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Chinese New Zealanders' Online Political Discussions and Lived Power Experience

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Abstract
This paper explores the relationship between Chinese New Zealanders' online political discussions and participation. It also uses Mark Haugaard's four dimensions of power theory to explore their power experiences during online political discussions. Based on an interpretive analysis of 38 Chinese New Zealanders' in-depth interviews, I found that interviewees discussed domestic and international politics online. The relationships between their political discussions and participation were complex. Additionally, interviewees experienced diverse power dimensions simultaneously in online discussions, and their interpretations of power varied. This study deepens our understanding of how power operates in everyday life.

Keywords: Chinese New Zealanders, Four Dimensions of Power, Online Political Discussions, Political Participation

1. Introduction

Political discussion is vital for a healthy and vibrant democracy. Scholars have emphasized its significance from various aspects. First, citizens become informed about common affairs through political discussions (Huu, 2022; Siapera & Veikou, 2013). Political discussions can also shape public opinions and influence public policies, making governments transparent and accountable (Habermas, 1989; Mouffe, 2009). Furthermore, political discussions can potentially reform existing political principles and social norms, thereby promoting social progress. For example, prevailing public opinions in the United States used to condemn, demoralize, and disrespect the LGBTQ community decades ago. Through political discussions, popular public opinions nowadays support and respect this community (Coley & Das, 2020).

Noticing the significance of political discussions, scholars have explored how New Zealanders engage in online political discussions to articulate demands, address concerns, and advance interests (Murchusion, 2009; Rudd & Hayward, 2005; Vowles, 2015). Chinese New Zealanders account for nearly 5% of New Zealanders' population (StatsNZ, 2020). They are an unignorable ethnic minority community in New Zealand. However, a few studies have focused on their online political discussions (Zheng, 2022). This paper aims to fill the gap.

People's online political discussions could be analyzed from various aspects. Power is an integral theme of politics. Studies have found that political discussions help people to reverse, maintain, or strengthen existing power relationships (Couldry et al., 2014; Dahlgren, 2009). Therefore, this paper chooses power as its analytical perspective to study Chinese New Zealanders' online political discussions. Scholars have interpreted power differently (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962; Dahl, 1957; Lukes, 2005), leading them to have varied conclusions on people's power experiences during participating in politics. This paper uses Mark Haugaard's (2020) four dimensions of power theory to analyze possible power dynamics underlying people's online political discussions.

I structure this paper as follows. The next section explains the significance of immigrants' online political discussions and the four dimensions of power theory, laying the theoretical foundation for the following analysis. The third section explains research methods. The discussion section presents Chinese New Zealanders' involvement in various political discussions and reveals power dynamics underlying their political discussions. I conclude the paper with its contributions.

1.1 Immigrants' Political Discussions Online

Immigrants are often politically marginalized (Ersanilli & Koopmans, 2010; Quintelier, 2009). They have limited political opportunities to articulate demands, address concerns, and advance interests in receiving countries (Pilati & Morales, 2016; Sandovici & Listhaug, 2010). However, scholars have found that the internet significantly empowers immigrants to engage in politics (Oiarzabal, 2012; Reips & Buffardi, 2012).

Immigrants' online political discussions facilitate their political participation in receiving countries from three aspects. First, online political discussions help immigrants obtain more political information and get familiar with the political systems of receiving countries. Lack of sufficient political information and unfamiliarity with the receiving countries' political systems are the two primary barriers to immigrants' political participation (Barker & McMillan, 2017; Bevelander, 2015). Studies have found that immigrants often discuss shared concerns and public policies relevant to their interests on various social media platforms (Al-Rawi, 2019; Siapera & Veikou, 2013). Their political information acquisition encourages their online and offline political participation (Huu, 2022; Oiarzabal, 2012). Second, immigrants establish and extend social networks through online political discussions. They develop mutual trust and shared identities in these networks, further promoting their political participation (Kissau & Hunger, 2008; Nagel & Staeheli, 2010). Last, online political discussions help immigrants form collective identities around shared concerns and facilitate their political participation to address these concerns. For example, Oiarzabal (2012) found that Facebook helped diaspora Basques construct a virtual community, enabling them to act for common interests. Other studies also had similar findings (Al-Rawi, 2019; Siapera & Veikou, 2013).

