

**Reading Beijing in Surabaya:
Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy** 129

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Public Diplomacy**

Tonny Dian Effendi* and Josh Stenberg**

Abstract

Chinese Indonesians are among the critical target audiences for China's public diplomacy in Indonesia. Beijing attempts to connect with Chinese Indonesians through cultural organizations and by promoting its stances in Chinese-language newspapers. What news do Chinese Indonesians read about China, and what is its implication for China's public diplomacy targeting Chinese Indonesians? This study analyzed the content of China-related news in two newspapers in Surabaya, one in Chinese (Qiandao Ribao) and one in Indonesian (Jawa Pos). This study found that while Qiandao Ribao mainly gathers its reporting on China

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from PRC sources, Jawa Pos takes a more critical line on Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan issues. Thus, while Chinese-language newspapers are one place where the expression of Chinese Indonesian identity and Chinese public diplomacy intersect the Jawa Pos provides relatively more balanced information about China and serve as comparative information from different sources for the Chinese Indonesian community. Since different generations have divergent language proficiencies, and read different newspapers, the comparison suggests that different generations of Chinese Indonesians will get different accounts of China's domestic situation and international relations. While older Chinese Indonesians, an important sector of the local economy and community organizations, were often educated in Chinese and may read the reports in Qiandao Ribao, younger Chinese Indonesians consume mostly Indonesian-language media and are more likely to feel unconnected to questions of Chinese international relations. This situation has implications for any modeling of responses to "the rise of China" since younger Chinese Indonesians may be becoming less rather than more responsive to CCP messaging.

**Reading Beijing in Surabaya:
Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy** 131

Keywords: China, Indonesia, Chinese Indonesian, Newspaper, *Qiandao Ribao*, *Jawa Pos*.

Introduction

Recent decades of democratization have brought freedom for ethnic Chinese in Indonesia to express their Chinese identity and culture.¹ This situation has encouraged some Chinese Indonesian groups to revive the pillars of Chinese culture which were banned during the New Order regime: Chinese-language schools, media, and organizations.² Since the turn of the 21st century, many such institutions have blossomed. These domestic developments have coincided with China's rise, which generally enhanced relations between the PRC and ethnic Chinese Overseas. Since then, China's public diplomacy has targeted the Chinese Indonesian community by seeking to motivate them to reconnect culturally

¹ Indonesian democratization began following the collapse of the New Order regime in 1998. The New Order was an authoritarian military-dominated regime under President Suharto, in power for 32 years from 1966 to 1998. Besides regime change, democratization also removed anti-Chinese legislation and thereby gave ethnic Chinese in Indonesia equal rights with other Indonesian citizens. Since then, Chinese Indonesians have been able to publicly celebrate Chinese New Year and other elements of Chinese culture, Confucianism has been officially recognized as a religion, and Chinese institutional life, including the press, has revived.

² For the three pillars of Chinese culture, see Leo Suryadinata, *Etnis Tionghoa Dan Nasionalisme Indonesia: Sebuah Bunga Rampai 1965-2008* [Ethnic Chinese and Indonesian Nationalism: An Anthology of 1965-2008] (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010).

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 133

with China.³ Democratization in Indonesia and the rise of China placed Chinese Indonesians in two concurrent situations: reconstructing Chinese identity in Indonesian society and reconnection to China.

The reemergence of Chinese-language newspapers in Indonesia represents both tendencies: identity reconstruction and China's influence.⁴ Chinese-language newspapers constitute one facet of the expression of Chinese identity, preserving Chinese culture and bringing the community more visibly into the Indonesian public sphere.⁵ Chinese-language newspapers also emerged as the trend of (re-)learning Chinese has been increasing as part of the impact of China's soft power.⁶ Moreover, some Chinese-language newspapers connect and collaborate with media in China; thus, they promote Indonesia-China relations and take

³ Natalia Soebagio, "Tebar Pesona Di Indonesia: Cara Cina Mengambil Hati Indonesia [Spreading Enchantment in Indonesia: How China Takes Indonesia's Heart]," in *Merangkul Cina: Hubungan Indonesia- Cina Pasca Soeharto* [Embracing China: Post-Soeharto Indonesia-China Relations], ed. Ignatius Wibowo and Syamsul Hadi (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2009), 101–38.

⁴ 'Chinese-language newspapers' in this study refers to newspapers published in the Chinese language in Indonesia. Most of these newspapers were established or supported by Chinese Indonesian organizations which emerged in the post-New Order regime.

⁵ Setefanus Suprajitno, "Reconstructing Chineseness: Chinese Media and Chinese Identity in Post-Reform Indonesia," *Kemanusiaan* 27, no. 1 (2020): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.21315/kajh2020.27.1.1>.

⁶ Chang Yau Hoon and Esther Kuntjara, "The Politics of Mandarin Fever in Contemporary Indonesia: Resinicization, Economic Impetus, and China's Soft Power," *Asian Survey* 59, no. 3 (June 1, 2019): 573–94, <https://doi.org/10.1525/AS.2019.59.3.573>.

relatively pro-Beijing stances on Taiwan and Hong Kong issues.⁷ This situation shows that Chinese-language newspapers in Indonesia potentially provide the means for China's public diplomacy to focus on Chinese Indonesian communities. In other words, the re-emergence of Chinese-language newspapers in Indonesia in recent decades represents domestic (democratization, reconstruction of Chinese identity, and Chinese culture's expression) and international (Indonesia-China relations and China's public diplomacy) dimensions. However, most existing scholarship has focused on the first than the second dimension.

Most scholars discuss Chinese-language newspapers from the perspective of history, identity, language, and media management. They study the history of the Chinese press in Indonesia, the reconstruction of Chinese identity, and the

⁷ Leo Suryadinata, "Chinese-Language Newspapers in Indonesia: Declining Readership, Advertisement Revenue and Dearth of Journalists/Writers," *PERSPECTIVE*, no. 91 (2020): 1–8.

**Reading Beijing in Surabaya:
Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy** 135

representation of Chinese culture in the public sphere.⁸

⁸ Iyus Jayusman and Miftahul Habib Fachrurozi, “Eksistensi Kaum Tionghoa Dalam Dunia Pers Di Hindia Belanda Tahun 1869-1942 [The Existence of Ethnic Chinese in Dutch East Indies, 1869-1942],” *BIHARI: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah dan Ilmu Sejarah* 4, no. 1 (July 11, 2021), <http://jurnal.unsil.ac.id/index.php/bihari/article/view/3202>; Ahmad Kosasih, “Pers Tionghoa Dan Dinamika Pergerakan Nasional Di Indonesia, 1900 – 1942 [Chinese Press and the Dynamic of National Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942],” *Jurnal Kajian Sejarah & Pendidikan Sejarah* 1, no. 1 (2013): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.2121/SUSURGALUR.V1I1.55>; Ravando Lie, “Reaksi Media Peranakan Terhadap Perang Tiongkok-Jepang 1937-1939 [The Reaction of Peranakans' Media on Sino-Japan War 1937-1939],” *Lembaran Sejarah* 9, no. 1 (April 6, 2012): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.22146/LEMBARAN-SEJARAH.23766>; Yerry Wirawan, “Pers Tionghoa Makassar Sebelum Perang Dunia Kedua [Chinese Press in Makassar before the World War II],” *Archipel* 82 (2011), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3406/arch.2011.4255>; Suprajitno, “Reconstructing Chineseness: Chinese Media and Chinese Identity in Post-Reform Indonesia.”

