Philippa K Smith
Institute of Culture, Discourse & Communication
Auckland University of Technology

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'NEW ZEALAND PASSPORT HOLDER' VERSUS 'NEW ZEALANDER'?

The marginalization of ethnic minorities in the news – a New Zealand case study

Abstract

This article uses critical discourse analysis to investigate audience criticism of the news media's marginalization of ethnic minority members in New Zealand through the use of the words 'New Zealand passport holder'. Following my presentation of a case study where a group of readers objected to these words being used to describe a New Zealander with Kurdish origins, I examine the meaning and use of this descriptor at a time of increased diversity. Analyzing a selection of news stories from the beginning of the new millennium, I consider aspects of journalistic practice (namely news values and the sourcing of information), as well as the wider sociocultural context in which the articles were embedded. I argue that the media, rather than creating prejudice by using 'New Zealand passport holder', reproduced and legitimated the political and public discourse of elite groups that disassociated immigrant groups from mainstream New Zealanders. I conclude by emphasizing the ongoing need for journalist training to include an understanding of how the reproduction of the language and discourse of elite groups in news stories can have a negative effect on the representation of minorities.

Introduction

At 8.06am on March 6, 2008, a news story appeared in the online edition of one of New Zealand's largest daily newspapers featuring the headline 'NZ passport holder shot dead in Iraq'. In publishing the story, *The New Zealand Herald* (which was founded in 1863 and has a readership of more than 800,000 people each week) gave a brief, three sentence, account of the murder of Abdul Sattar Taher Sharif who had been shot by unknown gunmen in Iraq – more than 15,000 kilometres from New Zealand. The by-line attributed the story to 'NZ Herald

staff'[1] – though the news agency *Agence France Presse* was cited in the body of the text as the source of information. While Sharif was described again in the lead paragraph as a 'New Zealand passport holder', his identity was elaborated on further in the body of the story by referring to him as a 'Kurdish academic' who had recently been openly critical of Kurdish leaders.

Just over one hour after the news item appeared online, a member of the Aotearoa Ethnic Network (AEN) – an organisation that brings together people interested in diversity and ethnic communities in New Zealand – posted a message on the network's e-list querying the 'passport holder' description of Sharif.[2] The member expressed surprise at this headline and called for 'someone at the Herald' to explain the difference between 'New Zealander' and 'New Zealand passport holder'. The inference was that the latter descriptor marginalized immigrants in New Zealand by suggesting their only connection to the nation was through their holding of a passport. Further discussion on the subject of ethnic categorization ensued amongst 16 AEN members on the e-list – some of whom took the opportunity to raise general concerns about the emergence of a more subtle form of racism in the media in recent times. There was no direct reply from *The New Zealand Herald* (referred to hereon as the *Herald*) through the AEN e-list, even though a number of journalists were known to have found it as a useful source for story ideas according to its moderator (R. DeSouza, personal communication, 30 August 2010). Later that day, however, the headline was altered, prompting one AEN member who missed viewing the original headline to comment: 'Flip I was too late. They changed the headline to "New Zealander shot dead in Iraq" '.

An investigation by the New Zealand Human Rights Commission (2008) into the *Herald* story concluded that the use of the words 'New Zealand passport holder' was merely a 'slip up' by editorial staff. It stated that the descriptor was taken from an *Agence France Presse* report from Kirkuk that quoted these words from a local police chief. However, my own search of a database of New Zealand news texts revealed that this was not the first time that such labelling of ethnic minority group members had been used. This reinforced the issue raised by the AEN members as to the relevancy of the words 'passport holder' in these circumstances.

This article uses this story as a starting point to investigate the news discourse surrounding the term 'New Zealand passport holder' with a focus on why journalists used the term and its likely effects on ethnic minority groups as a whole. Because the media draw on various discourses such as 'corporate interests, news values, institutional routines, professional ideologies and news schema formats' in its (re-)construction of news events (Van Dijk, 1989: 203), I apply Fairclough's (1989, 1995) approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a useful methodological framework. This involves three dimensions for analysis – text, discourse practice (the production and consumption of discourse), and socio-cultural practice. It enables me to:

(i)   establish the generally understood meaning of the words and to examine the different ways in which the New Zealand media have used it – particularly when it comes to differentiating between ethnic minorities and mainstream European New Zealanders;

(ii) review the discourse practice surrounding the journalists' production of stories with regard to news value and the sourcing of news, and how readers' interpret them; and

(iii) highlight the wider sociocultural context relating to the public debate about what it meant to be a 'New Zealander' at the time these stories were published.