Immigrants' online political discussions also encourage their homeland-oriented and global-oriented political engagement. In her study on migrants' transnational lives, Nedelcu (2012) maintains that the internet enables immigrants to form multiple belongings, construct de-territorialized identities, and develop cosmopolitan values. Studies have found that online communication helps immigrants maintain close ties with their homelands (Liu, 2011; Sun, 2005). On the one hand, online discussions support immigrants to transcend their nostalgia and pain of displacement, helping them reconstruct virtual "homes" in cyberspace (Wong, 2003). On the other hand, immigrants obtain domestic political information through online communications, express their viewpoints about homeland politics, and engage in online political activities that target their homelands (Baubock, 2006; Huu, 2022). Additionally, the internet allows immigrants to express their political dissidence against homeland regimes (Bernal, 2006; Brinkerhoff, 2009; Moss, 2018). Studies have also found that online political discussions encourage people to participate in global politics (Huu, 2022; Siapera & Veikou, 2013).

Noticing the significance of online political discussions in immigrants' political activities, I aim to explore why and how Chinese New Zealanders discuss politics online and the relationships between their online political discussions and participation. The findings will expand our knowledge of the role of politics in Chinese New Zealanders' daily lives.

1.2 The Four Dimensions of Power

Allen (1999) identifies the three most common types of power in societies, power-to, power-over, and power-with. Most scholars of power studies agree on this distinction. However, they interpret differently how these three types of power operate in societies ((Bachrach & Baratz, 1962; Dahl, 1957; Haugaard, 2012; Lukes, 2005). Haugaard's (2012) four dimensions of power theory is one of many frameworks that integrate these three types of power and systematically examine how they function in societies. He develops his theory based on Lukes' (2005) three dimensions of power theory yet makes some adjustments.

The first dimension (1-D) of power examines power from the agency aspect (Haugaard, 2012). It derives from Dahl's (1957, p.202) understanding of power as "the ability of A to make B do something B would not otherwise do". Haugaard (2012) uses it to describe an ability to bring about effects by directing others' actions. Although many scholars interpret this dimension of power as a zero-sum game (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962), it is a common misunderstanding of Dahl's idea. Instead, the 1-D power could be zero-sum or positive-sum (Dahl, 1957; Haugaard, 2012).

The second dimension (2-D) of power derives from Bachrach and Baratz's (1962) discussions of power. They notice that the existing social and political systems often bias specific issues and exclude others. However, they believe what is excluded from the systems also matters significantly. The 2-D power shifts the concentration of power from the agency to the structural aspect. Giddens' (1984) structuration theory helps us better understand this dimension of power. He argues that individuals and social structures mutually shape each other. On the one hand, social structures use social norms and values to regulate individuals' daily behavior. Actions that do not conform to social norms and values are infelicitous and often face critique and condemnation. Meanwhile, social norms and values are artificial products. They constantly undergo the process of production, revision, and reproduction through individuals' interactions with one another. Therefore, Giddens (1984) suggests analyzing social changes at two levels. The first-level analyzes how people modify the existing structures to make them more equal, diverse, and inclusive. The second-level is about reshaping social norms and values to constitute alternative social structures. The 2-D power explores how power operates to launch first-level social changes (Haugaard, 2012).

The third dimension (3-D) of power tackles the second-level social changes, analyzing the formation of social norms and values (Haugaard, 2012). Lukes (2005) interprets it as an ability to influence how people think of and understand the world and associates it with domination. However, Haugaard (2021) argues that the 3-D power has both positive and negative potential. Haugaard (2012) introduces two concepts, discursive and practical knowledge, to illustrate how the 3-D power operates. "A specific theory or model of discipline or social science is discursive knowledge, while the more taken-for-granted order of things that structures a system of thought constitutes practical knowledge" (Haugaard, 2012, p.43). The social norms and values mentioned earlier are part of practical knowledge that regulates whether specific actions are deviant or normal. Although people cannot fully escape the influence of practical knowledge, they can use their discursive knowledge to question whether or not the prevalent practical knowledge is appropriate and reasonable. When they realize the conflicts between their discursive knowledge and the prevalent practical knowledge are irresolvable and attempt to reform the latter based on their discursive knowledge, they initiate second-level social changes (Giddens, 1984). The 3-D power functions in their attempt to reshape practical knowledge to constitute alternative social structures.