Others discuss the content of Chinese-language newspapers from the perspective of linguistics, content, and readership.⁹

⁹ Alex Zulkarnain, “Analisis Homofon Bahasa Mandarin Pada Koran Harian Xunbao [The Homophone Analysis in Daily Xunbao Newspaper] (汉语同音词于讯报报纸的分析)” (Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Sumatera Utara, 2018), <http://repositori.usu.ac.id/handle/123456789/10604>; Febriyati Christina Sihombing, “Analisis Kata Bantu Bilangan Dalam Kalimat Bahasa Mandarin Pada Koran Hao Bao Daily [Analysis of Number Auxiliary Words in Chinese Sentences in Hao Bao Daily Newspaper]” (Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Sumatera Utara, 2017), <http://repositori.usu.ac.id/handle/123456789/4226>; Via Kumala Dewi, “Analisis Kata Sinonim Bahasa Mandarin Pers Dan Bahasa Mandarin Modern Dalam 华社动态 Huá Shè Dòngtài Pada 千島日报 Qiāndǎo Rìbào [Synonym analysis of Press Chinese and Modern Chinese in Huá Shè Dòngtài in 千島日报 Qiāndǎo Rìbào]” (Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Brawijaya, 2019), <http://repository.ub.ac.id/175256/>; Malinda Zahra, “Analisis Kohesi Dan Diksi Dalam Wacana Iklan Berita Duka Bahasa Mandarin Pada Koran Haobao [Cohesion and Diction Analysis in Chinese Condolence News Advertisement Discourse on Haobao Newspaper]” (Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Sumatera Utara, 2019), <http://repositori.usu.ac.id/handle/123456789/21581>; Mega Adinda Fitri, “Analisis Pola 缩略语 Suō Lüèyǔ (Abreviasi) Pada 千島日报 Qiāndǎo Rìbào Terbitan 12 Februari 2018 Pattern Analysis 缩略语 Suō Lüèyǔ (Abbreviation) In 千島日报 Qiāndǎo Rìbào February 12, 2018]” (Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Brawijaya, 2019); Fonny Soputra, “Perencanaan Strategi Pemasaran Koran Mandarin Pada Harian Naga Surya Berdasarkan Customer Value [Marketing Strategy Planning for Mandarin Newspaper at Naga Surya Daily Based on Customer Value]” (Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Surabaya, 2001), <http://repository.ubaya.ac.id/id/eprint/7763>; Cecilia Yuanita Purnawan, “Profil Pelanggan Koran Mandarin Ditinjau Dari Segi Demografis, Psikografis, Dan Perilaku Pembelian [The Profil of Chinese-language News Paper's Subscriber from Demographics, Psychographics and Buying Behavior Perspective]” (Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Katolik Soegijapranata, 2002), <http://repository.unika.ac.id/9516/>; Tonny Dian Effendi and Mohd Zaini Abubakar, “China Town Magazine and Indonesian-Chinese Identity,” *Journal of Politics and Law* 10, no. 2 (February 28, 2017): 97, <https://doi.org/10.5539/jpl.v10n2p97>.

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 137

Chinese-language newspapers are, however, also crucial in explaining China's public diplomacy in Indonesia, particularly to Chinese Indonesian communities, and it is this aspect we consider here.

Chinese-language newspapers are necessary for China to share information while strengthening cultural relations with Chinese Indonesian communities. As part of its public diplomacy, China tries to develop a positive image by sharing positive information and its perspectives on specific issues. The main goals are to gain support for China's policy, China's international status, and China-Indonesia relations. It is therefore of substantial consequence what information Chinese-language newspapers transmit on critical issues like Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. What are the implications of Chinese-language newspapers in China's public diplomacy to Chinese Indonesian communities?

This study attempts to enrich the international dimension of Chinese-language newspapers studies by analyzing specific critical content regarding issues such as Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. This study takes *Qiandao Ribao* (QR), a Chinese-language newspaper in Surabaya, as a case study. QR is one of the few Chinese-language newspapers that survived the consolidation of the Chinese press since the turn of the 21st century, and has many loyal readers. As a point of comparison as regards news in those critical issues, this study also examines the

news content of another Surabaya-based newspaper, the *Jawa Pos* (JP), which is published in the national language, Indonesian. The discussion first considers the relationship between China's foreign policy and Overseas Chinese, and then it turns its attention to Chinese-language newspapers in Indonesia. The following section deals with content and sentiment analysis in QR and JP on Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan issues. The final section draws on these findings to discuss the implication of Chinese-language newspapers to China's public diplomacy targeting Chinese Indonesian communities.

China's Foreign Policy and Chinese Overseas

China's foreign policy constantly adapts to international and domestic change. Once ideological, China's foreign policy has gone in recent decades from cautious pragmatism to the adoption of great power strategies.¹⁰ The country's rising economic power and its ambitions to increase international status influence how Beijing conducts its international relations.¹¹ From 2008 to 2018, China emerged from a regional to a global player, generating both admiration and concern among its regional neighbors.¹² China has become more active in international relations and expanded its foreign policy while challenging the United States in Asia and

¹⁰ Stuart Harris, *China's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014).

¹¹ Yong Deng, *China's Strategic Opportunity: Change and Revisionism in Chinese Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

¹² Zhiqun Zhu, *A Critical Decade: China's Foreign Policy (2008-2018)* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2020).

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 139

other regions in the economy, politics, and security.¹³ China's foreign policy actions are viewed by many inside and outside the region as being in tension with its rhetoric of peaceful development and good neighborly relations.¹⁴ Perceptions of China's international behavior are mixed, as its investment in military equipment suggests an intent to replace the West and the United States regionally and ultimately in the international system, a development that makes Southeast Asian states worried about being caught up in great power conflict.¹⁵ Alongside its hard power expansion, China has also developed its soft power by sharing positive images and seeking to dispel or manage the perception that China poses a threat. As part of this goal, Chinese Overseas (CO) are regarded by China as an important focus who can and should assist China in gaining international status and projecting a positive image.¹⁶ In recent decades, Beijing has adopted managed a persuasive approach and propaganda to explore CO's potential for improving its international image. Increasing influence over Chinese-language media has allowed a

¹³ Andrea Benvenuti et al., *China's Foreign Policy: The Emergence of a Great Power* (Oxon: Routledge, 2022).

¹⁴ Lukas K. Danner, *China's Grand Strategy: Contradictory Foreign Policy?* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

¹⁵ Andrea Ghiselli, *Protecting China's Interests Overseas: Securitization and Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

¹⁶ This study uses the term Chinese Overseas (CO) rather than Overseas Chinese (CO). According to Suryadinata (2017), the term 'CO' resembles 'ethnic Chinese' which is comparable to the idea of *huaren* in Chinese. Therefore, the CO in this study represents the ethnic Chinese outside of China who hold non-Chinese (in this case, Indonesian) nationality.

considerable measure of influence to secure loyalty and tackle anti-CCP sentiments, especially in Chinese-language environments and institutions.

China's rise has impacted the change of Beijing's policy to CO. At least in its soft power approaches, Beijing does not sharply differentiate between Chinese nationals living abroad (*huaqiao*) and foreign citizens of Chinese descent (*huaren*), considering them both as supporting sources for China's foreign policy. In the "China Dream," Xi Jinping limited the scope of the "Chinese nation" to various ethnicities in China and to Chinese nationals, but in "One Belt One Road," his vision included CO.¹⁷ In the view of some observers, this incorporation CO can mean they will be viewed, alongside mass media, Confucius Institute, academics, and industries, an important element in the

¹⁷ Leo Suryadinata, *The Rise of China and The Chinese Overseas: A Study of Beijing's Changing Policy in Southeast Asia and Beyond* (Singapore: ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, 2017).