Although this study is confined to investigating just one descriptor, it has implications for other labels of categorization used by the media to describe diverse groups which can result in stereotyping or discrimination. However, before analysis can proceed it is necessary to

briefly review previous research relating to media representation of ethnic groups, followed by a more detailed explanation of the theoretical aspects of CDA as it applies to this study.

Ethnic representation in New Zealand and the media

Research on stereotyping and the negative representation of ethnic minorities by the media, particularly in Western countries, came to the fore in the 1970s, notably with surveys of the media's negative representation of Blacks and immigrants (Hartmann and Husband, 1974; Hartmann, Husband and Clark, 1974; Critcher, Parker and Sondhi, 1977). In a retrospective analysis of the handling of race in the British national press from 1963–1970, Hartmann, Husband and Clark (1974) highlighted the media's role in the acquisition of beliefs about ethnic groups in the United Kingdom. They concluded that white people largely drew on the mass media for their information on immigration and discrimination more than their own experience. Later studies have pursued the relationship between the media and discourses of racism (Campbell, 1995; Hartmann and Husband, 1974; Van Dijk, 1991; Wilson and Gutiérrez, 1985), recognizing that media texts are responsible for disseminating discourses of the homogeneity of out-groups (O'Doherty and Lecouteur, 2007). Van Dijk, too, found in his analysis of people's everyday talk in interviews that they often referred to the media when 'expressing or defending ethnic opinions' (1989: 201).

Many of Van Dijk's studies have focused on the media's role in the distribution and acceptance of the dominant in-group's ethnic prejudices and ideologies (1989, 1991, 2000, 2012), and he points to 'a complex ideological framework in which intergroup perception, prejudices, White group dominance, cognitive strategies as well as journalistic news values all contribute to the negative representation of ethnic minorities in the press' which the readers tend to accept (Van Dijk, 1989: 204). While Van Dijk has concentrated mostly on British and Dutch newspapers, numerous other studies exist of the media and the representation of minority groups in the United Kingdom (for example, KhosraviNik, 2009 and in other countries, including Australia, Canada and Finland (Fleras and Kunz, 2001; Jakubowicz, 1994; Pietikainen, 2005). Similar studies can also be found in the New Zealand context.

Many academics agree that New Zealand has historically prided itself on having the best race relations in the world based on the relationship between indigenous Maori and Pakeha – those New Zealanders of European descent who are the dominant ethnic group in New Zealand (King, 2003; Spoonley, Macpherson and Pearson, 2004; Spoonley et al., 1984; Spoonley, Pearson and Macpherson, 1996). However, there has been an increasing acknowledgement that New Zealand has not been impervious to what is now known as modern or subtle racism – a new form of racial attitude based on a person's moral code or sense of how society should be organised (Sears and Kinder, 1971) that presents itself through discourses of cultural superiority (Tuffin, 2008), and through institutions (Pilkington, 2008) and the media (Van Dijk, 1991). A report by race relations conciliator Hiwi Tauroa in the 1980s, for example, challenged the myth of New Zealand as a 'multicultural Utopia' (1982: 12), while studies such as that by Wetherell and Potter (1992) highlighted the racist, yet often unconsciously espoused, talk of middle-class Pakeha that placed them in a position of dominance over Maori. The mainstream media, too, have been criticized frequently for reinforcing a dominant majority perspective about national identity that assumes Pakeha superiority (C. Bell, 1996).