Haugaard (2012) develops the fourth dimension (4-D) of power based on Foucault's (1979) conception of disciplinary power, examining how individuals are made into social subjects. "Subjects" here have two meanings. First, individuals are subject to others through control and dependence. As mentioned above, social norms and values (or practical knowledge in Haugaard's terms) regulate people's daily behavior. Individuals' actions are often considered deviant or inappropriate if they differ dramatically from the majority's actions (Giddens, 1984). Meanwhile, individuals' actions need recognition and acceptance from others. Actions neglected or denied by others are often infelicitous (Foucault, 1982). This type of subjectification relates to the 3-D power where individuals are socialized in specific societies. Second, individuals are subject to their identities by constantly practicing their beliefs. Foucault (1982) finds that individuals routinely discipline themselves to abide by the

prevailing social norms and values. Haugaard (2012) describes this process as internalizing practical knowledge and making it part of individuals' identities. The 4-D power examines how power operates in this internalization process through which people adopt certain social norms and values to self-discipline their daily actions (Haugaard, 2012).

Haugaard (2020) argues that power-to, power-over, and power-with can function in all four dimensions of power. Therefore, his theory has the advantage of systematically analyzing power operations in societies. Noticing this advantage, I use his theory to analyze Chinese New Zealanders' online political discussions. The findings will deepen our understanding of how power operates in people's daily lives.

2. Research Methods

I designed this research as an interpretive case study based on semi-structured in-depth interviews of 38 Chinese New Zealanders in Auckland from 2020 to 2021. Although interpretive case studies have limited validity and generalizability (Yin, 2003), they are good at revealing detailed information and nuances of people's involvement in various political discussions and their diverse power experiences. Therefore, I believe it was an appropriate approach for this research.

Chinese New Zealanders are diverse in age, socio-economic status, length of residence in New Zealand, and country of origin. The 2018 Census shows that mainland China,[1] Hong Kong, and Taiwan are the top three sources of Chinese New Zealanders' intake (StatsNZ, 2020). Therefore, I restricted my target groups to Chinese New Zealanders from these three places.

I recruited participants by sending invitation emails to Chinese association members, posting recruitment advertisements on social media, and asking respondents to invite their friends to join the project. All participants read the *Information Sheet* and signed the *Consent Form*. I first asked them to recall their involvement in online political discussions. I also introduced to them the three types of power, power-to, power-over, and power-with, and asked them to reflect on whether their political discussions included any power. If they said they experienced power, I asked them to elaborate on it. Following the data saturation principle (Charmaz, 2008), I stopped interviewing new participants when their descriptions of political discussions showed key themes repeatedly.

In the end, I interviewed 17 females and 21 males. The mean age of interviewees was 46-year-old, ranging from 28 to 86. The average length of residence in New Zealand was 27 years, ranging from 4 to 63 years. The interviewees came from all walks of life: chefs, white collars, university professors, entrepreneurs, homemakers, and other professionals.[2]

Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously. I used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to process interview transcripts, my notes during the fieldwork, and other secondary data. Many interviewees were unaware of the power involved in their online political discussions. Therefore, I used my professional knowledge to abstract power dynamics underlying political discussions. Data analysis shows that interviewees' political discussions covered diverse topics on the politics of New Zealand, their homelands, and the global. Their political discussions did not necessarily encourage their political participation. Additionally, they experienced diverse dimensions of power while discussing politics online. The following discussion section unpacks these findings in detail.

This research has some limitations. First, all interviewees were recruited in Auckland due to COVID-19-enforced travel restrictions. I initially planned to use phone and internet interviews to overcome this limitation. However, after three online interviews, I found that participants were more willing to share their participatory experiences face-to-face than online. It was because politics was a sensitive topic, and interviewees would have a deeper trust in me when having in-person communications. Non-Aucklanders might engage in other political discussions and

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[1] I use the People's Republic of China (PRC) to refer to mainland China in the following discussion section.
[2] I attach the detailed information about interviewees in Appendix I.

have diverse power experiences not identified in this research. Second, individuals from different places often experience various political socialization processes, further affecting their political participation (Bilodeau, 2014). Therefore, Chinese New Zealanders from other places might engage in political discussions differently from interviewees from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Future studies could overcome these limitations and have diverse findings by interviewing Chinese New Zealanders beyond these three places.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Participating in Diverse Political Discussions