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 141

development of “sharp power.”¹⁸ CO risk being regarded as a tool for Beijing to gain support overseas by exploring diasporic relations. Since policies toward CO targets citizens of other countries, the relations between China’s foreign policy and CO would be best described as belonging to China’s public diplomacy.

China seeks to involve CO in its international strategy to improve China’s image and articulate its position both on domestic and international issues.¹⁹ Beijing faces a perception of being regarded as a threat and its status as an authoritarian regime also cause limitations to its capacity for soft power development.

¹⁸ In contrast to soft power where a state uses non-coercive strategies to influence other states by, particularly, using culture, sharp power emphasizes the assertiveness and penetration of information to influence politics and public in other states. Authoritarian states use this power to democratic states by benefiting from the asymmetrical openness between democratic societies and their restrictive systems. In the case of China, some have defined sharp power as including manipulation and cooptation of media enterprises, education programs, academic exchanges, and ethnic relations. See Benvenuti et al., *China’s Foreign Policy: The Emergence of a Great Power*; Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig, “From ‘Soft Power’ to ‘Sharp Power’: Rising Authoritarian Influence in the Democratic World,” in *Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influences*, ed. Juan Pablo Cardenal et al. (Washington D.C.: National Endowment for Democracy|International Forum for Democratic Studies, 2017), 8–25, <https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Sharp-Power-Rising-Authoritarian-Influence-Full-Report.pdf>.

¹⁹ Mette Thunø, “China’s New Global Position: Changing Policies toward the Chinese Diaspora in the Twenty-First Century,” in *China’s Rise and the Chinese Overseas*, ed. Bernard P. Wong and Chee-Beng Tan (Oxon: Routledge, 2018), 184–208.

²⁰ To counter such perceptions, it attempts to construct a positive image as featuring a harmonious society, offering benefits as an economic partner, making contributions to world peace, and representing a great civilization.²¹ For this goal, CO are considered as an audience as well as a source of soft power; therefore, the Chinese government projected long-term diaspora policies centered on modernization, national unity, and international relations. For international relations, the government employs CO as “public diplomats” to enhance “soft power” while supporting China’s foreign policy as the rising power. Beijing views the CO as an asset to promote Chinese interests and to clarify Beijing’s stance on specific issues like Taiwan.²² Therefore, Beijing attempts to connect with and to influence CO simultaneously. On the one hand, Beijing aids and supports Chinese organizations in economic, educational, and cultural activities. On the other hand, Beijing provides financial support to the media to expand its overseas audience, including vis-à-vis

²⁰ Jan Melissen, “Concluding Reflection on Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in East Asia,” in *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power in East Asia*, ed. Sook Jong Lee and Jan Melissen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 247–62.

²¹ Ingrid D’Hooghe, “The Expansion of China’s Public Diplomacy System,” in *Soft Power in China: Public Diplomacy through Communication*, ed. Jian Wang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 19–36; Yan Xuetong, *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The Rise of The Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World* (New York: Penguin Book, 2009).

²² D’Hooghe, “The Expansion of China’s Public Diplomacy System.”

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 143

CO.²³ In other words, CO have become an important target of China's public diplomacy.

The rise of China explains the relations between China's foreign policy and CO in two ways. First, the rise of China has impacted the economic and cultural relations between China and CO.²⁴ In economic terms, Beijing needs CO support for economic development, while in cultural terms, the emergence of China's economic power encourages CO to learn Chinese and influences CO's ethnic culture and identity by means of re-Sinicization, especially when it comes to largely acculturated groups such as the Chinese Indonesians. Second, China's rise encourages Beijing to explore the potential of CO to support its foreign policy and international relations for constructing its soft power through public diplomacy. CO become a target audience for public diplomacy, and Beijing also seeks to involve them as actors in public diplomacy.

²³ Hongying Wang, "China's Image Projection and Its Impact," in *Soft Power in China Public Diplomacy through Communication*, ed. Jian Wang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 37–56; Michael J. Jensen and Titus C. Chen, "Illiberal Media in a Liberal Democracy: Examining Identity in Australia's Mandarin Language News," *Issues & Studies* 57, no. 02 (June 21, 2021): 2150005, <https://doi.org/10.1142/S1013251121500053>.

²⁴ Chee-Beeng Tan and Bernard P. Wong, "Introduction: Contemporary China's Rise and the Chinese Overseas," in *China's Rise and the Chinese Overseas*, ed. Bernard P. Wong and Chee-Beng Tan (Oxon: Routledge, 2018), 1–12.

The Emergence of Chinese-language newspapers in the post-New Order regime

Political reform beginning in 1998 allowed Chinese Indonesians to reconstruct their Chinese culture and identity, which had long been suppressed. They attempted to redevelop the three pillars of Chinese culture—Chinese schools, organizations, and media. While organizations and media resembled pre-Suharto entities to some degree, education was a different matter. Rather than establishing Chinese-medium schools such as those that had existed in the 1950s, Chinese Indonesians prefer to develop trilingual schools where Chinese courses are taught alongside English and Indonesian at school. The limited pool of qualified teachers and problems with curriculum development have been main obstacles to the development of Chinese courses at such schools.²⁵ For some Chinese Indonesian groups, learning Chinese is part of preserving the heritage and reconstructing the Chinese identity.²⁶ However, members of the younger generation may be inclined to regard learning Chinese as beneficial largely for business or employment.

²⁵ Hermina Sutami, “Fungsi Dan Kedudukan Bahasa Mandarin Di Indonesia,” *Paradigma, Jurnal Kajian Budaya* 2, no. 2 [The Function and Position of Chinese-language in Indonesia] (February 15, 2016): 212, <https://doi.org/10.17510/paradigma.v2i2.28>.

²⁶ Anita Lie, “Learning Chinese as a Heritage Language by Two Multilingual Youths in Indonesia,” in *Educating Chinese–Heritage Students in the Global–Local Nexus* (Routledge, 2018), 47–66, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315394541-4>; Suprajitno, “Reconstructing Chineseness: Chinese Media and Chinese Identity in Post-Reform Indonesia.”

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 145

Many Chinese organizations and media were established or re-established following the democratization. Clan, ethnic, alumni, place of ancestral origin, profession, and other cultural organizations were established.²⁷ Most of them focus on local and national activities to find and advocate for a congenial place for ethnic Chinese in Indonesian society; a minority also conduct China-facing activities.²⁸ Particular Chinese Indonesian groups like Muslims may regard themselves as post-diasporic and

²⁷ Susan Mary Giblin, “Being Chinese and Indonesian: Chinese Organisations in Post-Suharto Indonesia,” *PQDT - UK & Ireland* (Leeds University, 2003); Aimee Dawis, “Orang Tionghoa Berorganisasi: Yang Kini Lanjutan Dari Masa Lalu? [Chinese Indonesian Organize: What Now Continues From The Past],” in *Air Mata Kering: Masyarakat Tionghoa Pasca-Peristiwa Mei 1998* [Dry Tears: Chinese Society in the post-1998], ed. Ignatius Wiboro and Thung Ju Lan (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010), 49–74; Aimee Dawis, “Chinese-Indonesians: Today’s Renaissance,” *STRATEGIC REVIEW, The Indonesian Journal of Leadership, Policy and World Affairs* 2, no. 3 (2012): 79–87; Judith Nagata, “Local and Transnational Initiatives Towards Improving Chinese-Indigenous Relations in Post-Suharto Indonesia: The Role of the Voluntary Sector,” *Asian Ethnicity* 4, no. 3 (October 2003): 369–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1343900032000117204>; Afthonul Afif, *Identitas Tionghoa Muslim Indonesia: Pergulatan Mencari Jati Diri* [Chinese Indonesian Muslim Identity: The Struggle to find Identity] (Depok: Kepik, 2012); Amy Freedman, “Political Institutions and Ethnic Chinese Identity in Indonesia,” *Asian Ethnicity* 4, no. 3 (October 2003): 439–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1343900032000117259>; Chang Yau Hoon, *Identitas Tionghoa Pasca Suharto: Budaya, Politik Dan Media* [Chinese Indonesian Identity in The Post-Suharto: Culture, Politics and Media] (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2012), https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/soss_research/1202/; Suryadinata, *Etnis Tionghoa Dan Nasionalisme Indonesia: Sebuah Bunga Rampai 1965-2008*; Mely G Tan, *Etnis Tionghoa Di Indonesia: Kumpulan Tulisan* [Chinese ethnicity in Indonesia: a collection of writings] (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2008).