Although the New Zealand media's reporting of ongoing issues concerning Maori (including the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 between the British Crown and Maori) have come under scrutiny (Abel, 1997; Barclay and Liu, 2003; Praat, 1998; Rankine et al., 2007), the representation of other ethnic minority groups has also become the subject of academic research, particularly as immigration from a wider range of countries increased from the late 1980s onwards (see, for example, Gendall and Wood, 2004; Lyons et al., 2010). Instances of

discriminatory discourse in the New Zealand media were evident in the 1990s and 2000s, especially in the referencing of refugees from countries such as Ethiopia and Somalia, and Asian immigrants which was the fastest growing ethnic group (Spoonley and Trlin, 2004). A number of complaints of discriminatory reporting to the Press Council were upheld (*East and Bays Courier*, 1993; New Zealand Press Council, 2007) and research by Spoonley and Butcher (2009) confirmed these mostly negative sentiments and stereotypes of ethnic minority groups when they compared key images and discourses about immigrants in a number of New Zealand publications between 1993 and 2003. Although Spoonley and Trlin found that the reporting of concern about '"bogus" refugees/asylum seekers' became a recurrent theme in the print media in the late 1990s (2004: 31), later research noted a shift in the media's 'publicly articulated racialisation' to a more sympathetic representation occurring in the early 2000s, which rejected political anti-immigration rhetoric. Spoonley and Butcher explained this as stemming from the journalists' 'growing engagement' with diversity (2009: 355).

But while the New Zealand media have made an effort in the production of more positive stories about immigrants, some researchers still consider that minority groups are negatively represented by descriptors used in particular contexts. According to Kernot (1990) race-labeling (also known as race-tagging) of minorities by the media relates to the 'unnecessary use of racial or ethnic references' particularly in crime stories which he believes is a 'well-established practice in New Zealand newspapers' (1990: 53). One example he gives is the 'misleading … [and] prejudicial' description of a person as a 'New Zealand-born Indian faith healer' in two Wellington daily newspapers. The implication, he said, was that this person was not a New Zealander, and he posed the question: '[w]hen do people of Indian heritage qualify as New Zealanders?' (1990: 54).

Both Van Dijk (1991) and KhosravikNik (2009) go further with their criticism of the unnecessary specification of a person's ethnicity by the media, pointing to the foregrounding of this irrelevant information as having a prejudicial effect on that particular minority group. While the words 'New Zealand passport-holder' might not classify as race-tagging, because no ethnic label is attached to the descriptor, the further clarification in a news story of the passport-holder's ethnicity or place of birth still raises questions about the relevancy of this information to the story and the racial discourse it conveys. Given that the construction of news stories can be 'highly selective' when it comes to presenting a message (Maharey, 1990: 18), consideration in this study of what other discourses and power structures might influence the media's inclusion of the 'New Zealand passport-holder' label in news stories requires a methodological approach which will address this.

Critical Discourse Analysis

I selected Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for this study because of my objective to highlight any power relationships existing between groups or individuals that are enacted through using 'New Zealand passport holder'. CDA enables an investigation of discourse for researchers who are interested in meanings that often exist behind what is being said which, in turn, can shape social processes. The fact that language and semiotics can be used purposely to shape social practices for political, organizational and commercial gain is reason for concern (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). But perhaps of more significance, is that people can perceive negative discourses as normal without even knowing they are engaging in their production. Exclusion, for example, can become 'integrated into all dimensions of our societies …' and 'in some cases … occurs behind the backs of those who practice it' (Wodak, 2007: 659).

CDA has been used frequently to identify the ways in which 'political rhetoric, newspaper articles and other forms of elite communication are used to support dominant groups and marginalize others' (Crawford, 2011: 625). It has played a major role in research studies particularly since the 1980s (Garrett and Bell, 1998), and its ability to draw attention to examples of power abuse, inequality and racism through the examination of both language and context, has led to its popularity with numerous researchers concerned with political and media discourse about immigrants (De Fina and Baynham, 2013: 3). The linguistic conventions of journalists in the mass media are frequently the focus of CDA analysts (Fowler, 1991; Van Dijk, 1993, 2000; Wodak, 2011, 2013). This is mainly because the mass media are recognized as disseminators of the discourses of 'powerful social actors and institutions' (Van Dijk, 1993: 256).

The complexity of the influences on the media's construction of meanings, however, is exemplified through the following list offered by Wodak:

> texts, images, the link between text and image, the production of texts by journalists and news agencies, intended and optional readings (i.e. the dialogicality of news), the ideological and economic interests of the newspapers, broadcasting and TV companies, and their owners, the presupposed knowledge of the readers, historical (national) traditions of news reporting, recent global influences and so forth (2006: 4).