Empirical studies have found that male, young, and well-educated citizens are the main participants in political discussions ((Baek, Wojcieszak, & Delli Carpini, 2012; Uldam & Askanius, 2013). My observation differs from these findings. All interviewees, regardless of age and gender, reported they discussed politics online. However, their online communications were primarily for entertainment or sustaining interpersonal relationships. Most of the political discussions were casual and spontaneous conversations. They were not pre-scheduled. Instead, these conversations were often triggered by people sharing commentary articles and news reports on WeChat groups.[3] People's comments on specific issues also incentivized other group members to join the discussions. Although WeChat groups were where interviewees often had online political discussions, most people did not initially join these groups for political reasons. Only a few WeChat groups were formed for political discussions at first. Interviewees talked about diverse topics on WeChat groups, and overtly political conversations accounted for a small proportion.

Interviewees' political conversations on WeChat groups covered various topics. They talked about the government's COVID-19 policies, racial discrimination, gender-related issues, economic development, house prices, and other hotly debated social problems in New Zealand. They also discussed homeland politics, such as the Chinese government's lockdown policies and its relationship with the United States, and global politics, such as Black Lives Matter, Stop Asian Hate, and MeToo movements. Most interviewees said that discussing politics in WeChat groups increased their political information on the one hand and their trust in governments and politicians on the other hand.

Online discussions were one of many approaches for young and middle-aged interviewees to obtain political information. However, older interviewees claimed they heavily relied on online discussions to obtain political information, especially about political affairs in New Zealand. Interviewee 1 explained, "New Zealand has Chinese media, such as the *Chinese Herald*, which reports political news. However, you cannot get sufficient information as detailed as English-language media, especially during general elections. We can only learn detailed political policies of each political party and their candidates from WeChat groups. Those who understand English will translate information and post it for us." His complaints echo Barker and McMillan's (2017) finding that the media failed to provide the latest comprehensive information on New Zealand politics in non-English languages.

Many interviewees were mobilized to participate in politics after discussing politics with others, which echoes the empirical findings that immigrants' online political discussions facilitate their political participation (Huu, 2022; Moss, 2018; Siapera & Veikou, 2013). Thirty-six interviewees recalled that their political talks mobilized them to engage in New Zealand's politics, such as voting in the 2020 General Election, signing petitions, and attending public hearings. Studies often found that immigrants from authoritarian societies hesitate to engage in protests and demonstrations in receiving countries (Bilodeau, 2008, 2014). However, interviewees' online discussions successfully mobilized Chinese New Zealanders to join various protests. For example, Interviewee 14 mentioned how the Chinese community was united to protest outside Auckland High Court to pressure the Judge to impose a heavy sentence on the murderer who sexually assaulted and brutally killed Ms. Tian, an innocent Chinese old lady.[4] Four interviewees also recalled how they got mobilized to join street demonstrations to express solidarity

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[3] WeChat is a popular social media platform among Chinese people.
[4] News report about this case can be found here https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/jaden-lee-stroobant-the-making-of-a-murderer/QS5F3ALVTVA3BDCUHLS3XT6BYA/.

for global Stop Asian Hate, MeToo, and anti-climate change movements. Interviewee 25 said, "We are not allowed to organize or join street demonstrations asking for women's equal and fair treatment in workplaces in mainland China. But in New Zealand, we are free to do so. Therefore, when the global trend of the MeToo movement started, I went to WeChat groups and encouraged people, both females and males, to walk on the streets and fight for women. I'm surprised many people responded to my appeal and joined the demonstrations."

Three interviewees not only actively discussed with others about the mainland Chinese government's policies but wrote commentary articles about them. However, most interviewees said they were cautious when talking about homeland politics. They were worried that "inappropriate" comments on the mainland Chinese government would cause them unnecessary trouble, even though they were outside the PRC. Their worries echo many studies' conclusions that the influence of the Chinese government's censorship policies expands beyond its borders. It impedes Chinese people in and outside its territory from actively discussing online politics (Bamman, O'Connor, & Smith, 2012; Chan, Yi, & Kuznetsov, 2022).

Two interviewees said they lost trust in politicians and governments after political discussions. They knew more about governments' corruption and politicians' hypocrisy from online discussions, severely discouraging their political participation. Their reported negative relationship between political discussions and participation has also been found in empirical studies (Gil de Zúñiga, Diehl, & Ardévol-Abreu, 2017).