²⁸ Giblin, “Being Chinese and Indonesian: Chinese Organisations in Post-Suharto Indonesia.”

consider their Chineseness as peripheral than as a core identity.²⁹ Many Chinese Indonesians are disengaged from ethnic questions and organizations and as a consequence have no part in this institutional landscape. However, cultural links with China as well as economic opportunity make some Chinese Indonesian organizations eager to play roles in bridging Indonesia-China relations.³⁰

The reestablishment of Chinese organizations and the increasing trend of re-learning Chinese encouraged the emergence of Chinese-language newspapers in Indonesia in the 21st century. The emergence of Chinese-language newspapers is essential for Chinese organizations as a means of communication and critical for Chinese language education, and constitute part of the reconstruction of Chinese identity while bringing Chinese culture into the Indonesian public sphere.³¹ Flourishing in the early 2000s, they represented a cultural expression of the older generation.³² However, they are also caught between the idealistic project of

²⁹ Muhamad Ali, "Chinese Muslims in Colonial and Post Colonial Indonesia," *Exploration* 2, no. 2 (2007): 1–22.

³⁰ Tonny Dian Effendi, "The Relations Between Indonesian Chinese Diaspora and China: Case Study on Tionghoa Cultural Based Organization in Surabaya, Indonesia" (Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2017).

³¹ Suprajitno, "Reconstructing Chineseness: Chinese Media and Chinese Identity in Post-Reform Indonesia."

³² Chang Yau Hoon, "'A Hundred Flowers Bloom': The Re-Emergence of the Chinese Press in Post-Suharto Indonesia," in *Media and the Chinese Diaspora: Community, Communications and Commerce*, ed. Wanning Sun (London: Routledge, 2006), 91–118,

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203873601> Follow.

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 147

re-establishing the Chinese-language press and the economic logic of a small readership.³³ The limited Chinese-language readership in Indonesia meant that many of the initial Chinese-language newspapers of the 21st century collapsed, while others merged into Indonesian-language newspapers.³⁴

The ethnic Chinese played a major role in the press during the Dutch colonial period, principally in Indonesian-language publications.³⁵ Chinese publications, often affiliated with Chinese organizations, helped construct ethnic Chinese as part of the Indonesian nation and played a role in mustering anti-Japanese resistance.³⁶ The content of Chinese-language newspapers during the colonial period and during the Sukarno years is less well-known, not least because such resources are hard to find.

As concerns the post-Suharto period, a spate of articles have

³³ Andreas Pandiangan, "Chinese Press after the New Order: Caught Between the Continuity of Idealism and the Logic of the Market 1," *Asian Ethnicity* 4, no. 3 (October 2003): 401–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1343900032000117222>.

³⁴ Rezza Maulana, "Pers Tionghoa Pasca Orde Baru Di Yogyakarta [Chinese Press in the Post-New Order in Yogyakarta]," *Komunikator*, 2013, <http://journal.umy.ac.id/index.php/jkm/article/view/202>.

³⁵ Jayusman and Fachrurozi, "Eksistensi Kaum Tionghoa Dalam Dunia Pers Di Hindia Belanda Tahun 1869-1942."

³⁶ Wirawan, "Pers Tionghoa Makassar Sebelum Perang Dunia Kedua"; Kosasih, "Pers Tionghoa Dan Dinamika Pergerakan Nasional Di Indonesia, 1900 – 1942"; Lie, "Reaksi Media Peranakan Terhadap Perang Tiongkok-Jepang 1937-1939."

considered funeral parlor advertisements,³⁷ headlines and news coverage,³⁸ Chinese grammar and structure,³⁹ and the marketing and the readers.⁴⁰ The most common approach in Anglophone scholarship has been that of scholars such as Suprajitno, who argues that the emergence of Chinese-language newspapers in

³⁷ Cherry Cherry, “Analisis Iklan Rumah Duka Jakarta Dalam Surat Kabar ‘International Daily’ Edisi Juli 2019 [The Analysis of Funeral Home’s Advertisement in ‘International Daily’ newspaper, July 2019 edition],” *Century: Journal of Chinese Language, Literature and Culture* 8, no. 2 (August 26, 2020): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.9744/CENTURY.8.2.1-9>.

³⁸ Desy Indriani, “Analisis Isi Headline Surat Kabar Guo Ji Ribao Periode 1 Agustus – 31 Agustus 2013 [Headline Content Analysis of Guo Ji Ribao Newspaper, August 1-31, 2013],” *Jurnal Spektrum Komunikasi* 1, no. 2 (2013): 63–67,

<https://spektrumlama.stikosa-aws.ac.id/index.php/spektrum/article/view/23>; Dewi Rahmayuni and Helmi Hidayat, “Hierarki Pengaruh Isu-Isu Moderasi Beragama Pada Media Guo Ji Ri Bao 国际日报 Studi Kasus Berita Konflik Etnis Uighur Di Xinjiang [The Hierarchy of the Influence of Religious Moderation Issues on the Media Guo Ji Ri Bao 国际日报 Case Study News of the Uighur Ethnic Conflict in Xinjiang],” *Jurnal Studi Jurnalistik*, 2020, <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/jsj/article/view/14568>.

³⁹ Zulkarnain, “Analisis Homofon Bahasa Mandarin Pada Koran Harian Xunbao (汉语同音词于讯报报纸的分析)” ; Sihombing, “Analisis Kata Bantu Bilangan Dalam Kalimat Bahasa Mandarin Pada Koran Hao Bao Daily” ; Dewi, “Analisis Kata Sinonim Bahasa Mandarin Pers Dan Bahasa Mandarin Modern Dalam 华社动态 Huá Shè Dòngtài Pada 千島日报 Qiāndǎo Rìbào” ; Zahra, “Analisis Kohesi Dan Diksi Dalam Wacana Iklan Berita Duka Bahasa Mandarin Pada Koran Haobao” ; Fitri, “Analisis Pola 缩略语 Suō Lǜyǔ (Abreviasi) Pada 千島日报 Qiāndǎo Rìbào Terbitan 12 Februari 2018.”

⁴⁰ Soputra, “Perencanaan Strategi Pemasaran Koran Mandarin Pada Harian Naga Surya Berdasarkan Customer Value.”; Purnawan, “Profil Pelanggan Koran Mandarin Ditinjau Dari Segi Demografis, Psikografis, Dan Perilaku Pembelian.”

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 149

Indonesia represents the construction of Chinese identity.⁴¹ Scholars mainly discuss Chinese press and newspapers from historical, identity, language, journalism, and management perspective.