Van Dijk describes how people in 'complex industrial societies' often draw on discourse and communication for social learning (1989: 202). In the case of ethnic minorities, he states that the dominant in-group can make 'strategic inferences' from specific discourses, 'build mental models of ethnic situations and generalize these to general negative attitude schemata or prejudices that embody the basic opinions about relevant minority groups' (Van Dijk, 1989: 202). Therefore, it is easy to see that 'the dissemination and reification of figurative discourses that make the nation seem real' (De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak, 1999: 153) is used by politicians, intellectuals and the mainstream media to portray the dominant ethnicity as the in-group and the norm in contrast to ethnic minorities who are represented as different and the out-group. The objective of this analysis is to not only understand more recent representation of ethnic minorities by the news media, but to also facilitate an understanding of the audience interpretation of and their resistance to the use of a specific 'label' as a membership categorization device (Day, 1998; Sacks, 1992).

The following sections in this article incorporate Fairclough's (1989, 1995) three dimensional approach to CDA and will discuss:

- text (namely the use of the words 'New Zealand passport holder' in news stories involving ethnic minorities);
- discourse practice (specifically, journalists' practice of producing newsworthy stories and their sources of information, as well as the interpretation of the descriptor by readers); and
- sociocultural practice (that is, the context in which the story was embedded, particularly in relation to the commonly-held societal discourses about immigrants by the dominant majority in New Zealand).

Understanding the 'New Zealand passport holder' label

'New Zealand passport holder' is a noun phrase that conveys the meaning that a person is legally a New Zealand citizen through their holding of the relevant passport. Although a 'New Zealander' is likely to hold a passport, the descriptor incorporating the words 'passport

holder' is not a direct substitute for the common noun that denotes the person's nationality. A search for 'New Zealand passport holder' in *Newztext* (a database of New Zealand newspapers and newswires) from 1995 through to its most recent listings in 2012, identified this descriptor in 148 articles from a total of 7,466,493 – once duplicate stories were removed. This indicates that 'New Zealand passport holder' was an accepted term by mainstream media, and a close reading of these 148 stories identified four different contexts in which it was used.

The first three of these contexts offer a rather ordinary use of the words, which are briefly outlined here with extracts taken from stories to exemplify.[3]

(i) to highlight New Zealand passports as a form of documentation (55%): 'New Zealand passport holders don't need a visa to enter Oman' (*The NZ Herald*, 6 December 2006, 'Friendly faces abound');

(ii) to signal a sportsperson's eligibility to represent New Zealand in professional sports (23%): 'Cathrine [sic] was born in New Zealand, she is a New Zealand passport holder and she wants to play for her country, but is being treated unfairly' (*The Press*, 10 March 2011, 'NNZ off to court over exemption');

(iii) to indicate concern about the safety of New Zealand passport holders overseas at times of crisis – suggesting the New Zealand government's obligation to look after its citizens (6%): 'A New Zealand passport holder is unaccounted for on the Norwegian island where a gunman shot dead more than 80 people'(RNZ Newswire, 23 July 2011, 'Norway-Kiwi-VCR').

While each of these contexts is deserving of further investigation, the word limit of this article restricts specific analysis to the fourth context, whereby the 'New Zealand passport holder' label was used to distance a person's association from mainstream New Zealanders because of their involvement in negative activity such as drug trafficking, robbery, murder or suspicious circumstances (16%). While some of the 'passport holders' may have included mainstream New Zealanders, it was only those from minority groups whose ethnicity or place of birth were specifically mentioned. The following discussion of three news story examples demonstrate this concept.

The first example involves a story from the public service broadcaster, *Radio New Zealand* (*RNZ*), about a New Zealand man in Australia alleged to be a murderer, as indicated in the extract below.