Nine interviewees did not think their online political discussions affected their political participation. The disconnection between their political discussions and participation is also understandable. Many studies have found that political discussions do not necessarily mobilize people to participate in politics (Eveland Jr & Hively, 2009; Valenzuela, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2011). However, nine interviewees all admitted that communicating with others made them more politically informed than before. Their feeling echoes the empirical findings that political discussions helped people obtain political information (Siapera & Veikou, 2013). Additionally, six interviewees claimed they became more interested in politics than before, echoing the findings that political discussions develop people's interest in politics (Gil de Zúñiga, Ardèvol-Abreu, & Casero-Ripollés, 2021).

To conclude, interviewees engaged in online political discussions for various reasons. The relationships between interviewees' political discussions and participation were complex. Additionally, censorship policies had a negative transnational influence on interviewees' online political discussions.

3.2 Power Dynamics Underlying Online Political Discussions

Although only sixteen interviewees explicitly stated they experienced various types of power during online political discussions, I analyzed that all forty-five interviewees exerted power in different aspects when discussing politics online. Interviewees' weak awareness of power dynamics indicates their narrow understanding of power. This finding resonates with scholars' observation that power is everywhere in people's daily lives, yet people often ignore or be unaware of it (Dal Poz, 2020; Sawicki, 1991). Interviewees experienced four dimensions of power during online political discussions.

The 1-D power focuses on its capacity to make people do something they otherwise would not do (Haugaard, 2012). Those who identified power dynamics in their political discussions all mentioned the 1-D power. Interviewee 17, a retired teacher from the PRC, shared how she exerted power-with and power-to through online discussions to address older Chinese immigrants' objection to pension reform. In the past, immigrants could claim a pension once they had lived in New Zealand for ten years. However, former parliamentarian Mark Patterson proposed changing this residence length from ten to twenty years. She recalled that when older people knew about this reform, they intensively discussed how to stop it in different WeChat groups. A petition was created and circulated in numerous WeChat groups, and many people mobilized others to sign the petition. She signed it and knew many of her friends also signed it. They did not stop the reform. The New Zealand Superannuation and Retirement Income (Fair Residency) Amendment Bill is currently undergoing its second reading in Parliament. However, Interviewee 17 felt they formed a united community at that time, acting collectively to oppose the

reform. People constructed a temporary collective identity based on their objection to pension reform, and they attempted to exert power to affect public decision-making. Interviewee 2 and Interviewee 3 also shared their engagement in discussions about pension reform. They also signed the petition. The three interviewees said they felt empowered through online discussions because they realized their capacities to protect their interests and influence public policies. In this case, they experienced the positive aspect of the 1-D power.

The 2-D power tackles structural bias, exploring how the existing social and political systems prefer certain things and exclude others (Haugaard, 2012). Twelve interviewees' online political discussions involved this type of power. For example, eight interviewees recalled their discussions about the 2020 General Election in WeChat groups. They remembered many participants complained that they could not get the latest and detailed information about political parties and their candidates in Chinese from official websites, which discouraged them from voting. Interviewee 4 said he might not vote without sufficient political information because a blind vote was irresponsible. Six interviewees recalled that some participants shared in WeChat groups about their difficulties contacting local politicians to report their concerns due to language barriers or unfamiliarity with the procedures of contacting politicians. When people complained about lacking sufficient political information or feeling constrained to address concerns via government institutions, other participants in online discussions often gave suggestions, helping them overcome these difficulties.

On the one hand, through online discussions, many Chinese New Zealanders realized the existing political system discriminated against those uncomfortable communicating in English, even though the New Zealand government might not intentionally do so. On the other hand, participants could obtain the relevant information they needed to overcome the systematic difficulties they faced from online discussions. The interactions between those who raised the questions and those who offered suggestions manifest people's experiences of the 2-D power. Participants who complained about the systematic barriers experienced the negative aspect of the 2-D power, as Bachrach and Baratz (1962) and Lukes (2005) interpreted the 2-D power. Participants who benefited from the suggestions in online discussions instead experienced the positive aspect of the 2-D power, resonating with Haugaard's (2012) argument that 2-D power might also be positive-sum.