One study by Leo Suryadinata considered Chinese-language newspapers from a geopolitical perspective. He found that almost all Chinese-language newspapers in Indonesia were pro-Beijing, particularly as regarded specific issues like Taiwan and Hong Kong, while promoting Jakarta-Beijing economic cooperation.⁴² However, when it came to the Natuna Sea issue, they supported Indonesia's stance.⁴³ Suryadinata argues that the weak control of the Indonesian government over foreign media involvement has been contributing to this situation, meaning that some Chinese-language newspapers develop partnerships with China's media and even distribute Beijing's perspective through the People's Daily overseas edition. However, he notes that these newspapers have a limited reader among Chinese Indonesian communities because of readership, advertisement, and journalist issues, including the young generation's reluctance or inability to

⁴¹ Suprajitno, "Reconstructing Chineseness: Chinese Media and Chinese Identity in Post-Reform Indonesia."

⁴² Suryadinata, "Chinese-Language Newspapers in Indonesia: Declining Readership, Advertisement Revenue and Dearth of Journalists/Writers."

⁴³ The Natuna Sea issue is a potential territorial conflict between Indonesia and China. China does not claim the Natuna Islands, which are recognized as belonging to Indonesia. However, China does includes the sea around the islands as its territory.

read them.

The emergence of Chinese-language newspapers has coincided with the rise of China. This simultaneity has meant that the reconstruction of Chinese identity, and Beijing's approach to Chinese Indonesians, are both reflected in its CO policy. Chinese-language newspapers act both as a means for Chinese-speaking Indonesians to express their Chinese culture, and also connects them to China through cooperation with China's media or by drawing on information sourced from China. On the other hand, Chinese-language newspapers also provide a means for China to project its positive image while influencing the Chinese Indonesian community. In other words, Chinese-language newspapers provide a means for China to conduct public diplomacy by targeting a Chinese Indonesian readership.

Research Method

This study analyzed the China-related content in Chinese-language newspapers by taking the case of *Qiandao Ribao* (QR). There are two reasons for this choice. First, QR is published in Surabaya, Indonesia's second-largest city, with a relatively large Chinese Indonesian community. The population of Chinese Indonesian in Surabaya is thought to be the third largest

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 151

in Indonesia, after Jakarta and Pontianak.⁴⁴ According to a municipal domestic survey in 2017, Surabaya's Chinese population was 7.25% of the city's 3,052,020 total population.⁴⁵ Surabaya is host to many Chinese voluntary associations, with a total of 116 organizations in 2011.⁴⁶ These organizations are significant for Chinese-language newspapers because they provide readers, information, and financial support through advertisement and donation. Most of the committees in these organizations belong to the older generation who can speak and read Chinese because they underwent Chinese school education in the 1950s and early 1960s.⁴⁷ As an international trade center, Surabaya is also an important city for China's interests in Indonesia and this is why this was in 2006 the first Consulate General to be reestablished in Indonesia (diplomatic relations having been resumed in 1990).

Secondly, QR is among the few Chinese-language newspapers that have survived from the first crop of

⁴⁴ Leo Suryadinata, *Understanding the Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia*. (Singapore: ISEAS, 2007).

⁴⁵ DPM & PTSP, "Demografi [Demographics]," Dinas Penanaman Modal & Pelayanan Terpadu, Pemerintah Kota Surabaya, 2017, <http://dpm-ptsp.surabaya.go.id/v3/pages/demografi>.

⁴⁶ Jodhi Yudono, "Pusat Studi Tionghoa Melacak Sejarah [Chinese Indonesian Research Center Trace the History]," Kompas.com, 2011, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2011/02/20/00284016/~Oase~Cakrawala>.

⁴⁷ The older generation here refers to Chinese Indonesian who underwent Chinese-medium education before the bans of the late Sukarno and of the Suharto years. Most are septuagenarian or older now, and they form the core of Chinese organization leadership and membership.

Chinese-language newspapers that emerged around the turn of the 21st century, having been established on October 10, 2000. The survival of QR shows that it has a relatively strong readership and support from Chinese organizations. It targets Chinese readers mainly living in Indonesia but also reaches readers with Surabaya connections in Hong Kong, Macao, and China. Comprising 20 to 25 daily pages, the QR is a key Chinese-language newspaper in Indonesia.

QR represents the reconstruction of Chinese identity and the expression of the Chinese culture of the Chinese Indonesian community. It aims to struggle and protect the ethnic Chinese's rights and interests while supporting harmonious inter-ethnic relations for the prosperity of the Indonesian nation and state.⁴⁸ Like other Chinese-language newspapers, QR also aims to preserve Chinese culture by reporting on Chinese tradition. China has become the center of international news in QR because reporting China as the ancestral country is critical for the readers. However, it also promotes cooperation between Indonesia and China. For information about China, it has a correspondent post in Guangzhou and Hong Kong while also reporting the news from the Consulate General of China in Surabaya and cooperating with China Radio International.

This study analyzed the content of QR in Xinjiang, Hong

⁴⁸ Qiandao Ribao, “关于我们 (About Us),” 千岛日报, 2019, <https://www.qiandaoribao.com/about-us/>.

**Reading Beijing in Surabaya:
Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy** 153

Kong, and Taiwan. As regards Xinjiang, China attempts to counter negative information about its policy toward the Uighur Muslim community. This is particularly crucial since the majority population of Indonesia (and of Surabaya) is Muslim, and Uighur issues are thus liable to draw the attention of the Indonesian public and to affect China's image. As regards the Hong Kong issue, Beijing attempts to explain its position and policy in suppressing the democratic movement in the special administrative region. Taiwan is a perennial issue, with Beijing vehemently insisting on its One China Policy principle and its view of 'reunification.' All three issues are critical for Beijing; therefore, it attempts to deal with them and construct a positive message to be transmitted to the public in other countries, including Overseas Chinese such as Chinese Indonesians.

This study conducts content and sentiment analysis using the NVIVO and R Studio programs toward the QR's news on the website (<https://www.qiandaoribao.com>) from March 2019 to March 2021. For comparison, this study also analyzed the news content of *Jawa Pos* (JP), the Surabaya-based national newspaper in the Indonesian language. Although JP is a national newspaper, it has a strong readership in Surabaya, including the Chinese Indonesian community. Although this newspaper is more representative of a general Indonesian readership than of the Chinese Indonesian community, it is closely connected to Chinese Indonesian in Surabaya and the province of East Java

generally. For instance, in 2002, it had a “*Tekat Sayang*” section to accommodate information on Chinese Indonesian culture and traditions to contribute to a better understanding between Chinese and Javanese.⁴⁹

This comparison allows us to see how alternative information about Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan reaches the Chinese Indonesian community in Surabaya. Since QR and JP use different languages, all contents were translated into English and analyzed by two computer programs.

Result and Discussion

News Items about Xinjiang

A search produced 38 news items on Xinjiang in QR between March 2019 and March 2021. Some items indicate an attempt to counter Western media reported related to the Chinese government’s handling of the Xinjiang issue. Thus, they reported the statements of the Chinese Embassy and the Chinese Ambassador regarding the Xinjiang issue. Other items also reported on joint activities of the Chinese Consulate General in

⁴⁹ Novie Kusuma Dewi, “Jawa Pos Sebagai Surat Kabar Terpercaya Nasional Tahun 1986-2000,” *AVATARA* 7, no. 3 (2019); Departemen Komunikasi-UNAIR, “Webinar Berseri 2020: Chinese Indonesian Identities in a Challenging Time – Komunikasi UNAIR [Webinar Series 2020: Chinese Indonesian Identities in a Challenging Time],” Department of Communication, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Airlangga, 2020, <http://komunikasi.fisip.unair.ac.id/webinar-berseri-2020-chinese-indonesian-id-entities-in-a-challenging-time/>.