Extract 1

> The man suspected of killing three of his children and stabbing his wife and another child in Brisbane has been confirmed as a New Zealand passport holder … The man, who is originally from Samoa, is still in a critical condition in hospital with self-inflicted stab wounds.
>
> (*RNZ*, 4 September 2003, 'MFAT confirms Brisbane suspect holds NZ passport')

Although the man is only 'suspected' of these crimes, his implied involvement in such violence, including the fact that he is described as being in a 'critical condition' with 'self-inflicted stab wounds', reinforces the negative representation of him and his state of mind. The story relies on information provided by MFAT (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

and Trade) which 'confirms' the man's passport holder status, but also highlights his Samoan origins. These facts work together to distance his New Zealand identity and reveal his connection to another country.

The second example relates to a *Herald* story, quoting 'senior police officers' and a spokeswoman from MFAT about the rising number of New Zealand drug smugglers. The story references an 'Auckland couple' and a 'Wellington woman' using their New Zealand cities of residence as descriptors. In contrast, the 'New Zealand passport holder' label features in a paragraph about a third person in the second extract.

Extract 2

Another New Zealand passport holder died in Thailand after swallowing parcels of methamphetamine to smuggle out of the country in January. … The 40-year-old man, of Iranian descent, is believed to have died in hospital from an overdose after the packages burst inside him.

(*NZ Herald*, 1 June 2011, 'Pregnant NZ "drug mule" in Japan jail')

Although the word 'another' precedes 'New Zealand passport holder' and reinforces the New Zealand connection of all three smugglers in the story, it is only this 40-year-old man of Iranian descent whose ethnicity is specified. The negative representation of this third person, including his rather gruesome demise, impacts on his identity which foregrounds his Iranian descent.

The third example presents a story that refers to three New Zealand men in trouble in Iraq, yet only one is defined by his ethnicity. The story reports that '[t]hree New Zealanders are in trouble in Iraq – one in hospital, one in custody and one missing', referencing MFAT as the source of information. One person is referred to as a 'man in British custody … detained because of questions about the validity of his visa to enter Iraq', while the missing person is described as a 'New Plymouth man' which highlights his hometown in New Zealand. The third person is described somewhat differently as the third extract shows.

Extract 3

The other man, an Iraqi-born New Zealand passport holder, was being treated in a Baghdad hospital after being injured.

(*NZ Herald*, 15 April 2004, 'Iraq alert for three NZ men')

The relevancy of labeling only the hospitalized man not only as a 'New Zealand Passport holder' but also as 'Iraqi-born' needs to be questioned. His description of being 'in trouble', 'injured' and 'hospitalised' paints a negative picture of this man involving violence. It is enough to raise suspicion about his presence in a war-torn country that most New Zealanders would avoid and effectively distances him from being a 'genuine' or 'real' New Zealander. Parallels can be seen with Sharif in the 'New Zealand passport holder dies in Iraq' story, where suspicions were raised about him as a person of Kurdish origin who appeared to be the victim of puzzling circumstances.

Although the frequency of the use of 'New Zealand passport holder' in terms of negative overseas circumstances was not extensive, these examples still support the fact that the story about Sharif that attracted reader criticism is not unique in its use of the term. It

should be noted that each of the three stories also referred to the 'New Zealand passport holder' as a 'New Zealander' within the full texts, but the former acted as a sub-category of the nationality. However, in every case the ethnicity or country of birth (other than New Zealand) of the 'passport holder' is highlighted and acts an indicator of difference.

In comparing this fourth context with (iii), above, it appears that different levels of claim to national belonging exist – with immigrants and citizens of non-Pakeha descent living outside of the country having a weaker claim. In addition, there is the inference that the government still has a responsibility to these passport holders even though they might not be regarded as 'real' New Zealanders. These findings reinforce existing research about the media's marginalization of minority groups as described earlier (also see Cottle, 2000) and align with other studies that seek to 'problematize what the news profession thinks of as "diversity" ' (Cotter, 2011: 1899).

The close analysis of these examples validates the concerns of AEN members about the relevancy of 'New Zealand passport holder' and its effect on the overall representation of ethnic minorities. Each story involves the 'passport holder' in negative situations such as crime or violence, or alludes to deviance purely by being in a location which is in a state of war. It is topics such as these that Van Dijk says are most frequently associated with minorities and immigrants which suggest to readers that 'they are at least a problem if not a threat for us' (2012: 23). While this analysis, so far, establishes the media use of 'New Zealand passport holder', this then leads to the next level for analysis of discourse practice: to investigate the source of these words, why journalists select them, and how they are interpreted by readers.