Interviewees also recalled they discussed how the New Zealand workplaces discriminated against women, especially single mothers. Similarly, other participants provided suggestions on how to use laws to fight against gender-based discrimination. Interviewee 26 and Interviewee 31 remembered that their discussions further encouraged them to participate in online activities to support the global MeToo movement. Interviewees experienced the 2-D power during their discussions about gender issues. Many participants realized how traditional gender stereotypes unfairly differentiated men and women and how New Zealand society implicitly practiced these stereotypes to discriminate against women.

It is noteworthy to emphasize that when participants experienced the 2-D power during online discussions, they simultaneously exerted the 1-D power. For example, Interviewee 26 and Interviewee 31 were mobilized by online discussions to join global feminism movements to request women's fair and respectful treatment in workplaces. Their actions show their beliefs in using power-to and power-with to improve women's well-being globally.

The 3-D power explores how individuals use their discursive knowledge to challenge prevailing practical knowledge and reshape social and political systems in their desired directions (Haugaard, 2012). Interviewees' online political discussions involve this dimension of power, yet most of them were unaware of it when sharing their discussion experiences. Interviewee 12 recalled her discussion about the 2019-2020 Hong Kong protests on a WeChat group. Discussants were in three divisions. Some, including Interviewee 12, firmly opposed violent protests, even though she thought the protests fought for legitimate rights. She explained that violent protests threatened people's physical safety and generated unnecessary confrontations between protesters and the police. Others had the opposite viewpoint, believing violent protest was one of many means to achieve legitimate rights. Some hold an ambiguous attitude toward violent protests. Political theorists disagree on whether riots are legitimate to express political demands (Conge, 1988; Havercroft, 2021; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Nonetheless, participants with different political ideologies intensively discussed the legitimacy of violent protests. Their discussion indicates that participants had varied discursive knowledge to interpret violent protests, some for

it and others against it. People from one side tried to convince those from the other side. By doing so, they wanted their viewpoints on violent protests to become the prevailing public opinion in society. Therefore, their discussion involves a process where people try to make their discursive knowledge become the practical knowledge of society. In other words, they try to reshape popular public discourse in their desired direction, manifesting the 3-D power.

Interviewees' discussions about the role of the government in delivering welfare services and gender roles also involve the 3-D power. Interviewee 27 recalled his engagement in discussing the government's role during COVID-19 on WeChat groups. He observed that some preferred a paternalist governance model while others felt reluctant to expand the government's power. Interviewee 23 recalled her discussions about women being homemakers. Some, including herself, praised the contributions of female homemakers. Others despised this group, saying they were useless to society. In both cases, participants had different discursive knowledge of discussed topics and tried to persuade the other side to accept their beliefs. Their interactions manifest how people constantly use their discursive knowledge to change others' discursive knowledge and to reconstruct society's practical knowledge.

When participants tried to persuade others to accept their beliefs (discursive knowledge) during online discussions, some interviewees reported feeling dominated in this process. Interviewee 22 said, "Liberal values tend to dominate the discussions about the government's responsibility to the people. I am not against restricting the government's power. However, I believe the government can offer more welfare services in some aspects. When I express this desire to expand the government's power, I often face harsh critiques, blaming I am used to the paternalist governance model." He disliked being forced to accept particular political values during online discussions. Another three interviewees also expressed similar feelings. They did not think that discussants needed to agree on discussed issues. Interviewee 32 commented, "Many social affairs do not have absolute right or wrong. Therefore, we do not have to agree with each other. Consensus for me is like ideological hegemony." Interviewees' dislike of reaching a consensus during online discussions suggests that some people felt dominated when others tried to persuade them to accept their discursive knowledge. Their feelings manifest the negative aspect of 3-D power.

Interviewees' online political discussions also involve the 4-D power. For example, Interviewee 23 is a feminist. Whenever she read sexist comments online, she made counterspeech against those comments. She also actively posted comments asking for equal and respectful treatment for professional women when discussing women's working situations. She internalized her feminist belief and disciplined her actions according to feminism. Similarly, Interviewee 7 is an environmentalist. She often posted comments appealing to people to adopt an eco-friendly lifestyle in different WeChat groups. When she disseminated her eco-friendly ideology, she sometimes faced people skeptical about climate change. Some even denied climate change. In these situations, she presented scientific evidence trying to convince them to accept climate change fact. She explained, "Even though I cannot persuade them to believe climate change, I want at least not to make others get misled by these distorted discourses and become skeptical about climate change." Her debate with climate change challengers suggests that she experienced the 1-D (exerting power to change others' beliefs), 3-D (using her discursive knowledge to challenge others' discursive knowledge), and 4-D (self-disciplining her behavior according to her environmentalist belief) power. Many interviewees' online political discussions simultaneously involve diverse dimensions of power.