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 155

Medan and Surabaya with Muslim communities, including attending Zheng He Foundation activities in Surabaya, inviting Muslim leaders to visit China, and facilitating meetings with the Chinese Muslim community. The position of the Chinese government, relations with Indonesian Muslims, and countering the stance of the United States in the Xinjiang issues were the focal points of Xinjiang coverage in QR.

Meanwhile, there were 25 Xinjiang news items in JP between August 2019 and May 2021. JP covered both Beijing and Western perspectives on Xinjiang issues. It reported news about the detention of Uighur Muslims, anti-Halal campaigns, the question of the legality of Uighur Muslim camps, and United States policies in response to human rights violations in Xinjiang. However, JP also reported how Beijing responded to the Xinjiang issue, including reports on access of an independent team to visit Xinjiang, reports depicting the lives of Muslims in Xinjiang as peaceful, accounts of the construction of mosques by the Chinese government, and the visit of Indonesian Muslim leaders in China.

Content analysis shows that the QR shares information on Xinjiang mainly from Beijing's perspective, while JP provides more balanced information by including news criticizing Beijing's policy toward Xinjiang. In QR, positive terms representing Beijing's position, like 'cooperation' and 'development,' are among the most 20 frequent words. Also, the word 'people,'

‘government,’ and ‘religious’ show how the Chinese government explains its policy to Indonesian Muslims to counter Western media information on Xinjiang. The word ‘human’ and ‘right’ among most 20 most frequent words in JP show how JP covered Xinjiang news from the human rights perspective. These words also appeared in QR but were not as dominant as in the JP. Moreover, ‘violations,’ ‘detention,’ and ‘forced’ in JP news show reports that challenge Beijing’s stance.

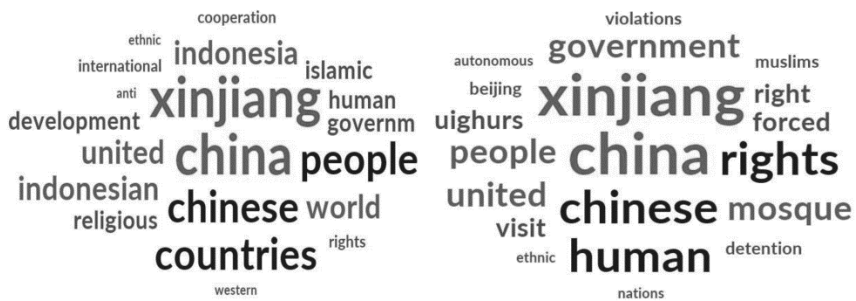


Figure 1. 20 Most Frequent Words in Qian Dao Ribao (left) and Jawa Pos (right) on Xinjiang news.

Although QR and JP differ in how they treat Beijing’s perspective on Xinjiang news, sentiment analysis shows they share a high level of trust emotion (Figure 2). However, the anticipation emotion was more potent in QR than in JP; conversely, the sentiment of fear was more potent in JP than in QR. Furthermore, the sentiment of anger in JP was more potent than in QR. These results show that QR represents the anticipation of Beijing to counter negative information on

**Reading Beijing in Surabaya:
Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy** 157

Xinjiang, while the negative emotions are more potent in JP than in QR, where it covers human right issues and protests toward Beijing’s policy in Xinjiang.

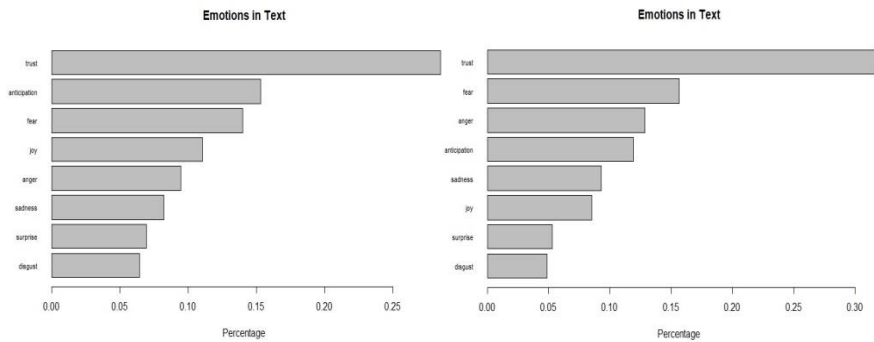


Figure 2. Sentiment analysis regarding Xinjiang news in Qiandao Ribao (left) and Jawa Pos (right)

The News about Hong Kong

There were 95 news items on Hong Kong in QR, and, like Xinjiang news, they covered Beijing’s response to Hong Kong issues. QR reported the Hong Kong movement substantially in terms of law enforcement. Some news covered supportive opinions for judicial reform, ‘No separation of power’ in the Hong Kong political system, the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region as a particular government under the central government of China, and allegations of US support to

Hong Kong protesters. QR also covered the explanation of the Chinese Ambassador to ASEAN regarding the Hong Kong issue, emphasizing Beijing's position to put national security as the highest priority; therefore, depicting protestors as part of a "Hong Kong independence" movement could be related to China's national security. To a smaller extent, QR also reported non-political news on Hong Kong, like economic and socio-cultural issues.

Meanwhile, JP provides more balanced information on Hong Kong issues, much as it had for Xinjiang. On the one hand, JP reported the arrest of former *Apple Daily* journalists and the forced closure of that pro-democracy newspaper, the commemoration of the Tiananmen tragedy by Hong Kong residents, the arrest of Hong Kong activists, and the US and UK government critiques of police actions and statements defending Hong Kong residents. On the other hand, JP also reported Beijing's perception that Western powers were attempting to make Hong Kong a geopolitical pawn, Beijing's criticism of the political asylum granted to Hong Kong activists, China's insistence on the United States not to make a provocation, and Beijing warning Australia not to interfere in Hong Kong issue.

The content analysis shows that QR covered the Chinese government's position on Hong Kong issues. The words such as 'people,' 'hongkong,' 'government,' 'china,' and 'chinese' indicate the Chinese government's attitude towards people in

**Reading Beijing in Surabaya:
Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 159**

Hong Kong and its principal treatment of them as Chinese. Furthermore, ‘law,’ ‘central,’ ‘national,’ and ‘security’ indicate Beijing’s stated policy to act as a central government in order to enforce the law in the interests of national security. While in JP, the centrality of words such as ‘government,’ ‘police,’ ‘hongkong,’ ‘china,’ and ‘demonstrators’ indicate critics of the Hong Kong government and police’s attitude to demonstrators. The word ‘democracy,’ ‘protester,’ ‘extradition,’ ‘demonstration,’ and ‘bill’ indicate a focus on pro-democracy protester demonstrations against the extradition bill in Hong Kong. JP’s coverage can be seen to include two kinds of items: Beijing vs. pro-democracy protesters and Beijing vs. foreign countries supporting pro-democracy groups.

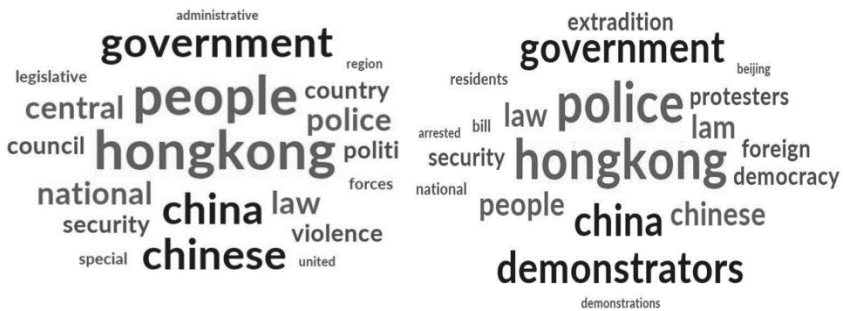


Figure 3. 20 Most Frequent Words in Qiandao Ribao (left) and Jawa Pos (right) on Hong Kong news.