Going beyond the text

In this research, discourse practice focuses on the journalistic processes of text production that influence the way a story is written, the discourse it conveys, and how the reader interprets the information. Journalists are trained to follow certain practices to source information, conduct interviews, and write the text for stories. The genre of news writing involves particular formats and conventions of news discourse with the objective of producing stories with news value to attract an audience. In reflecting on the examples detailing the ethnicity of 'New Zealand passport holders', this section firstly examines two important aspects of journalistic practice that impact on the selection of words: newsgathering through sources, and the notion of newsworthiness.

Deciphering a news story to determine whether material has come from a news release, an interview, news agency copy, a journalist's own research or prior knowledge, is difficult particularly when the 'multiple news discourses' they contain are recontextualized into a single narrative and 'framed as an authoritative, unified account of a news event' (Van Hout, Maat and De Preter, 2011: 1884). As each of the story examples involves events that have occurred overseas, the journalist is reliant on sourcing information from either foreign news agencies, institutions, or people in positions of authority. While MFAT, the Police, or the Minister of Customs are quoted, there is also evidence to be found of institutional use of 'New Zealand passport holder' in their own press releases.

Institutional press releases are distributed widely to news media to communicate a particular point of view. In my search of the *Newztext* database, I identified a press release from the New Zealand Customs Service (2011) relating its capture of an increasing number of drug 'swallowers' – those people attempting to smuggle drugs internally. The release refers to the activities of 'several transnational criminal networks' and it cites 'the recent death in Thailand of an Iranian born New Zealand Passport holder who was attempting to smuggle P internally out of Thailand' (NZ Customs Service, 2011). This is the same 'passport holder' written about by the *Herald* in extract two and is indicative of the recontextualization of information from an

official source into a news story. A closer examination of the press release provides some interesting insights into the official discourse relating to drug traffickers.

The press release includes comments from Maurice Williamson, the Minister of Customs at the time, that intensifies the negative representation of drug traffickers. He states:

> Our people will continue to be vigilant and alert at New Zealand's border and our Customs officers will persist in stopping these scoundrels bring [sic] this menace into our society. (NZ Customs Service, 2011)

Creating a sense of 'ingroups versus outgroups' through categorization may be a way to 'introduce simplicity and order where there is chaos', but there is also the potential for this to result in stereotyping (Tajfel, 1981: 32). In this press release we find the highest person in authority in this ministry presenting a clear sense of 'us and them' by using strong adjectives and verbs to indicate the power of his customs officers ('vigilant', 'alert', 'persist', 'stop') as protectors of 'New Zealand's border'. This is in contrast to the negative representation of the traffickers as 'scoundrels' and a 'menace' who invade 'our' society including the 'Iranian-born' offender.

Drug trafficking is a serious offence not to be dismissed, but the relevancy of the authorities' focus on the ethnicity of just the 'New Zealand passport holders' and its reproduction in the news story is of interest. This demonstrates that the use of the words 'New Zealand passport holder' is not confined to the media, but used by government officials as well. It presents an example of intertextuality whereby the media often do no more than draw upon pre-existing constructions and representations, of minority groups in particular, within society (Haynes, 2007: 167). But it also shows how the media may influence readers' wider assumptions about the behaviour and values of Iranians living in New Zealand and their potential threat to society.

Certainly the pressure on journalists to produce accurate stories may limit their time to think about, or look for, alternative word choices as they rush to get their articles published before their competitors. This draws attention to the more recent trend towards post-publication editing or 'backediting' by some online news outlets where a 'publish first and revise later' practice has risen from pressures within digital media organisations to get stories online immediately (Appenfeller, 2014). The *Herald*'s alteration of the headline in the original 'passport holder' story provides evidence of this practice. However, the notion that online readers may be less likely to care about 'issues of grammar, punctuation and precise phrasing' than their print counterparts (Appenfeller, 2014) is not supported by those AEN e-list commenters who regarded the descriptor as an example of subtle racism.