To conclude, interviewees experienced the four dimensions of power while discussing politics online, yet many were unaware of their involvement in these power dynamics. In many situations, they experienced diverse power dimensions simultaneously. Power operated both positively and negatively in online discussions, depending on the topics discussed and the role of people in these discussions.

4. Conclusions

This paper analyzes Chinese New Zealanders' online political discussions and power experiences. It finds that interviewees' online discussions covered political issues of New Zealand, their homelands, and global politics. The relationships between their online political discussions and participation were complex. Their discussions

sometimes mobilized their political participation and sometimes discouraged their political participation. Furthermore, interviewees experienced power dynamics during online discussions.

This paper has two significant contributions to future studies. First, it broadens our understanding of how power operates in society. Although power exists everywhere in people's daily lives, many are unaware of it. This paper gives an example of how to analyze power dynamics systematically in people's everyday interactions. It shows that people's online communications change others' actions, beliefs, and values. By doing so, active online discussants have the potential to reshape public opinions and social norms in their desired directions.

Second, this paper enriches our knowledge of Chinese New Zealanders' political discussions and participation. Studies have examined how immigrants' political discussions influence their political participation (Al-Rawi, 2019; Huu, 2022), yet we know little about Chinese New Zealanders in this respect. This paper offers interesting findings, revealing complex relationships between Chinese New Zealanders' online political discussions and participation. The findings also provide valuable information for scholars interested in immigrants' political discussions and participation.

Disclosure statement

The authors reported no potential conflict of interest.

Ethics Approval

This research was approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 15 May 2020, ref. Number 024522.

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Appendix I: Information of interviewees

No.	Age	Gender	Place of Origin	Length of Residence	Occupation	Immigrant Identity
1	83	Female	Hong Kong	61	Retired business manager	NZ Citizen
2	72	Male	Taiwan	50	Retired professor	NZ Citizen
3	70	Male	Taiwan	47	Retired civil servant	NZ Citizen
4	76	Male	Hong Kong	51	Retired engineer	NZ Citizen
5	45	Male	Taiwan	30	Self-employed	PR
6	46	Male	PRC	8	Lawyer	PR
7	42	Female	PRC	8	Homemaker	PR
8	45	Male	PRC	11	NGO worker	PR
9	30	Female	PRC	4	Engineer	PR
10	39	Male	PRC	10	Self-employed	PR
11	48	Female	Taiwan	26	Manager	PR
12	36	Female	PRC	18	Homemaker	PR
13	79	Male	PRC	6	Retired worker	PR
14	73	Male	PRC	5	Painter	PR
15	32	Male	Hong Kong	13	Self-employed	PR
16	28	Female	Taiwan	10	White collar	PR
17	67	Female	PRC	5	Retired teacher	PR
18	40	Male	Taiwan	18	Co-founder of a company	PR
19	36	Female	PRC	10	White collar	PR
20	31	Male	PRC	10	Chef	PR
21	34	Male	Taiwan	7	Real estate agent	PR
22	33	Male	PRC	12	Co-founder of a company	PR
23	35	Female	PRC	14	Homemaker	PR
24	39	Female	Hong Kong	8	Manager	PR
25	46	Female	PRC	15	Research fellow	PR
26	37	Female	PRC	7	Homemaker	PR

27	30	Male	PRC	6	Civil servant	PR
28	32	Female	PRC	6	Immigration agent	PR
29	46	Female	Taiwan	19	Homemaker	PR
30	38	Male	Taiwan	8	Businessman	PR
31	38	Female	PRC	6	Homemaker	PR
32	32	Female	PRC	7	Self-employed	PR
33	34	Male	PRC	7	Carpenter	PR
34	58	Male	Hong Kong	27	Artist	PR
35	86	Female	PRC	63	Retired engineer	PR
36	39	Male	Hong Kong	13	NGO worker	PR
37	42	Male	PRC	18	NGO worker	PR
38	37	Male	Hong Kong	10	Manager	PR