The sentiment analysis shows that QR and JP contain similar emotions in their Hong Kong news. They also share a similar

degree of anticipation emotion. The sentiment of trust in these newspapers was more than 20%, while fear, anticipation, anger, sadness, and joy were sequentially from the higher to lower percentage. However, the fear emotion in JP was higher than in QR, but the anger emotion in QR slightly higher than in JP.

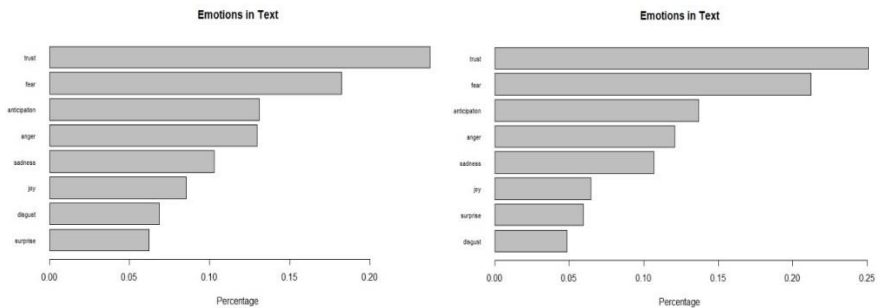


Figure 4. Sentiment Analysis on Hong Kong News in Qiandao Ribao (left) and Jawa Pos (right).

The high fear emotion in QR's Hong Kong news describes the Chinese government's concern for national security on Hong Kong issues. The high anger emotion QR news is also related to that situation. At the same time, JP's fear emotion may be linked to both the Chinese government and pro-democracy groups, suggesting that both the Chinese government and pro-democracy were reported similarly in JP.

The News about Taiwan

QR did not cover much Taiwan news, except the activities of

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 161

Taipei-affiliated schools in Jakarta and Surabaya. There were 47 news items on the Taiwan issue in QR, and most reported Taiwan School activities such as Chinese New Year celebrations, Halloween, and English contests. However, some news also covers cross-strait relations, elections in Taiwan, and economic and social relations between Indonesia and Taiwan.

Meanwhile, 41 Taiwan news in JP reported a diverse topic and covered information derived from both Taipei and Beijing perspectives. They reported Taipei's perspective, for instance in Taiwan's response to Xi Jinping's speech on the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party, the production of long-range missiles in anticipation of China's attack, Taiwan's new passport design (which deemphasized the Republic of China), Taiwan's response to Chinese military exercises, Taiwan protests against China, the Taiwan elections and the anti-Beijing movement, Tsai Ing-wen's visit to the United States and Taipei's efforts to strengthen its defense systems.

JP reported China's view on Taiwan in two ways. First, China's position in cross-strait relations. JP reported Beijing's warnings to Taipei, Beijing's responses to Taiwan's election results, China's threats to Taiwan, its plans for routine Chinese military exercises near Taiwan, and China's strong warnings to Taiwan about its political proximity to the United States. Secondly, JP also reported on China's position on China-the US

relations related to the Taiwan issue. JP reported China's protests to the US over Tsai Ing-wen's visit and the US arms sales to Taiwan, China's reaction to the presence of US warships near Taiwan, and Beijing's demands for Washington to withdraw support for Taiwan. Furthermore, JP also reported the US response to China's behavior in the Taiwan Strait which potentially puts Taiwan as a hotspot for the United States-China military conflict, and Washington's insistence on Beijing to stop military and diplomatic pressure on Taipei.

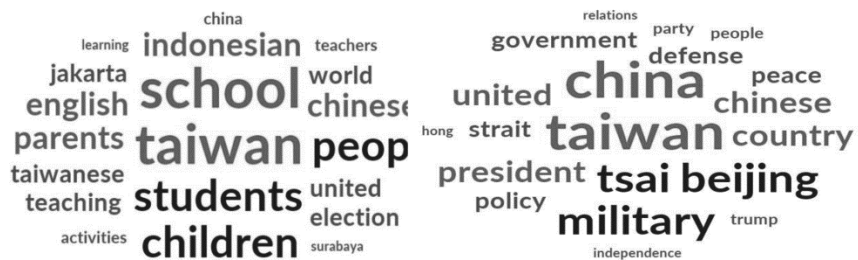


Figure 5. 20 Most Frequent Words in Qiandao Ribao (left) and Jawa Pos (right) on Taiwan news.

The content analysis shows that QR's Taiwan news was dominated by information on Taipei school activities. Therefore, the words 'school,' 'taiwan,' student,' 'children,' teaching,' and 'teachers' frequently appear in the news. While the word 'china,' 'taiwan,' 'tsai,' 'beijing,' and 'military' frequently appear in the JP's Taiwan news. This word indicates that JP covered Taiwan news in cross-strait relations and military or security issues.

**Reading Beijing in Surabaya:
Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy** 163

Since most of the Taiwan news in QR was about Taipei school activities, the joy emotion was high, although it did not surpass the values for anticipation and trust. The anticipation emotion represents China’s point of view on anticipating the situation in cross-strait relations. The overall result on emotion in the Taiwan news is relatively positive. While the sentiment analysis on JP’s Taiwan news shows that the emotion of fear is high, followed by anticipation and anger. These sentiments illustrate the recent tensions in China-Taiwan relations and fears of military conflict. The anger emotion describes the responses and protests against each other from China, Taiwan, and the US.

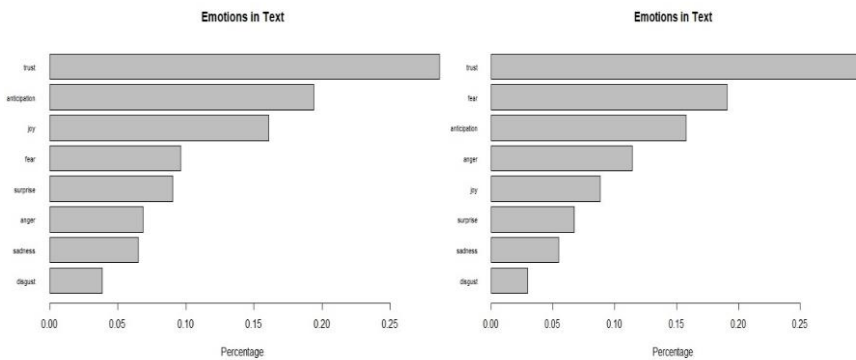


Figure 6. Sentiment Analysis on Taiwan News in Qiandao Ribao (left) and Jawa Pos (right).

The content and sentiment analysis in the QR on Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan news shows that the QR delivers China’s perspective and position more in Xinjiang and Hong Kong news.

The news items on Taiwan are more neutral than Xinjiang and Hong Kong, but are substantially depoliticized, since they deliver more information on Taipei school activities in Jakarta and Surabaya. The sentiment analysis shows that positive emotion is higher overall than negative emotion, while for Hong Kong news, the negative sentiments seem high. Meanwhile, JP provides more balance information on Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan news than QR by providing critical news on China's policy. The sentiment analysis of JP news shows that Xinjiang and Taiwan news provide considerable contrast with QR, where the negative sentiment element is higher than the positive. In contrast, the Hong Kong news sentiment analysis is similar to the QR, with high negative sentiment elements. However, this similarity may explain different directions. The sentiment of fear and anger in the QR may describe China's position, and in contrast, those sentiments represent both China and pro-democracy camps in JP.

