers

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Overview

In the summer and fall of 2008, The Opportunity Agenda commissioned a report to examine coverage of immigration in Chinese-Language newspapers. This report monitors immigration-related stories published in four major Chinese daily newspapers—the China Press, Ming Pao Daily, Sing Tao Daily, and World Journal—from April to June 2008.

While continuing to expand the base of immigration support is important, also crucial is further connecting the existing bases. Therefore, examining media coverage of immigrants within their own native speaking and ethnic press offers insight into how these outlets can play a role in promoting immigration reform and integration policies.

Findings

1. The Chinese press closely followed changes in immigration policy and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) monthly visa bulletins.
2. Immigration coverage in Chinese newspapers differed based on the location of the newspaper to reflect local news. For example, Chinese newspapers in New York featured more coverage of immigration raids because there were more raids in New York within that period of time. Immigration coverage also changed throughout the year to reflect seasonal events. For example, all major newspapers focused on H-1B visa issues in April when the visa quota was released, and May was devoted to immigration stories related to Asian Heritage Month.
3. Chinese newspapers did not single out undocumented immigrants in their coverage of immigration. Rather they reported on issues such as health care, education, and the economy that affect all immigrants. Chinese newspapers do not seem to have a unified policy on diction: they used the terms *undocumented* and *illegal* interchangeably.
4. Chinese newspapers published numerous articles to help new immigrants integrate into American society and culture. At the same time, they helped them keep ties to their home country.
5. The Chinese press failed to draw a larger connection between the experience of Chinese immigrants and those from other ethnic communities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to assist advocates in their messaging through Chinese based media outlets. These recommendations may be helpful in working with other non-English language media.

1. Expand reporting by Chinese media on undocumented immigrants beyond coverage of raids, crackdowns, detentions and court cases; to broader issues like health care, education and the economy.

2. Encourage consistent language about “undocumented” and explain concerns about the use of “illegal.”

3. Build on the already existing collection of articles published by Chinese newspapers intended to help new immigrants integrate into mainstream culture. By emphasizing the policies and legislation necessary to facilitate integration, Chinese papers could also help inform and inspire readers about the role they can play in affecting policy.

4. Identify bridges between shared experiences with other immigrant groups, helping the Chinese press draw upon a larger connection between the experiences and challenges of Chinese immigrants and those from other ethnic communities.

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