The second aspect of journalistic practice to be examined when considering the descriptor 'New Zealand passport holder' is that of newsworthiness – the central component that drives a story (A Bell, 1991). A number of academics have constructed lists of news values over the years (A Bell, 1991; Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Gans, 1980; Harcup and O'Neill, 2001; Herbert, 2000), many of which overlap in the features that they highlight. The news value of proximity or how 'close' a story is to audience interests, for example, is the most commonly accepted determinant of news coverage (Shoemaker et al., 2007: 231) and would be a major drawcard for New Zealand readers of the 'New Zealand passport holder' stories presented in this article. That is, highlighting the New Zealand connection of the social actors makes these events psychologically closer for local readers. However, it is two of Shoemaker and Cohen's (2006) indicators of newsworthiness – deviance and social significance – that are relevant to the 'passport holder' examples in that they reveal the ideological determinants behind the stories. (These indicators were major components of Shoemaker and Cohen's (2006) international research project that investigated news media coverage across eight continents.)

Social significance of a news item, according to Shoemaker and Cohen, can relate to what makes 'people, ideas or events … important or interesting' (2006: 231). From a political perspective, the passport holder stories are socially significant because they are embedded within public discourses where there is concern about drug trafficking, the ongoing war in Iraq that began in 2003, and domestic violence. Each story relates a level of violence or conflict occurring overseas but at the same time alludes to some level of New Zealand connection. Even though detailed information is lacking, there is an inkling that there might be more to these events than is being reported. The stories raise questions that pique the readers' news interest: who is this 'New Zealand passport holder' and why is this person described in this way rather than as a 'New Zealander'? What was this person doing overseas and why? Are they legitimate New Zealanders?

The 'New Zealand passport holder' stories could also be considered as having news value based on deviance whereby 'characteristic[s] of people, ideas, or events … sets them aside as different' (Shoemaker et al., 2007: 231). Certainly, a degree of deviance is suggested in constructing these passport holders because they differ from mainstream New Zealanders in their actions and beliefs which might cause the news audience some concern. There is the possibility in these situations that New Zealand's international image may become tarnished or undergo social change if there were something more sinister to these stories. What repercussions might result for the nation? In addition, the level of deviance might extend to the possible violation of laws by these passport holders, in what Shoemaker et al. (2007) refer to as normative deviance, either through the activities they have been involved in, or perhaps the gaining of a falsified or stolen New Zealand passport.

The newsworthiness of ethnic minorities, generally, is mostly linked to 'extraordinariness and conflict' (Pietikainen, 2005) and it is not unusual for cultural difference to be emphasized and used to explain deviant behaviour (Van Dijk, 1991). But while journalists are trained to seek out and write stories with news value, they also write with an audience in mind (Cotter, 2010). Mainstream media in New Zealand (including the *Herald* and *Radio New Zealand* which are long-established media outlets that attract large audiences) are regarded as presenting a Pakeha majority perspective (C Bell, 1996). In reproducing the discourse of institutions and authority figures, it is not surprising that the 'passport holder' stories portray minority groups as non-conformist when it comes to New Zealanders' core values. To support the view that there is a link between these 'passport holder' texts, discourse practice and sociocultural practice, I move to the final level analysis of Fairclough's framework to consider the wider context in which the 'passport holder' stories were embedded – the public discourse surrounding national identity and what it meant to be a 'New Zealander' in the 1990s and 2000s.

Situating 'New Zealand passport holder' in a sociocultural context

The media's use of the 'New Zealand passport holder' descriptor analyzed in this article occurred at a time when New Zealand's increasing diversity featured strongly in public discourse. As outlined earlier, New Zealand's ethnic demographic had changed remarkably with the introduction of its non-race-based immigration policy in the 1980s. This was particularly noticeable in the census statistics between 1991 and 2006 which showed an increase in minority groups and a relative decrease in the dominant New Zealand European population (Ministry of Social Development, 2007). Many New Zealanders felt unsettled by these changes and while a comparison of two surveys carried out in 2003 and 2006 of New Zealanders' attitudes to immigrants and immigration acknowledged the positive side of a culturally diverse nation, about half of respondents in both surveys feared that immigration

would 'overwhelm New Zealand culture' (Gendall et al., 2007: 15). A trend amongst new immigrants wishing to maintain their own cultural identities, or in fact develop dual or transnational identities, raised New Zealanders' concern about the fragmentation or dilution of their national identity. These sentiments were fuelled further by the growing global apprehension about multiculturalism and the occurrences of ethnic rioting in some countries such as France and Australia in 2005 (Murphy, 2007).