The Implication of Chinese-language Newspapers to China's Public Diplomacy

States influence other states by employing soft power. By means of soft power, the state uses a non-coercive strategy using values and inspiration to influence other states.⁵⁰ Public

⁵⁰ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004); Joseph S. Nye, *The Powers to Lead* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 165

diplomacy is the most critical instrument of soft power.⁵¹ In the case of China's public diplomacy, the CO is both a target audience and an actor. China targets CO communities to gain support for national development and international diplomacy, while China also attempts to involve them as an actor to support China's international status. For this occasion, sharing positive information with CO is critical, and one way to share it is through the media, including Chinese-language newspapers. Through newspapers such as QR, China shares its perspective on any given issue, including critical and contentious matters such as those in Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Content and sentiment analysis on QR reflect the influence of Beijing's perspective on Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan news. For Xinjiang and Hong Kong news items, QR covered Beijing's stance, including the Chinese ambassador's explanation of some specific issues. While in Taiwan news, QR seems to avoid reporting cross-strait relations, instead reporting on Taipei school activities. Therefore, the Taiwan news in QR was more adversarial, although its coverage of cross-strait relations is far from extensive. These results are in line with Suryadinata's argument that most Chinese-language newspapers in Indonesia

⁵¹ Jan Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Sook Jong Lee and Jan Melissen, "Introducing Soft Power and Public Diplomacy," in *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power in East Asia*, ed. Sook Jong Lee and Jan Melissen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1–10.

reflect Beijing's perspective.⁵² These results also show that China attempts to influence the Chinese Indonesian community by sharing its perspective, mainly on Xinjiang and Hong Kong issues through QR. This situation ensures that China conducts public diplomacy with Chinese Indonesians through Chinese-language newspapers.

However, Chinese Indonesian may also access alternative information on Xinjiang, Hongkong, and Taiwan from other newspapers like JP. For Chinese Indonesians who cannot read Chinese, the JP becomes an important alternative since it is reported in the language almost all Chinese Indonesians can read and speak: Indonesian. Moreover, JP provides more balanced information than QR reporting on Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. JP includes both Beijing and Western stances. The coexistence of more balanced media affects the reach of China's public diplomacy through Chinese-language newspapers like the QR, since few readers will receive their news exclusively in Chinese.

The adoption of China's perspective in Chinese-language newspapers is valuable for China's public diplomacy; however, the reach of such information is limited because of two circumstances. The first concerns readership: QR readers are limited to readers of Chinese, which is a minority group among

⁵² Suryadinata, "Chinese-Language Newspapers in Indonesia: Declining Readership, Advertisement Revenue and Dearth of Journalists/Writers."

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 167

Chinese Indonesians. Suryadinata notes that the readership of Chinese-language newspapers is declining since younger generations lack Chinese proficiency.⁵³ This would seem to apply QR. In other words, China may be able to conduct public diplomacy through Chinese-language newspapers but it predominately reaches the older generations, who have sufficient Chinese proficiency.

The second condition is that Chinese Indonesian communities also read newspapers providing perspective other than those of Beijing. Chinese Indonesians who cannot read Chinese access information about China from English- or Indonesian-language newspapers, where these media provide more balanced information than Chinese-language newspapers. Alternative sources of information on China-related news may make some Chinese Indonesians critical in adopting Beijing's stance and weakens the effect of China's public diplomacy in the Chinese-language press. These two limitations show that language has become the main obstacle to China's public diplomacy with Chinese Indonesian communities.

The generation gap may also create different models of responses to the rise of China among Chinese Indonesian communities. Almost fifteen years ago, Koning and Susanto already found the "inter-generational difference" among

⁵³ Suryadinata.

generational groups in Chinese Indonesian communities on their perception and responses to the rise of China.⁵⁴ According to their study, the China-Indonesia relations and Indonesian government policy to ethnic Chinese cause different perceptions of China among Chinese Indonesian communities. The senior generation was deeply attached to the rise of China, while the young generation was impressed by China, yet were likely to regard the phenomenon from an Indonesian perspective. Based on Suryadinata, Koning, and Susanto's study, if we assume that most readers of Chinese-language newspapers belong to the older generation since they can read Chinese, this group is more exposed to China's public diplomacy than the young generation. The old generation may be more responsive to the rise of China than the young generation. In other words, the generation gap limits the reach of China's public diplomacy to Chinese Indonesian communities, due largely to language. If more Chinese Indonesians learn to read Chinese proficiently, it may increase the coverage of China's public diplomacy to Chinese Indonesians. It may be that a more effective option for Beijing to increase its public diplomacy reach is cooperation with Indonesian media. Through this cooperation, Beijing can inject its perspective into the news and increase the readership of its

⁵⁴ Juliette Koning and Andreas Susanto, "Chinese Indonesians and 'the Rise of China': From Business Opportunities to Questions of Identity," in *China In The World: Contemporary Issues and Perspectives*, ed. Emile Kok-Kheng Yeoh and Joanne Hoi-Lee Loh (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of China Studies-University of Malaya, 2008), 179-180.

Reading Beijing in Surabaya: Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy 169

message, even beyond Chinese Indonesian communities.

Although reach is limited, the fact that it is the older generations of Chinese Indonesians who form the primary readership of Chinese-language newspapers is significant, since these are crucial members and leaders of Chinese Indonesian voluntary organizations. Chinese organizations are a critical point of articulation for Chinese Indonesians to connect with China through international networks under the auspices of cultural or business reasons as well as a means of communication with the Indonesian government and society. Such organizations also plays a critical role in promoting Chinese-language education.⁵⁵ Moreover, most of the old generation active in Chinese organizations are businesspeople. Therefore, China's public diplomacy through Chinese-language newspapers carries importance for its role in supporting Chinese organizations as the community's bridge both to Indonesian government and society and to official and semi-official China. Positioning the community as a group harmoniously situated between and across the two states, and devoted to the betterment of relations, Chinese newspapers tend to reflect Beijing's stances as regards Chinese-Indonesian relations and the role of Overseas Chinese.

⁵⁵ Hu Anqi, "Persahabatan Tiongkok dan Indonesia: Bantuan Bidang Pembelajaran Bahasa Mandarin [China-Indonesia Friendship: The Assistances for Chinese Learning]," in *Ragam dan Prospek: Hubungan Antarwarga Indonesia-Tiongkok [Variation and Prospect: The People-to-People Relations Between Indonesia and China]*, ed. Rudolf Paulus Yuniarto and Thung Ju Lan (Surabaya: Airlangga University Press, 2019), 75-99.

Conclusion

Chinese-language newspapers play an important role in reconstructing Chinese Indonesian identity and preserving Chinese culture among Chinese Indonesian communities. Simultaneously, at an international level, such publications provide a space for China to conduct public diplomacy toward Chinese Indonesians by delivering positive information and Beijing's perspective on specific critical issues. Therefore, Chinese-language newspapers operate at an intersection between the interests of some Chinese Indonesians and Beijing. This does not make any Chinese-language newspaper itself a part of Beijing's diplomatic toolbox in Indonesia, but does show that such newspapers provide a vehicle for China to conduct public diplomacy targeting Chinese Indonesian communities.

This study was limited to the local Chinese-language newspaper in Surabaya, *Qiandao Ribao*. Wider studies of Chinese-language newspapers at a national level can provide a comprehensive picture of the relations and impact of Chinese-language newspapers on China's public diplomacy with the Chinese Indonesian community. Also, since newspaper readership is waning, other methods of studying young Chinese Indonesians' response to China's public diplomacy may increase our understanding of the generation gap and the likely further trajectories of Chinese Indonesian sentiment as regards China.

**Reading Beijing in Surabaya:
Chinese-language Newspaper and China Public Diplomacy** 171

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