With the challenges of globalization, national identity became politicized in New Zealand as the Labour-led Government sought to ensure continuation of a socially cohesive society. This required a re-imagining of the population as a nation with a 'shared national purpose' and an economic vision for the future, despite its 'increasing internal diversity and global connectedness' (Skilling, 2010: 178–179). However, the 'dominant realities of New Zealand life ... [were] still those of a mainstream Pakeha [New Zealand European] culture in which almost every citizen has to participate' (King, 2003: 513), and much public debate ensued, both within and outside of the media, about what it meant to be a 'New Zealander'. The desire to maintain the dominant narrative of New Zealand national identity could be seen in such instances as the 2006 census when a wave of public pressure surrounding this event (through an anonymous email campaign and via the media) resulted in Statistics New Zealand introducing 'New Zealander' as a new ethnic category when it coded the data. This alternative appeared to be used mainly by people who previously categorized themselves as 'New Zealand European' (Callister, Didham and Kivi, 2009). Many ethnic minority groups felt marginalized and excluded by this move, particularly since it appeared that the nationality of 'New Zealander' had become conflated with ethnicity, and they vented their objections in online blogs and forums (Smith, 2012).

Overall, a background of ambiguity and confusion regarding the shifting nature of New Zealand's national identity in response to changing demographics presented journalists with challenges in how they represented ethnic minority groups in the 1990s and early 2000s. But reproducing the discourses of government, institutions and authorities in news stories meant that the dominant narrative persisted.

Conclusion

This article has questioned the relevancy of media use of 'New Zealand passport holder' to describe New Zealanders whose ethnicity differs from that of New Zealand Europeans. Although more balanced reporting about immigrants and refugees in New Zealand has developed in recent years, this research has shown that the ability for the news media to exacerbate differentiation still exists. This descriptor appears to create doubts about the level of a person's 'New Zealandness' and raises concerns about the stereotyping of ethnic minorities.

A CDA approach to this study has enabled an understanding of how the media's representation of minority New Zealanders can be influenced both by journalistic practice, as well as by the wider sociocultural context about diversity. In demonstrating the significant risk of slippage of 'New Zealand passport holder' as a technical descriptor to a socially categorizing label, the research has shown how the discourse of elite groups or institutions can access public domains and become normalized in people's minds. Certainly the temptation for journalists to quote descriptors such as 'New Zealand passport holder' directly from sources in authority for reasons of time pressure, accuracy or newsworthiness exists on a daily basis. However, the resulting marginalization of ethnic groups that reinforces and legitimizes discourses of negativity or threat contradicts the news media's democratic role of communicating information that provides an unbiased understanding of political and social issues.

This investigation has implications for media that go beyond New Zealand,

particularly when issues in news coverage of diversity exist in many countries such as the United States, Australia, Germany and England. It provides just one example of how descriptors can affect the wider representation of minority groups – whether relating to ethnicity, religion, gender, age or sexual orientation. Above all, it highlights two important aspects in the training of journalists: to resist reproducing language used by politicians, officials or institutions that places people as second-class citizens; and to become more conscious of the connotations of subtle racism or discrimination that can result from the transference of textual material from one context to another. Encouraging greater awareness about the meaning of descriptors (particularly as new ones arise in response to sociocultural change), how readers might interpret them, what their effect might be on minority groups, and what alternatives might exist, would provide some direction in overcoming an inter-textual web that supports discrimination.

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[1]This byline description implies that more than one person from *The NZ Herald* was involved in the production of this news story, though the headline is traditionally written by a sub-editor.

[2]An e-list (also known as an 'email list', a 'listserver' or listserv) is a list of people, with a common interest, who have subscribed to receive an automatic distribution of emails from other group members.

[3] The percentage of texts that fell into each context category is stated for each.